



Case study 3

PROTECTION OF NATIONAL NATURE PARKS CAMPAIGN

The case

In 2009 in Ukraine about 30 national parks and reserves were created. The area of protected areas for the first time exceeded 5 % from the country territory. This was a serious step towards sustainable development and harmonization of its environmental policy in the context of European integration.

But next year the situation in nature protection had changed sharply. The registration of majority of new protected areas have been suspended. The legal requirements and government strategic plans in this area were ignored.

The appeal of deputies of Nicolaev Regional Council from 16, April 2010 and a number of district councils to the President of Ukraine Nicolaev to abolish the status of national parks "Bug Gard" and "Biloberezhzhya Svyatoslava" (Kinburn Spit) on the Black Sea coast had the most resonance in this period. In the guise of protection of rights of several local councils the representatives of local authorities intended to change the purpose of valuable lands.

The change process

Civil campaign «For National Parks» was organized as a public reaction to deputy appeal. The goal of the campaign was not to allow the elimination of National parks by the President of Ukraine.

Organizers of campaign were the Regional Black Sea network of public organizations, youth organization "Democratic Alliance" and Nikolaev regional charitable foundation "Indigo". More than 40 public organizations and bodies of student government of Nikolaev region have joined them.



The beginning of the campaign was officially announced at a press conference held on 21, April 2010 at the Nikolaev municipality. By this time the public has already organized a picket at the walls of the Regional Council and announced a petition to support the parks.

It was necessary to consolidate around the problem as more NGOs as possible, to attract local and national mass-media, to hold the informational companies on the territories where national parks are located, to conduct a survey among local people and organize a mass gathering of signatures for appeal to the President of Ukraine, to achieve public recognition of legitimacy of the appeal of deputies of the regional council and thus can not abolish the status of national parks.





Participants of the action have visited localities, which are situated on the territory of National parks, with the purpose of making public inquiry and specifying opinion of local community about future of objects of nature-reserved fund. Thousands of signatures have confirmed that the majority of people have supported the creation of reserved territories.

More than 50 collective and individual appeals were sent to higher authorities. The campaign was supported by more than 40 associations of Nikolaev and Ukraine, in particular, Nikolaev Youth Municipality, Nikolaev City Volunteers Club, Public Council at the State Department of Environmental Protection in the Nikolaev region, the National Ecological Center of Ukraine, Ukrainian Society for Protection of Monuments of History and Culture, the environmental group "Pechenigy" (Kharkiv), forces of nature "Green Future" (Kyiv) and others. In addition, another 108 non-governmental organizations and individual citizens of our country, Moldova and Russia appealed to the President and Prime Minister of Ukraine and called to prevent the destruction of protected areas of the state.

Within the framework of the action the press conferences in Nikolaev and Kiev (Agencies UkrInform, UNIAN) were held.

The outcome

The first response from the Administration of President of Ukraine dated 07.05.2010 was received by National Ecological Centre of Ukraine – one of the most active participants of the campaign. The letter assured that development of nature protected areas is one of the main priorities of governmental policy on environmental protection, and therefore is under the attention of the President of Ukraine. "President of Ukraine strongly supports initiatives to expand the network of nature reserves and national parks, but also the establishment of new institutions – national parks' Biloberezhzhya Svyatoslav" and "Bug Guard" are under his control," – said the in the letter.

The statement of Ministry for Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine that this ministry «supports the position of citizens of Nikolaev region on barring the elimination of the status of National Natural Parks of objects of nature-reserved fund «Beloberezhie Sviatoslava» and «Bugsy Gard» was the answer to the campaign.

Thus, the Administration of the President of Ukraine for the first time voiced the position of President Victor Yanukovich on the development of Nature Protected Areas and supports the establishment of new national parks. Later, the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine by its letter dated June 24, 2010 № 12556/26/10-10 on the order of Administration of the President on June 9, 2010 № 22/056237-14 informed the participants of the campaign, that the Ministry supports the local people of Nykolaev region to prevent the abolition of the status of national parks "Bug Gard" and



"Biloberezhzhya Svyatoslava" and reminded that under the Law of Ukraine "On Nature Reserve Fund of Ukraine" elimination of the status of territories and protected areas objects is carried out in accordance with Articles 51 - 53 of this Act in coordination with the central executive authority in the field of environmental protection on the basis of appropriate expert examination.

Lessons learned

In consequence, an attempt to review Nikolaev Regional Council decisions on the establishment of national parks "Bug Guard" and "Biloberezhzhya Svyatoslav" failed, and a civil campaign "National parks have!" successfully fulfilled its mission. The public has defended the high nature protection status of the most valuable natural territories, pearls of nature of the Black Sea Coast!

The civil company "For National Parks" showed the possibility of successful effect of civil society institutes on the highest levels of power in Ukraine. The principals of rule of law and environmental democracy were realized.

