



**International seminar
“Green Belt of Fennoscandia: Status and Visions”**

Petrozavodsk, **June 9–11, 2008**

Organized by:

Karelian Research Centre, Russian Academy of Science (KRC of RAS);
Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Ecology, Republic of Karelia;
North Karelia Biosphere Reserve, Finland
State Strict Nature Reserve Kostomukshsky, Republic of Karelia

In collaboration with

Ministry of the Environment, Finland
Finnish Environment Institute
MAB Finland
Finnish – Russian Nature Protection Group

The concept of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia (GBF) appeared early in the 1990s as the result of international cooperation and united efforts in implementation of sustainable development principles, implying a balanced combination of economic development and nature conservation the society is interested in. Originally, the idea envisaged working out of common approaches to the environmental policy on both sides of the Russian-Finnish border to ensure more efficient management of forest resources, establishment and development of the network of protected areas (PAs) that would not only secure conservation of unique natural heritage but also generate better preconditions for economic growth in the territories. The principles of biosphere reserves can be applied to the Green Belt activities (there is one biosphere reserve in GBF, and new ones are planned). It is essential that GBF is included in UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere programme, which aims at being one of the most important sustainable development efforts on the globe within next five years. The programme includes 540 remarkable areas in 105 countries, and transboundary activities are prioritized in the programme.

GBF is a territory stretching along the Russian-Finnish (in the North also Norwegian) border and containing large areas of undisturbed coniferous forest and remarkable mire complexes. Over the past 15 years, the outline of GBF has become quite tangible, and the idea is gaining more support. The core of GBF in Karelia is made up of operating PAs –

Kostomukshsky strict nature reserve (47 500 ha), national parks Paanajärvi (104 500 ha) and Kalevalsky (74 500 ha), landscape reserves Tolvajärvi (42 000 ha), Iso-Ijärvi (6 000 ha) and Yudalsky (1 500 ha). In 2009, the Ladoga Skerries national park is going to be designated in an area of 124 000 ha.

GBF also includes extensive areas in Murmansk Oblast (e.g., Laplandsky strict nature reserve) and smaller ones in Leningrad Oblast. Also in Finland the areas of most importance to the Green Belt are officially protected by, e.g., national park programme, old-growth forest protection programme and EU's Natura 2000 network. The combined area of PAs forming the “backbone” of GBF on both sides of the Russian-Finnish border will be over a million ha.

Prospective themes for the seminar are:

- ✓ GBF background, state-of-the-art and development options;
- ✓ socio-economic aspects of GBF organization;
- ✓ ongoing regional and international scientific and applied conservation projects in the GBF area, possibilities for their coordination, development and integration within one programme;
- ✓ role of international cooperation and interregional actions in promoting GBF.

An important output of the seminar shall be a draft of the *ad hoc* programme for GBF development to contribute to official recognition of the outstanding natural value of the territory and substantiate expediency of organizing large international projects combining the efforts of governmental bodies, scientific institutions and NGOs of the participating countries.

Call for participation and inputs

Please inform us of your willingness to participate, stating the form of contribution (paper, poster), and share your ideas concerning the agenda before April 15.

Please e-mail your suggestions at greenbelt@krc.karelia.ru

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