

## PROTECTED AREAS LAND MANAGEMENT

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Protected areas contain some of the world's most beautiful scenery and outstanding natural and cultural landscapes. They play a vital role in conservation of biodiversity, maintaining genetic resources and protecting important ecosystem functions. At present more than 14000 protected areas exist in Russia occupying approximately 12 per cent of the country's area. Management of these territories affects many stakeholders. Therefore any management decision on protected areas should consider private and public interests and foresee possible ecological, economic, and social consequences.

Protected areas management shows consistent patterns of strengths and weaknesses. One of the main problems in protected areas management is some vagueness of land relationships on protected areas. According to the Land Code of 2001 all land fund of the Russian Federation is divided into 7 categories. Lands of protected areas should be ascribed to the 4<sup>th</sup> category "lands of specially protected territories and objects". By January 1<sup>st</sup> 2005 the total area of protected areas lands that has been inscribed to this category of land fund was 34 million ha. At the same time overall area of protected areas is more than 140 million ha. It's obvious that territories of protected areas are registered as lands of other categories. For example, all lands of Pribaikalsky National park are considered as lands of forest fund.

At the moment some protected areas are still facing problems regarding the demarcation of their physical boundaries. Less than a half of national parks and nature reserves have registered their lands in a proper way. Absence of documents on land hampers protection of rights of protected areas and is a serious threat to the full realization of their role. There are cases of emergence of unauthorized land users and attempts of federal, regional and municipal authorities to withdraw land from protected areas.

Sustainable land management in protected areas requires a comprehensive approach and should include territorial, economic, administrative, and juridical regulation. Land management is carried out on state, regional, municipal, and household (enterprise) level. Thereafter realization of functions of land resources management is carried out by state authorities as well as by municipal bodies, organizations and enterprises.

Policy-makers and stakeholders should consider the following peculiarities of protected areas:

- presence of unique natural complexes and objects that have special nature protection, scientific, cultural, aesthetic, recreational and health-improving value;
- public significance of protected areas and their openness to the public control and criticism;
- diversity of legal regimes for lands of different categories of protected areas;
- variety of stakeholders and forms of land use;
- inclusion of human settlements;
- underestimation by population and authorities of the role protected areas play, their ecosystem services; perception of protected areas as a way to withdraw natural resources out of use;
- necessity to integrate protected areas into socio-economic development of a region.

Territorial regulation involves land use planning, territory development, boundaries demarcation, zoning, creation of migration corridors and etc. The focus of this type of regulation should be placed on the local and enterprise level.

Economic regulation includes economic evaluation of land, land taxation, land rent regulation, valuation of benefits from establishing conservation easements, covenants and servitudes and tax implications, financing of conservation activities. Main economic measures should be developed on a federal level and can be broaden on lower levels.

Administrative regulation is a state regulation. It includes establishment and conduction of land cadastre, land monitoring, and land control. It guarantees that all mentioned subsystems, as well as economic measures follow standardized procedures throughout the country.

Juridical regulation implies development of legal measures for realization of all other types of regulation. It involves issues on land ownership and land titling, land rights protection, and conflict resolution.

Effective land management demands firsthand, reliable, homogeneous, complete, and comparable information on land resources capacity, land tenure, land use, land value and etc. The State land cadastre is the main source of this information and the core of a land management system. It can be defined as a parcel based and up-to-date land information system containing a record of interests in land (rights, restrictions and responsibilities). Comprehensive registration of ownership and other interests in parcels of land, indexed on a cadastral map is a basic land information product. When parcel information is linked to additional information about other use rights, restrictions, valuation and land use classification, the information becomes a powerful tool for land administration, management and distribution.

At the present time in Russia there is no integrated information resource that could contain all data on lands of protected areas. In the state land cadastre (and title register) there is no information on conservation easements, covenants and servitudes. The data on rights, borders of protected areas is not full. So in the view of the aforesaid it's clear that necessity of establishment and conducting of land cadastre is of high importance. There is need in development of guidelines for operation of land cadastre of protected areas in practice.

Land management in protected areas is essential for ensuring the proper management of protected areas. Availability of required information on land in the state land cadastre makes possible further improvement of land management system for protected areas: development of economic mechanism, correction of zoning, conflict resolution and other measures.

