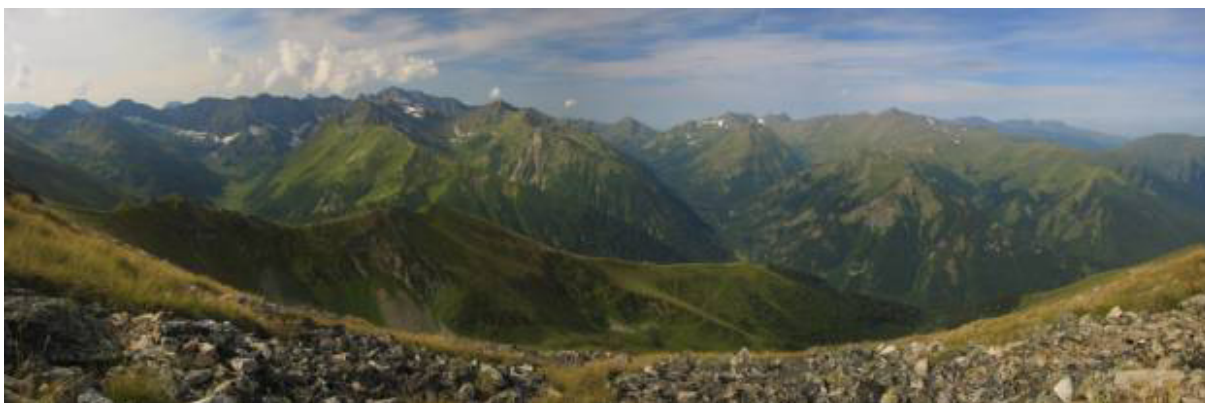


**MISSION REPORT**

**Reactive Monitoring Mission  
to the Western Caucasus World Heritage Site, Russia**

**From 18 to 25 April 2008**



Credit: Western Caucasus Strict Nature Reserve.

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United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



World Heritage  
Convention



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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From 18 to 25 April 2008, a joint UNESCO/IUCN monitoring Mission visited the Western Caucasus World Heritage Property, Russia, in accordance with the **Decision 31 COM 7B.32** (Annex 2) adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 31st session (Christchurch, 2007).

The Mission visited the World Heritage Property by car and by helicopter, in particular the Western Caucasus Strict Nature Reserve (WCNR) as well as its border areas, where the attention of the Mission was drawn on diverse conservation and management issues. The Mission had the opportunity to visit sites in the Sochi National Park (SNP) near Grushevy Ridge and at Krasnaya Polyana where the Olympic facilities might be constructed, particularly the locations of the sliding venue and the Mountain Olympic Village (MOV).

The Mission met Yuri Trutnev, Minister of Natural Resources (MNR) of the Russian Federation as well as Aslan Tkhakushinov, President of the Aedygea Republik, and his Cabinet colleagues and officials of the administration. The mission held discussions with various stakeholders, including officials of the MNR, SNR, SNP, local forest services, scientists, national NGO representatives (Greenpeace and WWF Russia) and local NGO representatives (NABU Caucasus, Environmental Watch on North Caucasus, Geographic Society). The mission also met a delegation of Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee as well as the Vice President and a delegation of Olympstroi (Russian State company for overseeing the planning and construction of the Winter Olympic facilities in Sochi). Finally, the Mission met Gilbert Felli, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director and Michelle Lemaitre, the IOC officer in charge of environment, in Lausanne.

At the end of the mission, a debriefing was held in Moscow at the MNR, in presence of Yuri Trutnev and MNR officials. Later, a second debriefing meeting was organized with officials of the Ministry and other experts, including NGOs like WWF, National Heritage Protection Fund, IUCN, etc. A representative of Olympstroy from Sochi was also present. A debriefing was also given to IOC and IUCN staff after the return of the Mission, at Gland.

During its visit in Western Caucasus World Heritage Property, the Mission reviewed the progress of the implementation of the decision **31 COM 7B.32** and other subsequent decisions (28 COM 14B.15 and 28 COM 14B.16) adopted by the Committee at its 28<sup>th</sup> session (Suzhou, 2004):

- assessment of the state of conservation of the Property;
- management of the Property including visitor management planning;
- policy on tourism development.

The Mission further reviewed the management and conservation issues in the Property and discussed with the relevant stakeholders on the main issues that may have direct or indirect deleterious effects on the integrity of the Property and globally may affect its state of conservation. All these issues were also raised during the meeting with Mr. Trutnev on 22nd April:

- **Boundaries of the Property** : the designated site includes the Kavkazkiy Nature Reserve and its buffer zone (286 335 ha)<sup>1</sup>, Bolshoy Thach Nature Park (3 700 ha)<sup>2</sup>, Ridge Buijnij Nature Monument (1 480 ha)<sup>3</sup>, River Tsitsa headwaters Nature Monument (1 913 ha) and Headwaters of Rivers Pshecha and Pshechashcha Nature Monument (5 776 ha)<sup>4</sup>. As stipulated in the Operational guidelines of the WH Convention, boundaries are an essential requirement to ensure the full expression of the outstanding universal value (OUV), integrity and authenticity of a WH Property. The Mission addressed this important issue during its visit in order to clarify the situation, which is rather confused and subject to dispute between the local stakeholders. In the Mission point of view, the buffer zone of the Kavkazkiy Biosphere Reserve as formerly designated is not part of the Property (however, as noted above, the buffer zone of the Kavkazkiy Nature Reserve is a part of the Property), which has been inscribed on the WH List further to the establishment of the Sochi National Park. **To conclude, the Mission takes note that the process of delimitation of the Property is on going and will be completed by the end of 2008. It applauds the**

<sup>1</sup> Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 322, 26 July 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 244, 08 October 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 467, 09 December 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 274, 23 December 1997.

**State Party efforts to clarify the situation and to eliminate all ambiguities on the border issue.**

- **Status of protection of the Property:** the Mission raised this issue after being told that the Republic of Adygea intended to withdraw the status of protection of part of the Kavkazkiy Nature Reserve, including the Lagonaki plateau, the buffer zone and other surroundings protected areas situated in the Northern Western sector of the Property. The Mission considers that this decision would be in contradiction with the WH Convention, which stipulates that a Property must be legally protected as appropriate. After further discussions with MNR and officials from the Republic of Adygea, the Mission observes that this issue is not a matter of dispute any more between the local stakeholders and that the legal protection of any part of the Property will not be withdrawn in the future. **The Mission concludes that the legal status of protection of the Property will remain the same as it was when the site was inscribed on the WH List and congratulates the State Party to maintain high level degree of protection on the whole territory of the Property, as required by the WH Convention.**
- **Logging and construction of infrastructures:** the Mission was very concerned by logging activities in the River Tsitsa headwaters and the Rivers Pshecha and Pshechashcha Headwaters Nature Monuments, in the North Western sector of the Property. The attention of the Russian authorities was drawn on the adverse impacts of these activities on the OUV and integrity of the Property; the Mission considers that these activities would put the Property under potential danger, should they continue. Before leaving, the Mission was told that the local and national authorities had ordered to immediate stoppage of these activities and asked to assess and to monitor the situation. **The Mission acknowledges the State Party authorities for taking the appropriate decisions in a very short time and recommends them to take all necessary measures in order to maintain the integrity of the Property.**

The Mission found that some infrastructures had been recently built and/or rehabilitated inside the Property (a gravel road and a Biosphere Center with a small ski lift at Lunnaya Polyana as well as a bridge and a gravel road close to the Gasprom complex).

The Mission considers that, in compliance with the paragraph 172 of the Operational guidelines, the State Party should have previously informed the Committee of its intention to undertake and to authorize these restorations and constructions. However these infrastructures had not significantly degraded the integrity of the Property at the time of the visit. **The Mission strongly recommends that State Party be urged neither to enlarge nor to asphalt the forest road accessing to Lunnaya Poljana and to the Biosphere Center. The Mission also recommends to strictly regulate the traffic on this road and to use the Biosphere Centre only for management, research and monitoring of the Property and not to convert it into a recreational facility.**

In regard to the gravel road and the bridge built nearby the Gasprom complex, the Mission regrets that the Committee was not kept aware of these constructions partly undertaken inside or very close to the Property. However, the Mission estimates that these infrastructures neither significantly affect the OUV of the Property nor degrade its integrity. **Should they serve in the future for the Access road n° 5.5, the Mission also recommends to revise the provisional outline of this roadway in order to relocate the loop further from the border of the Property or replace it by a direct road to the Olympic venues.**

- **Organization of the Olympic Games:** the Mission is very concerned about the provisional location of the MOV, the Sliding Center and the Access Road n° 5.1 and 5.2 that are situated in the immediate proximity of the Property, in an area known as being highly valuable and sensitive from an ecological point of view. The Mission estimates that these constructions would have long-term impacts on the ecological and biological processes for which the Property has been inscribed on the WH List and threatened its OUV and integrity, should their provisional location be confirmed. **The Mission acknowledges the decision of the State Party not to allow the construction of any Olympic infrastructure and the development of Game activities inside the Property. However, the Mission strongly recommends the State Party to assess alternative sites for the location of the Olympic venues mentioned here above, as well as for any of them, which would be situated in the immediate proximity of the Property. The Mission also**

**recommends that the final location of all Olympic venues be decided further to the assessment of their environmental impacts, carried out with the support of international expertise.**

- **Management planning:** in spite of recurrent recommendations to elaborate a master management plan for the whole Property, the State Party did not provide the WH Committee with such a document so far. The Mission was told that a management plan, for the strict nature reserve only, is currently under preparation. **It is strongly recommended that the State Party be invited to finalise and implement a master management plan for the whole Property by December 2009 at the latest; this plan should comply with Decisions 31 COM 7.1 and 31 COM 7.2 of the World Heritage Committee on climate change and risk reduction.**
- **Development of tourism:** integration of heritage protection into comprehensive planning programmes is amongst the obligations of the State Parties to the WH Convention. Moreover, according to the treaty, the State Parties should undertake not to take any deliberate measures, which might damage the Property. In 2004 and again in 2008, the State Party was asked by the WH Committee to provide a clear policy on tourism in the area of the WHP. To date, this vision has not been provided to the Committee and the mission was told that no vision on tourism has been elaborated so far. During its visit, the Mission found several signs showing that tourism infrastructures would be planned within or in the immediate proximity of the Property. **The State Party should be asked to take all adequate measures to withdraw all signs and publicity promoting the development of mass tourism in the Property and develop and implement in the very near future, a clear policy on tourism for the whole area. All projects to develop tourism activities and facilities in Lagonaki plateau and in the nearby areas of Fisht and Oshten mountains should also be abandoned.**
- **Establishment of a buffer zone:** in the light of the growing anthropogenic pressures near the Property, which will culminate with the organization of the Olympic Games in 2014, the Mission considers it is necessary for the proper conservation of the Property, to strengthen the level of protection of the sectors of the Sochi National Park, located at the Southern border of the Property. **The State Party should be encouraged to designate a buffer zone in these areas and to submit a proposal of designation to the WH Committee.**
- **Construction projects of roadway and railway lines:** the Mission was informed that plans for construction of highways and railways may be under preparation or already approved by the State Party and that some of these would pass through or close to the Property, in very sensitive areas like Lunnaya Polyana and upper Mzimta valley. **These infrastructures would place the Property under ascertained danger; the Mission therefore recommends that the State Party be invited not to approve such constructions and wherever such projects would be planned, to previously submit them to the State Ecological Expertise for approval, to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the values and integrity of the Property**
- **Reintroduction of the Caucasus Leopard:** the European bison was successfully reintroduced in the WCNR in the past ; the project to reintroduce the Caucasus leopard (*Panthera pardus ciscaucasica*) is a challenging initiative of the State Party. **The Mission applauds this initiative and recommends to implement the project in compliance with the international guidelines and standards on reintroduction and in close cooperation with the IUCN cats specialist group.**
- **The IOC and World Heritage:** the Olympic Charter gives to the IOC the mission and objectives *"to encourage and support a responsible concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games are held accordingly"*. The IUCN Resolution 3.054 *"threats from Olympic Games and other major sporting events to protected areas and biodiversity"*, also invites the IOC to encourage and to facilitate the conservation of the WH Properties as well as to further promote all measures addressing the WH management and conservation issues. **Based on the example of the position statement adopted in 2003 by ICMM on mining and protected areas, the Mission invites the WHC to recommend the IOC to develop principles and guidelines to enhance the preservation of the WH applicable to the Olympic activities, in cooperation with the relevant international organizations, in particular IUCN and ICOMOS.**

## 2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Mission would like to thank Yuri Trutnev, Minister of Natural Resources and Aslan Tkhakushinov, President of the Republic of Adygea.

The team is also grateful to the officials of the MNR who prepared, organized and accompanied the Mission throughout its visit, in particular Renate Gatzulin, Director/MNR, Amirkhan Amirkhanov, Deputy Director/MNR, Vladimir Ivlev, Deputy Director, and Igor Soloviev, First Councillor, Department of international cooperation/MNR, Sergey Shevelev, Director of the Western Caucasus Nature Reserve (WCNR) and the Director of the Sochi National Park (SNP).

It would also like to express its particular gratitude to Yuri Buyvolov, head of Protected areas Service/MNR, who paid a close attention to the excellent organization of the mission, as well as Nikolai Veskin, Deputy Director of WCNR who provided very valuable detailed information on the Property.

Lastly, the team would like to acknowledge with great appreciation all NGOs representatives (Andrey Petrov and Mikhail Kreiyndlin/Greenpeace Russia, Piotr Gorbunenko/WWF Russia, Dimitri Kapstov/Environmental Watch on North Caucasus, Suren Gazaryan/Geographic society, Michael Plotnikov/NABU Caucasus, Alexen Popev/Snow leopard project), scientists (Boris Tuniyev, Vice director and senior scientist/SNP, Sergey Trepet, Senior Scientist/WCNR, ) and other experts and colleagues (Julia Erofeeva/Head of the Hostas unit, Lilia Tiunova, guide) who provided the mission with very helpful information, data and documents to report on the situation.

Lastly, the Mission would like to extend warm thanks and congratulations to all these persons for their efforts to preserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the WH Property, with devotion and passion.

### 3 BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

The Western Caucasus was inscribed on the WH List in 1998 under natural criteria (ii), and (iv), currently criteria (ix) and (x).

The site includes the territory of the Caucasus State Biosphere Reserve (CSBR) with the exception of the Khosta Yew-Box Grove but including the entire Lagonaki plateau. On a legal point of view, the Property includes:

- Kavkazkiy Nature Reserve and its buffer zone (286 335 ha)<sup>5</sup>;
- Bolshoy Thach Nature Park (3 700 ha)<sup>6</sup> ;
- Ridge Buijnij Nature Monument (1 480 ha)<sup>7</sup>;
- River Tsitsa headwaters Nature Monument (1 913 ha)<sup>8</sup> ;
- Headwaters of Rivers Pshecha and Pshechashcha Nature Monument (5 776 ha) <sup>9</sup>.

The Western Caucasus has a remarkable diversity of geology, ecosystems and species. It is of global significance as a centre of plant diversity. It is one of the very rare large mountain area in Europe that has not experienced significant human impact, containing extensive tracts of undisturbed mountain forests unique in Europe.

The WH Property provides critical and viable habitat for many endemic, rare and endangered species, including species listed in the IUCN red data book.

In 2001, at its 25th session, the Bureau of the WH Committee expressed concerns to the State Party over management problems of the Property.

In 2004, at its 28th session, the WH Committee invited the State Party to provide information on the integrity concerns raised in 2001, including:

- reported illegal trespassing;
- weakening of conservation controls;
- impacts of proposed tourism infrastructure development;
- potential changes in the boundaries of the WH site;
- construction of a road.

The Committee also encouraged the State Party to prepare and implement a management plan for the Property that includes a visitor management plan and a clear policy on tourist development (Dec. 28 COM 14B.16).

In 2007, the WH Committee noted that the State Party had submitted new detailed information on the state of conservation of the Property and welcomed the invitation extended by the State Party to a joint UNESCO – IUCN monitoring mission to the Property to assess its state of conservation.

The Committee decided to postpone the discussion on the state of conservation of the Property until its 32nd session in 2008 and requested the State Party to provide the WH Centre with a copy of the management plan of the Property by 1st February 2008, including a visitor management plan and a clear policy on tourism development, as requested by the WH Committee at its 28th session (Dec. 31 COM 7B.32).

More recently, the awarding of the 2014 Olympic Winter Games to Sochi has raised concern that the building of facilities for this event within the SNP, which lies along the southern boundary of the Property, will have an adverse impact.

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<sup>5</sup> Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 322, 26 July 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 244, 08 October 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 467, 09 December 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 274, 23 December 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Decree of the President of Adygea Republic n° 274, 23 December 1997.



The UNESCO – IUCN monitoring mission took place from 18 to 25 April 2008. It was well planned and implemented by all the relevant authorities of Russia, including the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, which provided valuable coordination support.

The Mission team was composed of Kishore Rao, Deputy Director of UNESCO WH Centre and Hervé Lethier, consultant for IUCN. The IUCN representative arrived in Sochi on 18 April; on 19 and 20 April, he had discussions with the local representatives and NGOs and visited some sites in the SNP where the Olympic facilities were proposed to be built. The UNESCO/WHC representative joined him on 20 April in the evening. The IUCN expert returned to Sochi on 23<sup>rd</sup> and left on April 24 in the evening after a meeting with officials from the SNP, whereas the UNESCO representative proceeded by road from Guspul to Maikop where he met NGOs and officials from the Republic of Adygea, travelled to Krasnodar and then to Moscow. The UNESCO representative returned to Paris 25 April in the evening after meeting with NGOs, Olympstroy which is the Russian State company for overseeing the planning and construction of the winter Olympic facilities in Sochi, and officials from the MNR for a debriefing.

The Mission met Yuri Trutnev, Minister of Natural Resources, Aslan Tkhakushinov, President of the Republic of Adygea and his Cabinet colleagues, as well as officials of the administration. The Mission had discussions with various stakeholders, including officials of the MNR, WCSNR, SNP, local forest services, scientists, national NGO representatives (Greenpeace and WWF Russia) and local NGOs representatives (NABU Caucasus, Environmental Watch on North Caucasus, Geographic Society). The Mission also met a delegation of Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee as well as the Vice President and a delegation of Olympstroy. Finally, the Mission also met officials from the IOC, Gilbert Felli, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director and Michelle Lemaitre, IOC officer in charge of environment. A detailed program of the mission can be found in Annex 1.

The mission was able to conduct visits on the ground and to fly over the Property by helicopter in order to overview the situation and assess the state of conservation of the Property.

#### 4 INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The protected areas are enshrined in the Federal Laws n°7-FZ of 10 January 2002 on environment conservation and n°33-FZ of 14 March 1995 on specially protected natural areas, as well as in the Order of the Ministry of Natural Resources n°190 of 15 April 2002, that is specifically devoted to the system of protected areas of Russia.

According to these Laws, the system of protected areas is composed of seven main categories of protected areas:

- at federal level: strict natural reserves, national parks and natural monuments;
- at regional and local levels: nature parks, nature reserves and natural monuments.

The Law defines specially protected areas as *"parts of land, water, surface and airspace above them where natural landscapes and properties with high conservation, scientific, cultural, aesthetic, recreational, or sanative value are located which are completely or partially withdrawn from economic uses ... and for which a special protection regime is established"*.

In the Russian federal system, all protected areas are in public ownership.

The Property was inscribed in 1999, including the Kavkaisky Biosphere Reserve, its buffer zone<sup>10</sup>, the three Natural Monuments of Buijniy Ridge, Headwaters of Rivers Tsitsa, Headwaters of River Pshecha and Pshechashcha, and the Bolshoy Thach Nature Park.

The present status of the Property provides a high degree of protection, especially in the Kavkaisky Biosphere Reserve (strict nature reserve) where according to the Law, economic uses are completely withdrawn in order to preserve natural ecosystems and processes, landscapes and wildlife in general. Furthermore, uses and activities can be allowed in natural monuments and in nature parks, only if they do not contradict the protection regime of the concerned protected area and do not jeopardize the ecosystems.

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<sup>10</sup> This buffer zone was modified when the Sochi national park was created in 1983.

## 5 ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION ISSUES

The mission identified the following management and conservation issues.

### 5.1 MANAGEMENT ISSUES

#### 5.1.1 Delimitation of the Property

The mission considered the clarification of the boundaries as an important issue, especially due to the proximity of several Olympic venues and facilities planned for Sochi 2014 and because of further development of tourism in the region.

There was also an ambiguity on the Southern limit of the Property linked to the buffer zone of the Biosphere reserve as established in 1978, before the creation of the SNP in 1983 and the inscription of the Western Caucasus on the WH List in 1998.

It is clear for the Mission that the Southern buffer zone of the Biosphere reserve was not existing any more when the Property was inscribed on the WH List; this buffer zone still exists on the North border of the Property but has been removed in the South on the creation of the SNP.

Furthermore, the Mission was told that the field delimitation process of the Property is on going and will be completed by the end of 2008.

*The Mission takes note that the question of the current boundaries of the Property will be definitely clarified in the coming months; however, this clarification should take into account the recommendation further made by the Mission to strengthen the legal protection of the areas located close to the current borders of the Property where tourism activities are expected to be developed in the future, and to set up a buffer zone on the Southern border of the Property.*



Map 1 – Delimitation of Western Caucasus WH Property (Source: NABU Russia).

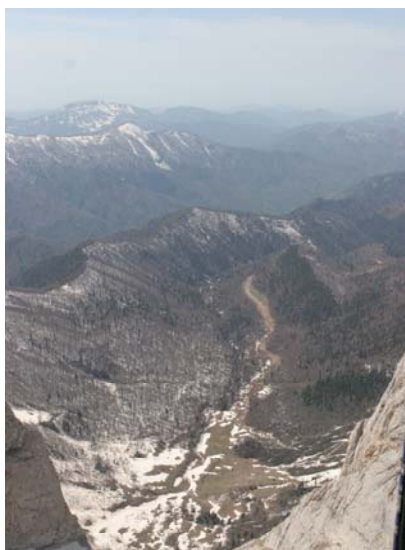
#### 5.1.2 Constructions and activities on the territory of the Property

At the time of its designation, the Property included the entire Lagonaki plateau and the CSBR, but the Khosta Yew-Box Grove (Dec. WH 99/23COM).

According to this definition, the Property includes the Kavkazkiy Nature Reserve and its buffer zone, the Bolshoy Thach Nature Park, the Ridge Buijnij Nature Monument, the River Tsitsa headwaters Nature Monument and the Rivers Pshecha and Pshechashcha Headwaters Nature Monument.

During its field visit, the Mission observed that various infrastructures located inside the Property as defined here above, were recently built or modified.

- the **forest road** to Lunnaya Polyana constructed in the twenties has been significantly enlarged and restored; this road of 12 km length, facilitates the access by car to the territory of the Property, through the River Tsitsa headwaters and the Rivers Pshecha and Pshechashcha Headwaters Nature Monuments. That may adversely contribute to degrade the integrity of the Property, should the car traffic and the frequentation increase in the future (Picture 1)
- the Mission observed evident signs of recent **logging activities** on satellite imageries; the presence of these activities in the surroundings of the forest road were confirmed during the field visit. The Mission was told that **logging** in the buffer zone and in the R. Pshekha and R. Pshechashka Nature Monuments is driven by economic reasons. The Apskhron District of Krasnodor Kray was traditionally dependent upon logging as its main economic activity and even after the transfer of the forest to the buffer zone and the natural monument, people still consider them their logging areas. According to the federal legislation, uses and activities in natural monuments can be allowed only if they are compatible with the conservation of the ecosystem and logging can be allowed only for sanitary purpose. Furthermore, commercial logging inside the Property cannot be considered as compatible with the obligation of the State Party to maintain the integrity of the Property.
- a large building known as **"the Biosphere Center"** and a small ski lift have also been built on the territory of the Property, at the end of the forest road. The Mission was told that this building would be devoted to recreational purposes in the future. The Mission considers that recreational activities would not be appropriate as regard to the criteria ix) and x) under which the site was designated in 1999 (Picture 2).



**Picture 1** – Road on Lunnaya Polyana



**Picture 2** – Biosphere Center and ski lift.

The Mission is very concerned about the development of these equipments and of these building and facilities, which could endanger the Property should they continue. Moreover, according to the paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, the State Party is required to inform the Committee beforehand of its intention to undertake or to authorize in a Property major restorations or new constructions, which may affect the OUV of the Property. The Committee may also assist the State Party in seeking appropriate solutions to ensure that the OUV of the Property is fully preserved.

*The Mission is grateful to the Minister of Natural Resources for his personal resolve to address all these issues and acknowledges decisions already taken to immediately stop logging activities in the Property and to assess the situation. It also wishes to express its gratitude to the President of the Republic of Adygea for his decision to immediately set up a Commission to enquire into all the*

issues, and to agree on solutions of a common accord with the Russian Federation authorities who have the responsibility under the WH Convention.

However, the Mission recommends that the Committee expresses major concern on these issues and asks the State Party to immediately stop all developments in the North-Western part of the Property in the Republic of Adygea, which may threaten should they continue, the outstanding universal value (OUV) and integrity of the Property, including among other activities:

- further construction of the road; the State Party should ensure the road is not enlarged, asphalted and used for recreational use, and the traffic strictly regulated;
- logging of forests; the State Party should be asked to rehabilitate previously logged areas and to monitor their ecological recovery;
- plans for recreational use and development in Lagonaki Plateau, Mt. Fisht and Mt. Oshten areas; the State Party should also be asked to ensure that the use of the existing infrastructure and equipment on site is strictly limited;
- use of the "Biosphere Centre" built at Lunnaya Polyana except for the purposes of management, research and monitoring of the Property as well as for visitor information; the State Party should be asked not to use this building and the associated equipments for recreation.

### 5.1.3 Organization of the Olympic Games in 2014

The Mission had the opportunity to view the planning and the construction of the Olympic Games facilities, especially at Krasnaya Polvana and near Grushevy Ridge where part of these facilities would be constructed, and paid a particular attention to two Olympic venues that would be located outside the Property, but very close from its Southern border (Map 1):

- the **Olympic Mountain Village**: this village equipped with underground parking facilities for around 300 cars, would be located in the Mzimta valley, at the base of Grushevy ridge. It would be accessible by road (Access Road n° 5.1; 10,2 km) and cover 45 ha. 2 600 beds (1 400 rooms) would be available. After the Games, the village would be dedicated to a winter sports training center (Picture 3);
- the **Sliding Center**: this venue would be situated nearby the OMV, further in the upper valley of Mzimta river and would host bobsleigh, luge and skeleton events. It would be the longest sliding track in the world, with a capacity to accommodate 10 000 standing spectators with 1 000 additional seats. The Center would be also be accessible by road (Access Roads n°5.1 and 5.2; 10,2 km + 21,5 km) (Pictures 4 and 5);



**Map 1** – Provisional location and extension of the OMV and Sliding Center.  
(Source: State Unitary Company)

— Southern border of the Property      — Access Roads n°5.1 and 5.2.

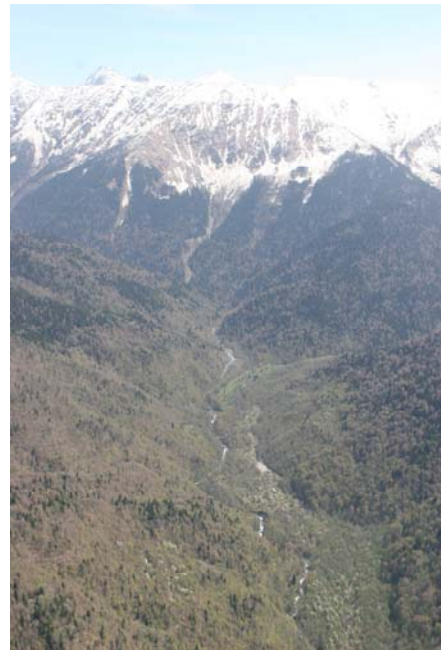




**Picture 3** – Provisional location and extension of the OMV  
(Source: Sochi 2014 bid-book).



**Picture 4** – Provisional location of the Sliding Center.  
(Source: Sochi 2014 bid-book)



**Picture 5** - Provisional location of the Sliding Center.

Both venues would be built in an area known to be important for wildlife movements and wintering of many species, birds and large mammals in particular. This high ecological value and the sensitivity of this area are mentioned in the Strategic Environmental Assessment report<sup>11</sup>, in the Sochi 2014 bid-book (§ 10.3) as well as in the State Environmental Expertise Committee Report dated 10 April 2007 and authorized by the Order of the Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources Usages dated 16 April 2007. Furthermore, a recent UNEP mission to the area has confirmed that the proposed locations pose a “serious environmental threat” due to their close proximity to the WH site and because they are habitats of several key species in IUCN’s red data book.

<sup>11</sup> Environmental Center IFPA, Ltd, Moscow, 2007, p 31-33.

These venues would have adverse effects on the Property, not only during the preparation and the organization of the Games, but also in the long term, after the Games, whilst they could not be removed and they would be dedicated to other permanent activities; these effects would be especially significant in winter and during the breeding seasons when the wildlife is very sensitive.

The construction project of the Access Roads n°5.1 and 5.2, which would give access to these venues for the spectators is also a matter of concern for the Mission. These infrastructures would have indirect effects on the OUV of the Property not only in the course of their construction and during the Games, but also in the long term. The Mission was not able to further appraise the effects of these infrastructures during its visit, but it is clear that they would greatly facilitate the access to the upper part of the valley and the surroundings areas, which currently are well prevented from human frequentation and other significant disturbance. Should the OMV and sliding venues be relocated in another area, which is less sensitive, as strongly supported by the Mission, the construction of these Olympic roads would not have any more sense.

The Mission was not able to go into further details of the other collateral effects of these two Olympic venues on the environment. However, energy needs, water supplies and, in general, all service requirements would put a heavy pressure on the whole area, in addition to the disturbing effects of the permanent presence of people. All these issues should be raised when the location of these Olympic venues will be decided and the environmental impacts should be assessed for each venue, in order to reduce their ecological impact; their synergetic effects on the wildlife in the whole area should also be appraised in relation to the conservation of ecological and biological processes that guarantee the OUV of the Property.

*The Mission expresses its satisfaction that no Olympic facility would be located in the Property and thanks the MNR for its commitment not to start constructions of Olympic related facilities prior to the approval of the State Ecological Expertise.*

*Furthermore, the Mission considers that the immediate proximity of some Olympic facilities to the border of the Property would undoubtedly affect the ecological and biological processes and threatened species, for which the site was inscribed on the WH List.*

*Therefore, the State Party should be strongly encouraged to assess alternative sites for the location of the OMV and the Sliding Center, and preferably use existing infrastructures. These alternatives locations and all related infrastructures, such as the Olympic roads, should not be situated at the immediate border of the Property; they should not have direct or indirect adverse impacts on its OUV and integrity. There should be particular attention on the impacts of any proposed locations on the seasonal movement of wildlife to and from the Property. Finally, it should be recommended to the State Party that suitable international biodiversity experts be involved in the process, to enhance its transparency and credibility.*

The Mission was told during its visit that the **Biathlon Stadium** initially situated on Psekhako Ridge would be relocated. According to the official documents, this venue would accommodate 20 000 spectators and feature several buildings to host competition management, training and medical areas, as well as various offices, meeting and dining areas, and storage.

In absence of further information on this new location, it was not possible for the Mission to assess this issue, as appropriate.

The Mission also observed during its field visit that a section of a road and a bridge over Laura river, a tributary of Mzimta river, have been recently built close to the Gasprom tourism complex that will host Olympic events (Pictures 6 and 7).



**Picture 6** – Gravel road constructed in the Property.



**Picture 7** – Bridge constructed in the in the Property.

The WH Committee has not been kept aware of these works undertaken inside the Property, at its immediate border.

The Mission estimates that in the present time, these infrastructures do not significantly affect the OUV of the Property and do not degrade its state of conservation. However, the possible future conversion of this gravel road into the **Access Road n°5.5** (Sochi 2014 bidding document, § 14.4, Map B2; length: 11,5 km) that would be built partly close to the border of the Property and give access to the Psekhako Ridge, would become a matter of concern for the preservation of the Property.

The Mission is not sure whether or not this road will still be constructed, if the biathlon Stadium is relocated. In any case, the Mission recommends that the alignment of this road be adapted so that the loop, which is currently planned, be relocated further from the border of the Property or replaced by a single road giving direct access to this sector of the mountain cluster (Map 2).



**Map 2** – Access Road n°5.5, Sector of Psekhako Ridge,

■ Territory of the Property

*The Mission reiterates the recommendations made for the locations of the OMV and Sliding Center; it also recommends that the Biathlon Stadium not be located in or close to a sensitive area like Grushevy Ridge that contributes to maintain the OUV and the integrity of the Property.*

*Finally, the Mission also recommends that the State Party be asked to subject all construction projects of the 2014 Olympic Winter Games facilities and infrastructure to a full and independent environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedure, which explicitly assesses the likely direct and indirect impacts of projects on the Property, as well as on the SNP.*

#### 5.1.4 Management planning

According to paragraph 108 of the Operational Guidelines, each nominated Property should have an appropriate management plan or other documented management system to ensure the effective protection of the Property.

Since the inscription of the site on the WH List, it has been recommended that the State Party elaborates **a master management plan** for all the protected areas included in the nomination. This recommendation has been reiterated several times since 1999.

The WH Committee has requested the State Party to provide the WH Centre with a copy of the management plan of the Property by 1 February 2008 (Dec. 31 COM 7B.32). In a letter dated on 1 June 2007, the Minister of Natural Resources informed the WH Centre that a management plan of the Property had been elaborated and would be submitted to the WH Committee at its 31<sup>st</sup> Session. The State Party did not submit this plan to the WH Committee, as announced.

To date, no master plan has been provided to the WH Centre and the Mission was told that a management plan was under preparation for the WCSNR only. The Mission pointed out this issue to the Minister of Natural Resources and other officials from the Ministry.

After nearly ten years, the absence of a unified management plan remains a key issue and jeopardizes the existence of common management vision and objectives between the different constituent parts of the Property that would secure the long-term preservation of the OUV of the Property and contribute towards its effective protection.

The Mission estimates that a master management plan for the whole area is necessary, due to the growing anthropogenic pressures in and around the Property. It also considers that there is no particular difficulty to elaborate this plan, and no reason to further delay its elaboration and adoption. Furthermore, this plan should comply with Decisions 31 COM 7.1 and 31 COM 7.2 of the WH Committee on climate change and risk reduction.

*In conclusion, the Mission recommends that the State Party be invited to finalise and implement a master management plan for the whole Property by December 2009 at the latest.*

#### 5.1.5 Development of tourism

The development of tourism in the SNP is an objective for the local authorities. To date, the Sochi region does not have adequate facilities to host visitors and the quality of the existing facilities does not allow the exposition of natural heritage at its best. The Mission was impressed by the efforts of the Russian authorities to address the issue of environment in general. These authorities are highly committed in the use of environmental friendly techniques and equipments, which will facilitate the development of tourism in the long term and also contribute to a better protection of the natural heritage in the Sochi region.

The Mission also deems the Olympic Games to catalyze this development and give the local authorities an opportunity to enhance the current standards of tourism in the region. The equipments that will be built (sewage treatment, garbage, clean energy, etc) and the benchmarks that will be raised will definitely contribute to sustain the regional development. The SNP can also offer great possibilities to promote and develop sustainable tourism.

However, the Mission considers that the Property should be treated as an integral part of the regional development scheme, because the growing number of visitors attracted by this region can also become a threat for the conservation of the Property.

As an example, the Mission visited various areas where recent resorts and facilities had been built for winter tourism. During its visit of the Gasprom ski complex in Krasnaya Polyana where Olympic events would be organized in 2014, the Mission observed that ski facilities were planned inside the Property (Picture 8).





**Picture 8** – Information panel, Mountain Center Gasprom.

The development of economic activities in the WH Property, like mass tourism, would not be compatible with the maintenance of the OUV of the Property and it would immediately place the Property under ascertained danger.

This issue was raised when the Mission met the Minister of Natural resources. The Minister clarified that:

- no compromise would be made on the management and conservation regime of the Property;
- no tourism infrastructure and economic activities would be undertaken on the territory of the Property;
- the concerned company would be immediately asked to remove all signs and publicities promoting the development of ski and other tourism facilities in the Property.

If tourism is to be an opportunity for sustainable development in the region, this activity should neither lead to unsustainable uses of the natural resources, nor affect the ecological and biological processes that guarantee the integrity of the Property.

The Mission was informed that several companies plan to develop tourism complexes in the proximity of the Property, in the future. These projects do not respond to a global vision of tourism for the whole region and are not based on a common comprehensive plan aiming at developing tourism in a sustainable way. The Minister of Natural Resources confirmed the Mission that this vision is still to be developed.

The Mission estimates that this absence of vision is a structural weakness for the regional development that can have adverse effects on the natural heritage, including the SNP and the WH Property. The lack of a clear tourism strategy may drive towards an unsustainable economy that would badly affect the well being of the local population in the long term.

*In conclusion, the Mission recommends that the State Party be invited to elaborate and implement a regional tourism strategy and a comprehensive plan to address, among other issues, the current and future impacts of tourism on the OUV of the Property. This process should be pursued in close cooperation with suitable external experts and international organizations like UNWTO, UNESCO and IUCN, which carry out specific activities and programs on tourism.*

## 5.2 CONSERVATION ISSUES

### 5.2.1 Legal status of protection of the Property

The Mission was informed that the authorities from the Republic of Adygea wished to remove the buffer zone located inside the Property, at its Northern border, and to develop tourism facilities on Lagonaki plateau also entirely situated within the Property (Picture 9). Another project would extend the existing tourism facilities situated nearby the Property, in Mt. Fisht and Mt. Oshten areas.



**Picture 9** – Lagonaki Plateau.

The construction of tourism facilities inside the Property would undoubtedly have deleterious effects on its OUV and degrade its integrity. The Lagonaki plateau has a high ecological value and hosts an outstanding flora biodiversity. Any construction project of tourism facilities in this area would endanger these species and threaten the Property that would consequently face an ascertained danger.

The extension of the existing tourism facilities in Mt Oshten, currently visited by a few thousand visitors per year and able to host around 50 persons in “Armjanskij camp”, would also be considered as jeopardizing the Property that would consequently face a potential danger susceptible to adverse impacts on its characteristics.

However, the Mission obtained encouraging information from the President of Adygea that he would not take any action that would be contradictory to the current status of the Property.

*In conclusion, the Mission strongly recommends the WH Committee to ask the State Party to reverse the withdrawal of legal protection for the buffer zone as well as the natural monument located in the North Western sector of the Property. It also recommends to abandon the plans for recreational use and development in Lagonaki Plateau, Mt. Fisht and Mt. Oshten areas, and to be ensured that the use of infrastructure and equipment already existing on site will remain strictly limited.*

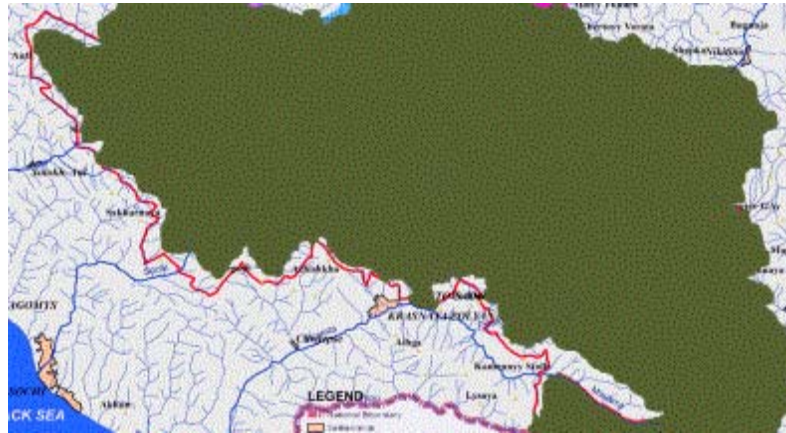
### 5.2.2 Establishment of a buffer zone

According to paragraph 103 of the Operational Guidelines, “*wherever necessary for the proper conservation of the Property, an adequate buffer zone should be provided*”.

Prior to the establishment of the SNP, a buffer zone existed along the Southern border of the Property, corresponding to the buffer zone of the Kavkaizky Biosphere Reserve. As stated before, the legal status of this former buffer zone is still a subject of dispute between the local stakeholders, whilst the situation seems clear as regard to the limits of the Property.

In response to the anthropogenic pressures that are growing very fast in the region and will culminate with the organization of the Olympic Games, a buffer zone should be set up at the South border of the Property to limit the risk of degradation of its state of conservation.

*The State Party should be encouraged to strengthen the legal protection of the areas of the SNP, which were formerly designated as the buffer zone of the Kavkaizky Biosphere Reserve and to designate them as the buffer zone of the Property. The State Party should submit a proposal of designation of this buffer zone for approval of the WH Committee<sup>12</sup> (Map 3).*



**Map 3** - buffer zone of the Kavkaizky Biosphere Reserve before the establishment of the Sochi National Park.

### 5.3. OTHER ISSUES

#### 5.3.1 Construction of roadways or railways

The Mission was told during its visit that plans for construction of highways and railways are under preparation or already approved by the State Party. Some infrastructures would pass through or very close to the Property, in very sensitive areas like Luyanna Polyana and upper Mzimta valley.

Should these infrastructures be related or not to the 2014 Olympics Games, construction of roadways and railways whose alignment is proposed to pass through the Property or on its immediate proximity will not be compatible with the conservation requirements of the Property and will place it under ascertained danger.

This issue was raised and discussed with the MNR who assured that such constructions would not be allowed within the Property. Furthermore, officials from the MNR clarified that some road infrastructure mentioned in the bid-book would not be built and that the exact coordinates of all Olympic objects would be known in the near future.

*The Mission recommends that the State Party be invited not to approve such constructions if they pass through and/or in the immediate proximity of the Property, especially in sensitive areas like Luyanna Polyana and Grushevy Ridge. In any case, such project should be previously submitted to the State Ecological Expertise for approval, to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on the values and integrity of the Property.*

#### 5.3.2 Conservation of wildlife

As mentioned before, the status and trends of wildlife populations in the Property are considered as positive. The Mission was impressed by the level of integrity of the whole area except in the noted sectors where measures should be immediately taken to stop deleterious activities which would endanger the Property if they continue.

The Mission reiterates its concern on the provisional location of some Olympic venues that could significantly affect the state of conservation of the biodiversity and the ecological and biological processes in the long term, should these be not relocated to other less sensitive areas.

It was also informed that a programme for reintroduction of the Caucasus leopard (*Panthera pardus ciscaucasica*) was decided as a mitigation measure. This very rare and endangered sub-

<sup>12</sup> In accordance with paragraph 107 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

species of felid is still present in the Eastern part of the Caucasus; it is thought to have disappeared from the Western part in the 60's, mainly due to poaching. The reintroduction of this flagship species will definitely contribute to extending the OUV of the Property, should this project be successful.

*The Mission applauds the State Party to undertake this ambitious project and invites the relevant authorities to implement it in line with the international guidelines and standards on reintroduction and in close cooperation with the IUCN cats specialist group.*

### 5.3.3 The IOC and World Heritage

When considering the Sochi 2014 bid book and other official documents provided by the IOC and the State Party, the Mission observed that the issue of the WH Property was in general poorly addressed and a source of confusion in the IOC 2014 Evaluation Commission Report.

Although the proximity of a UNESCO WH site is mentioned in the bid book (Theme 5), the protection measures that would minimize the impact of the Olympic Games on the Property remain rather weak and the efforts in favor of natural heritage are concentrated on the compensation of the overall impacts of the Olympic Games. Moreover, the Strategic Environmental Assessment previously mentioned, does not address the Property as a whole and only refers to the "Caucasian National Nature Biosphere Reserve" and other protected areas.

These comments clearly show that the presence of a WH site at the proximity of the Olympic venues has not been adequately considered, from the beginning of the process.

The Mission estimates that in compliance with the Olympic Charter, in particular the role and mission of the IOC *"to encourage and support a responsible concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games are held accordingly"* and according to the IUCN Resolution 3.054 *"threats from Olympic Games and other major sporting events to protected areas and biodiversity"*, the IOC should encourage and facilitate the conservation of WH Properties as well as further promote all following measures:

- addressing WH management and conservation issues;
- seeking to prevent as much as possible, and to minimize the adverse direct and indirect effects of the Olympic Games on WH properties.

*Based on the example of the position statement adopted in 2003 by ICMM on mining and protected areas, the WH Committee should recommend to the IOC to develop principles and guidelines to enhance the preservation of WH sites where the Olympic Games venues are located close to WH properties. It should also invite the IOC to work with the relevant international organizations, in particular IUCN and ICOMOS, in this task.*

## 6 ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

### 6.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE (OUV) OF THE PROPERTY

Western Caucasus was inscribed on the WH List under natural criteria (ii) and (iv) (currently criteria, (ix) and (x)). The nominated Property was evaluated to meet these criteria on the following basis (see evaluation report by IUCN, March 1998): *"The Western Caucasus has a remarkable diversity of geology, ecosystems and species. It is of global significance as a centre of plant diversity. Along with the Virgin Komi WH site, it is the only large mountain area in Europe that has not experienced significant human impact, containing extensive tracts of undisturbed mountain forests unique on the European scale."*

- (ix) The Western Caucasus is an outstanding example of ecological processes; ecological succession across the site results in a great diversity of ecosystems and species that provide good opportunities for research and studies;
- (x) It is one of the global centers for plant biodiversity and its fauna is also very rich; the site is the place of reintroduction of the European bison and acts as a reservoir for its expansion in the whole region; it hosts many endemic as well as threatened species

In 2007, the general conservation state indices of the Property did not show negative trends in comparison with 1999 when the site was inscribed on the WH List; positive dynamics of the population size of main mammal species was even noted.

As noted above, the Mission was impressed by the state of conservation of various natural ecosystems, including the high mountains, plateaus, valleys and lowlands, and was able to see wildlife - bears, bison, and deer in different parts of the site. In the Mission's view, this Property remains an exceptional natural site, whose OUV lies in the isolation and undisturbed status of the natural ecosystems, which has allowed for ongoing ecological and evolutionary processes to proceed unimpeded.

During its visit, the Mission got no indication that key wildlife species inhabiting the Property were lost or decreased since the inscription of the site but on the contrary the Mission was informed that large mammals populations were increasing. The site still hosts as well a large number of endemic and threatened species of flora and fauna as described in the IUCN technical evaluation and its accompanying WCMC data-sheet; the Mission had the opportunity to see some of the endemic plants in the field.

However, there are also some serious problems affecting the Property. One of the OUVs of this WH site is the relatively undisturbed state of its natural ecosystems, which allow ecological and evolutionary processes to continue in their natural state. Thus, some recent developments mentioned above in this report are of serious concern.

The Mission wishes to draw the attention of the Committee on the ecological links between the Property and the surroundings areas that guarantee the maintenance of the ecological and evolutionary processes essential for the integrity of the Property; they lead also to the preservation of the nearby very sensitive areas, Grushevy Ridge and upper Mzimba valleys in particular.

Should the recommendations made in the report be followed and implemented, the Mission considers that the OUV of the Property will not be significantly affected by the on going projects of development. Based on the above, it also concludes that adverse effects of works and activities mainly observed in the Northern Western of the Property do not lead to recommend the inscription of the Property on the List of WH in danger.

**Based on the above, the mission concludes that OUV for which the Property has been inscribed on the WH List is still present.**

## 6.2 STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Reiterating its decision taken at its 28<sup>th</sup> session (Suzhou, 2004), the Committee at its 31<sup>st</sup> session, requested the State Party to provide the WH Centre by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008, with a copy of the management plan of the Property, including a visitor management plan and a clear policy on tourism development for this area. This Plan has not been sent to date.

As previously mentioned, the Mission was informed during its visit that a management plan for the strict nature reserve was under preparation and would be completed by the end of 2008. However, there is currently no process on going for the elaboration of a master management plan applicable to the Property as a whole.

Furthermore, it was also confirmed to the Mission that a clear vision and policy on tourism did not exist for the region so far.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 CONCLUSION

**The mission concludes that the Outstanding Universal Value for which the Property has been inscribed on the World Heritage list, was not in danger at the time of the visit.**

### 7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the here above assessment, the Mission makes the following recommendations:

- a) Halt further construction of the road to Lunnaya Polyana, and ensure it is not enlarged, asphalted and used for recreational use, and the traffic is strictly regulated;
- b) Restore the legal protection for the buffer zone of the property and ensure that it is managed fully in accordance with its World Heritage status;
- c) Stop illegal logging of forests, rehabilitate the logged areas and monitor their ecological recovery;
- d) Abandon plans for recreational use and development in Lagonaki Plateau, Mt. Fisht and Mt. Oshten areas, and ensuring that the use of infrastructure and equipment already existing on site is strictly limited;
- e) Ensure that the Biosphere Centre built at Lunnaya Polyana is used for management, research and monitoring, or visitor information purposes only, and not converted into a recreational facility;
- f) Prevent construction of facilities and infrastructure related to the 2014 Winter Olympics within or in the proximity of the World Heritage Property, especially in very sensitive areas like Grushevy ridge;
- g) Identify alternative locations to the proposed locations of the Olympic Mountain Village, the Sliding Centre and the Biathlon stadium, as well as associated roads and infrastructure, located in the adjoining Sochi National Park and in the immediate proximity of the Southern boundary of the Property. Suitable international biodiversity experts should be involved with this process to enhance transparency and credibility;
- h) Subject all construction projects of the 2014 Winter Olympics facilities and infrastructure to a full and independent environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedure which explicitly assesses the likely impacts of projects on the outstanding universal value and integrity of the Property, as well as on the Sochi National Park;

The following additional recommendations of the mission should also be implemented by the State Party to strengthen protection and management of the Property:

- i) Complete the on going delimitation process of the Property by the end of 2008;
- ii) Finalise and implement a management plan for the Property by December 2009, to ensure the six protected areas comprising the property are effectively managed in line with a common vision and objectives;
- iii) Strengthen the legal protection of those parts of the Sochi National Park, which were formerly designated as the buffer zone of the Kavkaizky Biosphere Reserve and also consider including them as the buffer zone of the property. The State Party should submit a proposal of designation of this buffer zone for approval of the World Heritage Committee;
- iv) Develop a tourism strategy and comprehensive plan to address the current and future impacts of tourism on the outstanding universal value of the Property; all signs and publicity that promote the development of ski and tourism facilities inside the Property, should be immediately removed from the field;
- v) Deny approval for the construction of roadway or railway lines, whether related or not to the 2014 Winter Olympics, whose alignment is proposed to pass through the Property or on its immediate proximity;

Failure to implement the recommendations of the mission should lead to the property being considered for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Based on the example of the position statement adopted in 2003 by ICMM on mining and protected areas, the following recommendation should be implemented by the IOC:

- vi) Develop principles and guidelines to enhance the preservation of the World Heritage sites if it is projected that the Olympic Games are located close to World Heritage properties, in cooperation with the relevant international organizations, in particular IUCN, on this task.

**ANNEXES**



## PROGRAMME OF THE MISSION

### 18 April

07H45 Departure Sarajevo  
 15H20 Arrival Sochi  
 Reception at the airport by WCNR and MNR  
 Dinner with WCNR and MNR  
 Work session at the WCNR office (discussion on the programme of the mission, technical documentation, others)  
 23H00 Adler Hotel

### 19 April

08H30 Breakfast with YB  
 09H30 Work session at the WCNR office

- review of the main conservation issues: Olympic facilities locations (Biathlon, bobsleigh, Olympic Village, ...) ; forest road rehabilitation at Pshekhako (NW) + construction of the Biosphere Reserve Center; highway projects (Maikop/Dagomys, Cherkess/Adler); Oshten ski complex (Enektur + extension close to Lagonaki plateau);
- discussion on the WH borders ;
- collection of data, maps and other technical documents

12H30 Brief meeting with NGOs (WWF, Greenpeace)  
 12H45 Lunch with WCNR and MNR  
 14H00 Visit of "Hostas" unit with WCNR and MNR  
 16H30-19H00 WCNR office work  
 19H00 Meeting and dinner with MNR and NGOs  
 24H00 Adler hotel

### 20 April

08H30 Breakfast with MNR  
 09H30 Field visit with NGOs, WCNR and MNR (Krasnaya Polyana, Gasprom complex, biathlon area, WCNR zoo, thermal spring).  
 15H00 Adler hotel  
 15H15 Lunch with MNR, WCNR and NP  
 16H30 Adler hotel (office work)  
 18H30 Meeting with NGOs  
 20H20 Departure from Adler Hotel to airport  
 21H45 Arrival Russian and UNESCO delegations  
 22H30 Adler hotel (official dinner cancelled)

### 21 April

08H30 Breakfast with Russian and UNESCO delegations  
 09H30 Office work with UNESCO  
 10H00 Meeting with NGOs  
 11H15 Field visit (Olympic Village, Sliding Center)  
 18H00 Dinner on the return  
 21H30 Adler hotel

### 22 April

08H00 Audience with Mr Trutnev, MNR  
 11H00 Visit of the WHP by helicopter  
 15H30 Return to Krasnaya Polyana (HL)  
 16H30 Adler Hotel and Office work  
 19H00 Dinner with MNR

**23 April**

08H30 Meeting at NP office with MNR and SNP (HL)

13H00 Lunch with MNR and SNP (HL)

15H15 Meeting at the airport with Greenpeace (HL)

17H00 Departure

**Decision 31 COM 7B.32**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-07/31COM/7B.Add.2,
2. Recalling Decisions 28 COM 14B.15 and 28 COM 14B.16, adopted at its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004),
3. Notes that the State Party has submitted new detailed information on the state of conservation of the property;
4. Welcomes the invitation extended by the State Party to a joint UNESCO – IUCN monitoring mission to the property to assess its state of conservation, for consideration by the 32nd session of the Committee in 2008;
5. Decides to postpone the discussion of the state of conservation of the Western Caucasus until its 32nd session in 2008;
6. Requests the State Party to provide to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2008 a copy of the management plan of the property, including a visitor management plan and a clear policy on tourism development for this area, as requested by the Committee at its 28th session (Suzhou, 2004).

**Decision 28COM 14B.16**

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The World Heritage Committee,

1. Recalling the concerns expressed by the 25th session of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee (2001) (WHC 01/CONF.208/4.III.118) over the management problems of the existing Western Caucasus, Russian Federation, World Heritage property,
2. Invites the State Party to provide information on integrity concerns which have been previously raised with the State Party in relation to the existing Western Caucasus property, including reported illegal trespassing, a weakening of conservation controls, impacts of proposed tourism infrastructure development, including potential changes in the boundaries of the World Heritage property, and the construction of a road;
3. Requests the State Party to prepare and implement a management plan for the existing Western Caucasus World Heritage property that includes a visitor management plan and a clear policy on tourist development.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MISSION

The mission will review the following issues:

- (i) Assess the state of conservation of this property and the factors affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in particular the Sochi Nature Reserve where the Olympic construction (luge-bobsleigh route, mountain Olympic village etc) is planned (Grushevy Ridge);
- (ii) Assess alternative locations of the Olympic village outside the national park;
- (iii) Review and assess all road development, underway and planned, including Lunnaya Polyana and Lagonaki Plateau;
- (iv) Evaluate the progress made since the last World Heritage Committee Decisions and define issues that may affect the integrity of the World Heritage property (see Decision 31 COM 7B.32 attached);

On the basis of the foregoing findings, make recommendations to the Government of the Russian Federation and the World Heritage Committee for a better conservation and management of the property;

Prepare a concise mission report in English on the findings and recommendations of this Monitoring Mission following the standard format.

**ACRONYMS**

<b>CSBR</b>	Caucasus State Biosphere Reserve
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment
<b>IOC</b>	International Olympic Committee
<b>MNR</b>	Ministry of Natural resources
<b>MOV</b>	Mountain Olympic Village
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organization
<b>OUV</b>	Outstanding Universal Value
<b>SNP</b>	Sochi National Park
<b>WCNR</b>	Western Caucasus Nature reserve
<b>WH</b>	World Heritage
<b>WWF</b>	World Wide Fund