

# Education for Sustainable Development: Russian-Swedish Project

## RUSSIAN SUSTAINABILITY NewsLETTER



### *Special Issue. January 2013*

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### ***Editorial. 2013: Waiting for something better***

Judging from the press, the Russian public reacted very positively to president **Putin's** decision to declare 2013 the Year of Environmental Protection in Russia. Not that the whole country unanimously endorsed and expressed enthusiasm for the subject, but there were clearly no objections. There was, and still is, some scepticism. The reasons for this are many.

It would seem obvious that this kind of campaign needs appropriate symbolic attributes, first and foremost, a logo for the campaign. There has been enough time to develop it - the presidential decree was signed in mid-2012. However, the competition on designing this logo was announced only in the beginning of this year ... and the results will be summed up on February 28. Thus, at least 2 months of the Year of Environment will pass without its main symbol.

Introducing the contest for the logo, the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Ecology of Russia **R. Gizatulin** identified the main idea: *"The logo design should the best way visually identify the main goal of the Year of Environmental Protection - to ensure the right of every person to a healthy environment. This contest is also a contribution to the development of environmental culture of all Russian citizens, the involvement of each of us in the conservation of nature and the conservation of its resources."* Wonderful words, but why not voice them a few months earlier?

However, the Year of the Environment has de facto begun. The question of holding it was considered in the government of Russia among the first issues this year (see information in this issue). The action plan that was designed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and accepted by the government is already being put into practice. Chronologically, the first of these actions was the Seventh Moscow International Festival of Nature "Golden Turtle", which was opened on January 19. Opening the photo exhibition organized as part of this festival, minister **Sergei Donskoy** said: *"The main educational function of the exhibition is to draw attention not only to the unique beauty and diversity of wildlife in Russia, but also the fragility and value of this wealth."*

All is well, but the name of the festival is confusing - a turtle, even though it's a golden one. Somehow this animal has become much loved by the Russian environmental establishment. But what if this will become the symbol of the Russian Year of the Environment? It is clear that this animal is a very expressive living metaphor for Russian environmental politics. But does it bring us closer to "the future we want"? In Russia, as usual, we hope for the best. And some do not only hope, but also do everything in their power. Read more about this as well in the current issue.

Yuri Mazurov, Moscow State University  
[jmazurov@yandex.ru](mailto:jmazurov@yandex.ru)

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## *Year of Environmental Protection in Russia*

January 9, 2013, the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, **Sergey Donskoy**, took part in a meeting with the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation **Dmitry Medvedev** on issues concerning core tasks and activities in the field of environmental protection. The Minister said: *"In 2013, the Year of environmental protection, measures will be taken in accordance with the approved plan of the Government of the Russian Federation. The document includes nation-wide, inter-regional and international events."*

The content of these activities, the minister said, is consistent with the basic issues in the field of environmental protection: environmental safety, waste management, protected areas, environmental education and culture, protection of air, water and forests. *"Major international events planned include: the Global Ministerial Environmental Forum (dedicated to the 27th session of the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the High-Level Conference of the Baltic region to protect the ecology of the Baltic Sea, the World Conference on Sport and the Environment (with the participation of the International Olympic Committee), and the International seminar on illegal trade in wild fauna and flora (together with Interpol)"*, said S. Donskoy.

According to the Minister, the main problems that have accumulated in the Russian system of environmental protection to date are: outdated legislation, lack of a modern system of recycling and disposal of waste, a large amount of accumulated environmental damage, and low efficiency of environmental monitoring. *"In order to determine how to address the problems, as well as the terms and responsibilities of authorized state bodies, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment developed a new environmental strategy for Russia. It was approved by the President of the Russian Federation on April 30,"* the minister reminded.

The programme links legal regulation measures aimed at economic stimulation of environment-oriented "green growth" with practical measures to improve the environment into a single system. The total funding of the programme is 335.9 billion rubles. The environmental inventory of the country has shown 194 territories in a state of environmental crisis. *"For three of them work began in 2012: the archipelago of Franz Josef Land, Wrangel Island and the district of the Dzhida tungsten-molybdenum plant. On behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russia, Rosprirodnadzor and subjects of the Russian Federation began to eliminate illegal dumping. Of 22.8 thousand dumping sites identified 14 thousand have been liquidated during a year's work,"* said S. Donskoy.

The Russian Federation State Programme on Forestry development 2012-2020 was adopted at the end of 2012 in order to ensure the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of forests. In addition, as said the head of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Government has approved the federal target programme "Development of the water management system of the Russian Federation 2012-2020". The main objectives of the programme are to guarantee water supply to the population, the energy sector and the industry, while at the same time providing an environmentally friendly living environment. The total funding of the programme activities is 523.0 billion rubles.

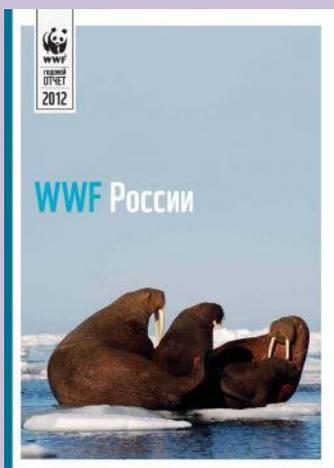
Speaking of the agencies in the field of hydrometeorology, S. Donskoy stressed: "In the period 2010-2012 over 1847 meteorology and air pollution control sites have been upgraded, as well as 64 aerological stations for altitude remote sensing. A new radar network is being set up and the space constellation of satellites monitoring the Earth is being restored. A modern environmental monitoring system that allows any citizen to obtain information on-line has been set up in Sochi, in the area of the future Olympic Games. Baikal is next area for network deployment. From 2020 the modern monitoring system should cover the whole territory of the Russian Federation.

*Source:* Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

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## WWF Russia achievements in 2012

The new annual report of WWF Russia informs on the work done in the past year and tells about what they have been able to do for the Russian nature.



The photo shows the illustrated booklet on the activities of WWF Russia in 2012.

The report highlights the work of major WWF programmes and projects, and introduces the reader to the results of WWF field projects, as well as environmental actions involving business, community and WWF supporters.

The report is available online in English at:

<http://www.wwf.ru/resources/publ/book/eng/743>

Here are some of the results of the Fund for the year:

- the European bison population in the Caucasus has grown, and there are new Persian leopards at the re-introduction centre of the Sochi National Park;
- the number of poachers' snares has dropped by two-thirds in key snow leopard habitat;
- the Land of the Leopard National Park and the Sredneussuriysky Refuge were established in Primorsky Krai, and in the Republic of Dagestan - the Itsari Natural Park;
- 13 Russian protected areas received grants from WWF;
- Over 500,000 hectares of protected areas will become part of a single system of PAs along the middle branch of the Syrdari River in Kazakhstan, and the Tigrovaya Balka Reserve in Tajikistan has been enlarged by 11 hectares;
- Commercial logging by the Les Export Company has stopped in northern Primorsky Krai's key Amur tiger habitat;
- Millions of Korean pine seedlings planted during the WWF's and Citibank's campaign "Plant Trees for Leopards";
- More than 40 observers worked on preventing conflicts between humans and polar bears, followed the bears' migration protected and birth lairs from poachers;
- the company En + Group has suspended design work on the Trans-Siberian Hydroelectric Dam on the Shilka river, and dangerous drilling in the Prirazlomnoye oil field in the Pechora Sea has been postponed at least a year;
- Asia's largest sockeye salmon fishery in Kamchatka became the third Russian fishery certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC);
- WWF and other organisations were victorious in their All-Russian campaign in support of a law protecting seas from oil pollution.

*"In 2012, the President approved the Principles of State Environmental Policy. We at WWF proposed developing such a document during a meeting with the President of the Russian Federation in 2010, and so, less than two years later, our country is the first to define what we want to achieve in the field of environmental protection," says Igor Chestin, Director of WWF Russia. "For us at WWF-Russia, probably the most dramatic event was the wide-scale support for our draft law to protect oceans from oil pollution, a time when 120,000 people signed an internet petition during Earth Hour. This was the first time we used such a signature-gathering mechanism, and we will definitely continue this practice in 2011".*

According to Chestin, there were also saddening news – the Arctic is heating more quickly than the remainder of the planet, and September saw the smallest ever sea ice extent in the history of its

recording. That is, the home of the Polar bear and Walrus continues to be destroyed at a headlong pace. *“In this regard it’s comforting that at least the oil and gas companies (BP, Shell, and Gazprom) have delayed their plans to extract hydrocarbons on the Arctic shelf, and Total’s CEO has publicly announced that such works would be premature,” he says.*

By the Russian president’s decree, 2013 will be the Year of Environmental Conservation, and WWF-Russia plans to address even more environmental issues and to undertake new projects. Among the priorities for next year are saving the Polar Bear, the snow leopard and the Siberian tiger, continuing to help restore the leopard and bison population in the Caucasus, work to improve the environmental responsibility of Russian business and the oil and gas industry, etc.

The report also illustrates the fund's system of financing. Some interesting numbers:

- WWF Russia's total budget in 2012 was EUR 10 million;
- WWF saved more than 35 million rubles in 2012 because all advertising was published free of charge;
- The proportion of corporate donors in WWF Russia's budget was about 16%;
- 53 companies supported WWF projects in 2012;
- 35 thousand Russians provide financial support to WWF Russia.

Source: WWF Russia

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## *The long-awaited Beringia*

The Beringia National Park in Chukotka has been established. The corresponding decree has been signed by Russian Prime Minister **Dmitry Medvedev**.

As of today, Russia and neighbouring countries have 4 cross-border areas. Each protected area in the transboundary nature reserves is managed in accordance with the national legislation, and joint programmes for the study of natural processes are developed and implemented for them.

According to the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Rinat Gizatulin, the federal national park was created to preserve the unique natural, historical and cultural heritage of the Chukchi Peninsula. It will now be possible to conduct a comprehensive monitoring of the region most impacted by global changes in the Arctic. The park area will be included in the eco- and sports tourism system.



Beringian landscape.

*Photo Kevin Schafer / WWF*

In the park there are more than one thousand species and subspecies of plants, there are polar bears, bighorn sheep, Pacific walruses, and the coasts harbour bird colonies.

The new specially protected natural area in the eastern part of the Chukchi Peninsula consists of five plots with a total area of over 18 thousand square kilometres, of which more than three thousand are marine waters, reports WWF.

R. Gizatulin emphasized that the Beringia National Park will become part of a Russian-American reserve. At present work is under way to establish the first transboundary protected area (PA) of the two

countries. This transboundary reserve will consist of Beringia in the Russian Federation and the Bering Land Bridge National Park in the US.

Beringia is located in the eastern part of the Chukotka Peninsula in the Providensky, Chukotka and Iultinsky municipalities of the Chukotka autonomous territory, on an area of more than 1 million 819 thousand hectares.

Beringia has a rather long and difficult history. Back in June 1990, the Soviet Union and the United States decided to organize a Soviet-US international park in Chukotka and Alaska to preserve unique natural and cultural values. It took more than 20 years to transform the political agreements into real solutions, to take into account as fully as possible the task of preserving the unique biodiversity of the region and the interests of the indigenous population, on the one hand, and on the other - the socio-economic development of the region.

*Source:* Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

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## *Day of reserves and national parks in Russia*

On January 11, the Russian Federation celebrated the Day of reserves and national parks on the initiative of a number of environmental organizations. This day is an important occasion to draw attention to the problems of the reserve system in Russia, which in 2013 celebrates its 96th anniversary.

In autumn 1916, Russia passed the first legal act regulating the procedure for the establishment and functioning of reserves - On the establishment of rules of game reserves. It was printed in issue 304 of Laws and orders of the Government, published by the Governing Senate October 30, 1916.

Shortly after this event, on January 11, 1917 (December 29, 1916, Old Style) the first national reserve in Russia's history, Barguzin (Buryatia), was established on the shores of Lake Baikal, and it continues to operate to this day. The reserve was established to protect the Barguzin sable, whose numbers was drastically reduced in the early twentieth century.

Creating protected areas is a traditional and very effective form of environmental management in the Russian Federation. Russia's environmental doctrine sees the creation and development of protected areas of different levels as one of the main directions of environmental state policy.

The purpose of creating such areas, fully or partially exempted from economic use, is the preservation of biological and landscape diversity as the basis of the biosphere.

The system of protected areas in Russia, which has evolved over almost 100 years, now includes 102 national nature reserves, 43 national parks, 70 federal state nature reserves, 1940 regional state nature reserves, 7300 natural monuments (including 28 of federal significance), and 58 natural parks of regional importance. In addition, more than 2,300 protected areas of other categories of regional and local significance have been established under the laws of the Federation.

The total area of all of these protected areas is 208 million hectares (including land with inland waters - 197 million ha or 11.3% of the country). The most valuable natural complexes and objects are part of the federal system of protected areas, which is based on the state nature reserves, national parks and federal reserves.

As noted the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Sergei Donskoy, "Establishing this unique system is one of the most significant environmental achievements of our country. This year we will

continue to develop and expand the network of federal protected areas, as well as educational tourism in reserves and national parks."

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

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## ***Developing the resources of the continental shelf***

On January 15, 2013, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation **Sergey Donskoy** spoke at a meeting in Novaya Urenga on the prospects of development of the resources of Russia's continental shelf of Russia under the leadership of Prime Minister **Dmitry Medvedev**. "The role of the continental shelf in the world energy balance is difficult to overestimate. Interest in the resources of the shelf has been steadily increasing, due to the objective facts of depletion of traditional oil and gas provinces on land, as evidenced by international analysts. According to recognized experts, over the past 10 years, more than two thirds of the hydrocarbon reserves have been discovered on the shelves, and for the last 10 years, more than 90% of the value of the newly discovered assets have been concentrated precisely on the shelves," said the head of Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia.

S. Donskoy stressed: *"Russia's continental shelf has a huge resource potential. The initial aggregate hydrocarbon resources are estimated at around 100 billion tons of fuel equivalent, and on the Arctic shelf 76 billion tons of fuel equivalent. Unique gas condensate fields have been found on the shelf: Stockman, Leningrad, Rusanovskoye gas field and several others. The pace and timing of the development of this unique resource potential of the Russian shelf is directly correlated with the geological knowledge of the shelf and the pace of exploration work such as seismic surveys, exploratory drilling, and the amount of exploration drilling."*

According to the Minister, the Russian shelf is characterized by a very low degree of geological knowledge - 10 times lower than the U.S. continental shelf of the Chukchi Sea and 20 times below the Norwegian shelf. The coating density of seismic work in the most promising waters of the Arctic seas, except in the Barents and Pechora, are not more than 0.15 km per sq. km, and for the eastern seas - less than 0.1 km to 1 square km. Without a significant increase of knowledge of the shelf there will be no major discoveries and the prospects of large-scale development will move beyond 2030.

*"As for now, 107 licenses on the continental shelf of Russia have been issued, including licenses issued under state contracts, and in transition zones. The pace of the work under the licenses issued is so far not enough to develop the shelf. Thus, in 2008-2010 11 bore holes were drilled and four finds made on the shelf. For comparison, in Norway during the same period 110 wells were drilled and 44 discoveries made. Offshore production in 2011 amounted to 13 million tons of oil and 55 billion cubic meters of gas, mainly in the Okhotsk Sea and the Caspian Sea,"* said S.Donskoy.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

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## ***Eliminating accumulated environmental damage***

During the "government hour" January 23, 2013, Russia's Minister of Natural Resources **Sergey Donskoy** held a presentation for the Federal Council. In his speech, the Minister informed about the progress on eliminating accumulated environmental damage in the country. S. Donskoy noted: *"By the end of 2011 more than 31 billion tons of waste associated with past economic activity had accumulated in Russia. In addition, each year about 1 billion cubic meters of waste rock is taken up to the surface and the area occupied by waste is growing by 300-400 thousand hectares every year."*

The Ministry's initial inventory revealed 194 territories in a state of environmental crisis. Of these 77 objects of past environmental damage were selected. The analysis showed that the specific localization of objects of past environmental damage is related to the spatial distribution of the country's industrial sector in view of geographical and natural-resource aspects: these objects are, above all, located at the locations of mining, heavy and processing industry, and the military-industrial complex.

*The following priority areas for the implementation of pilot projects to clean up the country were identified: the Arctic region, Baikal - the national pride of Russia, and Nizhegorodsky oblast, where the "Black hole" dump site and the "White Sea" slurry pond are located," said S. Donskoy.*

The Russian Natural Resources Minister reported on the work started on cleaning territories in the archipelago of Franz Josef Land, Wrangel Island, the operation area of the former Dzhida tungsten-molybdenum plant, in the Nenets Autonomous District, as well as in area of Russian presence on Svalbard.

*"Among the contaminated islands of Franz Josef Land, the Alexandra Land Island has been completely cleaned, on Hooker Island work has begun, pollution has been reduced by more than 9 tons and technical reclamation of over 50 hectares of disturbed land has been carried out. In the Amderma village in the Nenets Autonomous District work has been done on disposal of five objects submerged in the water with a total mass of 100 tons, as well as work on collecting scrap metal and reclaiming land. The total amount of eliminated contamination in Amderma totaled 5.83 tons, and technical reclamation of 5.3 hectares of disturbed land was carried out. The volume of recycled waste in the territories of Russian presence on Svalbard in the townships Kolsbey, Barentsburg, Pyramid, and on the west shore of Grønffjord was 2.3 tons, and 1.9 thousand tons of oil-contaminated soil has been cleaned," said the Minister.*

S. Donskoy also noted that the outcome of the pilot projects is not only the restoration of the natural environment, but also working out the principles of such projects, and obtaining experience for future use.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

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## ***Sport and the Environment***

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation and the International Olympic Committee on organizing and conducting the X World Conference on Sport and the Environment. The signing ceremony in Lausanne January 25, 2013, was attended by Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment **Rinat Gizatulín** and President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) **Jacques Rogge**. The purpose of the Memorandum is to assist in the organization of the X World Conference of the IOC Sport and Environment Commission and the meetings of the IOC Sport and Environment Commission to be held in Sochi from October 30 to November 2, 2013.

Preparing and conducting the Conference is on the list of socially important events in the organization of the XXII Olympic Winter Games and XI Paralympic Winter Games in 2014, and the course of its implementation is under the control of the Government of the Russian Federation. The conference is held under the environmental support to the preparation and holding of the XXII Olympic Winter Games and XI Paralympic Winter Games of 2014.

The conference will start a large-scale public debate on sustainable development and improving the socio-economic policy. For the successful implementation of the project, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Sports, the Russian Olympic Committee, the Administration of Sochi and the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee have combined their efforts and resources.

The Russian side will ensure that the interaction with the IOC and UNEP in the preparation and conduct of the Conference will be performed based on a perfect, prompt and constructive exchange of information to facilitate successful project preparation and conduct of the Conference.

The Conference's open discussions, including plenary sessions, as well as professional panel discussions and workshops, will discuss the main theme: Positive sustainable change through sport. The event is traditionally held once every second year, including in the Olympic capitals, and brings together representatives and partners of the Olympic Movement, government agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations working in the field of environmental protection and sport, business and industry representatives, research institutes, media, etc.

R. Gizatulin stressed: *"A high level of understanding and trust between our organizations helps to successfully implement the Olympic project. This conference aims to promote the popularization of sports, education, culture and environmental protection."* The Deputy Minister thanked the IOC experts for their open and constructive attitude as well as their active participation in the preparations for the Olympic Games in 2014.

*Source:* Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

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## ***Russian-Swedish cooperation***

Representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia have held a meeting with a delegation from the Kingdom of Sweden. During the meeting 15 January 2013, the sides discussed prospects of bilateral cooperation in the field of environmental protection. The Russian delegation was headed by the director of the Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment **Nuritdin Inamov**, and the Swedish delegation by Deputy Minister of Sustainable Development and Environment of Sweden, **Anders Flanking**.

One matter addressed was Russia's participation in the meeting of Ministers of the Environment on the Arctic (5-6 February 2013, Jukkasjärvi, Sweden). It is expected that the meeting will be attended by high-level representatives of all member countries of the Arctic Council and its working groups: Russia, Canada, USA, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Greenland, as well as representatives of observer countries of the Arctic Council. The Russian delegation will be headed by the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation Sergey Donskoy.

The participants expressed their interest in the issue of eliminating pollution in the Arctic and in expanding cooperation in this sphere. Environmental issues associated with the negotiation process of Russia's accession to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) were also discussed and the Swedish side expressed its readiness to support Russia in this matter. The parties discussed issues of cooperation in the framework of the Helsinki Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea (HELCOM) and the Russian participation in the meeting of Ministers in Copenhagen in October 2013. During the meeting the possibility of holding an event in 2013 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of bilateral relations with Sweden on environment issues was discussed.

Nuritdin Inamov informed the Swedish delegation on legislative initiatives in the field of environmental protection, as well as the upcoming April 2013 High Level Conference of the Baltic region to protect the ecology of the Baltic Sea, which is scheduled in St. Petersburg. The conference will be attended by the heads of government of 12 countries of the Baltic region, representatives of UN agencies, the European Union, the OECD, the HELCOM Secretariat, heads of relevant Russian agencies and entities, as well as interested business entities.

The meeting participants noted the importance of continued cooperation to protect nature and the potential for further development.

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

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## ***The Environmental Protection Programme***

The Russian governmental Environmental protection programme for the years 2012-2020 (Decree of the Russian Federation of December 27, 2012 № 2552-r) has been published on the web site of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

*"The main purpose of the state programme is to improve environmental safety and biodiversity of natural systems of the Russian Federation. The document is intended to be a basis for the solution of key environmental issues, it joins into a single system both regulatory measures aimed at stimulating economic environment-oriented "green growth", and practical measures to improve the environment,"* said the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation **Sergey Donskoy**.

To achieve this end, the following key objectives are addressed: reducing the total human impact on the environment by improving the environmental efficiency of the economy, preserving and restoring biological diversity, improving the functioning of Hydrometeorological and Environmental Monitoring, organizing and maintaining works and research in the Antarctic.

The programme includes five sub-programmes: Regulation of the quality of the environment, Biodiversity of Russia, Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring, Organization and maintenance of works and research in the Antarctic, Ensuring implementation of the Russian Federation state programme Environmental Protection for the years 2012-2020, and also the federal target programme Protection of Lake Baikal and the socio-economic development of the Baikal natural territory 2012-2020 year. The total funding of the programme from the federal budget in 2012-2020 is 268.4 billion rubles.

Implementing the programme is expected to give the following results in quantitative terms (compared to the base year 2007): reduced emissions of harmful substances (pollutants) from stationary sources per unit of GDP - by 2.2 times, and reducing the number of cities with high and very high air pollution - by 2.7 times. It is planned to improve the environmental conditions for the 36.1 million Russians now living in cities with high and very high levels of air pollution (where the air pollution index is more than 7), and reduce the amount of generated waste of all classes of risk per unit of GDP - by 1,6 times.

The environmental conditions will be improved for more than 750 000 Russians living in areas with an unfavourable- environmental situation, exposed to negative impacts associated with economic or other activities, and the percentage of the Russian Federation area occupied by protected areas at all levels will increase to 13.5% of the country's territory. In addition, implementing the programme will achieve indicators of socio-economic development foreseen in the Concept of long-term socio-economic development of the Russian Federation until 2020.

The same site - that of the Ministry of Natural Resources - has also published the Russian Federation state programme on forestry development in the years 2013-2020 (Decree of the Russian Federation of December 28, 2012 № 2593-p).

Source: Press Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation.

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## *Wild reindeer in the Barents Sea region*

WWF initiates work on the preservation of wild reindeer in the Barents Sea region. On January 29 Arkhangelsk experts assessed threats to the species in the European part of Russia and outlined a plan further action.

The platform for the dialogue was the office of the young Russian Arctic National Park. In his welcome speech, its director, **Roman Ershov**, said that he wanted to see the practical result of the discussion already in the coming field season. Wild Novaya Zemlya reindeer is not only Red Book species, but also an object of cultural tourism for the guests of the archipelago. In addition, it is the least studied population in north-west Russia.



Wild reindeer, the standard type on open spaces of the Russian Arctic and Subarctic.

*Photo by T. Golubeva/  
Laplandsky Nature Reserve*

The meeting participants were impressed with the experience of colleagues from Komi: in the region, wild reindeer is studied by satellite imagery, GPS-collars, genetic studies and modelling of vegetation change depending on the possible influences. This system makes it possible study migration paths, the number of animals and the main areas of distribution. It was decided to use this progressive experience in other regions. The experts will also consider establishing a programme for the reintroduction of reindeer.

Among the planned events of the coming field season is counting reindeer in the Lapland Reserve, which is to be held with the support of WWF, and research in the Northern Island of Novaya Zemlya.

*"Every year lost means lost reindeer, so it is necessary to act quickly: to look for ways to maintain the population and the funding for this work."* These words closed the meeting of experts. The number of reindeer in the north-west Russia is steadily declining, so delay is indeed impossible.

Source: WWF Russia

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