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**Sumava National Park (Czech Republic)  
Application**

**Expert report by Mr Pierre Galland  
(Switzerland)  
22 – 24 July 2010**

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the Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage*

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### **Preliminary remark**

The Czech Ministry of environment has submitted in 2009 a nomination file for the Sumava National Park which had been examined by the specialist group in early 2010. Following the positive assessment, an on the spot appraisal mission was organized in July 2010.

Sumava National Park is directly adjacent to Bayerischer Wald National Park (Germany) which is holding the European Diploma since 1986 and is due to renewal in 2011. For this reason, both missions were organized back to back and Mrs Françoise Bauer, from the secretariat, joined both missions. Due to the proximity of both parks, their common problems and their close cooperation, the organization of the joint mission was well justified and proved to be very positive.

## **1. Introduction**

Sumava National Park is located in the S-Western part of the Czech Republic, along the border to Germany and, for a short section, to Austria. Together with the neighbouring Bayerischer Wald National Park they cover the largest part of the Bohemian Forest, a unique large semi-natural forest area in the middle of Europe.

Some parts of the Sumava Mountains have been protected for some 150 years. The Sumava Mountains were declared as a large size protected area in 1963 with 167'000 ha (Protected Landscape Area); it was at that time the largest protected area in the former Czechoslovakia and it encompasses the current Sumava National Park. In 1978 the Sumava PLA was designated as "Water Natural Accumulation Protected Area", while in 1990 the Sumava Biosphere Reserve was recognised by the MaB programme of UNESCO. Currently the Sumava BR covers an area of 167'000 ha, including the whole National Park territory as well as the main part of the Sumava PLA.

In 1990, the Sumavská raseliniste (Sumava peatlands) were declared as Ramsar site with a total area of 6'371 ha (serial site covering the most interesting mires within the National Park).

The Sumava National Park was established in 1991 by the Government of the Czech Republic with the following mission:

*"1. To maintain and improve its natural environment, especially as regards the protection and the renewal of the self-management functions of the natural systems, strict protection of animals living at large and of wild plants, to maintain the typical appearance of the landscape,*

*meet the set scientific and educational aims and use the area of the National Park for tourism and recreation without endangering the environment.*

*2. The economic and other uses of the National Park must be subordinated to the maintenance and improvement of natural conditions pursuant to paragraph 1.“*

In 2004, the European Community's Natura 2000 site, namely the Šumava Mts. SPA (968 km<sup>2</sup>) under the EC Birds Directive, was declared; it includes the whole National Park's territory and some parts of PLA. In 2005, another Natura 2000 site – the Šumava Mts. PSCI (1'719 km<sup>2</sup>) under the Habitat Directive was listed on the Natura 2000 National List and includes the National Park's territory, most of the PLA's territory and some adjacent land.

In the Bavarian part of the mountain range, the neighbouring Bayerischer Wald National Park was established in 1979. It covered some 13'000 ha and constituted the 1<sup>st</sup> German national park. It was extended with another 11'000 ha in 1997, to reach now a global surface of 24'000 ha, almost completely covered by forests. Both parks are certified as Transboundary Parks by the Europarc federation and their common border is some 40 km long.

The Parks cover the core of the Bohemian Forest (Sumava Mtn in Czech), one of the largest and best protected forest zone in Central Europe. The conservation and management issues of this forest area of European significance have to be addressed globally by both concerned countries. The European Diploma application from the Czech side is therefore welcome and the organization of a combined mission was highly justified

The mission took place from July 20<sup>th</sup> – July 24<sup>th</sup>. The first 2 days were spent in Germany for the appraisal of the Bayerischer Wald National Park; the second part of the mission took place in Czech Republic to assess the application of the Sumava National Park with a short joint meeting of both teams on the border.

The Czech part of the mission was very well prepared by the national park team supported by the Ministry of Environment. Discussions covered all the actual relevant management issues, including the integration of the park in the regional context and the relations with surrounding territories, in Czech Republic as well as in Germany and Austria. We had the privilege to visit a large choice of sites corresponding to the different zones and management regimes of the Park and to discuss in detail some "hot" management issues.

The management of the Sumava National Park has been a topic for discussion at regional, national and international level for more than a decade. A strong opposition to the current park's policy was expressed by regional and local politicians; a demonstration was organized in the street of Vimperk during the first day of the mission. The mission met the opponent to the park as well as the supporters, including representative of local and regional authorities and national NGOs. The sensitivity of the Park's management issue in the region was also demonstrated by the large attendance during the meeting with the media.

We would like to thank the numerous partners met during the mission, and in particular the Director, Mr. František Krejčí (Director of NP Šumava Administration), Mr Michal Palka and Michal Valenta. All participants contributed to give a comprehensive picture of the state of the park, the current management issues and their vision about the role of the national park in the regional and international context. Two representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Mrs. Dagmar Zikova and Mr. Zak were present the first day, demonstrating the strong interest and commitment of the State Authority regarding the management of the Park and the application for the European Diploma. The detailed programme with the list of partners met during the mission is attached to this report.

## **2. Summary of the findings**

The park covers nowadays an area of 70'000 ha along the German and Austrian borders. It is one of the 4 national parks of the Czech Republic. The whole park lies within the mountain zone and is covered by forests with a large domination of Norway Spruce. On the high plateau, along the German border, large openings in the forest host important surface of mires; the most

valuable ones are protected under the Ramsar convention. Most of the forests have been severely exploited in the past and their composition significantly modified. The broad leaf trees have been almost completely eliminated and replaced by more productive and market valuable Norway Spruce; unfortunately these very large monospecific and even aged stands offer a very favourable ground for bark beetle expansions and massive attacks at large scale. In addition, the high wildlife density gives little chance to the broad leaves trees to come back naturally.

The aim of the park is to allow the re-establishment of a mosaic of natural coniferous and mixed forests able to survive without human intervention. However, due to the profound human-induced transformations in the past and the current local conditions, the return of natural processes is difficult and different interest groups largely disagree on the necessity of human intervention within the park, in order to protect the surrounding commercial forests and to maintain the tourism attractiveness of the park. The passionate discussions on this topic have been going on for 2 decades at national and international level; several missions (IUCN, Ramsar, Europarc, etc. ) have taken place and have issued recommendations often approved by the national authorities. However the opposition from local authorities and interest groups have significantly delayed or stopped the implementation of these recommendations, delaying also the return to natural processes even in the core area of the park.

The park is very attractive and hosts largely over 1 million of visitors per year. A large majority come from Czech Republic while a growing number of German visitors is recorded. The recent opening of cross border trails has certainly contributed to this phenomenon. Trails are well marked and several information centres are operational; however very little information is available in foreign languages, though efforts are currently made to introduce English and German languages on information boards.

A management plan for the period 2001 – 2010 was adopted in 2000. Unfortunately, it looks much more like a forest exploitation plan than a national park management plan; following the Czech legislation it presents an extremely complicated zoning system with 3 levels which are not always compatible. This plan and the park's management policy have been criticized in 2002 and 2004 by IUCN missions and proposals were made to improve the situation. A new park direction has been appointed and the management improved significantly. On the other hand, while the state authorities had accepted the suggestions for revising the management plan, especially the zoning, little progress has been registered in this field. A new plan is in preparation, confirming the current management policy; the goal is to increase the zone without intervention from 30 to 40 % of the park's territory within 10 years. However, a strong opposition from local and regional authorities has already been expressed. The Municipalities having the power to stop the adoption of the plan, serious delays must be expected.

The zoning included in the plan is an ecosystem zoning which does not correspond to a management zoning. The core area is composed of some 140 small units, often isolated and not forming a few compact blocks as recommended. The management zoning (non-intervention zones, non-penetration zones, bark beetle protection zones, etc.) is not a part of the management plan; it can be changed at any time by the Ministry, upon request from the park administration. This situation does not guarantee a stable long-term management policy which is a sine qua non condition for the return of natural processes in large areas.

The park is implementing a high quality research programme, largely in close cooperation with research institute and also with the German colleagues.

Sumava is located in a mountainous border area which is not economically strong and offer limited resources. Forestry in the past as well as the park and the tourism it generates are among the most important sources of income, which explain the animated discussions. 6 villages are located within the park and 3 more are located along the border.

The programme of the evaluation mission was prepared by the Director and his staff. All key management issues were covered and a broad range of topics were discussed. We could meet representatives of many interest groups, and in particular regional and local

representatives, often strong opponents to the park and its current policy. Unfortunately a trend consisting in putting the responsibility for all local problems and deficiencies on the national park and its administration was repeatedly observed.

### **3. Brief description of the park's main ecosystems and management issues**

*NB: the situation is very similar in the Bayerischer Wald National Park and most of the issues addressed in this chapter are also relevant for the German side*

The park is described quite in detail in the nomination file; only a few important features regarding management issues discussed later will be mentioned here.

The Sumava National Park is located in the SW part, adjacent to the German and Austrian borders; together with the German Bayerischer Wald National Park they cover the main part of the Bohemian Forest. The highest mountains reach 1300 – 1400m; the climate is relatively humid with long and harsh winters. The park is covered by forests, essentially spruce forests that have been intensively used and strongly modified in their structure and species composition. In the upper part of the mountain, several high plateaus and flat valley beds are occupied by mires mostly treeless. The natural vegetation would certainly be a mosaic of mixed forests with large areas, mostly at high elevation and in moist condition, strongly dominated by Norway spruce. At lower elevation, some lakes can be found and towards the borders of the park some open areas are used for agriculture purpose.

The monospecific and even-aged features of the forests have favoured major so-called “disasters”, mainly a combination of windfalls and bark beetle massive attacks on living or weakened trees. This is not new for the area, historical records showing similar massive attacks in the past. The park policy consists in leaving without interventions a few large zones, mainly close to the German border and therefore adjacent to the Bayerischer Wald National Park. On the NE borders of these untouched areas, a “buffer” zone has been established where bark beetle attacked trees are eliminated, in order to protect the healthy forest inside and outside the park. The non intervention strategy is applied to ca. 30 % of the park's territory; the aim of the current administration is to reach some 40 % within 10 years, and therefore to bring back gradually a more natural spruce – mixed forest mosaic in the core area of the park.

The harsh climate of the highest parts of the mountain and the scarcity of seed sources of broad leaf trees strongly reduce the chance of recolonization by beech, mountain ash, maples and white fir; moreover these species constitute the favourite food source for the deer populations and plantations of broad leaf trees have to be physically protected against wildlife browsing. Good populations of ungulate are present and the absence of large carnivores obliges the park authority to take active measures to control the populations. Lynx have been reintroduced and a stable population is now well established and closely monitored on both sides of the border; however they cannot control the red deer population. Capercaillie and black grouse are regularly observed; several management measures have been implemented in favour of the capercaillie population (restricted access zone, trail closed until mid-July), in coordination with the German neighbours.

Unfortunately the zoning is very complicated, with management zones [no-intervention / time-limited recovery (sanitation) and continuous maintenance management] overlapping with the ecosystem zoning and the “disturbance-free areas” (= limited access zones for tourists) with only a very partial correspondence. In addition the management zoning is subdivided in different management regimes. It therefore happen that parts of the “natural” (or core) zone (high value ecosystems) are harvested with heavy machines, while the access is restricted for visitors.

Another problem consists in the shape and location of the natural / non-intervention zones. 3 relatively large blocks have been identified, but they still have irregular shape and therefore relatively long and sinuous borders, which makes the control of bark beetle by the way of buffer zone quite complicated and relatively inefficient.



#### 4. Park perimeter, park zoning and management plan

The overall size of the Park seems adequate to guarantee the integrity and the free development of typical ecosystems. However it is essential to combine the Czech and German sides of the mountain in order to have the whole diversity of ecosystems and to ensure free development and natural succession processes of the whole Bohemian Forest.

Sumava National Park is surrounded by a large Protected Landscape Area (PLA) which constitute the buffer and transition zones of a Biosphere Reserve. Two military areas can be found at both ends of the PLA; they constitute very interesting open landscapes and contribute significantly to the regional biodiversity. One of the areas is still used and its management is done in coordination with the Park authority with the aim to maintaining a semi-open landscape; unfortunately the large military area in the NW is not used any more and the open landscape is rapidly colonized by trees and bushes and may relatively quickly lose a significant part of its biodiversity. The main reason is the severely limited access of this area for man and cattle due to the amount of dangerous ammunition scattered in the landscape. The possibility of decontamination of the zone in order to return it to pasture and agriculture land should be investigated as soon as possible.

The mires designated as Ramsar zone should be all integrated into the Zone I and be left strictly without intervention.

In general the discussions were far too much focused on forest management issues. There was very little mention of the surrounding very valuable cultural landscape, or the historical assets of the region.

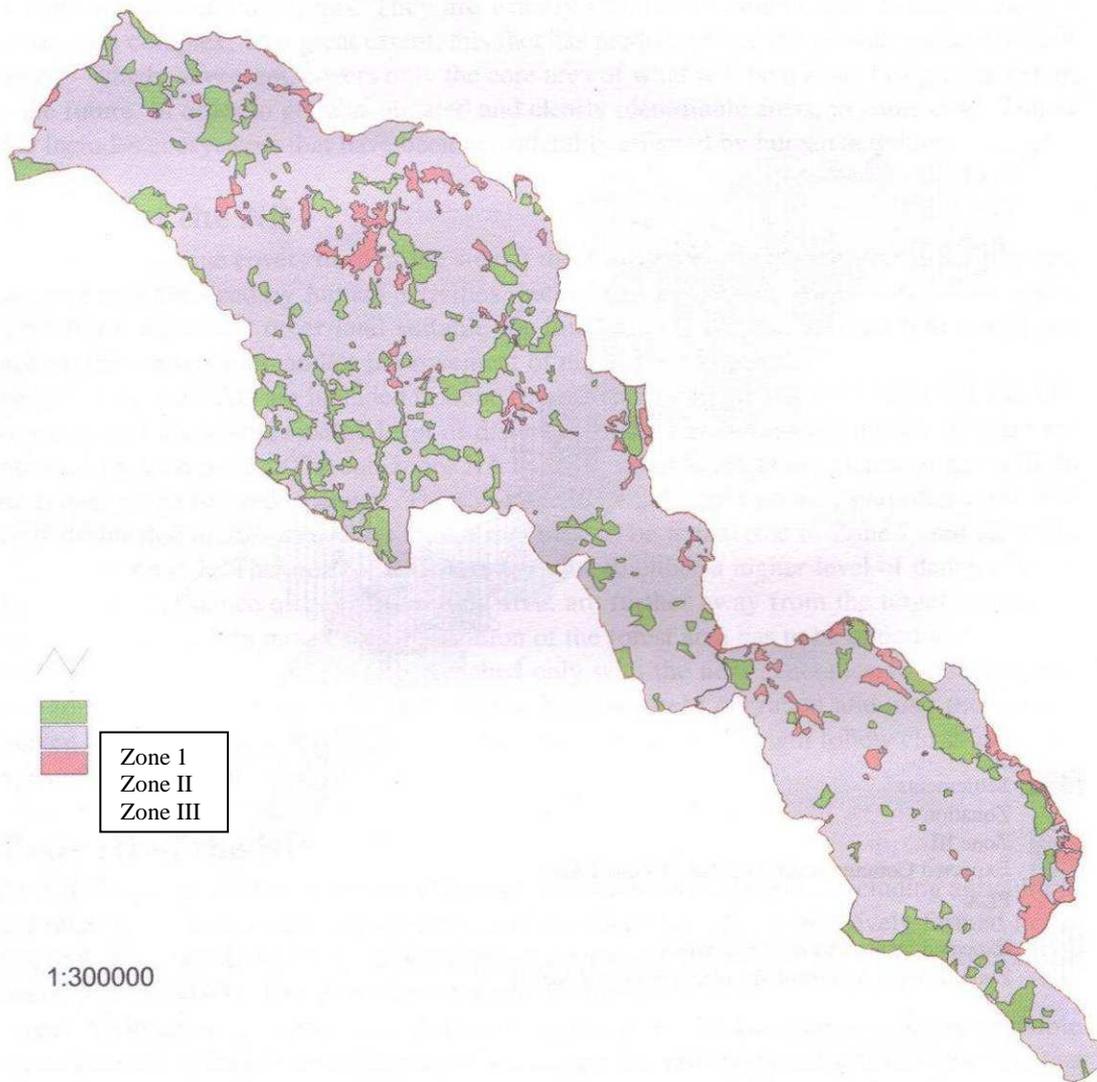
The management plan established in 2000 is valid for the 2001 – 2010 period; it is due to renewal soon. According to the Czech nature Protection Act, the park's territory is divided in 3 zones; furthermore the current management plan recognizes 3 sub-zones:

	Zones ("ecosystem zones")	% of Park's territory 1999	% of Park's territory proposed in 2030
I	Natural	13	Min 50 %
IIa	Close to natural (transitional)	16	

IIb	Steered towards natural - transitional	46	
IIc	Steered towards natural - permanent	20	Up to 40 %
III	Zone of development	5	Up to 10%
	Total	100	

Unfortunately the different zones (called here “ecosystem-zones”, by opposition to the “management zones” and “access zones”) are very small entities, spread over the whole territory (cf. map) and thus inadequate for management purpose – though they might and should serve as basis for the definition and location of the management and access zonings. For example management measures (like debarking or elimination of bark beetle attacked trees) may still currently occur in the zone I, where they should be absolutely excluded.

## Šumava NP Zonation



The management zoning is not an integral part of the management plan, which is really unfortunate. Some principles are in the plan, but there is not corresponding maps in the plan; the management zoning can be changed any time by the ministry upon request from the park administration; such a process could be initiated as a response to local political pressure from the park's opponents. It is essential for the new management plan to harmonize both management systems and to follow the recommendation of the 2002 IUCN mission:

### **Technical measures to resolve the fragmentation of the core zone**

*The main goal is to reorganize and simplify the zoning and to integrate all the levels of protection into a single coherent system.*

1. *Revision of the NP zoning: the zone I (core zone) must be reorganized in a few compact blocks (less than 10) with clear conditions – basically non intervention – and ground marking, according to the law. The big blocks should be established for at least 20-30 years, with some flexibility in the application of the management principles; in case of emergency, marginal changes to the zoning and/or light intervention might take place but only after discussion with an executive scientific / management committee. Clear criteria for zoning should be elaborated.*
2. *Original transition process (as described in management plan) and transformation of zone II areas into core zone areas should be significantly accelerated in order to cover 30 to 40 % of the NP within the next 3 to 5 years.*
3. *As a principle, the zone I should be non-intervention area; a small part (1-2 blocks) could be designated as research areas for comparing a limited and well targeted intervention regime with similar non-intervention plots. In any case a performance monitoring scheme must be set up.*
4. *The non-intervention zone(s) should be surrounded by a "buffer zone" or "sanitary belt", where: (1) ad hoc intervention in order to prevent the spreading of bark beetle, and to reduce the damage to an acceptable level, and (2) intervention facilitating the transformation into a mixed forest would be executed*
5. *Other categories of protection should match with the zoning, especially the non-intervention zone. Ramsar zone should be identical to 2 to 3 of the core area blocks; Biosphere Reserve zoning should also be equivalent to NP zoning (Zone I = core area, rest of the Park = buffer zone, landscape PA = transition zone).*
6. *Access for the public and for different activities should be rechecked for the non disturbance zone.*
7. *Wildlife population and hunting has to be addressed to allow a natural regeneration of the forest, including growth A strict policy regarding the control of wildlife populations - no winter feeding, hunting plans for the areas outside of the Park coupled with a comprehensive monitoring scheme - has to be applied; depending upon the actual population density, direct intervention within the Park might be temporarily necessary to allow a regeneration of broad leaved or mixed forests. Ideally, condition should be created allowing the natural return of large carnivores ensuring a long term control of ungulates populations.*
8. *Coordination with Bayerischer Wald Nationalpark is a must (and probably with Austrian foresters as well). However the ecological, historical and socio-economical differences must be considered when establishing a common management scheme.*

The cooperation with the Bayerischer Wald National Park is extremely important and should continue, while the role of the Nature Park, Biosphere reserves and Landscape protected areas as buffer and transition zones for the National Park should be reinforced.

The overall policy and its timely implementation should be firmly established in a management plan valid for at least 10 years, with the endorsement of the national authorities and after discussion with the local and regional authorities. Such a plan is under preparation and should be adopted as soon as possible. In order to avoid the risks of change of policy during the period of validity of the plan, it might be necessary to adapt some articles of the Protection of Nature and Landscape Act.

## 5. Management structure

The Park directorate has a very good structure and is organized in different resort areas. The director is supported by competent staff with about 350 people. The budget appears to be quite adequate in order to perform the NP duties.

Important human and financial resources have been put into the visitors' management and infrastructures, as well as in scientific research and monitoring. Wildlife management and young forests protection also mobilize important resources.

It must be mentioned that the park is one of the few large employers of the region.

## 6. Socio economic situation and relation of the park with local communities

Sumava area is located in a border area with limited resources. Employment is scarce, and perspectives for young people are limited. However the national park is generally considered as an asset, but for quite a few people not with its actual policy and its current administration!

During several meetings with the local authorities, it appeared clearly a lack of dialogue and mutual understanding regarding the key management issues. Local and regional authorities complained about the current park administration, putting the responsibility concerning regional development failures on the park, though the park is only marginally or not at all concerned. For example the park cannot be responsible for not stopping the demography loss, the lack of development projects in the area or the insufficient tourism infrastructures. Even complains about the Schengen agreements implementation were expressed during one the stakeholders' meeting! In a few cases the Ministry of Environment can be blamed (insufficient water treatment system or air pollution caused by the use of lignite instead of wood for heating) , but this has very little relation with the park and its management. Some municipalities challenged the existence of the Park itself, claiming the absence of proper declaration, though they first declared that they were in favour of the Park. It was said that the number of villages in the park area went from more than 40 in the past to currently 22; however it was later confirmed that this dramatic drop occurred just after the Second World War, together with the establishment of military and border zones, and is not related to the park.

There is apparently a lack of institutional settings for proper consultation process bringing together the park administration, interest groups, local and regional authorities under the supervision of the ministry of Environment. Local authorities complained about the regional policy concept: "wilderness is invading zones where it should not be", although wilderness is a key element regarding the attractiveness of the area, as it has been demonstrated on the German side.

## 7. Land ownership

Most of the land belongs to the State and municipalities, a very minor surface being in private hands.

Surface (% of the Šumava NP area)	Ownership
85.6 %	State
10.3 %	municipal
4.1 %	private

The private property does not appear to create problems; on the other hand, some of the municipal forests are in the middle of the park; they constitute a valuable resource for the municipalities and therefore it is difficult to include them in a non-intervention scheme. Land exchange could be a solution, but such a process does not appear to be acceptable for the

Municipalities for the time being. The state should envisage mechanism for land exchange as part of the negotiation for the new management plan and the park's zoning.

## **8. Information, education, visitor centres and visitors management**

Considerable efforts have been put during the last decade regarding visitors' information and environmental education. A good network with 8 information centres is operational in Šumava National Park; 5 centres are open whole year, 3 only for main tourist season and 1 museum at Vimperk Castle. In addition 2 information centres operate in cooperation with local municipalities, 2 with NGOs and 2 with private sector (in Ceske Budejovice and in Plzen – both capitals of regions). Relatively dense networks of well marked hiking and biking trail are available. A new biking trail separated from the road was realized recently with the support of the European community.

Czech language is used for all information materials; some translations exist in English and German, but this is still largely insufficient, though this reflects the actual origin of the visitors, with a large domination of Czech citizens. Some of the nice traditional wood carved information boards in Czech language are unfortunately (to our opinion!) replaced by "modern" aluminium boards that accommodate more easily translation in foreign languages.

During the mission a joint meeting of both parks was organized on the border German village of Bayerisch Eisenstein. The old train station is a very long building which was at the same time a former border post. It is not used any more and has been transformed into an information centre jointly managed by both countries!

## **9. Research**

A very comprehensive research programme is in place. Research projects are implemented by the park but also by external institutions (Universities, research institute of the Academy of Sciences, NGOs and scientific societies). Several interdisciplinary long-term research and monitoring programmes are in place; long-term monitoring projects focused on studies of ecological processes or management impact assessment are among the priorities of the park. They provide a lot of comprehensive scientific information which can be used as a basis for management policy decisions. It has been demonstrated for example that the spruce forest have started to suffer from environmental changes (air pollution, climate changes, etc) since just after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. On the other hand available comprehensive hydrological data can be used to rectify false statement from park opponents regarding the supposed threat of drought caused by the actual forest management.

Following projects are among the top research priorities for the park:

- Long-term monitoring of forests and glacial lakes ecosystems.
- Radiotelemetry of the Eurasian lynx population (transboundary).
- Radiotelemetry of Red deer and roe-deer population (transboundary).
- Long-term monitoring of populations of the key bird species in SPA (Capercaillie, Black grouse, Hazel grouse, Black stork).
- Long-term monitoring of bird populations and bird diversity in remnants of primeval forests.
- Ecology and restoration of drained mires in the Šumava National Park.
- Current vegetation of secondary grasslands as a background for different and diversified management approach.
- Impact of management activities on grassland diversity.

Many projects, such as the lynx or the capercaillie monitoring, are implemented jointly with the Bayerischer Wald National Park. The large project "Wild Heart of Europe", with the support of the EU, is an outstanding example of what can be achieved by 2 parks working together regardless the political and language borders between them. The Bohemian mountains offer a unique opportunity to demonstrate that a wilderness area can exist in the middle of Europe.

## 10. Main management issues

### Forest regeneration and transformation – bark beetle issue

Most of the forests have been used in the past and as a consequence their composition and structure have been profoundly modified. The overall goal of the national park is to facilitate the return of the forests to their original status and to ensure the free ecosystem development. This is a long term process which implies that “natural disasters” will happen, the spruce monoculture being particularly sensitive to climatic events (drought, windbreaks) and biological phenomenon (bark beetle attacks).

Different techniques have been applied in order to protect the living trees from the bark beetle and the respective forest stands have been carefully monitored. In the non intervention zone nothing is done and large areas of standing dead tree can be observed. In the zones in transitions (zones that should become progressively non-intervention areas) attacked trees are either debarked and left on the spot, or evacuated in order to protect the still intact zones.

Regeneration is taking place naturally everywhere and is very successful. However, on the Czech side, the natural return of mixed forests will be much more difficult and much slower than in Germany (altitude, exposure, climate, low seed source diversity). It can be expected that Norway spruce will still largely dominate the next generation of trees. Active measures outside of the core zone have to be taken, like planting fir and broad leaf species and protecting them from browsing. In addition, the ungulate populations have to be controlled in order to avoid damages in and outside the park.

The protection of the commercial forests outside the park and in some cases inside the park (municipal properties) is a key issue. Again the topographic, geomorphologic and climatic conditions specific to the NE Czech side of the mountain oblige to find specific solutions. The protection (or buffer) zone must be significantly larger than on the German side; this is not too dramatic, given the overall size of the Park. However an improved design of the core zone, or zones, with large compact blocks, would allow to increase the effectiveness of the buffer areas and thus to reduce their size, in comparison to the size of the core zone.

The fight against the bark beetle on large surfaces in the middle of the park is a “combat d’arrière garde” with very low efficiency. The result will just be a delay but will not “save” the forest as alleged by the opponents to the park administration. It is much wiser to provide sound and comprehensive information about the natural processes to visitors and to bring them to spots where regeneration is taking place 5, 10 or 20 years after massive bark beetle attacks.

#### 10.1. Ungulates management and large carnivores

Relatively large ungulate population can be found within the park (red and roe deer essentially). No "commercial" hunting is allowed in the park, but deer shooting is authorized according to the needs for forest regeneration. The area declared as "Wild Heart of Europe" is excluded from hunting.

The regeneration of young trees does not suffer from wildlife damages in summer, when the food is abundant. However severe damages may occur in winter and spring, when the snow is still covering the ground and food sources are scarce. For this reason a few "over winter game preserves" have been established; the deers are driven inside by food and are kept inside for the whole winter. Three of these preserves have observation posts for public from where deers can be observed throughout the winter.

The well established lynx population contributes to some extent to the game regulation; however the lynx cannot control the red deer population. Bear is not present in the park; occasionally passing wolves can be observed, but no pack is established.

#### 10.2. Tourism and visitors' management

The park attracts a large number of visitors the year around, but with peaks in summer and winter. Hiking, biking, canoeing, cross country skiing are among the most popular activities. A

large network of marked trails exists, and several of them are crossing the border. Canoeing is very popular while limited to some section of rivers and severely regulated.

Large disturbance-free areas, including for example the peat bogs declared as Ramsar sites, have been declared in order to protect the reproduction of birds and other animals and to allow completely free ecosystem development. Some of the trails, especially in the border areas, are closed until mid-July to ensure disturbance-free shelter to the capercaillie and black grouse chicks.

An important project with high potential environmental impact is planned in the SE part of the park. It consists in building a chairlift for bringing the tourists to the upper part of the ski resort area located on the Austrian side of the Mountain. It is envisaged to build the lift but without opening any ski run in the forest. It can be feared that sooner or later repeated demands for ski runs will push the local authorities to request their construction. An alternative exists which proposes improving the road or rehabilitating the railway around the mountain in order to bring the tourists directly to the Austrian departure of the lifts.

### 10.3. Relation with surrounding communities and regional authorities

There is an obvious deficiency in dialogue between the park authority, the Ministry of environment, the regional political leaders (governors, parliament members) and the municipalities. The process for preparation and adoption of the management plan is still unclear and the content of the plan, as it is actually prescribed in the Czech legislation, does not provide optimal conditions for a clear and open process. Still far too many regional problems and deficiencies are put in relation to the park, though they are not part of its duties and hardly in its sphere of influence.

Relations with local communities vary significantly from one place to the other. Some mayors of small municipalities see in the park one of their major source of income and work well with the administration; some other consider that the park is responsible for the destruction of their resource. Comprehensive and scientifically based information has to be brought again and again to the local people.

### 10.4. Transboundary cooperation

Very good and active transboundary cooperation exists in many areas (research, monitoring, trail marking, information, forest and wildlife management, etc.). For example, all these aspects are now integrated under the umbrella of the "Europe's Wild Heart" project. This cooperation is essential to guarantee a coherent management of the whole Bohemian Forest which is the largest wild forest area between Atlantic and Ural. Considerable efforts have been made for a bilingual marking system on the German side; similar efforts should be done on the other side.

Many visitors visit both sides; however they still usually wish to stay overnight in their own respective countries. Four transboundary trails have been opened and are widely used by visitors.

The efforts regarding the transboundary cooperation have been recognized with the delivery of the Europarc federation certificate for Transboundary Parks.

An agreement has been signed with the Austrian forest owners (church property). However the project of chairlift or cable car on the Czech side, which should bring skiers and hikers to the Austrian ski resort, is still on the table for discussion.

## **11. Conclusions and recommendations**

The Bohemian mountains, with the 2 national parks Sumava National Park and Bayerischer Wald National Park form a unique forest zone in the middle of Europe susceptible to host and demonstrate natural forest dynamics and ecosystem processes. It deserves to be effectively protected by joint efforts of both Czech and German authorities.

Establishment of new coordinated management plans for both parks after having agreed upon a shared vision for the area is an absolute condition. Sumava National Park should prepare as soon as possible its management plan which should include the management zoning for a 10 years period.

This plan has to be discussed and the zoning negotiated with the local municipalities and other stakeholders.

The situation has significantly improved during the last 5 years and the park administration has developed clear ideas regarding the future management of the Park. The park administration and the Czech authorities must be congratulated for their efforts and in particular for the development of an outstanding cooperation with the neighbouring Bayerischer Wald National Park.

However, the current the local and national political climate does not offer sufficient guarantee regarding the long-term management of Sumava National Park and the preservation of its exceptional values; moreover some essential management instrument, like a coherent management plan, are missing.

After having carefully considered these different elements, we recommend

*[postponing the decision regarding the awarding of the European Diploma to Sumava National Park until the following conditions are fulfilled]:*

Or

*[awarding the European Diploma to Sumava National Park with the following conditions]:*

1. A management plan including a coherent management zoning system is prepared for the next 10 years period and is adopted by the Czech authorities in 2012 at the latest. A proper Park Declaration is adopted and, if appropriate, a revision of the Czech legislation in order to include the management zoning into the plan is undertaken.
2. The plan, the zoning and the activities allowed in the different zones are negotiated with and approved by the local authorities. The objective of keeping at least 40% of the territory without intervention should be clearly stated.

Furthermore the application is subjected to the following recommendations

1. The collaboration with the German counterparts should continue and the synergies further developed. In particular, the joint scientific research projects should continue; special effort should be put on the translation of information materials.
2. Need assessment and feasibility study should be undertaken in order to develop a public transportation system in or around the park.
3. A branding system with certification for goods and services, similar to the "Nationalpark Partners" in Germany, should be established as a marketing tool for the region.
4. The state should continue its effort to by of exchange municipal forest land located inside or close to the core zone of the park.
5. The responsible authority should undertake all possible measure to decontaminate the former military land bordering the park and to allow the return of farming and grazing activities as tool to maintain the biological diversity of this open or semi-open landscape.
6. Comprehensive EIA regarding the construction of a chairlift in the Smrcina areas should be undertaken and alternative solutions should be actively promoted

**Programme**

for the visit of Mr Pierre Galland / Consultant for Environment and Development and Mrs Françoise Bauer / Biological Diversity Unit-Council of Europe  
in the Šumava National Park (SNP), 22 – 24 July 2010  
(on the spot appraisal as a part of the process of Award of the European Diploma)

**21<sup>st</sup> July**

18:00 to 18:30 arrival from NPBW to Kašperské Hory

19:00 – meeting with Mrs. Dagmar Zíková (Ministry of Environment)

**22<sup>nd</sup> July**

8:30 – Official welcome at headquarters of SNP Administration in Vimperk by director Mr. František Krejčí (Director of NP Šumava Administration) and representative of Ministry of Environment Mrs. Dagmar Zíková. Basic information summary about SNP after Mrs. Zíková (Director of International Biodiversity Protection Department – Ministry of Environment)

Mr. Žák (Chief Advisor of Minister of Ministry of Environment)

11:00 – Meeting with media – Vimperk – conference room A

11:30 – working lunch (preparations for meetings)

13:00 – first meeting - Prachatice, Town Hall

- Mr. Průša (Director of the South Bohemian Regional Authority)

- Mr. Vlasák (Member of Regional Council of South Bohemia for Environment)

- Mr. Stráský (Chairman of National Park Council, Club of Czech Tourists)

- Mr. Hůlka (Mayor and Chairman of Association of Municipalities in NP Šumava)

- Mr. Malý (vice-Mayor – Prachatice)

- Mrs. Lelková (Mayoress - Stožec, Microregion Chairwoman)

- Mr. Schubert (Mayor - Modrava, Microregion Chairman)

- Mrs. Hrazánková (Mayoress – Borová Lada, Chairwoman of Regional Section of NP Council)

- Mr. Pícek (Agency for Regional Development – Šumava Region)

15:00 – 17:00 – Transfer through southern part of SNP (PT – Volary – Soumarský most – Horní Vltavice – Borová Lada – Kvilda) – short stops included

17:00 – Working Dinner (second meeting) – hotel Šumava Inn at Kvilda

- Mr. Vostradovský (Mayor)

- Mr. Krejča (Member of Parliament, Senate)

- Mr. Neuzil (local stakeholder – agriculture, NGO Wilderness Guides representative)

- Mr. Scheinost (local stakeholder – agriculture)

20:00 – Evening programme (Kvilda?) – Krejčí, Zelenková, Křenová, Pavlíčko

**23<sup>rd</sup> July**

9:00 – third meeting – Prášíly – U Beránka, congress room

- Mr. Kabát (Mayor – Prášíly)

- Mr. Jirsa (Member of Parliament, Senate)

- Mr. Hail (NGO Friends of Šumava Chairman, forestry enterpriser)

- Mrs. Emmerová (President of Regional Authority of the Pilsen Region) with Mr. Smutný (Councillor for the Environment) (*requested*)

- Mr. Zelinger (local stakeholder – tourism / Bed & Breakfast + Restaurant owner)

- Mr. Svoboda (Czech University of Agriculture, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences)

12:00 – Common working lunch with representatives of transboundary NP BW - Železná Ruda and visit of shared information centre (from NP Šumava Administration: Štefanová – First Deputy Director, Zelenková – Chief of Nature Protection and Monitoring Department)

14:00 – Field Trip – former Military Area “Dobrá Voda”, Poledník Mountain, Prášilské Lake  
- Mr. Svoboda (Czech University of Agriculture, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences)

### **24<sup>th</sup> July**

Field Trip – choice from: Vltavský luh, Plešné Lake, Smrčina Mountain (must end at 13:00) – *dep.*  
*15:16 from Passau*

- Mr. Bláha (Chairman NGO Hnutí Duha)

- Mr. Vrba (Biology Centre of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Institute of Hydrobiology)

- Mr. Průša (Director of the South Bohemian Regional Authority)

Mr. Zimola (Governor of the Region of South Bohemia) sent apologies, Mr. Průša and Mr. Vlasák at the meeting

Mr. Bauer (Mayor and Member of Parliament, Chamber of Deputies) sent apologies, Mr. Malý at the meeting

Mr. Boček, Czech Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe will be invited sent apologies

Professional Czech / English translation will be provided for meetings on 22<sup>nd</sup> July for whole day

Working meetings with Administration staff concerning management plan, Natura 2000, zonation, Šumava Ramsar Site and Šumava Biosphere Reserve will be arranged during evenings or field trips