

Development of Ecotourism in the Largest National Park "Yugyd va"

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Abstract: The National Park "Yugyd va", Komi, Russia is used predominantly by the Russian population for summer and winter recreation purposes. The National Park (NP) organizes, plans and controls visitor flows. Management of visitor flows is directly and indirectly realized by the NP. The direct management includes functional zone division, normalizing recreation loads, law-enforcement activity. The indirect management includes regulation of visitors access in determined places of the NP because of complex and dangerous routes or specific objects organization of tourist infrastructure. Monitoring of visitor activities in the National Park is realized by short-term visitor observation and route registration. Organization of visitor flow is realized on the basis of agreement between the NP and tour operators. The NP regulates of tourism and recreation by restriction of moving the visitors on the NP area on the basis of permissible recreation loads.

INTRODUCTION

National Park "Yugyd-va" ("Clear water") is situated in the north-east part of Komi Republic, on western slopes of Prepolar and Northern Ural mountains and Pechorskaya lowland. The park was founded in 1993. In December, 1995 National Park "Yugyd-va" and Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve were included by UNESCO in the list of World Natural and Cultural Heritage and named "Pristine forests of Komi". The total park area is equal 1.9 mln ha. Nowadays this is largest reserve area in Russia and Europe. So due to its very large area and small staff in the NP there always exists a danger of uncontrolled spontaneous tourism, which can damage the unique ecosystems and discredit the idea of ecotourism.

The basis of conditions creation for regulated tourism and recreation is work out and realization of system of management and economic actions by the NP, which are directed on attraction of tourists and tour operators in the NP and creation of highly effective tourist's infrastructure. The aim of the NP management in tourism and recreation sphere is development of tourist industry in the Komi Republic on the principles of rational utilization of natural resources and conservation of natural and historical-cultural unique of the NP area.

METHODS

The following methods for the NP management in tourism and recreation sphere were used:

- Effective system creation of management of visitor flows of the NP

- Organisation of tourist activity and visitor's service by enlist the services of local population and private sector
- System creation of constant improvement of the NP tourist infrastructure by additional financing from different sources
- Qualification increase of the NP workers busy in scope of tourism
- Integration of tourism and recreation in the NP into regional social and economic systems

SOME RESULTS OF EFFECTIVE SYSTEM CREATION OF MANAGEMENT OF VISITORS FLOWS IN THE NP

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The NP area is subdivided on 7 zones:

1. zone of reserve regime with 7 complex, 1 ornithological, 3 ichthyological, 23 geological, 2 floristic, 6 archeological natural reservations
2. zone of reserve regime with rocky natural formations and tundra regions
3. zone of regulated tourism
4. recreation zone for sport hunting and fishing based on tourism

5. zone of agricultural landscapes
6. zone of visitor service
7. zone of economic-production activity.

The NP regulates of tourism and recreation by restriction of moving the visitors on the NP area on the basis of permissible recreation loads. The loads were calculated by scientific researchers of Russian Academy of Sciences. The park organizes many tourist routes: traveling on foot, mountain, water, ski. Most tourists prefer water routes. A total distance of river routes is equal 1108 km.

The order and dates of visit, permissible number of visitors for different functional zones are determined by the NP itself. Those also depend on year season and weather peculiarities. The main visitor flows are recorded on the rivers Kojim, Kosyu, Synya, Vangyr, Schugor, Podcherem. Number of visitors constantly increases from 1321 (1995) to 2856 (1999) and 2709 (2000), and consequently a total sum of visitor's fee also increases from 6 000 rbl. (1995) to 51000 rbl. (2000). Organization of visitor flow is realized on the basis of agreement between the NP and tour operators. Unfortunately there are not many quality tour operators in the Komi Republic and Russia. So the NP organizes different routes for visitors based on visitor's application forms sent 2 weeks before visit.

Not large visitor flows is explained by presence of uncontrolled spontaneous tourism, short warm season, mosquitoes, absence of good transport roads. The park area is a great and has not good infrastructure. In spite of these facts 12 workers of the park have certificates of ecotourism instructors, 2 tourpackets are prepared, set of maps (different parts of the park) and 2 information booklets are published. Every year ecological camps for kids from different parts of Russia are organized on the rivers Podcherem and Schugor. It is noted that in 2001 majority of visitors registered in the park control posts. The park workers try to decrease number of uncontrolled tourists through publications and reports in mass information media and lectures in different organizations.