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Educational, Scientific and  
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# **World Heritage Patrimoine mondial**

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
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POUR L'EDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE

CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD  
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

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**Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda:** State of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and/or on the List of World Heritage in Danger

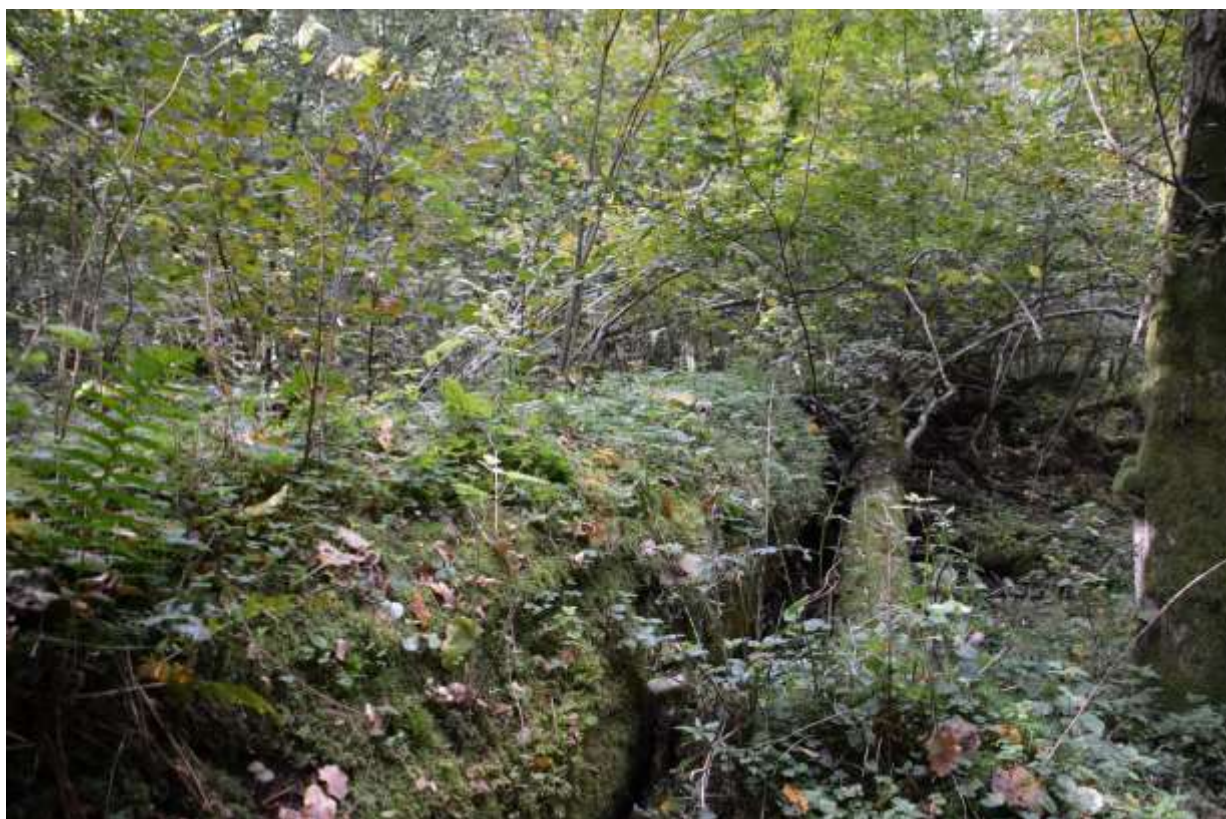
**Point 7 de l'Ordre du jour provisoire:** Etat de conservation de biens inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et/ou sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril

MISSION REPORT / RAPPORT DE MISSION

Białowieża Forest (Belarus/Poland) (33ter)  
Forêt Bialowieza (Biélarus/Pologne) (33ter)

24 September – 2 October 2018

**REPORT ON THE JOINT WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE – IUCN  
REACTIVE MONITORING MISSION  
TO BIALOWIEZA FOREST (BELARUS and POLAND)  
FROM 24 SEPTEMBER TO 2 OCTOBER (2018)**



*Photo: © Guy Debonnet, 2018*

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Carlo Ossola (IUCN Expert)**

**December 2018**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BNP	Bialowieza National Park
BNP	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park
DeF	Department of Forests
DeNP	Department of Nature Protection
EIA	Environmental Impact assessment
FMP	Forest Management Plan
IBL	Forest Research Institute Poland
IMP	Integrated Management Plan
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SFS	State Forest Service
SOUV	Statement of Outstanding Universal Value
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHC	World Heritage Centre

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The mission would like to thank the State Parties of Belarus and Poland for their hospitality and excellent cooperation.

We are particularly thankful to the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Poland, in particular Minister Henryk Kowalczyk who met with the mission team and the Secretary of State Małgorzata Golińska who accompanied the mission during the field visits in Poland. Sincere thanks are due to Agnieszka Dalbiak and Zygmunt Krzemiński of the Department of Nature Conservation, Sławomir Ratajski of the UNESCO National Commission for Poland and Anna Marconi-Betka of the National Heritage Institute. Without their support, the mission would not have been impossible. We also thank sincerely the colleagues of the General Directorate of the State Forest Service for the received support and information, in particular Jan Tabor and Katarzyna Gurowska.

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For the part of the mission in Belarus, we are especially grateful to the General Director of the National Park “Belovezhskaya Pushcha” Aleksandr Buryj, to Tamara Jalkovskaja, Chairperson of the Brest regional Committee of natural resources and environmental protection and Natalia Rybienieć, Vice Chairperson of the Belarus UNESCO-MAB National Committee. Sincere thanks go also to Vassily Arnolbik and Dmitrij Bernackij and to the team that accompanied us in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park. Their explanations were surely fundamental to understand the forest management in Białowieża.

The mission team wants to thank all the scientist and researchers that took their time to participate in the mission. Their knowledge has given a fundamental contribution in the understanding of the main issues and challenges for the property and will be crucial finding the related possible solutions for the future. We further thank the NGO representatives for all the information provided during the mission and for the frank discussion with the mission team. We further thank local representatives and local NGO's that shared their views and concerns. A special thank also goes to the interpreters.

All people consulted during the mission are listed in the Annex 6.3, possible omissions are unintentional and exclusively the authors' responsibility.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Inscribed in 1979, Bialowieza Forest has been one of the earliest natural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. Bialowieza is a complex of lowland forests, which is characteristic of the Central European mixed forests terrestrial ecoregion and of exceptional significance for conservation, due to the scale of its old-growth forests, which include extensive undisturbed areas where natural processes are on-going. Following its inscription in 1979, the Property was extended into a transboundary site by inclusion of the Belovezhskaya Puscha State National Park in Belarus in 1992. In 2014, the Property was extended again to include most of the remaining natural tree stands of the Bialowieza forest in both Poland and Belarus, covering an area of 141,855 ha, with a buffer zone of 166,708 ha. Originally inscribed under natural criterion N(iii), in 2014 the criteria were changed to criterion (ix) and (x), highlighting the importance of the old-growth forests and the undisturbed nature of the forest for both criteria and for the integrity of the site.

Since 2016, significant concerns were raised about the impacts of logging activities and forest management measures in order to contain the spread of the European spruce bark beetle.

In its Decision **41 COM 7B.1** taken at its 41st session in 2017, the World Heritage Committee strongly urged the State Party of Poland to immediately halt all logging and wood extraction in the property. The Committee further requested the States Parties to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to evaluate current and potential impacts of ongoing and planned forest management operations on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property and to assess whether the property meets the criteria for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission took place from 24 September 2018 to 2 October 2018.

The mission notes that the forest management regime in place in the Belarussian component of the property privileges a strict non-intervention policy in the majority of the property and targeted active management linked to specific conservation objectives in a smaller part of the property. It concludes this forest management regime, which is fully in line with the objectives of conserving the property's OUV.

However, the mission observed that between 2016 and 2018, there have been widespread logging activities on the Polish side of the property, including the removal of deadwood, widespread safety cuttings made on 150 meter -strips on both sides of minor paths and roads, large-scale sanitary cuttings and active forest regeneration activities. These activities were also undertaken in the partially protected zone II, which includes old-growth forest of more than 100 years old and where no active forest management is allowed as documented in the 2014 nomination. Harvested timber has also been commercialized. The mission considers that these activities are not in line with the commitments formulated in the 2014 nomination dossier and have disrupted the ecological and natural processes in the property, resulting in negative impacts on its OUV.

***The mission therefore concludes that the logging and active forest management activities undertaken in the Polish part of the Property since 2016 constituted an ascertained danger in line with paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines.***

However, the mission acknowledges that the State Party of Poland has suspended these logging activities since the beginning of 2018 and therefore, at this stage, does not recommend to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The mission further considers that should the State Party of Poland not comply with the management arrangements foreseen in the 2014 nomination, i.e. reinstate any active forest management

activities in the strict protection zone as well as in the partial protection zone I and II, including any logging, sanitary cutting, safety cuttings outside a strip of 50 m along major public roads, removal of deadwood or assisted forest regeneration, the World Heritage Committee should consider inscribing the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The mission further reviewed the status of the transboundary management plan and of management planning for the Polish and Belarus components and looked into wildlife management issues, road and infrastructure potentially affecting the OUV, sustainable development as well as some other conservation issues.

To adequately protect the OUV of the property, the mission makes the following **priority recommendations** to the State Party of Poland and Belarus:

#### **Recommendation 1 (to the State Party of Poland)**

Ensure that all forest operations in the property comply with the following management arrangements in line with the 2014 nomination (see annex 6.5):

- In the strictly protection zone as well as in the partial protection zone I and II, ensure that no forest management interventions are undertaken, including removal of deadwood, sanitary cuttings or any active regeneration activities (including soil preparation and tree planting);
- In the active protection zone, limit forest management activities exclusively to interventions directly aiming at speeding up the process of tree stand replacement to a more natural broadleaved oak – hornbeam forest or at preserving certain associated non-forest habitats, including wet meadows, river valleys and other wetlands and habitats of endangered plants, animals and fungi. The necessary active protection measures should be detailed in the integrated management plan;
- In the entire property, restrict safety cuttings only to areas along specific roads and paths (on 50 m distance from each side) on the basis of a clear risk evaluation plan;
- For the entire property, develop and implement a comprehensive Forest Fire Prevention and Suppression plan based on a rigorous risk assessment, to be included in the integrated management plan and taking into account the observations in this report.

#### **Recommendation 2 (to the State Party of Poland)**

Revoke the amendment on the Forest Management Plan for the Bialowieza Forest District and ensure that the any new FMP for areas within the property are based on the new overall Management Plan of the Polish part of the property. The existing FMPs should not be amended or only in a very restrictive way to allow for strictly necessary safety measures as stipulated above and on the basis of a clear risk evaluation plan. Any amendment to the existing FMP should be sent to the World Heritage Centre with a clear justification, for review by IUCN, before approval.

#### **Recommendation 3 (to the States Parties of Poland and Belarus)**

Expedite the preparation of a transboundary management plan, defining the overall management vision for the Property in order to conserve the Outstanding Universal Value as defined in the adopted Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, defining the transboundary governance system and identifying common areas of collaboration, including restoration of the hydrological regime of the Property, connectivity, management of the bison population, etc.

#### **Recommendation 4 (to the State Party of Poland)**

As a matter of urgency, develop an overall management plan for the Polish part of the property taking into account the following recommendations:

- Involve all actors and stakeholders (NP, SFS, scientists of disciplines linked to the attributes, NGOs);

- Place the protection of OUV (as defined in the Decision **38 COM 8B.12**) as the central objective of the management plan;
- Define the management activities based on a mapping of the attributes defining the OUV. The richness of scientific data available will facilitate such mapping;
- Define a possible adjustment of the zoning in areas to simplify the current situation, without decreasing the area excluded from active forest management (strict protection zone and partial protection zones I and II) ;
- Align all other management plans on the basis of the overall management plan;
- Define a clear joint governance between the Bialowieza National Park, the State Forest Service and the Ministry of Environment;
- Submit a draft of the overall management plan to the World Heritage Centre before a final approval of the plan;

#### **Recommendation 5 (to the State Party of Belarus)**

Strengthen the legal status of the overall Management Plan of the Belarus part of the property, making it obligatory for all other relevant management plans to be aligned with it and adapt the other management plans (Forest, Wildlife) on the basis of the new overall Management plan in order to take into account the protection of the OUV;

#### **Recommendation 6 (to the State Party of Belarus)**

Continue the moratorium on wolf hunting in BPNP and consider making this moratorium permanent by legally forbidding wolf hunting in the BPNP, in order for the population to continue its recovery to its historical size and ensure that wildlife management activities further limit the population of red deer and maintain the population of elk;

#### **Recommendation 7 (to the State Party of Poland)**

Halt the upgrading works on the Narewowska road until a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is prepared and submitted, which assesses the impacts of the road improvement on the OUV of the property, in line with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*;

#### **Recommendation 8 (to the States Parties of Poland and Belarus)**

Develop a vision on how the property can contribute to sustainable development of the surrounding region, based on a clear sustainable tourism strategy compatible with the protection of the OUV.

## 1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

### 1.1 Inscription history of the Property

In 1979, the World Heritage Committee inscribed the Bialowieza National Park (BNP) in Poland on the World Heritage List. The inscribed Property only covered a surface of 5,069 ha (figure 1), corresponding to a strictly protected Polish National Park at the time and a very small area compared to the overall Bialowieza forest in Belarus and Poland and to the current property and buffer zone.

The original inscription under natural criterion (iii) corresponded with today's criterion (vii). However, criterion N(iii) at the time was formulated differently<sup>1</sup> and the criterion was probably chosen as the site was one of the last intact lowland forest areas in Europe, therefore fitting to the description of "one of the important ecosystems for man(kind)"<sup>2</sup>.

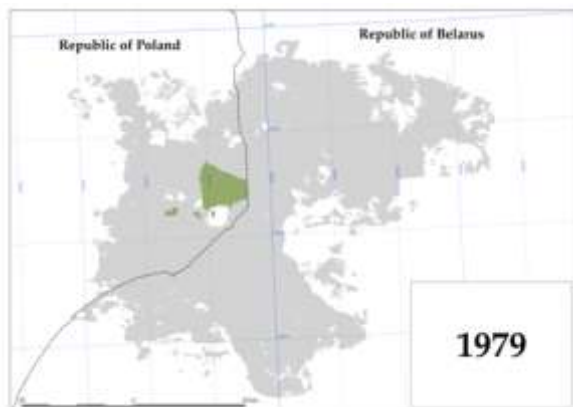


Fig. 1: WH Property as originally inscribed in 1979

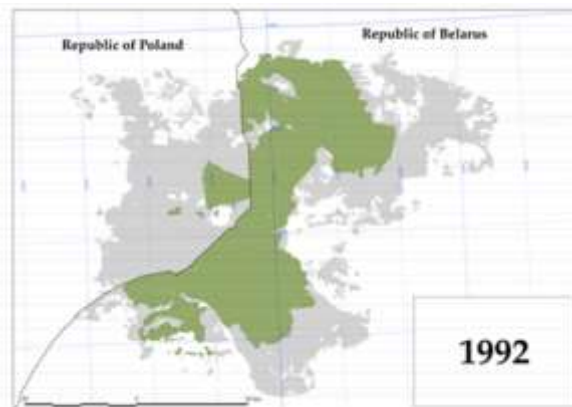


Fig. 2: Transboundary extension in 1992, taking into account entire Belovezhskaya Puscha State National Park

In 1992, the "Belovezhskaya Puscha" State National Park (BPNP) in Belarus was inscribed as a transboundary extension of the property. According to the rudimentary map submitted with the nomination, the entire State National Park was proposed for inscription. However, based on the IUCN evaluation, the Committee decided to only inscribe the strictly protected core zone of the park (5,235 ha along the international border) on the World Heritage List (**CONF 002 X.A**) (fig. 3). Nevertheless, this was not documented in the UNESCO files and as a result the World Heritage Centre continued to consider that the entire National Park in its original boundaries (87,606 ha) was part of the World Heritage site (fig. 2). This discrepancy was only recognized by the 2008 Reactive Monitoring mission to the property. The 2008 mission also recommended the State Parties to work on another extension of the property on the Polish side and to re-nominate the Property under criteria (ix) and (x).

In 1996, the Bialowieza National Park in Poland was extended to 10,502 ha (adding the orange area in fig. 3). In 1999, a proposal was tabled to include this area also in the World Heritage

<sup>1</sup> The 1977 definition of criterion N(iii) refers to sites which contain unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features or areas of exceptional natural beauty, such as superlative examples of the most important ecosystems to man, natural features, (for instance, rivers, mountains, waterfalls), spectacles presented by great concentrations of animals, sweeping vistas covered by natural vegetation and exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements;

<sup>2</sup> Other « virgin » forest sites, have also been inscribed under the same criterion in the same period. An example is the Salonga National Park in DRC (inscribed in 1984).

site. IUCN recommended in its evaluation that the standards of protection which apply within the existing World Heritage site should apply to the entire forest area and that a new nomination proposal should be brought forward, enclosing the whole Polish part of the Bialowieza forest. The extension was therefore not approved.

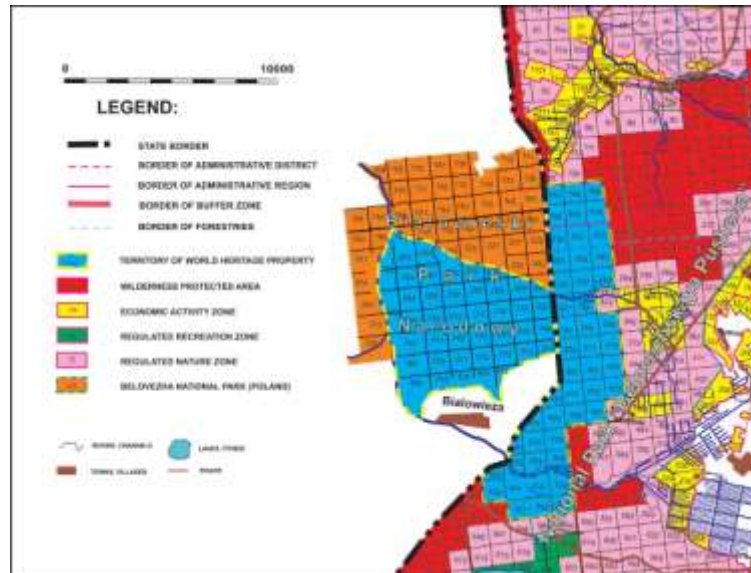


Fig 3: Area effectively inscribed in 1992 in blue, composed of the original Bialowieza National Park in Poland and the core zone of the Belovezhskaya Puscha" State National Park in Belarus. In orange, the extension to the Bialowieza National Park in Poland in 1996 (Source State Party of Belarus)

After the 1996 extension, there continued to be discussions to further extend the Bialowieza National Park, but because of strong opposition from some of the local governments and also from the forestry administration, this extension never materialized. A fundamental different management view of the conservationists and the foresters is at the basis of this discussion: while the conservationists argue that priority should be given to natural processes happening in an undisturbed way and therefore a strict non intervention policy should be applied as it is currently the case in the original national park, foresters believe that active forest management is needed to maintain a healthy forest<sup>3</sup>.

In 2014, the property was nevertheless extended, to cover all the forests of natural character of the Bialowieza forest in both Belarus and Poland. The extended property now covers an area of 141,855 ha, with a buffer zone of 166,708 ha (fig. 4) and includes most of the remaining forest stands, as proposed in the 1999 IUCN evaluation.

At the same time, the criteria for inscription were changed to criterion (ix) and (x) and a new Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) was adopted, which provides a clear justification for both criteria. The SOUV (available in annex 2) clearly lays out the values for which the site was inscribed and highlights the importance of the old-growth forests and the undisturbed nature of the forest for both criteria and for the integrity of the site.

<sup>3</sup> Krzysztof Niedziałkowski (2016). Why do foresters oppose the enlargement of the Białowieża National Park? The motivation of the State Forests Holding employees as perceived by social actors engaged in the conflict over the Białowieża Forest. *Leśne Prace Badawcze / Forest Research Papers*, December 2016, Vol. 77 (4): 358–370.

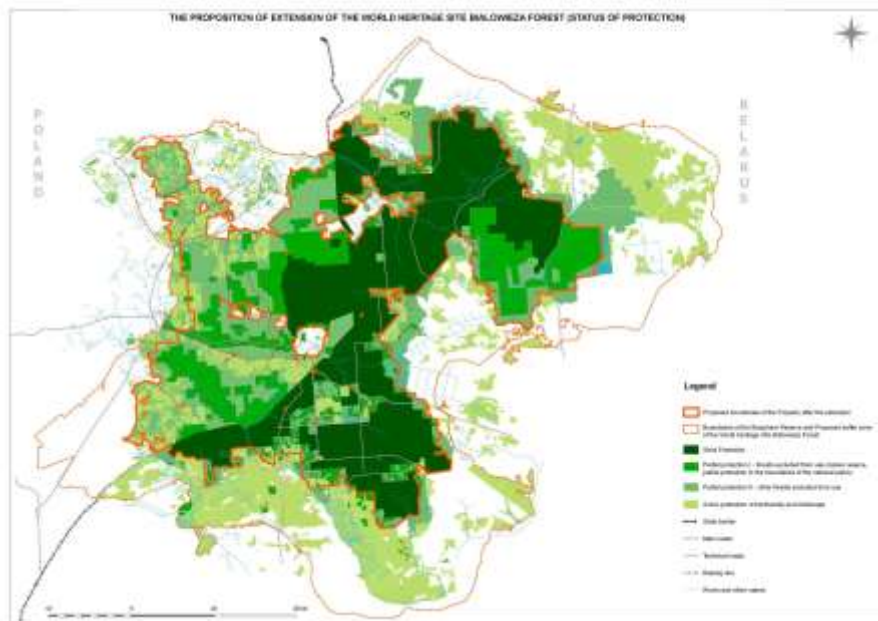


Fig 4: The 2014 extended World Heritage property with the zoning of the property and the buffer zone (Source: 2014 nomination file)

## 1.2 Previous Decisions on the State of Conservation of the property

At the time of extension in 2014, the Committee also requested the States Parties of Belarus and Poland to undertake a number of urgent measures, including

- (1) the establishment of a Transboundary Steering Committee with adequate human and financial resources to coordinate, promote and facilitate the integrated management of the Property;
- (2) to expedite the preparation, adoption and implementation of the integrated management plan for the Property addressing all key issues concerning its effective conservation and management (forest and wetlands management, functional ecological connectivity in the Property, reducing the existing large network of roads and fire prevention corridors), and to
- (3) maintain and enhance the level of cooperation and engagement of local communities as to ensure their contribution to the effective management of the Property (Decision **38 COM 8B.12**).

From 2016 onwards, the World Heritage Centre received a large number of third party submissions raising significant concerns about an amendment to the Forest Management Plan (FMP) for one of the three forest districts included in the property, the Białowieża Forest District, approved by the Ministry of Environment of Poland on 25 March 2016. This amendment authorized a threefold increase in wood extraction in the Białowieża Forest District for the period 2012-2021. In addition, the State Party adopted a "Programme for the Białowieża Forest as a UNESCO Natural Heritage and a Natura 2000 site", allowing active habitat restoration interventions in two thirds of each of the three Forest districts. The State Party of Poland justified that these decisions were necessary to contain the spread of the European spruce bark beetle in the property. The State Party also invited an IUCN Advisory mission to "discuss current protection principles" in the Polish part of the property.

The IUCN Advisory mission took place in June 2016. The mission stressed that the main objective of the management of the property should be to maintain the overall ecological character of the Białowieża Forest and to restore it, when necessary, by minimizing human intervention and facilitating natural processes. It concluded that the implementation of the annex to the FMP for the Białowieża Forest should be suspended until a new integrated management plan is prepared and approved, with appropriate zoning and regulations, which can guide future preparation and revisions of FMP for areas within the property. It further recommended that this management plan should be fully compatible with the World Heritage requirements and favoring natural ecological and biological processes and be led by a team comprising representatives from all relevant institutions working collaboratively with local communities and stakeholders, local and national NGOs and research communities and associating stakeholders from Belarus and international expertise<sup>4</sup>.

The World Heritage Committee expressed concern in Decision **40 COM 7B.92** about the amendments to the forest management plan and the adopted Programme for Białowieża and recalled that the SOUV of the Property emphasized its undisturbed natural processes and the consequent richness in deadwood, standing and on the ground, which leads to a high diversity of fungi and saproxylic invertebrates. The Committee took note of the conclusions of the IUCN Advisory Mission and requested the State Party of Poland to submit to the Committee an evaluation of potential impacts of the amendments to the FMP on the OUV of the Property. It further urged the State Party to take measures to maintain the continuity and integrity of protected old-growth forest in Białowieża Forest and to ensure that no commercial timber extraction is permitted within the Property. It also considered that such commercial timber extraction would represent a potential danger to the property in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

In the State of Conservation report of January 2017, the State Party of Poland stated that no commercial logging was undertaken within the property and that all logging was justified as sanitary cutting in response to the continued bark beetle outbreak in the Polish part of the property. A summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the amendment to the FMP was also included, which concluded that the increase in tree felling would not result in any negative impacts on the Natura 2000 site<sup>5</sup>.

On 17 February 2017, the Director General of the Polish State Forest Service adopted *Decision 51*, ordering the removal of all trees colonized by the spruce bark beetle and the harvesting of trees constituting a threat to public safety and posing a fire risk in all age classes of forest stands in the three forest districts of the Białowieża forest. This decision triggered an infringement decision issued by the European Commission<sup>6</sup>, given that “*increased logging is likely to adversely affect the conservation of the site's habitats and species as well as cause irreparable biodiversity loss, including through removal of 100-year and older trees, and that these measures would, according to the evidence available, exceed those that would be necessary for ensuring the safe use of the forest*” (see also chapter 2).

At its 41 session the World Heritage Committee in Decision **41 COM 7B.1** noted that the SEA focused on assessing potential impacts to the Natura 2000 and did not represent an adequate assessment of impacts on the OUV of the Property. The Committee reiterated its request to the State Party of Poland to maintain the continuity and integrity of protected old-growth forest in Białowieża Forest and strongly urged it to immediately halt all logging and wood extraction in old-growth forests. It further requested the States Parties to invite a joint World Heritage

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<sup>4</sup> The full report is also available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/33/documents/>

<sup>5</sup> In 2007, the Białowieża Forest was designated as a Natura 2000 site under the European Union Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992.

<sup>6</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-17-1045\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-1045_en.htm)

Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the Property to evaluate current and potential impacts of ongoing and planned forest management operations on the OUV of the Property and to assess whether the property meets the criteria for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

On 20 July 2017, the European Commission brought an action against Poland before the European Court for failure to fulfil its obligations under the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive. On 20 November 2017, the European Court decided to apply interim measures pending a final decision and ordered Poland to immediately cease its active forest management operations in the Białowieża Forest, except in exceptional cases where they are strictly necessary to ensure public safety.

On 17 April 2018, the European Court confirmed that Poland had failed to fulfil its obligations arising from the Habitats Directive<sup>7</sup> and the Birds Directive<sup>8</sup> due to the adoption and implementation of the Decision No 51. The Court concluded that implementation of the active forest management operations has resulted in the loss of a part of the Puszcza Białowieża Natura 2000 site and stated that the 2016 decision and Decision No 51 would inevitably result in the deterioration or destruction of breeding sites and resting places of certain saproxylic beetles protected by the Habitats Directive as species of EU interest in need of strict protection. Furthermore, the Court concluded that the implementation of the contested decisions would inevitably lead to deterioration or destruction of the breeding sites or resting places of the bird species protected under the Bird Directive.

Following this Decision, the State Party of Poland repealed Decision 51 by the State Forest Service.

### **1.3 Justification of the current Reactive Monitoring mission**

The joint UNESCO World Heritage Centre / IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission was originally planned for end of April 2018 but was postponed at the request of the State Party of Poland because of the date of the announcement of the final decision by the European Court.

The mission took place from 24 September 2018 to 2 October 2018. The mission team was composed of Guy Debonnet of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Carlo Ossola, IUCN expert.

The mission was requested to assess current and potential impacts of all recent, ongoing and planned forest management operations on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and whether these activities represent an ascertained or potential danger to the OUV of the Property, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the *Operational Guidelines*. The mission was also requested to evaluate progress achieved by the States Parties in preparing a Transboundary Management Plan for the entire property, and any other relevant issues that may negatively impact on the OUV of the property, including its conditions of integrity and protection and management, in line with paragraph 173 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

The mission met with the Minister for Environment of Poland and senior staff of the Ministry in Warsaw, then travelled to the site and conducted 2,5 days of field visits in Poland and 2 days of field visits in Belarus. A stakeholder meeting was also organized in Poland, allowing the

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<sup>7</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ 1992 L 206, p. 7; corrigendum at OJ 1993 L 176, p. 29), as last amended by Council Directive 2013/17/EU of 13 May 2013 (OJ 2013 L 158, p. 193).

<sup>8</sup> Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ 2010 L 20, p. 7), as amended by Directive 2013/17.

mission to meet with representatives of local communities and local administration, local and international NGOs as well as scientists and researchers. A concluding meeting was organized in Białowieża, with representatives from Poland and Belarus. The mission's terms of reference, the list of people met and the itinerary are annexed (Annex 1, 3 and 4).

## **2. NATIONAL POLICY FOR THE PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTY**

### **2.1 Legal and institutional framework in Poland**

The Polish part of the property has different legal statuses: part of the property is a National Park, but a large area has the status of “Managed forests”.

Protected areas in Poland have been established under the 16th October 1991 Act of Nature Protection. The Act defines the concept of a national park as well as other forms of nature protection, whereby national parks in Poland are given the highest degree of protection and are managed directly by the central government.

For the Managed forests, the priority legal act, being a determinant of activity conducted in the forests, is the Forest Act of August 28th, 1991.

Legal acts, which work closely with the Forest Act, are inter alia:

- Spatial Planning Act
- Act on Protection of nature
- Water Law Act
- Hunting Law Act
- Forest Reproductive Material Act.

The Forest Act determines the model of Polish forestry, both in private and public sectors. It indicates the aims of sustainable forest management and emphasises the significant meaning of the non-productive role of forest ecosystems. In spite of their status as managed forests, the nomination file clearly specifies (page 65) that the basic principle for all forests included in the property is “undisturbed wild nature” and that “timber exploitation for economic purposes is banned”.

In 2007 the European Commission, in accordance with the Habitats Directive, approved the designation of the Puszcza Białowieńska Natura 2000 site. The site comprises the entire Polish part of Białowieża Forest, in particular, the three forest districts Białowieża, Browsk and Hajnówka – as a ‘site of Community importance’ based on the presence of natural habitats and habitats of certain priority species of animals and birds. The site is also designated under the Birds Directive as a ‘special protection area’ for birds. The National Park was also a holder of the European Diploma of the Council of Europe, but this has been suspended since 2016. The Polish part of the property is also included in the Białowieża Biosphere Reserve.

The legal framework is implemented through different management plans. The Management plan for the Białowieża National Park is in force for the period 2015-2034. It defines all the activities of the National Park. Each forest district has a Forest Management plan (FMP) for the period 2012-2021. These plans are approved by the Minister of Environment. The FMPs determine all the activities taken as components of forest management, including silviculture, nature protection and assessment of the volume of wood that can be logged. The nomination file also specifies that while there is some logging allowed in the active protection zone, timber exploitation for economic purposes is not allowed and hence the volume of wood that can be extracted has been greatly reduced in the current FMP. However, this volume has been increased in 2016 for the Białowieża Forest District through an amendment of the FMP (see also chapter 1.2).

A separate part of FMP is the Nature Conservation Program, which includes a broad description of nature condition as well as protection tasks and methods for their implementation. The Natura 2000 site Puszcza Białowieńska has three management plans for each forest district (Białowieża, Browsk and Hajnówka). These Conservation management

plans are in force for the period 2012-2015. Finally, Conservation Tasks are defined for each Nature Reserve included within the managed forests.



Fig. 5 Representation of the different management plans that are implemented in the property for the Polish side as well as their latest modifications (prepared based on information received during the mission)

The institutional set up in the Polish part is relatively complex. The Ministry for the Environment is in charge of both the National park and the Forest districts<sup>2</sup>. It is the most important institution for the property. The Department of Nature Protection (DeNP) and the Department of Forestry (DeF) are directly under the Ministry.

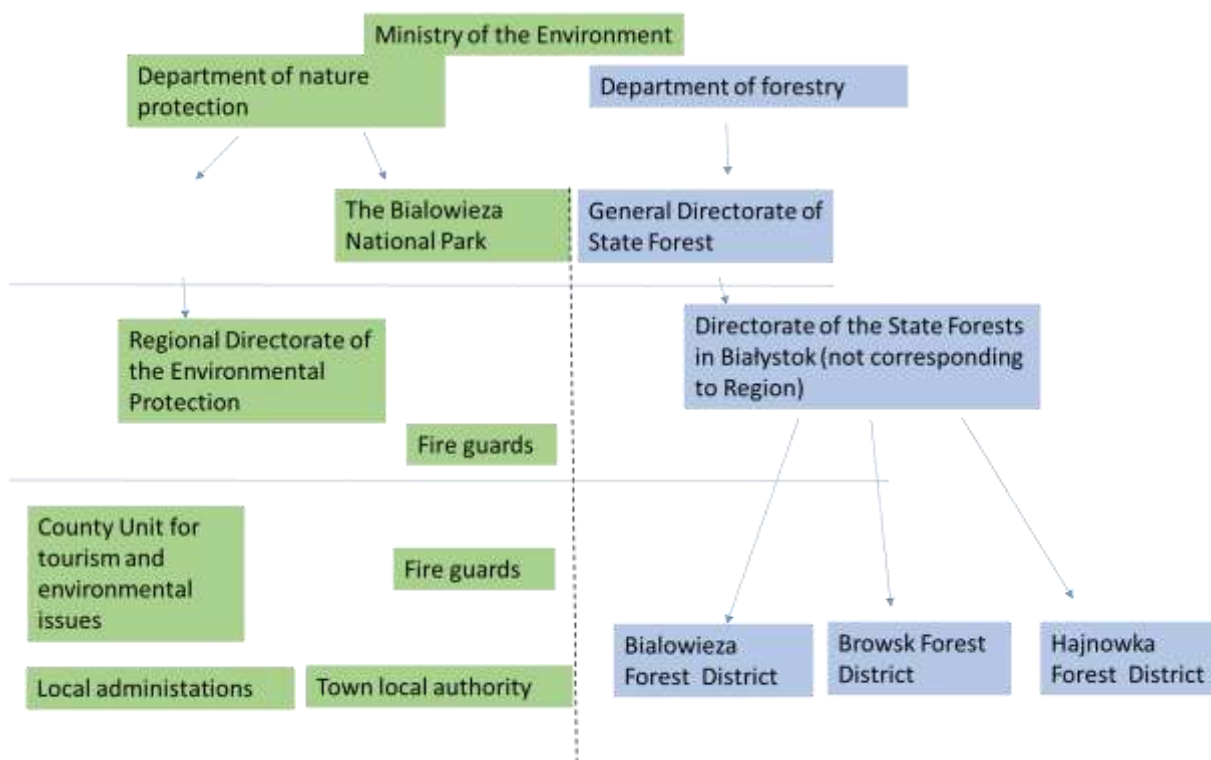


Fig. 6 Schematic representation of the institutional structure for the property in Poland (prepared based on information received during the mission)

The National Park is directly under the DeNP. On authorisation from the Minister of the Environment, Department of Nature Protection exercises supervision over the General Directorate for Environmental Protection as a separate authority of central administration. This Directorate leads a Regional Directorate whose main task is to oversee the Natura 2000 Site Białowieża Forest and, in addition to the Białowieża National Park, the other forms of

nature protection within Białowieża Forest. The DeF is responsible for forest management at the national level. Responsible for implementation is the General Directorate of the State Forest. Under these units, there are a number of regional directorates of the State Forest (Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok). The three forest districts included in the Property (Białowieża, Browski Hainówka) are under this regional directorate. These districts are led by Forest District Directors.

At the county level, there are entities that are in charge of touristic promotion and environment. At the local level, there are town and village administrations. The fire protection unit is organized at the county and regional level.

## 2.2 Legal and institutional framework in Belarus

The legal basis for the conservation of biological diversity in the Republic of Belarus is structured around general and special laws in particular the Land Code of the Republic of Belarus (1999), the Forest Code (2000), the Law of the Republic of Belarus on Special Protected Natural Areas (1994, 2000) and the Law of the Republic of Belarus on State Ecological Examination (Environmental Impact assessment) (2000).

The following laws are also relevant for the protection of the OUV:

- "On the Environment Protection" (1992),
- "On Specially Protected Natural Territories" (1994),
- "On Use of the Animal World" (1996);
- Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Flora" (2003);
- Forest Code of the Republic of Belarus (2000);

The Belarus component of the Property is part of the National Park and Biosphere Reserve Belovezhskaya Pushcha. It was granted National Park Status in 1991 (Decree No 352 of September 16, 1991). The National Park was awarded the European Diploma for Protected Areas by the Council of Europe in 1997. The Ramsar site, the Dikoe Fen Mire, is part of the World Heritage property (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7: Boundaries of the Dikoe Fen Mire Ramsar Site (Source Ramsar Convention)

The regulations of the national park are laid down in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus "On Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park" № 460 (2004).

The different laws and decrees are applied through management plans. The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park has a Management Plan for the period 2008-2020 where all the actions and management objectives are defined. A new management plan is planned for the period 2021-2030. There is also a Forest Management Plan for the period 2016 – 2026 and a Game Management Plan for the period 2017 – 2027.



*Fig. 8 Representation of the different management plans that are implemented in the property for Belarus (prepared based on information received during the mission)*

Institutionally, the National Park is directly placed under the Authority of the Government of the President of the Republic of Belarus.

### 2.3 Protection regime of the property

The 2014 nomination foresees a complex zoning system, with different management and protection regimes. The different management regimes and authorized uses are summarized in table 1.

In **Poland** there are four zones: the strict protection zone, partial protection zone I, partial protection zone II and the active protection zone of biodiversity and landscape protection.

The strict protection zone is a non intervention zone with only limited access in order for natural processes to evolve undisturbed. Only the original National Park (before the 1996 extension) has this status. The partial protection I regime is very similar to the strict protection, the only difference being that this zone is accessible with restrictions for mushroom and berry picking. This zone includes the part of the National Park not included in the strict protection zone (corresponding to the 1996 extension) as well as the Forest Reserves managed by the State Forest Service (SFS). The partial protection II zone includes forest areas managed by the Forest Districts, which are excluded from active management. Areas included in this zone include tree stands of over 100 year old, pioneer stands in humid areas with dominant birch and aspen (forming over 50% of tree stand) of over 60 years old and protective zones for species conservation (black stork, lesser spotted eagle, Tengmalm's owl, tree lungwort). Both zone I and II have a restrictive management regime and do not allow for any active forest management activities. These are only allowed in the active protection zone.

The active protection zone allows interventions with the aim of habitat restoration. The active protection zone covers 26 % of the Polish part of the property (16,558 ha) and is subjected to active forestry management, including wood extraction<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, the nomination specifies that the basic principle for these forests is "undisturbed wild nature". As a result, the amount of wood allowed to be cut in this zone was greatly limited to approximately 48,000 m<sup>3</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The Active Protection Zone is actually larger, but the State Forest Service has instated a so-called reference zone, partly overlapping with the Active Protection Zone, where currently no active forest management activities are implemented for research purposes. This is however not a permanent legal status and can be reversed easily.

in the current FMP and that timber can not be exploited for economic purposes. It is also mentioned in the nomination that any cutting needs to be justified by ecological reasons, including limiting bark beetle infestations or re-modelling of tree stands which were altered in the past (page 46 of the nomination file)<sup>10</sup>. It needs to be noted that it is very exceptional to have active forest management, in particular logging, inside World Heritage properties unless these management activities are directly linked to the conservation of the OUV of the property.

Table 1: Zoning and regulation (Source 2016 IUCN Advisory mission report, adapted from nomination file<sup>11</sup>, see also annex 6).

Zones	Wood extraction	Hunting	Fire prevention	Road maintenance for safety	Recreational Activities	Berries and Mushroom Picking	Other
Strict Protection	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	
Partial protection I	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Maintenance of meadows allowed
Partial Protection II	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Maintenance of meadows allowed
Active protection zone	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Maintenance of meadows allowed, sanitary cutting allowed

In **Belarus** the park has a zoning that defines the activities that are allowed. The Park has 5 zones. The strictly protected zone is a non intervention zone, with only research activities permitted and no habitat management. The regulated zone allows habitat management but only when justified for conservation purposes. The recreational zone is managed to permit the tourism activities, while protecting the ecological features. The economic activities zone allows sustainable use activities but most of this area is situated outside of the World Heritage property, with the exception of two areas linked to the National Park facilities.

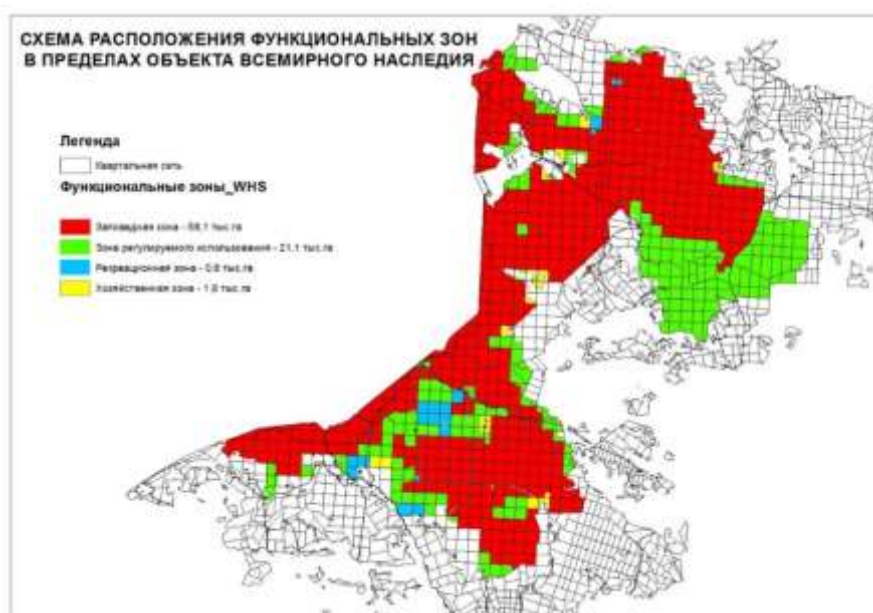
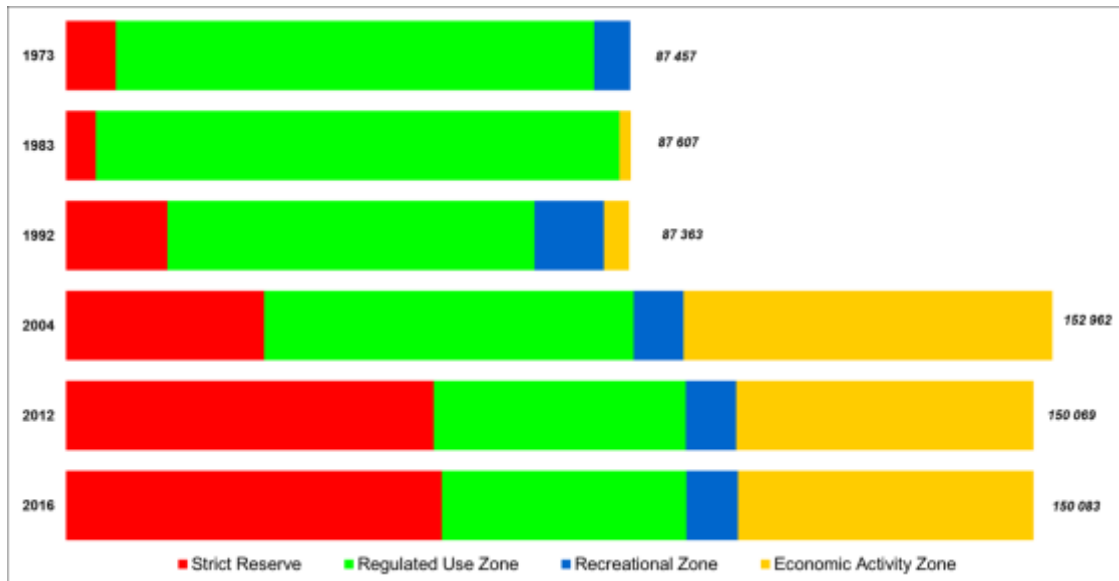


Fig. 9 Current perimeter and zoning of the Belarus component of the property. The strictly protected zone is marked in red, the regulated zone in green, the recreational zone in blue and the economic activities zone in yellow (Source State Party of Belarus).

<sup>10</sup> Available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/33/documents/>

<sup>11</sup> This table is based on the supplementary information to the nomination submitted by the States Parties in November 2013 and considered an integral part of the nomination document and reproduced in annex 6.

It needs to be noted that the size of the National Park was increased significantly in 2004. Figure 9 shows the current zonation of the Belarus part of the property. Over time the zoning has evolved: the strictly protected zone (red) has been enlarged significantly and is now covering a major part of the Property, with the economic activities (yellow) situated almost entirely outside the World Heritage property. It also needs to be noted that the strict protection zone has been increased further since the submission of the boundary modification in 2014 (figure 10). In 2004, the size of the National Park was almost doubled. Today, almost the entire Belarus part of the property is under strict protection or in the regulated use zone, while the economic activity zone is part of the buffer zone of the property.



*Fig. 10 Graph demonstrating how the Strict Protection zone of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park increased over time. In 2004, the size of the National Park was almost doubled and today, most of the economic zone is situated outside the property (Source State Party of Belarus).*

### 3. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THREATS

#### 3.1 Forest management

The forest management regimes in this property are crucial for the protection of the OUV. As the “little disturbed forest ecosystem” (Statement of OUV) is one of the most important elements defining the value linked to the criterion (ix) and an element directly linked to most of the biodiversity values defined for the criterion (x), there should be a very restricted active forest management in the property. The 2014 nomination file clearly specifies that “the undisturbed wild nature is the basic principle for the management” (page 7). It also specifies that timber exploitation for commercial purposes is banned in the entire property. The mission stresses that all interventions have to serve the management objective of the conservation of the OUV.

The mission notes that the zonation of the property serves this purpose. The areas which contain undisturbed, relatively undisturbed and old-growth forests are included in the strict protection zone and the partial protection zone I and II and have to follow a regime of non-intervention, with some exceptions for safety reasons. Following the nomination dossier, active forest management is allowed only in the active protection zone in the Polish part and in the regulated, recreational and economic activities zones of the Belarussian part.

The active forest management zone contains the forest stands that have been altered more profoundly by past forestry activities and timber harvesting. This has resulted in a higher share of pine and spruce stands, while in some areas monoculture of these species are even present. However, the mission recalls that these areas have been included in the property to ensure its overall integrity, as the areas are dispersed over the Białowieża forest and it would have been difficult to come up with coherent boundaries if these areas were to be excluded. To allow for these areas to evolve more quickly to a natural oak hornbeam forest, active forest management activities are permitted here. The mission notes however that, as expressed in the nomination, these forest management activities should focus only on speeding up the process of tree stand replacement to a more natural one, composed of broadleaved trees, for example by removing spruce and pine or by thinning. The mission notes that also in the active forest management zone, it is not possible to carry out commercial timber activities, as stipulated in the nomination. In addition to speeding up the evolution back to more natural forest stands, active management also has the objective to protect some specific attributes of the OUV, such as the “range of associated non-forest habitats, including wet meadows, river valleys and other wetlands” (Statement of OUV) and for the habitat for specific species linked to the criteria (x).

#### **Bark Beetle outbreaks:**

The mission recalls the observation of the 2016 Advisory mission that outbreaks of the bark beetle are to be considered a natural disturbance and part of the on-going ecological processes. The artificially high occurrence of spruce in certain stands combined with recent climatic changes have certainly favoured the intensity and frequency of bark beetle outbreaks and has impacted stands with an artificially high share of conifers. The mission notes that this will allow accelerating the tree stands conversion towards a more natural, broadleaved forest and therefore not intervening against the outbreaks is in line with the management objective of the property. The mission further notes that empirical data confirm that natural regeneration at sites affected by bark beetle and left to evolve naturally, allows them to overgrow quickly with diverse forest tree communities<sup>12</sup> (see also below).

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<sup>12</sup> Paluch R. & Bielak K. (2009). Stand conversion by means of natural succession in the Białowieża Primeval Forest. *Lesne Prace Badawcze*, 2009, Vol. (70) (4): 339-354.

The mission also notes that studies show that sanitary cuttings against bark beetle outbreaks cause important losses on the biodiversity in the forests<sup>13</sup> and therefore clearly have an impact on the OUV of the property. Moreover there is also evidence that the factors triggering the outbreak waves are closely related to landscape-scale connectivity of both host and beetle populations as well as to regional bark beetle infestation levels and thus cannot be managed at the forest district level<sup>14</sup>. The mission therefore considers that it is not possible to demonstrate that the sanitary cuttings on the three forest districts can have a significant impact on controlling the outbreaks waves.

## **Forest management in Belarus**

As mentioned above, forest management in the Belarus part of the property follows a general principle of non-intervention, with a large part of the site under the strict protection regime. The only exceptions are made for a limited area that needs active intervention for specific species and habitat conservation objectives. The areas earmarked for active forest management are a relatively small part of the property and are clearly defined in the annual action plan. The mission visited some of these more actively managed areas and for each of these areas, the management authority explained the specific conservation objectives, which justify active management and which active management measures are permitted accordingly.

Bark beetle outbreaks are no longer managed actively in the Belarus part. Since the extension of 2014, no sanitary cuttings, extraction of dead wood or artificial regeneration of the forest took place in the entire Belarus part of the property. The mission visited areas, which were affected by bark beetle outbreaks in the past and was able to observe how the regeneration based on natural processes (without plantation or soil preparation) after an outbreak leads to the establishment of rich forest habitats (pictures 11 and 14 in annex 6.5).

The mission was also able to observe that safety cuttings are restricted along part of the main roads, whenever a risk is assessed and on a distance of max 50 meter on both sides of the road (pictures 15-16 in annex 6.5). In terms of fire protection, a sophisticated fire surveillance system is in place, but no further specific interventions in terms of dead wood removal are undertaken.

***The mission considers that the forest management regime in place in the Belarussian component of the property, which privileges a strict non-intervention policy in the majority of the property and targeted active management linked to specific conservation objectives in a smaller part of the property, is fully in line with the objectives of conserving the OUV.***

## **Forest Management in Poland**

As clearly stated in the nomination, forest management activities in the Polish component of the property are normally only allowed in the active protection zone and do not provide for commercial timber extraction, with limited wood extraction allowed in this zone for habitat or species conservation reasons and within the quota set in the district FMP (see also annex 6). However, in 2016, the Minister for the Environment authorised a significant increase in timber harvesting in the Białowieża Forest District through an addendum to the FMP, almost tripling the quota for harvesting. This decision was reportedly motivated by the increased need for sanitary cuttings with the aim to manage the spruce bark beetle outbreaks. The Minister further allowed active forest management operations, such as sanitary pruning/felling, reforestation and active forest regeneration in the partially protected zone II, where these interventions were

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<sup>13</sup> Thorn S, Bassler C, Gottschalk T, Hothorn T, Bussler H, et al. (2014) New Insights into the Consequences of Post-Windthrow Salvage Logging Revealed by Functional Structure of Saproxylic Beetles Assemblages. PLoS ONE 9(7): e101757. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0101757

<sup>14</sup> Rupert Seidl, Jörg Müller, Torsten Hothorn, Claus Bässler, Marco Heurich and Markus Kautz (2016), Small beetle, large-scale drivers: how regional and landscape factors affect outbreaks of the European spruce bark beetle, Journal of Applied Ecology, 53, 530–540

previously precluded. In 2017, the Director General of the State Forest Office adopted Decision No 51 'concerning the removal of trees colonised by the spruce bark beetle and the harvesting of trees constituting a threat to public safety and posing a fire risk in all age classes of forest stands in the forest districts'. This Decision was applied in the three Białowieża, Browsk and Hajnówka Forest Districts. This Decision was clearly in contradiction to the commitments in the nomination file (see annex 6).

The new annex to the Białowieża district FMP was subject to an SEA. However, the 2016 Advisory mission already pointed out that this SEA did not take into account the OUV and the different attributes, which are impacted. The mission also notes that the Court of Justice of the European Union in its ruling considered *"that the impact assessment could not be capable of removing all scientific doubt as to the harmful effects of the decision on the Natura 2000 site"*. The 2016 Advisory mission recommended, *"to suspend the annex until an Integrated Management Plan was prepared and approved, with appropriate zoning and regulations, which can guide future preparation of forest management plans for areas within the property"*. This recommendation was not observed.

The mission has visited areas, which have been logged extensively to remove dead and affected spruce trees. Trees and deadwood has been completely removed and were reportedly commercialized (pictures 7-8 in annex 5). These cuttings and removal of trees were carried out in a very significant intensity (see also tables below).

The mission also visited areas where large-scale pruning/felling activities were conducted as safety cuttings. These cuttings were often carried out on all the dead trees standing on a distance of 150 m on the both sides of a path. Sometimes entire zones were emptied of dead trees (pictures 5-6 in annex 5). The safety cuttings were not restricted to major roads but were also conducted along minor forest roads and even foot paths, which seemed little used. In many cases, heavy machinery like tree harvesters were used, creating major disturbances to the soil and damage to other trees. The mission observed that these cuttings took place not only in the active protection zone but also in the partial protection zone II.

The mission further notes that active forestry management activities in the active protection zone seem to go beyond the objective of this zone and are not focussing exclusively on efforts to speed up the process of tree stand replacement to a more natural broadleaved trees oak hornbeam forest or to preserve natural habitats and habitats of plants, animals and fungi.

The information received from the State Party on the volumes of wood that have been extracted from the property in 2016, 2017 and 2018 can be found in tables 2, 3 and 4. These figures clearly demonstrate the scale of the logging. They also show that in 2017 wood extraction was particularly high in the partial protection zone II, where stands older than 100 years are found. Forest management activities and timber extraction in the active protection zone are also important.

However, the mission was informed by the State Party that at this stage all logging activities had been halted in conformity with the European Court ruling. This was confirmed by other stakeholders met by the mission team. The mission did not observe any recent logging activities.

Table 2: Volume of wood harvested (m<sup>3</sup>) in Poland in 2016 (before the 7.11.2016) (Source 2017 State of Conservation report)

Protection zone	Forest District Białowieża*	Forest District Hajnówka	Forest District Browsk
Strict protection	-	-	-
Partial protection I	-	-	-
Partial protection II	-	-	-
Active protection	3653	22815	21172

Table 3: Volume of wood harvested (m<sup>3</sup>) in Poland in 2017 (information provided by the State Party of Poland at the request of the mission)

Protection Zone	Forest District Białowieża*	Forest District Hajnówka	Forest District Browsk
Strict protection	-	-	-
Partial protection I	-	-	-
Partial protection II	30848,45	13800	71442,43
Active protection	7201,35	58400	7536,09

Table 4: Volume of wood harvested (m<sup>3</sup>) in each of the management zones in 2018 (till 30/06/2018, information provided by the State Party of Poland at the request of the mission)

Protection Zone	Forest District Białowieża	Forest District Hajnówka	Forest District Browsk
Strict protection	-	-	
Partial protection I	-	-	
Partial protection II	-	691,52	
Active protection	-	2305,42	5,60

**The mission concludes that since 2016, there have been widespread logging activities in the Polish side of the property including the removal of deadwood (an important attribute of the OUV), widespread safety cuttings made on the strips of 150 meters on both sides of minor paths and roads, large scale sanitary cuttings and active forest regeneration activities. Harvested timber has also been commercialized. The mission considers that these activities are clearly contradictory to the commitments made by the State Party in the 2014 nomination for the extension of the property, which clearly emphasized that “the undisturbed wild nature is the basic principle for the management”. This mission further considers that these activities were not in line with the objectives of conserving the OUV but on the contrary have impacted negatively on the OUV of the property.**

The mission reiterates that the OUV is defined by attributes such as the little disturbance of the forest ecosystem, the deadwood and the species linked to it and therefore forest management activities and wood extraction should be limited to the areas where this is

functional to the protection of clearly geographically defined habitats that are relevant for the OUV of the property. This is also in accordance with the judgement of the Court of Justice of the European Union concerning the Natura 2000 site as the values concerned by the European Directives and the OUV are linked to the same attributes.

The mission notes that **safety cuttings** have also to be strongly restricted in comparison to other managed forests. These activities have to be aimed at the direct security of visitors and local population following a risk evaluation plan. However, the current methodology used seems to identify all the old dead or ill trees as a potential security risk. This approach is not compatible with the conservation of the OUV of the property. The 2016 Advisory mission already questioned the decision making process with regards to safety cuttings. The mission considers that safety cuttings on the Polish side of the property should be limited to the areas around main roads and most frequented paths to a maximal extend of 50 meters on each side of them, as is the practice in the Belarussian part of the property. If there were the need for other safety measures in some area that are very frequented (around villages, for example), this should be possible only after having clearly identified these “high risk areas” on the basis of frequentation data. The mission further suggests that in areas with an increased risk, visitors are informed about this risk and discouraged to go off the main roads. For certain high risk areas, it may be necessary to temporarily close areas for the general public.

At several occasions, different authorities pointed to the **increased fire risk** as a result of the increased amount of deadwood in the forest. The mission considers that fire risk has also to be evaluated before taking any further security measures on this matter and notes a study by the Forest Research Institute (“IBL”) from 2015<sup>15</sup> where Białowieża Forest was included in the third category of forest fire risk (III KZPL) meaning “low hazard level”. The mission notes that fire risk is proven to be very strongly linked to human activities, and this should be taken into account when evaluating the fire risk. The mission further notes that there have been few cases of fire in the Polish part of the property and also points to the evidence from the Belarus side, where no fires were observed in the last years even though the dead wood was not removed. **The mission considers that the volume of deadwood is not directly a source of risk but that the risk depends on the status of this deadwood and on the amount of other material on the ground.** Dead or dry grass for example can constitute a higher risk for fire than dead trees. Soil humidity is also a very important factor assessing this risk. A serious risk assessment for fire has to be made for the Polish side of the property before taking any further prevention measures against fire that implies cuttings or removal of deadwood. The mission recalls the recommendation of the 2016 Advisory mission that a comprehensive Forest Fire Prevention and Suppression plan should be developed for the property, involving all categories of stakeholders and regulating access to the most sensitive areas by cars and visitors.

***The mission recommends that the State Party of Poland should renew its commitment to the management arrangements foreseen in the 2014 nomination (see annex 6.5), in casu:***

- In the strictly protection zone as well as in the partial protection zone I and II, ensure that no forest management interventions are undertaken, including removal of deadwood, sanitary cuttings or any active regeneration activities (including soil preparation and tree planting);***
- In the active protection zone, limit forest management activities exclusively to interventions directly aiming at speeding up the process of tree stand replacement to a more natural broadleaved oak – hornbeam forest or at preserving certain associated non-forest habitats, including wet meadows, river valleys and other wetlands and habitats of endangered plants, animals and fungi. The necessary active protection measures should be detailed in the integrated management plan;***

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<sup>15</sup> Stereńczak et al. 2015 „Ekspertryza – Wpływ ilości martwego drewna w Puszczy Białowieskiej na zagrożenie pożarowe i zagrożenie i zagrożenie dla ludzi”

- *In the entire property, restrict safety cuttings only to areas along specific roads and paths (on 50 m distance from each side) on the basis of a clear risk evaluation plan;*
- *For the entire property, develop and implement a comprehensive Forest Fire Prevention and Suppression plan based on a rigorous risk assessment, to be included in the integrated management plan and taking into account the observations in this report;*

*The mission supports the recommendation from the 2016 Advisory mission that the amendment on the FMP for the Bialowieza Forest district should be revoked. Any new FMP for areas within the property should be guided by the new overall Management Plan of the Polish part of the property. (see also 3.2). The mission considers that the existing FMPs should not be amended or only in a very restrictive way to allow for strictly necessary safety measures as stipulated above and on the basis of a clear risk evaluation plan. Any amendment to the existing FMP should be sent to the World Heritage Centre with a clear justification, for review by IUCN, before approval.*

### 3.2 Management planning

#### **Integrated Management Plan (IMP)**

In its decision **38 COM 8B.12**, the World Heritage Committee requested the States Parties of Belarus and Poland to establish, as a matter of urgency, the Transboundary Steering Committee that will coordinate, promote and facilitate the integrated management of the property, and to expedite the preparation and further official adoption of the Integrated Management Plan for the entire property. While the Transboundary Steering Committee has been established and meets regularly, progress on the establishment of the IMP has been slow. The request to develop this plan as a matter of urgency has been reiterated in the further Committee decisions (**40 COM 7B.92** and **41 COM 7B.1**).

A description of the draft of the transboundary management plan was included in the 2017 state of conservation report by the States Parties (named “*Draft Assumptions for the integrated management plan for the Bialowieza Forest transboundary World Heritage site*”). The mission was informed that no further work had been done on this document since its submission.

The mission team reviewed this document and notes that the description of OUV included in the document as a basis for the IMP is not in line with the SOUV as adopted by the World Heritage Committee in decision **38 COM 8B.12**. The mission stresses that the IMP has to be based on the SOUV as adopted by the Committee. In fact, the purpose of the IMP is to develop a common policy and vision for the conservation of the OUV, which will guide the management planning for both the Belarussian and Polish components of the property. The mission therefore considers that the **current “draft assumptions” are not a valid basis for the transboundary integrated management plan.**

The mission notes that the IMP should be an overarching document, defining the overall management vision for the property in order to conserve the OUV as defined in the SOUV. The document should also define the transboundary governance system and identify common areas of collaboration. Examples are the restoration of the hydrological regime of the property, measures to ensure connectivity, management of the bison population etc.

The mission notes the wealth of scientific research available both in Belarus and Poland and considers this should be used better to guide the overall management. The mission therefore suggests establishing and defining a transboundary scientific committee and advisory board and define its role in the transboundary management plan. The mission team also suggests to ask IUCN for advice on the matter of the transboundary management plan.

## Management planning for the Polish part of the Property

The World Heritage Committee, in its Decision **38 COM 8B.12**, further requested the State Party of Poland to “establish as a matter of urgency the Steering Committee between the National Park and the Forest Administration to ensure the integrated planning and management of the Polish side of the property, and to provide adequate financial resources for the effective functioning of this Steering Committee.” As described in chapter 2 of this report, different management plans are in force in this moment, all with different time spans and without clear established coordination system between them. The mission notes that currently there is no common vision on the management of the property on the Polish side and that the different management planning documents are not aligned with a common objective of conserving the OUV of the Property. The mission notes that the different authorities in charge of the management of the property have no clear common understanding of the OUV of the property, and this is further exacerbated by the fact that erroneous interpretations on the OUV continue to be promoted in different official documents.<sup>16</sup>

The mission considers that it is crucial that a unified management plan is developed for the Polish part of the property based on the adopted SOUV and that all other management plans are aligned with this overarching management plan.

The mission was informed that the Minister had invited different stakeholders in May 2018 to establish a committee that will have the task to define and reflect on the management for the property. However, part of the scientific community and the NGO community did not accept to participate because they considered that the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the committee were not clear and fearing that the composition of the committee was unbalanced. The mission considers that this Committee could have a crucial role in developing the overarching management plan for the Polish part of the property, provided that all stakeholders are duly represented. After the discussion during the mission, some NGO expressed willingness to reconsider their participation in the Committee, provided that clear ToR would be established and that the committee would have a balanced composition.

The mission was also informed that when the zoning was developed during the nomination process, certain mistakes were made. In addition, the patchy structure of the zoning (with sometimes changes in the management regime for each forest block) was considered confusing by the management authorities. The mission notes that there is probably room for further streamlining of the zoning, based on the spatial analysis of the attributes of the OUV. However, it stresses that this revision of the zoning should be an opportunity to further increase the area where no active forest management is allowed in order to facilitate undisturbed ecological processes, given the main objective of protecting the OUV.

***In line with the recommendations already provided by the 2016 Advisory mission to the property, the mission considers it crucial that the State Party initiates without further delays the development of the overall management plan for the Polish part of the property taking into account the following recommendations:***

- ***Involve all actors and stakeholders (BNP, SFS, scientists of disciplines linked to the attributes, NGOs);***
- ***Place the protection of OUV (as defined in the Decision 38 COM 8B.12) as the central objective of the overall management plan;***
- ***Define the management activities on the basis of a mapping of the attributes defining the OUV, which can be facilitated the scientific data available ;***
- ***Define an eventual adjustment of the zoning in areas to correct the current «patchwork» situation, without decreasing the area excluded from active***

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<sup>16</sup> This is not only clear from the above mentioned document on the draft assumptions for the transboundary management plan, but also from a document « Białowieża Forest – Heritage of the Local Population », published by the Ministry for the 41 session of the Committee which was provided to the mission.

- forest management (strict protection zone and partial protection zones I and II);***
- ***Align all other management plans on the basis of the overall management plan;***
  - ***Define a clear joint governance between the Bialowieza National Park, the State Forest Service and the Ministry of Environment***
  - ***Submit a draft to the World Heritage Centre before a final approval of the plan.***

The mission experts reiterate the suggestion of the 2016 Advisory mission to ask the National Commission for UNESCO to act as facilitator for the discussions in the committee that will define the overall management plan for the Polish part of the property and to consider seeking advice from IUCN during the process.

### **Management planning for the Belarussian part of the property**

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Belarussian component disposes of an overall management plan for the National Park valid until 2020 and the mission was informed that the process for renewing this management plan is expected to start soon. However, the mission found that the other management plans that have a clear relevance to the OUV (Wildlife Management plans and Forest Management plans) have been developed without taking into account the overall management plan. The mission stresses the importance of aligning all other management plans to the protection of OUV and to the overall management plan of the National Park.

#### ***The mission recommends to:***

- ***Expedite the review of the Management plan of the National Park;***
- ***Strengthen the legal status of the overall Management Plan, making it obligatory for all other relevant management plans to be aligned with it;***
- ***To adapt the other management plans (Forest, Wildlife) on the basis of the new Management plan of the National Park, once available, in order to take into account the protection of the OUV.***

### **3.3 Wildlife Management**

The flagship species of Bialowieza is the European bison and the site harbours 25 % of the world population and 30 % of the free roaming population. The last free roaming bison was hunted in Bialowieza in 1919 and its reintroduction from remaining captive animals is one of the great conservation success stories in Europe. The free-roaming population in Bialowieza is stable and even increasing (the 2014 extension dossier speaks of a population of approximately 900 animals, but the mission was informed that the population is currently 654 animals in the Polish component and 512 animals in the Belarussian component, totalling 1166 animals). The Belarussian and Polish populations are physically separated by the border fence and there have been recommendations in the past to open up the fence in certain areas to allow for both populations to mix. While this would seem advisable to improve the genetic health of the population, it has been argued by some experts that both populations originated from a limited group of the same ancestors, so that merging the two populations would have limited genetic benefits (see report of the 2008 Reactive Monitoring mission for more details). Nevertheless, the issue of connectivity does not only concern the bison population.

Bialowieza forest has historically been managed as royal hunting grounds and there has been a practice of managing wildlife populations for hunting, in particular by controlling predator populations (such as wolf) and by supporting ungulate populations (in particular bison and red deer) by providing winter feeding. Winter feeding of bison is considered necessary to avoid bison leaving the forest area to look for food in the agricultural fields. Both on the Belarussian and Polish side, park authorities have been paying farmers to leave fields adjacent to the

property available for the bison to graze on. However, the practice of winter feeding of red deer has resulted in a population, which is considered significantly above the carrying capacity of the ecosystem and with potential impacts on natural forest regeneration. This problem was already pointed out by the 2008 Reactive Monitoring mission. The mission was informed that in Poland the long-term big game breeding and hunting plan foresees a decrease of the red deer population, while proposing an increase in roe deer population size. In Belarus, also some efforts have been undertaken to reduce red deer by diminishing the number of feeding areas and to move them away from the World Heritage boundaries. However, red deer numbers remain very high and further efforts seem necessary to address this issue. Two hunting reserves have been created outside the World Heritage area and it has been proposed that all hunting activities (and supplementary feeding) would be limited to these areas but this has not yet been implemented.

While red deer populations remain too high, the population of wild boar in the property has crashed as a result of the outbreak of the African swine fever and other diseases. Concerns about a further spread of the African swine fever into Poland, with important economic consequences for pig farming, have impacted discussions on an opening of the border fence to allow free movement of wildlife. In fact, the mission was informed that Belarussian authorities had indicated their willingness to consider opening some areas of the fence for wildlife provided that alternative control mechanisms could be put in place to monitor the opened areas, but this discussion is currently stalled as a result of the African swine fever issue.

Before the population crash, trophy hunting for wild boar was an important source of revenue for BPNP and there are reports that there is now an increased focus on the hunting of elk. The current elk population is estimated at 195 animals in Belarus and 101 in Poland and considered stable, but increasing hunting pressure on this species could potentially affect its population and it is recommended that conservative hunting quota are established for elk and that the population trends are carefully monitored. As mentioned above, the mission considers there is a need that wildlife management plans are better aligned with the overall management plan (see point 3.3 on management planning).

The 2008 Reactive Monitoring mission also noted that predator populations in the property are low. There are no figures for lynx available in Belarus and in Poland, the population is estimated to be less than 10 animals. For wolf populations, the mission was provided with population estimates of 30 individuals in Poland and 51 in Belarus. The wolf population is reported to be stable but lower than the historic population. Research in the region has shown that wolves and lynx use large territories, which go well beyond the boundaries of the World Heritage site, so to be effective, it is important that protection measures are not limited to the World Heritage property only. In spite of the border fence, there is also evidence that wolves and lynx do move across the border between the two parts.

Wolf hunting is no longer permitted in Poland but is still legally possible in Belarus. Wolves on the Belarussian side are reported to be subject to a moderate hunting pressure, with shooting of 5-25 % of winter wolf numbers. Packs are being flagged and individuals are being hunted at baits. As a result, the wolf population in the Belarussian component has not reached the pack size and densities recorded in the neighbouring Polish component, where wolves are not hunted. To address this, a wolf hunting moratorium was adopted by the BPNP in 2015. Although the mission received information that several wolves were hunted in early 2018, park authorities informed the mission that the moratorium remained in place and would be maintained. The mission wants to point out that the wolf is not only a flagship species, which contributes to criterion (x), the SOUV also explicitly mentions the importance of large carnivores (wolf, lynx and otter) and their role in supporting complete food webs as a justification for criterion (ix).

***The mission recommends to:***

- ***Continue the moratorium on wolf hunting in BPNP and consider making this moratorium permanent by legally forbidding wolf hunting in the BPNP, in order for the population to continue its recovery to its historical size. It stressed that given the large territories of the wolves, it is important that the moratorium does not only cover the World Heritage property but the entire BPNP;***
- ***Ensure that the wildlife management plans are in line with the overall management plan of the World Heritage site and foresee clear management activities to further limit the population of red deer and to maintain the population of elk;***
- ***Take up again the discussions on how to improve connectivity in the overall Bialowieza forest ecosystem, including across the state border between Belarus and Poland.***

### **3.4 Roads and infrastructures affecting the OUV**

During the visit, the mission was informed about some important works on the Narewowska road (pictures 3 and 4 in annex 6.5) in the Polish part of the property. Prior to the works, this road was a 15.5 km forest dirt road, which was used as an internal road of the State Forests, 5-6 m in width. General vehicle traffic was allowed there in 2001. The mission was informed that the road upgrade was undertaken to facilitate vehicle traffic between the local villages as it presents an important shortcut. After protests by environmental groups, the Ministry for Environment halted the works for some time but following a petition by local communities, this suspension was lifted and works are ongoing. The mission team was presented with a copy of the petition during the stakeholder meeting.

The State Forest Service did not allow the mission to visit the area where the roadworks were the most important, supposedly for safety reasons. However, according to information received from the NGO by the mission, road improvement works involve broadening the width up to 7 m while widening the bends, putting in place a completely new road base with a deep water drainage system and laying of a new asphalt surface layer (mineral-emulsion mix covered with 2 layers of asphalt emulsion).

The mission notes that the State of Conservation report from the State Parties of 2017, did not mention such project in the chapter “In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Property, including authenticity and integrity”. Nevertheless, the road improvement is mentioned on page 27 of the State of Conservation report.

The mission further notes that the road is located within the property and in a very sensible area. The road crosses a partial protection I (Reserves) and II areas. The mission notes that the nomination only foresees road maintenance works in the property, not major upgrading. An improvement of this existing road could potentially affect strongly the ecological connectivity in the forest and therefore also affect the OUV of the property. The impact on the values and attributes linked to criteria (ix) and (x) have to be assessed, in particular, its impact on the birds and mammals populations and on disturbance of the forest ecosystem. The indirect impacts have also to be evaluated, such as the spread of alien invasive species, the impact on the hydrological system and the increased fire risk.

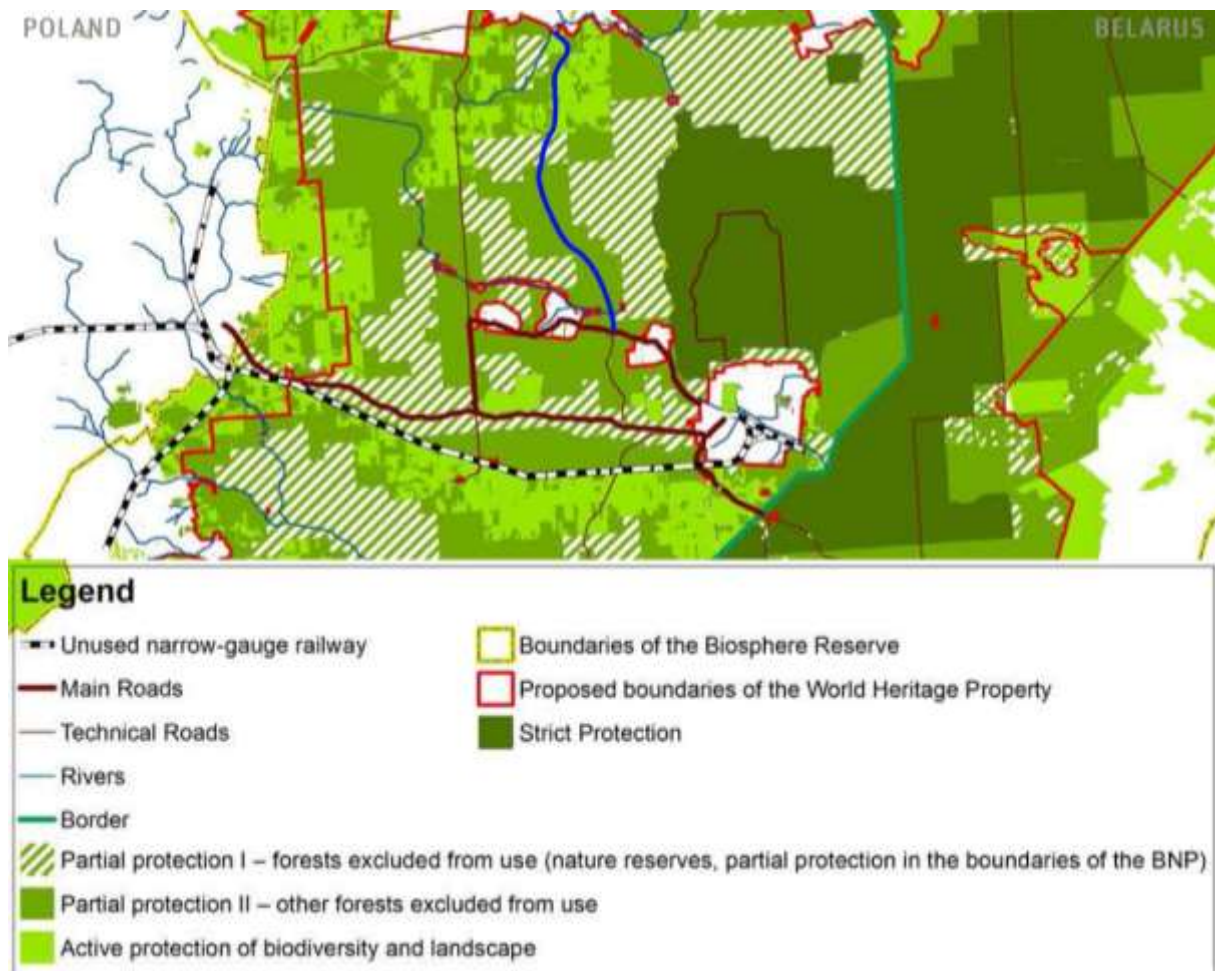


Fig 11: Situation of the Narewka road (blue) crossing Partial Protection Zone I and II areas (Source NGO presentation)

At the request of the mission, the State Party provided some information on the EIA, which was implemented. This document exists in Polish and only an English summary was provided. From the information available, it seems clear that the EIA did not properly assess the impact of the road improvement on the OUV and on the attributes defining it, in line with the IUCN World Heritage advice note on environmental assessments<sup>17</sup>.

***The mission considers that the upgrading works on the Narewka road have to be halted until a detailed EIA is prepared and submitted, which assesses the impacts of the road improvement on the OUV of the property, in line with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.***

### 3.5 Other conservation issues

#### ***Hydrology and wetland restoration***

The transboundary hydrological system is of utmost importance for the functioning of the forest environment in Białowieża. Important and very extended wetlands are located in and around the property. Particularly the RAMSAR site of the Dikoe Fen Mire located in the Belarussian part of the World Heritage property is emblematic of the link between the wetlands and rivers of the region and the forest ecosystem. In the past, most parts of the forest have been artificially drained and some rivers were canalized. In addition, many wetland areas around the forest

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/iucn\\_advice\\_note\\_environmental\\_assessment\\_18\\_11\\_13\\_iucn\\_template.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/iucn_advice_note_environmental_assessment_18_11_13_iucn_template.pdf)

have been drained and converted into agricultural land, especially on the Belarussian side. The mission notes that the artificial drainage has resulted in much dryer environmental conditions, which are now further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. It has also been recognized that the increased frequency and intensity of Bark Beetle outbreaks is linked to the dryer environment.<sup>18</sup>

In Belarus, important efforts are underway to restore some of the wetlands, which had been drained for agriculture in the past. The mission visited the restoration project of the Dziki Nikar fen mire, jointly implemented by the BPNB administration and the NGOs BirdLife Belarus and Frankfurt Zoological Society. Also in Poland, some efforts are underway to remove some of the existing drainage systems from the forest, although the mission had not had the opportunity to get more details on these activities.

***The mission welcomes the efforts to restore the hydrology of the forest ecosystem by removing drainage and restoring wetlands and recommends to continue these efforts and increase the transboundary coordination regarding this point. It considers it would be important to develop this aspect in the transboundary management plan. It also suggests mapping the drainage in the forest.***

### ***Invasive and alien species***

During the visit, the mission could observe the presence of invasive species particularly in the active management zone. In other areas where the active forest management is not permitted, the mission observed few invasive species, and they were found only in small patches along roads. However, some species of non-native trees, such as American oak (*Quercus rubra*) can be found in the strictly protected zones because of past forestry activities. The mission was informed that projects are in place in Belarus and Poland to fight invasive species. The mission was also informed that recent changes in the Belarussian legislation now made it possible to remove alien species like the American oak in the strict protection zone and that a removal programme was currently underway.

***The mission recommends to maintain efforts to combat invasive species and to reduce at minimum active forest management and other active actions like road renewal to counter and avoid the spread of invasive species in the property.***

### **3.6 Sustainable development at the local level**

During the stakeholder meeting, some local authorities and representatives of the local communities expressed their concerns over the lost income and perceived economic decline as a result of the reduction of forestry activities and timber production. The shortage of cheap firewood was also advanced by several participants. The importance of forest resources, like fire wood, mushrooms and berries as well as the right to free access to the forest was also often stressed.

The mission appreciates the concerns of the local communities and considers it is vital that these concerns are addressed. It notes that as long-term residents, the local communities have to be considered as “right holders” rather than stakeholders. The mission acknowledges that the increased protection requirements for Bialowieza Forest as a World Heritage property inevitably have impacted some economic activities linked to the traditional forestry economy of the region. At the same time, the mission notes that the World Heritage status undoubtedly has facilitated the emergence of new economic opportunities, in particular linked to tourism.

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<sup>18</sup> Seidl et al. (2015), Small beetle, large-scale drivers: how regional and landscape factors affect outbreaks of the European spruce bark beetle, *Journal of Applied Ecology* 2016, 53, 530–540

According to information received by the mission, tourism revenues in 2016 exceeded 17 million Euro, an amount several times higher than revenue generated by forest activities<sup>19</sup>. Tourism revenue also benefits the local communities directly and creates job opportunities. The mission further notes that the development of tourism is directly linked with the conservation of Bialowieza Forest, as it is the undisturbed character and pristineness, which attracts visitors to the area.

***The mission reiterates the recommendation of the 2016 Advisory mission to develop a vision on how the property can contribute to sustainable development of the surrounding region, based on a clear sustainable tourism strategy compatible with the protection of the OUV. The mission also notes the need for a better coordination of the tourism activities between Belarus and Poland. The mission further recommends to elaborate a strategy to create a transboundary Biosphere Reserve to address especially the sustainable development of the region and the benefits for the local populations taking into account the World Heritage property and its values.***

On the question of firewood, the mission notes that a lot of confusion seems to persist on the amount of firewood needed and the mission was presented with different estimates on the amounts needed. The mission reiterates the recommendation of the 2016 mission that these needs should be estimated accurately and that a supply plan should be developed to meet these needs, prioritizing sources coming from the buffer zone or from the active protection zone in line with the overall Management Plan. The mission also notes that the development of alternatives for heating (for example natural gas) has been under discussion for a long time and needs to be considered. The mission notes that forestry activities in Bialowieza are heavily subsidized and that it could be considered to use some of this budget to support the development of alternatives.

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<sup>19</sup> Kowalczyk R. (2018). For the Forest's Sake. On the need to change perceptions of the Bialowieza Primeval Forest's value. In Akademia, Polish Academy of Sciences.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTY

As laid out in the Statement of OUV, the unique nature of this property lies in the scale of its old-growth forests, which include extensive **undisturbed areas where natural processes are on-going**. The property includes large areas with old-growth forest, which have been undisturbed or little disturbed for a very long time, a unique situation for the Central European mixed forests terrestrial ecoregion and in the lowland temperate Western Palearctic region. A consequence is the richness in deadwood, standing and on the ground, and consequently a high diversity of fungi and saproxylic invertebrates. The large and integral forest area supports complete food webs including viable populations of large mammals and large carnivores (wolf, lynx and otter) amongst other. Also in terms of integrity, the SOUV points out that the presence of extensive undisturbed areas is crucial to the nature conservation values of the property.

To protect the OUV, it is therefore crucial to ensure that the ecological processes can continue to unfold without or with very little disturbance. The 2014 nomination recognizes this and states that “undisturbed wild nature is the basic principle for the management (of the Property)” (page 7 of the nomination).

As also noted the nomination, in addition to almost totally undisturbed areas, there are many parts of the forest where there are signs of past limited human use resulting in some disturbance, for example through human-induced fire or other human use of the natural resources. However, these areas have been left undisturbed for decades and free from active forest management and therefore will continue to evolve through natural processes.

To achieve the objective of protecting the OUV, human interference within the ecosystem has to be minimized or excluded in these areas. This is achieved through the establishment of strictly and partially protected zones, which cover more than 80 % of the Belarussian part of the property and more than 70 % of the Polish part of the property. In these zones, the States Parties made a commitment as documented in the nomination file that **no active forest management will be implemented, no logging allowed** (including no sanitary cutting but with the exception of limited safety cutting for fire management activities) **and no wood should be removed**.

The nomination also notes that since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century some areas of Bialowieza Forest have been significantly disturbed and altered through logging activities and through artificial tree planting. The State Party of Poland decided to include these areas in the nominated area as it was considered important “to make the boundaries of the proposed site more compact” (sic, page 14 of the nomination file).

These areas are characterized by stands which are often younger and have a less natural composition. In this zone, limited active forest management practices are permitted. However, the nomination states clearly that this active forest management has the “*objective of maintenance and renaturalization of the habitats and ensurance of favourable conservation status of priority habitats and rare and endangered species, according to the Bird and Habitat Directives*” (page 117 of the nomination).

From the data provided by the State Party of Poland, it is obvious that since 2016, significant logging activities have taken place within the partial protection zone II, where no active forest management was to be permitted to allow for natural process to unfold, therefore directly affecting the OUV. Large areas have been logged (sometimes almost clear cut) to remove trees killed or infected by the bark beetle or under the justification of safety cuttings of areas affected by the bark beetle. In these areas, wood has been removed and commercialized. Although no logging took place in the National Park of the Forest Reserve zones (partial

protection zone I), several of the areas which have been logged are in between Reserve areas and the logging has led to increased habitat fragmentation. Large machinery (tree harvesters etc.) have been used in these operations, resulting in additional significant disturbance and leading to a potential threat due to the spread of invasive alien species. Some of the affected old-growth forests include important habitats for endangered species, which significantly contribute to the values under criterion (x). These impacts on species and habitat are also acknowledged in the Decision of the European Court, which concluded that the active forest management operations resulted in the deterioration and destruction of breeding sites and resting places of species protected under the Habitats and Birds Directive.

According to research on forest cover change using satellite images of July 2015 and July 2018, an area of 675 ha was logged, including 229 ha in old-growth stands (partial protection zone II). Assuming a buffer of 100 m from the edge of cleared forest patches, the cumulative direct and indirect impacts of these logging activities is estimated to be at least 4073 ha leading to an increase of 26% in fragmentation of the property. At the level of partial protection zone II and the active forest management zone, this increase in fragmentation even amounts to 52% and 89 % respectively.<sup>20</sup>

The mission notes that it is clear that the logging activities and related wood removal in the partial protection zone II are contrary to the protection regime foreseen and documented in the nomination. The mission further notes that the extent and intensity of the logging and resulting habitat fragmentation also have impacted the forests in the active conservation zone. Although active forest management activities are permitted in this zone, they should serve the management objective of the “renaturalization” of the habitat and promote the conservation status of priority habitats and rare and endangered species. The mission considers that the extent of active forest management activities in the active forest management zone since 2016 have not been in line with the management objectives as stated in the nomination.

***The mission concludes that the logging operations by the State Party of Poland have disrupted the ecological and natural processes in the property and therefore have impacted negatively on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and constituted an ascertained danger in line with paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines.***

However, the mission notes that the State Party has suspended these logging activities since the beginning of 2018 – following the decision of the European Court – and therefore, at this stage, the mission does not recommend to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. ***The mission further considers that should the State Party of Poland not comply with the management arrangements foreseen in the 2014 nomination, i.e. reinstate any active forest management activities in the strictly protection zone as well as in the partial protection zone I and II, including any logging and sanitary cuts, safety cuttings outside a strip of 50 m along major public roads, removal of deadwood or assisted forest regeneration, the World Heritage Committee should consider inscribing the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.***

The mission notes that since the extension of the property in 2014, the State Party of Belarus has applied a strict protection regime on a very large area of more than 870 % of the area of its part of the World Heritage property. In addition, it has also developed clear forest management regimes for all areas included in its partially protected zone or regulated use

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<sup>20</sup> Grzegorz Mikusinski, Jacob Witold Bubnicki, Marcin Churski, Dorota Czeszczewik, Wiesław Walankiewicz, Dries P.J. Kuijper (2018). Is the impact of loggings in the last primeval lowland forest in Europe underestimated? The conservation issues of Białowieża Forest. In Biological Conservation 227 (2018). Available via [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327867134\\_Is\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_loggings\\_in\\_the\\_last\\_primeval\\_lowland\\_forest\\_in\\_Europe\\_underestimated\\_The\\_conservation\\_issues\\_of\\_Białowieża\\_Forest](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327867134_Is_the_impact_of_loggings_in_the_last_primeval_lowland_forest_in_Europe_underestimated_The_conservation_issues_of_Białowieża_Forest)

zone, which comprises 26 % of the property, including a total ban on logging and deadwood removal on 8500 ha. ***The mission wants to commend the State Party of Belarus for successfully focussing the management of its component of the property on maintaining natural ecological processes.*** The mission notes that the field visits in the Belarussian component emphasized that this non-interventionist forest management policy resulted in successful natural regeneration of areas affected by bark beetle or by windfall. The field visits also demonstrated that active forest management is only required in a limited area to promote certain endangered species but that this does not require large scale sanitary cuttings or salvage logging, as it was applied in Poland.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The unique nature of the Bialowieza Forest World Heritage property lies in the scale of its old-growth forests, which include extensive undisturbed areas where natural processes are ongoing. To achieve the objective of protecting this OUV, human interference within the ecosystem has to be minimized or excluded in these areas. This is achieved through the establishment of strictly or partially protected zones, which cover the more than 80 % of the Belarussian part of the property and more than 70 % of the Polish part of the property.

The mission notes that the **State Party of Belarus**, in line with the nomination, is applying a strict protection regime in these areas and has developed clear forest management regimes for all areas included in its partially protected zone and regulated use zone. The mission concludes that the State Party of Belarus has successfully focussed the management of its component of the property on maintaining natural ecological processes.

The mission further notes that between 2016 and 2018, the **State Party of Poland** has implemented logging and active forest management activities, which are not in line with the commitments formulated in the nomination, including in the partially protected zone II, which includes old-growth forest of more than 100 years old. The mission concludes that these logging operations and other forest management activities have disrupted the ecological and natural processes in the property and therefore have **impacted negatively on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Property and constituted an ascertained danger in line with paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines**.

However, the mission acknowledges that the State Party of Poland has suspended these logging activities since the beginning of 2018 and therefore, at this stage, the mission does not recommend to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The mission further considers that **should the State Party of Poland not comply with the management arrangements foreseen in the 2014 nomination, i.e. reinitiate any active forest management activities in the strictly protection zone as well as in the partial protection zone I and II, including any logging including sanitary cutting, safety cuttings outside a strip of 50 m along major public roads, removal of deadwood or assisted forest regeneration, the World Heritage Committee should consider inscribing the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger**.

To adequately protect the OUV of the property, the mission makes the following **priority recommendations** to the State Party of Belarus and Poland:

### **Recommendation 1 (to the State Party of Poland)**

Ensure that all forest operations in the property comply with the following management arrangements in line with the 2014 nomination:

- In the strictly protection zone as well as in the partial protection zone I and II, ensure that no forest management interventions are undertaken, including removal of deadwood, sanitary cuttings or any active regeneration activities (including soil preparation and tree planting);
- In the active protection zone, limit forest management activities exclusively to interventions directly aiming at speeding up the process of tree stand replacement to a more natural broadleaved oak – hornbeam forest or at preserving certain associated non-forest habitats, including wet meadows, river valleys and other wetlands and habitats of endangered plants, animals and fungi. The necessary active protection measures should be detailed in the integrated management plan.
- In the entire property, restrict safety cuttings only to areas along specific roads and paths (on 50 m distance from each side) on the basis of a clear risk evaluation plan;
- For the entire property, develop and implement a comprehensive Forest Fire Prevention and Suppression plan based on a detailed and realistic risk assessment, to

be included in the integrated management plan and taking into account the observations in this report.

**Recommendation 2 (to the State Party of Poland)**

Revoke the amendment on the Forest Management Plan for the Bialowieza Forest District and ensure that the any new FMP for areas within the property are based on the new overall Management Plan of the Polish part of the property. The existing FMPs should not be amended or only in a very restrictive way to allow for strictly necessary safety measures as stipulated above and on the basis of a clear risk evaluation plan. Any amendment to the existing FMP should be sent to the World Heritage Centre with a clear justification, for review by IUCN, before approval.

**Recommendation 3 (to the State Parties of Poland and Belarus)**

Expedite the preparation of a transboundary management plan, defining the overall management vision for the Property in order to conserve the OUV as defined in the SOUV, defining the transboundary governance system and identifying common areas of collaboration, including restoration of the hydrological regime of the Property, connectivity, management of the bison population, etc.

**Recommendation 4 (to the State party of Poland)**

As a matter of urgency, develop an overall management plan for the Polish part of the Property taking into account the following recommendations:

- Involve all actors and stakeholders (BNP, SFS, scientists of disciplines linked to the attributes, NGOs);
- Ensure the protection of OUV (as defined in the Decision 38 COM 8B.12) as the central objective of the management plan;
- Define the management activities on the basis of a mapping of the attributes defining the OUV. The richness of scientific data available will facilitate such mapping.
- Define an eventual adjustment of the zoning in areas to simplify the current situation, without decreasing the area excluded from active forest management (strict protection zone and partial protection zones I and II);
- Align all other management plans on the basis of the overall management plan;
- Define clear joint governance arrangements the Bialowieza National Park, the State Forest Service and the Ministry of Environment;
- Submit a draft of the overall management plan to WHC before taking a final approval of the plan;

**Recommendation 5 (to the State Party of Belarus)**

Strengthen the legal status of the overall Management Plan of the Belarus part of the Property, making it obligatory for all other relevant management plans to be aligned with it and adapt the other management plans (Forest, Wildlife) on the basis of the new overall Management plan in order to take into account the protection of the OUV;

**Recommendation 6 (to the State Party of Belarus)**

Continue the moratorium on wolf hunting in BPNP and consider making this moratorium permanent by legally forbidding wolf hunting in the BPNP, in order for the population to continue its recovery to its historical size and ensure that wildlife management activities further limit the population of red deer and maintain the population of elk;

**Recommendation 7 (to the State Party of Poland)**

Halt the upgrading works on the Narewowska road until a detailed EIA is prepared and submitted which assesses the impacts of the road improvement on the OUV of the Property, in line with paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;

**Recommendation 8 (to the State Parties of Poland and Belarus)**

Develop a vision on how the property can contribute to sustainable development of the surrounding region, based on a clear sustainable tourism strategy compatible with the protection of the OUV.

The mission further proposes the following recommendations as additional measures, which can support the implementation of the key recommendations stated above:

- Establish and define a transboundary scientific committee and advisory board and define its role in the transboundary management plan;
- Resume the discussions on how to improve connectivity in the overall Bialowieza forest ecosystem, including across the boundary between Belarus and Poland;
- Continue efforts to restore the hydrology of the forest ecosystem and increase the transboundary coordination regarding this point;
- Maintain efforts to combat invasive species and reduce to a minimum active forest management and other active actions like road renewal to counter and avoid the spread of invasive species in the Property;
- Elaborate a strategy to create a transboundary biosphere reserve to promote the sustainable development of the region and the benefits for the local populations taking into account the World Heritage property and its values.

## **6. ANNEXES**

## **Annex 6.1      Terms of Reference of the mission**

At its 41st session, the World Heritage Committee requested the States Parties of Belarus and Poland to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the transboundary World Heritage Property “Białowieża Forest” (**41 COM 7B.1**, Annex 1). The objective of the monitoring mission is to assess the state of conservation of the Property, to evaluate current and potential impacts of recent, ongoing and planned forest management operations on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Property and to assess whether the Property meets the criteria for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Therefore, the mission should assess

1. current and potential impacts of all recent, ongoing and planned forest management operations on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Property, and assess whether these activities represent an ascertained or potential danger to the OUV of the Property, in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the *Operational Guidelines*. This assessment should include a review of
  - a. the Amendment to the Forest Management Plan for the Białowieża Forest District on the Polish side of the Property and the respective Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and
  - b. forest management activities that have been referred to as sanitary cuttings in respect to their impact on the OUV.

Furthermore, the mission should evaluate

2. the progress achieved by the States Parties in preparing a Transboundary Management Plan for the entire Property, and
3. any other relevant issues that may negatively impact on the OUV of the Property, including its conditions of integrity and protection and management, in line with paragraph 173 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

The States Parties should facilitate necessary field visits to key locations in both the Belarusian and Polish parts of the Property, including the active and strict conservation zones, areas in which forest management and wood extraction activities have taken place and are due to take place. The mission should seek clarification from the relevant authorities for which purpose the logged wood is used.

To enable the mission’s preparation, the States Parties should, as soon as possible and preferably no later than one month prior to the mission, provide the World Heritage Centre and IUCN with

- a) An inventory demonstrating the volume of trees felled where and when as well as their age, species and final use of wood,
- b) Detailed maps demonstrating in which areas wood extraction and forest management activities, including sanitary cuttings, have recently taken place, are currently ongoing or are planned to be carried out in the future,
- c) The most recent versions of any forest management plans applicable within the boundaries of the Property, most recent versions of the management plans for the Białowieża Forest National Park (Poland) and Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Belarus) and an update on the preparation of the Transboundary Management Plan for the entire Property, as well as provisions for an integrated transboundary management framework.

The mission should hold consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including representatives of the Ministry of Environment of Poland, the Polish Forestry Administration, the Directorate of the Białowieża Forest National Park (Poland) and the Directorate of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Belarus), as well as relevant regional and local authorities and representatives of civil society, including local communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), relevant scientists and experts such as biodiversity specialists and ecologists.

Based on the results of the above-mentioned reviews, assessments and discussions with the representatives of the States Parties and other stakeholders, the mission should prepare a concise report on the findings and recommendations within six weeks following the site visit, following the attached reactive monitoring mission report format (Annex 2). The mission's recommendations to the Governments of Belarus and Poland as well as the World Heritage Committee should have the objective of providing guidance to the States Parties to ensure the ongoing conservation of the Property's OUV. It should be noted that recommendations should be provided in the mission report and not during the mission.

**Decision: 41 COM 7B.1**

**Białowieża Forest (Belarus / Poland) (N 33ter)**

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/17/41.COM/7B.Add,
2. Recalling Decision **40 COM 7B.92**, adopted at its 40th session (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016),
3. Welcomes the decision by the State Party of Belarus to increase the strict protection zone of the Belarussian part of the Property;
4. Notes the information provided by the States Parties regarding the activities termed sanitary cuttings undertaken in the Polish part of the Property and the conclusions of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Amendment to the Forest Management Plan for the Białowieża Forest District but, noting that the separate evaluation of potential impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Property mainly summarized the conclusions of the SEA, considers that the focus of the SEA on assessing potential impacts to the Natura 2000 site "Puszcza Białowieska", does not represent an adequate assessment of impacts on the OUV of the Property;
5. Reiterates its position that commercial wood extraction within the entire Property would represent a potential danger to the Property in accordance with Paragraph 180 of the *Operational Guidelines*, and notes with utmost concern the infringement decision issued by the European Commission in relation to Białowieża Forest in Poland, which noted that increased logging is likely to adversely affect the conservation of the site's habitats and species as well as cause irreparable biodiversity loss, including through removal of 100-year and older trees, and that these measures would, according to the evidence available, exceed those that would be necessary for ensuring the safe use of the forest;
6. Reiterates its request to the State Party of Poland to maintain the continuity and integrity of protected old-growth forest in Białowieża Forest and strongly urges it to immediately halt all logging and wood extraction in old-growth forests, and to clarify

third party reports about logging targeting species other than those affected by bark beetle, which cannot be justified as so-called sanitary cuttings;

7. Requests the States Parties to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission to the Property to evaluate current and potential impacts of ongoing and planned forest management operations on the OUV of the Property and to assess whether the Property meets the criteria for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger;
8. While also noting the conclusion of the States Parties that the preparation of the Transboundary Management Plan for the Property will require several years, also reiterates its request to the States Parties to prepare such a Plan as a matter of priority in order to ensure a coordinated approach to the management of the Property and to guarantee that no actions can be allowed within the entire Property that could negatively impact on its OUV;
9. Also requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 December 2018**, an updated report on the state of conservation of the Property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 43rd session in 2019, **with a view to considering in case of confirmation of ascertained or potential danger to Outstanding Universal Value, the possible inscription of the Property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.**

## Annex 6.2 Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of Bialowieza Forest

### Brief synthesis

Bialowieza Forest is a large forest complex located on the border between Poland and Belarus. Thanks to several ages of protection the Forest had survived in its natural state to this day. The Bialowieza National Park, Poland, was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979 and extended to include Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Belarus, in 1992. A large extension of the Property in 2014 results in a Property of 141,885 ha with a buffer zone of 166,708 ha.

This Property includes a complex of lowland forests that are characteristics of the Central European mixed forests terrestrial ecoregion. **The area has exceptionally conservation significance due to the scale of its old growth forests, which include extensive undisturbed areas where natural processes are on-going.** A consequence is the richness in dead wood, standing and on the ground, and consequently a high diversity of fungi and saproxylic invertebrates. The Property protects a diverse and rich wildlife of which 59 mammal species, over 250 bird, 13 amphibian, 7 reptile and over 12,000 invertebrate species. The iconic symbol of the Property is the European Bison: approximately 900 individuals in the whole Property which make almost 25% of the total world's population and over 30% of free-living animals.

**Criterion (ix):** Bialowieza Forest conserves a diverse complex of protected forest ecosystems which exemplify the Central European mixed forests terrestrial ecoregion, and a range of associated non-forest habitats, including wet meadows, river valleys and other wetlands. The area has an exceptionally high nature conservation value, including extensive old-growth forests. The large and integral forest area supports complete food webs including viable populations of large mammals and large carnivores (wolf, lynx and otter) amongst other. The richness in dead wood, standing and on the ground, leads to a consequent high diversity of fungi and saproxylic invertebrates. The long tradition of research on the little disturbed forest ecosystem and the numerous publications, including description of new species, also contributes significantly to the values of the nominated Property.

**Criterion (x):** Bialowieza Forest is an irreplaceable area for biodiversity conservation, due in particular to its size, protection status, and substantially undisturbed nature. The Property is home to the largest free-roaming population of European Bison, which is the iconic species of this Property. However the biodiversity conservation values are extensive, and include protection for 59 mammal species, over 250 bird species, 13 amphibians, 7 reptiles, and over 12,000 invertebrates. The flora is diverse and regionally significant, and the Property also is notable for conservation of fungi. Several new species have been described here and many threatened species are still well represented.

### Integrity

The Property is a large, coherent area conserved via a range of protective designations representing the full range of forest ecosystems of the region, and providing habitat for large mammals. **The presence of extensive undisturbed areas is crucial to its nature conservation values.** Some of the ecosystems represented in the Property (wet meadows, wetlands, river corridors) require maintenance through active management, due to the decrease of water flow and absence of agriculture (hay cutting). The buffer zone that has been proposed by both State Parties appears sufficient to provide effective protection of the integrity of the Property from threats from outside its boundaries. There are some connectivity challenges, from barriers inside the Property, and its relative isolation within surrounding agricultural landscapes, that require continued management and monitoring.

## **Protection and management requirements**

The Property benefits from legal and institutional protection in both States Parties, through a variety of protected area designations.

Protection and management requires strong and effective cooperation between the States Parties, and also between institutions in each State Party. The Bialowieza National Park (Poland), the Polish Forestry Administration and the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park authorities have entered into an agreement regarding preparation and implementation of an integrated management plan for the nominated Property, and to establish a transboundary steering group. In addition the State Party of Poland has developed an agreement establishing a Steering Committee between the National Park and the Forest Administration aiming to achieve a coordinated approach to integrated management. It is essential to ensure the effective functioning of this Steering Committee, including through regular meetings, and its input to transboundary coordination and management. It is essential that the national parks of both States Parties maintain effective and legally adopted management plans, and an adopted management plan for the Bialowieza National Park (Poland), to support its inclusion in the Property, is an essential and long-term requirement.

It is essential to ensure that the integrated management plan for the Property addresses all key issues concerning the effective management of this Property, particularly forest, meadows and wetlands management, and that it is adequately funded on a long term basis to ensure its effective implementation.

Effective and well-resourced conservation management is the main long-term requirement to secure the Property, and maintain the necessary management interventions that sustain its natural values. Threats that require long-term attention via monitoring and continued management programmes include fire management, the impacts of barriers to connectivity, including roads, firebreaks and the border fence. There is also scope to continually improve aspects of the management of the Property, including in relation to ensuring connectivity within the Property, and in its wider landscape, and to also secure enhanced community engagement.

### Annex 6.3 List of people met

Warszawa, 24.09.2018

Name and surname	Institution	Function
Henryk Kowalczyk	Ministry of the Environment	Minister of the Environment
Małgorzata Golińska	Ministry of the Environment	Secretary of State
Jarosław Spyra	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ambassador
Anna Marconi	The National Heritage Institute	Head of Unit
Sławomir Ratajski	Polish National Commission for UNESCO	Secretary General
Andrzej Konieczny	General Directorate of the State Forests	Director General
Bogusław Piątek	General Directorate of the State Forests	Deputy Director
Jan Tabor	General Directorate of the State Forests	Head of Unit
Andrzej Szweda Lewandowski	General Directorate of the Environmental Protection	General Director
Rafał Paluch	Forestry Research Institut	Head of Unit
Jacek Hilszczański	Forestry Research Institut	Deputy Director
Jakub Wiśniewski	Ministry of Culture and National Heritage	Counselor to the Minister
Jacek Sagan	Department of Forestry	Director
Tomasz Zygmunt	Department of Forestry	Deputy Director
Piotr Kowalczyk	Department of Forestry	Specialist
Agnieszka Dalbiak	Department of Nature Conservation	Director
Wojciech Hurkał	Department of Nature Conservation	Deputy Director
Zygmunt Krzemiński	Department of Nature Conservation	Counselor to the Minister

Białowieża, 25 and 28 of September 2018

Name and surname	Institution	Function
Małgorzata Golińska	Ministry of the Environment	Secretary of State

Agnieszka Dalbiak	Department of Nature Conservation Ministry of the Environment	Director
Guy Debonnet	UNESCO	Expert
Carlo Ossola	IUCN	Expert
Beata Bezubik	Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Białystok	Director
Katarzyna Gurowska	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	Specialist
Jan Tabor	General Directorate of the State Forests	Head of Unit
Bogusław Piątek	General Directorate of the State Forests	Deputy Director
Jacek Sagan	Department of the Forestry	Director
Piotr Kowalczyk	Department of the Forestry	Specialist
Urszula Olejnicka	The Browsk Forest District	Specialist
Robert Miszczak	The Browsk Forest District	Head of Forest District
Jacek Hilszczański	Forest Research Institute	Deputy Director
Piotr Karnasiewicz	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	specialist
Anna Marconi-Betka	The National Heritage Institute	Head of Unit
Rafał Paluch	Forest Research Institute	Head of Unit
Mariusz Agiejczyk	The Hajnówka Forest District	Head of Forest District
Dariusz Skirko	The Białowieża Forest District	Head of Forest District
Andrzej Szweda Lewandowski	General Directorate of the Environmental Protection	Director General
Michał Krzysiak	Białowieża National Park	Director
Mateusz Szymura	Białowieża National Park	Specialist
Adam Kwiatkowski	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	Head of Unit
Dmitrij Bernacki	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park <b>Belarus</b>	
Vassili Arnolbik	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park <b>Belarus</b>	Deputy Director
Slava Kravchuk	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park <b>Belarus</b>	
Rafał Kowalczyk	Mammal Research Institute Polish Academy of Sciences	Director

Białowieża, 26 September 2018

Name and surname	Institution	Function
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Sławomir Ratajski	Polish National Commission for UNESCO	Secretary General
Jadwiga Dąbrowska	Hajnówka County	Vice-Chairman of Hajnówka County
Walentyna Pietroczyk	Hajnówka County Office	Head of Unit
Ślusarczyk Radosław	Non-governmental organization „Laboratory for All Beings Association”	
Diana Maciąga	Non-governmental organization “Workshop for All Beings Association”	
Carlo Ossola	IUCN International Union for Conservation of Nature	Expert
Jerzy Bałtyga	Interpreter/Translator	Interpreter/Translator
Guy Debonnet	UNESCO	Expert
Małgorzata Golińska	Ministry of the Environment	Secretary of State
Agnieszka Dalbiak	Department of Nature Conservation Ministry of the Environment	Director
Beata Bezubik	Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Białystok	Director
Katarzyna Gurowska	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	Specialist
Jan Tabor	General Directorate of the State Forests	Head of Unit
Michał Żmichorski	The Institute of Nature Conservation of the Polish Academy of Sciences	
Tomasz Pezold Knezevic	WWF Polska World Wide Fund for Nature Poland	

Przemysław Chylarecki	Greenmind Foundation	Chairman
Bogusław Piątek	General Directorate of the State Forests	Deputy Director
Jacek Sagan	Department of Forestry Ministry of the Environment	Director
Piotr Kowalczyk	Department of Forestry Ministry of the Environment	Specialist
Piotr Beszterda	Matecznik Association	
Danuta Kaczyńska	The Polish Society for the Protection of Birds	Chairwoman
Joanna Łapińska	Non-governmental organization  "Local community against cutting out Białowieża Forest"	
Bogdan Jaroszewicz	Białowieża Geobotanical Station  University of Warsaw	Director
Oliwia Hurley	Inhabitant	Private person
Anna Nikitiuk	inhabitant	Private person
Elżbieta Laprus	Commune Council of Białowieża	V-Chairwoman
Krzysztof Zamojski	Commune Council of Białowieża	Chair
Urszula Olejnicka	The Browsk Forest District	Specialist
Robert Miszczak	The Browsk Forest District	Head of Forest District
Jacek Hilszczański	Forest Research Institute	Deputy Director
Piotr Karnasiewicz	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	specialist

Robert Cierech	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	specialist
Marta Grundland	Greenpeace Poland	
Joanna Pawluśkiewicz	Camp for the Forest	
Augustyn Mikos	Camp for the Forest	
Adam Bohdan	The Wild Poland Foundation	
Anna Marconi-Betka	The National Heritage Institute	Head of Unit
Rafał Kowalczyk	The Mammal Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences	Director
Jan Łukaszewicz	Polish Forest Society	
Rafał Paluch	Forest Research Institute Department of Natural Forests	Head of Unit
Agata Szafraniuk	ClientEarth	
Ostapczuk Eugeniusz	Bojarski Guest house	local businessman
Kabać Elżbieta	Bojarski Guest house	local businessman
Piotr Pietraszko	Provincial Headquarters of the State Fire Service	Provincial commander
Piotr Koszczuk	District Headquarters of the State Fire Service	district commander
Marcin Janowski	District Headquarters of the State Fire Service	Head of Unit
Mariusz Agiejczyk	The Hajnówka Forest District	Head of Forest District
Dariusz Skirko	The Białowieża Forest District	Head of Forest District

Marek Ksepko	The Forest Management and Geodesy Bureau	Deputy Director
Andrzej Karczewski	Białowieża National Park	Head of Unit
Krzysztof Trębski	General Directorate of the State Forests	Specialist
Artur Rutkowski	General Directorate of the State Forests	Specialist
Rafał Zubkowicz	General Directorate of the State Forests	Spokesperson
Mikołaj Pawlicz	The Communal Office of Narewka	Commune Head
Grzegorz Kasprowicz	The Communal Office of Białowieża	Commune Head
Jerzy Sirak	The Municipal Office of Hajnówka	Head
Michał Wróblewski	The Communal Office of Czeremcha	Commune Head
Andrzej Szweda Lewandowki	General Directorate of the Environmental Protection	General Director
Michał Krzysiak	Białowieża National Park	Director
Michał Książek	Camp for the Forest	
Artur Rudkowski	The Information Centre of the State Forests	
Dmitrij Bernacki	„Białowieska Puszcza” Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park <b>Belarus</b>	
Vassily Arnolbik	„Białowieska Puszcza” Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park <b>Belarus</b>	
Slava Kravchuk	„Białowieska Puszcza” Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park <b>Belarus</b>	

Mateusz Szymura	Białowieża National Park	specialist
Aleksander Bołbot	Białowieża National Park	Deputy Director
Adam Kwiatkowski	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	Head of Unit
Zygmunt Krzemiński	Department of Nature Conservation Ministry of the Environment	Counselor to the Minister

Białowieża, 27 September 2018

Name and surname	Institution	Function
Przemysław Chylarecki	Fundation Greenmind	
Tomasz Pezold Knezevic	WWF Poland	
Adam Bohdan	Wild Poland Foundation	
Michał Żmihorski	Institute of Nature Conservation Polish Academy of Sciences	
Radosław Ślusarczyk	Laboratory for all Beings	
Diana Maciąga	Laboratory for all Beings	
Agata Szafraniuk	ClientEarth Lawyers for the land	
Adam Wajrak	Gazeta Wyborcza Newspaper	
Augustyn Mikos	Camp for the forest	
Michał Książek	Camp for the forest	
Joanna Pawluśkiewicz	Camp for the forest	
Rafał Kowalczyk	Mammal Research Institute Polish Academy of Sciences Białowieża	Director
dr hab. Bohdan Jaroszewicz	Institute of Botany Geobotanical Station in Białowieża Faculty of Biology University of Warsaw	Director
Anna Nikitiuk	Private person	
Oliwia Hurley	Private person	
Guy Debonnet	UNESCO	Expert
Carlo Ossola	IUCN	Expert
Małgorzata Golińska	Ministry of the Environment	Secretary of State

Agnieszka Dalbiak	Department of Nature Conservation	Director
Beata Bezubik	Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Białystok	Director
Katarzyna Gurowska	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	Specialist
Jan Tabor	General Directorate of the State Forests	Head of Unit
Bogusław Piątek	General Directorate of the State Forests	Deputy Director
Jacek Sagan	Department of the Forestry	Director
Piotr Kowalczyk	Department of the Forestry	Specialist
Urszula Olejnicka	The Browsk Forest District	Specialist
Robert Miszczak	The Browsk Forest District	Head of Forest District
Jacek Hilszczański	Forest Research Institute	Deputy Director
Piotr Karnasiewicz	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	specialist
Anna Marconi-Betka	The National Heritage Institute	Head of Unit
Rafał Paluch	Forest Research Institute	Head of Unit
Mariusz Agiejczyk	The Hajnówka Forest District	Head of Forest District
Dariusz Skirko	The Białowieża Forest District	Head of Forest District
Andrzej Szweda Lewandowski	General Directorate of the Environmental Protection	Director General
Michał Krzysiak	Białowieża National Park	Director
Mateusz Szymura	Białowieża National Park	Specialist
Adam Kwiatkowski	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	Head of Unit
Dmitrij Bernacki	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park <b>Belarus</b>	
Vassili Arnolbik	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park <b>Belarus</b>	
Slava Kravchuk	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park <b>Belarus</b>	

28  
and  
29

September 2018, Belarus

Name	Position
Anna Marconi-Betka	
Katarzyna Gurowska	
Jan Tabor	
Jerzy Bałdyga	
Tomasz Zygmunt	
Marek Konarzewski	
Aleksandr Bolbot	
Aleksandr Buryj	General Director National Park «Belovezhskaya Pushcha»

Natal'ja Rybjanec	Vice-Chairperson Belarus UNESCO-MAB National Committee
Tamara Jalkovskaja	Chairman of the Brest regional Committee of natural resources and environmental protection
Aleksandr Pugačevskij	Director Institute of experimental botany of NAS of Belarus
Vassili Arnolbik	Deputy General Director National Park «Belovezhskaya Pushcha»
Vasilij Filimonov	Chief Forester National Park «Belovezhskaya Pushcha»
Dmitrij Bernackij	Senior researcher National Park «Belovezhskaya Pushcha»
Viktor Fenčuk	Program leader for Belarus Frankfurt zoological society

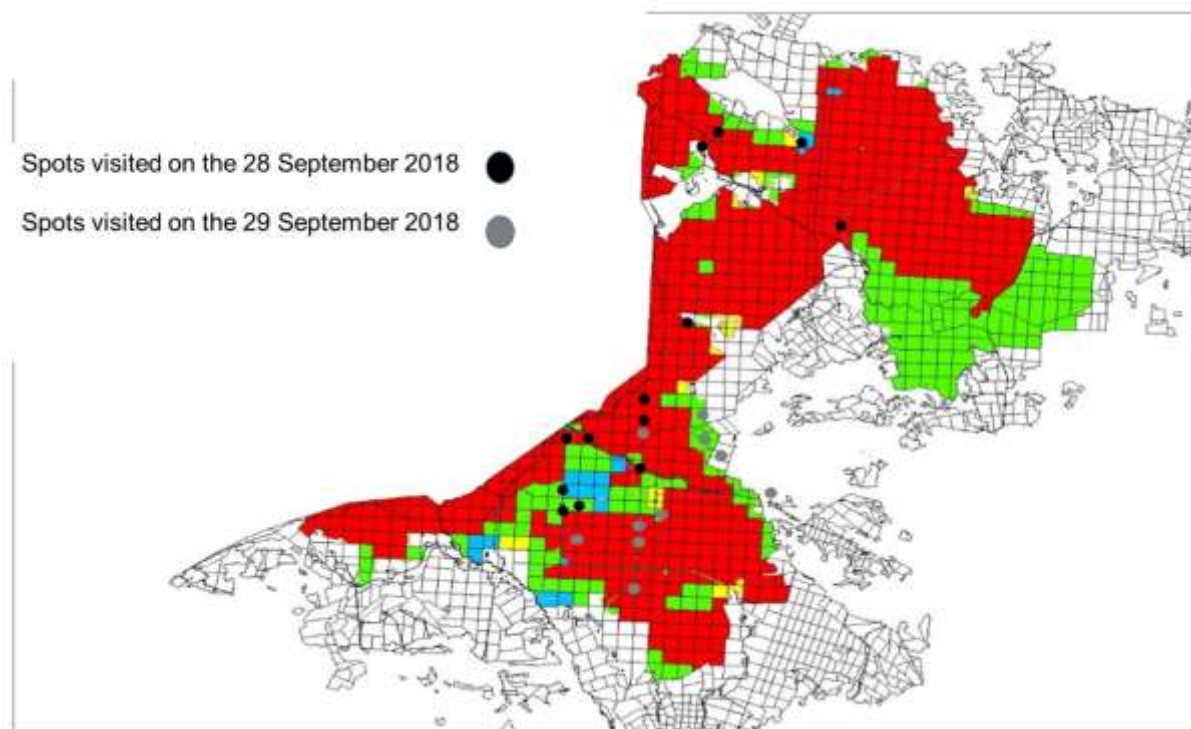
Bialowieza 1 October 2018

<b>Name and surname</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Function</b>
Małgorzata Golińska	Ministry of the Environment	Secretary of State
Agnieszka Dalbiak	Ministry of the Environment Department of Nature Conservation	Director
Marek Konarzewski	Polish National Commission for UNESCO	Expert
Bogusław Piątek	General Directorate of the State Forests	Deputy Director
Jan Tabor	General Directorate of the State Forests	Head of Unit
Katarzyna Gurowska	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	Specialist
Adam Kwiatkowski	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	Specialist
Dariusz Skirko	The Białowieża Forest District	Head of Forest District
Robert Miszczak	The Browsk Forest District	Head of Forest District
Mariusz Agiejczyk	The Hajnówka Forest District	Head of Forest District

Michał Krzysiak	Białowieża National Park	Director
Aleksander Bołbot	Białowieża National Park	Deputy Director
Jacek Hilszczański	Forest Research Institute	Deputy Director
Rafał Paluch	Forest Research Institute	Head of Unit
Piotr Paschalis	Warsaw University of Life Sciences – (WULS-SGGW)	
Tomasz Zygmunt	Ministry of the Environment Department of Forestry	Deputy Director
Mateusz Szymura	Białowieża National Park	Specialist
Zygmunt Krzemiński	Department of Nature Conservation	Counselor to the Minister
Guy Debonnet	UNESCO	Expert
Carlo Ossola	IUCN	Expert
Jerzy Bałdyga	Translator	
Vassily Arnolbik <b>Belarus</b>	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park	Deputy Director
Aleksandr Bury <b>Belarus</b>	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park	Director
Vassily Filimonov <b>Belarus</b>	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park	
Dmitrij Bernacki <b>Belarus</b>	Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park	
Natalia Rybienieć <b>Belarus</b>	National Committee MAB	
Aleksander Pugaczewski <b>Belarus</b>	Institute of Botany Belarusian Academy of Sciences	
Anna Marconi-Betka	National Heritage Institute of Poland	Head of Unit
Dawid Iwaniuk	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	Deputy Director
Andrzej Nowak	Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Białystok	Director

## Annex 6.4 Itinerary and agenda of the mission

Time		Activity
24 September	12.30 – 14.00	Meeting with the polish authorities, at the Ministry of environment
	Trip to Bialowieza	
25 September	All day	Visit of the Białowieża- Forest District “Browsk” Visit to different zones of the Forest district, security cuttings along the main road between Hajnowka and Narewka, regenerated forests in the North of the property.
26 September	Morning	Opening meeting in conference hall of Białowieża NP
	Afternoon	Discussion with the NGO's and scientists
	Evening	Summary of the day in the Conference Hall
27 September	Morning/Afternoon	Visit to the Forest District “Białowieża”, Sanitary/Safety cuttings, Narewkowska road,
28 September	Morning	Visit to the Bialowieza NP
		Visit to the Forest District “Hajnówka”
	Afternoon	First summary of the session for the polish side
	Evening	Departure for Belarus
29 September	All day	Visit to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, see map in Annex
30 September	All day	Visit to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, see map I n Annex
	Evening	Summary for the Belarus side
1 October	Morning	Departure to Bialowieza (PL)
		Summary of the mission for the both parts
	Afternoon	Return to Warsaw



Map of the main spots visited in Belarus

## Annex 6.5    Photographs



1. Forest District "Browsk" Barkbeetle outbreak and safety cuttings (25.09.18) © Guy Debonnet



2. Forest District "Browsk", human made regeneration in fenced parcels after a Barkbeetle outbreak (25.09.18) © Carlo Ossola



3. On-going work on the Narewowska road (27.09.18) © Guy Debonnet



4. On-going work on the Narewowska road, drainages (27.09.18) © Guy Debonnet



5. *Extensive safety cuttings in the Forest District "Białowieża" with wood removal (27.09.18) © Guy Debonnet*



6. *Safety cuttings in the Forest District "Białowieża", wood removal (27.09.18) © Guy Debonnet*



7. Extensive sanitary cuttings, wood extraction and soil preparation after a Bark beetle outbreak in the Forest District "Białowieża", (27.09.18) © Carlo Ossola



8. No entry sign on the path of the cutting site of the former picture (27.09.18) © Carlo Ossola



9. Different designation signs on the entry of the Białowieża national park (28.09.18) © Guy Debonnet



10. Old forest stand with deadwood, Białowieża national park (28.09.18) © Guy Debonnet



11. *Regeneration with no human intervention after a Bark beetle outbreak, Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (28.09.18) © Guy Debonnet*



12. *Wetland, Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (28.09.18) © Guy Debonnet*



13. Old forest stand with deadwood, Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (28.09.18) © Guy Debonnet



14. Regeneration of a forest stand after a bark beetle outbreak based on a non-human intervention regime, Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (28.09.18) © Guy Debonnet



15. Safety cuttings along the roads, no wood extraction, Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (28.09.18) © Guy Debonnet



16. Safety cuttings along the roads, no wood extraction, Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (28.09.18) © Guy Debonnet

**Annex 6.6      Extract from nomination file (supplementary information November 2013)**

## **Management Plan for the World Heritage Property „Bialowieza Forest”**

### **Roadmap for preparation and implementation**

The entire area of the Bialowieza National Park (Poland), National Park “Belovezhskaya Pushcha” (Belarus) and State Forests (Poland) is owned by the State of respective countries, thus all parts are State Property. There are no private properties within the Property in its proposed boundaries. Private property is present however in the proposed buffer zone.

The Transboundary World Heritage Property “Bialowieza Forest”, situated at the border between Poland and Belarus is administered by three administrative authorities: National Park “Belovezhskaya Pushcha” manages the part of the Property situated within the Belarusian borders. Polish part of the Property is managed by the Bialowieza National Park and by the State Forests. State Forests administer the area of the Bialowieza Forest which is not enclosed within the boundaries of the Bialowieza National Park. The whole area of Polish part of the Bialowieza Forest outside the national park constitutes the Forest Promotional Complex “Bialowieza Forest” which is composed of three Forest Districts: Bialowieza, Browsk and Hajnowka. For clear in this document the component administered by the State Forests will be referred to as Forest Promotional Complex “Bialowieza Forest” (FPC “BF”).

Tab. 1. Component parts of the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone.

	Component part	Area within the boundaries of WHS (ha)	Area of the buffer zone of WHS (ha)	Total
Belarus	National Park “Belovezhskaya Pushcha”	82 308.6	130 873.4	213 182
Poland	Bialowieza National Park	10 467	0	10 467
	Forest Promotional Complex “Bialowieza Forest”	49 109.09	35 834.91	84 944
	Total	141885	166 708	308 593

Tab. 2. Changes between existing boundaries of the property and the proposal.

	Original area (1992) (ha)	Added area (ha)	Subtracted area (ha)	Nomination 2013 (ha)
Poland – WH Property	5 069,00	54 557,00	49.04	59 576,00
Belarus – WH Property	87 600,00	9 409,60	14 701,00	82 308.60
Total WH Property	92 669,00	63 966,60	14 750,04	<b>141 884,60</b>
Poland – buffer zone	0	35 835,00	0	35 835,00
Belarus – buffer zone	0	130 873.40	0	130 873.40
Total buffer zone	0	166 708,40	0	166 708,40
Total WH Property with buffer zone.	92 669,00	230 675,00	14 750,04	<b>308 593,00</b>

The management plan for the World Heritage Property „Białowieża Forest” is in preparation. It is based on the following documents:

1. Protection plan for the Białowieża National Park
2. Management tasks for the Natura 2000 Site
3. Management Plan for the State Forests Administrative Units: Białowieża, Browsk, Hajnówka
4. Management Plan for the National Park “Białowieża Forest” (Belarus)

For more information see Table 3.

All the documents are put through the public consultation process and all remarks received are taken into consideration. For creating the management plan for the WHP the following steps are foreseen:

1. Steering committee for the Polish part of the WHP – end of 2013

At the moment there is an agreement signed by the Director of the Białowieża National Park and the Head Foresters of Forest divisions: Białowieża, Browsk and Hajnówka (Annex I).

Invitations to interested parties (listed in the agreement) to join the Steering Committee will be sent soon so the Committee may start its work by the end of the year.

2. English summary of Management Plan for the State Forests Administrative Units: Białowieża, Browsk, Hajnówka – middle of 2014.
3. Acceptance of the Management Plan for the BNP – middle of 2014.
4. International Steering committee – middle of 2014

5. Acceptance of the Management Tasks for Natura 2000 – end of 2014
6. Preparing of detailed maps of activities – end of 2014
7. Management plan for the World Heritage Property – middle of 2015

For managing the area of the proposed World Heritage Site “Bialowieza Forest”, the area is divided into management zones. The regulations are summarised in the Table 4. Taking into consideration the fact that the Property is situated in two different countries with different political and social environment we present the zoning and the regulations separately for Polish and Belarusian parts of the Property.

## **POLAND**

### **Strict protection**

According to the definition, the principle of the strict protection is to leave specified area entirely in the power of natural forces where humans have no direct interference. The strict protection enables free course of ecological processes, eg. forest regeneration after cessing cutting, changes in the species composition and in a structure of forest communities, which are results of natural development of forest stands and processes of succession.

Activities permitted within the area subjected to the strict protection regime are as follows:

- a) monitoring of the condition of biotic and abiotic components of ecosystems;
- b) recognition of the state and threats of resources and components;
- c) taking of generative and vegetative propagules for ex-situ breeding and reintroduction programmes of species with special needs;
- d) fire prevention measures;
- e) maintenance of main roads and routes passable in order to ensure fire safety and safety for people being on the territory of the Park;
- f) repairs of tourism, information and educational infrastructure related to public access to the area;
- g) protection against not-entitled human penetration and harmful activities;
- h) minimization of the negative effects of public access to the area.

### **Partial protection I**

This protection regime encompasses some area of the Bialowieza National Park and all nature reserves managed by the State Forest Administration. The basic difference between strict protection

and Partial protection I is that mushroom and berry picking for individual purposes is allowed in the latter.

Activities permitted within the area subjected to a partial protection regime I are as follows:

- a) monitoring of the condition of biotic and abiotic components of ecosystems;
- b) recognition of the state and threats of resources and components;
- c) taking of generative and vegetative propagules for ex-situ breeding and reintroduction programmes of species with special needs;
- d) fire prevention measures;
- e) maintenance of main roads and routes passable in order to ensure fire safety and safety for people being on the territory of the Park;
- f) repairs of tourism, information and educational infrastructure related to public access to the area;
- g) minimization of the negative effects of public access to the area;
- h) mushroom and berry picking for individual purposes;
- i) alien species removing;
- j) maintenance of open non-forest habitats through mowing.

#### **Partial protection II**

This protection regime encompasses forest ecosystems managed by the State Forest Administration which are excluded from forestry practices. These are: treestands of over 100 year old, pioneer stands with dominant (forming over 50% of treestand) birch and aspen of over 60 years old, protective zones of species (black stork, lesser spotted eagle, Tengmalm's owl, tree lungwort). There is no wood extraction but hunting is allowed.

Activities permitted within the area subjected to a partial protection regime II are as follows:

- a) monitoring of the condition of biotic and abiotic components of ecosystems;
- b) recognition of the state and threats of resources and components;
- c) taking of generative and vegetative propagules for ex-situ breeding and reintroduction programmes of species with special needs;
- d) fire prevention measures;
- e) maintenance of main roads and routes passable in order to ensure fire safety and safety for people
- f) repairs of tourism, information and educational infrastructure related to public access to the area;
- g) protection against not-entitled human penetration and harmful activities;
- h) minimization of the negative effects of public access to the area;
- i) mushroom and berry picking for individual purposes;
- j) alien species removing;

k) hunting.

### **Active protection of biodiversity and landscape protection**

Human interference is allowed in a form of protection measures in order to restore the state of ecosystems and the components of nature to the conditions closest to natural or to preserve natural habitats and habitats of plants, animals and fungi. An example of active protection is meadow mowing and removing bushes from meadows in the river valleys, in-forest meadows and terrains after the former timber depot areas. These are places of occurrence of many valuable and rare species of plants, including: marsh gentian, marsh pea, matgrass, *Succisella inflexa* or orchids as well as rare bird species (corncrake, common snipe and lesser spotted eagle). Maintenance of an open character of these habitats helps to stop the succession, i.e. overgrowing with shrubs and trees. The above works are carried out in the summer period, after shedding of blossom by rare species of plants and bird clutching season.

The objectives of landscape protection is to preserve characteristic features of a given landscape. The landscape protection includes sanitary cuttings of trees and shrubs and mowing of meadows. In practice the landscape protection of a part of a national park or nature reserve often allows to maintain economic use of a given area. This status usually is given to technical terrains such as roads, car parks, buildings, etc.

The following protective activities are allowed:

- a) environment monitoring, including monitoring of threats imposed by factors which may disturb the course of natural processes or put in danger the durability of ecosystems;
- b) establishing of seed banks and *ex-situ* gene banks as well as pure cultures of fungi species;
- c) protection against damages caused by external factors and limiting their effects;
- d) slowing down and stopping surface water outflow in order to increase retention capacity of ecosystems;
- e) protection and restoration of biodiversity and genetic diversity of ecosystems, including maintenance of populations of species requiring special care treatments of active protection;
- f) supporting of non-forest plant communities through mowing or pasturage adjusted to a type of plant communities and to biological proprieties of the species being the subject of protection;
- g) removing invasive species and those of alien origin threatening the subjects of protection;
- h) fire prevention;
- i) building and repairing of tourism, educational and administrative infrastructure;
- j) maintaining communication roads and routes passable;
- k) protecting values and revitalisation of historic-cultural landscape;

- l) protecting former agricultural land by preservation of traditional and extensive way of their use;
- m) active protection of animals, fungi and plants;
- n) sanitary tree cutting and thinnings;
- o) hunting.

### **Buffer zone covering forest habitats**

Generally the proposed World Heritage Property covers the entire area of the Bialowieza Forest. Nevertheless after serious consideration the managers of the area decided to exclude from the Property a narrow stripe of the forest habitats which is bordering the town Hajnówka. The proximity of town poses some threats to natural values of the wild area. Moreover within this area there is an area used exclusively by Polish Army. Therefore it was decided that the area will form a buffer zone to the Property. Management of this area, with the exception of the military area, is exactly the same as in the zone of active protection of biodiversity and landscape.

Human interference is allowed in a form of protection measures in order to restore the state of ecosystems and the components of nature to the conditions closest to natural or to preserve natural habitats and habitats of plants, animals and fungi. An example of active protection is meadow mowing and removing bushes from meadows in the river valleys, in-forest meadows and terrains after the former timber depot areas. These are places of occurrence of many valuable and rare species of plants, including: marsh gentian, marsh pea, matgrass, *Succisella inflexa* or orchids as well as rare bird species (corncrake, common snipe and lesser spotted eagle). Maintenance of an open character of these habitats helps to stop the succession, i.e. overgrowing with shrubs and trees. The above works are carried out in the summer period, after shedding of blossom by rare species of plants and bird clutching season.

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- f) supporting non-forest plant communities through mowing or pasturage adjusted to a type of plant communities and to biological proprieties of the species being the subject of protection;
- g) removing invasive species and those of alien origin threatening the subjects of protection;
- h) fire prevention;
- i) building and repairing of tourist, educational and administrative infrastructure.
- j) maintaining communication roads and routes passable;
- k) protecting values and revitalisation of historic-cultural landscape;
- l) protecting former agricultural land by preservation of traditional and extensive way of their use;
- m) active protection of animals, fungi and plants;
- n) sanitary tree cutting and thinnings;
- o) hunting

#### **Buffer zone outside the forest**

This area is generally non-forest and agricultural area situated to the North and West of the Bialowieza Forest. The buffer zone of the World Heritage Property “Bialowieza Forest” covers almost exactly the same area as the transition zone of the Biosphere Reserve “Bialowieza Forest” . Moreover it overlaps with the boundaries of the Landscape Protected Area of the Bialowieza Forest with the fragments of the Landscape Protected Area of the Upper Narew River Valley. These areas are characterized by a high share of natural landscapes: peatbogs, meadows, pastures and extensively used agriculture land. The manner of functioning and management of this zone is defined by the communal Spatial Development Plans which include the principle of sustainable development of the region.

#### **REGIMES VALID FOR THE WHOLE TERRITORY OF THE BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA NATIONAL PARK (BELARUS)**

The following activities are prohibited in the national park (unless provided by the national park’s management plan):

- (a) exploration and development of minerals fields;

- (b) extraction of peat and bottom ooze;
- (c) performance of land reclamation activities, and any other activities that may bring about any changes in the natural landscape or the existing hydrological regime (other than those aimed at reconstruction of the existing reclamation systems, and restoration of the disturbed hydrological regime);
- (d) discharges of crude sewage into the environment;
- (e) any scientific experiments involving natural complexes and sites located within the national park's boundaries, which may cause a failure to meet the protection and nature management requirements;
- (f) final harvesting of trees and harvesting of galipot;
- (g) arrangement of vegetable gardens or orchards;
- (h) introduction and acclimatization of flora and fauna, other than recurrent introduction (re-introduction);
- (i) cultivation of trees using introduced tree and shrub species;
- (j) activities resulting in disturbance of the habitats of flora and fauna;
- (k) arrangement of camping sites, placement of tents and making of fires outside of locations specifically designated for such purposes;
- (l) use by legal entities and/or individuals of aquatic vehicles equipped with outboard internal combustion motors with over 15 horse power, other than vehicles operated by the Institution, agencies and units of the Ministry of Emergencies, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, and territorial bodies thereof, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, and State Inspectorate of Flora and Fauna Protection under the President of Belarus;
- (m) operation and parking of any automotive or self-propelled vehicles outside of roads and locations specifically designated for such purposes, other than automotive vehicles operated by the institution, agencies and units of the Ministry of Emergencies, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and territorial bodies thereof, Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus, and automotive vehicles operated by the Border Guard agencies to maintain and protect the state border of the Republic of Belarus, State Inspectorate of Flora and Fauna Protection under the President of Belarus, agencies of the Governmental Control Committee, local executive committees (while exercising governmental control over use and protection of land), and automotive and self-propelled vehicles engaged in forest management and agricultural activities enabling operation of the national park. Entry of any automotive or self-propelled vehicles to the national park shall take place through

checkpoints, and shall only be permitted under special authorizations issued by the institution in accordance with the procedure established by the relevant statutory acts.

Reconstruction and restoration of hydrological network may take place as part of project that have been subject to state expert review and environmental impact assessment.

## **FUNCTIONS OF THE ZONES**

1. The following zones are defined in the BPNP:

*Allocation of the zones according to their area*

<i>Zone</i>	<i>Name of the zone</i>	<b>Area km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>% of the total park area</b>
I	Strictly protected zone	570.5	38.0
II	Regulated zone	391.0	26.1
III	Recreational zone	78.2	5.2
IV	Economic activities zone	461.0	30.7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1530</b>	<b>100</b>

### **2. Zone I – Strictly protected Zone.**

1) The Strictly protected zone is managed with the goals of:

- (a) Preserving the natural succession processes in the ecosystems;
- (b) Preserving of samples of natural ecosystems, including characteristic and/or remarkable wild plant and animal species and their habitats;
- (c) Preserving of structural landscape peculiarities;
- (d) Encouraging the scientific research and ecological monitoring activities.

2) The zone meets the following criteria for defining regimes:

- (a) It is almost entirely free of direct human impact;
- (b) The biodiversity conservation in this zone is achievable only through protection and does not require active habitat management or manipulation;
- (c) It is sufficiently big and allows the achieving of the conservation goals.

### **3. Zone II – Regulated zone.**

1) The Regulated zone is managed with the goals of:

- (a) Preservation of natural complexes and sites and maintenance of conditions contributing into their natural development and restoration;
- (b) Ensuring access in a way, providing physical and spiritual pleasure for the visitors and simultaneously maintaining the wild nature of the area for the present and future generations;
- (c) Establishing an ecological corridor between natural habitats of conservation value and protected areas in and out of the park's boundaries.

2) The zone meets the following criteria for defining regimes:

- (a) It has natural qualities of high conservation value and allows stopping of the human interference, which guarantees management sustainability;
- (b) It has typical ecological, biological and landscape features, which are of great importance for the scientific and educational goals;
- (c) It is sufficiently large and allows both the conservation and the applying of the described ways of management.

#### **4. Zone III – Recreational zone.**

1) The Recreational zone is managed with the goals of:

- (a) Tourism, recreation and improvement of people's health;
- (b) Maximum protection of the ecological features;
- (c) Establishing conditions and orientate the visitors to such forms of sports, tourism and recreational use, which allow the preservation of the territory in its close to natural state;
- (d) Protection of the natural resources from tourism and sports practices, which damage the biodiversity on the park's territory out of the zone;
- (e) Establishing facilities for providing visitor information and interpretation.

2) The zone meets the following criteria for defining regimes:

- (a) It is clearly defined and covers ecosystems, which are influenced by man;
- (b) It allows the long-term use of the existing tourist resources and sports facilities without additional destruction of the natural values.

#### **5. Zone IV - Economic activities zone.**

1) The Economic activities zone is managed with the goals of:

- (a) Enable operations of the national park.

- (b) Development of economic and other activities that use nature conservation technologies and do not impede preservation of preferentially protected natural complexes, sites, tourist and recreational resources;
  - (c) Protection of the natural resources from methods of using and maintaining the facilities, which damage the biodiversity on the park's territory.
- 2) The zone allows the long-term use of the existing resources and facilities with maximum preservation of the ecological qualities.

### III. REGIMES BY ZONES

#### 6. Zone I – Strictly protected Zone.

- 1) All activities **are prohibited** on the territory of the strictly protected area, except for the following:
- (a) preservation in their natural state of natural complexes and sites and prevention of any alterations thereof caused by man's impact;
  - (b) combating invasive species of wild animals and plants;
  - (c) preservation of individual populations of rare and endangered wild plants that are red-listed in Belarus;
  - (d) maintenance of conditions contributing into fire safety;
  - (e) prevention and elimination of the effects of fires and natural disasters. Measures intended to prevent fires and natural disasters in the national park's strict protection zone shall be implemented in pursuance of a relevant decision adopted by the scientific and technical council set up in the institution following approval thereof by the Academy of Sciences of Belarus;
  - (f) sanitary and veterinarian and health activities intended to preserve the European bison's gene pool upon approval by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus;
  - (g) arrangement of tours, however provided that the number of visitors in a group including the Institution's accompanying personnel does not exceed 20 individuals;
  - (h) environmental monitoring;
  - (i) performance of research;
  - (j) exercise of supervisory and regulatory functions;
  - (k) maintenance of motor roads, including removal of overhanging individual hazardous trees and collection of fallen dead wood in the 30 m right-of-way zone, provided

however than no such trees or any parts thereof are removed to any locations outside of the sites of their origin;

(l) maintenance and protection of the state border.

2) To ensure natural development of nature complexes in the national park's strict protection zone no individuals shall be allowed into such zone other than personnel of the Institution, Department of Presidential Affairs of Belarus, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and territorial agencies thereof, agencies and units of the Ministry of Emergencies and personnel of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, who shall access the strict protection zone subject to the institution's approval, border patrols to maintain and protect the state border of the Republic of Belarus, officials representing the State Inspectorate of Flora and Fauna Protection under the President of Belarus and agencies of the State Control Committee in the discharge of their official duties, and groups of up to 20 visitors accompanied by the institution's employees, who shall travel on the forest roads in compartments No. 122A in Svislotchskoye forestry, No. 91, 116, 139, 142 in Yazvinskoye forestry, No. 262, 263, 264, 291, 292, 322 in Khvoynikskoye forestry, No. 806, 807 in Korolevo-Mostovskoye forestry, and No. 847, 848 in Pashukovskoye forestry.;

## **7. Zone II – Regulated zone.**

1) The following are the activities **prohibited** in the regulated zone:

- (a) Placement of waste, other than placement of waste of consumption in specifically designated temporary waste sites, where such waste is stored until transportation thereof to waste burial sites, waste neutralization sites and/or waste handling sites;
- (b) Disturbance of the natural soil cover, other than delineation of agricultural lands, forest management, protection of forest resources, preservation of the European bison and maintenance and protection of the state border;
- (c) burning out of dry vegetation and remaining standing crops;
- (d) Commercial harvesting of wild plants or parts thereof;
- (e) presence of industrial enterprises, residential development, including existence of temporary accommodation premises (garden cottages, dachas);
- (f) Residential development, including existence of temporary accommodation premises (garden cottages, dachas);
- (g) Existence of any tourist infrastructure (other than hunters' and fishers' cabins, specifically equipped resting places and ecological paths).
- (h) hunting, removal of fallen dead wood and all and any types of tree felling, other than activities intended to remove trees and bushes to restore open lowland swamps, construction of power lines, roads, pipelines and other utility lines in compartments No.

153A, 153B, 153B, 166A, 166B, 166B, 177, 178, 188, 188A, 189, 197-199, 207, 208A, 209, 216, 216A, 217 in Oshchepskoye and compartment No. 200, 202, 210-212, 218, 219, 222, 224 in Novoselkovskoye forestries;

- (i) hunting during the bird nesting season (from April 10 to August 1), removal of fallen dead wood and all and any types of tree felling, other than activities intended to remove trees and bushes to restore open lowland swamps, construction of power lines, roads, pipelines and other utility lines in compartments No. 254-256, 282, 292-294, 285, 286, 302-304, 310-312 of Oshchepskoye and compartment No. 227-233, 235-239, 242-247, 261-266, 272-275, 287-289 of Novoselkovskoye forestries;
- (j) any types of tree felling and removal of fallen dead wood in units 21, 22 of compartment No. 69 of Brovskoye forestry; unit 34 of compartment No. 176 of Oshchepskoye forestry; unit 1 of compartment No. 481, unit 20 of compartment No. 482 of Khvoynikskoye forestry; unit 9 of compartment No. 678, unit 28 of compartment No. 708, unit 16 of compartment No. 709, unit 18 of compartment No. 710, unit 8 of compartment No. 711, units 33 and 38 of compartment No. 744, units 11, 22-28 of compartment No. 773, units 1, 2, 20 of compartment No. 774, unit No. 4 of compartment No. 804 in Korolevo-Mostovskoye forestry, unit 9 of compartment No. 683, unit 5 of compartment No. 715 in Nikorskoye forestry, units 8, 17, 19 in compartment No. 863, units 5, 12-16 of compartment No. 864 in Pashukovskoye forestry; unit 6 of compartment No. 870, units 10, 11, 21 of compartment No. 871, unit 3 of compartment No. 886, and units 4 and 5 of compartment No. 887 in Yasenskoye forestry;
- (k) any types of tree felling, other than sanitation felling in case of total loss of forest stand in units 31, 37, 44, 49, 51, 53, 56 of compartment No. 10, units 1, 4, 17, 24, 32 of compartment No. 13, units 20, 21, 23, 26, 32 of compartment No. 14, units 1, 13, 17-19, 26-28, 35, 37, 62-64 of compartment No. 32A, units 1, 3, 5, 25, 27, 31, 54, 56, 67 of compartment No. 43A, units 13, 18, 22, 29, 32, 39, 47, 49 of compartment No. 47, units 15, 30 of compartment No. 69, unit 29 of compartment No. 70, units 24, 25, 31, 37, 43, 44, 52 of compartment No. 74, units 3, 7 of compartment No. 119 in Brovskoye forestry; unit 3 of compartment No. 4, units 2, 5 of compartment No. 5, units 8, 9 of compartment No. 6, units 5, 7, 9, 15, 16, 20, 21, 26, 28 of compartment No. 56, units 6, 10-12, 14, 16, 17, 25 of compartment No. 75, units 1, 3, 9, 12, 17, 18, 31, 32, 37, 38, 40 of compartment No. 121, units 21, 22, 52 of compartment No. 122, units 14, 15, 21 of compartment No. 256 in Svislochskoye forestry, units 24-26, 30, 31, 33 of compartment No. 72A, units 5-8, 11, 13 of compartment No. 85, units 5-8, 10, 12, 14-18 of compartment No. 86, units 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24 of compartment No. 87, units 32, 46, 48 of compartment No. 201 in Yazvinskoye forestry; units 1, 29, 36, 38, 55 of compartment No. 176, units 1, 2, 4, 8-10, 19 of compartment No. 187, units 2, 9, 13 of

compartment No. 196, units 4, 7, 18 of compartment No. 206, units 12, 19 of compartment No. 215, units 9, 13 of compartment No. 253, units 2, 3, 5, 6 of compartment No. 284 in Oshchepskoye forestry; units 11, 12, 19, 20 of compartment No. 134 in Yazvinskoye forestry; units 6-18 of compartment No. 323, units 1-6, 14, 16, 18 of compartment No. 324, units 13, 26 of compartment No. 353, units 1, 29 of compartment No. 382, units 29, 30 of compartment No. 436, units 14, 17, 27, 28, 30, 33, 40 of compartment No. 437, units 7, 15 of compartment No. 461, units 6, 12, 14, 18, 19, 29 of compartment No. 481, units 10, 13, 15, 28 of compartment No. 482, units 12, 21, 25, 27, 28 of compartment No. 483, units 7, 26 of compartment No. 484, units 3, 5, 8, 9, 11-16 of compartment No. 509 in Khvoynikskoye forestry; unit 4 of compartment No. 528, units 4, 14 of compartment No. 552, unit 1 of compartment No. 553, unit 7 of compartment No. 554, units 6, 22, 35 of compartment No. 586, unit 26 of compartment No. 587, units 14, 15, 28 of compartment No. 588, units 7, 30 of compartment No. 613, units 5, 7, 9, 26, 29, 33 of compartment No. 614, units 7, 17 of compartment No. 615, units 5, 9, 14 of compartment No. 616, units 7, 8, 11-13, 15-18, 20 of compartment No. 677, units 7, 8, 11, 13 of compartment No. 678, units 2, 6-13, 17-21, 25, 32, 33, 40, 41, 45, 46, 50, 52 of compartment No. 708, units 1, 11, 15, 18, 22, 24 of compartment No. 709, units 7, 10, 12, 16 of compartment No. 710, units 7, 12 of compartment No. 711, units 7, 10 of compartment No. 712, units 2, 7, 9, 12-14, 16-18, 25, 27, 28 of compartment No. 742, units 1, 10 of compartment No. 744, units 7, 9, 13-15, 17, 29 of compartment No. 773, units 18, 26 of compartment No. 774, units 1, 2, 5, 13, 14, 18, 19 of compartment No. 775, units 8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 19, 21 of compartment No. 799, units 2, 6, 9, 16, 17, 19, 20, 25 of compartment No. 804 in Korolevo-Mostovskoye forestry; units 1, 3-7, 12, 20 of compartment No. 561, units 17, 21, 22 of compartment No. 589A, units 1, 2 of compartment No. 618, units 3, 5-10 of compartment No. 623, units 1-5 of compartment No. 624, units 1, 4, 8, 9, 16, 20, 21 of compartment No. 652, units 2-5, 10, 21 of compartment No. 653, units 6-11, 14-16 of compartment No. 654, units 15, 16 of compartment No. 682, units 2, 8, 18 of compartment No. 683, units 4, 20, 21 of compartment No. 684, units 3, 7-9 of compartment No. 685, unit 21 of compartment No. 690, units 3, 4, 14 of compartment No. 714, units 1, 2, 3, 14 of compartment No. 715, unit 1 of compartment No. 723, units 4, 5 of compartment No. 758, unit 15 of compartment No. 791 in Nikorskoye forestry; units 19, 21 of compartment No. 792B, units 2-4, 6, 8, 10, 13 of compartment No. 798, units 3-7, 10, 17 of compartment No. 820, units 5, 11-13, 16 of compartment No. 823, units 3-5 of compartment No. 823A, unit 6 of compartment No. 925, units 2, 6, 8, 12, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27, 29 of compartment No. 931, units 1, 7, 11, 12, 19, 34 of compartment No. 932, units 2, 5, 6, 10, 11, 20, 21, 26, 27, 31, 32 of compartment No. 938, units 1, 11 of compartment No. 939 in

Belyanskoye forestry; units 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12 of compartment No. 826, units 1, 4, 8, 13, 16, 20 of compartment No. 827, units 4, 7, 16 of compartment No. 843, units 1, 6, 7, 10, 13, 17, 19, 20 of compartment No. 844, units 9, 16, 17, 21, 25 of compartment No. 861, units 2, 4, 9, 14, 16, 20, 21, 24 of compartment No. 862, units 1-4, 9, 12, 13, 16, 20-23 of compartment No. 863, units 1, 3, 17, 19, 26 of compartment No. 864, units 1, 3, 4 of compartment No. 880, units 4, 11, 21 of compartment No. 880A, units 1, 3, 7, 16 of compartment No. 889, unit 10 of compartment No. 1006, unit 10 of compartment No. 1017 in Pashukovskoye forestry; units 1, 10, 13, 17, 18 of compartment No. 819, units 1-3, 8, 10, 12-14 of compartment No. 870, units 1-8, 12, 14-20, 23, 27, 28, 30 of compartment No. 871, units 1, 6, 8, 10, 17-19, 21, 25, 29, 31 of compartment No. 885, units 1, 2, 6-8, 19, 22 of compartment No. 886, units 7, 8 of compartment No. 887, units 1, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17 of compartment No. 888A, units 1, 3 of compartment No. 916, unit 10 of compartment No. 919B, units 1, 4, 12 of compartment No. 922, units 1, 2, 3, 14 of compartment No. 923, unit 1 of compartment No. 924 in Yasenskoye forestry;

- (l) all and any types of tree felling (other than measures to preserve and restore the white fir population) in units 4-13 of compartment No. 562 in Nikorskoye forestry;
- (m) all and any types of tree felling (other than measures to preserve and restore populations of rare plants) in units 3 of compartment No. 712 in Korolevo-Mostovskoye forestry;
- (n) biotechnical measures, other than arrangement of man-made bird nesting sites in compartments No. 561, 562, 589, 589A, 590, 593, 618, 619, 623, 624, 652-655, 657, 658, 682, 687-689, 717, 748-750 in Nikorskoye forestry, compartment No. 482 in Khvoinikskoye forestry and compartments No. 529, 552-554, 585, 588, 613, 646, 712, 745-747 in Korolevo-Mostovskoye forestry.
- (o) Abstraction of water from water bodies and waterways for industrial and household purposes; clearance of water-side and aquatic vegetation in the riverside areas other than in areas intended as resting places;

2) Arrangement of feeding sites for the European bison and other wild ungulates shall take place in pursuance of a relevant decision taken by the institution's scientific and technical council upon approval thereof by the national Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

3) Hunting, fishing and use of flora and fauna sites for research, cultural, educational, aesthetic and other purposes in the national park's regulated zone shall take place in locations specifically designated for such purposes by the institution and in accordance with the procedure established by the applicable law.

4) Haying and cattle grazing shall only be allowed to the benefit of the institution and the locals and shall take place in locations specifically designated for such purposes in accord with the approved standards establishing the maximum permissible load on the national park;

#### **8. Zone III – Recreational zone.**

1) The following are the activities **prohibited** in the recreational zone:

- (a) placement of waste, other than placement of consumption waste in specifically designated temporary waste sites, where such waste is stored until transportation thereof to waste burial sites, waste neutralization sites and/or waste handling sites;
- (b) burning out of dry vegetation and remaining standing crops;
- (c) commercial harvesting of wild plants or parts thereof.
- (d) any types of tree felling in units 23, 26, 28 of compartment No. 2, units 18, 20, 21, 24, 30, 31, 36, 39, 43 of compartment No. 3, unit 25 of compartment No. 234, unit 29 of compartment No. 236 in Brovskoye forestry; unit 1 of compartment No. 963, units 15, 32 of compartment No. 968, units 6, 8, 18, 24, 25 of compartment No. 971 in Dmitrovichskoye forestry, units 1, 3-6, 16, 20-22, 32, 40 of compartment No. 77 in Svislochskoye forestry, units 1-6, 8, 10 of compartment No. 649, units 11, 17, 18, 20, 21 of compartment No. 679, units 3, 5, 7, 11-14, 17, 18, 20, 22-25 of compartment No. 680, units 13, 16, 17, 21 of compartment No. 681, unit 8 of compartment No. 713, units 2, 4, 7, 12, 25, 26 of compartment No. 800, units 1, 4, 9, 15, 16, 21-24, 28, 33 of compartment No. 801, units 6, 12, 16, 17, 23, 26, 28 of compartment No. 823B, units 2, 3, 9, 10 of compartment No. 823B in Korolevo-Mostovskoye forestry, unit 28 of compartment No. 828, units 6, 10, 20 of compartment No. 877, units 1, 2, 6 of compartment No. 878A in Pashukovskoye forestry;
- (e) biotechnical measures, other than arrangement of man-made bird nesting sites in compartments No. 589 and 617 in Nikorskoye forestry and compartment No. 1005 in Dmitrovichskoye forestry.

2) Location of campsites, equipped places for recreation, a campfire in the recreation zone of national park are determined by the institution;

#### **9. Zone IV – Economic activity zone.**

1) The following are the activities **prohibited** in the zone:

- a) hunting, any types of tree felling and removal of fallen dead wood in compartment No.205 in Rechitskoye forestry and compartment No.76 in Svislotchskoye forestry;

- b) any types of tree felling in unit 4 of compartment No. 825 of Pashukovskoye forestry; unit 18 of compartment No. 729A, units No. 1, 2, 7, 10, 11 in compartment No. 797 in Belyanskoye forestry;
- c) any types of tree felling, other than indiscriminate sanitation fellings in case of total loss of forest stand, in unit 9 of compartment No. 933, units 1, 4-6 of compartment No. 934 in Belyanskoye forestry; unit 36 of compartment No. 988, units 1-6, 8-13, 15, 16, 18-28, 30, 33 of compartment No. 1037, units 1-7 of compartment No. 1041 in Dmitrovichskoye forestry; units 29, 43 of compartment No. 21, units 7, 9, 12, 15, 17, 21, 25, 27, 28, 31, 37, 40, 53 of compartment No. 120 in Brovskoye forestry; unit 4 of compartment No. 133 in Novoselkovskoye forestry; units 1-8, 15, 16, 19, 23, 25 of compartment No. 325, units 1, 2, 12, 20, 21, 25, 27, 30 of compartment No. 326, units 2, 5, 8 of compartment No. 351, units 2, 10, 11-13, 19 of compartment No. 352, units 5, 11, 16 of compartment No. 380, unit 5 of compartment No. 381, units 3, 5, 8, 10, 12-14, 17, 18, 20 of compartment No. 458, unit 1 of compartment No. 459, unit 23 of compartment No. 460 in Khvoinskoye forestry, units 5, 6, 13, 17 of compartment No. 802, units 8, 20 of compartment No. 803, unit 10 of compartment No. 824 in Korolevo-Mostovskoye forestry, unit 1 of compartment No. 67 in Sukhopolskoye forestry, unit 4 of compartment No. 889A, units 1, 3, 7, 9-12, 14 of compartment No. 898, units 1, 2, 4, 5 of compartment No. 899, units 11, 19 of compartment No. 906, units 1, 10, 16, 17 of compartment No. 907, unit 4 of compartment No. 915, units 5, 9 of compartment No. 920 in Pashukovskoye forestry; units 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 15, 17, 18, 21, 23, 25 of compartment No. 872, units 1, 2 of compartment No. 873 in Yasenskoye forestry; units 15, 19 of compartment No. 4, units 4, 12 of compartment No. 11, unit 16 of compartment No. 15, unit 8 of compartment No. 16, units 1, 8 of compartment No. 17, unit 13 of compartment No. 18, units 1, 8, 9 of compartment No. 24, unit 8 of compartment No. 25, units 3, 14 of compartment No. 32, unit 6 of compartment No. 33, unit 4 of compartment No. 36, unit 4 of compartment No. 66, and unit 7 of compartment No. 98 in Rechitskoye forestry;
- d) biotechnical measures, other than arrangement of man-made bird nesting sites in compartment No. 76 in Svislotchskoye forestry and compartment No. 1037 in Dmitrovichskoye forestry.

**10.** To prevent any adverse impact of economic and other activities upon the national park's natural complexes and sites the area adjacent to the national park was declared a **buffer zone**.

1) The following are the activities **prohibited** in the buffer zone:

- (a) abstraction of water from water bodies in quantities that may cause any changes in the behaviour of such water bodies, other than water abstracted for fire suppression purposes;
- (b) discharges of crude sewage and waste into water bodies;
- (c) aerial dusting with pesticides;
- (d) introduction of invasive species of wild animals and plants;
- (e) hydrotechnical reclamation activities, activities capable of bringing about any changes in the existing hydrology of water bodies, waterways, groundwater or producing an adverse impact upon natural complexes;
- (f) clearance of the riparian and aquatic plants found in the waterside areas of rivers and water bodies, other than in reclamative networks and areas intended as recreational locations;
- (g) placement of waste, other than placement of waste in specifically designated waste sites, where such waste is stored until transportation thereof to waste burial sites, waste neutralization sites and/or waste handling sites;
- (h) other economic activities that may adversely affect the reserve's or national parks' natural complexes, bring about change or deterioration of the species diversity or number of animals or plants

2) Exploration and development of minerals fields, allotment of land for construction, construction of power lines, roads, pipelines and other utility lines, reconstruction of the hydrological network shall only take place upon approval thereof by the Institution.

3) Forest management, hunting and commercial fishing in the buffer zone shall take place in accordance with the applicable law and following approval thereof by the Institution.

4) Owners of land lots, land owners and land users whose land is located within the national park's buffer zone shall comply with the protection and nature management requirements established hereby.

#### **IV. STIPULATIONS**

**11.** The boundaries of the national park, its strictly protected zone and buffer zone shall be designated in appropriate locations with information and other signs. All and any changes of the boundaries and areas of the foregoing zones shall take place in accordance with the law.

**12.** The protection and nature management requirements applicable in the national park and its buffer zone shall be taken into consideration while developing and adjusting land management projects and schemes for Kamenets and Pruzhany Districts in Brest Region and Svislotch District in Grodno Region, land reclamation projects, projects providing for setting up of water protection zones

and water-side strips of water bodies, game management, forest management and town planning projects, programs of social and economic development of Kamenets and Pruzhany Districts in Brest Region and Svislotch District in Grodno Region.

**13.** Measures to combat invasive species of wild animals and plants in the national park shall be implemented in pursuance of a relevant decision adopted by the natural park's scientific and technical council upon approval thereof by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

**14.** Setting up and reconstruction of construction sites in the national park shall take place in accordance with projects approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Architecture and Construction of the Republic of Belarus.

**15.** Tourist, recreational and health promotion activities in the national park shall take place in full accord with the effective protection and area management requirements and permissible load standards.

**16.** Personnel of the nature reserve protection agencies and national parks being a part of the system run by the Belarusian Department of the Presidential Affairs shall be responsible for protection of the national park, its natural complexes and sites and supervision of compliance with the requirements applicable in the strictly protected zone.

**17.** The list of positions of personnel of the nature reserve protection agencies and national parks being a part of the system run by the Belarusian Department of the Presidential Affairs, and their distinctive insignia shall be approved by the President of Belarus.

**18.** Legal entities and individuals responsible for any failure to meet the protection and nature management requirements applicable in the national park shall be held liable in accordance with the provisions of the statutory acts of the Republic of Belarus.

**19.** All and any damages caused to the national park shall be reimbursed by legal entities and/or individuals to the extent and in the manner prescribed by the statutory acts of the Republic of Belarus.

Taking into account the requirements of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the managing authorities of the administrative units of the proposed World Heritage Property "Białowieża Forest" confirm the will to implement the management plan for the Property according to the regulations reported in this document.

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Regionalnej Dyrekcji Lasów Państwowych  
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Table 3. Management plans and documents:

Document	Managing authority	Relevant area	Accepted by	Time period	Remarks
Protection plan for the Bialowieza National Park (PL)	Director of the Bialowieza National Park	Bialowieza National Park (BNP)	Minister of the Environment	2014 - 2035	After the first round of public consultations; at present at law department of the Ministry of the Environment; to be signed in the first half of 2014 after the second round of public consultations. The plan takes into account all recommendations of Natura 2000 Directives.
Management tasks for the Natura 2000 Site (PL)	Regional Directorate of the Environment Protection, Head foresters of forest divisions: Bialowieza, Browsk, Hajnówka.	Natura 2000 area (PLC200004). See the map "Protection regimes in the Bialowieza Forest" except for the BNP	Regional Directorate of the Environment Protection in Białystok	2014 - 2019	After public consultations; to be signed in the second half of 2014, after the management plan for the Bialowieza National Park is accepted by the Minister of the Environment.  The plan does not include the territory of the Bialowieza National Park. The requirements of Natura 2000 are included into the management plan of the Park.
Management Plan for the State Forests Administrative Units: Białowieża, Browsk, Hajnówka (PL)	Head foresters of forest divisions: Bialowieza, Browsk, Hajnówka.	Forest divisions: Bialowieza, Browsk, Hajnówka.	Minister of the Environment	2012 - 2021	In force  The document takes into account requirements of Natura 2000 and includes the activities foreseen by the project of Management tasks for the Natura 2000 Site.
Management Plan for the National Park "Bialowieza Forest" (BY)	Director of the National Park "Bialowieza Forest"	National Park "Bialowieza Forest"	Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection  Head of the Department of Presidential Affairs of the Republic of Belarus	2008 - 2017	In force

# Management of the proposed World Heritage Property “Bialowieza Forest”

Table 4. Regulations in different protection regimes of the World Heritage Property and its buffer zone.

	Protection regime	Wood extraction	Hunting	Berry-, mushroom picking	Recreation activities	Public access	Road construction	Others
PL	Strict protection	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Restricted	Not allowed, maintenance permitted	Restricted research and education
	Partial protection I	Not allowed	Not allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Restricted	Not allowed, maintenance permitted	Restricted research and education, alien species removal, maintenance of open habitats
	Partial protection II	Not allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Restricted	Not allowed, maintenance permitted	Research and education
	Active protection of biodiversity (including landscape protection)	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not allowed, maintenance permitted	Research and education
	Buffer zone covering forest habitats	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not allowed, maintenance permitted	Research and education
	Buffer zone outside the forest	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed according to local spatial plans	Development according to local spatial plans.
BEL	Strict protection (Ia)	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	
	Strict protection (Ib)	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed	Allowed	Not allowed	
	Regulated use	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not allowed	Allowed	Not allowed	
	Regulated use with	Not allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not allowed	Allowed	Not allowed	

	prohibition of cutting							
	Recreational	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not allowed	
	Recreational with prohibition of cutting	Not allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not allowed	
	Economic activity	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	
	Economic activity with prohibition of cutting	Not allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not Allowed	
	Buffer Zone	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	