

SUMMARY

1. Personal data: Mrs Marina Rubtsova, 1 Gribnaya St, Bor, Turukhanski raion, Krasnoyarski krai, 663246 RUSSIA, +7 (39198) 74140, okovfors@mail.ru

2. Award research title: Effect of Environmental Awareness/Education and Tourism Development on Local Communities in Middle Siberia

3. Original text: English, Pages 50, Tables 8, Schemes 3, Diagrams 13.

4. Country & region: RUSSIA, Tsentral`nosibirsky State Nature Biosphere Reserve

5. Objectives:

- to identify and analyze the impact of environmental awareness/education and various kinds of tourism development on the ecological integrity of ecosystems in Middle Siberia;
 - to prepare recommendations for the incorporation them into the five-year management plan that is currently being drawn up;
 - to improve the image of the biosphere reserve;
 - to publish the project's conclusions and recommendations in the media and to deliver them to relevant authorities
-

6. Research and methods:

To estimate the perspectives of tourism development around the BR a questionnaire as well as the list of target groups to be covered was developed. The questionnaire was spread in local population. The sample interview method was used.

Based on the data collected from the BR Eco-educational Reports, the list of eco-education activities was developed.

Based the experience of the tourism experts and author of the project the eco-tourism analysis was completed and Management Plan was generally prepared.

Based on the literature review and Reserve staff experience were available to prepare the English version of leaflet for the BR.

For the collection of data and making pictures from the interesting tourist objects some field trips around and to the Reserve territory were organized (total distance is more than 900 km).

7. Major results:

Practical activity:

- 1) Over 200 photographs of the most interesting nature sites and objects and cultural monuments were taken.
 - 2) Assessment of potential for tourism development in BR including the SWOT-analysis was completely done. The section on Environmental Education and Public Outreach in the Management Plan of the Tsentral`nosibirsky State Nature Biosphere Reserve for the Period 2011-2015 was prepared
 - 3) The English version of leaflet for the BR was prepared.
 - 4) Two new tourist routes, incorporating both nature- and local lore/history-specific features, were developed for visitors.
-

Total conclusions:

- 1) The biosphere reserve “Tsentrāl`nosibirsky” (BR) plays an important role in long-term ecological monitoring of and research on the Central Siberian flora and fauna. The Reserve has a high potential for tourism development, although any tourism related activities must be carried out under strict supervision from the reserve`s inspectors and rangers
- 2) The BR area is very attractive for developing various types of ecotourism. The BR is one of the largest protected untouched forest areas in the World. There are primeval fir, spruce, larch and cedar pine forests, raised bogs, permafrost, bottomland and bedrocks landscapes. Many interesting species of birds is able to observe in the Yenisei fly way. Settlements of Siberian Old Believers, local minority Keto and Evenks are situated around the BR. Rafting along the mountain rivers, trekkings, snowmobile Safari are possible. Four main tourist routes, incorporating both nature- and local lore/history-specific features, were developed for visitors to the reserve. Two of them were worked out in this project integration.
- 3) The majority of local residents support the development of low impact-type tourism and are confident that regulated tourism can bring certain benefits to them and to the entire region. Half of respondents voted in favour of ecotourism being the type of development that affects nature the least. Less than a third of respondents believe fishing and hunting to be the main tourist attraction within the area, while most of them think that pristine nature and local lore attract tourists the most.
- 4) There are a number of issues constraining tourism development in the region. Many of them are difficult or impossible to remove, particularly the high cost of travel in reaching the Reserve from large cities, the price of food, etc. However, working with local enthusiasts, re-investing in tourism development and securing support from the local authorities may help to remove or reduce the influence of many unfavourable factors. This can be achieved, for example, by preparing meals using mostly from local produce, creating and developing a network of bed-&-breakfast guesthouses, purchasing appropriate vehicles, etc.
- 5) Ecotourism development within the Reserve and its adjacent area is of substantial non-monetary benefit, particularly in the form of volunteer assistance, expansion of international contacts, raising environmental awareness amongst local authorities and the public-at-large, fundraising and support from sponsors for educational and monitoring projects within the Reserve, improving the image of the Reserve, and helping the Reserve become a key player in regional tourism development.

Recommendations for BR management

To successfully address the needs of ecotourism development within the Reserve and its surrounds, it is advisable:

- 1). **To develop a tourist package for the Reserve, to expand the list of tour operators which regularly receive information on tourism opportunities in the Reserve and to promote established tours on the websites of partner tour operators.**

Primary focus should be paid to those operators working in the field of domestic ecotourism and companies bringing foreign adventure tourists into Russia. Potential partnerships can be established with Ltd. “RussiaDiscovery”, Ltd. “VICAAR” - International Projects and Expeditions, Ltd. “RusAdventures”, Ltd. “In the World of Imaginations” and other tour companies.

- 2). **To improve tourism infrastructure within the Reserve**

As a necessary prerequisite for successful ecotourism development, the Reserve must acquire a new boat which can take 10-12 people at a time without it becoming uncomfortable.

To address the issue of comfortable accommodation within the Reserve, pre-fabricated houses can be purchased and erected on the Lebed outpost in the Reserve.

The natural and climatic characteristics of the Enisey River valley (ie. strong winds and numerous sunny days) allow one to use a combination of wind and solar power systems that produce environmentally-friendly energy.

3). To develop a visitor services system

It is necessary to provide regular training courses for both reserve staff and local residents on basic visitor-handling skills. It is also necessary to make a list of all resources relating to transport, accommodation, tourist equipment and personnel resources available in the area.

A management GIS on ecotourism development should be created, initially for the Reserve itself and at a later stage for the region.

4). To assess the profitability of certain categories of tours and to promote them amongst potential target visitor groups

The first priority is to identify target visitor groups, to assess potential demand and profitability of various types of eco-tours. It is very important to promote tours among schoolchildren and students from the Krasnoyarsk region, birdwatchers, plant enthusiasts, volunteers, nature study researchers and adventure tourists. These categories of tourists are generally not so choosy with regards tour conditions and would really appreciate staying within an area of pristine nature.

Another important condition for tourism development in the region is the regular running of river cruise ships. Short excursions by such vessels bring regular income to the Reserve and involve very little service cost on the part of the Reserve.

5). Human resources policy for the successful implementation of ecotourism programs

The human impact on the natural ecosystem is also growing because the socio-economic situation in the village of Bor, the largest settlement close to the Reserve, is presently somewhat unsteady. It is necessary to offer local residents some alternative ways of securing their livelihoods. Development of planned tourism in the area is one of the most promising possible options. The Reserve needs to pay special attention to improving the visitor-handling skills of those local residents who are keen to take part in providing services. First of all, a training program for potential bed-&-breakfast guesthouse owners needs to be organized. It is also advisable to further train graduates of the environmental education system (eg. primary and secondary school scientific societies and school field research expeditions) in order that they can become local guides.

Several types of local craft-making are common in the villages around the Reserve. These include bead-weaving, wood, stone and birch bark carving, applications using fabric and birch bark, soft and painted clay toy-making and craft-making using other natural materials. The ecotourism development program envisages organizing souvenir production that features the Reserve's logo, as well as providing assistance and support to local residents in the production and sale of handicrafts.

6). Re-investing in tourism development

It is advisable to spend the bulk of the income generated through tourism from 2011 to 2015 on improving ecotourism infrastructure within the Reserve and further promoting the Reserve's brand.

8. Bibliography: 7 sources
