

Protected Areas System in the Ukrainian Carpathians

Eduard Arustamian, Director of the Department of Protected areas and Land Resources,
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine

I. Protected Areas in 4 Administrative Regions (Oblasts) -1of3

- **Zakarpatska Oblast:** 478 sites with a total area of 193.3 thousand hectares - 15.16% of the oblast; consisting of: Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, national nature parks: "Synevyr", Uzhanskyi and "Zacharovanyi Krai", 2 regional landscape parks, 75 zakaznyks, 12 protected stows, 347 natural monuments, 2 botanical gardens, 1 dendrological park, 35 parks-monuments of garden and park arts.
- **Ivano-Frankivska Oblast:** 560 sites with a total area of 222.4 thousand hectares - 15.97% of the oblast; consisting of: Gorgany Nature Reserve, national natural parks: Carpathian, Hutsulshchyna, Halytskyi, Verkhovynskyi and Synohora, 4 regional landscape parks, 72 zakaznyks, 207 protected stows, 253 natural monuments, 9 dendrological parks, 9 parks-monuments of garden and park arts.
- **Lvivska Oblast:** 399 sites with a total area of 177.9 thousand hectares - 8.15% of the oblast; consisting of: Roztochya Nature Reserve, national nature parks: Skolivski Beskydy, Yavorivskyi, Pivnichne Podillya, Boykivshchyna and Korolivski Beskydy, 5 regional landscape parks, 76 zakaznyks, 37 protected stows, 199 natural monuments, 5 dendrological parks, 67 parks-monuments of garden and park arts, 2 botanical gardens, 1 zoo.

I. Protected Areas in 4 Administrative Regions (Oblasts) -2of3

- **Chernivetska Oblast:** 331 units with a total area of 103.6 thousand hectares - 12.8% of the oblast; consisting of: national natural parks: "Vyzhnytskyi", "Khotynskyi" and "Cheremoskyi", 2 regional landscape parks, 57 zakaznyks, 38 protected stows, 184 natural monuments, 6 dendrological parks, 40 parks-monuments of garden and park arts, 1 botanical garden.

These statistics apply to 4 oblasts in the the Ukrainian Carpathians as a whole, only 42% of the area of which is mountainous. The percentage of protected areas in mountainous areas is slightly higher (not officially calculated).

TOTAL in Ukraine there are 8633 sites with a total area of 4.105 million hectares - 6.8% of the country's area and 1 marine reserve with an area of 402.5 thousand hectares.

I. Protected Areas in 4 Administrative Regions (Oblasts) -3of3

International protected areas in Ukrainian Carpathians:

- There are 8 Ramsar sites: Lake Synevyr, Narcissi Valley, Romania-Friendship Cave, Ozirnyi Brebeneskul, Black Bog, Pogorilets River Headwaters, Prut River Headwaters, Nadsyannia Raised Bog
- 13 parts with an area of 28,986 thousand hectares - 29.5% of the area of 94 parts of the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site "Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions in Europe" (18 European countries)
- 33 sites of the Emerald Network of Europe with a total area of 702.2 thousand hectares - 29% of the area of the Ukrainian Carpathians.
- Biosphere reserves: Carpathian, Ukrainian part of TBR "Eastern Carpathians". Now *we are working on the creation of a transboundary Ukrainian-Romanian biosphere reserve in the Maramures branch of the Carpathians.*

II. Possibility of synergies with the surrounding territories, outside Pas -1of2

- Activities within PAs involve local authorities and communities, other stakeholders from the time of designation, when they approve protection status of certain lands.
- PA-administrations pay land tax to territorial communities for land provided for permanent use and provide recommendations on the use of these funds to solve environmental problems of communities.

II. Possibility of synergies with the surrounding territories, outside Pas -2of2

- Cooperation of PA-administrations institutions with the population is regulated by legislation, general and sectoral strategies/programs/action plans, separate cooperation agreements, due to national and local festivals/holidays/events and situations, in particular in case of floods, fires, etc.

Example: approved by the order of the Government of Ukraine dated of November 21, 2018 # 892 concerns not only beech virgin forests and is entitled: Action Plan for the Conservation of the Ukrainian Part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions in Europe” and Sustainable Development of Adjacent Areas and, in particular, stimulates the development of alternative firewood from heating sources, which will reduce the level of timber harvesting.

- Devastating floods in the Carpathians took place in 2020 and 2021, which encouraged the cooperation of the PA-administrations and local communities and the elimination of negative consequences, the use of human resources and equipment.

III. Overview of PAs economic status with a view to the implementation of future strategies – 1of2

The environmental sector (Environmental Ministry, State Forest Agency, State Water Agency, PAs) participates in the implementation of national strategies/programs, action plans for their implementation on the formation of a network of protected areas, recreation and tourism, reforestation, reduction of continuous felling, shore protection. Hydrotechnical, antkarst, avalanche measures, collection and recycling of household waste), including the following strategies and programs:

- State Strategy of Regional Development of Ukraine for 2021 - 2027;
- State Program for the Development of Cross-border Cooperation for 2021 - 2027;
- State Development Program of the Ukrainian Carpathians Region for 2020-2022.

III. Overview of PAs economic status with a view to the implementation of future strategies – 2of2

- *For instance*, the National Strategy for Creating a Barrier-Free Space in Ukraine until 2030, approved by the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of April 14, 2021 # 366, obliges PA-administrations to take into account the characteristics of people with disabilities, including inclusive environmental trails. Such trails and other facilities for people with disabilities already exist in some national nature parks and reserves, in particular in the Synevyr National Nature Park and the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve.

Unfortunately, the implementation of tasks is inadequately provided with financial resources, which was previously complicated by the funding of measures to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

The environmental sector of Ukraine did not participate in the CentralParks project and cannot make examples of the implementation of certain measures in Ukraine, but we are ready to take into account environmental recommendations, methods, etc. in our work.

IV. Description of the major risks threatening protected areas in Ukraine -1of2

- 1) As in other areas due to climate change, but more acute in mountainous areas are:
 - mass drying of trees as a result of snowless winters and droughts;
 - devastating floods due to heavy rains.

The last floods in the Ukrainian Carpathians took place in June 2020 and July 2021: roads, communications, buildings, etc. were destroyed, damaged and silted up;

- 2) In the Ukrainian Carpathians, the problem of collecting and disposing of household waste is also acute, due to which we have numerous landfills, littering of rivers, especially the cross-border Tisza;

IV. Description of the major risks threatening protected areas in Ukraine -2of2

- 3) In recent years, the amount of cars has grown significantly, roads are being repaired/built at a rapid pace (this is gratifying!), but due to a significant increase in mobility, the recreational load on natural areas has increased significantly with all the negative consequences (increased number of dead animals, noise, illegal visits to protected areas, etc. (this is no longer pleasing!);
- 4) There are risks associated with: development of recreational areas, especially ski resorts, construction of small hydropower plants, wind farms, etc.

V. My opinion on a possible dialogue between PAs and external communities present in Ukraine

- Inter-sectoral cooperation in Ukraine is constantly evolving, including to execute its obligations under the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU.
- The laws of Ukraine “On Environmental Impact Assessment” (2017), “On Strategic Environmental Assessment” (2018), “On Basic Principles (Strategy) of the State Environmental Protection” adopted in recent years in accordance with the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU policy of Ukraine for the period up to 2030 “(2019). These laws are already in work, although we have a lot of complaints, especially about the need to pay for the development of reports on EIA and SEA.
- Interactions are facilitated by the rapid temps of digitalization of public authorities and self-government. Today, information on the state of the environment can be obtained, if not immediately, by visiting the relevant websites, then on request in a few days. At the same time, our time requires the necessary training, new knowledge and skills, access to better experience and best practice.

Conclusions

- Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the project at the expense of the Government of Germany "Support to Nature Protected Areas in Ukraine", the Frankfurt Zoological Society and WWF Ukraine for their strong support of the development of the protected areas network in the Ukrainian Carpathians.
- However, I would like EU projects to be more accessible to us. Ukraine was one of the initiators of the Carpathian Convention, acceded to all five protocols to the convention and the new article of convention 12bis on climate change, but has not yet received adequate results from the implementation of the convention due to lack of cooperation.
- Let's interact better to have better results!