



Minutes:

EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section Members Meeting 2013

Debrecen, 12 October 2013

Participants

Andris	Širovs	Nature Conservation Agency	Latvia
Anette	Petersen	GEON	Denmark
Anne-Marie C.	Bürger	Region Zealand	Denmark
Dennis	Mejer	Nature Agency	Denmark
Erling	Post	Mols Bjerger National Park	Denmark
Giedrius	Norvaisas	Zemaitija National Park	Lithuania
Henning	Enemark	Danish Outdoor Council	Denmark
Inari	Ylläsjärvi	Metsähallitus	Finland
Jan	Woolhead	Region Zealand	Denmark
Kaja	Lotman	Environmental Board	Estonia
Kari	Sveen	Jotunheimen National Park	Norway
Kirsten	Thyrum	Norwegian Environmental Agency	Norway
Kristen	Jul	Mols Bjerger National Park	Denmark
Maria	Knagenhjelm	Jostedalbreen National Park	Norway
Maria-Louise	Galamba	Danish Outdoor Council	Denmark
Mika Leth	Pedersen	Mols Bjerger National Park	Denmark
Nele	Söber	Environmental Board	Estonia
Ramunas	Lydis	Zemaitija National Park	Lithuania
Rauno	Väisanen	Metsähallitus	Finland
Rita	Jakovleva	Nature Conservation Agency	Latvia
Rolands	Auzins	Nature Conservation Agency	Latvia
Tuija	Laitakari	Metsähallitus	Finland

Minutes

1. Information about next presidency 2015-2017:

- The Nordic-Baltic Section Danish members have discussed hosting the next presidency over several months. Until now nothing concrete has been decided, but they are optimistic to figure out the best solution in hosting the presidency, probably by dividing the responsibilities between different Danish members.
- Keskkonnaamet / Estonian Environmental Board as the host of presidency 2012-2014 will contact Danish members in the beginning of December 2013 to receive the names of possible hosting organizations in order to ask their written approval. Official decision will be made by section members at Members Assembly (January 22, 2014).

2. Report from the section secretariat:



- Secretariat has made several printed materials (brochure about the section and its member countries; bookmarkers), notebooks and PowerPoint presentation to celebrate section's anniversary.
- Secretariat made a summary about previous seminars, called out next year's themes (cultural heritage, wooded meadows, health) and offered to host a workshop about "films and protected areas" during Matsalu Nature Film Festival, which takes place in September in Estonia.

3. Reports from working groups:

- Sustainable Tourism WG (STWG)

STWG as all the other working groups received an additional 2-year mandate from EUROPARC Council. WG consists of 10 members (incl. 2 from Finland), 7 experts (incl. 1 from Latvia) and 5 task groups (Charter Strategy, Global extension of Charter, Charter management Action Plan, Methodology for Charter, Charter funding).

EUROPARC is hosting a Charter event in Brussels (November 2013). Charter focal point in the Nordic-Baltic Section is Klaas van Ommeren from Norway, but during the Members Meeting Norwegian Environmental Agency has made a suggestion to replace Klaas van Ommeren. Suggestions are open via e-mail!

- Transboundary WG (TBWG)

Transboundary Parks Programme is coordinated by Transboundary Steering and Evaluation Committee (STEC), which is chaired by Finland. The main tasks include: preserving the quality of the EUROPARC Transboundary Basic Standards and Certification Programme; pre-assessment of registering candidates; recommendation on award of the Certificate to the Council; further development of the evaluation system; promotion of the EUROPARC Transboundary Parks Programme inside the EUROPARC network; promotion of the EUROPARC Transboundary Parks Programme outside the EUROPARC network.

WG consists of 7 members (incl. 1 from Latvia and 1 from Finland). The main tasks include: develop project proposals; identify funding streams; lobby for crossborder fundings towards EU through the Federation; encourage capacity building across Europe and exchange of expertise on TB work; coordinates itself and TB work with other working groups; coordinates working with other partner organisations (IUCN, Alparc, etc.).

WG organizes regularly TransParcNet meeting since 2009. Next meeting will be in Hainaut cross-border Nature Park in Belgium/France.

- Health WG

WG has 9 members (incl. 1 from Finland, 1 from Denmark, 1 from Estonia representing the whole section). WG meets regularly. The main task for 2013-2014 is to compile case studies from all over Europe to demonstrate important work that protected areas are doing in the field of health. Such a template for submission of information will be circulated across EUROPARC network. Another key element of the WG is to promote European protected areas' work internationally and develop toolkit for protected areas.



The previous seminar on health was held in 2008. The plan is to take out again this topic for the theme of Nordic-Baltic Section seminar in the end of 2014. Seminar will be co-organized with EUROPARC Atlantic Isles.

WG is keen on spreading the message to a wider public through IUCN World Parks Congress (Sydney 2014) and Healthy Parks Healthy People International Congress (Atlanta 2015).

Similarly to Charter event this year, there will be probably an event on health and protected areas in 2014 in the European Parliament hosted by EUROPARC Federation.

4. News from the member organizations and countries:

- Finland
Combining structural and social funds to develop visitor management in national parks. New visitor centres have turned out to be very popular, even artists, musicians and other persons want to cooperate. Visitor numbers have risen significantly and nature conservation reputation is on high level. Right now they are undergoing cost-accountings for creating 2 new national parks and in the near future those will be affirmed as the minister is a representative of the green party. Previous minister created also 2 national parks.
- Denmark
Great role lies in the hands of Danish Outdoor Council, which is a NGO and consists of hikers, birdwatchers, hunters, sailors, etc. National parks have Councils, who decide financial questions. Denmark had a big Interreg project with Norway and Sweden to mark trails jointly.
- Norway
Reforms are still undergoing. Environmental purview was added to nature conservation agency. Budget has been increased. National parks worked before on county level, but now local municipalities also participate in national parks management.
- Latvia
Nature conservation agency has a new leader. Many projects are in the process, 4 new visitor centres are created and nature films about national parks are made.
- Lithuania
Two Interreg projects ended, structural funds have been used to build visitor infrastructure and they have just now received seed money for new Interreg project between Sweden and Poland. The problem is to find co-financing.
- Estonia
Reforms in nature conservation still continue. Three national parks celebrated their 20th anniversary this year – Vilsandi, Soomaa, Karula. Collaborative bodies are created for the national parks. Structural funds have been used for repairing visitor infrastructure, maintaining wooded meadows and creating Rehabilitation Centre of Endangered Species. Social funds are used for promoting nature education.

5. Refreshing contact details:

Members were asked to look over their contact details provided by the secretariat.

Nele Sõber
Nordic-Baltic section coordinator
October 2013