



Ecotourism development in national parks as mean to support local population: case of the National Park "Onezhskoe Pomorie", Russia

MSc Thesis

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Declaration

I, Tatiana Markidonova, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date 15.03.2016

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ABSTRACT

The National Park “Onezhkoe Pomorie” is situated in the remote and inaccessible area of Russian North (Arkhangelsk region), where limited development opportunities for local population. Lack of jobs and degradation of traditional lifestyle force people migrate to urban areas. Therefore, the development of ecotourism in the recently established National Park and involvement of local population can improve the socio-economic situation. This research investigates perspectives of ecotourism development, and its possible contribution to sustainable livelihoods of local communities through the following objectives.

First, the research was aimed to examine present livelihoods situation. Second, it explored stakeholders’ perceptions toward the National Park and its conservation policies. Third, it studied perceptions towards ecotourism development in the Park and involvement of local people in it. To accomplish these tasks qualitative research method was adopted. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with five main actor groups: local people, park managers, touroperators, local authorities and NGOs.

The study revealed that local livelihoods largely depend on natural resource use, especially on fishing, and collecting of timber and firewood. However, local residents perceive that conservation has decreased the availability of these products because different restrictions were imposed, and has made them even more vulnerable. Therefore, the Park, which seems to pursue top-down management, perceived by majority as a threat. Further, despite park managers and NGOs stressed importance of local people’s participation in the management of park, there is no policy in place. Community in the study area do not have any roles and rights in the park management, or power to control over the natural resources.

The study also found that the territory of the Park has a great potential for ecotourism development due to unique nature, objects of cultural and historical heritage, and traditions of local people. Despite the attractiveness, such factors as remoteness, inaccessibility and lack of infrastructure prevent the intended development of the tourism. While park managers believe that tourism would be a useful tool for community development, they lack knowledge and experience to develop the area into a tourism destination. Moreover, local people do not participate in the decision-making and planning processes of ecotourism development. The study also revealed that as a legacy of Soviet time local community lacks of initiative and entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, the current situation is unfortunate when local people suffer and tourism opportunities are not developed as they could be.

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List of Abbreviations

NP	National Park
PA	Protected Area
RF	Russian Federation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Conservation of valuable natural and historical-cultural heritage in Russia's protected areas (PAs) largely depends on the socio-economic situation in the country, as well as adequate legislation and relevant regulations.

Since the nineties of the 20th century, there has been a significant decline in living standards of the rural population, the majority of which is currently living below the poverty line (Tarasov & Grygoryan 2009). The implemented policies after the collapse of the Soviet Union have led to degradation of once thriving agriculture, livestock and fish production. Most of national parks (NP) in Russia are located in such socially and economically depressed rural areas, for example, in remote regions of the Far East or North Arctic regions. Therefore, unemployment and low income gave a rise to greater use of natural resources within PAs by local people. The lack of understanding of people's motivation by the PAs authorities, on the one hand, and the limitations of nature use (logging, hunting, fishing, gathering, etc.) that PAs apply, on the other hand, often result in open confrontation (Schigreva 2012). Moreover, some gaps in Russian legal system, as well as poor implementation do not secure rights of local people.

Russian legal system during transition period (after the Soviet collapse) faced the necessity to create new regulations for natural resources management that would match new economic and social conditions. A rapid change and expansion of the legislative and regulatory framework resulted in some gaps and incoherence. In addition, since the late 1990s State Agencies responsible for environmental protection and natural resources management had been reorganized several times that weakened the system (Khmeleva). Although the government has taken the action to improve the quality of regulations, the assurance of conservation continued to rely on the 'exclusion and punishment' policy (OECD 2006). Furthermore, well-developed and environmentally sound legislation nowadays has lack of implementation.

To resolve the unfortunate situation when people living near NPs suffer from restrictions and inadequate regulations, managers of NPs should find the way to secure peoples livelihoods and conservation at the same time. They should provide opportunities for local people to get benefits from the park, alternative to those they receive from the intensive exploitation of

natural resources. One of these alternative sources of livelihood can be ecotourism (Bushell & Eagles 2007).

Ecotourism within NPs contributes to environmental education of population and to socio-economic benefits for local people and for the region at large. In accordance with the Concept of development of PAs in Russian Federation (RF) until 2020, adopted by the Ministry of Natural Resources, the development of ecotourism is an important task, which can create local "points of growth" in rural areas (Bukvareva et al. 2006). The well-managed ecotourism provides significant benefits to NPs and communities adjacent to them such as additional income and infrastructure development, especially where are limited economic opportunities (Bushell & Eagles 2007). These benefits result in greater appreciation by local people of their environment and desire to preserve it. That in turn keeps people off poaching and other illegal activities. Moreover, tourism development unites different actors that lead to cooperation between the authorities, park managers, local population and other stakeholders (Fauchald & Gulbrandsen 2012). Russia has both successful and unsuccessful examples of ecotourism development in NPs.

The most striking example of ecotourism development in NP is the NP "Kenozero" located in the South-West of the Arkhangelsk region. The NP "Kenozero" actively collaborate with municipalities, regional and district authorities, artists, scientists, and most importantly with local people. For 15 years, the Park have managed not only to preserve the unique nature, but also to restore the objects of wooden architecture, to create a tourism infrastructure, and to revive local traditions and crafts (Belova & Grygoryan 2007). Local residents participate in construction and restoration activities, and in hospitality services. Villages located within the Park were given a new lease of life. The majority of Russian NPs, however, have failed to develop tourism as was intended, or to make it beneficial for local communities.

This research investigates perspectives of development of ecological tourism in the newly established NP «Onezhskoe Pomorie» (Arkhangelsk region, Russia), and its possible contribution to sustainable livelihoods of local communities. It examines roles and opportunities, as well as limitations for local communities' involvement in tourism and other park activities.

1.1. Background

The NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie” was established in 2013 in the Arkhangelsk region, Russia, offshore in the White Sea, and it became 45th NP in the country (Plan 2 2014). The formation of the park has come a long and difficult way.

The idea of the NP formation on the Onega Peninsula appeared in 1997 (Plan 2 2014), because of threat of deforestation due to logging operations made by commercial enterprise “Onega-forest”. The project had been agreed with local population, local authorities and other stakeholders during public hearings. However, public limited company “Onega-forest”, engaged in logging industry since 1993 (*Onega-Forest*), argued that their activity had socio-economic importance for local people and did not approve the boundaries. The search for a compromise between timber harvesting and conservation of old-growth forests has delayed the park establishment for 15 years and resulted into significant reduction of the originally planned territory.

Therefore, the newly established park “Onezhskoe Pomorie” aims to conserve remaining unique old-growth forests, and other natural complexes of the Onega Peninsula (including the rare animal and plant species of Russian Arctic), as well as culture and traditional lifestyle of Pomor people. In order to achieve these goals the park set the following objectives (Plan 1 2014):

1. Preservation of natural complexes, unique and reference natural sites and objects;
2. Conservation of historical-cultural objects;
3. Environmental education of the population;
4. Creation of conditions for tourism development;
5. Development and introduction of scientific methods of nature protection and environmental education;
6. Implementation of state ecological monitoring;
7. Restoration of disturbed natural, historical and cultural complexes and objects.

However, according to the mid-long term management plan (Plan 1 2014) the park faces many challenges that must be dealt with to accomplish objectives.

First, the management of the park lacks the system for the development of sustainable resource use, qualified personnel on-site and systematic information support of the local population and visitors. In addition, the villages adjacent to the NP remain poorly researched. Secondly, low quality and high cost of logistics associated with the remoteness of the area impedes the development of the park. The territory lacks the infrastructure such as mobile phone connection, banking system, and basic communal facilities. Most of the areas do not have roads and centralized power supply; marine piers and airports are poorly equipped and poorly serviced. The villages adjacent to the NP have no any economic development. Many residents are now involved in poaching, mostly illegal fishing. Moreover, local people, local business and local authorities resist to the involvement of the NP in the socio-economic structure of the region, as park creation has raised a number of conflicts.

The main conflict caused by the park creation occurred because of the ban on commercial fishing in Unskaya Bay, which is included in the NP. According to the law of the Russian Federation, any industrial activity in NPs is prohibited (Legal regulation 2003). As a result, two private farms were substantially limited in their activities, and residents of two villages employed in the farms actually remained without means of living. The directorate of the park and the local authorities are trying to propose amendments to the legislations that would allow local people to implement the "artisanal" regulated fishing with traditional fishing gears and to sell the fish surplus. However, it is not profitable for the owners of farms. Thus, stakeholders have different interests and competing goals, which makes it difficult to find a compromise.

The second conflict broke out between local residents and park authorities because of the ban on collecting of firewood and timber within the park territory. Before the Park creation local residents used to cut forest for household and construction purposes. In 2014, these local needs were not satisfied. As the Park is very young, it does not have forestry regulations yet, and cannot conduct even thinning operations. Therefore, the provision of firewood remained with the regional forestry in 2014 (Plan 2 2014). Meanwhile, the park together with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forest Industry Complex of Arkhangelsk region try to find resources for providing local people with firewood and timber.

Another conflict has developed around the industrial logging conducted by the company "Onega-forest" in central part of the peninsula, outside the park. Massive logging leads to such adverse ecological consequences as loss of biological diversity, change of microclimate,

waterlogging of soils, changes of rivers and lakes regimes (Plan 2 2014). Moreover, it causes migration of species and irreversible depletion of fishery resources – salmon in the first place. Clear cutting has come close to the borders of the park and villages. The local population expects the NP to stop the expansion of industrial logging to their villages and places of traditional fishing.

Finally, locals blame tourists and park that there are not enough seats on the plane for them, which is the only way to get to the regional center. Local plane flies two times a week, and has only 13 seats on six villages (Plan 2 2014).

The situation is further complicated by the fact that currently the NP "Onezhskoe Pomorie" uses infrastructure and technical facilities of the eco-hotel "Letnaya Zolotitsa", located near the same-name village, and built by the private club "Wildlife". Limited liability company "Wildlife" was established in 2002 in order to preserve local nature, to promote ecotourism, and to ensure decent life of Pomor people by revival of traditional crafts and development of sustainable businesses (such as seaweed collecting, small-scale fisheries) (*Program Letnaya Zolotitsa 2008*). The club involved local people in construction and design of eco-hotel, and later in tourist-related services. However, over time tourist activity came to naught, and left local people with frustrated hopes on benefits from tourism. In addition, the club leases a fishing ground on the local spawning river and puts restrictions on commercial fishing in order to preserve the population of salmon. According to Federal Law 166 (*Federal law N 166-FZ "About fishery and preservation of aquatic biological resources" from 20 December 2004*) to perform sport and amateur fishing in the fishing areas leased by legal entities or individual entrepreneurs, individuals must obtain a permit. The necessity to buy permits angers local residents. Moreover, director of the NP was the first director of the club, and continues to be one of its owners. Therefore, local residents do not see the difference between two organizations and project their negative attitude to the NP.

To minimize negative impacts of park creation and repair relationship with local people the park authorities intend to assist local municipalities in infrastructure development, to provide local population with services on a preferential basis (supply of firewood, transport, provision of equipment for household work), to create alternative sources of income for local people through sustainable use of natural resources and particularly through involvement of local communities in ecotourism development (Plan 1 2014). However, the majority of the plans have not been realized yet.

There are two existing tourist flows in the park area, which were formed before the park creation. First, there is unregulated flow of tourists in Unskaya Bay, mostly fishermen and hunters, the number of whose is difficult to count. Officially, in the first half of 2014 139 people required permits to visit the park (Plan 2 2014). However, it is known that about 4000 fishermen visit Unskaya Bay every weekend during the fishing season (Plan 2 2014). This area lacks of tourist infrastructure such as parking zones, organized beaches, picnic spots, food services area, and tourist accommodation.

Second, there are organized, mostly rich tourists, who live in eco hotel “Letnaya Zolotitsa” with the highest international standards. It was built with using of "green technologies" in traditional style of Russian North, and can accommodate 24 guests (Club "Wildlife"). Tourists come here rarely, mainly in March to observe the pups of harp seals. The high cost of accommodation and use of expensive equipment and transport during tour, such as helicopters, for example, determine the elitism of tourism in this area.

To change these unsatisfactory conditions and ways of tourism development, park managers with the assistance of specialists from NGOs and tour companies has developed a program on sustainable tourism development in the park. This program aims to create conditions for sustainable development through the regulating of tourists flows, and ensuring the integrity of natural systems and well-being of the local population (Plan 1 2014). The specific objectives of the program include development of infrastructure, creation of a competitive tourist product, monitoring of illegal and natural tourist flows, training and involvement of local communities in tourists service. The expected results of the sustainable tourism development are as follows:

1. The emergence of new forms and directions of sustainable tourism.
2. The improvement of quality of the visitors flow.
3. The increase amount of tourists who come to the park with educational purposes by promotion of ecotourism.
4. The creation of an enabling environment for social adaptation of local people to the new economic and political realities; the improvement of their socio-economic conditions and life standards.
5. The development of partnership; and the involvement in the program of local authorities, NGOs, touroperators, business communities and local population.

The ecotourism development occurs in a complex situation around the park, which involves a variety of stakeholders with different views, expectations and often-conflicting objectives.

1.2. Problem statement

Effective management and ecotourism development of protected areas is not possible without the cooperation of different stakeholders. *“Stakeholders imply individuals, groups or organizations, who are, in one way or another, interested, involved or affected (positively or negatively) by a particular project or action toward resource use (Pomeroy & Douvere 2008).”* Therefore, it is necessary to consider attitudes and opinions of local residents, tour operators, various NGOs and authorities about territory development to avoid conflicts, and work together to achieve sustainable environmental and socio-economic results.

Many Russian PAs had been developing for a long time in isolation from society that has led to such problems as the lack of understanding of their roles and values, the lack of support from the wider population, and negative attitudes towards the PAs (Tarasov & Grygoryan 2009). Currently one of the priorities of the NPs in Russia are raise environmental awareness, cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular local residents and their involvement in conservation and tourism activities (Schigreva 2012). However, the implementation never goes without problems: there is a discrepancy between the good intentions on paper and the obstacles that exist on the ground, which is often the case in Russia.

Official documents usually claim that nature resource management aims to find a balance between conservational and economic interests and to protect rights and interests of individuals. However, while these goals sound good in theory, in reality insufficiently developed nature resource management in Russia cannot ensure their implementation (OECD 2006). Therefore, institutional competence and capacity are also very important for effective management and ecotourism development.

The strategy for PAs management and for ecotourism development should be based on a preliminary study of public values of natural resources and opinions about PAs activities, including tourism. As what seems obvious to conservationists, can be treated by local population or tour operators completely differently. For example, place that ecologists consider worth to protect may has other meaning and function for the residents. This clash of views on

the same problem makes it difficult for the fruitful cooperation of all stakeholders. That is why to prevent such situations managers should maintain an ongoing dialogue through meetings, surveys and interviews.

In this light, the study focuses on understanding of various stakeholders' perceptions on the NP «Onezhskoe Pomorie», and its activities, particular in ecotourism development. In order to find out stakeholders' perspectives on existing problems, conflicts, and possible solutions, and to identify existing contradictions, I conducted interviews with local people in the village Letnaya Zolotitsa, park managers, tour operators, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local authorities.

1.3. Objectives and Research questions

The main goal of the project was to study opinions of all potential participants about ecotourism development in the National Park «Onezhskoe Pomorie» as mean to support local population.

To address abovementioned, specific objectives and corresponding research questions were designed:

Objective 1: Study local perceptions towards natural, social and economic conditions of the study area.

- What is the level of employment and general welfare of local population?
- What are the sources of income and livelihood of local population; the role of different activities and natural resources in livelihoods?
- How do the local people value the territory of the NP, and what do they perceive as a threat for the territory?
- What is the degree of satisfaction of local people with their quality of life?

Objective 2: Study stakeholders' perceptions towards park activities, and examine the current conflicts.

- What is the stakeholders' awareness of the park and of purposes of its creation?
- How has the park affected the communities adjacent to it?

- What are the roles and opportunities as well as limitations for local communities' involvement in park activities?
- What are the current conflicts, their causes and possible ways out of the situation?

Objective 3: Study stakeholders' perceptions towards ecotourism development, and their willingness to participate.

- How do different stakeholders perceive the ecotourism?
- What are the current ecotourism resources in the Park, plans and constraints for their development?
- What are ideas about local involvement in tourism-related services and associated development of local businesses, constraints and their willingness to collaborate?
- What are the potential benefits derived from ecotourism for local people?
- What are the plans for touroperators and local authorities' involvement in ecotourism development in the Park, and their willingness to collaborate?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THESIS AND FEATURES OF MANAGEMENT AND ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN RUSSIAN PROTECTED AREAS

2.1. Protected areas management

2.1.1. Classical nature-protection management

Management of protected areas in many countries, including Russia, is traditionally based on ‘*classical nature protection*’ model, strongly regulated by state. It implies centralized decision-making, where the main goal is biodiversity conservation and where there is a little room for interests of other stakeholders (Fauchald & Gulbrandsen 2012; Kaltenborn et al. 2011). Despite good intentions to protect nature from destruction, such model has significant shortcomings (Haukeland 2010). First, it relies only on scientific data and ignores traditional knowledge. Second, it depreciates commercial use of the territory, thereby limiting regional development. Finally, it excludes from the management local people, whose lives are affected the most by the decisions made. However, this model of conservation came to dominate in 20th century because of growing concern about adverse impacts of consumptive use on the environment.

To prevent consumptive use and minimize other forms of human impact on the environment conservation strategies attempted to reserve places for nature, drawing protected areas as a pristine and wild territories free from people. Such ‘*Fortress Conservation*’ narrative prevailed in protected areas’ management worldwide until the 80s of last century (Hutton et al. 2005; Vedeld 2002). Managers practiced ‘fine and fence’ and ‘exclusion and punishment’ policies. They deprived local people from their usufruct rights and put restrictions on traditional resource use such as grazing, wood collecting, hunting and fishing (Vedeld 2002). People living in PA and in adjacent territories did not recognize such policies and continued harvesting resources ‘illegally’ in order to secure their livelihoods. As a result, biodiversity resource became threatened. All this led to mutual distrust between local population and government/conservationists, and gave rise for numerous conflicts.

2.1.2. Conflicts over protected areas management

Conflicts over protected areas come from contradictions between different stakeholders who have frequently competing goals. Protected area management is a multi-layered process

where various actors meet at different levels and in different arenas (Vedeld 2002). The actors may include both those who use natural resources for their living directly, such as farmers, foresters, pastoralists and anglers, and those who do not use resources directly but still depend on them such as merchants and touroperators.

Conflicts mostly appear around distribution (restriction) of resources and the benefits from such a policy. People who live in the proximity to PAs often rely on natural resources for their livelihoods (Tarasov & Grygoryan 2009). When conservation, depending on its status and protection regime, sets restrictions and imposes regulations on owners and users, it generates tension. Thus, to mitigate the tension, governance of protected areas needs a fundamentally new approach different from ‘Fortress approach’.

Ineffectiveness and negative consequences of ‘Fortress approach’ stressed the need to reconsider the policy of protected areas management in order to reach a consensus between different stakeholders and their goals. Specialists argue that interests of local people can coexist with conservation goals and plenty of new approaches appeared last decades prove this (Bushell & Eagles 2007). The main rationale behind new approaches is reduction of conflict level through inclusion of all stakeholders (resource users) in management of PAs.

2.1.3. Integrative management

Inclusion of stakeholders in PAs management helps to gain their support that contributes to long-term integrity of PAs. Such ‘*Integrative*’ management integrates ecological, economic and social perspectives in order to find a compromise among multiple interests for the most effective development of the territory (Torfing & Sørensen 2014). Therefore, it implies 'bottom-up' and 'cross-level' relationships. As opposed to ‘classical nature protection’ management, this model recognizes importance of traditional knowledge, sustainable use of protected areas and public participation in PAs management (Haukeland 2010).

From 1980, several ‘*participatory*’ approaches to PAs management that aims to deliver both sustainable livelihoods by creating business opportunities, and better conservation, were developed. These approaches empower those who are most affected by the decisions being made through decentralization of power and devolution of rights and resources from state to local levels of governance and then to civil society and individuals (Hutton et al. 2005; Vedeld 2002). Although, ‘participatory’ approaches have been tried in many places with different contexts, they have not always achieved a success.

To achieve a success, it is usually not enough just to involve local players in governance of PAs. According to Lewis (1996) it is also crucial to find the power balance among numerous actors, and to take into consideration interests of each in a fair and respectful manner. Similar concepts we can find in McCool's (2009) theory of partnerships, based on mutual trust and responsible participation of all stakeholders. In practice, however, local participation can take different forms.

2.1.4. Forms of participation in protected areas' management

The local participation can take different forms as one can use it to enhance local legitimacy in PA management and transfer decision-making process to local people, as well as to justify increase of state control and decisions of external agencies. Thus, according to Pretty (1997) local participation can be viewed as a mean to reach other goals such as conservation efficiency, because local people more likely support conservation if they are involved; or as goal in itself - a right of local people to be involved. Therefore, when the term 'participation' is used, the context should be clearly defined.

Pretty (1997) has developed a detailed typology of participation forms (Table 1) from the lowest level where the participation of local people is just nominal, to the highest level when local people are very much in charge.

Typology	Characteristics of each type of participation
Manipulative Participation	Participation is simply a pretence, with people's representatives but who have no real power.
Passive Participation	People participate by being told what has been decided/what is going to happen/has happened. It involves unilateral announcement without listening to people's responses. Information shared belongs to external professionals.
Participation by Consultation	People participate by being consulted or answering questions. Process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
Participation for material incentives	People participate in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Local people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.
Functional Participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project.
Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation/strengthening of local institutions. People have a stake in

	maintaining structures or practices. Participation is seen as a right, not just a means to achieve goals.
Self- mobilization participation	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used.

Table 1: A typology of participation. Source: (Pretty 1997)

It is highly recognized that effective management of PAs should involve local people in decision-making at all stages from creation and maintenance to further development. However, Vedeld (2002) advocates that the highest level of participation is not always necessary and different situations require different levels of participation. In one case to inform people may be appropriate, and in other participation must be a target. Still, models of co-management where local people actively participate remain the best way both to protect nature and to sustain livelihoods.

2.1.5. Role of protected areas' management in sustaining livelihoods

Organization of sustainable livelihoods of local population in protected areas plays an important role in poverty reduction and sustainable development. Sustainable development implies the ability to ensure a better quality of life for all people living now and for future generations (Ellis 2000). According to Ellis (2000) the livelihood includes capacity, resources (both material and social) and activities required to maintain the decent level of life. According to Scoones (1998) livelihood is considered sustainable when it can cope with stress and shocks, recover from them and grow without destroying natural resources.

Local residents are the true preservers of natural resources. However, they have to deal with factors such as unfavorable weather conditions, economic shocks, migration processes that can negatively affect their ability to provide themselves with sustainable income (Ellis 2000; Tarasov & Grygoryan 2009). Because it seems impossible for all humans to stop their use of nature resources, conservationists must work to introduce the means to deliver sustainable use (Hutton & Leader-Williams 2003).

Sustainable resource use needs peoples' awareness of real benefits that they can get from conservation rather than exploitation and destruction of nature (Belova & Grygoryan 2007). Therefore, the main task of PAs management is to preserve nature together with the local residents and for their real and concrete benefits. It should provide people with income that will

reduce their dependence on the landscape and intensive use of natural resources (Ellis 2000). This can be achieved by involving the population in environmentally oriented business.

Overall, PAs play an essential role in the accomplishment of conservation objectives and in socio-economic development. They can make a tangible contribution to solving crucial problems of modern society related to the poverty eradication, especially as many PAs are located in the poor areas without sources of income.

2.1.6. Features of protected areas' management in Russia

The Russian modern system of protected areas began in 1916 with the foundation of Barguzinsky Zapovednik on the shores of the Lake Baikal (Transformation of protected areas 2003). Today biodiversity protection is ensured by more than 13 thousands PAs of different categories, protection regimes and management, which cover 11% of the country area (Elvestad et al. 2011). Zapovedniks, representing the strictest category of protection where even visits are strictly limited, remain the key elements of the system. NPs appeared quite recently – in 1983, and now their number has reached 46 (Elvestad et al. 2011).

Russian NPs are organized in accordance with zoning principle, including a protected core zone, a recreational zone and a buffer zone in which economic activity such as tourism is allowed. According to legal regulations (Legal regulation 2003), the establishing of NP occurs at the federal level by a decision of the government on condition of the prior consent of the region to transfer the land into Federal ownership. Before the submission, local authorities, owners and users whose lands are planned to be included in the NP should approve the decision (Legal regulation 2003). NP's lands are withdrawn from industrial activities, and granted to NPs for permanent protection. In some cases, NP can allow existence of other users and owners lands within its borders if their activities do not damaged NP lands and do not violate its regime. Financing of NPs comes from federal budget, as well as from charitable funds, and grants. NP also can conduct entrepreneurial activity if it serves to achieve the objectives.

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russian PAs faced the choice of their further development. The reduction of the financing on which the PAs had used to depend and decline of centralized (Moscow-based) power forced conservationists to rethink their policies. There was assumption that Russia might follow the Western model of PA management that promote active stakeholder participation (Transformation of protected areas 2003). However, crucial political, social and historical differences, and lack of tradition of civil society have challenged

the implementation of such a policy (Elvestad et al. 2011). PAs seemed mainly to maintain a policy drawn from the Soviet period based on strong restriction of public access.

PAs has continued to achieve conservation results by mainly restrictive methods, misrepresenting authoritarian approach to management as a special path of development. The inefficiency of this approach has become apparent, as protected PAs are too small to neither preserve biodiversity within their area nor contribute to ecological stability in the regions (Volkov 1999). To increase significantly the total area of PAs seems unrealistic. Instead, the PAs must promote green initiatives in adjacent territories. Although, according to law and regulations commercial resource users should implement environmentally friendly methods by themselves, this is not happening. These factors made PAs to redirect their activities from conservative protection of natural complexes within the borders to an active environmental policy in the regions.

According to the State Development Strategy for Russian PAs, managers should create a mechanism to integrate their activities in the socio-economic development of the regions (Belova & Grygoryan 2007). The government encourages PAs to develop ecological tourism, implement social programs, create jobs and additional sources of income for the local population, promote sustainable use of renewable natural resources, and involve local people in conservation initiatives. The interaction with local communities as a prerequisite for successful management of PAs is highly recognized now by state and conservationists.

In practice, PA chooses the most effective form of interaction with the local community, based on their priorities and current situation. From Russian experience, it can be public councils comprising representatives of local residents and protected areas; advisory councils in protected areas; representation of local communities in management; agreements on the transfer of certain functions from the PAs to communities; organization of work of volunteers from the local population; the inclusion of PA representatives in the territorial public self-government (Schigreva 2012). The important thing, though, is that these instruments of interaction will not become just a formality but serve as a real basis for ongoing dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation.

2.2. Ecotourism in protected areas

2.2.1. Defining ecotourism

The phenomenon of ecotourism has arisen from the global environmental movement in the late 1970s as a result of growing concern about negative environmental and socio-economic impacts of mass tourism. Increased awareness of its consequences such as severe degradation of natural resources, socio-economic inequity and erosion of traditional values has led to the emergence of alternative forms of tourism (Honey 2008). Ecotourism has appeared to be environmentally friendly, as well as socially and economically beneficial for local communities. However, clear definition has still not been devised.

A lack of clear definition of ecotourism and little consensus among experts generate a great confusion about its meaning. Initially, the term ‘ecotourism’ referred to nature-based travel and described what tourists do, rather than what they should do (Donohoe & Needham 2006). Since the 1980s, the discussion of definition has broadened by such dimensions as sustainability, contribution to conservation and educational experiences. In 1990, The International Ecotourism Society defined ecotourism as a responsible visit to natural areas that not only preserves the environment, but also raises the living standards of local people (Honey 2008).

Other attempts to understand the ecotourism concept have been related to exploring its principles. According to Fennell as cited in (Donohoe & Needham 2006), who made review of 85 ecotourism definitions, the most frequently met principles are (in descending order): (1) experience natural setting, (2) minimize negative impacts on the environment and support conservation, (3) appreciate and respect local culture and traditions, (4) benefit local communities and (5) increase awareness and educational opportunities. In recent years focus has shifted from environmental to social dimension, thus, ‘sustainability’ and ‘benefits to locals’ have become a new trend in the definitional discourse.

While the definition continues to evolve, the interpretation of Honey (2008) nowadays is considered the most encompassing and widely quoted in literature:

“Ecotourism is travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strive to be low impact and (usually) is small scale. It helps educate the traveler; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights.”

The lack of agreement on ecotourism definition, however, reduces the legitimacy of ecotourism industry. The ecotourism industry is developing in many different forms, and often outside of definitional boundaries (Donohoe & Needham 2006). Cases of ‘eco-exploitation’, when this term is used in meaningless way to give a specific topic a ‘green’ dimension, have become widespread. Touroperators, conservationists, government officials and tourists label their activities as ecological without any or with limited ethical or practical considerations of the conceptual principles. Therefore, according to Honey (2008) the key principles should form the basis of ecotourism applications.

2.2.2. Tourism in protected areas

Most typically, ecotourism involves visits to areas that are under some form of environmental protection. Most PAs possess unique natural and cultural landscapes that makes them ideal ecotourism destinations. Since the creation of first NP (Yellowstone National Park, USA) in 1872, providing opportunities for recreation and environmental education has become the main goal of many PAs (Ceballos-Lascuráin 1996). Despite many believe that popularity of NPs among tourists may undermine conservation efforts, nature protection and recreation have proved to be compatible (Bushell & Eagles 2007). Moreover, ecotourism can foster the park development when it is designed as a tool for conservation.

Tourism in PAs must be a tool not only for conservation, but also for local prosperity. Tourists show increasing interest in PAs as attractive sites for outdoor recreation. Therefore, NPs can use this demand for their own and local benefits. According to (Eagles et al. 2002), tourism in and around PAs should support protection of the natural and cultural heritage through income generating, education and interpretation of protected values to visitors. It also can improve the quality of life of local communities by enhancing economic opportunities, developing local infrastructure and supporting traditional customs (Bushell & Eagles 2007). Overall, ecotourism in PAs plays an important role in poverty alleviation and sustainability.

While the role of ecotourism in sustainability cannot be overestimated, locals and managers should be aware of possible risks and be realistic. Possible risks may include deterioration of landscapes, pollution, seasonality of jobs and competition for recreation places and services (Eagles et al. 2002). If poorly planned and managed, there will be no difference between mass tourism and ecotourism (Bushell & Eagles 2007). Furthermore, even well-handled tourism is not a panacea, as benefits are a long-term commitment and need many years of effort. In addition, existing of PAs does not necessarily lead to local development through

tourism, as protection by itself does not bring favorable conditions for tourism businesses (Lundmark & Stjernström 2009). Accessibility, travel time, market, competition, and supporting services are also of great importance. The small number of tourists in remote protected areas combined with the restrictions on land use limits the tourism development. Therefore, park managers should take into consideration all the potential costs and constraints.

2.2.3. Participation in ecotourism

Long-term sustainability of ecotourism in PA depends on shared interests of conservationists, touroperators, government authorities and local communities. Therefore, the participation of all stakeholders in management of tourism is of paramount importance for PAs (Bushell & Eagles 2007). According to Levkin (2000) to ensure successful development of tourism, PAs must perform following tasks:

- To inform the local authorities, community and tour operators of the park's plans and projects for the development of tourism;
- To involve regional and national tour operators in tourism management activities;
- To involve local population in tourists-service activities;
- To coordinate activities with all stakeholders.

Meanwhile, whereas tourism development requires cooperation of all stakeholders, participation of the local communities remains the main condition of success. If tourism development and planning does not match with the local desires and abilities, this can destroy the tourism' potential (Whelan 1991). Therefore, different NGOs and governments incorporated local participation in their policies (Pretty 1997). Many organizations nowadays claim that they involve local people in tourism projects in order to give their actions a moral value. In reality, however, there is more than one model for local involvement, and therefore, the term is often used inappropriately.

There are various models for involvement of local people in ecotourism. As was discussed earlier in the chapter, forms of participation range from manipulative and passive participation to self-mobilization. Likewise, there are various models for the benefit sharing: from rent for use of land to co-ownership and to full community ownership of the park or tourist facilities (Honey 2008). Thus, one should pay attention not to the fact of locals being involved, but rather how they are involved. Ideally, local communities should actively participate at all

stages of ecotourism development and receive sufficient benefits to improve their well-being and maintain their wish to participate in ecotourism projects.

The participation of local communities in ecotourism projects, however, is not an easy process. Local people living near PAs are often scattered over a large geographical territory and are not part of any organization, which makes it difficult to reach them (Whelan 1991). Moreover, according to Tosun (2000) participation especially in developing countries has several operational, structural and cultural limitations. Operational limitations include lack of coordination, and informational support of locals from PAs. Structural are many. First, the locals do not have required level of skills or education, on that account, tourism professionals are frequently unwilling to negotiate with them. Second, managers themselves lack expertise and experience in work with local communities. Third, community participation is time and money consuming, and many PAs do not have financial resources for it. Furthermore, legal system in developing countries frequently does not secure community rights. Cultural limitations relate to limited capacity and low awareness of people to handle tourism development effectively. Therefore, they do not show interest in it.

In general, if PAs intend to involve local people in ecotourism development not only on paper, but also on practice, they should find a way to overcome these barriers.

2.2.4. Development of ecotourism in Russian PA

Ecotourism and visiting NPs are relatively new forms of recreation in Russia. While worldwide around 15% of tourists choose eco-tourism trips, in Russia ecotourism is less than 1% of the tourist market (Makarova 2013). According to Makarova (2013), the share of organized tourists in NPs in the country is also very small - only 7% from about 1.49 million tourists.

Russia, however, has a huge potential for development of ecological tourism, and its socio-economic importance has the highest efficiency in the Russian rural areas, where, the most national parks are located. According to Russian statistics, almost 14 thousand of villages and 214 small towns have disappeared in Russia in last ten years (Kuleshova 2013). Crisis has hit primarily the villages in regions with unfavorable climatic and agricultural conditions, including the Arkhangelsk region. Therefore, development of ecotourism in these regions involves the population in the hospitality services, thereby creating jobs; expands the market for local products; increases tax revenues to local budgets; and, consequently, improve the quality of local life (Zvyagina 2013).

Recognizing the important role of ecotourism in the improving quality of rural life, many PAs have expressed their interest in this activity. Several formal plans and documents on federal, regional and local governmental levels spell out the importance of the PAs potential for the development of ecotourism (Elvestad et al. 2011). In accordance with the Federal Law of the RF “On Protected Areas”, Russian NPs should develop ecotourism on their territories as institution of nature conservation and environmental education (Legal regulation 2003). As a result, various programs and methodologies were elaborated.

The positive experience of own methodology was used in the three-year project “The Management Strategy for Russian NPs”. It was implemented by Biodiversity Conservation Center in 1999-2002 under the coordination of the Ministry of Natural Resources of the RF, the Federal Forestry Agency and the Ministry of International Development of Great Britain in the framework of the Russian-British program of development (Zvyagina 2014). The project contributed to the development of eco-tourism, revival of local crafts and cultural traditions, attracted investments and introduced the system of micro credits in several pilot areas. Successful experiences have been replicated and embraced by other protected areas.

Although, ecotourism in Russian NPs seems to be growing fast, the existing services for the visitors do not always bring the expected results. According to Levkin (2000), there are several reasons for this. First, professionals of tourism business (tour operators and travel agents) are not aware about recreation opportunities in Russian NPs. Second, the staff of the NPs often do not have any experience in tourism or tourism education. Third, there is no or little coordination of tourism activities with local authorities. In addition, the normative and legal acts regulating the relations of the NPs and businesses, in most cases, are inefficient. Other aspects, such as low salaries of employees of the NPs and small budget do not facilitate the ecotourism development either. The main problem, however, impeding the ecotourism development in PAs and adjacent territories is poor tourists infrastructure (Tarasov & Grygoryan 2009; Zvyagina 2014). To solve this problem, managers of NPs should involve local communities and support them in creation of rural guesthouses.

The process of involving the local communities in the park’s tourist activities is complex in Russia. The population in and around the NPs is primarily rural. Most people live on their small farmlands and unwilling participate in tourism activities until it guarantees additional income or legal status (Levkin 2000). The realities like lack of entrepreneurial initiatives and lack of required skills, as well as rural mentality taking roots in Russian culture and history are

difficult to change. Besides, ecotourism industry lacks adequate legislation, relating to setting norms and standards in organic food production, crafts productions and sales, registration and operation of small private museums, operation and rent of boats, etc., which makes it problematic for locals to provide such services ("Reserves" 2014).

To conclude, despite the government at all levels and PAs in Russia have recognized the socio-economic importance of ecotourism for the PAs and regions as a whole, and have taken many steps towards its development, more adjustments and amendments in legislation and management policies, and other efforts should be made to succeed.

3. STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study area

3.1.1. Physiographic conditions

Location

The NP "Onezhskoe Pomorie" is located on the Onega Peninsula, which is bounded by the White Sea in the North-West of Russia (Figure 1). The park stretches mostly along the coastal areas of peninsula and has quite complex territory characterized by mosaic structure and high fragmentation. Administratively it includes the territories of Primorsky and Onezhsky districts of Arkhangelsk region, and occupies an area of 201668 hectares (including forestland area of 180668 hectares and waters of Unskaya Bay of the White Sea with an area of 21000 hectares) (Plan 2 2014).

Research was conducted primarily in the village Letnaya Zolotitsa adjacent to the NP "Onezhskoe Pomorie" on the west coast of Onega Peninsula, 186 kilometers from the regional center Arkhangelsk (Figure 2).



Figure 1 – Location of the National Park “Onezhskoe Pomorie”. Adapted from (*Map Russia*)

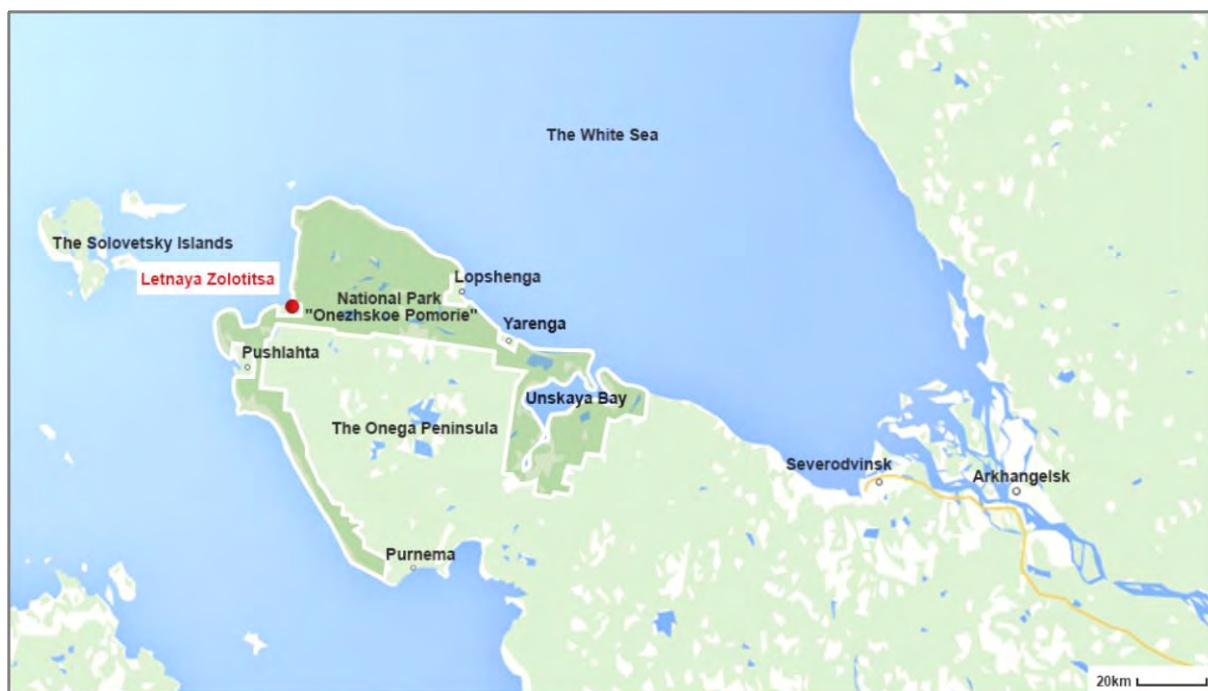


Figure 2 – Map of the National Park “Onezhskoe Pomorie”. Adapted from (Plan 1 2014)

Climate

The main features of climate are determined by geographical location in the North of European Russia, the influence of cold waters of Arctic seas and the character of atmospheric circulation. The NP "Onezhskoe Pomorie" has a cool temperate continental climate, characterized by short cool summers and long cold winters with stable snow cover.

The minimum and maximum average monthly temperatures are -9 -11°C in February, and $+11$ $+14^{\circ}\text{C}$ in July accordingly (Plan 2 2014). The annual rainfall for the area ranges from 416 to 434-mm (Plan 2 2014). Steady snow covers the territory (with the average depth of 20 – 41 cm in open areas, 61 – 71 cm in forests) from the second half of November until the first decade of May: 175 – 181 days (Plan 2 2014). Coastal location, numerous small rivers, lakes and especially wetlands contributes to the high humidity.

Ecological significance and representativeness of the territory

The NP features an extraordinary landscape diversity, which is a rare combination of continental taiga, wetland, lake-lowland and coastal natural systems. Here is the only in Europe a large area of primeval taiga forests located on the seacoast.

Onega Peninsula that deeply shoot out into the White Sea has independent hydrologic system with numerous lakes (about 2000), salmon-spawning rivers (95 rivers and streams) and wetlands (Plan 2 2014). Due to their clean waters, rivers and lakes are the perfect breeding grounds for many freshwater and migratory salmonid fishes. The Park is one of the habitats of the European pearl oyster in the European North (Davydov 1998).

A variety of geographical elements of flora coexist on the park's territory: there are more than 500 species of vascular plants, 159 species of algae, a high species richness of mosses, and a wide variety of fungi, including lichens (Plan 2 2014).

The most important White Sea-Baltic migration route of birds passes through the park's territory: hundreds of thousands of geese, ducks, and waders fly via Onega Peninsula to the breeding grounds in spring and back to the wintering grounds in fall (Davydov 1998). There is a real opportunity to see flights of 400 thousands migrating geese in the park.

Unskaya Bay and coastal waters of the White Sea are usual feeding grounds of belugas and other whales, and permanent habitat of the ringed and bearded seals. Moreover, in spring one can observe large gatherings of harp seals on the ice floes off the coast of the Peninsula. Brown bears, elks, wolves, foxes are common inhabitants of the Park, traces of which presence can be found everywhere, and in some seasons it is easy to see the animals themselves. There are also lynxes and wolverines in the park.

Overall, the NP territory is a fine example of Northern pristine nature.

3.1.2. Demographic and Socio-Economic conditions

The territory of the Onega Peninsula is the most remote place in the Arkhangelsk region with poor energy (wood still remains the main fuel) and poor transport infrastructure.

The level of road network development in the territory is significantly lower than average in Russia and Arkhangelsk region. The area around village Letnaya Zolotitsa and western part of the Peninsula in general have no roads at all. Thus, the transport system relies only on sea and air communications, which highly depends on weather conditions.

There are ten villages on the territory adjacent to the NP with 1130 people living permanently (during summer population increases in 2-3 times) (Plan 1 2014). The 90% of the local people represent specific ethno-cultural group of Russians with characteristic features of

life and beliefs – Pomors (Davydov 1998). The proximity of the White Sea historically has determined the type of resource use on the territory - the sea fishing over many centuries remains the main occupation of Pomor people.

The population in the village Letnaya Zolotitsa, where the study was conducted, is 182 people, one-third of which are elderly people, and one-fifth are children (Table 2).

The number of residents	The number of pensioners	The number of children under 16	The number of households	The number of working people
182	60	36	65	81

Table 2 – The basic socio-economic characteristics of the village Letnaya Zolotitsa. Source: (Volkova 2013).

The overall employment of the working-age population in the village is 94% (Table 2).

There are three main sources of income in the village:

1. Commercial enterprises: cooperative farm, communication center, airport, shop, hotel, sawmill, bakery
2. Work in the public social sphere: school, kindergarten, club, library
3. Work in state-owned enterprises: administration, military unit, post office, NP, boiler station

According to official data, the cooperative farm supplies 49% of jobs, public sector - 43%, and private business 8% (Volkova 2013)

Therefore, the cooperative farm, engaged in industrial fishing in the Barents Sea, is the main employer in the village. The additional activities of the farm according to registration data are livestock and crop production, forestry, marine transportation, power generation, and construction (*Co-operative farm "Belomor"*). In fact, resources and infrastructure "inherited" from collective farm-millionaire (during Soviet years) have almost been lost: arable lands are not exploited, dairy and meat products are not produced, the fish catch has significantly decreased, and fish processing is absent at all. Some people also collect algae of White Sea; however, the production level is very low.

Now the food production does not cover the needs of residents, so most products are imported from other regions. The area is almost entirely dependent on state subsidies. The expenditure budget of village Letnaya Zolotitsa goes on maintenance of administration (69,3%) and of housing and public utilities (15,5%), while only 13% is invested in the territory development, and 0,3% in youth policy, health and sports (Plan 2 2014). As a result, the traditional way of life has destroyed. Fish poaching is prospering, while the population of the village is declining. Migration of youth to cities in search of a better life and employment left the village with elderly people. About one-third of the houses in the village are abandoned or used only as a summer cottage (Volkova 2013).

Thus, sparsely populated and undeveloped areas provide little opportunities for local economy and local communities without purposeful development of sustainable tourism and other key competencies.

3.1.3. Tourist resources

The protected area has many remarkable and unique natural sites of great cognitive and aesthetic value, and thus are attractive for tourists.

Coastal systems, including beaches of the White Sea, pine forests and dunes are promising for the creation of recreational trails and routes for the observation of marine mammals, waterfowl and wading birds. The White Sea is one of the three places in the world where you can see the pups of harp seals in March (Plan 1 2014). Unskaya bay of the White Sea, the Zolotitsa River and large lakes are promising for the development of sport and recreational fishing.

Moreover, the objects of historical and cultural heritage located in the adjacent areas have significant educational value. Lighthouses are the monuments of navigation in the 19th century (Davydov 1998). The ancient coastal villages with unique houses (so called "eyes of the sea") represent the architectural value of the site. Finally, the local people Pomors with their characteristic way of life and traditions especially in fishing and sailing are also of interest and perspective to the organization of interactive forms of tourism.

3.2. Research design

This research used a qualitative approach as meanings, characteristic and description of things seem to be more appropriate than counts and measures to address the research questions. Qualitative research allows to understand how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings, and how their meaning influences their behavior (Berg & Lune 2012). Qualitative techniques helped me to get a better understanding of different stakeholders' perceptions and experiences in relation to conservation and ecotourism development through first-hand experience and quotations of actual conversations. Moreover, small sample do not allow to make quantitative analyses.

3.2.1. Sampling methods

The process of sampling includes choosing of target population, site and strategy (Berg & Lune 2012).

The **target population** for this study included local people living near NP, park managers, local authorities, touroperators, and NGO representatives. I chose these five relevant stakeholder groups for the role they play or stake they hold. I considered they could all provide interesting perspectives and insights into my topic. The most interviews, however, I have done with local residents as the main actors of my study.

Since my study focused on ecotourism as a mean to support local population, the **site** for the interviewing of local residents was selected based on relevance to the research topic. Thus, among ten villages adjacent to NP I chose the village Letnaya Zolotitsa, as currently it is the most prepared for tourism and recreational activities. It is the only village that has some tourist infrastructure and accommodation for tourists (eco-hotel "Letnaya Zolotitsa"). The development center of the Park is also situated here. Therefore, this site has administrative, economic, scientific and recreational value. Moreover, residents of this village have some experience in tourist-relative services, which residents of other villages do not have. Besides local people, I interviewed some of the park managers and local authorities in this village. Other actors were interviewed in different locations: park managers in the city Severodvinsk, where the main office of NP is situated; most touroperators and regional authorities in regional center – Archangelsk. I also made four interviews with touroperators and experts from NGOs in Moscow.

In terms of **strategy**, I used purposive and snowball samplings methods. Tracing of suitable people through purposive techniques, aims to interview those, who most of all correspond to research questions and provide more complete and varied results (Bryman 2008). Therefore, I made a list of touroperators specializing in ecotourism, especially in Archangelsk region; of local and regional authorities who in charge of tourism and economic development; of NGOs who work with NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie”; and picked four key informants from different departments among the park managers. These experts, with their particular knowledge and understanding, I believed could provide insight on the nature of problems and give recommendations for solutions. For interviewing local people, I mostly applied snowball or so-called respondent-driven technique when I asked participants to assist me in identifying other potential subjects (Berg & Lune 2012).

3.2.2. Data collection techniques

The methods used in order to get required information included both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included semi-structured interviews, participation and observation. Secondary sources included literature and document review and analysis. According to Bryman (2008) this process of getting information from different sources, called triangulation is a powerful technique, reducing probability of biases and facilitating validation of data through cross verification.

Primary sources

The research used **semi-structured interviews** that enabled gathering special information and reflections on different issues. This choice allowed me to make adjustments during the interview and adopt questions to each particular respondent, at the same time, adhering to the chosen line and not letting go beyond the topic of my interest (Berg & Lune 2012). Separate interview guides for each actor group were prepared prior to the interviews (Appendix 1).

As a **tool**, I have decided to use audio recorder during interviews where it was possible and when the permission was granted. The audio recording allowed me to focus on participant observation and reduced risk to lose or misinterpret the information. However, when respondents did not want to be audiotaped (which only happened twice), I took notes instead of recording. For some touroperators, I have decided on internet-based interviews via e-mail or Skype, because I could not to interview them in person, as they were situated in different cities.

In addition to interviews, I **observed and participated** in daily activities of local community and park workers. Living in the village, I had the chance to know the area, to talk to people and observe their life and behavior in familiar to them situations. I also participated in some meetings and local events. Moreover, I accompanied the park director and other managers in their trips over the park territory. This helped me better understand the different subjects discussed in this work and interactions both within one group of actors and between different groups.

Data collected from primary sources reveals people's perceptions and reactions about the issue that researcher raises. However, according to Bryman (2008) researcher must compare primary sources with secondary materials in order to contextualize these perceptions and revise their understandings.

Secondary sources

The research has also relied on secondary sources such as academic articles, books, documents and previous studies done in the study area. First, I got acquainted with the management and development plans, as well as other working documents of the NP "Onezhskoe Pomorie", which gave me an idea on management policies and challenges, and general picture of study area. Second, I read a lot of literature in order to gain a broader perspective on conservation, ecotourism and livelihoods, particularly in Russia. Further, throughout the internship and fieldwork I collected many documents, mostly reports of different NGOs and of other researches in the area, which provided me with important background and specific regional data. All secondary data were used to compare and compliment the data I obtained during fieldwork.

3.3. Ethical considerations and Limitations

Conducting research, especially in social sciences, **ethical considerations** must be taken seriously in order do not harm the participants. Therefore, we have a moral responsibility to protect rights, privacy and well-being of people included in the study (Bryman 2008). One of the main ethical principles of research is transparency that implies informing of participants about study purpose along with details about interview procedure. Following this principle, I clearly introduced myself to informants, explained the aim of the study and the research questions, and their right to refuse or withdraw from the study at any time. The permission of voice recording was asked as well. Another ethical principle I followed was confidentiality,

when participants and the data gained from them must be kept anonymous. I fully respected the privacy of my informants and assured them that no names will be used in thesis or elsewhere.

As my topic was of law sensitivity, the respondents did not hesitate to be interviewed and audio recorded, except one local resident who refused to participate and head of the village who did not want to be recorded. However, I noticed that use of voice recorder in interviews with some of park managers and authorities was to some extent a **limitation** to get full and truthful information. It seemed that audio recording made the interviews too official and interviewees felt they represented some organization and responded carefully. I believe that I fulfilled this gap by observation and participation in respondents' activities, and informal talks in which they expressed their opinion freely.

I also encountered minor linguistic challenges when translated the interviews conducted in Russian into English. It is possible that differences in languages have caused the loss or misinterpretations of some information, but with small effect on results.

The major limitations for me were logistic and time constraints. Due to inaccessibility and remoteness of the territory, and different locations of stakeholders, it was difficult to obtain a large sample size of participants within the timeframe of the study. I tried to solve this problem by making arrangements beforehand where it was possible, and where it was not I took a chance and came without notification. In particular, I found it difficult to get information from touroperators, most of which I had to interview via e-mail. The rate of responses was very low. Moreover, despite my research focuses on ecotourism, multidisciplinary nature of the topic makes it very broad with a great number of influencing factors. During the fieldwork, some new actors came to the light, but unfortunately, I did not have enough time to interview them. In this regard, it was inevitable to face the problems related to credibility and validity of the materials relying on a limited number of informants. The data with low external validity, thus, cannot be generalized to other situations and people. However, using different methods of data collection and five distinct sources of information, which provide different perspectives on the same issue, has increased credibility and validity of my study.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Local people’s perceptions of the national park activities and ecotourism development

This section presents the findings from 18 interviews of local people conducted in the village Letnaya Zolotitsa. The intention is to identify tendencies and patterns concerning how the locals value their territory, impacts of conservation and ecotourism, and how it affects their prospects for village development.

4.1.1. The main socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Gender

Among 20 participants, 16 were women and four were men (Figure 3).

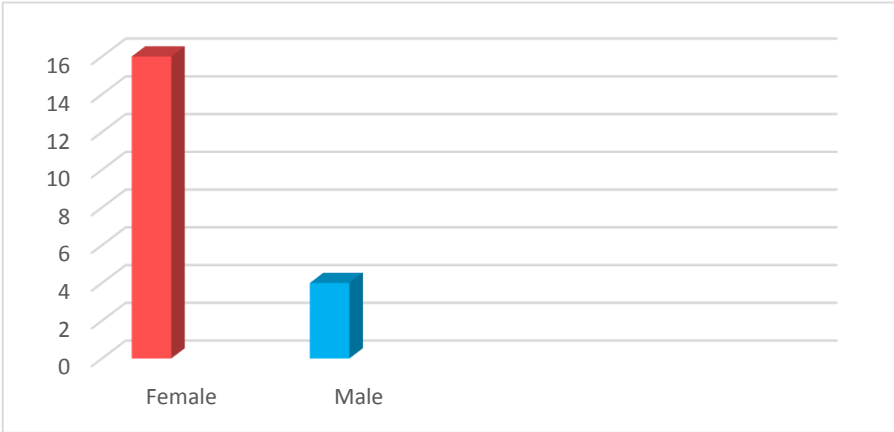


Figure 3 – Gender composition of respondents from the village Letnaya Zolotitsa

The imbalance towards more female respondents can be explained by the fact that the available for interview population such as workers of administration, airport, school and pensioners are mostly women. The male population, working mainly outside the village – on the farm, in the military unit, at the boiler station or in the sawmill, during the study were not available.

Age and household composition

Among the participants only three were under the age of 35, nine were between 35-55/60 and eight were older than 55/60 (which is the age of retirement in Russia for women/and men respectively) (Figure 4).

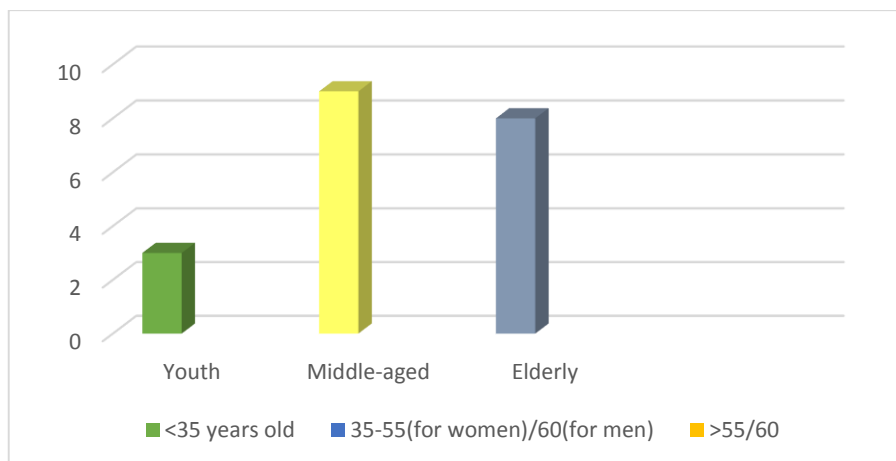


Figure 4 – Age composition of respondents from the village Letnaya Zolotitsa

A large percentage of the elderly population among the respondents corresponds with the general demographic situation in the village. Basic household characteristics revealed by this study find that the size of households ranges from one (mostly pensioners) to six people whereas an average household consists of three people (which coincides with the official data on the village in Table 2).

Sources of income

Among the respondents, sources of income were distributed as follows: 8 of respondents get a pension, 5 work in public-social sector, and the same number in commercial enterprises, 2 people work in government enterprises, 2 have their own business (Figure 5).



Figure 5 – Sources of income of respondents from the village Letnaya Zolotitsa

It is noteworthy that all the participants reply negatively to the question: "Do you have any difficulties providing for your family?" Many people have two jobs or run a business in

addition to the main job; some of the pensioners continue to work. To improve their food security villagers also go fishing, collect mushrooms and berries. All of interviewees maintain vegetable gardens, although only two keep a livestock. People use all the products from these activities only for personal needs, not for sale.

“There are no difficulties indeed; we have our own garden, where we grow vegetables. We can buy everything in the store, what we cannot - we order on the Internet.”

“Our vegetable garden helps us, we grow potatoes and others, this helps. My mother keeps a cow, so we make our own milk. We have settled here down well.”

“We get a pension every month, the collective farm helps us, we are good here.”

Two of respondents who are the local entrepreneurs believe that every man is the architect of his own fortune.

“A cat in gloves catches no mice. Here people can live well if they are capable to make something by their own hands: catch fish, grow vegetables, keep livestock.”

“No. If a person is able and want to work, he will always earn.”

4.1.2. The value of the territory for local people

One of the objectives of the interviews was to identify the meanings and values of the park territory for local population. Almost all participants emphasized the aesthetic and ecological value of nature and the resources that it provides, especially fish.

“All people who come here, they are all fascinated by our nature. You can go to the beach, or it is very good to breathe fresh air in the forest. Difference from the city is tremendous, so we settled down here. ...We promote this love of nature for our children.”

“Forest, river, sea, mushrooms, berries, fish – we have everything here.”

“I'm a fisherman and a hunter, I grew up in the village, I like our sea, river and lakes.”

It is important to note that majority of the respondents are Pomor people. Their ancestors were engaged in fishing, harvesting seaweed, working on the lighthouse – the whole life was inextricably connected with the sea. People still cannot imagine life without the sea and fish. This explains their fear that the NP will make the buffer zone in the sea and impose restrictions on fishing.

Many interviewees also highlighted a spiritual value of the area:

"I'm tired of the city. My daughter and grandson who live in the city always come here in summer with pleasure. I do not need money, the harmony is more important."

"For me, who had been living a half of life in the city, this freedom and space here - are the very first values. It is an opportunity to realize my potential, particularly here in the school, because in the city I did not have such opportunities. And what else attracts that city lacks is an ability to work with the land, ecology."

"What I like about it is the pace of life; we can live here, and not just live to work."

Among other values, respondents often mentioned homeland and local people.

"This is my small motherland. Pomors have been living here for almost seven centuries."

"I was born here, everything is valuable for me. It is peaceful here; we do not even lock the doors when we go out."

The way the locals value the territory affects their vision of the current challenges and threats.

4.1.3. The threats to the development of territory

All threats named by the respondents I have summarized to the following categories (presented in descending order of importance for the local population):

1) Socio - economic (especially unemployment, and as a consequence the outflow of young people to urban areas).

"There is no work, the only source of income is the collective farm in the village, and it is also uncertain. Some women work at school, some - in the bakery. There is no work at all. The collective farm has already died, three cows are left in the village, and they belong to privateers. Nobody wants to do anything; fields have been overgrown. You are welcome to keep a livestock, but again, there is no product market. The village died."

"The village does not have basis for prosperity. Earlier collective farm was the city-forming enterprise. Now it fall to decay."

"Young people leave, but do not come back as village is far from the center. If you want to go even to Arkhangelsk (regional center) - tickets are very expensive."

At the time of the study, the regional administration was making a decision about the integration of municipal units. People feared the redistribution of finances from the budget and

their outflow from the village with the subsequent closing of the school. Therefore, the locals perceived the integration and its possible negative socio-economic consequences as the main threat to the territory at that time.

“Regional authorities want to unite these village councils. If they unite, the school can be closed... If the school closes, where to work then, my daughter and son-in-law work in school, and where they will go then.”

“Integration, then the school and other institutions will be closed, unemployment will take place.”

2) Ecological (especially everybody was concerned about the problem of deforestation due to the activities of industrial-logging enterprise “Onega–forest”).

“The deforestation, for example. A large forest area on the peninsula was cut down.”

In addition, during the boom of nuclear-submarine production in Severodvinsk (the nearest city) from early 1950's to early 1990-ies, government organized several military facilities in the coastal area of Onega Peninsula (Plan 2 2014). Since the beginning of 1990-ies, some facilities were closed, but due to extremely high transport costs, most of the equipment and materials were disposed here without proper isolation.

“We also have submarines and Zhizhkin Island nearby - there is a military base where rockets are launched and it is not very good for the ecological state of the sea.”

“Ecological: in the 50s here was a polygon for the disposal of the chemical weapons. How have they been stored in those days?”

3) While the state of environment is among the biggest local concerns, the national park, which aims to preserve the environment, itself is perceived as a threat.

“The park threatens our activities. The commercial fishing in the Unskaya Bay is forbidden now. Then the national park will create a buffer zones in the forest, and, perhaps, in the sea. If it happens, commercial fishing will be also forbidden here. Now we can gather algae here and catch fish. However, hunting is forbidden for the local residents. Although the amateur hunting is theoretically not forbidden in the national parks, here it is forbidden. To collect firewood is also forbidden.”

4) Some of respondents also mentioned military unit, which is located nearby. People are afraid of missile tests.

“The military base is nearby, exercises are held constantly, rockets are launched”

“The space base is nearby; here is a polygon for testing the ballistic rockets (the Zhizhkin Island)”

Actively expressing their opinions about existing threats, the majority of the respondents found it difficult to name possible solutions of these problems. Some believe that locals are powerless to influence decisions of higher authorities; others, on the contrary, believe that it is all in their hands – the residents should be active and fight. Several interviewees pointed on the necessity to develop infrastructure and create jobs. They hope that National Park will help them in addressing these problems.

4.1.4. Local awareness of the National Park and its purposes

Although all the locals are aware of the special environmental status of the territory aiming to preserve the unique nature of the peninsula (in the first place - primeval taiga), not everyone agrees that the nature here need a special protection.

“We do not know why it was created here. We do not need it.”

“I cannot say, for the protection of nature, may be, although nobody destroyed it here.”

“What's here to protect? What are they doing, what are their goals and objectives?”

It should be noted, that the idea of the park establishing emerged in the 90s and was highly supported by the local people, as they felt threatened by the enterprise “Onega-Forest” engaged in industrial logging. Eventually the Park was formed only two years ago, when the whole peninsula is almost cut down. So now, many residents find no sense in its creation.

“They have been delaying it - delaying for 15 years. Only now, they organized this park, when almost entire forest has been cut down. What is left to protect? There is no forest left.”

In this regard, some residents believe that someone can gain from the park establishment, and official goals do not coincide with the real.

“I do not know; it's beneficial to someone.”

“The stated objectives are not always the same as what they actually are.”

4.1.5. Impacts of the Park creation on people's lives.

The special focus in research was made on local understanding of socio-economic role of the National Park "Onezhskoe Pomorie". The respondents were asked to identify existing benefits and problems associated with PA creation.

A number of participants emphasized the important role of NP in conservation of natural complexes and ecological education.

“There is only one advantage - nature protection. I understand and support it because it is necessary to protect nature.”

“It preserves fish for the future, salmon population will increase”.

Few respondents mentioned possible job creation, infrastructure and tourism development. No other benefits were named. The majority does not see any benefits or opportunities, but only restrictions because of park creation.

The most frequently stated *restrictions* were (in descending order):

1) Restrictions on fishing for individuals in the river;

“We have some problems with fishing in the river. We have to buy permits; it depends on the kind of fish and on a certain size. It is not the park who sells these permits, though; it is the club «Wild Life». It has been selling permits for last 3 years, so people got used to it; they understand that it is important to regulate fishing. Well, in general, we are not very limited here.”

“There are restrictions on fishing in the river; we need to buy permits. I do not understand why, we catch fish for personal use, not for sale.”

It should be noted, that the NP has nothing to do with this restriction, as the river is not included in the park territory. The river is leased by the private club “Wild Life”, which sells the permits for fishing in it. However, since the NP is based in the ecohotel, built by the club, and the park’s director was the former director of the club, residents do not make a difference between two organizations.

“It is an unclear situation with the park and ecohotel - everything mixed up, who owns what, who is responsible for what. Clarity is needed.”

2) Obtaining a permit to pass the park territory;

“Obtaining permits. People do not like this. People came to get it, but nobody was there. Now it is better, they fixed it.”

“My son works on the military base (40 km from the village), to get there he needs to pass through the park area. Recently park inspector asked him to show permit, even he knew my son is local. What is the point, for what?”

We understand when they asked visitors, but not the locals. If we just want to go to the lake for fishing, we have to take a permit (it is free though)."

"Moreover, we need to take permit to go to the forest. I do not want to carry this piece of paper with me when I go to the forest to gather berries. I must take also passport. It is ridiculous. To go fishing, we must take a permit either. There is a lake, a half of which belongs to national park and other half does not, well, it is just ridiculous."

"To go to the forest now we have to take a permit from the national park. I am not going to take it, it is humiliating for me. I have been living here for almost 72 years, and now I should ask the permission to go to the forest. My ancestors have been living here for centuries. Park managers are guests here, and we are hosts, we can walk here wherever we want."

3) Restrictions on collecting firewood and timber for personal needs;

"Last year there were great problems with firewood, and we all have the furnace heating. The school will also soon fall apart because there is not enough firewood. People used to collect firewood not for sale, but for themselves, in a small way. And now we have to pay to get it."

"Not that many, but there are some limits. Collecting firewood - yes, this is a problem. They say that when forest belongs to the park (it does not have forestry regulations yet), they will allocate some sites for people's needs. I do not know; let us hope that it will be so."

"It is forbidden to cut down the forest. Now we collect firewood only in the collective farm's forests that are not included in the national park. It is far away - 12 km from the village."

"The national park has greatly affected the peoples live. First, we cannot collect firewood; the area where we can is 15 km from here. Can you imagine how expensive the transportation of this firewood will be?"

4) A ban on industrial fishing in the Unskaya Bay, where residents mostly work on the farm engaged in industrial fishing of cod, and who now are actually remained without work. Although this ban has not affected residents of Letnyaya Zolotitsa, where the farm gets fish in the Barents Sea, some have relatives there or just worried about the inhabitants of those villages.

"Industrial fishing is forbidden. The Unskaya Bay became a talk of the town. Commercial fishing was the main source of income for two villages there. And now they don't know how to live."

"There is a ban on industrial fishing in the Unskaya Bay, people suffer there. It was the only source of income for most of them. How should they feed their families now? This case came to the Supreme Court, but nothing was resolved."

"The park was created to preserve the forest, but they have captured control over bioresources in the Unskaya Bay, and have banned commercial fishing there. It's a war there between park and local population."

5) The difficulty of buying plane tickets because the Park holds reservation

“The park always reserves the seats on the local plane (it is the only way to get to the village), even if it not necessary.”

In general, on the concrete question about existing conflicts with the park the respondents answered that there are no conflicts, but only contradictions, mentioned above. People continue to do what they are used to do. No fines or other sanctions were applied yet. The majority recognizes the importance of preserving nature, but believe that it should be done wisely, not harmful for the local people.

“This is good, but protecting the nature, do not to forget about people who live here. It should be balanced.”

“In general, it is good to preserve nature, but do it in a way that people would not suffer.”

4.1.6. Collaboration with the park

The study reveals that park authorities held several meetings, and informed the locals about park creation. However, nobody asked their opinion on this topic.

“Meetings took place. But, you know, the park creation has been already approved at the highest level. The agreement of the local residents was not required. That is according to the law.”

“When the national park was created, people were gathered and pinned down to the facts: here are our borders, you can go here, you can't go there... that's all.”

Now, according to interviewed local residents, park hold meetings infrequently, and at an inconvenient time. Moreover, villagers consider them ineffective and pro forma.

“They were talking among themselves, we just signed it and that's all.”

“Rarely. It seems I always cannot get to these meetings. But there is no contact with the people.”

“They speak in professional jargon; we don't fully understand it.”

“Usually they hold meetings, but at that time, we are always at work.”

The respondents also noted that NP created school forestry. While some see this as a positive moment, others believe that it was done for PR and it is not actually working. At the same time, all informant highlighted the excellent work with children by park's ecologists who

live on the Park base near the village and actively communicate with locals. People, however, do not consider their work as the NP activities.

“Park’s ecologists run environmental club for pupils. They are good and enthusiastic people. It is so interesting to listen to them.”

However, some of the participants made a point that locals themselves are unable to communicate.

“Our people are very difficult. They do not say anything in the presence of park director. But when he leaves, they begin to speak out their opinion to the head of administration and to us - deputies. We in turn tell him, he gathers people, everybody comes to the meeting but keeps silent.”

The results show that local people do not know any legal opportunities to influence the park’s decisions and do not believe anyone would take into consideration their opinion.

It should be noted, that many interviewees are not interested, neither in the park activities, nor in cooperation with it.

"Someone wants to cooperate, others don't, and I don't care."

Some people just do not know how they can be involved in park activities, what can be their role.

"There are no common interests, I didn't think about it".

"Don't know, what can I do there?"

The majority, nevertheless, wants to establish a contact with the Park and to collaborate in such areas as infrastructure development, problem solving, and environmental education.

"Together to create the infrastructure in the village: roads, electricity, and communication"

"It would be interesting to cooperate. People would not hinder the development of the Park if there was some cooperation"

4.1.7. Recommendations of local residents to the park administration

The interview participants were asked to suggest ways out of existing conflicts and to list the park’s actions that can improve local life.

First of all, the majority of respondents stressed the need in cooperation and constant dialogue between park representatives and local population. People do not have enough information about park activities and live only through hearsay. Therefore, they wish more meetings were held. At the same time, some interviewees noted that meetings should be more effective: based on two-way communication when their point of view is taking into consideration.

“It is necessary to inform people. We read news about park in newspapers and on the internet.”

“I see the way out in collaboration. Meetings are held, but not effectively – they express their opinion without listening to our one. There is no dialogue. But once the park was created in a populated place, it should take into account the opinion of people living here.”

“We have to find a compromise, everything can be solved. So far, people think only of themselves, and park tries to satisfy their objectives. If everyone continues to hold his ground, there will be nothing good neither for them nor for us.”

Secondly, respondents ask the park to consider possibility of easing some restrictions for local population, especially on fishing. It is important for residents to continue to do what they have been doing for centuries.

“The Park should make concessions to the local population, especially for fishing. Local people will not catch all the fish. One should offer joint solutions, projects”

Finally, despite the fact that the village is not officially included in the NP, villagers express the hope that the NP could attract investors and federal money for the development of the territory and create jobs for locals.

4.1.8. Understanding of ecological tourism by local people

Before to find out the attitude of local residents towards ecotourism development, their participation in this process, cooperation with the National Park, possible benefits and negative effects, I first decided to ask how they understand the ecotourism. The interview included the following question: “Do you know what ecotourism is? How would you define it?”

The results show that many participants are not familiar with the definition and principles of ecotourism. Many of them admitted that they "don't know what it is." The rest mainly noted natural and environmental principles of ecotourism:

“It is some kind of walking-tours in the woods, or to the lakes, acquaintance with nature.”

“Observation of nature without interference. Do not damage the nature - is the main principle.”

“Do not litter, do not harm, but to preserve the nature.”

Meanwhile, none of the interviewed locals is aware of the social and economic principals of ecotourism. Many of them were surprised that this type of tourism should maintain or restore the social-cultural environment, and benefit the local population.

4.1.9. Possible benefits from ecotourism development

The majority of respondents doubted they could make profit from tourism

“Our village is not included in the park territory, so we will not get benefits, I guess.”

“Tourists are very welcome. However, what benefits can we get? There are no benefits for locals.”

“It is beneficial only to the ecohotel, we will not get any profit.”

Among possible advantages of tourism development mentioned by few interviewees were:

- Additional income

“There will be an additional income if the tourism develops, of course, someone knits mittens someone do something else.”

- Job creation

“If there were some jobs for locals, it would be great.”

“In general, I support the idea of tourism development. I will retire soon, would be happy to work in tourism after that.”

- Village development

“Yes, it would help the development of the village.”

“Infrastructure development. We need a road here.”

- Communication with new people, interesting events

“Locals could interact with tourists, hold meetings ... It would be good if we participated somehow, our old women do not mind to organize something at the club, they could sing or tell something.”

“It would be interesting, things will start happening.”

A number of respondents, who supported the tourism development in the area, at the same time, expressed some concerns over the ways of this development.

“If the tourism develops, the infrastructure for tourists will be built - entertaining facilities. I think it is not good for the rural people.”

“We do not want the roads here - it will destroy the whole idea of the NP. They should make flights and boat trips more often and cheaper.”

I must say that the opinions about transport infrastructure development, particularly road construction, were divided among local residents. Some believed that it would help the development of the village; others on the contrary, believed that it would destroy their way of life.

“Here we have some disagreements, there are pros and cons, the environment will be damaged. Although it is believed that we live in the middle of nowhere, the difference from the city is huge: all people know each other here, and everybody is friendly. Maybe if there is a road, different people will come here in numbers... of course, civilization is a good thing, but there are also disadvantages.”

Two respondents argued against the tourism development, because they do not want any changes in their lives:

“No way, we do not need tourism here. We are good without it.”

“I don't want to see any tourists here. We live here quietly, do not disturb anyone.”

4.1.10. Potential for ecotourism development

The majority of interview participants find the NP and surrounding areas are extremely attractive for tourists. The main argument was the unique primeval nature.

“Of course, it is attractive. That is why they built the ecohotel here. Our forest, lakes and sea are beautiful.”

“Attractive. The beauty of the nature never fails to amaze even us locals. Wilderness and silence - this is what should attract tourists. This cannot be found in suburbs, there is no such silence.”

“Yes, it is a picturesque place with lots of different animals.”

Some of the locals think that tourism in such a remote place can be attractive only for a certain people with specific interests.

“There are some crazy people who want a wilderness experience, and ready to pay a lot of money for it, but they are few.”

“The territory would be attractive only to a narrow circle of tourists - hunters, anglers.”

Two of respondents do not consider the territory attractive for tourism at all.

“What is here to see and do? Fishing is not good here for tourists, one period there are many salmon in the sea and other are few. To catch pike in the lake - one should go 7 km by the swamp, not everyone wants to do it.”

“And to be honest, there is nothing interesting here - no unique animals as kangaroo, only elks and bears.”

If the nature was named as a main factor of tourists' attractiveness, the village by itself is not interesting for visitors from the local point of view. The interviews revealed that only old people have some knowledge about the history, customs and crafts of Pomor people. There is no centralized network of collection and storage of such information. Only few enthusiasts keep a museum room. According to interviewees, Pomor traditions have been almost lost, traditional festivals or folk art fairs are not held in the village.

“We do not maintain traditional northern culture. No one knows traditions. There are no traditional clothes or household items of Pomor people.”

“There are no traditions left. People are not active. If there was a club with qualified staff, who can teach traditional crafts and arts, attract locals, especially children. Although old women can tell a lot.”

“We do not collect folklore. Almost all people who knew traditions died.”

Moreover, many locals are not willing to revive traditions in order to please tourists.

“For any revival of traditions there should be the prospect, the plan. To revive for what - to show something once in a year - what is the point?”

“What does the revival mean? We are not dying here; we northern people are severe and proud.”

In addition to the lack of traditions, respondents identified several other obstacles *on the way of tourism development*.

- 1) The main constraining factors were named as the remoteness and inaccessibility, lack of road network in particular.

“The main obstacle to the development of tourism – the large distance from the center and difficulty of access. We need a road.”

“In my opinion, it will be no any tourism here. There are no transport infrastructure, no roads.”

“I do not see any prospects for tourism development, there are no roads. There will be only some groups that can drive a snowmobile in winter. It is hard to get here by the sea – we need new berth.”

- 2) The second obstacle mentioned by informants was expensive transport.

“To get here is very expensive. Rural tourism is popular near the city, where you can drive, but not here.”

- 3) Participants also pointed on the lack of active people among the local population, especially among the youth.

“We are old women – pensioners, we just want to fish. Young people should participate, but they are passive, they don’t want anything.”

“Youth is passive. Even teachers are all passive. I remember my teachers; they organized something all the time – festivals, exhibitions, concerts, and clubs. Now the situation is different. All people here are lack of initiative. If there is at least a cultural worker in the club with an education or even without it, but enthusiastic. Our worker just locks and unlocks the door in the club, that is all. She could not even organize a concert last year. The same situation is with the library. Young people don't have organizational skills.”

“Residents do not need it, they are passive and do not want to work. Although they can be involved one by one and friends will catch up with the rest.”

- 4) Some respondents consider that the special environmental status of the territory, which implies restrictions on activities attractive for tourists, decreases the tourism potential.

“Let’s say tourist comes from Moscow and wants to go fishing. How I can guide him, if we are under the pressure of the controlling organizations here. Border guards, fishing control, and now park inspectors - they are here constantly.”

“And then, to guide the tourist on a fishing trip on the lake belonging to the Park, it is necessary to take permission. They will not give it, I think.”

“The territory would be attractive only to a narrow circle of tourists - hunters, anglers. But hunting is prohibited. If the hunting was permitted within reasonable limits, it would be interesting.”

Others also doubt that creation of NP has increased the tourism potential of the area.

“Creation of the park doesn't make any difference. People will not come here just to visit the park.”

“What can it offer – this park? Nothing”

One of the interviewees has more hopes for regional administration than park.

“There was such a program in the Arkhangelsk administration some years ago - to build an aerodrome here for planes flying to Solovki islands. The monks do not allow build hotels there. So, the authorities wanted to make the campsites in our village. But this program was needed lots of money from the budget, so it has never happened. I think only this or similar project can help to develop tourism here.”

The majority, however, believe that NP will give impetus to tourism development in the area.

“I think the creation of national park increases the tourist potential of the area though the residents don't realize it yet.”

“There will be potential, if the park develops.”

4.1.11. Involvement of local population in tourism activities

According to the interviewed locals, neither the Park nor the administration or NGOs do not run any tourism projects in the area yet. Thus, local people do not participate in tourist activity anyhow.

“No, there are no many tourists here.”

“There is no activity at all.”

However, almost everybody noted that when the club “Wildlife” built the ecohotel here, many tourists visited the area and local residents participated in the service process. Over the time, the tourism activity ceased.

“At one time we cooperated with ecohotel: children made souvenirs and even got money for it, people collected berries and mushrooms for hotel guests. We met new people, it was interesting.”

“At first, when the ecohotel was built (before the NP creation), there were some joint activities with the local residents. Celebrities came here; locals met them with pies... That was interesting. Then everything has come to nothing.”

“When the hotel was built, different people came, even celebrities. I knitted napkins for the hotel interior. It was interesting. Now there is no activity. But I would like to participate somehow if it was.”

As can be seen, villagers liked this experience. More than half of the respondents expressed the wish to participate in tourist activities and to cooperate with the Park. The rest of interviewees either did not think about this, or do not wish to participate. Among the reasons were:

- 1) Distrust towards park authorities. The former director of the club “Wild life” that built ecohotel, who is now director of the NP, promised a lot of benefits to the local population from tourism, but the result was different.
- 2) Lack of understanding of their role in tourism development.

“What function we can perform there? At school, we organize the work of the park ecologists with children; they work very well with kids. What else can we do?”

- 3) Unwillingness to work in the service sector

“What can we do there? To be servants – that’s all. But we are proud people.”

- 4) Unwillingness to change their life style. Local people used to work in fishing industry and they want to stay that way.

“People have been living here almost 700 years; they have been fishing and gathering for ages. We want to continue to fish. We are not interested in tourism.”

“I do not believe that tourism will save us. I see our future only in fishing industry.”

On the concrete question about services local residents can provide, many found it difficult to answer. No one have specific ideas or projects. Local women, especially the older generation could make souvenirs (mostly knit and embroidery articles), and cook meals for tourists. Few of participants could rent out house or room to tourists, but mostly in wintertime. Two respondents have fishing huts that can be rented. Some local residents could guide the tourists in fishing and hunting trips. Many villagers also collect berries and mushrooms. One

person has organized the museum room; one family expressed a desire to revive the traditional craft of collecting algae.

One of the interviewees mentioned that park ecologists conducted a survey on willingness and ability of the residents to participate in tourism-related services. Two of the respondents also said that park managers offered them to provide tourism services, but it is not clear how, to who, and what are the benefits.

“A tourism department worker from the park, a good woman, came here and offered me to rent out my house to tourists. I still think about it. We cannot make money of it, there are not many tourists.”

In general, interviewed local people do not want to rent out their own houses. However, one of them noticed that there are many abandoned houses, which can be used for this purpose, but they are difficult to purchase.

“There are many empty houses, which can be guest’s houses, but nobody knows whom they belong to. It seems they are abandoned, but you cannot use them. You should find the owner...it will take a lot of time. But everything is possible if there is a wish.”

Many respondents emphasized the need for training of their involvement in tourism services, and for presence of the park’s coordinator who would organize the work with the population.

“If there was an organizer from the park who can interest people in, it would work out all right.”

“If they worked with the population, many would participate.”

Meanwhile, people feel that park managers are just all talk and no action.

“In my opinion, it will be no any tourism here. Only talks.”

4.2. Park managers’ perceptions of park activities and ecotourism development

This section presents the findings from review of park’s reports on management plan and from four interviews of key informants from the National park “Onezhskoe Pomorie”, such as Deputy Director, head of Department of area protection (chief inspector), senior researcher (ecologist), and tourism specialist.

4.2.1. Purposes of the park creation and current objectives

The interviews show that all informants are well aware of stated in the park's charter goals and *objectives*, which are primarily - to preserve the old age primeval taiga and the traditional way of life of Pomor people. Chief inspector has noted that there are no specific social objectives in the charter, such as infrastructure development in adjacent villages, or improvement of local livelihoods. Formally, park is not obliged to develop the villages adjacent to the NP. However, park's directorate understands the need to support local population and such intentions are spelled out in the programs and plans of the Park.

The park ecologist also expressed his disappointment about the fact that the process of park establishment was dragged out over 15 years. He understands the local frustration of the park being created only one year ago, when the company "Onega-Forest" has cut down almost the entire Peninsula.

"The boundaries of the Park could be much better. The first project covered the entire Peninsula, but the "Onega-Forest" did not approved it, gave as a reason that its activity has a social importance for the inhabitants. Thus, the Park has been formed only now with the borders as they are. But this is a good thing, because forest of the northern part of the Peninsula, untouched by industrial logging, was included in the Park territory and now it will not be cut down."

The park set many objectives, but according to the informants, they have a number of *challenges* in their accomplishment. Most of them managers explained by the short time of the park existence. Not all structures are functioning, as they should, not all the lands and forests have been delivered into the park possession yet.

"Forests kind of belong to the Park, but we cannot use it yet. There is our Russian legislation - rezoning the forestlands is a long procedure: forest management cannot be implemented until forest regulations will be approved and forest inventory will be done, inventory costs a lot of money and so on. Hope it is a matter of time."

Interviewees also highlighted problems in interaction with the local people, who so far has a negative perception towards the park due to some adverse impacts of its creation.

4.2.2. Impacts of the park creation on the communities adjacent to it

Among the benefits that the park can provide, managers mentioned the possibilities of self-development, new jobs, and profit from tourism. However, for the present, as noted by the

Deputy Director, there are only opportunities and no real benefits from the park creation yet. The only thing is that they organized the club "Onega Pathfinder" and a school forestry for local pupils.

All key informants admitted that so far local residents experience only negative sides of park creation, because they have some limitations coming from the need to fulfill the law.

First, the industrial activity on the park territory is prohibited. The Deputy Director highlighted that it is the main restriction.

“Certain groups of citizens who are engaged in industrial fishing has limits on this activity. For now, there are no other alternatives for the residents.”

Secondly, the forest cutting is not allowed. However, the lands and forests nearby human settlements are not included in the Park as well as a farm’s forest. Local residents can collect firewood there, although park managers understand that it is not enough.

Thirdly, hunting is also prohibited within the park, but illegal hunting is not a problem.

As for collecting wild plants, mushrooms, berries and amateur fishing, park did not impose any restrictions on it.

“The collecting of mushrooms and berries is not limited. Amateur fishing is allowed in accordance with the fishing regulations of Russia that existed before the park creation. The only change - that there is more control now.”

Unclear situation with the club "Wild life" that sells for local residents permits to fish in the local river, and in which hotel the Park is based now, was commented by park ecologist upon as follows:

“Yes, the park director was a former director of the club “Wild life”, but there is another director now. The reach of the river, which is leased by the club, does not belong to the Park, the Park has nothing to do with this. In order to fish in the river locals have to obtain a permit, it is free for pensioners and for a token fee for other locals. The only thing that they cannot use spinning or nets, because it is spawning river and the salmon is protected. The club leased this river in order to limit the commercial salmon fishery, the salmon fishing is only allowed now by license to a limited extent within the quota.”

In addition, local residents need to get a permit to pass through the park territory. However, the park workers believed that it was just a formality, which did not affect negatively peoples’ life. The chief inspector noted:

“Permission to visit the Park is required under Federal law (it is free for locals and their relatives and valid for one year). I did not receive any complaints about this from the residents. I have many friends in the villages, everyone is happy. Permits can be obtained from the inspectors or on the website. I do not see any problems. I think over time they will get used to it, it is the law. Even if the inspectors know some locals by sight, it is better to have the permission. And if we go easy on one person and do not on another it will be a mess.”

The park ecologist admitted though, that from the human viewpoint he understands residents who are unhappy with this rule.

“I understand this; moreover I'm on their side, as a human. However, there is a Federal law, which states that in order to visit the national park you should have a permission. In addition, local residents do not technically live within the Park territory, so they have the same status as residents of Arkhangelsk, for example. But we understand that they are actually the local residents, despite the fact that the village is not officially included in the Park. So, they only need to go to the village administration and get this paper for free and for a year. However, some proud people say they do not want to. I can understand their position.”

In overall, according to all interviewees, park have more negative than positive impacts on the communities so far, which has led to the conflicts.

4.2.3. Conflicts

The conflict in the Unskaya Bay, from the point of view of the informants, is the main conflict in the park. Two collective farms require permission for commercial fishing of cod, since the ban leave residents of nearby villagers almost without job. The reason of this conflict the managers saw differently:

The Deputy Director stated that when it came to the issue of borders regional authorities did not inform them about fishing industry in Unskaya Bay:

“During alignment of parks borders, documents received from the Arkhangelsk region stated that there is only amateur and sport fishing in the Unskaya Bay, but no commercial fisheries. As these activities are not prohibited in the national park, the Unskaya bay was included in park territory. Therefore, the commercial fishing of cod "remained behind the scenes" and turned into a serious conflict now.”

The chief inspector assumed that regional administration did not sufficiently examined the situation before approve the borders:

“During the park formation all stakeholders approved the borders. In my opinion, the regional administration did not study thoroughly the legislation limiting industrial activity, and now we have problems.”

The Park was formed in accordance with the law. I think it is just negligence of someone in regional administration.”

The park ecologist blamed the confusing legislation.

“The waters of Unskaya Bay was included in the national Park with formulation in brackets – without withdrawal from economic use. The Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev signed this resolution. The chairmen of the collective farms also approved it when they read this formulation. However, legally this formulation does not negate 33 federal law prohibiting industrial activities in the territory of NP. I believe it was approved unknowingly, and now the Park administration cannot allow commercial fishing to the farms, only recreational. We would not mind to allow the fishing of cod, but we cannot do it – it is against the law. It is necessary to solve this problem at the highest level – the legislation of the Russian Federation.”

It should be noted, that the Park directorate is actively working on this problem, it has already tried different approaches and even took the case to the court. The way out of this situation they see in the implementation of the following actions:

- Returning to local people capability of fishing with traditional gear. For this purpose, the Park's administration sent a letter to the Ministry of natural resources of Russia with a proposal to initiate changes in the fishing rules for the Northern fishery basin in the Unskaya bay and allow catching of cod for locals with traditional gear.
- Making amendments to the regulations of the NP.
- Development of local self-government and involvement of local people in park management.

The chief inspector saw this conflict as the main reason of negative attitude towards the Park. It has created a bad reputation of the Park in all the villages, even in those that are not affected by this problem.

“The locals are friendly and sociable, if not for this Unskaya Bay, everything would have been different.”

Therefore, park managers believed conflict impedes successful collaboration with the local population.

4.2.4. Collaboration with local population

The respondents admitted that at this stage of the park development there is little cooperation with local residents. The tourism specialist recognized that the local population was not sufficiently informed on their part. However, to say that there is no dialogue is wrong, in park ecologist's opinion.

“Immediately after the Park creation - a year ago – park director held a meeting with the residents. Park also organized a workshop where we invited heads of villages’ administrations and active citizens. In summer, the park held a seminar on development strategy of the Park, where we also invited the heads of administrations and deputies. We, living here, hold informational meetings constantly. The park managers could be more active, I agree. But the thing is that even not all the lands and forests have not been delivered into the park possession yet, so we can’t adequately answer a number of vital questions such as firewood collection.”

The chief inspector also noted that park managers held several meetings with local residents, and inspectors often visit the villages raising public awareness.

“Meetings were held in each village, at least once for sure. Now we hold meetings if necessary. We also work with population individually – it is even better, because one-on-one person can ask any question without pressure from others.”

Despite the difficulties in communication with the local people, respondents emphasized the necessity and importance of collaboration for the park’s existence. First, they see this collaboration in ecological education of children in the adjacent villages. Currently park works with school in the village Letnaya Zolotitsa, and plans to begin such activities in other villages in the nearest future. Second, managers expressed their willingness to support the initiative people in projects creation, especially who work with traditions, culture, history, and tourism, and to attract money for these projects. In addition, they support the development of local self-government. Thirdly, the park directorate intends to create jobs for local residents, particularly in tourism service. At present, the park has two inspectors and one employee of the science and research department from local people. However, informants listed a number of difficulties of local involvement in park’s work: lack of experience and qualification, too many personal interests, the lack of vacancies in the park to hire a significant number of residents.

The Deputy Director was concerned that locals could abuse the power:

“We do not want locals work as inspectors in order to gain status and to poach. If we are lucky to find such persons as inspector in the village Purnema who do not need the resource of power, the Park will definitely involve them.”

The ecologist and chief inspector, on the contrary, considered that locals have some advantages:

“I’ve just hired a local resident as my assistant. One of the inspectors in Letnaya Zolotitsa was a local resident; unfortunately, he died recently. We also have inspectors from local population in the villages Yarenga and Purnema. Park hires local inspectors carefully, as people here, all know each other; and it will be difficult

for them to be independent and objective. However, I am the head of the science and research department, I believe that my assistant should be from locals who knows the territory well. Park cannot provide jobs for a large number of local residents; they need a certain level of qualification and experience.”

“There are some inspectors from local people, there is no such policy – do not hire locals. I think it should be fifty-fifty, for now proportion of locals is much less, but we are going to hire more. Local people have some advantages such as knowledge of the territory and of the people, who trust them, so they can work more effective.”

Predominately, the Deputy Director and tourists specialist expect to involve local residents in tourism sphere.

4.2.5. Understanding of ecological tourism

Park workers defined ecotourism as ecological tours, aiming to get acquainted with nature and local traditions and crafts, with minimal anthropogenic impact on the territory. Not all respondents, however, highlighted the principles of social and economic benefits for the local population.

4.2.6. Potential of ecotourism development

The attractiveness of the territory

According to the Deputy Director, the NP has a great potential for the development of ecological tourism including educational, sport (mostly fishing) and health recreation. The main objects that can attract tourists are unique landscapes (especially coastal systems, including beaches of the White Sea, pine forests and dunes), objects of cultural and historical heritage (ancient villages, lighthouses), the flora and fauna (especially marine mammals such as seals, harp seal, Beluga whale), as well as the traditions and crafts of Pomor people.

In the opinion of park ecologist, wilderness and beautiful nature attract tourists here:

“In my opinion, the main thing that attracts people is the wilderness of this territory, its isolation and originality. Second, it is a unique combination of taiga and the sea, tourists can watch marine mammals and birds (the migration of the White sea-Baltic birds), and animals of the taiga (bears, lynx, wolverines) at the same time.”

The tourist’s specialist consider that territory could be interesting for different tourists:

“The territory will be popular among people who want to visit intact nature. Tourists are diverse: those who love peace and serenity, who is tired of hustle and bustle of big cities, who have thirst for adventure and new knowledge – as I see it.”

The chief inspector noted that every year more and more people, who are tired of the traditional southern destinations, seek relaxation in untouched wild corners of Russia.

“People have interest in the North, this destination is promising.”

However, respondents recognize that mass tourism is not desired here, as it will increase anthropogenic pressure on the territory.

Compatibility with nature conservation

The Park's experts noted that with a proper management and right approach tourism and conservation are quite compatible. As mentioned above, tourism in PAs does not imply mass tourism, it should be wisely regulated. According to Deputy Director, the current legislation allows to develop tourism in the NP to the extent that it does not contradict with the main goal – the nature protection, however, no specific regulations are designed:

“There are no such regulations in the law. There are some methods in international practices, which evaluates the impact of tourism on the territory. But according to experts, almost all of them are based on common sense, if you see that the soil is moist, it is clear that tourists can damage it, so the soil here must be protected (bridges).”

Therefore, in order to find a compromise between tourism development and conservation, park specialists recognized the need of scientific evidence of recreational load in the most visited spots, as well as the scientific rationale for the placement of various infrastructure facilities.

Perspectives

The main and most promising destination at the moment, according to expert assessment of the Park managers, is the village Letnaya Zolotitsa and surrounding area, as it already has some infrastructure. The club “Wild Life” built ecohotel here with two buildings in different price categories, and park ecologists designed 19 tourists’ routes. The next step, according to tourist’s specialist, is to construct the trails, install markings and signs, and organize viewing sites and tourist bases.

“The starting point for tourism development is the village Letnaya Zolotitsa. Of course we must create the ecological framework of the territory: trails, locals, guides etc.; a lot of work needs to be done.”

However, according to respondents tourism development in this area is limited, primarily by complex logistic. The park ecologist admitted:

“It's difficult to get here, the plane flies 2 times a week, and seats should be booked in advance. Moreover, the tickets are very expensive. It is impossible to come here by car. In summer you can come by the sea, the boat goes every ten days, but it depends on the weather.”

The Deputy Director also highlighted poor infrastructure and lack of skilled workers and expressed the hope for cooperation with regional authorities and local farm in order to solve this problem:

“The limitations are numerous: expensive transport, no trained guides etc. It would be good together with the region administration to wheedle the funds out of the ministry, to attract private investors or get grants on the development of transport system. Back in 2007, we wrote the project, but have not succeeded in getting funds for it. Now we plan together with the collective farm in Letnaya Zolotitsa to raise money for deepening the river and construction of the pier, the sand we can use on the extension of the airport runway.”

Meanwhile, the park managers are making grant proposal for reconstruction of abandoned fishing huts in tourists sites.

In General, informants noted that tourism is a real prospect upon conditions of hard work and involvement of local population.

4.2.7. Involvement of local population in tourist's activities

All respondents emphasized the importance of local people involvement for successful ecotourism development. Involvement of locals in tourist's service includes, in their view, creating guesthouses, providing meals, producing souvenirs, organizing traditional fairs and festivals.

The Deputy Director expressed readiness to help local people in organization such tourism-related businesses:

“The Pomors are very proud people, but if they want we are ready to involve them in the construction of visitor center, to support their initiatives, to assist with writing proposals for grants and raising funds.”

Among the possible benefits for local people from tourism development, named by interviewees, were additional income, environmental education (awareness of the value of the territory), and revival of traditions. However, the tourist's specialist admitted that cooperation at this point of park development comes down to 'question-answer' dialogue.

The park ecologist recognized that despite the good plans, little work has been done so far:

“We have all these plans, but can't say that they are implemented. Nevertheless, park directorate understands the necessity of local people involvement. This is a complex long process, requiring years of work. We held one meeting on tourism development here in Letnaya Zolotitsa and invite guests from all villages. But still managers do not communicate with locals enough.”

Besides insufficient work of the park, the respondents noted that unwillingness to cooperate and lack of understanding from locals also hinder the successful collaboration.

The tourist specialist, therefore, suggested to find and to collaborate with enthusiastic people who then involve the others:

“We must show that the National Park is not the enemy but a mean for development and personal growth. We should find the activists and work with them, and then they can work with the population.”

The chief inspector believed that financial incentives would motivate people.

“People resist, because there's no tourism activity yet, but once they get the money, they will be willing to participate. They are very sociable, and they would love it. I don't think they would dance in kokoshniks – that is for sure, but they could show their traditional fishing, for example.”

Moreover, according to Deputy Director the lack of communal infrastructure, complicating the life of the local population, makes it difficult to involve residents of adjacent villages in tourism activities. Therefore, the park intends to improve the lives of local people through the implementation of joint projects (for example, establishment of mobile connection and internet) and the development of local self-government.

In addition to cooperation with local residents for the successful development of tourism, the park managers emphasizes the importance of cooperation with tour operators.

4.2.8. Cooperation with touroperators

Since the park managers see cooperation with touroperators as essential condition for successful tourism development, the Deputy Director listed following tasks:

- To find interested touroperators and to attract them to the tourism development at the park;
- To create and promote tourist products and services;

- To participate in tourism specialized exhibitions and workshops;
- To make partnerships relations with neighboring regions in order to develop joint tour programs.

At the moment, the Park is cooperating with six regional touroperators, which are included in the Arkhangelsk Travel Association. According to the park experts, touroperators have expressed an interest in the park's territory and readiness to promote it. They have already organized a few snowmobile tours around the peninsula through the park territory. At the regional level, it was proposed to work out the tourism development strategy and develop tourism jointly in the framework of this strategy.

4.3. Touroperators' perceptions of ecotourism development in the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie”

This section presents the findings from interviews with local and national touroperators of four cities engaging in ecotourism of Archangelsk region. The interviews were sent by email to local touroperators of Arkhangelsk, to national touroperators of Moscow and St. Petersburg, and to touroperators of Petrozavodsk, the capital of the neighboring Republic of Karelia (popular in Russia ecotourism destination). However, of the 26 touroperators I got the answers only from three (two from Moscow and one from Arkhangelsk). In addition, I was able to conduct two personal interviews (one in Moscow and one in Arkhangelsk) and to make informal conversations with three local travel agencies (Arkhangelsk).

4.3.1. How tourism professionals define ecotourism

The majority of respondents associate ecotourism with recreation in natural settings, especially in pristine areas, such as PAs. Some also refer it to rural tourism and active tourism (cycling, hiking, riding, rafting etc.). One participant highlighted the importance of the educational component of ecotourism.

“People who come to us, in most cases, consider eco-tourism as a country tour to some ecologically clean areas just for rest, sometimes even ‘to drink and have a snack’. Someone understands it as an agro-tourism or rural tourism. Others think it is hiking and camping. Our company considers eco-tourism as a popular ‘science’; we try to develop tours, where people can learn something new about nature phenomena, flora and fauna. However, again, the majority today perceive ecotourism just as recreation in natural environment.”

Nevertheless, none of the touroperators named such important principles of ecotourism such as support of conservation and benefits to local people.

4.3.2. Ecotours Offer and Demand

All the interviewed touroperators are engaged in ecotourism and can offer such tours as watching animals and birds, fishing, snowmobile tours, rafting, photo tours, visits to NPs etc. They also noted that interest in Russia to this type of tourism has increased significantly in recent years.

“Since 1998, only foreigners had been clients of our company; since 2003, our compatriots began interested in eco-tours too. In 2008, Russian-to-foreigners ratio was 70 to 30% respectively. Most popular directions for our tourists are Karelia and Arkhangelsk regions.”

Local touroperators emphasized that rural tourism and ecotourism are one of the major tourist activities in the region.

Despite the majority of interviewees said that ecotourism is in demand now, one expressed the opinion that it is not popular enough to be profitable for the company.

The interview also included a question whether it is important for Russian tourists that local people can benefit from tourism. The results show that Russian tourists usually are not guided by this principle when choosing a tour.

“This is an interesting question. I do not think that is important for tourists. For a Russian tourist, it is only important to have a good rest.”

However, one of the local touroperators believes that if raise the awareness among tourists, they would begin to think about social responsibility. So, for example, tourists of his company gladly sponsored the local museum in the village adjacent to the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie”.

4.3.3. Ecotourism potential of the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie”

Three out of eight respondents (one of them is local) have not heard about the existence of the NP. Those who are aware about the Park existence said the Park has projects and plans for tourism development, but only on paper so far.

Attractiveness of the area and tourists resources

All participants found the Park territory attractive for ecotourism, primarily due to the unique untouched nature, especially the White Sea and the sea animals such as whales and seals. Some noted that local lifestyle is also the object of interest for tourists.

“Local lifestyle is interesting too: a unique combination of traditional Pomorian and modern lifestyle, traditional activities, like seaweed gathering or sailing on Pomorian boat. They could transform it into a touristic product. Many people would like participate. There are a guesthouse and museum in village Yarenga. The park is planning to create a traditional lifestyle museum and museum of lighthouses. This is all very interesting.”

However, respondents had different opinions about the role of the park in tourism development of the area. Some believe that the park existence does not increase the tourism potential, others that it surely does, while rest think it depends on the management of the Park.

Prospects

According to participants, the Park has good prospects of ecotourism development, but upon conditions of hard and persistent work in this direction.

“Prospects are good, but much work should be done.”

“Of course, there are perspectives. The park was created for eco-tourism. More and more people come there every year, the price gets cheaper, and the tourist’s routes become available.”

One interviewee, however, stated that he does not see prospects, because the experience of tourists does not justify high cost of the travel.

Constraints

The study revealed that there are some constraints for tourism development in the area. The main limitations named by respondents were remoteness and inaccessibility of the territory, and as a consequence a high price of transportation.

“Pricing is an important thing. For example, few people visit Kamchatka because of expensive plane and helicopter tickets. That is why these tours might be not very popular. However, it depends on the way the park positions itself.”

Other frequently mentioned constraints were the lack of infrastructure and lack of information from the Park about its tourism activity. Touroperators also noted that tense relations between the Park and local population impede the development of tourism.

Thus, from the participants points of view, to increase tourism potential the NP should perform the following tasks:

First, the Park needs to develop infrastructure, in particular network of guesthouses and small hotels, to build piers and gas stations. One should also pay attention to use traditional Pomor style in the constructions.

“Infrastructure should be developed, and preferably in the traditional style, but comfortable enough (village toilets should be clear and warm, kerosene lamps instead of torches, etc.), like in Kenozero National Park.”

Second, to solve the transport problem.

“Regular and affordable traffic is needed.”

Thirdly, park specialists should create interesting tour products for reasonable price, and properly promote them to the market, including cooperation with touroperators.

“Advertising and correct positioning of tour products are the major aspects. By now, the park promotes product itself. Contracts with travels operators should be the next step.”

In addition, one of the respondents pointed to the importance of the park collaboration with local residents for the successful development of ecotourism.

4.3.4. Collaboration with local people

On the question, whether touroperators themselves collaborate with local population or not, all interviewees respond negatively. In their opinion, it is the task of the NP to involve local people and jointly create tourist product, while the task of touroperators to promote and sell it. However, all recognize the need for local participation in tourism-related services such as providing of accommodation and meal, guiding, and souvenir production.

“It is very important. Tourists like souvenirs, and local crafts. They are specific to each place. You cannot find it in cities.”

Among the limitations to local participation in the tourist activities, the respondents highlighted reluctance of local people and fishing and agricultural limitations, imposed by the NP.

Although touroperators do not collaborate with locals directly, two local operators among participants collaborate with municipalities, regional government, and NGOs in order to support the local population through the development of ecotourism. As for the park, only 3 out of 8 interviewed touroperators collaborate with it.

4.3.5. Collaboration with the park

Before the parks creation local touroperators collaborated with the club “Wildlife” in this area and accommodated tourists in its ecohotel. The most popular tour was and still is “A visit to the new born seals”, but now the park workers organize it. Interestingly, one of the

interviewed touroperators who actively cooperate with the club knows nothing about the existence of the NP. Two of the respondents who do not cooperate with the Park yet, expressed their wish to do so. In their opinion, however, it is the Park who should take the initiative: visit travel exhibitions, contact tour operators and travel agents, and offer its services on good terms. It should be noted, that touroperators called beneficial terms as the main condition for cooperation.

“We do not collaborate with the park, but we would like to. It will be great if the park develop ecotourism, we would be glad to participate in sales. However, we need commercially good terms (good distribution fee). We can advise a better way to sell because many NPs work the old-fashioned way without understanding operator-operator and operator-agent relationships. It discourages from collaboration. We want to earn money, not just work for nothing.”

Two of the participants did not show interest in collaboration, because the Park is not yet able to offer an interesting tourist product compatible with offers of other NPs in Arkhangelsk region such as “Kenoozero NP” or NP “Russian Arctic”.

4.4. Local authorities’ perceptions of the national park and ecotourism development

This section presents the findings from four interviews with local authorities: the Head of Local Administration in the village Letnaya Zolotitsa, the Head of Local Administration in the neighboring village Lopshenga, the Head of the Department of Sport and Tourism of Primorsky district (Arkhangelsk), the Head of the Department of Economic Development of Primorsky district (Arkhangelsk).

4.4.1. Value and problems of the territory

All respondents were unanimous in saying that the main value of the territory is local people. Therefore, they consider the main problems are those that threaten people’s well-being: primarily economic decline, unemployment, small local budget, and as a consequences population reduction. The head of the village Lopshenga also see the threat from the NP.

The participants were also suggested to share their views on possible solutions of these problems. The head of the village Letnaya Zolotitsa believes that organizing production of dairy and meat products, fishing industry and tourism development will help to revive the village economy. The head of the village Lopshenga insists on the Park fulfillment of assigned tasks such as infrastructure development, preservation of historical heritage, traditional crafts etc.

The head of the Department of Economic Development noted that they are currently implementing several federal and municipal programs, which aim to improve rural life. Despite the limited resources, programs have already given some positive results.

“We provide the information about programs to all heads of local administrations, and hold meetings constantly. In 2014, six local companies participated and received grants on seven million rubles. We have no resources but try to help anyway; we support any initiatives to develop the territory.”

He also emphasized that local authorities see the future for the district in fishing industry and want to develop it. Therefore, in Unskaya Bay conflict they support local collective farm that engaged in commercial fishing, and not the NP.

4.4.2. Awareness of the NP and its purposes

All respondents are well aware of the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie”, and believe that the main rationale behind the Park creation was to stop industrial logging of enterprise “Onega forest”. However, in their opinion, it did not help, as “Onega forest” continues massive logging outside the park. Consequently, the territory is cooling, plants are degrading, and fish goes deeper.

In general, interviewees support nature protection but not the way the NP do it.

“Nature should be protected, but not from the local people”

“It is good, but the implementation is not quite good. Local people strongly depend on the landscape. Failure to use it is a threat.”

4.4.3. Collaboration with the park

According to heads of the villages, initially the park managers hold several meetings, where they shared their plans and objectives, but now they do not inform about their activities enough.

“They came, explained their objectives and actively promoted their park. Now they just answer the letters.”

The interviewed district authorities noted that the Park provided relevant departments of administration with its management plan and programs. They also participated in roundtable discussions and meetings devoted largely to the resolution of conflicts associated with the Park

creation, in particular to the ban on industrial fishing in Unskaya Bay. That is all collaboration for now.

The participants see the future collaboration with the Park mainly in two sectors: education and infrastructure development. Despite the initial rejection of the Park, they support its integration in socio-economic development of the region. However, interviewees have concerns whether the Park really wants to improve local life or just pursues conservation objectives.

“There are still doubts that the park is willing and ready to collaborate with local people.”

4.4.4. Impacts of the park on local people’s lives

Respondents have identified two main restrictions imposed by the Park that have the most significant impact on people’s livelihoods:

- 1) The first one is the ban on firewood and timber collecting.

“Wood problems for the population. It was fixed for this year, but I do not know about the next year. The park has no forest regulations yet.”

- 2) The second is the ban on commercial fishing in Unskaya Bay

“They took fishing grounds in Unskaya Bay, but gave nothing in return.”

The head of the village Letnaya Zolotitsa also mentioned the restriction on fishing in local river, leased by the club “Wildlife” and double-role of the park director who at the same time is one of the owners of the club.

“The river is leased by the Wildlife club. They charge for fishing now. The director of the park was the general director of this club, so now there is a confusion.”

Furthermore, despite interviewees do not consider the visitation of the Park a problem, because it is free for locals, they do not have clear information about zones and different regimes of these zones. They also pointed out that park staff violates their own rules; therefore, locals do the same.

In general, respondents think that park creation has affected peoples’ lives negatively that has generated conflicts.

The main conflict, in the opinion of interview participants, has developed around the ban on commercial fishing in Unskaya Bay. As a result, two collective farms and local people working in them were left without work. However, respondents could not name the exact cause of this conflict.

“Either thoughtless actions or some kind of interest.”

It is worth to note that informants do not fully blame the NP in this situation.

“It is not a fault of park managers. It is the Federal Law prohibits industrial activities in NPs.”

“The park managers do not happy about this situation either, they try to find loopholes in legislations to solve the problem.”

The way out of situation, they see differently. The head of administration in the village Lopshenga, where some residents suffered from this ban, intends to obtain the permission for commercial fishing by any means. Meanwhile, the district authorities want to find a way for peaceful co-existence of the NP, farms, and local people.

“It would be good if both fishing farms and the park survive. Maybe, we can develop amateur fishing, when locals could sell the fish to the farm for further processing.”

The head of the village Letnaya Zolotitsa, where people do not suffer from the ban, admitted that there are no conflicts with the Park, but just misunderstandings arose out of lack of information.

The only positive impact of park creation respondents see in possible benefits from ecotourism development.

4.4.5. Understanding of ecotourism

The results show that the interviewed authorities do not have clear understanding of ecotourism concept. The head of the Department of Sport and Tourism, however, mentioned as an example to follow, tourism in the “Kenozero” NP.

“When I was in Kenozero NP, I had a good impression of tourism development there. As soon as you come to the territory, they register you and take a fixed fee. One cannot just build the fire wherever he wants. There are special places for it. They know, who comes and for how long they stay. I like this kind of tourism. Here, in the Unskaya Bay, it goes another way. Nobody knows amount of visitors, where and how they catch the fish.

Drunk people drown and our administration turns out to be responsible for it. I do not like the tourism like this. The purpose of the park is tourism regulation.”

4.4.6. Potential of ecotourism development in NP

Attractiveness of the territory

Three out of four informants consider the territory attractive for tourism development due to unique nature (especially sea animals) and objects of historical-cultural heritage.

“The territory is picturesque: lighthouses, old villages.”

“It seems to me, nature is even more beautiful than in Kenozero NP: sea animals, pups of the seals. Tourists have not seen this before and ready to pay for it.”

However, the lack of infrastructure, particularly of affordable transport, limit the tourism development, in their opinion.

“Since there are no roads, the tourism is expensive. There are places with no communication at all. Thus, the infrastructure requires development.”

The head of the village Lopshenga thinks that area can be interesting mostly for scientists.

Benefits

Regardless their personal opinions about the attractiveness of the area, all the respondents support the development of the tourism as they hope it helps villages to survive in difficult economic conditions.

‘Someone should support economics; otherwise, the territory will die out.’

“If they do everything that is planned, that will be an advantage for the area and the region as a whole.”

“Promising direction. We hope it will help to develop the territory.”

According to interviewees, local people can get additional income from sales of souvenirs and food products, from providing accommodation and other services.

4.4.7. Collaboration with park

The respondents stressed the need for collaboration of the Park with authorities at all levels in order to regulate and develop tourism. Since neither the district authorities, which do not have sufficient funds, nor the Park alone cannot solve this problem.

“We want to cooperate. Unregulated ‘wild’ tourism thrives even in the PAs. The park is unable to stop it, because they have a small staff.”

‘Yes, it is necessary. Municipalities are not able to establish order where the thousands of people come and catch a lot more fish than collective farms. This requires a lot of money and we do not have them.’

At the regional level, it was also proposed to work out the tourism development strategy and develop tourism jointly in the framework of this strategy.

4.4.8. Involvement of local people in tourism activities

According to interview participants, everyone in administration understands that rural tourism development needs the support of local residents. Therefore, they hold explanatory work with the population in the region: hold meetings and seminars. They also noted that the main initiative must come from the NP; it must involve and train local people. However, in their opinion, there are some obstacles for people’s involvement. The head of the village Lopshenga highlighted that it is not typical for local people do something for sale or for show. The head of department of Sport and Tourism think that they are not ready for tourism development yet, as they are interested only in fishing industry.

“I understand them. Their grandfathers and great grandfathers had fished for centuries. We have to pass this stage and learn to fish in new conditions. They cannot deny it. At the same time, they should learn how to host tourists and earn money on it. Now it is a transition period, a start-up phase.”

4.5. NGOs perceptions of the park and ecotourism development

This section presents the findings from interviews with general manager of eco-center “Reserves” (Moscow) and expert on tourism and marketing of NGO "Development agency of rural initiatives" (Moscow).

4.5.1. Awareness of the NP and its purposes

According to the respondents, the NP was created primarily to protect unique northern nature, to develop ecotourism and support local population.

“They should support the local population because the locals are isolated from the ‘mainland’. Therefore, locals can greatly depend on the activities that park will develop. However, the main purposes are nature preservation and tourism development.”

4.5.2. Collaboration with the park

The interviewees noted that they have a good cooperation with the Park. Experts from these NGOs often consult park managers; assist them in employee training and management plan development. They also have developed recommendations and guidance on sustainable development of the territory for the NP.

4.5.3. Impacts of the park creation on the communities adjacent to it

General Manager of eco-center “Reserves” believes that the Park does not restrict much the resource use of individuals, but limit considerably the activities of local industries. In her opinion, the park formation certainly create some opportunities for the local population, for example in tourism business; so far, Park failed to show people the benefits of its existence.

“The local people still have not understood the way the park can be advantageous. If the Park involve local population in tourism services, people will feel the benefits.”

4.5.4. Involvement of local people in park activities

The results of the interviews show that the Park does not yet actively involve local people in its activities. Respondents explained this by the fact that recently created NP at this early stage is more concerned about monitoring and planning. However, they believe that as the park develops, it will engage the community more and more.

The NGOs experts suggested two forms of park collaboration with locals.

1) The NP should promote the creation of the Territorial Public Self-Government, and then collaborate with its bodies. TPSG is the responsible self-organization of residents with the purpose to implement their own initiatives (Schigreva 2012). The interviewee emphasized that the Park should help active people on its territory for two reasons. First, park would better

perform its tasks when local people are active and successful. Second, it is morally right thing to do.

“The poor and hungry population would be pain in the neck for the park management. It would result in poaching, drinking, negative attitude that hinders the park operation. It is just wrong: a flourishing park and impoverished population.”

One of the respondents cited the NP “Kenozero” as an example of successful collaboration with TPSG.

“The park has always worked with the local people in a very active way. They initiated the creation of TPSG, because to collaborate with this active group of people is more effective than try to reach out every person in the village. Thus, they invited people from other rural areas who could share their successful experience of organizing TPSG, who speak the same language and understands local problems. Then the locals saw the way it works. Kenozero NP has done a lot for local people: it raised additional funds, created an NGO for this kind of assistance.”

2) The Park should establish a Coordination Council with representatives of all stakeholders, and whenever possible to hire local people as inspectors, and employees of Environmental Education Department.

Interview participants also highlighted a number of constraints for effective cooperation between the NP and local residents: misunderstanding arising from insufficient informing of locals, lack of experience of park managers, lack of initiative from both sides, anti-Park propaganda by enterprises that have commercial interests in the territory, ambiguities in the legislation, where there are no clearly defined mechanisms. Thus, conflicts arise.

4.5.5. Conflicts

Both respondents admitted that current situation around the Park is not going well, and there are many problems to be solved. The expert of NGO "Development agency of rural initiatives" identified two main conflicts and suggested possible ways to resolve them.

1) Conflicts between local residents and some park inspectors. Solution: to introduce higher requirements for inspectors; to control labor discipline during raids to the territory; to develop employee incentive program; to conduct regular training of inspectors.

2) The conflict around the ban on industrial fishing in Unskaya Bay that deprived fishing farms and local residents of their major source of income. Solution: together with the Fishing Agency of the Arkhangelsk region to develop legislation amendments, which would allow

artisanal fishing for local people with possibility to dispose of excesses; to cooperate with local fishing farms; to involve local people in park activities, in particular in tourism.

4.5.6. Understanding of ecotourism

The results show that interviewees are familiar with main principles of ecotourism.

“There are official statements adopted by the World Tourism Organization and there is my own understanding. I would say that eco-tourism is a kind of tourism associated with nature-based travels, which minimize negative impacts on the environment. It also should provide local people with some benefits. In my opinion, there are two major features.”

4.5.7. Potential of ecotourism development in the park

The respondents believe the Park has a high potential for ecotourism development.

First, they noted that ecotourism and nature conservation are fully compatible, as under Russian legislation NPs are created and zoned for tourism development.

Second, they consider the area very attractive for tourists. The main condition for ecotourism development they see in the preservation of traditional Pomorian villages and traditional fishing activities.

“The prospects are great. The place is very attractive. The villages here managed to preserve Pomorian culture and traditions, while the villages of other regions failed.”

However, participants also highlighted several constraints for ecotourism development. From their point of view, remoteness and inaccessibility of the area make it difficult to attract middle-class tourists. Meantime involvement of local people in tourism activities largely depends on such tourists.

“It is too expensive to get there. It used to be elite tourism, when tourists stayed in ecohotel and used the services of highly qualified guides, thus, local people were not involved. They need middle-class tourists instead of the wealthy ones, who will actively use the services of local people, for example, accommodation and meals.”

According to director of eco-center “Reserves”, regional authorities implement several projects on tourism development in Arkhangelsk region, but not particular in that area. Therefore, the Park should establish contact with authorities, and learn the mechanisms how to attract regional money on the development of local villages.

4.5.8. Involvement of local people in tourism development

Both interviewees emphasized that local population can be a good partner for the Park in tourism development. If cooperate, the work gets much easier and more successful, because the NP and locals can divide responsibilities. Local people should provide hospitality services (accommodation, meals, and souvenirs), while the park create tourist routs, excursions, provide informational and educational services.

“It is a mutually beneficial symbiosis: residents host tourists and get income, and park does not have to invest great sums of money in tourist infrastructure.”

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Local perceptions of natural, social and economic conditions of the study area

5.1.1. The sources of income and livelihood of local population

Organization of sustainable livelihoods of local population in PAs plays a key role in poverty reduction and sustainable development (Tarasov & Grygoryan 2009). One of the ways to achieve this can be development of ecotourism and involvement of local people in it. Ecotourism as a mean to support local livelihoods is a main topic of the research. Therefore, the study of local peoples' welfare and role of different activities and natural resources in their livelihoods was part of the research.

The results of the study show that percentage of the unemployed working-age population is small, and, basically, it is people either not willing to work, or addicted to alcohol. Working-age population works mainly in collective farm (fishing industry), which traditionally plays an important social and economic role in the village, sometimes comparable with the role of local authorities. The employment in public sector (school, post office, military unit etc.) is also high, while the share of private sector in employment is very small. Income from tourism is absent.

The study also revealed that local livelihoods largely depend on natural resource use, especially on fishing, and collecting of timber and firewood. Therefore, it makes them vulnerable, if they are restricted in their use (Ellis 2000). Fish is the main product in local diet. Firewood is used for cooking and heating, and timber for construction of houses and wooden furniture. Vegetable gardens also help to ensure food security, livestock to a less extent. Collecting berries, mushrooms and hunting are not so important. Thus, fishing as main source of income and nutrition plays the key role in local livelihoods.

In general, according to respondents, they do not have difficulties with providing their family. Even if they have little income, the above-mentioned activities (fishing, collecting forest products, and gardening) help to secure their livelihoods.

5.1.2. Value of the territory of the NP and threat for the territory

People's view on NP is largely determined by the personal value system, which in turn depends on a number of factors – upbringing, education, lifestyle, social environment, and also which jobs they are holding and their interpretation of roles and responsibilities related to that. Often representatives of different groups (in the context of my research – park managers, local people, authorities, tour operators, etc.) do not understand each other due to different life principles and priorities. To consider the values of other people is necessary for productive collaboration and a successful dialogue between different stakeholders (Tarasov & Grygoryan 2009).

Many residents and local authorities consider local people Pomor as a main value of the territory. Pomor people consist the majority of local population. Since they have been fishing for centuries, sea and fish especially salmon have a great value for them. A number of interview participants also noted that territory of the park has an aesthetic and educational value. They recognize the beauty and uniqueness of the local nature and emphasize the importance of its conservation for spiritual enrichment and education of children.

How the people define the meaning and the value of the territory, is directly connected to their vision of the existing threats and problems of the territory. Therefore, socio-economic problems such as lack of jobs, which force young people to migrate to urban areas, and consequent aging and decreasing of population, threaten the existence of Pomors. Despite the fact that almost all working-age population are employed and are more or less satisfied with quality of their lives, the village does not have opportunities for prosperity and growth to keep young people in.

Another local concern revealed by the study are environmental threats, in particular deforestation on an industrial scale. That is why residents at the time supported the idea of NP creation. However, the establishment of the Park has led to more significant for local socio-economic problems because of restrictions on the use of resources necessary for life. Thus, many perceive NP itself as a threat to the area.

The stakeholders do not seem to understand that the park can provide important socio-economic benefits, particularly related to income from tourism and from local people's involvement in that. For now, local residents and local authorities see their future in revival of production, especially fishing industry.

5.2. Stakeholders' perceptions towards park activities and current conflicts.

The attitude of local people and authorities toward the special environmental status of the territory is ambivalent. On the one hand, they recognize the important role of the National Park in conservation of unique natural complexes of Onega Peninsula; on the other hand, they experience a number of problems associated with a special regime of protection.

5.2.1. Awareness of NP and its purposes

According to Russian environmental regulations, NPs are created with purposes of nature conservation tied with ecological tourism, and environmental awareness of population (Bukvareva et al. 2006).

The study revealed that the main purpose of creation of NP "Onezhskoe Pomorie" was to preserve unique northern forests, which were threatened by logging activities of commercial enterprise "Onega forest". However, "Onega Forest" continues massive logging outside the park, which leads to adverse environmental consequences such as cooling of the territory, animal migration, plants degradation, and depletion of fish resources. Therefore, the majority of local people and local authorities do not see a point in park existence.

Another purpose of the Park creation is the preservation of traditional way of life of Pomor people. However, stakeholders interpret it differently. Park managers see their task in the revival and preservation of traditions, in support of local initiatives, involvement of local residents in tourism development, and thus improving local life. Local people understand the task that the Park must directly invest money in the village, create the infrastructure and jobs, and solve other economic problems. However, the Park does not have sufficient funds for this. Moreover, since the village is not included in the Park, the Park is not formally obliged to invest money in its development.

Thus, local perceptions do not coincide with those of park managers. This makes locals believe that the stated objectives are not the same as what they actually are. Furthermore, impacts of park creation appeared to be different from that were promised.

5.2.2. Impacts of the park creation on the communities adjacent to it

The establishment of PAs nearby human settlements inevitably affected lives and activities of local residents, imposing restrictions on the one hand and providing benefits on the other (Belova & Grygoryan 2007).

The main task is to preserve nature together with the local residents and for their real and concrete benefits. Cooperation between protected area and local communities should ensure livelihood security, which implies opportunities to obtain food and construction materials, and if possible to improve welfare of local people by providing new economic opportunities, such as tourism (Bushell & Eagles 2007).

The research found that only benefit from park creation residents see in nature protection for future generations. Other possible positive impacts such as job creation, infrastructure development, and profit from tourism mentioned by all stakeholders so far exist only on paper. The Park is still failing to show the benefits of its existence in the territory.

While NGOs and park managers seem to be optimistic about park effects on local life, the results show that significant part of the population in the village is experiencing negative impacts of the park creation.

First, local residents perceive conservation to have decreased availability of forest products because different restrictions on access to natural resources were imposed. According to Russian legislation the collection of firewood and cooking from inside the park is prohibited, that causes the most frustration among the locals. At the time of the study, the Park was less than two years old and had not forestry regulations, so it was not allowed to make even thinning operations in order to provide the population with wood. The park managers, however, promised that after the forests would be transferred to the park, they would allocate sites for the harvesting of wood for personal needs on the basis of sales contracts.

Hunting of wild animals is also prohibited, but as there are very few hunters in the village, it has not much affected the lives of people. Some residents also think that park restricted collecting of mushrooms and berries, however, according to the Park regulations, collecting mushrooms and berries is permitted for local residents.

Second negative impact revealed by the study is the necessity to obtain a permit to visit the park territory according to regulations. Whereas the Park managers and local authorities do

not consider this a problem, as permits are free for locals and valid for one year, many residents perceived it negatively, as they do not used to take documents when go into the forest or fishing, and also because of time consuming bureaucracy. A number of local residents are not willing to ask someone for permission, as they consider themselves masters of the territory. Although some of park managers understand them and make concessions for locals, technically, because village is not included in the Park, status of local residents is not different from the status of other visitors. It seems that park managers use the official status of villages being not included in the park territory as a 'good' excuse. The villages have to survive being surrounded by the Park.

Another problem is a lack of seats on the local plane because the Park holds the reservation for employees and tourists.

However, the greatest concern of local residents found to be restrictions on fishing, which their livelihoods depend on. The amateur fishing within the park shall be carried out in accordance with fishing regulations of the RF, which existed before the creation of the Park. The park managers did not introduce any new restrictions. However, because the Park has increased the monitoring of compliance with these rules, the locals think that restrictions are imposed by the Park.

Moreover, the villagers also assign restrictions on fishing in the local river to the Park, when in fact permits on fishing are sold by the private club "Wildlife", which leases the river. The confusion has arisen because one of the owners of the club and its former Director is now the Director of the Park. Therefore, people do not understand who is responsible for what and blame the Park. It should be noted, that this situation is not unique for the environmental sector in Russia. Cases when officials combine their work with the business occur quite frequently. For example, the head of the Altai Hunting Supervision had combined the position of director with the shareholder in a company engaged in hunting. In the Kemerovo region, many officials from Federal Environmental Service were also employed in companies under their supervision (OECD 2006).

To conclude, following problems can be distinguished:

- Low awareness of local residents about park's boundaries, zones, protection regime, special conditions for the local population. As a result, the information vacuum is filled with rumors, inaccurate or false information.

- Due to the fact that the Park was organized recently it does not have forest regulations yet and well-functioning system of permits' issue. Not all departments work as they should.

-Lack of transparency, unclear double role of park director and private enterprise in park management.

Recommendations: In the view of the above mentioned, this study found it to be necessary for the Park Directorate to establish constructive and transparent dialogue with local people and clearly to inform them about park activities and regulations, especially those, which influence local livelihoods . Moreover, it should seek the ways to minimize the negative effects of the restrictions placed on park resources, particularly on wood collecting. Limiting access to these resources in the name of conservation without providing them with alternatives, as well as lack of clear objectives and poor awareness-building have only resulted in conflict.

5.2.3. Current conflicts, their causes and possible ways out of the situation

Conflicts over protected areas come from contradictions between actors who have different perspectives, needs, *values and interests*. Place that ecologists consider worth to protect may have other value for the local people (Kaltenborn et al. 2011). Thus, some of the residents did not support the idea of the park establishment from the very beginning, as their values of natural resources differ from those of conservationists. The majority, however, recognize the importance of nature conservation, but planning and management processes have generated conflicts among multiple interests, as the park has to recognize the roles and needs of local people too.

In all national parks, we face variety of resource users or a large number of stakeholders with frequently competing goals (Axelrod 1967), and the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie” is no exception. The conflicts of interests among different stakeholders appeared around such resources as old age forests of the Peninsula and fish resources of Unskaya Bay.

In the first case, the interests of the company "Onega-Forest" engaged in industrial logging on the Peninsula compete with the interests of the Park, which aims to preserve primeval forests, and of the residents concerned about massive deforestation. In the second case, Unskaya Bay has become an arena of conflict between national Park, prohibiting industrial fishing, the residents, leaving without source of income, the local authorities supporting local people and the Directorate of farm, pursuing their commercial interests.

Whereas the local population supports the ban on industrial activities of “Onega-forest” in the Park, a ban on industrial activity of the farm, which their livelihoods depend on, has resulted in a real war.

All interviewed stakeholders perceived the conflict in Unskaya Bay as main conflict in the Park territory. However, none of the respondents could name the exact cause of the situation. Local residents tend to blame the Park in resource grabbing pursuing some hidden purposes. Local authorities refer to the Russian legislation, prohibiting industrial activities in PAs, which the park managers must follow to. The park managers are inclined to mistake or thoughtless action of the regional administration during the process of approving Park boundaries. The results also show that all the respondents including park managers suffer from this situation and try to find joint solution. Currently the Park directorate together with the Fishing Agency of the Arkhangelsk region are working on various options to address this problem. They made a proposal of amendments to the law on PAs that would allow artisanal fishing for local people with possibility to sell excesses to the farm for further processing. Although, this conflict does not directly affect the village where the study was conducted, it has created a negative attitude towards the Park among the residents, who have friends and relatives in the conflict area.

In the study area – the village Letnaya Zolotitsa, residents and other stakeholders believe there are no serious conflicts, but solvable problems, which arose from restrictions on the resource use without providing sustainable alternatives, and which were discussed earlier in the chapter.

Hence, a lot of work should be done to reduce the tension. First, Park managers should regularly examine the situation in the village, identify current problems in order to take timely actions and prevent conflicts. Second, they must involve local people in park activities as much as possible, as it will help establish good relationships, and therefore, better protect the environment. However, the most important thing is that livelihood of local people needs to be on top of the agenda for conservation to be successful. Otherwise, it will only fuel conflicts and less participation of the villagers.

5.2.4. Local participation in park activities and management

Roles

The participatory approach to conservation, where communities influence and share control over decisions and resources that affect them, highly recognized as one of the most successful ways of managing natural resources (Hutton et al. 2005). The main rationale behind such approach is that through participation, local communities would have a more positive perception of the park and motivation to preserve its resources, thus resulting in more effective park management (Hutton & Leader-Williams 2003).

The study revealed that managers of the NP “Onezhskoe Pomorie” apply inherited from Soviet times ‘Fortress’ approach what is this, and achieve conservation results by mainly restrictive methods. They are pursuing top-down management, deprived local people from their usufruct rights and put restrictions on traditional resource use such as wood collecting and fishing. Therefore, local people view conservation as threatening their livelihoods and benefiting only conservationists.

The results also show that despite park managers and NGOs stressed local people’s participation in management of park, there is no policy in place and community in the study area do not have the power to decide and control over the natural resources.

So far, the Park’s cooperation with local residents is limited to rare meetings and environmental education at school. Even these activities are random and ineffective. It seems that managers are not interested in real dialogue, because they hold meetings during working hours and speak scientific language, often incomprehensible to the locals. Local people believe they do not have any roles and rights in the park management, and, therefore, left out of it. Most of the respondents, however, do not question the existence of the park, but they require a more active involvement in decision-making at least to be informed or consulted before decision has made.

Overall, local participation, according to results, can be found in the three lower levels of Pretty’s Participation Typology: manipulative participation, passive participation and participation by consultation (Pretty 1997). The NP informed people about decisions without listening to people’s responses and taking their views on into consideration. Participation seems to be only pretense, when locals have no real power.

Opportunities

In practice, PA chooses the most effective form of interaction with the local community, based on their priorities and current situation: TPSG, Coordinating Council etc. (Schigreva 2012). The study found that despite plans and ideas, park managers has not adopted any policy for people's involvement so far, which can be explained by the early stage of park development when managers are more concerned about monitoring and planning.

However, future collaboration with local residents park managers and NGOs see primarily in education activities (especially at school), in assistance initiative people in business creation especially in sustainable resource use, and in tourism development. Local people and local authorities expect more concrete actions such as infrastructure development and job creation. Therefore, people's expectations do not coincide with real possibilities and intentions of the Park.

Moreover, the study revealed some contradicting opinions among the managers on policy of hiring local people, especially as inspectors. The deputy director seems to be not willing to hire local people as inspectors because they have close ties with other residents thus cannot be objective and can use the power to their advantage. The head of Department of area protection on the contrary believes that the knowledge of the territory and trust from residents help local inspectors to work more efficiently than strangers.

In general, the managers of the Park have many nice plans and wish to implement them, but do not have clear idea and consensus on how to make them work.

Limitations

The study identified several limitations to successful collaboration of the park managers with local people. First, park managers lack of experience in dealing with local people. They do not have sufficient insight in local values and norms. Their top-down management style is very destructive. Second, enterprises such as Onega-forest and collective farm of Unskaya Bay that have commercial interests in the territory make anti-Park propaganda. Third, the legislations lack the clearly defined mechanisms of NP integration in the socio-economic development of the region. Finally, lack of initiative and apathy of locals caused by top-down management and park restrictions also hinder the cooperation.

Thus, park managers should find a common ground with all stakeholders, and primarily with those who impede the development of the Park. They also must study successful Russian and world practices on local involvement, as well as local values and opinions, in order to apply these practices to local conditions. Moreover, to increase the interest of people towards the park activities the NP should provide incentives and real (not hypothetical) opportunities. They also must apply bottom-up management. The important thing that all actions will not become just a formality but serve as a real basis for mutually beneficial cooperation.

5.3. Stakeholders' perceptions towards ecotourism development in the NP

5.3.1. Understanding of ecotourism

The concept of ecotourism worldwide lacks of unifying definition, however the following principles consider the most relevant: nature-based, environmentally friendly, educational and locally beneficial (Donohoe & Needham 2006).

The study found that stakeholders have different perceptions of ecotourism and majority of them do not fully understand this concept. Local people and authorities are mostly not familiar with this concept or perceive it as recreation in natural settings. None of them mentioned social and economic principals of ecotourism. Moreover, even park managers and touroperators are not aware of these important components of ecotourism, and identify it simply as non-destructive nature-travels preferably with educational purposes. The experts from NGOs, however, have more insightful view and highlight the importance of benefits for local people; therefore, they should raise awareness of other stakeholders.

According to interviewed touroperators, Russian tourists seem do not pay attention that their activities benefit local people. However, it depends on how touroperators and park managers position themselves. If they concerned about social and economic well-being of locals, the tourist would do too.

5.3.2. Potential and Current tourist resources in the park

Despite many believe that popularity of NPs among tourists may undermine conservation efforts, nature protection and recreation have proved to be compatible (Bushell & Eagles 2007).

The results show that park managers and NGOs find the conservation and tourism quite compatible, but under the condition of wise management. Therefore, respondents admit the need to determine acceptable recreational loads for the NP, and the least invasive locations for tourist routes and facilities within the park.

Attractive factors

Ecotourism and visiting NPs are relatively new forms of recreation in Russia, but interest to them among tourists and touroperators is growing fast (Makarova 2013). Local touroperators emphasized that rural tourism and ecotourism are one of the major tourist activities in the Archangelsk region.

The study revealed that the territory has a great potential for tourism development.

First, all respondents emphasized the amazing nature of the NP and unique combination of the White Sea, pine forests and dunes. The territory is especially promising for watching of marine mammals, waterfowl and wading birds. The White Sea is one of the three places in the world where you can see the pups of harp seals in March. The White Sea, the Zolotitsa River and large lakes are promising for the development of sport and recreational fishing.

Second, according to the informants the objects of historical and cultural heritage, such as lighthouses and ancient coastal villages, and lifestyle and traditions of Pomor people especially in fishing and sailing can also attract tourists.

The interviewed park managers, touroperators, and NGOs consider that year-round observation of wild animals (“Russian safari”), which is unique tourism product for Russia, can be a signature moment in tourism development of the site. However, the high price on accommodation and transportation in the territory resulted in elitism of tourism. Despite there are enough people in Russia and worldwide who want a wilderness experience, and ready to pay for it, the tourist flow is small. Eco-hotel "Letnaya Zolotitsa", which is the only accommodation in study area, receives about 300 organized tourists a year with an annual capacity of 3000 people/year (the workload is 10%) (Plan 1 2014). The hotel is still unprofitable.

Therefore, in spite of many attractive factors and conditions, research has identified many constraints for tourism development as well.

Constraints for ecotourism development in the park

According to Lundmark & Stjernström (2009) managers of PAs should take into consideration such factors as accessibility, travel time, market and competition when planning tourism. The small number of tourists in remote protected areas combined with the restrictions on land use limits the tourism development.

The remoteness and inaccessibility, and consequent expensive transport tickets are found the main constraints for ecotourism development. In the opinion of many interviewees, very few people would want to pay much money for the flights to get here. Therefore, the prospect of attracting an average-income tourist is very doubtful. Rich tourists usually stay in the ecohotel, which has no relation to the village, and local people do not get any benefits.

Another major constraint for tourism development is lack of infrastructure, in particular of road and guesthouse networks. The ecotourism, however, does not necessarily require 'blessing of civilizations'.

Degradation of Pomor lifestyle, loss of traditions, restrictions on fishing and hunting, lack of tourism specialists and financial resources in the Park also impeded the tourism development.

To conclude, despite attractive tourist resources the abovementioned constraints prevent the intended development of the tourism in the NP. The current situation is regrettable when local people suffer and tourism opportunities are not developed as they could be. Therefore, park managers and other stakeholders need find a way how to attract middle-class tourists who would actively use services provided by local people, such as accommodation and meals, or how to make elite tourism beneficial for locals as well.

5.3.3. Potential benefits and adverse consequences of tourism for local people

In accordance with the Concept of development of PA in RF until 2020 (Zvyagina 2013), the development of ecological tourism is an important task, which can create local "points of growth" in rural areas. If well managed it can improve the life of local communities by enhancing economic opportunities, developing local infrastructure and supporting traditional customs (Bushell & Eagles 2007).

The benefits of tourism development mentioned by the stakeholders can be grouped into the following categories.

First, tourism development in the NP can create jobs and thus to be alternative source of income, and also complementary to other economic activities of locals.

Second, tourism can be a driver for growth and development of the area. Local and district authorities hope that tourism will improve the village welfare as the territory have no other economic opportunities for prosperity.

Third, tourism development will lead to infrastructure development. Not all local people, however, see infrastructure development, especially building of road and entertaining facilities, as a benefit, because it will disrupt their quiet and isolated way of life.

One of the benefits frequently mentioned by park managers and NGOs was a revival of the local culture and traditions, as tourists are interested in traditional activities.

For many local people tourism creates the opportunity to communicate and meet new people, and to learn from each other.

The results show that stakeholders have different opinions on how real these benefits. Although, the majority of local people expressed a positive attitude and interest in ecotourism development, they were rather skeptical about benefits it can provide. Moreover, they pay great attention to ways of tourism development and its impacts. Local authorities recognize that tourism can only help to reduce the problem because the entire community cannot be employed in the ecotourism industry. While park managers believe tourism would be a useful tool for community development, they do not have a clear idea how to develop area into a tourism destination.

The success of ecotourism, however, does not only depend on the kind of benefits the people get, but the relationship between local people and workers in the ecotourism business (Honey 2008).

5.3.4. Local involvement in tourism-related services and collaboration with the park

Success in ecotourism can only be guaranteed if the local population are fully involved in tourism related services, as well as in the decision-making and planning processes of using their resources for local development (Eagles et al. 2002).

The study reveals that park workers, NGOs, and touroperators see involvement of local population as an important factor for sustainable tourism development. The experts from NGOs emphasized that cooperation make the work much easier and more successful, because the NP and locals can divide responsibilities. It is mutually beneficial when local people provide the hospitality services and get income, then the park do not have to invest much money in infrastructure but provide informational and educational services, create touristic routes and attract tourists to the area.

In the view of park managers, NGOs and touroperators, involvement of local people in tourist's service includes providing accommodation (guesthouses), meals and transportation for tourists, producing souvenirs, organizing master-classes of traditional crafts and activities. Park managers intend to support such activities, but believe the initiative and desire to participate should come from locals. Locals, on the contrary, expect the Park will take the initiative, because no one have specific ideas what role they can play and what services provide.

The villagers also did not express much enthusiasm to take in the visitors. Nevertheless, the architecture of the northern house, which has two isolated parts: summer and winter, may contribute to the development of guesthouse network. The problem is that in spring-summer period many residents who leave for winter in the city come back, along with numerous relatives and friends, so no one simply has places. The interviews also revealed that there are a large number of abandoned houses that can be used as guesthouses. However, the procedure of buying them can be very difficult, as few people know who the owners are and where they are.

The results show, that although the park representatives said about importance of tourism development for village prosperity during meetings, no specific plans or arrangements were made. Local people do not participate in the decision-making and planning processes of ecotourism development, the park managers make some announcement without listening to people's responses. Therefore, participation can be characterized as passive according to

Pretty's typology (Pretty 1997), which generally reflects the relationship between the Park and local residents.

Constraints for local involvement

Tosun (2000) distinguished operational, structural and cultural constraints for involvement of local people in tourism development. Applying his typology to the situation in NP "Onezhskoe Pomorie", the following constraints can be identified.

The operational constraints include the lack of coordination and cohesion of park management, as well as insufficient informing of the local population. It seems that park managers does not have a cohesive strategy for the development of tourism and involvement of local population in it. The work with locals either is not being done or presented in random actions, which do not lead to any results.

The structural constraints relate to lack of expertise from the both side. Managers do not know how to work with locals, and lack experience. Local people are not competent in tourism sphere: they do not have enough knowledge about ecotourism, as well as organizational skills. Moreover, they do not have sufficient financial resources to start up their own business.

The cultural constraints also hinder involvement of local people in tourism. People are not used making things for the show and are not willing to. Staging authenticity for tourist satisfaction would not work here. Moreover, locals resist to everything new, and do not want to change their life of style. Many perceive that tourism would make them servants.

In addition, the study revealed that local community lacks active people. As a legacy of Soviet time, people do not have entrepreneurial spirit or skills. Villagers are mostly passive and unambitious; therefore, park managers should make an effort to interest them in tourism activities.

However, from the park managers' point of view, locals are unwilling to cooperate. The results show that local population distrust park authorities. The former director of the club "Wild life" that built ecohotel, who is now director of the NP, promised a lot of benefits to the local population from tourism, but the result was different. Thus, park managers should be realistic about their plans and honest with local people about possible risks.

Success of ecotourism development, however, depends not only on local involvement, but also on cooperative effort of all stakeholders including local authorities and touroperators.

5.3.5. Cooperation with local authorities and touroperators

According to Levkin (Levkin 2000) the local authorities usually have a great interest in the development of tourism since it contribute to socio-economic development of the territory. The results show that district and local authorities eager to collaborate with the Park, as they do not have sufficient resources to develop tourism themselves. The study found that for now there is no such collaboration. However, on the regional level it was decided together with the administration to develop strategy for tourism in the region and work jointly within this strategy. The integration of the park into regional and municipal policies will make the development of the tourism more sustainable.

Sustainable tourism development also largely depends on effective cooperation with travel companies and joint creation of compatible tourism products, as well as on effective promotion (Belova & Grygoryan 2007).

The low rate of response from touroperators during my research show the low awareness of the park existence among ecotourism specialists. The Park cooperate with touroperators insufficiently, and even those who are aware of its existence lack the information about park services and its tour products. Therefore, park should be more active in promoting itself by visiting travel exhibitions and making contracts with travel companies. The study also revealed that cooperation on favorable terms is a main concern of touroperators. The Park should be able not only offer interesting product but also develop effective system of distribution fee. So far, in the opinion of some interviewed touroperators, park fail to offer interesting compatible tour product, which justify the high cost of travel. Despite the above critique, it worth to notice that NP quite successfully collaborate with Arkhangelsk Travel Association.

Overall, the national Park "Onezhskoe Pomorie", like any PA in Russia and in the world, has great potential for socio-economic development of the territory. Raising awareness of the local population and its involvement in tourism activities can contribute to achieving sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes. Development of ecotourism in the study area where limited development opportunities and restricted resource use can support local population and raise their standard of living. However, remoteness and inaccessibility of the territory and inadequate management make the prospective not so bright. Despite the nice plans on ecotourism development, park managers do not have sufficient insight of ecotourism

concept, and do not know how they can apply it in park conditions in order to improve people's livelihoods.

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Appendix

Interview Guide: local people

1. Background information

- 1) Gender
- 2) Date of birth
- 3) Residential area/municipality
- 4) Do you originally come from this area? If not, when and what is the reason behind your migration?
- 5) Did any of your ancestors use this area?
- 6) What meaning and value does this area have for you personally?
- 7) Are there any threats for this area in your opinion? What?
- 8) What should be done to avoid them?

Socio-economic conditions

- 9) How many family members do you have?
- 10) What are your livelihood activities (job, farming, business, other)?
- 11) Do you have any difficulties providing for your family?
*If Yes, what kind of difficulties?
*How do you solve this problem?

2. National Park

- 12) Are you aware of the park around you? If yes, why do you think it was designated?
- 13) Were local residents informed about the establishment of the national park? Have there been any meetings before or after the creation of the park with park representatives?
- 14) Do you support the idea of establishing of national park?
- 15) Do you personally participate in the park activities/management? If yes, how? What is your role and responsibility?
- 16) Do you know what legal possibilities have local residents to participate in decision-making/influence on decisions made by the park?
- 17) How do the park and its management affect your live?
 - Are you allowed to use park resources? If yes, what products do you collect from the forests?
 - What happens when someone violates any of the rules of access to resources within the park? Are there any sanctions, how effective are they?
 - Do you visit the Park territory? If yes, why do you visit the area?

- What are the main obstacles to meet your livelihood needs?
- What opportunities does the creation of national park open for you?
- What benefits do you get/can get from national park creation?

18) What are your perceptions and willingness to collaborate with the park?

19) What specific actions of the park can improve your live?

3. Conflicts

20) What kind of conflicts do exists (land use, hunting/ fishing, cultural) between local people and park authorities?

21) Are you involved in these conflicts?

22) What do you perceive as its cause?

23) What are the possible ways out of the situation, in your opinion?

4. Ecotourism

24) Do you know what ecotourism is? How would you define it?

25) Is the area where you live attractive for such kind of tourism, in your opinion? Do you think that creation of national park «Onezhskoe Pomorie» has increased the tourism potential of the area?

26) What benefits or vice versa negative consequences do you see from the development of tourism in the area?

27) Are there any ecotourism projects in your area? Who is running them? Are you involved somehow?

28) Do you participate in tourist activities in the area? How? Do you have direct contact with tourists?

29) Do you want to participate in tourism development and cooperate with the Park on this issue?

30) Did you have any meetings on tourism development and local participation in it with park representatives and tour operators? What arrangements have been made?

31) What are your ideas/opportunities about your involvement in tourism-related services and associated development of local businesses (guest houses, cafes, local museums, guides, boat rental/fishing rods, transport service, master classes, crafts, folk performances etc.)?

32) Do you have local knowledge and skills about nature, species, culture, traditions of interest to tour operators and for involvement in tourism?

33) Do you have any needs for the training of your involvement in tourism service?

Interview Guide: park managers

1. National Park

- 1) Why the park was designated in this area?
- 2) Have local residents been informed about the creation of the park? Did you arrange any meetings with locals before or after the park establishment?
- 3) How has the park affected the communities adjacent to it (constraints/opportunities)?
- 4) Are local residents allowed to use the natural resources of the Park? Which recourses and how?
- 5) Do illegal activities still occur in the park? How do you solve this problem?
- 6) What are the main management challenges?
- 7) Do you cooperate with the local people in managing the area? How?
- 8) Do you have local staff in the park? What kind of jobs do they have? Are there any plans in the park to create jobs, provide alternative income for local population?
- 9) What are the specific ideas and plans for collaboration with local communities and their involvement in park management?
- 10) How and when will these plans be implemented?
- 11) To what extent current laws and regulations allow to local people participate in park management (forms of cooperation)?
- 12) What are the constraints for local communities' involvement in park management?
- 13) Do you implement (support the implementation) any program/project on sustainable local livelihoods?
- 14) Do you collaborate with municipalities, regional government, NGOs in order to support local population?

2. Conflicts

- 15) What kind of conflicts do exists (land use, hunting/ fishing, cultural) with local people?
- 16) Who are involved in the conflict?
- 17) What do you perceive as its cause?
- 18) What are the possible ways out of the situation?

3. Ecotourism

- 19) Do you know what ecotourism is? How would you define it?
- 20) Are the park and surrounding area attractive for such kind of tourism in your opinion? Do you think that creation of national park has increased the tourism potential of the area?
- 21) Is ecotourism compatible with nature conservation? How?
- 22) What benefits/negative effects do you see from tourism development?

- 23) What are the current tourist resources in Park and plans for their promotion and expansion?
- 24) Are there any ecotourism projects in your area? If yes, who is running them?
- 25) Are current legislation and regulations adequate for tourism development in the park?
- 26) What are the financial mechanisms for tourism development in the park?
- 27) What are the constraints for the development of tourism in the park?
- 28) What should be done to improve the attractiveness of the area for tourists, in your opinion?
- 29) What are your perceptions and willingness to collaborate with tour operators and local communities?
- 30) What are the potential benefits derived from tourism for local people?
- 31) Do local people have adequate competence and capacity to participate in tourism activities (legislations, financial mechanisms)?
- 32) What are the specific ideas and plans for collaboration with local communities and their involvement in tourism?
- 33) How and when will these plans be implemented?
- 34) What are the constraints for local communities' involvement in tourism?
- 35) Have you already conducted some research/meetings with local residents on this issue?

Interview Guide: touroperators

- 1) What, in your opinion, ecological tourism is? How would you define it?
- 2) Is your company involved in ecotourism of Arkhangelsk region? What kind of ecotourism services do you provide?
- 3) How popular are ecotours to Arkhangelsk region among your tourists (both Russian and foreign tourists - comparison)?
- 4) Are you aware of the park Onezhskoe Pomorie (Arkhangelsk region, the White Sea, <http://onpomor.ru/>)?
- 5) Are the park and surrounding area attractive for ecotourism, in your opinion?
- 6) Do you think that creation of national park has increased the tourism potential of the area?
- 7) *Has the creation of a national Park affected your business? If yes, how?
- 8) What are the current tourist resources in the Park and surrounding area?
- 9) Are there any ecotourism projects in this area? If yes, who is running them? Are you involved somehow?
- 10) What are the prospects of tourism development in the Park and surrounding area, in your opinion?
- 11) What are the constraints for tourism development (remoteness, inaccessibility, lack of infrastructure, lack of information/advertising about the Park, something else)?
- 12) What should be done to improve the attractiveness of the area for tourists, in your opinion?
- 13) Do you cooperate with the Park?
 - If yes, how?
 - If not, would like to collaborate, how?
- 14) Do you provide any tours, excursions, etc. in the Park Onezhskoe Pomorie?
 - If yes, how much they are in demand; by whom; what are the most popular routes?
 - If not, would you like to create such a product, or to include a visit to the Park in already existing tours?
- 15) Do you collaborate with local people living near the Park? If yes, how? If not, would like to collaborate?
- 16) What are the specific ideas and plans for collaboration with local communities and their involvement in tourism? How and when will these plans be implemented?
- 17) What are the potential benefits derived from tourism for local people, in your opinion?
- 18) What are the constraints for local communities' involvement in tourism?

19) Do you collaborate with municipalities, regional government, park and NGOs in order to support the local population through the development of ecotourism? If not, would like to collaborate?

20) To what extent socially responsible tourism is a priority for Your company, for tourists?

* For local touroperators

Interview Guide: NGOs

1. National Park

- 1) Are you aware of the park «Onezhskoe Pomorie»? Why do you think it was designated?
- 2) Does your organization collaborate with the Park? If yes, how?
- 3) How has the park affected the communities adjacent to it (constraints/opportunities), in your opinion?
- 4) What possibilities do the local residents have to participate in decision-making/influence on decisions made by the park?
- 5) Are current legislation and regulations adequate for local people's involvement in park management?
- 6) What are the constraints for local communities' involvement in park management?
- 7) Do you implement (support the implementation) any program/project on sustainable local livelihoods? Describe your activities?
- 8) Do you collaborate with municipalities, regional government, park and other NGOs in order to support local population?

2. Ecotourism

- 9) Do you know what ecotourism is? How would you define it?
- 10) Are the park and surrounding area attractive for such kind of tourism in your opinion? Do you think that creation of national park has increased the tourism potential of the area?
- 11) Is ecotourism compatible with nature conservation? How?
- 12) What benefits/negative effects do you see from tourism development?
- 13) Are current legislation and regulations adequate for tourism development in the park?
- 14) What are the constraints for the development of tourism in the park?
- 15) What are the potential benefits derived from tourism for local people?
- 16) Do local people have adequate competence and capacity to participate in tourism activities (legislations, financial mechanisms)?
- 17) What are the constraints for local communities' involvement in tourism?
- 18) Does your organization support the local people's involvement in tourism development (training programs, seminars, services etc)?
- 19) What are the specific ideas and plans for collaboration with local communities and their involvement in tourism? How and when will these plans be implemented?
- 20) Are there any ecotourism projects in the area? If yes, who is running them? Are you involved? How?

21) Do you collaborate with municipalities, regional government, park and other NGOs in order to support the local population through the development of ecotourism? If not, would like to collaborate?

Interview Guide: local authorities

1. National Park

- 1) Why the park was designated in this area?
- 2) Have local residents been informed about the creation of the park?
- 3) How has the park affected the communities adjacent to it (constraints/opportunities)?
- 4) Do you know the cases of illegal resource use within the park by local people? What is the solution of this problem, in your opinion?
- 5) Do you see the necessity of cooperation between local people and park in managing the area? Why?
- 6) To what extent current laws and regulations allow to local people participate in park management (forms of cooperation)?
- 7) What are the constraints for local communities' involvement in park management?
- 8) Do you collaborate with the park in order to support local population?
- 9) What are the specific ideas and plans for collaboration with local communities and their involvement in park management? How and when will these plans be implemented?

2. Conflicts

- 10) What kind of conflicts do exists (land use, hunting/ fishing, cultural)?
- 11) Who are involved in the conflict?
- 12) What do you perceive as its cause?
- 13) What are the possible ways out of the situation?

3. Ecotourism

- 14) Do you know what ecotourism is? How would you define it?
- 15) Are the park and surrounding area attractive for such kind of tourism in your opinion? Do you think that creation of national park has increased the tourism potential of the area?
- 16) Is ecotourism compatible with nature conservation? How?
- 17) What benefits/negative effects do you see from tourism development for the region?
- 18) What are the current tourist resources in Park and surrounding areas, plans for their promotion and expansion?
- 19) Are current legislation and regulations adequate for tourism development in the park?
- 20) What are the constraints for the development of tourism in the park?
- 21) What are the potential benefits derived from tourism for local people?
- 22) Do local people have adequate competence and capacity to participate in tourism activities (legislations, financial mechanisms)?
- 23) What are the constraints for local communities' involvement in tourism?

- 24) Are there any ecotourism projects in your area? If yes, who is running them?
- 25) Do local authorities support the local people's involvement in ecotourism development, business development, organizations of ecofarms, guest houses, etc.?
- 26) Do you collaborate with the park and NGOs in order to support local population through the development of ecotourism? If yes, how? If not, why?



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