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Website: <http://plateauperspectives.org/>

Contact: marc.foggin@ouce.ox.ac.uk

Yaghnob National Park Management Plan

General review, with
recommendations



Marc Foggin, Ken Marr, Abduvohid
Safarov, and Phil Steiner (Feb 2025)

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Yaghnob National Park was established on May 2, 2019 by decree of the Government Republic of Tajikistan (Document No. 227). Local communities have been practicing sustainable farming and herding within its borders for many generations, therefore the designation as a 'national park' builds on long-standing Yaghnobi customs and practices. The local mountain communities and national environmental authorities can readily join forces for common purposes in conservation and sustainability.

People are at the heart of conservation in Yaghnob National Park. Its overarching legal basis is stated in Article 27 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Specially Protected Natural Areas" for the protection and restoration of both biological and cultural diversity. The park's objectives include not only the protection of nature but also the "preservation and restoration of cultural diversity" and "improvement of social, cultural and household conditions of the population and development of traditional methods of nature management." Furthermore, the proposed zoning categories for the national park include a range of options for local communities, including tourism and recreational uses, agricultural production landscapes, accommodation, and more. All of these options (potential goals for the national park) require sustained, in-depth partnership between park authorities and local mountain communities for their sustainable development, a conservation approach known as 'co-management'.



Plateau Perspectives' project *Strengthening Co-Management in Yaghnob National Park, Tajikistan* was undertaken in partnership with the Yaghnob National Park and local communities between June 2023 and February 2025. The project was implemented in collaboration with the national organization "Anahita" and supported financially by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). CEPF is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, Fondation Hans Wilsdorf, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank.

Project activities have included wildlife monitoring and associated capacity development, awareness and outreach, community tourism, and more.

Each project activity has had stand-alone value in regard to biodiversity conservation, community development, and cultural heritage preservation, as well as providing opportunity to promote more community-oriented perspectives and practical approaches consistent with co-management values.

THE PROCESS

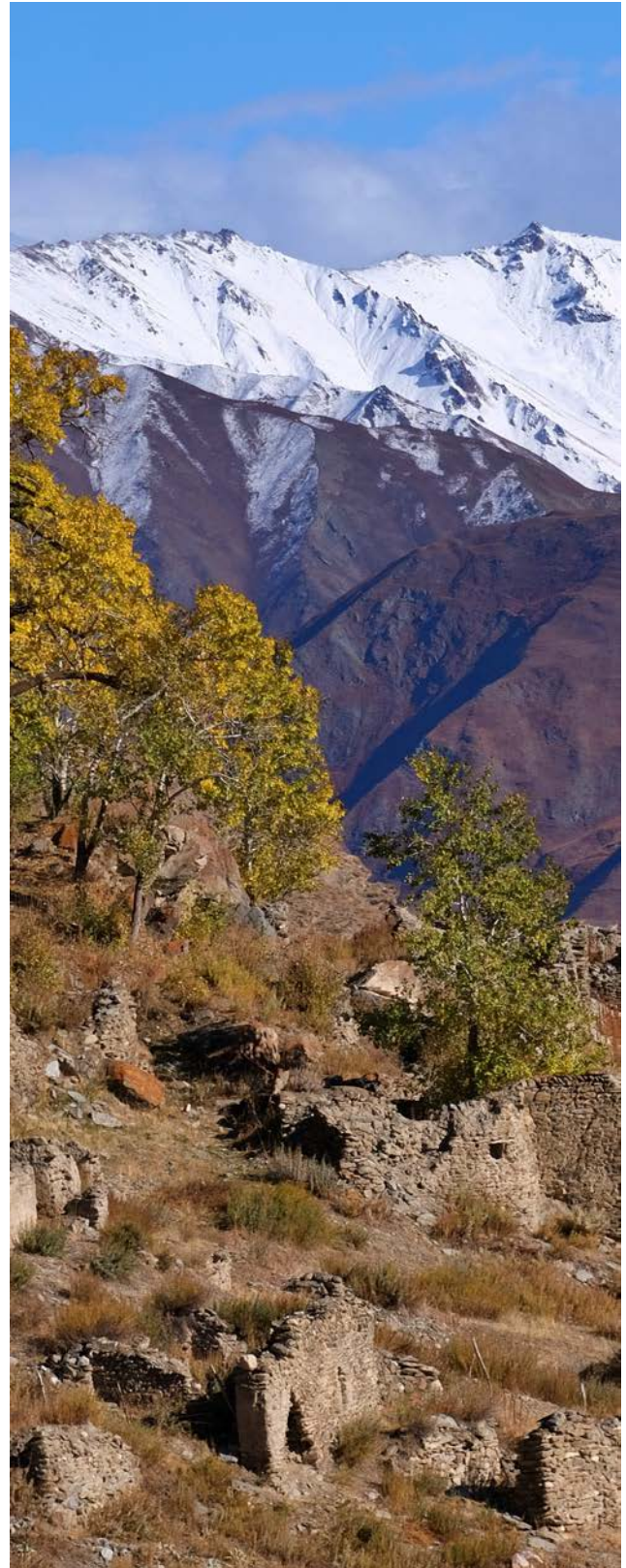
Establishment of the national park

The Yaghnob National Park was created on the basis of the interconnected natural and cultural heritages of Yaghnob Valley, both of which have their own inherent value. Each can be leveraged in support of the other.

The national park is an exceptional biocultural landscape in the Mountains of Central Asia that offers unique conservation opportunities in a globally recognized Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). Conservation approaches can be advanced in integrated fashion to meet community needs while being sensitive to the cultural heritage.

Developing the park's management plan

National park authorities are collaborating with the National Academy of Sciences to refine the management plan in line with park objectives. This project feeds into the process through its support, training, and other forms of enabling national park leaders and field staff, along with offering key recommendations made based on direct observations and focus group discussions facilitated by the project partners.



This document reviews major elements already present in the *Provisions* of Yaghnob National Park that were published on 2 May 2019 and several additional aspects that are relevant to co-management.

In broad terms, the park comes under the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On specially protected natural areas” for protection and restoration of biological and cultural diversity in Yaghnob Valley. Therefore, ever since its establishment, the national park has maintained a *dual focus*, involving both conservation of local biodiversity and preservation of the Yaghnobi sociocultural heritage.

Mention is made in the first paragraph of the park’s *Provisions* about *valuable landscape complexes*—pointing to the *integrated* and *landscape-level approaches* that are deemed necessary for sustainable development and environmental conservation intentionally centred on people and place.

The *Provisions* also highlight rare and endangered wildlife, natural and cultural monuments, the need for research, the desire to revive folk traditions, and ideas to support tourism development for the benefit of local communities. The means to enjoy the national park itself, along with other forms of sustainable use of natural resources are reflected in all of these highlights.



Project team members with field staff (rangers) from Yaghnob National Park

See Annex 1. Provisions about the National Natural Park “Yaghnob” (Doc. No. 227)

ISSUES ARISING

Building on the official *Provisions* for the national park, the following comments and recommendations for strengthening and expanding (co-)management are offered:

I. People-centred conservation

The *Provisions* mention that...

- local or traditional methods of nature management should be supported, and
- actions should be taken to improve social, cultural, and household conditions.

This points to the **people-oriented objectives** of the park, which operate in tandem with conservation objectives, as well as a vision for **inclusive management** to be emphasized in the park's operations.

Over time, this should be extended also to **governance matters** with substantial community inputs in planning and decision-making.

Inclusive governance and management are at the heart of **sustainable development**, which aims to ensure **just and equitable outcomes**. These two elements are at the heart of **people-centred conservation**, which builds on all the work, knowledge, and commitment of the longest-standing custodians of nature—**local communities**.

In practical terms, people-centred conservation of protected and conserved areas, involves **collaborative management (or co-management) with local communities**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Involve community members in setting long-range vision as well as participation in the regular operations of the park.
- Strengthen outreach and awareness-raising activities with local communities, e.g., with schools.
- Conduct meetings throughout the year, ensuring at least once per year for each community. These can also serve as focus group discussions, i.e., opportunities for airing concerns, and share ideas essential for the management of the park.
- Raise awareness of legal provisions associated with the park, both opportunities and restrictions, and clarify communication approaches (including complaints) and grievance redress mechanisms.

2. Landscape, place, and biocultural diversity

Conservation action can take place at multiple scales—all are needed. However, community-level issues of local development and community-based conservation take place primarily at the **landscape level**—where the effects of actions are often directly visible. This is **line-of-sight conservation**. Within Yaghnob National Park, situated along the length of one main river (Yaghnob River) valley and several tributaries, nearly all action will be within local landscape dimensions. However, these actions are also affected by national and regional decisions and dynamics. The term “broad natural complexes” is used in the *Provisions*, when referring to this landscape dimension.

Place or **place-based conservation**, refers to much more than a mere locality. Instead, it includes the intersection of geography, people, and nature and all of the relationships among them. Place thus includes not only nature in a particular location but also the local people and all their ways of interacting with nature. It also includes people’s memories and the meanings they attribute to particular locations and/or elements of nature—and thus, place also includes local cultural heritage.

Biocultural landscapes include all aspects of biological diversity and cultural diversity, including all the ways that local communities engage with natural resources and how they sustainably use them. Recognized as an integrated biocultural system, Yaghnob Valley should be managed in ways that protect and sustain both its natural and cultural heritage. This is now in the process of being further refined in the development of a more detailed management plan.

Yaghnob National Park includes not only wildlife conservation amongst its management objectives but also conservation of the broader landscapes. It follows, then, that **integrated and area-based approaches** are endorsed for achieving natural and socioeconomic outcomes in the coupled social-ecological system of Yaghnob Valley.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Research and consider, from other locations, approaches known as other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) including the status and opportunities arising from territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities (ICCAs), which are “place-based” rather than focusing on natural resources and involve important cultural dimensions such as a sense of identity based on culture, language, and attachment to land.
- Document, study, and prioritize customary forms of land and resource uses in planning for local development, as these cultural practices often contribute *de facto* to conservation outcomes.

- Prioritize agrobiodiversity and associated traditional cultural practices, alongside traditional conservation approaches in protected areas (i.e., with a focus on species and ecosystems).
- Affirm the roles of local communities as significant partners in conservation—not only through employment with the national park, but as guardians and custodians of this very special place.

3. Management planning

In light of the centrality of **people**, **place**, and **landscape approaches** for effective conservation, what should be included in a national park management plan? In particular, what key elements should be incorporated as part of a people-centred **community co-management** approach for conservation that is fair and equitable, simultaneously supporting community development in the landscape?

Globally, for many years, planning for conservation by way of protected areas (including national parks) has largely been centralized, standardized (blueprint approach), and specialist-driven. However, given the complexity and diversity of social and environmental contexts around the world, more adaptive, place-based, and inclusive forms of management—and management planning—have begun to emerge.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provides an excellent synthesis of the key elements involved in management planning in general, as well as for the development of more detailed, action-oriented management plans:

- Thomas, L., & Middleton, J. (2003). *Guidelines for Management Planning of Protected Areas*. IUCN Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2003.PAG.10.en>

In addition, an outline of complementary approaches known as “other area-based conservation measures” and “territories and areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities” (these are also known as ICCAs or territories of life) are provided in the following references:

- Jonas, H. D., Wood, P., & Woodley, S., Volume Editors (2024). *Guidance on other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)*. IUCN WCPA Good Practice Series, No.36. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. <https://doi.org/10.2305/LAAW4624>
- Stevens, S. with contributions by Eghenter, C., Fitzsimons, J., Goradze, I., Ironside, J., Mellis, C., Nitah, S., Parling, P., Reyes, G., & Tabanao, G. (2024). *Recognising territories and areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities (ICCAs) overlapped by protected areas*. IUCN WCPA Good Practice Guidelines No. 34. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. <https://doi.org/10.2305/RSly2962>

Notably, management planning is a process – not an event. One of the major products to emerge from management planning is a specific management plan (e.g., for a particular national park). But as important as the development and endorsement of such a plan might be, this is not the end-point in itself. Implementation is even more important, with regular monitoring and continuous adaption in light of ever-changing circumstances.

What is a management plan?

A management plan is the written communication of the **management vision** and **direction** for a protected area, such as Yaghnob National Park. Specifically, a management plan:

- situates the protected area within a landscape context;
- articulates the major features and values of the protected area;
- clearly establishes the long-term vision and goals for the protected area;
- establishes management objectives and types and levels of management activities; and
- responds to current and predicted future threats and opportunities.

Source: *BC Parks Protected Area Management Planning Process Manual*, available online at https://nrs.objectstore.gov.bc.ca/kuwyyf/management_planning_manual_415d24c1ed.pdf

General guidelines for management planning

A three-stage approach is recommended for developing management objectives:

- design overall management objectives for the protected area,
- develop issue-specific management responses, and
- prepare initial management options.

Successful management planning is characterised by the following features:

- It is a **process**, not an event—it does not end with just the production of a plan, but continues through its implementation, regular monitoring and evaluation, and if necessary adaptation.
- It is concerned with **the future**: it identifies concerns and future alternative courses of action, examining chains of causes and effects that are most likely to result from current decisions.
- It provides a mechanism for **thinking about threats and opportunities** and other difficult issues.
- It is **systematic**: most planning exercises work through a pre-determined sequence of steps that give structure to the process and encourage a logical approach, helping to ensure that decisions are based on knowledge and analysis of the specific context.

- It also involves **value judgements**: management planning involves the identification not only of “what is” (description) but also of what “should be”—which is something that can vary greatly among stakeholders, as different people may hold different opinions.
- It takes a **holistic view**: the planning process may consider a very wide range of issues and views if it is undertaken in an integrated and inclusive manner, depending on who is involved and how the final decisions are made.
- It is a **continuous process** and must be able to adjust to changing conditions and goals.

Guidelines for developing a good management plan

A management plan should aim at balancing

- precision with flexibility
- comprehensiveness with simplicity
- management orientation with ease of understanding

Management oriented: *The main focus of a Management Plan should be a clear explanation of the vision, the management objectives needed to realise this, and the strategies/actions required to implement them. Many plans lose their impact and clarity because of an over-emphasis on descriptive information about the site. The quest for detailed information can also unnecessarily delay the production of a plan.*

Within management plans, the major objectives tend to relate to **key features of the protected area** (defining how these will be conserved) and/or to **types of management activity**. Typically, objectives would be formulated to cover the following:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| • habitat and species management | • education and training |
| • research, surveys, and monitoring | • social and cultural features |
| • infrastructure (incl. communications) | • income generation |
| • visitor use and facilities | • administration |

Furthermore, a management plan should be:

- **Clear and accessible:** easy to read, jargon free, and well presented;
- **Concise but still comprehensive:** no longer than necessary, but with sufficient information;
- **Accurate and objective:** without major errors and with judgement criteria clearly explained;

- **Systematic and logical:** with management policies derived from an assessment of the site, including a clear rationale for all proposals made;
- **Acceptable and motivating** to all people with interests in and/or emotional attachment to the particular site, including local communities;
- **Precise and practical:** with clear objectives and realistic methods for achieving them, resulting in desired outcomes that can be monitored and assessed; and
- **Focused and effective** in order to fulfil its purpose as a tool for site management, meeting the needs of its users (national park leaders and staff) and satisfying any legal or other obligations.

Several more detailed plans are commonly associated with the over-arching management plan (master plan): business plans, zoning plans, sectoral plans, specific site plans, conservation plans, etc. These are integrated through the master plan.

A new paradigm for protected areas

A more inclusive approach to Protected Area (PA) management has emerged in recent years. This trend is captured in the following new “paradigm” for protected areas:

Topic	In the past, PAs were...	But now, PAs are becoming...
Objectives	⇒ Set aside for conservation ⇒ Established mainly for spectacular wildlife and scenic protection ⇒ Managed mainly for visitors and tourists ⇒ Valued as wilderness ⇒ About protection	⇒ Run also with social and economic objectives ⇒ Often set up for scientific, economic and cultural reasons ⇒ Managed with local people more in mind ⇒ Valued for the cultural importance of so-called 'wilderness' ⇒ Also about restoration and rehabilitation
Governance	⇒ Run by central government	⇒ Run by many partners and involve an array of stakeholders
Local people	⇒ Planned and managed against people ⇒ Managed without regard to local opinions	⇒ Run with, for, and in some cases by local people ⇒ Managed to meet the needs of local people
Wider context	⇒ Developed separately ⇒ Managed as 'islands'	⇒ Planned as part of national, regional, and international systems

		⇒ Developed as 'networks' (strictly protected areas, buffered, and linked by green corridors)
Perceptions	⇒ Viewed primarily as a national asset ⇒ Viewed only as a national concern	⇒ Viewed also as a community asset ⇒ Viewed also as an international concern
Management techniques	⇒ Managed reactively within a short timescale ⇒ Managed in a technocratic way	⇒ Managed adaptively with a long-term perspective ⇒ Managed with political considerations
Finance	⇒ Paid for by taxpayer	⇒ Paid for from many sources
Management skills	⇒ Managed by scientists and natural resource experts ⇒ Expert-led	⇒ Managed by multi-skilled individuals ⇒ Drawing on local knowledge

Some recommendations can be made based on the above discussion. These are listed below in bullet point form, with several being developed in greater detail in subsequent sections of this report.

REMINDERS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- Protected area management planning – identifying high level vision*
- Developing a specific management plan – what to consider in regular operations
- Note on the difference between protected area governance versus management –
 - Park management pertains to operational matters including research and monitoring, infrastructure development and maintenance, public relations, and enforcement.
 - Governance* pertains to setting long-range vision and oversight of the park's operations, including establishing who is practically involved in planning, and with what decision-making authority
- Co-management approaches* involve local resident communities in the operational life of the national park, not simply informing or instructing local residents, but developing action plans together and then jointly implementing these either together or with delegation
- Internal land use zoning of the national park (core zone, etc.) **
- Conservation-oriented monitoring and research **
- Education, awareness, and outreach **
- Sustainable use and development **

- Community-beneficial tourism **
- Protecting cultural heritage **
- Capacity development **
- Administration **

** elements related to “co-management”*

*** developed in greater detail below*

If any further discussion is desired on these topics, the park director and/or other relevant authorities are welcome to contact the lead author of this report—who is willing to apply more time to these important subject matters.

4. Internal zonation

The *Provisions* recognize the following possible land use zones for the territory of Yaghnob National Park:

- **Strict protection zones** where all forms of economic and recreational activities are prohibited (conservation priority)
- **Regulated *zakaznik* zones** where some controlled short-term **recreational uses** are allowed on specified routes, with designated locations for camping and for small shelters (including a range of possibilities for sports such as climbing, amateur hunting and fishing, filming, photography, etc.)
- **Educational zones** designed for the organization of **environmental education** and **familiarization** with natural and cultural sights, complemented by information boards and other public outreach
- **Cultural heritage zones** for the protection of **historical and cultural structures or landscapes**
- **Visitor service zones** intended for **accommodation** and **other services for tourists**, including the possibility of environmentally and socio-culturally appropriate hostels and tent camps
- **Agricultural production zones** where agricultural land use, both grazing and cultivation, may be undertaken in an environmentally friendly manner (also possible within *zakaznik* zones)
- **Economic zones** where economic and production activities necessary to ensure the functioning of the park may be undertaken, as well as production activities for meeting the basic needs of the resident population if it does not cause environmental harm

Building on the above list of approved types of zones for the national park, the following recommendations are made in regard to zonation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to internal zoning, some areas in the park already clearly fall within a particular category, e.g., potato cultivation fields, while other areas could be assigned to one or another of several possible zones; with the following suggestions now emerging:

- **Strict protection zone** – include the high mountainous areas in the northern and southern portions of the national park and the upper reaches of the main valley; consider other areas based on the results of dedicated environmental and wildlife surveys, to ensure adequate cover
- **Regulated *zakaznik* zone** – include the valley bottoms along the length of Yaghnob and Qul Rivers, in particular all villages (both current and former) and the roads and pathways connecting them; these destinations and routes will form the basis for most tourist routes and accommodation
- **Educational zones** – near the main (western) park entrance, national park headquarters, village school, and an extended area around the main petroglyph site and nearby confluence of rivers
- **Cultural heritage zones** – include selected historic villages (ruins), the ancient fortress on hilltop, petroglyph site(s), and traditional water-powered flour mill near the main petroglyph site. Further surveys for cultural artefacts should be undertaken to identify and protect any additional sites of cultural significance
- **Visitor service zones** – information areas near the western entrance to the national park including the outpost at the gateway bridge, the rest stop near the park entrance/boundary, park headquarters, the village school, the petroglyph site, and Qul valley rangers' outpost. Accommodation and associated services could include a small store for basic supplies near the headquarters within the park, a tent camp (or yurt camp) in the vicinity of the park entrance, and a camping area and an educational activity area near the confluence of the Yaghnob and Qul rivers. Information materials should be available in all of these places to direct visitors to homestays and to key persons who can assist/enrich tourism experiences.
- **Agricultural production zones** – including all currently active agricultural fields in use by Yaghnobi residents (along with a restricted amount of land for new fields, pending their approval following appropriately conducted environmental impact assessments, EIAs).
- **Economic zones** – (to be determined)

5. Monitoring & research

Appropriate management requires knowledge of the past and current conditions of the natural and cultural heritage of the Yaghnob Valley – and how it may be changing over time.

It is, therefore, imperative that this newly designated Yaghnob National Park establish a monitoring regime as soon as possible. At first, decisions need to be made to determine which aspects should be monitored, i.e., which species, ecosystems, and/or environmental complexes (landscapes). The latter must include agro-biocultural landscapes that involve traditional mountain farming and livestock herding in the Yaghnob valley and surrounding mountain areas.

Monitoring must be repeated at regularly established intervals. Given the dual focus of the park on natural and cultural heritage conservation, including the goal to support people's wellbeing, both ecological and social dimensions should be incorporated into such monitoring mechanisms.

In addition to regular monitoring, specific conservation-oriented research projects should be organized. An inclusive process of needs assessment and prioritization involving the local resident stakeholders will help to develop and refine an appropriate research agenda for the park in its first phase of development.

For greatest impact, results from monitoring and research should be made publicly available with national and international partnerships welcome. This will further strengthen the park with associated inputs including time/effort, expertise, technology, and finances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Wildlife and other environmental monitoring work should begin as soon as possible, including the adoption of appropriate data recording and data management systems and offering any necessary training (capacity development).
- A comprehensive Long-Term Socio-Ecological Research (LTSER) programme* should be established, similar to those used in many other parks. Ideally, the Park would coordinate and collaborate with regional and global LTSER networks and mountain protected area (PA) networks
- A research agenda for the Park should include at least the following:
 - biology and distribution of selected wildlife species, including threat analyses and solution-oriented research
 - protection of vulnerable natural habitats, including riparian areas and other habitats or ecosystems that are currently suffering from unsustainable levels of usage

- agrobiodiversity, including traditional ecological knowledge
- folk traditions of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including oral histories
- A research programme developed by a national park should be very targeted:
 - focus on conservation outcomes (conservation solutions)
 - focus on protection of rare and endangered species, both fauna and flora
 - include entire landscapes, with both natural and human dimensions
 - consider the different stakeholders in the landscape
 - consider multiple geographic scales of analysis
 - prioritize interdisciplinary research

* For more information about long-term ecological monitoring and research, see <https://lternet.edu/> and <https://www.ilter.network/network/global-coverage>.

A “Best Practices Manual for Long-Term Socio-Ecological Research (LTSER) platforms is available here: <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.15305.88169>.

6. Education and awareness

Education, awareness, and outreach can be achieved in several ways.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop and display permanent information boards within the park’s territory.
- Develop and disseminate information and guidance through brochures, website, social media.
- Develop and mainstream community outreach activities focused on youth. For example, the national park could integrate issues related to conservation and local culture in local school teaching, in events organized and offered by park staff, and in summer camps developed and supported by multiple partners.
- Offer training/awareness opportunities for park field staff and interested community members on relevant topics, tools, and techniques including environmental monitoring as well as areas of

overlap between environmental conservation and people's livelihoods (such as agrobiodiversity, ecological functions, payments for ecosystem services, nature-based tourism, etc.).

- Build professional capacities of the national park's field staff and interested community members in conservation and sustainability science, including approaches and technologies as well as their underlying concepts and comparative global experiences.
- Start a process of outlining and nominating (and eventually establishing) a new UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, including Yaghnob Valley and the wider region, with a focus on both people and nature.

7. Sustainable use

Sustainable use and development of natural resources is a fundamental issue in the national park, with both opportunities and concerns/challenges. Appropriate research as well as awareness and outreach are needed (see above).

Special attention is needed on rangelands and domestic livestock; forage pastures; agricultural productivity; preservation of soils that are maintained in good condition; streams, rivers, and riparian areas; wildlife species, both flora and fauna; and landscapes that are recognized as integrated social-ecological systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify current challenges and/or concerns in regard to the use of natural resources including possible overuse leading to resource degradation and loss of biodiversity. Integrate these into the national park's research agenda. Most likely, other research institutions would take the lead in the research *per se*, but park field staff (and other community members) could become deeply committed to the monitoring work of long-term social and ecological research, LTSER.
- In regard to land use, particular attention should be given to reducing environmentally harmful impacts of livestock grazing and to protecting and restoring riparian areas. One way to establish vegetation in riparian areas quickly, particularly where streambanks are eroding, is to plant cuttings of willow stems. These should be planted in the spring while the stems are dormant, they will then develop roots and in a few years will grow into branching shrubs that will both stabilize the soil and form habitat for birds and other animals.
- More generally, the park should build local capacities in relevant livelihood skills, including agriculture, tourism services, and various forms of partnerships (both paid and unpaid) in the national park's territory.

8. Tourism development

Yaghnob National Park is comprised of many extraordinary mountain landscapes. In addition to being home to a unique array of wildlife species and over a dozen Yaghnobi mountain farming communities, these landscapes also can be viewed as important ‘tourism assets’ that can be leveraged to promote environmental conservation and sustainable development, viz. tourism-for-development. This is also known as community-beneficial tourism (not simply tourism that benefits individual community members).

While tourism development already falls within the park’s purposes (as per its *Provisions*), more research and planning would help to ensure that only appropriate forms of tourism development take place, i.e. tourism that supports the goals of the national park, that maximizes local benefits, and that does not harm the Yaghnobi natural and/or sociocultural heritage.

To aid in discussions, broad familiarity with different tourism terms (or approaches) is deemed helpful – and such a tourism typology is available at <https://stories.platauperspectives.org/choose-ecotourism>.

Two forms of tourism are mentioned in the national park’s *Provisions*: ecotourism and cultural tourism. Both of these include one or more elements of community benefit (socioeconomic or cultural benefit) as well as an educational component. In these ways, both ecotourism and cultural tourism are richer than just nature tourism or mountain tourism, which simply highlight the main assets that may be used to draw people to the region. Tourism in Yaghnob valley should also be sustainable and responsible. Many standards and guidelines for the development of sustainable tourism are available.

In the context of Yaghnob National Park, the following specific recommendations may be made:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build capacities for community-led tourism experiences, including training for nature guides and homestays.
- Trial different forms of accommodation, such as family homestay, hostel, or yurt/tent camping.
- Provide appropriate and informative signage along travel routes, including the names of villages, and interpretive guideposts and information boards at entrance points and key points of interest (POI) in the national park.
- Develop and disseminate a map of the network of trails in the national park.
- Explore ways of extending the tourism season, e.g., winter experiences.

- Develop and disseminate specific regulations, such as “leave no trace” and “campfires only in designated areas” (these are already highlighted in the *Provisions*).
- Raise awareness of the national park through social media and printed materials.
- Welcome and promote “research tourism” (i.e., science-based partnerships).

9. Cultural heritage

Protecting cultural heritage in the national park should focus on two elements: 1) agrobiodiversity and its associated livelihoods and knowledge; and 2) special sites that exhibit cultural heritage (e.g., petroglyphs). Agrobiodiversity includes knowledge of human culture, livestock, and cultivated plant diversity. Cultural traditions over many generations result in the selection of domesticated livestock and crop varieties adapted to the local environment. In regard to cultural heritage, this may come in either tangible or intangible forms; both are important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Research and protect traditional livestock and crop varieties where these are present, including their uses and associated beliefs.
- Protect populations of crop wild relatives (CWR), involving ethnobotanical studies.
- Protect sites already known to contain special cultural heritage, including petroglyphs and traditional water-powered flour mills.
- Survey more of the national park’s territory for particular sites of special cultural significance, including attention to the possibility of the existence of more petroglyph sites and ruins of ancient fortresses.
- Research the national park’s intangible cultural heritage (ICH), particularly with oral histories, including such heritage elements (as recognized by UNESCO) as transhumant pastoralism or traditional worldviews and beliefs.
- Develop and disseminate educational materials about nature and culture, for both school children and the general public, in the local Yaghnoobi language.

10. Park operations

Considering the over-arching approach that has been adopted for Yaghnob National Park with its joint focus on the unique biodiversity of Yaghnob Valley as well as Yaghnobi culture and local agency for the long-term custodianship (guardianship, protection) of the valley, the park is *de facto* aiming to operate under what is known in international conservation as “collaborative management.” This brings both opportunities and some needs, in particular a need for common understanding about the unique challenges of collaboration with community partners. Such partnership brings more comprehensive and lasting conservation outcomes, as well as greater community benefits.

To achieve its conservation and cultural aims, the park’s administration requires support across several areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support the park’s administration in matters of infrastructure and other material needs.
- Support the park’s administration in matters of staffing and associated capacity development.
- Train local people to be naturalist guides, familiar with the biota of the park.
- Support the park in planning, execution of projects and activities, monitoring, evaluations, etc.
- Develop appropriate signage for villages, pathways (routes), and relevant information boards.
- Provide appropriate communication systems (e.g., radio system as mobile coverage is poor).
- Research and develop appropriate garbage disposal systems, and latrines.
- Decide on appropriate graduated entrance fees (free for local residents, and exemptions for particular purposes) and develop transparent systems for tracking and using funds raised.
- Enhance public relations through media and forms of outreach
 - Website, social media, brochures, maps
 - Research/write materials on nature and culture
 - Develop a ‘destination marketing’ approach for tourism
 - Create and grow communities of interest, e.g., Friends of Yaghnob

Application to the draft Decree of the Government Republic of Tajikistan
May 2, 2019 (Document No. 227)

Provisions about the National Natural Park "Yagnob"

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The National Natural Park "Yagnob" (hereinafter referred to as the "Park") was organized in accordance with Article 27 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Specially Protected Natural Areas" for the protection and restoration of biological and cultural diversity - conservation of valuable landscape complexes, rare and endangered species of flora and fauna, natural, cultural and historical monuments, conducting research, revival of folk traditions, creating favorable conditions for tourism development, and sustainable natural resource management.
2. The park is located in the northwestern part of the republic on the territory of the state land reserve and other land funds of the Ayni district of Sughd province.
3. The territory of the Park with all natural objects located on it constitutes the category of lands of nature protection purpose and their use is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On especially protected natural territories", the Land Code of the Republic of Tajikistan and the present Regulation.
4. The park is in the list of the organization of the Forestry Agency under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.
5. The boundaries and areas of the Park are determined in accordance with the requirements of the Land Code of the Republic of Tajikistan.
6. Employees of the Park in accordance with Article 49 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Specially Protected Natural Territories" are simultaneously state inspectors of the given territory and enjoy all rights and privileges provided in accordance with normative legal acts of the Republic of Tajikistan in the field of nature protection, forest and hunting.
7. In carrying out its activities, the Park is guided by the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, legislative and other normative legal acts of the Republic of Tajikistan, the present Regulation and decisions of the Forestry Agency under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

II. PARK OBJECTIVES.

8. The Park is entrusted with the following tasks:
 - Preservation and restoration of cultural diversity Preservation of unique natural complexes as well as historical and cultural monuments and other objects of cultural heritage (ethnographic and local history objects);
 - Restoration and enrichment of biological diversity and rational use of natural resources;
 - Preservation of the cultural and historical heritage;

- Conduction of scientific and research programs for the purposes of protection and reproduction of flora and fauna including rare and endangered species;
- Revival and preservation of national traditions, improvement of social, cultural and household conditions of the population and development of traditional methods of nature management;
- Facilitating the development of ecological and cultural tourism;
- Organization of tourist and excursion activities in the recreation zone, promotion of educational activities among the population;
- Development and implementation of scientific methods for preservation of natural complexes, ecological monitoring and eco-education the population;

III. TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE AND Regime OF THE PARK

9. The territory of the Park is divided into the following zones:

- Zone of reserved regime, within which any economic and recreational activities are prohibited;
- A zone of reserved regime, which provides for the protection of natural objects, within which strictly regulated recreational use is provided. In the zakaznik zone it is allowed to create conditions for short-term recreation of citizens by organizing tourist routes, placing tents, small shelters and natural corners for inspection;
- Zone of cognitive tourism, designed for the organization of environmental education and familiarization with the sights of the Park;
- Recreational use zone, including areas designated for sport and amateur hunting, fishing, filming and photography;
- A zone of protection of historical and cultural objects, providing conditions for the preservation of complexes and objects of cultural heritage;
- An area of agro-landscapes designed for agricultural activities in an environmentally friendly manner;
- Visitor service zone, intended for the permission of hotels, tent camps and other tourist service facilities;
- Economic purpose zone - within which the economic and production activities necessary to ensure the functioning of the Park, as well as to meet the basic needs of the population living on its territory are conducted;

10. The regimes of the zones of reserved, reserved, cognitive tourism zone, recreational zone, historical and cultural objects protection zone, visitor service zone and economic purpose zone are determined by the authorized state body in the field of specially protected natural territories in coordination with the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan;

11. The following activities are allowed in "Yaghnob" Park:

- Carrying out activities on preservation, restoration and prevention of changes in natural complexes as a result of anthropogenic impact, as well as performance of the task of conducting research work entrusted to the Park;
- Carrying out activities to improve the sanitary condition of forests, as well as other types of limited economic activities and rational use of natural resources, which are necessary

for the implementation of the planned activities of the Park and do not have a negative impact.

- Implementation of measures for the development of the Park's infrastructure and tourist facilities.

12. In the territory of the "Park" it is forbidden to carry out economic activities that contradict the purpose of the Park and its activities, including:

- All activities that threaten the existence of natural complexes under the protection of historical and cultural objects;
- Geological works and exploitation of minerals
- Actions that change the hydrological regime;
- Economic activities on the territory of ecological and ethnographic objects, which lead to the degradation of the environment and biological resources;
- Introduction of plants and animals alien to local flora and fauna;
- Burial of all types of industrial and household waste;
- Organization of campsites, installation of tents, campfires outside the places intended for this purpose;
- Collecting of zoological, botanical and mineralogical collections, except for those provided for by the themes and plans of scientific researches in the Park;
- Other activities that cause reduction of natural, scientific, aesthetic and cultural values;

IV. MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONAL NATURAL PARK

13. The park is headed by the head appointed and released by the director of the state institution of specially protected natural territories by the Forestry Agency under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.
14. The structure, staffing and cost estimates of the park are approved by the authorized state body of the specially protected natural territories.
15. The park in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan submits departmental, strategic and accounting reports.
16. Compliance with the Park regime is ensured by the state inspectors

V. TAXATION AND FINANCING

17. Taxation of the "Park" is carried out in accordance with the tax legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan.
18. Activities of the Park are financed from external and internal investments, as well as from other means not prohibited by the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan.

VI. FINAL PROVISIONS

19. The liquidation of the "Park" is carried out in accordance with Article 19 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On especially protected natural territories".



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