APPROVED BY

Edict of the President

of the Republic of Belarus No. 367 dd. 24.07.2014

STATE PROGRAMME

for Development of Specially Protected

Natural Areas for 2015 – 2019

CHAPTER 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Conservation of biological and landscape diversity and ecological equilibrium of natural systems, in accordance with paragraph 16 of the National Security Concept of the Republic of Belarus, approved by Edict of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 575 dated November 9, 2010 (National Register of Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus, 2010, No. 276, 1/ 2080), represents one of the main national interests in the environmental field.

The Programme of Socio-economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2011 - 2015, approved by Edict of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 136 dated April 11, 2011 (National Register of Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus, 2011, No. 43, 1/12462), establishes that the leading role in the conservation of biological and landscape diversity belongs to the Specially Protected Natural Areas (hereinafter, unless otherwise specified, referred to as SPNA).

Development of the SPNA system in accordance with Article 10 of Law "On Specially Protected Natural Areas" dated October 20, 1994 (Bulletin of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus, 1994, No. 35, p.570; National Register of Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus, 2000, No. 52, 2/171) is based on the implementation of the State Programme for Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas.

To implement the provisions of Article 10 of the aforementioned Law, and on the basis of the results of the State Programme for Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas for 2008 - 2014, approved by Edict of the President of the Republic of Belarus No.146 dated March 6, 2008 (National Register of Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus, 2008, No. 57, 1/9532), the State Programme for Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas for 2015 - 2019 (hereinafter referred to as “the State Programme”) was developed.

The activities of the State Programme aimed at developing the SPNA system, as well as supporting the operation, protection and management of SPNA represent consistent follow-up of the activities implemented under the State Programme for Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas for 2008 - 2014.

CHAPTER 2

FEASIBILITY STUDY

As of January 1, 2014, the SPNA system includes 1,213 objects, including one wildlife sanctuary (zapovednik), 4 national parks, 85 nature reserves (zakaznik) of national significance (31 landscape, 38 biological, and 16 hydrological reserves), 249 nature reserves of local significance, 306 natural monuments of national significance and 568 of local significance. The total area of specially protected natural areas of Belarus is 1615.4 thousand ha, or 7.8 per cent of the country's territory, including 1341.5 thousand ha, or 6.4 percent, under specially protected natural areas of national significance. The Berezinski Biosphere Reserve and the national parks occupy 476 thousand ha or 29.4 percent of the total territory of specially protected natural areas, while the reserves account for 1124.1 thousand ha, or 69.6 percent, and natural monuments for 15.4 thousand ha, or 0.9 percent. However, the SPNA system is not yet fully representative with respect to coverage of all typical and rare natural landscapes, biotopes, rare and endangered species of wild animals and plants. Not all of the areas having international nature conservation status have received the SPNA status. A certain part of the nature reserves require optimization in terms of spatial arrangement, boundaries and regimes of protection and use, as well as need to undergo the procedure of registration and recognition as territorial entities in the unified register of administrative-territorial and territorial entities of the Republic of Belarus. Development of the SPNA system (declaration, transformation and termination of functioning of SPNA) is envisaged in the Scheme of rational allocation of specially protected natural areas of national significance until January 1, 2025 and in the regional Schemes of rational allocation of specially protected natural areas of local significance.

According to the Programme of Socio-economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2011 - 2015, by 2015 is planned to increase the area of SPNAs to 8.1 - 8.3 percent of the country's territory. The Strategic Plan for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for 2011 - 2020, adopted at the X Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Decision X/2), ratified by Resolution of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus dated June 10, 1993 (Bulletin of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus, 1993, No. 27, p. 347), stipulates that by 2020 at least 17 percent of land and inland waters and, in particular, of the areas having particular importance for biodiversity conservation and performance of ecosystem services, will be preserved through efficient and fair management and operation of ecologically representative and well-linked systems of protected areas.

SPNAs provide for preservation of natural equilibrium and conservation of biodiversity, including genetic heritage, and serve as centres for the reproduction of flora and fauna, along with limited and concerted utilization of other natural resources, help to preserve the natural state of rare and typical landscapes, floodplain meadows, old-growth forests, wetlands and water bodies, which play an important role in forming the small-scale climate and improving the environmental situation. Within the boundaries of specially protected natural areas there dwell about 80 percent of species of rare and endangered wild plants and about 90 percent of species of rare and endangered wild animals.

The country has established and maintains state environmental agencies that manage SPNAs, including the Berezinski Biosphere Reserve, national parks and 26 nature reserves of national importance. It is necessary to further improve and develop the system of management of national level reserves and staff these state agencies with qualified personnel.

In the framework of the State Programme for Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas for 2008 – 2014,16 management plans for SPNAs have been developed, including those for the Berezinski Biosphere Reserve, the national parks, and the reserves of national significance "Middle Pripyat"44, "Yelnya"44, "Osveyski"44, "Prostyr"44, "Zvanets"44, "Sporovski"44, Lebyazhi"44, "Volmyanski"44, "Vygonoschanskoye"44, "Krasny Bor"44, and "Pribuzhskoye Polesie"44. At present, it is necessary to develop science-based management plans for the nationally significant nature reserves considered attractive for the development of recreational activities, as well as those having an international nature conservation status.

For the sustainable management of SPNAs, especially internationally significant ones, it is necessary to implement measures to regulate the spread of invasive alien species of wild plants and control the trees and shrubs overgrowth in open meadows and fen bogs, the loss of which leads to disappearance of the associated wetland plant and animal species, creating conditions for the reproduction of certain species of wild animals and plants, and others.

Implementation of regulated recreational activities is one of the key elements of the sustainable use of natural complexes and SPNA objects. During the period of implementation of the State Programme for Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas for 2008 – 2014, positive dynamics was observed in the development of recreational activities in the SPNAs. The infrastructure allowing for attraction of tourists to the national parks greatly improved: hotels, nature museums and fenced areas for demonstration of wild animals were built, and sightseeing tours (hiking, biking, horseback riding, water) were designed. Due to this, national parks annually accept more than 130 thousand tourists and vacationers.

As part of measures to create an enabling environment for development of recreational business and environmental outreach in SPNAs, the Nature Museum was built and its exhibits were arranged in the National Park "Pripyat", along with the construction of the hotel "Turov" with the accommodation capacity of 38 persons, landscaping of the resort village of Naroch and camping of the same name was carried out in National Park "Narochanski", enclosures from wild animals were constructed in the Berezinski Biosphere Reserve and the National Park ''Braslav lakes", and more than 30 nature trails and tourist routes were arranged and equipped in national parks and nature reserves. In addition, the infrastructure facilities were strengthened in the Berezinski Biosphere Reserve, the national parks and 26 nationally significant nature reserves; state environmental agencies were set up to manage them and tourist equipment was purchased.

Due to the implementation of the State Programme for Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas for 2008 – 2014, recreational activities were developed in over 26 nationally significant nature reserves, including "Vygonoschanskoye", "Sporovski", '' Pribuzhskoye Polesie", “Mid-Pripyat", ''Krasny Bor", "Sinsha", "Nalibokski" and others, which are very popular with visitors. New ecological tourism areas, such ornithological and botanical tourism, have been developing actively.

Implementation of these measures allowed for enhancing the recreational attractiveness of SPNAs and achieving a three-fold increase in the number of tourists visiting SPNAs.

CHAPTER 3

KEY GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE STATE PROGRAMME

The main goal of the State Programme - conservation of natural ecological systems, biological and landscape diversity through supporting operation of an effective SPNA system.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives have been identified:

development of the SPNA system through the implementation of:

the National Strategy for Development of Specially Protected Natural Areas until January 1, 2030;

the Scheme of rational allocation of specially protected natural areas of national significance until January 1, 2025;

regional Schemes of rational allocation of specially protected natural areas of local significance;

support of the operation, protection and management of SPNAs through the following activities: development and implementation of SPNA management plans, training of employees of state environmental agencies in charge of SPNA management, restoration of disturbed ecosystems, creation of artificial nests for rare bird species, development of additional recreation infrastructure facilities in SPNAs, organization of festivals, conferences and other similar events, publication of books and booklets in order to raise public awareness about the SPNA operation, maintenance of the SPNA register, etc.

The targets and indicators of the State Programme are identified as per Annex 1.

The State Programme provides for the implementation of the activities listed in Annex 2.

CHAPTER 4. RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE PROGRAMME

The State Programme pertains to the category of environmental programmes and has a social focus.

The funds for the implementation of the State Programme are allocated on an annual basis and their amounts are to be indexed for inflation.

Resources for the implementation of the State Programme as per Annex 3 (in the prices as of January 1, 2014) shall be provided from:

the national budget;

local budgets;

proceeds of international technical assistance.

The cost of implementation of the State Programme will be BYR 119, 730 million, including:

BYR 97,480 million from the republican budget;

BYR 16,310 million from the local budgets;

BYR 5,94 million from the proceeds of international technical assistance.

CHAPTER 5

EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE STATE PROGRAMME

Implementation of the State Programme will provide for:

optimization of the SNPA system through implementing the Scheme of rational allocation of specially protected natural areas of republican significance until January 1, 2025 and regional Schemes of rational allocation of specially protected natural areas of local significance, which will increase the total territory of SPNAs to no less than 1,723 thousand ha, or 8.3 percent of the country's area;

more effective SPNA management through the development of management plans for 13 nature reserves of national significance and implementation of the developed SPNA management plans;

restoration of natural complexes and ecological systems (drained wetlands, flooded areas, overgrown open meadows, areas prone to erosion) on an area of about 1,200 thousand ha;

creation of enabling conditions for the development of eco-tourism and improvement of public health in SPNAs, increase of the inflow of organized tourists by 25 percent or more, development and improvement of at least 30 tourist routes and nature trails, rehabilitation of existing tourist campsites and recreation areas and arrangement of at least 20 new ones;

creation of enabling conditions for sustainable development of the regions within the boundaries of which SPNAs are functioning, increased public awareness of the SPNAs.

Effective operation of the SPNA system will contribute to the socio-economic development both at the national and regional levels and ensure national security of the country in the environmental field.

Annex 1

To the State Programme

for Development of Specially Protected

Natural Areas for 2015 – 2019

OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS OF THE STATE PROGRAMME FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALLY PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS IN 2015 - 2019

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| State Programme Objectives | Progress Indicators, measurement units | Scores for years | | | | |
| 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| 1. Development of a System of Specially Protected Natural Territories (SPNT) | Number of announcements on SPNT establishment | 14 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Number of announcements on SPNT transformation | 69 | 113 | 59 | 87 | 60 |
| Number of announcements on SPNT ceasing of operation | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Ensuring functioning, protection and management of SPNT | Number of management plans for reserves of republican importance | - | 4 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| Number of managers and employees of state environmental agencies responsible for the management of protected areas, who passed training | - | 25 | - | 25 | - |
| Number of manufactured and installed information signs and advertising boards | 1260 | 1225 | 1435 | 1435 | 1435 |
| Number of updated applications for nomination wetlands Republic of Belarus on the list of Wetlands of International Importance | 8 | - | - | - | - |
| Number of projects developed and implemented for restoration of ecological systems | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 |
| Number of protected areas in the territory of which the measures were taken to clearing of trees, shrubs and reeds in areas of ecological systems (meadows, fens, islands) | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Area of protected areas, which took measures to combat invasive alien plant species, ha | 290 | 150 | 50 | 50 | - |
| Number of artificial nests for birds belonging to the species included in the Red Data Book of the Republic of Belarus | - | 160 | 200 | 100 | - |
|  | Number of procured special vehicles | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
|  | Number of purchased sets of special equipment for forest fires detection | - | 3 | 3 | 3 | - |
|  | Number of constructed and reconstructed tourism infrastructure objects | 1 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 4 |
|  | Number of festivals, conferences and exhibitions held in SPNT | 14 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 |
|  | Number of published promotional materials on SPNT | 1900 | 5600 | 6500 | 600 | 600 |
|  | Increase in attendance SPNT by PA tourists, % | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |