

**EXTRACTS from
Rila Monastery Nature Park
Management Plan Draft
after the High Expert
Ecological Council Review**

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Content

I. Concept for Coordination and Interaction in the Management of Rila Monastery Nature Park	1
II. Scheme for Motor Vehicles Traffic Management in Rila Monastery Nature Park	8
III. Territory Proposed for Inclusion in the Rila Monastery Nature Park	10
IV. Description of the Recreation Facilities in the Rila Monastery Nature Park	15

I. Concept for Coordination and Interaction in the Management of Rila Monastery Nature Park

This part of the Management Plan belongs to Part IV Work/Operational Plan, item 1.1 Management Plan Priorities.

1.3 Proposal of a New Management Mechanism for Unique Protected Area - Rila Monastery Nature Park

Rila Monastery Nature Park is characterized with special features, which distinguish it from all others Protected areas in the country:

1. The Rila Monastery Nature Park conserves part of the most valuable nature resources in the country, the continent and the world. From North, East and South the park is surrounded by Rila National Park and they create the unique nature complex from two big and connected in indivisible whole protected areas in Bulgaria;
2. For the Bulgarian population Rila Monastery is valuable place for pray and worship. The Park is the second most visited protected area in the country – with more than 500 000 visitors annually;
3. The Monastery is included in the UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage List;
4. According to the PAA in Rila Monastery Nature Park are applied the regimes of National park.
5. 77% from the territory belongs to one private owner. This is the Bulgarian Orthodox church – the biggest religious institution in the country;

These special features are influencing the philosophy and principles of the Management Plan development as well as the way and organization of its implementation. In the Management Plan development process the Core Planning Team has realized that in Bulgaria till now there is no precedent of national significant protected area management, the bigger part of which is restituted to one private owner. At the same time a number of State bodies have authorities for the monitoring, protection, control and accomplishment of the nature protection activities on the Rila Monastery Nature Park territory. All this requires development of new, efficient management coordination mechanism for Rila Monastery Nature Park, which to satisfy the strivings and responsibilities of the landowners and to insure efficient implementation of the functions and responsibilities of the State bodies, resulting from the active legislation.

The BCEG Project initiated the setting up of a working group comprised of representatives of the Holy Synod, of the ministry of the Environment and Waters, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, the Directorate of Ecclesiastical Matters with the Council of Ministers, and the Project itself, with a view to developing such a mechanism. Number of meetings was held with the BCEG Project facilitators roll. It became clear that the Holy Synod is not ready directly to participate in the Rila Monastery Nature Park coordination and interaction management mechanism

development. In order to support the process the MoAF and MoEW representatives in coordination with the Directorate of Ecclesiastical Matters developed such a mechanism draft, which was officially submitted Minister Arsenova's letter to the Holy Synod on 9 June 2003. In Patriarch Maksims' letter to Minister Arsenova from 9 July 2003 the Coordination Concept is rejected with the motives that it lesions the owners rights to take independent decisions concerning the Rila Monastery Nature Park. There is proposal for "changes in PAA in direction arranging the RMNP management viewing the specific status of the Bulgarian Orthodox church (BOC)".

The team developed the Management Plan and all State institutions representative that participated in the Concept development are convinced, that this unique territory needs a special and modern coordination mechanism and hopes that the Holy Synod of BOC will realize the necessity and benefit from it. This is why the Concept is included in the MP as an open possibility for discussions and as next, more improved and complementing the CC model for RMNP management coordination.

The down proposed idea for Management mechanism has a few innovatory elements:

- The interests and the rights of the owner of the bigger part of the territory are insured and he is invited to be chairman of the Consultative-coordination council, unlike of the presently acting CC with in the Nature parks directorates in the country.
- Supervisory council is envisaged to be created, for facilitating the solving of arise contradictions and problems.
- In the Supervisory council can also participate representatives of international nature protection organizations with world acknowledged prestige. This will guarantee additionally the impartiality and consideration of all parties' interests.
- The New Management mechanism will support the funds rising for conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in the Park and for the activities for the Management Plan implementation.

Concept of coordination and interaction in the Management of Rila Monastery Nature Park

The interested parties reviewing and making an agreement on the RMNP Management Mechanism are as follows:

1. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church;
2. Ministry of Agriculture and Forests/National Forest Board;
 - Rila Monastery Nature Park Directorate;
3. Ministry of Environment and Waters;
 - Rila National Park Directorate;
 - Regional Inspection of Environment and Waters – Sofia,
 - Water Basins Directorate – Blagoevgrad
4. Ministry of Culture and National Institute of Monuments of Culture.

Beside the listed institutions, functions, roles and responsibilities, result of the active legislation on the territory have also other state and local authorities and other individuals as: the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Rila Municipality, Ministry of the Interior, Dams and Cascades National Energy Complex

PLC and etc. All of them conduct activities on the Nature Park territory in the frames of their rights and obligations.

The rights and obligations of the owner of the bigger part of the lands in the park and the main State authorities are as follows:

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church

The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, as the rightful owner of the majority of the lands, forests and resources in the territory of Rila Monastery Nature Park, husbands its lands and properties and is engaged in its intrinsic activities, in compliance with the applicable legislation and the Management Plan for RMNP.

Government Agencies

1. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests/National Forestry Board/Directorate of Rila Monastery Nature Park. For the territory of Rila Monastery NP the Park Directorate combines the functions of a Nature Park Directorate and the role and responsibilities of a State Forest Enterprise. Within its respective prerogatives pursuant to the Forestry Act, the Protected Areas Act, the Hunting and Game Protection Act, the Fisheries and Aquatic Cultures Act, the Management Plan for Rila Monastery Nature park and to all by-laws, the Directorate carries out the following activities:

- Restoration and maintenance activities relevant to biodiversity conservation;
- Ecological monitoring of the flora and fauna; of tourism-related activities; of the sanitary condition of forests, etc.;
- Publication of information and promotional materials relevant to the Park;
- Interpretation activities for the benefit of visitors to the Park;
- Carrying out of ecological education programs, coordination of scientific research activities in the Park territory;
- Building and maintenance of park infrastructure: trails, picnic sites, marking and directional signs;
- Protection of the forests and lands of the forest estate, of game and fish;
- Issue of summons and writs in the event of established violations of the Forestry Act, the Hunting and Game Protection Act, the Fisheries and Aquatic Cultures Act, the Protected Areas Act, and the Administrative Violations and Penalties Act;
- Oversees the implementation of activities related to afforestation, the growing and use of forests; organizes the taking of inventories of forests and lands within the forest estate, funded by the State budget;
- Provide consultations, administrative and technical assistance to the forest owners in the implementation of the provisions of the Forestry Act;

- Issue permits for logging and for transportation of timber to and from a temporary storage facility; for the use of medicinal plants and mushrooms; for grazing livestock etc., based upon an application by the owner or a party duly authorized by the owner.

2. The Ministry of the Environment and Waters-Rila National Park Directorate, within their respective prerogatives pursuant to the Protected Areas Act, the Hunting and Game Protection Act, the Fisheries and Aquatic Cultures Act, and to all by-laws, carry out the following activities:

- Provide management and protection of Rila Monastery Forest Reserve;
- Finance the building of tourist infrastructure within the boundaries of the Forest Reserve: trails, information boards, directional signs, etc.;
- Carry out monitoring of the quality of environmental components: flora, fauna, waters, forests, etc.;
- Finance the issuing of information and promotional materials about the Reserve;
- Impose sanctions for violations established in the territory of the Forest Reserve.

3. The Ministry of the Environment and Waters/Regional Inspectorate of the Environment and Waters-Sofia and the Water Basin Directorate-Blagoevgrad within their respective prerogatives pursuant to the Protected Areas Act, the Biodiversity Act, the Atmospheric Air Purity Act, the Environment Protection Act, the Waters Act, and to all by-laws, carry out the following activities:

- Control of the implementation of legislative provisions pertinent to the protection of qualities of environmental components: air, water, solid waste pollution, etc.;
- Instruct the owners and users to rectify violations and irregularities;
- Impose fines/sanctions in the event of violations of the applicable legislation and the Management Plan.

4. The Ministry of Culture/National Institute for Monuments of Culture, within their respective prerogatives pursuant to the Monuments of Culture and Museums Act, and to the respective by-laws, carries out the following activities:

- Supervise and oversee the seeking out, identification, study and protection of monuments of culture,
- Supervise the study, design and implementation of restoration, reinforcement, conservation and other activities on fixed monuments of culture;
- Finance activities relevant to the maintenance, restoration and conservation of monuments of culture;
- Impose sanctions for violations of the Monuments of Culture and Museums Act.

Having in mind the National and International significance of the park the proposed RMNP Management Mechanism should be legalized through Memorandum of

Understanding, signed between the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox church and the major Governmental Institutions – the Minister of the Environment and Waters, the Minister of Agriculture and Forests, the Minister of Culture and the Director of Ecclesiastical Matters Directorate with the Council of Ministers. In this Memorandum we propose the forming of two structures with functions as follows:

Consultative-Coordinating Council

The territory of Rila Monastery Nature Park needs a body having consultative functions. This council would discuss and coordinate activities that are to be carried out in managing the Park and in implementation of the Management Plan.

1. Composition of the Consultative-Coordinating Council

- A representative of the Holy Synod/Rila Monastery –Chairman of the Council;
- The Director of Rila Monastery Nature Park Directorate – co-Chairman of the Council;
- Another representative of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church/Rila Monastery;
- The Director of Rila National Park Directorate or party duly authorized by him;
- A representative of the National Institute for Monuments of Culture;
- The Director of the Regional Inspectorate of the Environment and Waters- Sofia or party duly authorized by him;
- A representative of the Regional Forestry Board, Kyustendil.

The Consultative-Coordinating Council has to have the right to invite and include within its composition, as permanent members, representatives of Rila Municipality, of the National Energy Complex/Dams and Cascades PLC and other institutions, at its own discretion.

2. Functions of the Consultative-Coordinating Council

- Discusses and coordinates the content of the annual draft plans for activities to be performed by the members of the council and the budgets allocated for their implementation;
- Oversees current progress and the end results of the implementation of the annual plans for activities in the territory;
- Discusses the need of, and makes proposals for amendments to the Management Plan;
- Discusses arising problems concerning the management plan implementation, the sustainable use of resources in the park, the biodiversity conservation and the monuments of culture preservation and takes action to rectify or overcome them within the members' competencies or to refer them to the Supervisory Board or to other competent bodies;
- Defines methods of ongoing operational coordination, exchange of information and interaction between the institutions represented to the Council, in the implementation of individual day-to-day activities as per the annual plans; in the management and use of resources; in emergency situations;

- Draws up and presents to the Supervisory Board a general annual report on the implementation of plans for activities of the institutions represented to the Council over the current year.

3. Organization of activities of the Consultative-Coordinating Council

The Consultative-Coordinating Council is to meet at least three times annually. The dates and agendas for such meetings are to be agreed in advance between the co-Chairmen. Where necessary, and subject to advance coordination between the co-Chairmen, an extraordinary meeting may be convened. The Directorate of RMNP shall be the body to offer organizational and logistical support to the Council and will act as a secretariat.

The Consultative-Coordinating Council should define more detailed ground rules for the organization of its own work. A mechanism for decision taking will be chosen, and it will not be based on the principle of the number of representatives and majority in voting. Agreement will be searched for to provide for protection of the interests of all parties and observing the active legislation.

The Council can invite to its sessions representatives of scientific institutions, NGOs or private entrepreneurs active in the area.

Supervisory Board

The formation of a supervisory Board is hereby proposed to ensure communication on major issues between the Consultative-Coordinating Council, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the central managing bodies of relevant institutions, as well as coordination among the latter:

1. Composition of the Supervisory Board

- A representative of the Holy Synod;
- Deputy-Minister of the Environment and Waters;
- Deputy-Minister of Agriculture and Forests;
- Deputy-Minister of Culture;
- The Director of the Directorate of Ecclesiastical Matters to the Council of Ministers.

2. Functions of the Supervisory Board

- Reviews the annual report of the Consultative-Coordinating Council on the implementation of annual plans and activities for the current year, and the draft plans for the coming one;
- Rules on the appropriateness of activities and budget allocations as per the proposed draft plans and assists in providing the requisite funds for their implementation;
- Reviews reports submitted by the Consultative-Coordinating Council on specific problems and ensures that appropriate measures are taken to rectify them. Where necessary, e.g. when a problem has arisen that is beyond the competences of the

institutions represented in it, the Board can refer it to other central government agencies;

- Reviews and oversees implementation of the agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) by its signatories and, where necessary, makes proposals for amendments thereto.

3. Organization of activities of the Supervisory Board

The Supervisory Board points out Chairman and co-Chairman and approves Regulation for its activities. The Supervisory Board is to meet at least once a year. The dates and agendas for such meetings are to be agreed in advance between all parties represented to it. The co-Chairmen of the Consultative-Coordinating Council shall be invited to the annual meeting to present the Council's reports. Where necessary, and subject to advance coordination between all parties represented, an extraordinary meeting may be convened. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests shall be the body to offer organizational and logistical support to the Board.

A provision shall be included in the Regulation to the effect that, where necessary, representatives of international organizations (whether the UNESCO Council of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage or IUCN) be invited to sessions of the Supervisory Board. This would help reiterate the international significance of cultural and spiritual sites (the Monastery and the Holy Sites) and of the Nature Park as a whole while seeking the commitment of potential sources of funding for their maintenance and development.

The Regulation shall also allow for representatives of other government agencies or scientific institutions to participate in individual meetings of the Board wherever the need of an expert opinion or coordination of activities may arise.

II. Scheme for Motor Vehicles Traffic Management in Rila Monastery Nature Park

The text included in item II describes a proposal for a transport scheme in RMNP. It affects the territory of the Sub-zones with Moderate and Low Visitor Use in part III. Zoning, Regimes and Norms, item 2.0.

*The motor vehicle management scheme in the park is included here as a possibility, which may be considered in the future for the development of the project **Assessment of the possibilities for insuring alternative transport in the Park within the Program 2.7.4 for organization of transport and maintainance of the road network** included in the Management Plan. The proposed scheme can serve as basic information for the consideration and planning of the nature-friendly transport scheme in the Park.*

Moderate Visitor Use Sub-Zone

Management of the access and traffic of personal vehicles and tourist flow

Rila Monastery Nature Park has one major entrance with access for vehicles – asphalt road connecting Rila Monastery with Rila town. Till the moment the tourist flow and the traffic of this road has not been an object of special management. During the tourist season peak and the religious holidays, when there are many visitors in the region the road and the parking in front of the monastery are overloaded and create risk for the visitors security. The asphalt road to Kirilova Polyana passes in immediate vicinity to the monastery's walls and the passing of heavy vehicles negatively impacts on the building, which is situated on a slide land cone.

The presence of many car, buses and other vehicles and the connected with them noise and pollution in front of the Rila Monastery's doors does not allow appropriate atmosphere, which to raise feeling of admiration and spiritual peace.

The present Management plan develops and proposes traffic management scheme for the Park and Rila Monastery village (See 2.7.4 Program for transport organization in part "Programs and projects"). In general the proposal envisages the scheme to be realized in two stages. After the completion of the second stage conditions for efficient and adaptive tourist flow and traffic management will be created according to the visitors profile and the park management needs.

For official vehicles including the Rila Monastery's cars introduction of annual permits for free access to the park territory is proposed. The permits will be issued by the NPD after informing the Rila Monastery abbot.

Proposal for stage I

Regimes

1. Setting up parking facilities;
2. Providing internal park transport services by motor vehicle from Brichebor to Kirilova Polyana;
3. Building transport corridor along the south bank of the river Rilska from the confluence point with the Iliyana to Hotel Rilets – 4 km in total;
4. Free access shall be provided for non-official motor vehicles with observing the permit regime.

Norms

1. Free access shall be provided for motor vehicles to short-term recreation facilities from Brichebor locality to the Rila Monastery for the period May 1st-October 1st. On weekends and official holidays the transport access have to be by internal Park transport system;

Proposal for stage II - After building the transport corridor connecting Brichebor locality with Rilets hotel on the south bank of Rilska River.

Regimes

1. Restricting the traffic of the road segment Rila Monastery – Bachkova cheshma on the road passing on the north Rilska Riverside;
2. Development of pedestrian zone from the monastery to Bachkova cheshma locality;
3. Providing internal park transport services by motor vehicle from Brichebor to Kirilova Polyana;
4. Free access shall be provided for non-official motor vehicles with observing the permit regime.

Norms

1. Free access shall be provided for motor vehicles to Rila Monastery on the road on the north Rilska riverside during working days. (The road segment connecting the monastery with Bachkova cheshma locality passing in immediate vicinity to the monastery's walls should be closed);
2. Free access shall be provided during working days for motor vehicles to the picnic sites situated after the monastery towards Kirilova polyana locality only on the road on the south Rilska riverside from Brichebor locality through Rilets hotel to Kirilova polyana;
3. The road segment connecting Rilets and Tsarev vrah hotels will be used only for personal motor vehicles access for guests and Tsarev vrah hotel staff;
4. On weekends and official holidays the transport access from Brichebor locality direction Rila Monastery is only by internal Park transport system on the road on the south Rilska riverside for the period May 1st-October 1st;
5. Exceptions of the defined traffic management regimes in the sub-zone are allowed only with NPD permission (the exceptions include the moving of disabled persons, when they need special transport and on special monastery events and needs);
6. If necessary the NPD can close or open the access to different parts of the transport system in the zone after informing in appropriate way the interested parties and visitors.

Low Visitor Use Sub-Zone

Regimes

1. Provision of internal Park transport services to visitors along the following routes:
 - Between Kirilova Polyana and Tiha Rila;
 - Between Brichebor and Bukovo Berdo.

Norms

1. Motor vehicle transport from Kirilova Polyana to Tiha Rila: 2 round trips (vehicle seating capacity: up to 10 passenger) daily (morning and afternoon);
2. Motor vehicle transport from Brichebor to Bukovo Berdo – for eco-lodge needs only – eco-lodge and the guests vehicles;

III. Territory Proposed for Inclusion in the Rila Monastery Nature Park Territory

Part III presents the information concerning the territory along Rilska River in the Park's vicinity, proposed for inclusion in the borders of the protected area. Proposal of a zoning scheme in case that this territory was included in the park is described. The proposed zones, regimes and norms can be used as a whole or parts of them when activities are planned on this territory no matter if it is or not part of the Park. The information may be useful in the future as well if the territory will be included in RMNP.

The information describing the territory proposed for inclusion in the Park boundaries was included as Appendix 1 in the Management Plan draft presented to the HEEC.

Appendix No. 1

On May 22, 2002, The Minister of Agriculture and Forests made a proposal to the Minister of Environment and Water to open a procedure to change the boundaries and area of the Rila Monastery Nature Park. It is proposed that the Park should include the lands between the Rilska and Iliyana river watersheds and the Kalin river valley that are still outside its boundaries and whose total area is 756,2 ha. With a statement dated August 6, 2002, the Minister of Environment and Water adopted the proposal to increase the nature park area. The actual territory proposed for inclusion in the Park is 775.5 ha. The changes were made following additional calculations using the digital model of the Park.

This Appendix contains information about the area proposed for inclusion. It also proposes zones, regimes and norms in this area to serve after the inclusion of this area in the Rila Monastery Nature Park as the basis for a zoning scheme attaining the highest harmony and expediency with the present area of the Park. A zoning map is included as well.

The sections and subsections of the Rila Monastery State Forestry Board proposed for inclusion in the Park are presented in the following table:

No	Section	Subsection	Total area (ha)
1	1	?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, 4, 5	43,5
2	4	?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, 4, 5, 6	25,7
3	5	?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	90,2
4	6	?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	119,1
5	7	?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	46,7
6	13	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?	89,1
7	14	?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	78,8
8	15	?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	94,7

9	16	?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20	31,1
10	46	1	3,9
11	75	?, 1, 3	2,5
12	78	?, ?, ?, ?, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	33,6
13	79	?, ?, ?, 1, 2	10,3
14	83	?, ?, ?, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10,2
15	84	?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ?, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	36,1
16	86	1, 3	7,1
17	87	?, ?, ?, ?, ?, ? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	31,7
18	88	1, 2	6,0
Total:			760,3

Brief Biological Characteristic

The additional study of the new territory proposed for inclusion in the Park shows that it does not include any habitats and plant communities of significance for conservation. No new species and floral components have been established. The area proposed for inclusion in the park has no specific diversity of vascular plants, mosses and medicinal plants of significance for conservation and/or their resources. However, it should be noted that as a whole, it contains high diversity of medicinal plants such as elder (*Sambucus ebulus*), stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and bramble (*Rubus caesius*) with significant resources.

No inventory has been made of the micromycetes or of their nature conservation status in the area proposed for inclusion in the park.

Based on the expert assessment of the area proposed for inclusion in the park, the lower level of diversity of the main group of invertebrates and prevalence of trivial species and communities could be noted. At the same time, more xerophilous species typical of Mediterranean areas occur and enhance the range of invertebrate biotic groups in the nature park. Also certain attractive representatives of the invertebrate fauna are present (such as *Cordulegaster picta*, found along the stream to the north of the Pchelino locality) that can be of interest for education and educational tourism.

The 2002 expert assessment of the area proposed for inclusion in the nature park indicates poor diversity of vertebrate species with the exception of the bat fauna helped by the many abandoned buildings. Common vertebrates prevail. No species of high significance for conservation have been found. The only and substantial exception is made by bats (almost all species of which are of high significance for conservation) and the Aesculapian snake (*Elaphe longissima*) present in relatively high numbers in the area. The analysis of the invertebrate fauna shows a certain increase in diversity in the park of dry habitats close to the Mediterranean, which provide favorable conditions for reptiles and for certain birds and mammals that prefer warmer climates.

Infrastructure

The area proposed for inclusion in the park contains many different items of infrastructure. The main sites are as follows:

Religious and cultural and historical sites

The Church of Virgin Mary. A single stone building with additionally built protective roof structure, located to the north of the Pchelino cloister owned by the Rila Monastery.

Pchelino Cloister. This monastery croft built in the late XIX and early XX century is located 4 km to the west of the Monastery proper, in immediate proximity to the Pilgrim road. It represents a solid-built two storey structure surrounded by a stone fence, with a hostel for workers and officials of the former Monastery forestry enterprise, and a hay loft, 2 abandoned sheep pens and 2 abandoned shepherd houses.

The outpost. Built in 1869 as a forward sentry house of the monastery guards. It is approximately 10 km from the Monastery, immediately close to the road to Dupnitsa, on the Pilgrim road. It represents a solid-built structure.

Hydro-power and water supply facilities

Hydro-power facilities in the Eleshnitsa locality. They represent a catchment and water supply facilities.

Hydro-power plant mines One operational small hydro-power plant representing a one-story brick building in the Veli lag locality. Its capacity is 50 kW.

Water distribution facility. The Veli lag locality is also the home of a dam with sluices leading the water of the Rilska River into the Kamenitsa hydropower plant.

Recreation or visitor service facilities

Eleshnitsa complex. The tourist facility Eleshnitsa is a tourist dormitory in a two-story brick building, with a one-story building with a yard and barbeque, and a frame house with a hall and a kitchen facility for the Eleshnitsa restaurant. The complex includes also a resort facility of the Bulgarian Post Office consisting of a solid two-story building with a central heating system, a complex of 20 bungalows, a restaurant and a one-story house with a guest room.

Gorski Kat Restaurant. A semi-framed house in the Iagniloto locality near the road between Pastra village and the Rilska and Iliyana rivers watershed.

Veli Lag Hotel Restaurant. A brick-built two-storey building in the Veli Lag locality.

A complex of buildings in the Gorhim locality. Consists of a two-story brick building – a resort, 2 one-story warehouses and the Rilski Rai restaurant, which is a one-story brick building. There are a one-story wooden frame house and an ancient stone building with a wooden bay window near the restaurant, as well as a wooden frame building with the Ilyo Voivoda apiary and an abandoned building of the former Forestry Enterprise check point.

Private recreational buildings. There are a private one-story brick building and 8 wooden bungalows in the Lomnitsa locality.

Agriculture and forestry related facilities

Fish farms. There are 2 fish farms in the area proposed for inclusion in the park. One of them that are also the Ribarnika tavern is a brick building, with 20 bungalows and 5 fish tanks. The other farm has 1 semi-framed building and 2 tanks with adjacent area of approximately 0.8 ha.

Buildings of the Rila Monastery Forestry Enterprise. These are in the Iagniloto locality between Pastra village and the Rilska and Iliyna rivers watershed. They represent a two-story building with offices of the Forestry Enterprise and 2 farming buildings.

Building of the forestry nursery. The Lomnitsa locality is the home of the Forestry Enterprise nursery with one one-story brick building for workers.

Agricultural buildings. There are a sheep pen, a house for shepherds and a wooden shed in the Sheremeto locality.

Road network

Roads from the republic's road network. The road between Pastra village and the Rila Monastery that is part of the republic's road network cross the area proposed for inclusion in the park.

Other roads. Several dirt roads cross through the area to connect the main road (Pastra-Rila Monastery) with various sites (the Forestry Enterprise nursery, the small wood building for accommodation of hunters in the Lomnitsa locality, forest roads etc.).

Narrow gauge rail road. The area proposed for inclusion in the park contains some remains of the narrow gauge between the town of Kocherinovo and the Rila Monastery used in the past and two bridges in the Veli lag and in the Pchelino localities.

Agriculture, industry, mining and mineral resource management in the area proposed for inclusion

The area proposed for inclusion is used for pasture of the cattle and sheep of the Rila Monastery and of livestock belonging to residents in the urban areas near the park. There are small potato fields and apiaries on both sides of the Rilska River in the area.

The Gorhim locality in the Rilska river valley has been the location of the Gorhim wood impregnating plant that had been operated until the 50s of the XX century when its facilities were transferred to the Kocherinovo railway facility. Also, close to that plant had been a wood processing plant, Velilag, later transferred to the Yahinovo railroad facility near the town of Dupnitsa.

Zoning

The zoning scheme proposal for the area proposed for inclusion in the park is shown on the attached zoning map. The proposed area includes territories that should be parts of:

- The Environmentally sound use zone in the NP with the same regime and norms.

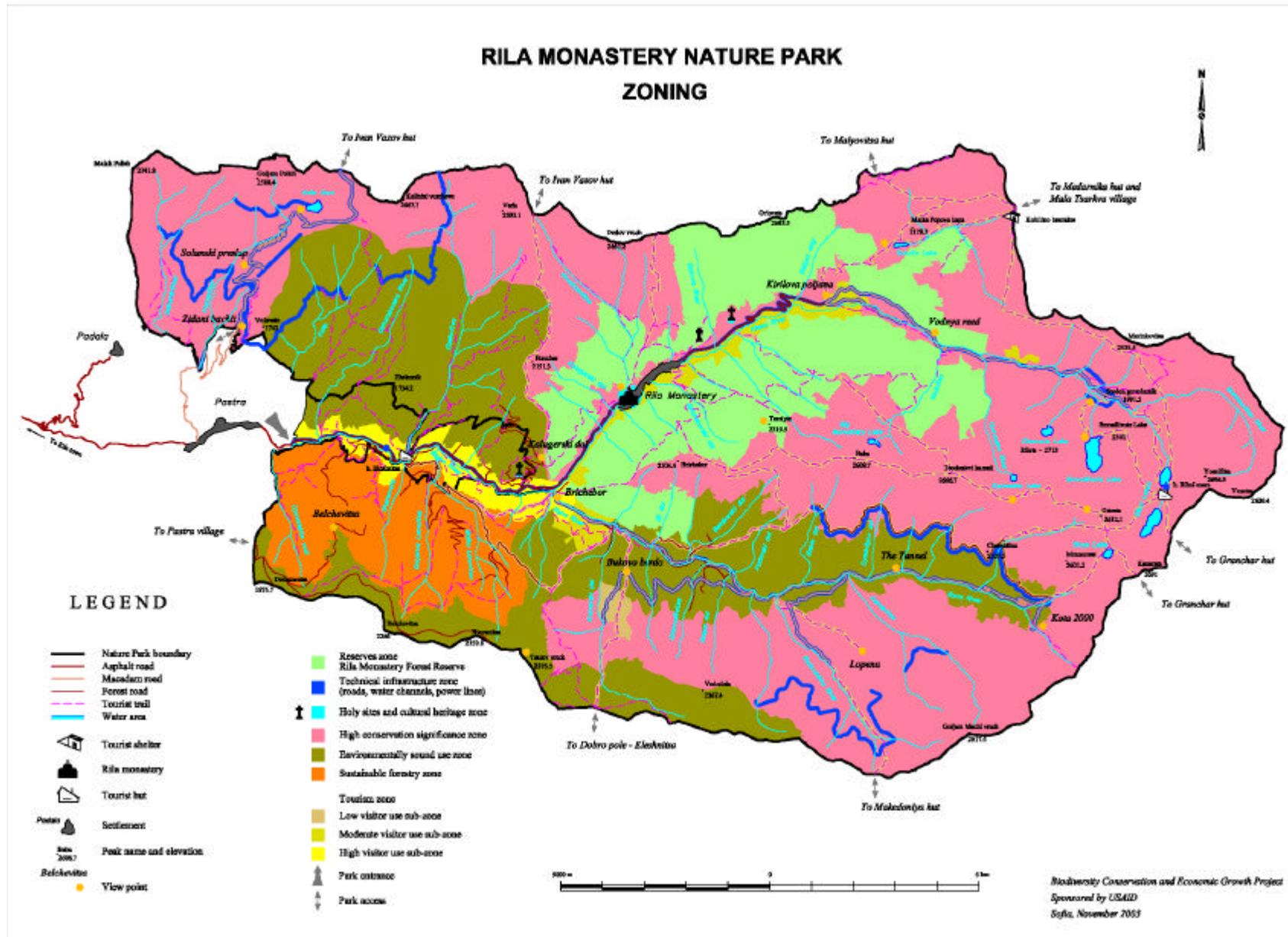
- The Infrastructure zone in the NP with the same regime and norms.
- The Sustainable forestry zone in the NP with the same regime and norms.
- The Tourist zone in the NP:
 - Sub-zone with a low level of tourist use with the same regime and norms.
 - Sub-zone with a high level of tourist use with the following additional regimes and norms:

Regimes

1. Construction and maintenance of a new hotel facilities.
2. Construction and maintenance of camping sites, including caravan infrastructure
3. Construction of small hydro-power plants following a project design;

Norms

1. The new hotel facility should not exceed 100 beds in 5 hotels;
2. The caravan site should be set up in the northern section of the Eleshnitsa complex;
3. Up to two mini hydro-power plants can be built for local power supplies to the sites;
4. Construction of 100-car parking sites in the Veli lak and Gorhim localities each.



Extracted after HEEC texts from Rila Monastery Nature Park Management Plan draft
04 February 2004

IV. Description of the Recreation Facilities in the Rila Monastery Nature Park

Description of the functions, content and purpose of the infrastructure objects for the tourist services is included in the Rila Monastery Nature Park Management Plan draft. Here objects are presented that fall on the territory proposed for inclusion into the Park. The vision for the rest and recreation sites in the Park is included in Appendix 23 of the Management Plan draft.

Parts from the proposed transport scheme, which represent tourist services in the park, are presented as well. The proposed in the Management Plan draft transport scheme was dropped out as a whole according to the HEEC decision. The relevant parts of Appendix 23 are also extracted. The text concerning Tsarev Vrah Hotel is removed from Appendix 23, due to the fact that the hotel is located on the territory of the Rila Monastery settlement.

Appendix ? 23 (parts)

Description of the Complex between the Park Entry and the Brichebor Locality

The complex between the Park entry and the Brichebor locality will be constructed in the area between the beginning of the Park to the south of Pastra village and the Brichebor locality above the confluence of Rilska and Iliyana rivers. The construction envisions a caravan camping site, two new parking lots to cater for the vehicles of visitors arriving with the intention of spending their time mainly in this most social part of the Park. The complex will also include most of the buildings and other infrastructure related to the most usual forms of recreation such as restaurants, open-air games etc. At the same time, additional tourist services such as horseback riding, panoramic views, camping in the caravans camp etc. will be offered.

1. Veli lag parking lot

Location

The old site of the Veli lag saw mill.

Area and boundaries

1,5 ha between Rilska river and the old forest nursery road.

Capacity 100 motor vehicles.

Household waste handling 2 times weekly, removal in metal containers.

Handling of fecal waste

Septic tanks cleaned in mid season and at the end of the season.

Seasonal operation

May-September.

Auxiliary infrastructure

A fence, a barrier, a cashier's desk, a bath and toilet facility/facilities.

Design

Lightweight collapsible structures in accordance with the local construction traditions with domineering wooden shells and stone masonry.

Tourist experience

The site is in a convenient location and with good services. The tourists will have good experience from the services, the fresh water of the river and the near-by forest from the very first contacts with the NP.

2. Gorhim parking lot

Location

On the Rila Monastery road near the abandoned forest roadman's hut.

Area and boundaries

1,5 ha between Rilska river and the old forest nursery road.

Capacity

100 motor vehicles.

Solid waste handling

2 times weekly, removed in metal containers.

Handling of fecal waste

Septic tanks cleaned in mid season and at the end of the season.

Seasonal operation

May-September.

Auxiliary infrastructure

A fence, a barrier, a cashier's desk, a bath and toilet facility/facilities.

Design

Lightweight collapsible structures in accordance with the local construction traditions with domineering wooden shells.

Tourist experience

The site is in a convenient location and with good services. The tourists will have good experience from the very first contacts with the NP because of the service and from the easy access to the 'heart' of the Park. The contours of the distant mountain will spur their interests for longer contacts with nature in the Park.

3. Horse riding trails

Location

The Yagniloto locality, along the road to the Ravna locality near Eleshitsa River.

Trail

Unsurfaced forest road with an approximate height difference of 100 m.

Approximate length

4 km

Infrastructure

An outlook with information boards and a shelter below Ravna locality. At the starting point – a horse stable, watering trough, waiting room for the riders.

Tourist experience

The riding trail allows for a more exotic manner of direct contact with nature, physical strengthening, primal sporting pleasure, feeling of satisfaction when controlling the horse, enjoyment from the constantly changing view, particularly from saddle height. The panoramic view towards the valley brings additional pleasure

4. Inner park transportation between Brichebor and Kirilova poliana

Location

Starting at the Brichebor locality, ending at the Kirilova poliana locality.

Trail

Depending on the stage transport management scheme implementation in the tourist zone, it is a sub-zone of moderate tourist use

Approximate length

11 km.

Seasonal use

June-September.

Auxiliary infrastructure

Starting terminal, ending terminal, intermediary stop signs, garages for the transport vehicles.

Transport type

Mini bus vehicles with petrol engines and, where possible, propane gas.

Tourist flow services

4 buses every 15 minutes

5. Kirilova Poliana-Tiha Rila Inner Park Transportation

Location

Beginning at the Kirilova poliana locality, ending at the visitor center near the building of the National Electricity Company Yazoviri i Kaskadi Ltd., in the Tiha Rila locality.

Trail

Along the existing road with height difference of 600 m.

Approximate length

9 km.

Seasonal use

June-September.

Transport type

Off-road motor vehicles with gas engines and, where possible, propane gas.

Tourist flow services

2 times daily, morning and afternoon.

Description of the Tsarev Vrah Hotel and Conference Center Complex

The existing hotel will be converted into an integral center to be used as a conference tourism destination for national and international forums requiring the unique harmony of natural and spiritual values. The hotel will be renovated and made subject to high nature conservation standards and quality of services.