

The New Paradigm for Nature Protection: A Model for Russia's High North?

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Abstract: This article addresses whether the new Western paradigm for nature protection, combining conservation and local development, could serve as a model for nature protection in Russia, and for Russia's High North in particular. The article introduces the new paradigm of protected areas and the Russian protected area (PA) system. Three different types of PAs in the Murmansk Oblast are then presented, focusing on the role protected areas can play in terms of local development. The new paradigm has been embraced in the West, but the dominant form of PA in Russia is still the strictly protected areas – *zapovedniks* - which do not allow any form of economic activity including nature-based tourism. The number of national parks and nature parks in Russia is slowly increasing, but to establish and develop these forms of PAs suited to promote local development is challenging. The situation in the Murmansk Oblast illustrates problems such as conflict of interest between different stakeholders, lack of support from

the authorities – most notably at Federal level – and bureaucratic hindrances including the system for leasing of land as well as weak tourism infrastructure and competence. However, local “park enthusiasm,” a growing number of tourists and new governmental strategies may contribute to local development in the years to come.

Keywords: nature conservation, the new paradigm for protected areas, local development, nature-based tourism, *zapovedniks*

Introduction

A large number of protected areas (PAs) have been established to conserve the rich and pristine wilderness of the Euro-Arctic Barents Region. In the Norwegian and Russian parts of the Barents Region alone there are nearly one thousand protected areas covering more than 180 thousand square kilometers.¹ However, in the arena of public debate area protection have traditionally been seen to come at the expense of rural economic development.² However, over the past years there has been a growing trend towards integrating the need for local development into nature conservation policies. The result is a shift in favour of protected areas allowing local resource use.³ There are different models for integrated management and use of PAs. The model of the Nordic countries is based on the public's right to access and use state-owned as well as private land for *recreational purposes*.⁴ Other European countries, for example the UK, offer variants of this practice. Furthermore the European/Western models promote active stakeholder participation amongst others through different forms of deliberative decision-making,⁵ and incentives for local economic activity such as tourism in relation to protected areas.⁶ The combination of nature protection and sustainable use are key elements

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1. Günter, M. *Field Guide to the Protected Areas of the Barents Oblast*, Svanhovd Environmental Centre, Svanvik 2004, pp. 46–47.
 2. Wells, M. P. & McShane, T. “Integrating Protected Area Management with Local Needs and Aspirations’ in *Ambio*, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, 33(8) 2004 pp. 513–519.
 3. Naughton-Treves, L., Buck Holland, M. & Brandon, K. “The Role of Protected Areas in Conserving Biodiversity and Sustainable Local Livelihoods” in *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, (30) 2005, pp. 219–252.
 4. Hammitt, W. E., Kaltenborn, B. E., Vistad, O. I., Emmelin, L. & Teigland, J. “Common access tradition and wilderness management in Norway: A paradox for managers” in *Environmental Management*, 16(2) 1992, pp. 149–156.
 5. Zachrisson, A. *Co-management of natural resources. Paradigm shifts, key concepts and cases*, Umeå: Department of Political Science, University of Umeå 2004.
 6. Bushell, R. & Eagles, P. F. J. *Tourism and protected areas: benefits beyond boundaries: The*

in the Western models of protected areas. The situation in post-Soviet Russia is in rather sharp contrast to this, as Russia seems mainly to maintain a different policy drawn from the Soviet period based on strong restriction of public access to protected areas.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, indications were that Russia might follow the Western practice of managing both business and common pool resources in Russia.⁷ However, there are several severe obstacles and challenges when it comes to actually implementing these policies. This should perhaps not come as much of a surprise, as various studies, for example as related to the Western concept of co-management of natural resources,⁸ have illustrated the difficulty of promoting and applying Western concepts in post-Soviet Russia. This raises a critical question: Can Western models of protected areas work in post-Soviet Russia? We address this question by analyzing the current status of local development in relation to protected areas in three PAs of the Russian High North. The first, Laplandsky *zapovednik*, is a typical Soviet-style strictly protected area, struggling to become more integrated with society in line with its role as a biosphere reserve in the network of UNESCO's "Man and the Biosphere" (MAB) Program. A central component of the MAB concept is to link the conservation of biodiversity with the needs of local communities.⁹ The second case is an example of establishing a Western-type national park in the Khibiny Mountains, which is particularly illustrative with regard to the challenge of combining different user-group interests in a Post-Soviet context. The third example is the Kutsa *zakaznik* in Kandalaksha where there is local consensus and rather ambitious initiatives to convert the PA to a nature park as part of a tourism development strategy. The analysis is based on a combination of existing relevant data and official documents from the Russian Federation, i.e. laws, decrees, plans, official statistics, etc. Furthermore, scholarly

Vth IUCN World Park Congress: CABRI 2007; Eagles, P. F. J., McCool, S. F. & Phillips, A. *Sustainable tourism in protected areas: guidelines for planning and management*: IUCN. World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) 2002; Machlis, G. E. & Field, D. R., *National parks and rural development: Practice and policy in the United States*. Washington, DC: Island Press 2000.

7. Murota, T. & Glazyrina, I. "Common-Pool resources in East Russia: a case study on the creation of a new national park as a form of community-based natural resource management," in *Environmental Economics and Policy Studies* (11) 2010, pp. 37–52.
8. Hønneland, G. & Nilssen, F. "Co-management in Northwest Russian Fisheries," in *Society & Natural Resources*, (13) 2000, pp. 635–648; Wilson, E. "Time, idealisation and international development: promoting Canadian co-management in northern Russia," in *Area*, 39(3) 2007, pp. 323–330.
9. UNESCO, *Biosphere Reserves. The Seville Strategy & The Statutory Framework of the World Network Man and the Biosphere Programme*, 1996.

articles, reports and other available credible sources of information have been used for background information and to some extent as a means to validate the interview data collected. The first-hand data has been collected over a series of field trips in Russia in 2009 and 2010. The data includes interviews with respondents with various relationships to protected areas on the Kola Peninsula, both individual and group interviews with a total of 25 PA actors. In addition several NGOs, representatives from the scientific community, and economic actors such as tourist companies were interviewed. Lastly, several relevant local, regional and federal authorities were interviewed. The data thus covers all major relevant stakeholders. In order to gain access to the respondents they were assured they would be treated with full anonymity, which is quite normal in such cases.¹⁰

The article is structured as follows: first we address the so-called “new paradigm” for protected area management. In section 2 we relate this to the Russian PA system and how the new paradigm fits with the rationale of Russian area protection. Section 3 presents the empirical basis, focusing on the examples of Laplandsky, Khibiny, and Kutsa which represent different forms of PAs and illustrate varied conditions for implementing the new paradigm that combine conservation and local development. Against this background, in Section 4 we examine the status and potential for local development in terms of nature-based tourism in the Murmansk Oblast. Finally, section 5 discusses whether the new paradigm can be a model for Russia in general and for Russia’s High North in particular, highlighting factors influencing the possibilities to integrate sustainable use and local development with nature protection.

1. The new paradigm for protected areas – combining nature conservation and sustainable use

There are more than 120,000 protected areas worldwide, covering close to 14% of the Earth’s terrestrial land surface.¹¹ Although there are various forms of protected areas, the most well known type of PA is the national park, inspired by American PAs such as Yellowstone National Park, established as early as 1872.¹² The classical

10. The data was collected through the NAPROLD project “The role of protected nature in sustainable local development in North-West Russia and Northern Norway – a comparative analysis” funded by the Norwegian Research Council. All authors participated in the NAPROLD project, but during the project period Christel Elvestad was affiliated with Nordland Research Institute in Bodø, Norway.

11. See the IUCN (The International Union for Conservation of Nature) webpage; <http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/pa/> (accessed 27 June 2011).

12. Dudley, N. *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*. Gland, Switzerland 2008.

model for PAs has typically been pre-occupied with setting aside areas for conservation purposes and protecting spectacular nature and wildlife, with little regard for local communities. The dominant type of PA management has been top-down forms of steering run by central governments, protecting nature “against people.” In some cases the conservation of areas has been mainly to the benefit of occasional urban visitors, constituting a restriction to the development of local communities.¹³ However, over the last thirty years a new paradigm for area protection has developed, turning some of the classic ideas about PA management on their head.¹⁴ Social and economic objectives have come to the forefront of PA management, and local people are increasingly seen as the essential beneficiaries of protected areas.

In particular, there have been major changes in governance practices since the mid 1990s. Policy changes have been remarkable between the IVth World Parks Congress in 1992 and the Vth WPC in 2003. In addition, the so-called “Seville Strategy” of UNESCO, which evolved from 1995 from a primary focus on conservation to a greater integration of conservation and sustainable development, has influenced PA management all over the world. A global survey carried out by Dearden and Bennet drew attention to an overall trend towards increased participation of stakeholders and use of a wider range of participatory techniques in PA management.¹⁵ A large majority (83%) of the respondents in the survey indicated that the amount and strength of stakeholder participation in PA decision-making had increased over the past decade. Furthermore, there has been a growing interest in community-based input to PA management. While 41% of the respondents judged that local communities had no influence on protected area decision-making in 1992, the perception of a lack of participation had virtually disappeared by 2002 (2%).¹⁶ Another related trend is closer relations between conservation interests and industries such as mining companies, the oil and gas sector, and in particular the tourist industry. This may be linked to what some observers see as the recasting of PAs to be tools for social planning and income generation.¹⁷

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13. Odindi, J. O. & Ayirebi, G. K. “Communities and conservation: in search for a win-win situation in the Great Fish River Reserve” in *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12(1) 2010, pp. 13–26.
 14. Phillips, A. “Turning Ideas on Their Head. The New Paradigm for Protected Areas” in *The George Wright Forum* 20(2) 2003, pp. 8–32.
 15. Dearden, P. & Bennet, M. “Trends in Global Protected Area Governance 1992–2002” in *Environmental Management*, 36(1) 2005, pp. 89–100.
 16. Dearden and Bennet 2005 p. 97.
 17. Locke, H. & Dearden, P. “Rethinking Protected Areas Categories and the New Paradigm” in *Environmental Conservation*, 32(1) 2005, pp. 1–10.

At the Durban World Park Congress in 2003 there were, for example, several workshop streams and cross-cutting themes addressing tourism, co-ordinated by the Task Force on Tourism & Protected Areas.¹⁸ The Congress approved a series of recommendations, most importantly recommendation 12 “*Tourism as a Vehicle for Conservation and Support of Protected Areas.*” The congress emphasized that the world’s tourism and recreation sector potentially provides significant benefits to protected areas, and one of the recommendations addressed in particular the need to ensure that tourism contributes to local economic development and poverty reduction (rec. 1c).¹⁹ The benefits of tourism in protected areas are highlighted in a wide range of publication and policy documents.²⁰ The World Park Congress held in Barcelona, Spain in 2008 confirmed the emphasis on socio-economic aspects of nature protection. The point is that the new paradigm for nature protection promotes sustainable local development as an integrated part of biodiversity conservation, which was unthinkable just a few decades ago. But to what extent have these ideas been manifested in the Russian context, and how does the rationale behind the Russian PA system fit with the new paradigm and the aim to enhance and integrate local development with area protection?

2. The Russian PA system and the ethos of “zapovednost”

The Russian Federation holds one sixth of the world’s land areas, one fifth of the world’s forests, and over twenty per cent of the world’s freshwater resources containing an enormous diversity of ecosystems.²¹ In 1992 the Russian Federation signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), where one of the requirements was to establish a system of protected areas in order to conserve biodiversity.²² However, Russia had already met this requirement, as a comprehensive system of PAs had been put in place half a century before the CBD.²³

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18. DeRose, A. M. “Fifth IUCN World Park Congress” in *Special Bulletin on Global Processes*, (5) December 1, 2003.
 19. Eagles, P. F. J. “Tourism at the Fifth World Park Conference,” Durban, South Africa, 8–17 September 2003. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 12(2) 2003, pp. 169–173.
 20. Supra note 22; Supra note 9; Font, X., Cochrane, J., & Trapper, R., *Tourism for Protected Area Financing: Understanding tourism revenues for effective management plans*. Leeds (UK), Leeds Metropolitan University 2004.
 21. Wells, M. P. & Willams, M. D. “Russia’s Protected Areas in Transition: The Impacts of Perestroika, Economic Reform and the Move Towards Democracy” in *Ambio, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences*, 27 (3) May 1998, pp. 198–206. See page 198.
 22. CBD was ratified by Russia in 1995.
 23. Holten Jørgensen, J. & Hønneland, G. “Implementing Global Nature Protection Agreements in Russia” in *Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy*, (9) 2006, pp. 33–53. See page 43.

Russia has one of the world's oldest and largest systems of protected areas, established in the late 19th century. Today Russia has almost 150 protected areas in IUCN categories I and II and several thousands of other PAs.²⁴ The key element in the system is the *zapovedniks*, which are federal PAs representing the strictest category of protection. *Zapovedniks* were viewed as “laboratories of nature,” to paraphrase F. Shitlmark, the founding father of the network of Russian *zapovedniks*. The primary focus on *scientific research* in pristine, natural conditions protecting typical and rare ecosystems clearly distinguishes the system of *zapovedniks* from other PA systems around the world.²⁵ The definition of a *zapovednik* is a territory or water body from which *all* productive forms of economic activity are excluded, with a view to protecting the whole natural complex and biological diversity.²⁶

Table 1. The Main Russian PA Categories

Russian PA Category	IUCN PA Category	Commentary/explanation
<i>Zapovedniks</i>	Ia Strict nature reserve	Scientific reserves
<i>Natsionalnyy park/</i> National parks	II National Park	Federal parks
<i>Prirodnyy park/</i> Nature parks	II National Park	Regional parks
<i>Zakazniks</i>	Federal <i>zakazniks</i> – III Natural Monuments Regional <i>zakazniks</i> - IV Habitat/ Species Management Area or VI Managed Resource Protected Area	The majority are in practice Regional PAs in category VII.
<i>Pamyatnik prirody/</i> Natural monuments	III Natural Monuments	Often individual trees, geo- logical exposures or other small areas.

Main source of data²⁷

24. Category I is “Strict Nature Reserve” and category II is “National Park.” For more information about the IUCN categories definitions, see http://www.unep-wcmc.org/iucn-protected-area-management-categories_591.html (accessed 27 June 2011).
25. Ostergren, D. & Shvarts, E. “Protected Areas in Russia: Management Goals, Current Status, and Future Prospects of Russian *Zapovedniki*” in *USDA Forest Service Proceedings* (RMRS-P4) 1998, pp. 11–16.
26. Shitlmark, F. “History of the Russian *Zapovedniks* 1895–1995,” *Russian Nature Press* 2003, p.2.
27. Shestakov, A. “Protected areas in Russia: Legal regulation. An overview of Federal Laws,” WWF Russia, Moscow 2004; Dudley 2008.

According to this strict definition, there is no room for tourism and recreation in *zapovedniks* as no direct human influence on the natural objects is permitted. This is the ethos of “*zapovednost*,” emphasizing the preservation of “virgin etalons” or model examples of nature set aside as reference areas, in contrast to ecosystems in use, or what was labeled “zones of production” in Soviet terminology.²⁸ There are currently 101 *zapovedniks* covering a total area of 338,000 square kilometers, but throughout history there have been several set-backs with regard to their number and size. The policy shifts made by Stalin in 1951 and in 1964 by Khrushchev, motivated by the need to put more land into economic use, were particularly damaging to the system (see table 2).

Table 2. *Zapovedniks* – 1930s to 2010

Year	Number	Area/km ²	Comment
1933	69	61 145	The Soviet Union
1950	128	126 000	-II-
1951	40	13 840	-II- (“Stalin Effect”)
1961	93	63 000	-II-
1964	66	42 674	-II- (“Khrushchev Effect”)
1991	77	199 140	The Russian Federation
2000	100	333 000	-II-
2010	101	338 000	-II-

Main source of data²⁹

National parks have a fairly short history in Russia. The first National Park, Losiny Ostrov located in Moscow Oblast, was established in 1983. During the next decade more than twenty new parks were created, mostly near urban centers or areas where there already was an interest in some form of outdoor recreation.³⁰ National parks were established to protect natural complexes and related objects of cultural heritage, and to regulate public access for hiking, camping, skiing, and other recreational activities.³¹ Russian national parks are organized in accordance

28. Weiner, D. R. *Models Of Nature: Ecology, Conservation, and Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*, University of Pittsburgh Press 1988; Weiner, D. R. *A Little Corner of Freedom. Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachev*: University of California Press 1999.

29. Rosstat, *Russia in figures (Rossija b tsifrakh, ofitsial'noe izdanie 2009)*, Federal Bureau of statistics (Rosstat), Moscow 2009.

30. Haskell, D. A. “Forging the National Park Concept in the Russian Federation” in *The George Wright Forum* 12(1) 1995, pp. 36–39.

31. Where appropriate, national parks can also provide environmental education and scientifically based approaches to the protection of natural and cultural heritage.

with the principles of zoning, with a protected core zone, a recreational zone and a buffer zone in which economic activity such as tourism is allowed.³² While national parks are federal objects, nature parks are quite similar PAs but under the jurisdiction of local, oblast, republic or kray authorities. Furthermore, there is the category of *zakazniks*, which are PAs established for a particular time period and purpose such as to protect complex ecosystems, colonies of birds, or populations of rare plants, anticipating potentially stronger regulation in the future. An important aspect compared to other protected areas in Russia is that *zakazniks* lack the corresponding staff and budget of *zapovedniks* and national parks altogether, but since they can be created more quickly and easily they have become the most widespread form of protected area in Russia.³³ Many *zakazniks* are established to preserve and restore hunting resources. *Zakazniks* can be established at a regional level or a federal level, but most *zakazniks* are regional. This is also the case for natural monuments, which protect unique natural, historic and cultural sites usually of less than 5 km². There are no restrictions with regard to visiting and recreation in the *zakazniks* and natural monuments, but activities such as fishing and hunting may be subject to licensing. At the Baltic Sea Action Summit in Helsinki in February 2010, Prime minister Putin announced that the Russian government planned to increase Russia's protected areas by 20% by 2012 (11 million hectares), establishing 9 new nature reserves and 13 new national parks.³⁴ It remains to be seen whether these ambitions are realistic given the fact that only one new *zapovednik* and six new national parks have been established in the last ten years (see tables 2 and 3).

Table 3. National Parks of the Russian Federation – 1980s to 2010

Year	Number	Area/km ²
1983	1	12,881
1992	22	42,054
2000	35	67,606
2010	41	91, 661

Main source of data³⁵

32. Supra note 24.

33. Ostergren and Shvarts 1998.

34. Baltic Sea Action Group. State commitments made at the Baltic Sea Action Summit in February 2010, viewed 14 March 2011 at: <http://www.bsag.fi/content/view/full/1326> (accessed 27 June 2011).

35. Rosstat 2009

Nature-based tourism is the most relevant business to establish in terms of combining conservation and local development. In this regard the Russian *zapovedniks* are obviously not the PA category with the most potential, as no economic activity is allowed, and tourism must be non-commercial and is only permitted as a part of environmental education. *Zakazniks* and natural monuments are PAs without infrastructure and staff to support tourism, even though these may be valuable areas for recreation which attract visitors. However, recreation and tourism is one of the main aims of Russian national parks as well as nature parks, where commercial tourism is subject to licences to ensure that the activities do not contradict the purpose of the parks and cause damage to the areas.³⁶ Against this background we address the current situation in the Murmansk Oblast with regard to local development and tourism connected to protected areas.

3. Protected areas and local development in the Murmansk Oblast

3.1. Introduction

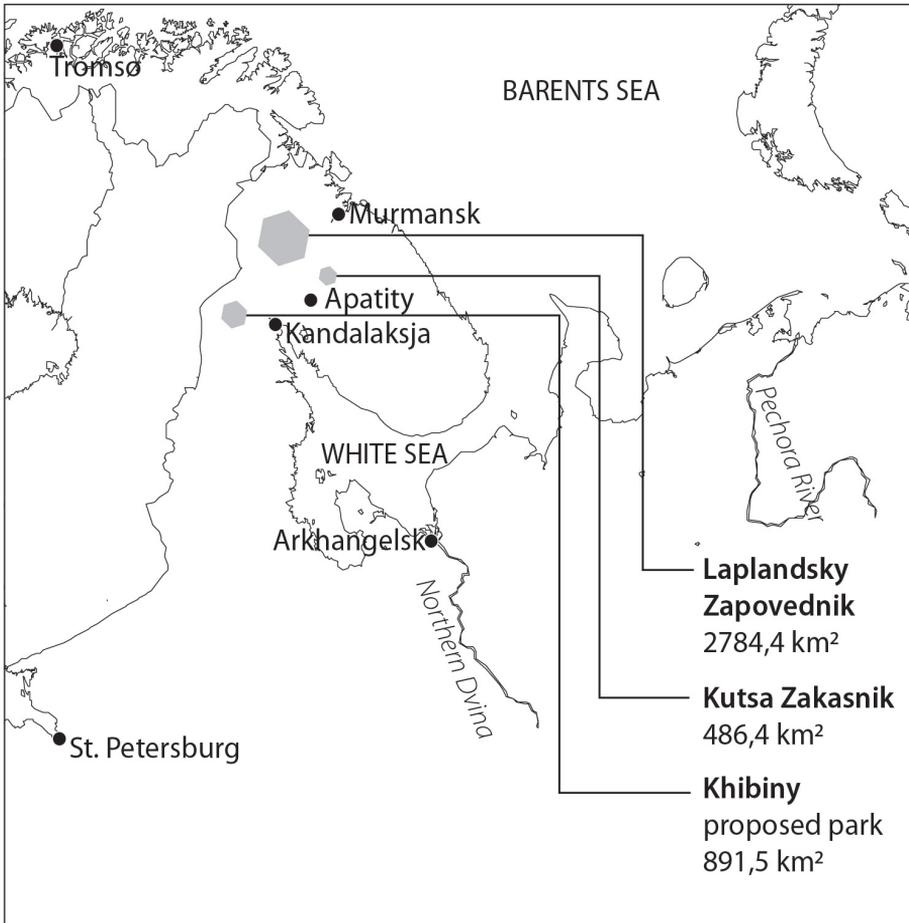
The Murmansk Oblast is located on the Kola Peninsula in north-west Russia. In the west the region borders Norway and Finland. An important specificity of the Murmansk Oblast is its high degree of urbanization, as 92 per cent of the population lives in urban settlements. The population grew rapidly in the 1930s as the Murmansk Oblast became one of the most industrialized territories of the Russian High North.³⁷ The economy is mainly based on the use of natural resources. The Kola Peninsula has always played a vital role for Russia due to its strategic location in the north and its abundance of natural resources. The huge deposits of valuable minerals have been and still are one of the main economic pillars of the region. Murmansk Oblast provides 100% of the Russian production of apatite concentrate, 12% of iron ore concentrate, 14% of refined copper, 43% of nickel, and 14% of fish products.³⁸

The Khibiny Mountains are one of the strategically important locations of mineral deposits in north-west Russia. Apatite-nepheline ores have been exploited since the late 1930s when the City of Kirovsk was established. In addition, mines were set up in Mohegorsk for copper-nickel ores, and in Olenegorsk for large iron

36. Supra note 30.

37. Luzin, G. P., Pretes, M. & Vasiliev, V. V. "The Kola Peninsula: Geography, History and Resources" in *Arctic*, 47(1) 1994, 1–15.

38. Murmanskstat, *Socio-economic Situation in the Murmansk Oblast*, Territorial Division of the Federal Service of State Statistics in the Murmansk Oblast 2009.



Map of the Case Areas: Laplandsky, Kutsa and Khibiny (Murmansk Oblast). ©Nofima

ore deposits. In 1930 the Russian Academy of Sciences established a department in the Kirovsk to support and further enhance the utilization of the different valuable components of the raw material in the ores. A branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences was established in the town of Apatity in 1962. The areas surrounding the mines in Kirovsk, Monchegorsk and Olenegorsk have been severely affected by mining activity. The environment has become heavily polluted and the landscape has been reshaped by the many huge slag heap deposits.

The PAs we will be addressing in the next sections are in fact located in or nearby this area. The Laplandsky *zapovednik* is surrounded by several mining areas, but the PA is particularly affected by the activities of the Severonickel combine in

Monchegorsk. The proposed Khibiny Park is located in the middle of the mining area in Kirovsk, while the Kutsa PA is located in Kandalaksha. Kandalaksha is not a typical Soviet mining town, but an old industrial city by the White Sea. It has a railway station, a commercial port which handles the apatite concentrate from the Oblast, and an oil terminal, etc. However, the main economic activity in Kandalaksha is related to the non-ferrous metal industry, with its large aluminum factory and hydro power stations to provide vital energy for production of the metals. Murmansk Oblast is in other words heavily industrialized. At the same time the environment of the Kola Peninsula is still very attractive. Murmansk Oblast has fascinating tundra, forest-tundra and taiga (boreal forest), more than 130,000 lakes and rivers, and rich flora and fauna. The opportunities for fishing, hunting, rafting, kayaking and canoeing, climbing, skiing, kiting, and hiking attract an increasing number of visitors to the area. At present around 10% of the total area of the Murmansk Oblast is protected nature in some form.

3.2 Laplandsky *Zapovednik* – A typical Soviet era PA³⁹

The Laplandsky *zapovednik* is one of the largest PAs in Europe, occupying 278.4 thousand hectares in the western part of the Kola Peninsula. The Laplandsky *zapovednik* was formally established in 1930 and incorporated in the federal network of protected areas in 1935. The *zapovednik* preserves one of the largest mountain-tundra ecosystems on the Kola Peninsula, as well as an intact northern taiga ecosystem. The initial rationale behind the PA was closely connected to the severe negative effects on the wild reindeer population caused by the building of the railway line to Murmansk between 1914 and 1916. The restoration of the reindeer stock has thus been a main goal of the PA, but valuable game such as moose, marten and otter are also benefitting from the conservation of the area. The Laplandsky *zapovednik* is a category 1a protected area, which is the strictest category of the IUCN system.⁴⁰ The *zapovednik* can be used for scientific purposes only. All economic activity is forbidden, including fishing, hunting and gathering. Visiting of the *zapovednik* is in principle forbidden, but limited scientific and ecological/educational excursions are allowed. There are no settlements except for the forest guard stations along the reserve's boundary. The PA has no roads, but motor boats and snowmobiles can be used by employees for service purposes.⁴¹

Laplandsky has managed its main tasks well, in particular with regard to the conservation of a population of wild reindeer. Once close to extinction, the

39. Lapland State Natural Biosphere Reserve is also used as the official name of this PA.

40. Dudley 2008.

41. Undated briefing note about Laplandsky provided by members of the PA staff.

herd is today the largest wild reindeer herd in Scandinavia, numbering around 1000 animals. There have nevertheless been several setbacks in the history of the Laplandsky *zapovednik*. During the Second World War it had to close, and just as it was beginning to recover after the war, the Council of Ministers of the USSR passed a resolution to reduce the number of reserves, including Laplandsky, and more than 80 other reserves in 1951. The area was then transferred to the forest administration in Monchegorsk and around 5% of the forest was cut down. However, Laplandsky was one of four reserves to be re-opened in 1957.

The second period of hardship was caused by the economic crisis of the 1990s. In the Soviet period *zapovedniks* were fully funded through federal budgets. In the second half of the 1990s federal funding was cut by about 70–80% and the *zapovedniks* were thus forced to actively search for other sources of income.⁴² In the case of Laplandsky, the fight for compensation for environmental damage became the main strategy for survival. The Laplandsky *zapovednik* is located only 10 km from the industrial giant JSC Severonikel combine, which has heavily influenced the environment.⁴³ By means of a court case Laplandsky was granted considerable compensation. In addition Laplandsky filed a claim against the Kolenergo hydro-electric complex for damaging the fish population of the Pyrenga and Okhta lakes, which also became subject to economic compensation.⁴⁴ So paradoxically it was the actors degrading the *zapovednik* that contributed to its restoration.

Today the financial situation is stabilized with around 80% of the budget coming from federal funds. The remainder of the funding comes from other sources, most notably from the Kolskaya Mining-Metallurgical Company KMMC, which provides annual funding for monitoring of the environment in and around the *zapovednik* as well as on the company's industrial area. The JSC Severonikel combine and the JSC Mining-metallurgical combine Pechenganikel are both part of KMMC. Furthermore KMMC is an important sponsor of new activities in the *zapovednik* related to the development of tourism services.⁴⁵ In 1985 Laplandsky was included in UNECO's World Network of biosphere reserves. This was a first step to implementing some of the ideas of "the new paradigm" in PA manage-

42. Interview, representatives of the Laplandsky *zapovednik*, 17 September 2009.

43. In fact, the area of Laplandsky *zapovednik* was doubled in 1983, after studies determined that the vegetation and wildlife had been greatly compromised by emissions from the nearby smelter.

44. Shestakov, S. & Barcan, V. "Legislative practice and nature protection in Russia's Kola Peninsula" in *The George Wright Forum*, 17(2) 2000, pp. 92–95.

45. Interview, representative of the Laplandsky *zapovednik*, 12 May 2010.

ment.⁴⁶ In this connection Laplandsky has ambitions to provide paid services to the public.⁴⁷ However, as a *zapovednik*, Laplandsky is at present not allowed to be involved in paid commercial activities. Tourism activity is allowed only as part of environmental education, which in practice means guiding and teaching of schools and kindergartens and other visitors. In 2009 the *zapovedniks* in the Murmansk Oblast had 18 ecological paths and three so-called “visit-centers” receiving in total about 4,700 visitors (only about 230 of them were foreigners).⁴⁸ On a national basis the total number of visitors to Russian *zapovedniks* amounted to around 200,000.⁴⁹ The *zapovednik* system is however not set up to deal with external income, which the government fears could lead to illegal economic transactions.⁵⁰ It is the view of the Laplandsky administration that the tourist activities of the *zapovedniks* should have been supported and funded by the federal government. But the federal authority responsible for *zapovedniks*, the Federal Ministry of Natural Resources, is not responsible for economic activities such as tourism.⁵¹ Furthermore, tourism in protected areas is not a priority of the Federal Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (“MERT”) Nevertheless, Laplandsky is trying to develop its tourism services to the public in spite of the lack of federal support, for example through international co-operation on tourism with neighbouring countries such as Norway and Finland, and through co-operation with local enterprises. This nevertheless represents a rare example of co-operation between a *zapovednik* and the local society, since the *zapovedniks* are closed areas which traditionally have operated in isolation from local social and economic development.

46. The Laplandsky *zapovednik* itself constitutes the core zone of the biosphere, while the territory between the east border of the Reserve and the Murmansk-Petersburg (M18) highway has been established as a buffer zone to study the effect of pollution from the mining industry on the Kola Peninsula. There is also a co-operation zone formed around Laplandsky *zapovednik*, where the *zapovednik* implements joint projects aimed to benefit the Kola Peninsula community together with its partners.

47. Interview, representative of the Laplandsky *zapovednik*, 12 May 2011.

48. Murmanskstat, Tourism and Recreation in the Murmansk Oblast, Territorial Division of the Federal Service of State Statistics in the Murmansk Oblast 2008.

49. Stepanitsky, V. B. “Ecological Tourism in Protected Areas in Russia: Problems and prospects,” report from the international conference on innovative policies of cultural heritage preservation and development of cultural tourism, Moscow, 25–27 November 2005 (2003 statistics are used in this article).

50. Interview with Rosprirodnazor (Federal inspection body under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology), October 2009.

51. Interview, representative of the Laplandsky *zapovednik*, 12 May 2010.

3.3 Establishing a national park in the Khibiny Mountains?

In 2000 the regional government commissioned the Kola Science Center to make a scientific assessment to prepare for a national park in the Khibiny Mountains. One of the main reasons for this was that the Khibiny area offers unique possibilities both for recreation and nature-based tourism for the population in the region, as well as for a wider audience in north-west Russia and internationally. The areas of the Khibiny massif have traditionally been used by the local community for recreational purposes and as an important area for domestic food supply, such as picking of berries and mushrooms, as well as recreation. There are no official numbers available, but rough estimates indicate that around 80,000 people visit the area each year, and at present the use of the area is unregulated and unorganized.⁵² Kirovsk has a down-hill skiing resort with some ski-town facilities and marked tracks and trails developed to be used in the Soviet winter “Spartakiad” down-hill competition – the Soviet equivalent to the Western winter Olympic games. In addition, several small tour operators are active in the area. Hence, the initiative to establish a national park was seen as an important move to secure the area from environmental degradation as a result of mining and uncontrolled use by the public, which in turn could provide considerable benefits to Kirovsk and Apatity, and to the Murmansk Oblast as a whole.⁵³ At the same time, the Khibiny Mountains are, as mentioned, an important area for mining, with plans for the opening of a new mine in the middle of the recreational area.

The establishment of national parks is a difficult process which involves several stakeholders at federal, regional and local levels. The establishment would imply not only approval but also financial support by the federal level in Russia. In practice the federal governments would need to commit and set aside funding for this purpose, both in direct money transfer from the federal budget and also in administrative resources to maintain, manage and control the park. In addition, the establishment of a national park entails very demanding administrative procedures which could normally take up to 10-15 years to finalize. In the case of the Khibiny area, there has been little official interest from the federal level to support the establishment of this new proposed protected area.⁵⁴ As a result the initiators and local stakeholders have launched a secondary strategy, namely to switch to establishing a regional nature park, which seemed to be a more realistic alternative.

It is fair to say that although mining activities have noticeably physically influenced the area around Kirovsk, most of the population in the area has remained

52. Interview with representatives of the Kirovsk City Council, 16 September 2009.

53. Interviews with local tourist companies, 16 September 2009.

54. Interview with environmental NGOs, 15 September 2009.

positive to the mining company and its presence. The economic importance and significance, spin-off of economic activities and the contribution to the local community of the Apatit combine has over time created a strong positive attitude to mining activity in public opinion.⁵⁵ The now privatized mining operations in the Khibiny area are still running, and remain the single largest economic activity in Kirovsk and the surrounding towns. The Apatit combine also takes significant local responsibility and is carrying out and financing maintenance services, as well as sponsoring sports, social and recreational facilities for the community. The mining company therefore has a high level of support from the public and a substantial influence in the Regional Duma.

The local companies consider the establishment of the park as a positive step that could be promising for future development of nature-based tourism. On the other hand, some fear that the establishment of a park would attract large companies from Moscow and St. Petersburg which might put local companies out of business.⁵⁶ The main problem, however, seems to be the attitudes of industrial giants towards establishing the Khibiny. For instance the borders of the proposed park were changed in order to accommodate the development of a new mine. The new mine is already under construction, and to stop it the licence must be revoked by the government.⁵⁷ This would be rather unlikely as the new ore would prolong mining activities in the area from 60 to over a hundred years. The question is whether it is possible to make some kind of compromise to ensure both the mining interests and the interests of nature are protected. At present there is discussion of construction of a bridge over the mining area to secure access to the proposed park. However, time seems to be running out to ensure conservation, recreational and tourism interests in the Khibiny area. Supporters of the park fear that “if we do nothing, the whole area will be excavated by mines and unattractive for tourism.”⁵⁸

3.4 Kutsa *zakaznik* and tourism development in Kandalaksha

The Kutsa PA was a *zapovednik* in the 1930s when the area was part of Finnish territory. In 1994 this area was converted to a *zakaznik* of regional significance by the Russian government after being classified as a closed military zone since the end of the Second World War. The Kutsa *zakaznik* has several conservation purposes,

55. Interview with representatives of the Kirovsk City Council, 16 September 2009.

56. Interviews with local tourist companies, 16 September 2009.

57. The JSC Apatit company is rather positive towards to the establishment of the PA, since the company's industrial activities would not be directly affected by the park. (But the park may create obstacles for its competitor, the North-Western Phosphorous Company (NWPC), which plans to develop mining nearby in the area of the proposed park).

58. Interviews with local environmental NGOs, 15 September 2009.

ranging from scientific research to nature conservation, prevention of pollution of rivers, streams and lakes, and resource management tasks related to game, fish, and berry-grounds. Recreational fishing and other tourism activities are allowed as long as they do not counteract the aims of the reserve. The total area of the reserve is 486.4 km² covering almost the whole length of the river of Kutsjoki and the lower course of the Tunsajoki river. Kutsa also protects intact boreal forests. The need to protect the old boreal forest was the decisive reason for establishing the PA, as samples testing for age showed that about 5% of the forest may be more than 500 years old. There is no comparable forest left on the Finnish side of the border, but on the Russian side the forest is intact and massive.

In addition to the main goal of nature protection, the local government has been pre-occupied by the need for economic development in the area, as current unemployment rates are around 3–4% and rising.⁵⁹ A joint Russian-Finnish project between Kandalaksha and Pallastunturi (Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park) has been instrumental in planning and developing tourism activities. For instance, there are ambitions to establish a border zone between Russia and Finland. This could be positive for tourism development, as the planned border zone could, for example, involve simplified visa procedures to stimulate cross-border activities. So far tourism has been seasonal. Summer tourism in particular has been flourishing with around 7,000 people visiting the area. The Kutsa River is very popular for rafting and fishing, although there is still a need to establish hiking trails, accommodation and food service facilities in order to attract visitors. The local authorities have allocated plots of land adjacent to the *zakaznik* to build a hotel, and more than 90 km of snowmobile tracks has been established.

There are also plans to expand the *zakaznik* and change the status of the PA to a regional nature park in order to promote as well as to regulate tourism. Ideas related to making the reserve a branch of the Paanajärvi national park in the future are also under consideration. Paanajärvi receives around 300,000 visitors, generating an income of about 10 million Euros annually.⁶⁰ To avoid a conflict of interest, identified valuable mineral deposits are not included in the area of the proposed park.⁶¹ There are also plans to build a biological centre in the Kovda village at the border of the park to strengthen the scientific basis and provide for ecological information and education. Local authorities consider international co-operation as vital for success. For instance, there are plans for a snowmobile track

59. Interview with the Kandalaksha City Council, 17 September 2009.

60. For information about tourism in this national park located in the Republic of Karelia, see: <http://parks.karelia.ru/paanajarvi/42.html>.

61. Interview the City Council of Kandalaksha, 17 September 2009.

from the Atlantic Ocean to the White Sea through Norway, Sweden, and Finland on to Russia. So far local experience with nature-based tourism is nevertheless limited, and there is a need to draw on external competence to educate staff, and strengthen and establish local tourist firms. However, there is considerable local enthusiasm for the plans to develop nature-based tourism in connection with the protected area, and the work to realize these ideas is moving forward step by step.⁶²

4. Nature-based tourism in the Murmansk Oblast

The presentation of the three PAs above shows that local stakeholders recognize the role of protected nature in local development. At the same time there are various hindrances to promoting new economic activity such as tourism. So before we discuss the findings in more detail, we elaborate on the general status and potential for nature-based tourism in the Murmansk Oblast.

In 2008 there were 72 tourist companies in Murmansk Oblast, of which 60% (44) were tour operators and the remainder tour agencies. Amongst the 44 tour operators, we identified 29 companies dealing mainly with incoming tourism. Most of these companies are engaged with nature-based tourism products such as angling (fly fishing) in salmon rivers of the Kola Peninsula, trailing and winter sports (down-hill skiing, skidoo trailing and the like). During the period 2004–2007 the number of tourists visiting the Oblast had increased five-fold and amounted to 33,500 people. In 2008 the number of incoming tourists serviced by tourist companies of the Murmansk Oblast was officially counted at 44,480 people, of which around 30% (13,250) were foreign tourists.⁶³ Some of the products, such as the sports fisheries that are offered in selected rivers, are well known in the international upscale markets. The number of tourists is nevertheless relatively low. One reason for this is that access to the rivers on the Kola Peninsula is limited, and should therefore be seen as a typical niche product amongst others due to the high price, low volume, and modest availability. This is perhaps also the case for many of the other nature-based tourism products that are offered, ranging from motorized trailing, tracking and down-hill skiing.

With regard to commercial angling, it should be noted that fishing in rivers for all species, and particularly the valuable species such as salmon and trout, is subject to quota regulation. The system of quota regulation is *per se* quite normal for recreational fisheries across nations, but notwithstanding this, represents a formal

62. Interview with representatives from the Alakurtti village (nearby the Kutsa *zakaznik*), 17 September 2009.

63. Murmanskstat 2008.

prerequisite that requires special competence and connections in order to be able to deal with the issue. In addition, along with most other nature-based tourism, there are also other restrictions that apply. Tour operating companies must for instance obtain insurance of around 12,000 Euros and a bank guarantee of around 250,000 Euros to start up a business, which represents a substantial amount of money for small tourist operators (in practice companies must pay around 1% of the sum of the insurance/guarantee). In addition, tour operators must enter into a leasing agreement to access an area for nature-based tourism.⁶⁴ As a concrete example one company was presented with a leasing claim for 12 million Rubles per year (approximately 300,000 Euros) for a very limited area by the Federal Forestry Agency of the Russian Federation.

Obviously the legislative basis related to land use and leasing seems to reflect the industrial structure of the Soviet period of large industrial enterprises, rather than meeting the needs and capacity of new small-scale, locally driven commercial initiatives related to nature-based tourism. Furthermore, incoming tourism is a “young business” in the Murmansk Oblast. Its status at present is that there are few companies and few incoming tourists. Furthermore, there is little tourist-friendly infrastructure, profits are low, and there are no governmental programmes to support business in this sector, in contrast to the situation of competitors, for example in Kiruna and Rovaniemi.⁶⁵

5. Protecting nature for local development: A model for Russia’s High North?

The new paradigm of protected areas and the aim to enhance local development in combination with nature conservation has become the dominant model internationally. But to what extent have these ideas manifested themselves in the Russian context? And what role could one expect protected areas to play in terms of promoting new economic activity or other forms of local developments in Russia’s High North?

It is interesting to note that Russian authorities seem to pay interest to the Western perspective that combines nature preservation with locally-based economic activities. For instance, there are several formal plans and documents on federal, regional and local governmental levels that all spell out the importance of and economic expectations for development of the nature-based tourism sec-

64. Russian Federation Forest Code, RF Federal Act No. 22-FZ adopted by the State Duma on 22 January 1997.

65. Interview with local tourist operators, 15 and 16 September 2009.

tor in Russia, and some also mention the use of protected areas in, amongst others, north-west Russia.⁶⁶ However, the dominant form of PA in Russia as well as in Russia's High North is still the *zapovedniks*, which do not allow any form of economic activity, including commercial tourism. In Russian terms the form of tourism allowed is called "cognitive tourism," emphasizing the educational aspects of the activities. The case of the Laplandsky *zapovednik* illustrates this point, where tourism is restricted to informational/educational activities for school/kindergarten children and other visitors. The establishment of nature museums and trails has to some degree made *zapovedniks* more accessible to the public, but the number of visitors is rather marginal. As mentioned earlier, *zapovedniks* in the Murmansk Oblast have in total under 5,000 visitors per year, and on a national basis the total number is around 200,000. There has for a long time been principal discussion on whether (eco)tourism should be allowed in *zapovedniks*. Some argue that carefully regulated tourism in strict nature reserves is valuable in order to increase the legitimacy of *zapovedniks* in the eyes of the public as well as the authorities, and thus a way to hinder the pressure for other forms of economic activity in these areas. In addition, the majority of *zapovednik* administrations have reported that they want to engage in ecotourism.⁶⁷ Others are fighting to preserve and restore the unique system of *zapovedniks* in accordance with the original non-use scientific purposes of these PAs, as stated by Shitlmark: "Scientific *zapovedniks* should avoid unique and remarkable nature wonders that attract people's interest; they should not be concerned with ecotourism or ecological education; there should be no need for museums, exhibitions, information boards, and other forms of propaganda. All these are the functions of national parks."⁶⁸

The establishment of national parks in Russia is increasing slowly, but given the short history of this form of PAs, managers have only recently started to realize the advantages of tourism development.⁶⁹ The case of the planned park in the Khiniby Mountains illustrates that the role of national parks is clearly recognized by local communities as a means to regulate and promote recreational and nature-based

66. For example: (a) Amendments to the Federal law "On specially protected nature areas and separate legislative acts of the Russian Federation," Проект № 97705-5, second reading; (b) Federal program "development of national and inbound tourism in the Russian Federation (2011 – 2016)," of 19 July 2010, no N-1230-r; (c) Long-term program "development of tourism in the Murmansk Oblast for 2009 – 2011," of 22 August 2008, Na 400, PP/14. Lytt til Les fonetisk Ordbok – Vis detaljert ordbokresultat.

67. Stepanitsky 2005.

68. Shitlmark 2003 pp. 233.

69. Basanets, L. "Russian Protected Areas as Part of the World Ecotourism System" in *ECOCLUB.com E-Paper Series* (3, Nov.) 2002.

commercial activities. On the other hand, there are also important hindrances to area protection that aims to combine nature conservation with sustainable use and local development. First of all, it is clear that the large economic actors from the Soviet period are still powerful economic entities, which makes it difficult for other actors such as environmentalists or small businesses to influence decision-making. The case of Khiniby clearly illustrates this point, as the plans for a national park are deadlocked by the mining interest in the area. The slow process and lack of interest and support from the federal level is also affecting the situation, and the most probable solution would be to establish a regional nature park (if any) rather than a national park. Another important issue is the system of national park licensing and leasing of land for tourism activities. The bureaucratic system is very challenging for small businesses to deal with and the prices of licencing are high, affecting the profitability of nature-based tourism products. The local business actors in the Kola Peninsula have hopes that the establishment of a national park could solve some of these problems. However, in 2005 it was reported that 15 out of 35 national park licences for tourism activities were not issued at all, and only 17 parks had been granted land as plots for lease.⁷⁰

The situation relating to the Kutsa *zakaznik* is somewhat more optimistic, as plans to develop nature-based tourism do not conflict with other economic interests in the area. However, it will probably take some time to change the legal status to a nature park. The legislative basis as well as the financial situation of regional nature parks is nevertheless not as favourable as for national parks. Nature parks do not have the security of federal funding, and there may be a mix of federal (most often federal land ownership and federal jurisdiction over the use of natural resources) and regional legal authority (nature park management) that may complicate the utilization of the area.

There is also a real challenge for ambitious local actors to establish the necessary infrastructure and know-how for nature-based tourism in the area. In the Murmansk Oblast, as for Russia in general, there are few organized tourist paths and routes, lack of accommodation, and there is an acute shortage of qualified personnel and training programs for nature-based tourism. The total number of employees in the 29 nature-based tour operating companies in Murmansk Oblast amounts to around 100 people, and it is important to bear in mind that the tour operating companies are small, often family companies with only 5–6 employees. In comparison, the total number of tourist company employees corresponds to the total number of staff engaged in the three federal *zapovedniks* located in Murmansk Oblast. So even though there are positive signs of nature-based tourism

70. Supra note 52.

becoming a new and promising form of economic activity in the area, there seem to be quite a few hindrances and limitations for this industry to develop, both in number of companies and volume of tourists.

Furthermore, protected areas so far play a very modest role in promoting local development of this kind. It remains to be seen whether the local enthusiasm manages to create national parks or nature parks that can promote sustainable local use and business enterprises. The role of the *zapovedniks* in relation to local development will in any case be very limited due to the regulatory regime of these PAs. The supporters of the *zapovedniks* and the Soviet legacy of these strictly protected areas may also play an important part in reserving this PA category for conservation only. Critics of the new paradigm would support the need to focus on protecting these last wild ecosystems instead of advocating a “social approach” to nature conservation.⁷¹ On the other hand, local initiatives for the establishment of new parks, the slow but increasing trend of tourism in the Kola Peninsula, promising international co-operation, and the fact that federal and regional authorities have adopted plans to promote increased nature-based tourism are all factors that can contribute to local development in the years to come.

Новая парадигма охраны природы: модель для Крайнего Севера России?

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Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается возможность применения новой западной парадигмы, сочетающей сохранение и местное развитие в качестве модели для охраны природы в России и, в частности, на Крайнем Севере России. В статье, прежде всего, дается краткое описание новой парадигмы для особо

71. See e.g., Locke and Dearden 2005.

охраняемых природных территорий (ООПТ) и российской системы ООПТ. Затем представлены три различных типа ООПТ в Мурманской области, с акцентом на роль, которую они могут играть в контексте местного развития. Новая парадигма широко распространена на западе. Однако в России преобладающей формой, по-прежнему, являются ООПТ со строгим природоохранным режимом – заповедники – где запрещены любые виды хозяйственной деятельности, включая экологический туризм. Число национальных и природных парков в России медленно возрастает, но создание и развитие этих форм ООПТ, способствующих местному развитию, остается проблематичным. Ситуация в Мурманской области иллюстрирует такие проблемы как конфликт интересов между различными заинтересованными сторонами, отсутствие поддержки со стороны властей, особенно на федеральном уровне, бюрократические препятствия, такие как система аренды земли, а также слаборазвитая инфраструктура туризма и компетенция в этой сфере. Местный «парковый энтузиазм» и растущее число туристов, а также новые правительственные стратегии могут, однако, внести свой вклад в местное развитие в ближайшем будущем.

Ключевые слова: охрана природы, новая парадигма для особо охраняемых природных территорий, местное развитие, экологический туризм, заповедник