

INDIA

Nanda Devi National Park



II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1988

Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Forest Department (DFO), Uttaranchal
P O Joshimath, Chamoli 246 401
State of Uttaranchal
India

II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria N iii, iv

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
“The area is reputed as one of the most spectacular wilderness in the Himalaya and is dominated by Nanda Devi Peak which is a natural monument and India’s second highest peak. Unlike many other Himalayan areas, it is free from human settlement and has remained largely unspoilt due to its inaccessibility. It will provide the future control site for the study of rare flora and fauna in the Himalayan region.”
- 7 out of 18 large mammal species found in the park are endangered: snow leopard, black bear, brown bear, Himalayan Thar, Bharal, musk deer, and Serow. It is also home to many threatened birds and butterfly.

Status of Site Boundaries

- The current WH property boundary does not need any revision. However, a proposal has been submitted to UNESCO-MAB to include 524.5 km² outside the buffer zone as a ‘transition zone’.
- A further proposal has been submitted to extend the WH Site with the inclusion of the Valley of Flowers in a serial cluster nomination.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- The WH biodiversity value is considered to have undergone “phenomenal improvement” following 20 years of strict protection.

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- The Nanda Devi National Park (the WH area) is managed as the core zone of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve. In a natural “bowl”, this ‘Inner Sanctuary’ is only open to scientific expeditions.
- Based on the management plan in operation since 1988-89, an Annual Plan of Operation (APO) is prepared every year in April by the district level officers for submission to the National Government for the release of MAB funds.
- A World Bank eco-development “revolving fund” is also being carried out in 14 villages in the buffer zone. Eco-development committees are being created in 33 villages in the BR to create 5-year ‘micro-plans’.
- The existing management plan is being revised as a ‘Landscape Plan’ for a period of 10 years.

Present State of Conservation

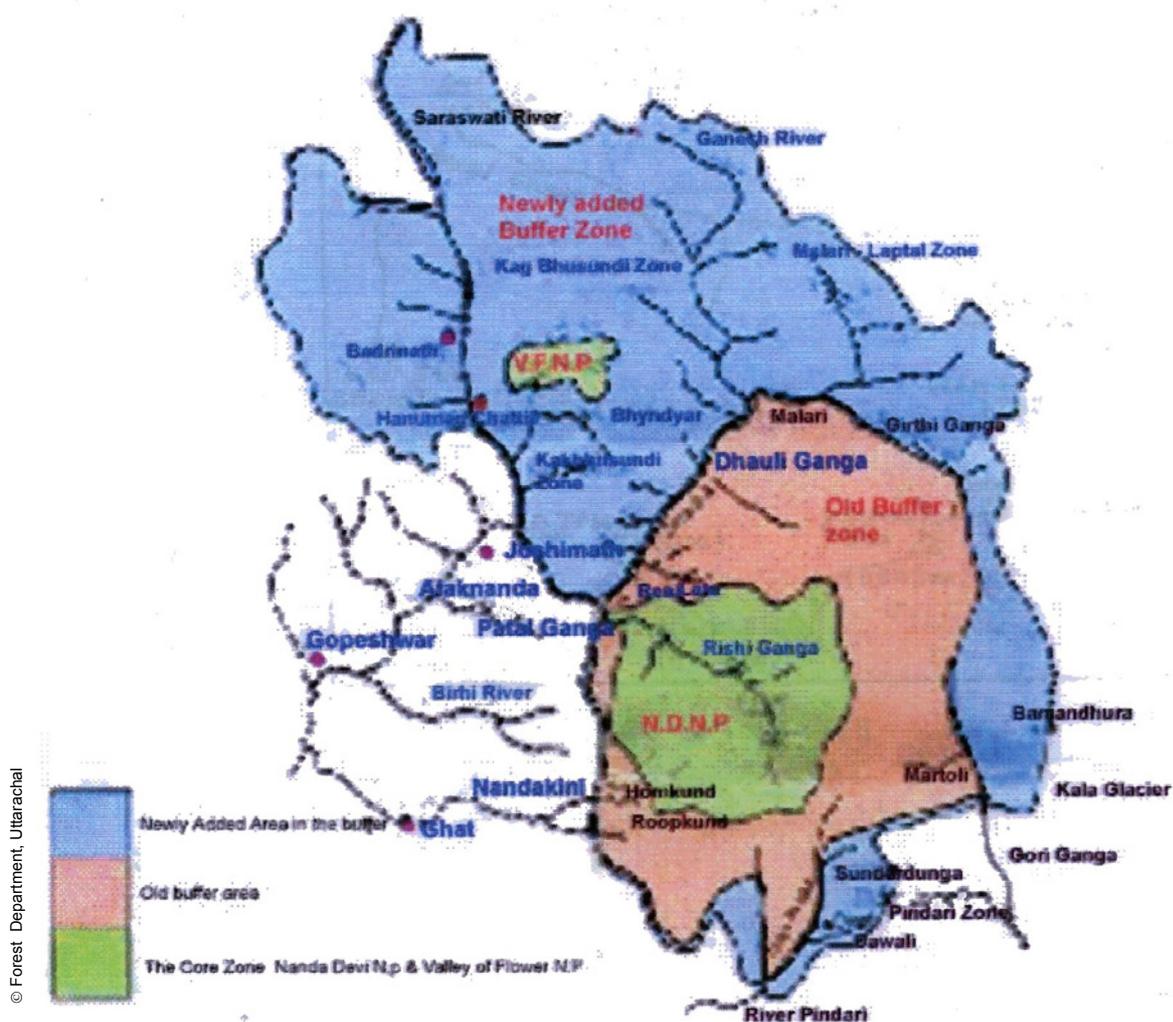
- The core zone is a strict conservation area with minimum disturbance except for scientific monitoring purposes (barely 100 people, porters included, have entered the Inner Sanctuary post-WH listing).

Staffing and Training Needs

- Altogether, the property is managed by 56 officers and staff including the DFO and the field level.
- Staffing level is considered inadequate. The site needs an additional 15 forest guards and 2 range officers.
- Training needs are identified in conflict resolution; state-of-the-art census techniques for elusive animals; in the use of surveillance equipment and intelligence gathering (including night-viewing devices and digital cameras); and in the propagation of medicinal plants.

Financial Situation

- Annual funds are provided by the Government of India under (i) Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries scheme; (ii) MAB project; (iii) Fire Protection Scheme. No figures supplied.
- “Considering the future planning, the present funding support will be inadequate.”



Nanda devi National Park (NDNP, in green) within the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, showing old Buffer zone (red) and newly added Buffer zone (blue).

- Funds are mostly needed for habitat management, infrastructure, high altitude and communication gear, plus for compensation to villagers for damage caused by wild animals.
- * International Assistance from WHF: none.

Access to IT

- 1 PC (shortly with internet). At least 3 more PCs are required. No GIS capacity.

Visitor Management

- “There is no future plan of opening tourism or mountaineering in the Inner Sanctuary... Allowing very strictly regulated trekkers up to Dharasi can be thought of if good results of eco-tourism is found in the buffer zone”.
- Special marked trekking routes have been identified in the BZ. Mountaineers with special permission from the International Mountain Federation are only allowed to climb “peripheral peaks” (one 3-room hut is available for these purposes).

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- Risk of resurgent poaching and illegal harvesting in the core zone
- Crop raiding by black bears and wild boars
- Leopard predation on domestic cattle
- Potential overgrazing/harvesting of medicinal plants in the buffer zone.

Counteractive Plans

- Risk preparedness is included in the 10-year management plan considered by the State Government.
- Surveillance in the park is divided between short range (3 day) and long range (10 day) patrols.
- “Immediate payment of compensation” for crop raiding and cattle predation for farmers in the buffer zone. Encourage local people to keep cattle in sheds at night.

II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- Scientific monitoring (accompanied by park staff) is undertaken roughly every ten years by a joint team of scientists from different institutions such as the Wildlife Institute of India and GB Pant Institute.
- In 1981-84, a baseline survey was conducted by the Botanical & Zoological Survey of India to prepare checklists of plant and animal species.
- In 1993, a second survey team consolidated future benchmarks by laying study plots, marking study trails, and selecting monitoring ridges.
- With the expertise of the Wildlife Institute of India, "how often to monitor" will be re-examined in 2003.

Monitoring Indicators

- Monitoring at present consists of recording the presence/absence of flagship and indicator species for fauna, and the maximum number of species of flora.
- In 2003, the same group of scientists as in 1993 will study the following indicators species at five identified sites: (i) snow Apollo butterfly, (ii) endangered plants like Aconite and Mecanopsis (per unit area), and (iii) snow leopards (per unit effort for scrapes and tracks) and population of its major prey (blue sheep and musk deer).

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- It would be desirable to have a professional ecologist deputed from the Wildlife Institute of India to permanently supervise monitoring activities in Nanda Devi.
- WHF support may be required for implementation of the proposed 2003 'Landscape Plan' which will fully integrate a BR 'transition zone' for grazing rights and eco-development committees.

* State of Conservation Reports

1997 Bureau CONF.204/2B The Bureau was informed that the Director of Nanda Devi National Park had presented a state of conservation report on the WH property at the meeting of the South Asian World Natural Heritage Site Managers held in January 1997. He reported that no major threats existed to the Park (although the illegal collection of medicinal plants had been recorded) and that no visitors or mountaineering groups were allowed inside the core zone. The Bureau took note of the high level of protection afforded to Nanda Devi and requested that the State Party consider undertaking a feasibility study for specialized (mountaineering) tourism development in the Park.

1998 Ext Bureau CONF.202/4 The Bureau was informed that the Deputy Director of the Park had presented a paper on the property at a sub-regional meeting on Himalayan Heritage in Nepal in August-September 1998. The Bureau invited the State Party to extend co-operation between conservation and tourism authorities in order to define a policy on visitor entry and use of the site.

1998 Committee CONF.203/8rev The Committee recalled that the management of the site was based on enforcing a policy of strict protection, and was informed that an Indian Supreme Court ruling of 1996 had suspended, until further review by concerned authorities, the rights of local people to collect forest produce in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, including the WH area. The enactment of the ruling had led to a rise in conflicts between the management and local people. Co-ordination between the Ministry of Tourism and site management also needed to be improved as site-staff had apprehended tourists with permits issued by tourism authorities without consultation with the Park management. In addition, the Deputy Director of the Park was of the view that the boundaries of the WH site could be extended to include the Valley of Flowers National Park and the Khedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Committee invited the State Party to review the site management policy to minimise conflicts with local people, and suggested that the authorities study the feasibility to enlarge the WH area.