



SUPPLEMENT
TO THE DIGEST "GREEN BELARUS"

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION CENTER
"ECO-INFO"
CENTRAL SCIENTIFIC LIBRARY NAS BELARUS

№ 6 (10),
JULY, 2014
MINSK, BELARUS



BELARUS PRESENTS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AT UN SESSION

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The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus will monitor wildlife as part of the national environmental monitoring system of the Republic of Belarus.

The decision was approved by Decree No.379 "Concerning amendments and additions to the Belarus President's Decree No.244 of 13 June 2011" which Alexander Lukashenko signed on 28 July, BelTA learnt from the Belarusian press service. The decree brings the financing of the events under the state program to secure the proper functioning and development of the national environmental monitoring system of the Republic of Bel-

rus for 2011-2015 in line with the law on the national budget 2014. "The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus has been vested with carrying out a monitoring of wildlife as part of the national environmental monitoring system of the Republic of Belarus.

Apart from that, the NASB was named the ordering customer of a new project under the program to monitor protective plantings (along roads and railways as well as on agricultural lands)," the press service said. Under the decree, starting from 2015 the research and information center of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment will conduct regular monitoring over pollutant emissions from big stationary sources, disposal of waste waters.

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29.07.2014

BELARUS PLANS TO SET UP TRANSBOUNDARY CONSERVATION AREAS WITH LITHUANIA, LATVIA, UKRAINE

Belarus plans to set up transboundary conservation areas with Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine.

MINSK, 10 July (BelTA) - Belarus plans to set up transboundary conservation objects with Lithuania, Latvia and Ukraine. This is envisaged in the national strategy to develop the system of designated conservation areas until 1 January 2030 approved by the Council of Ministers' Resolution No. 649 of 2 July 2014. The document will come into force on 1 January 2015, BelTA has learned.

The strategy provides for the establishment of the transboundary designated conservation areas, including "Vileity-Adutiskis" (Belarus-Lithuania), "Richie-Silene" (Belarus-Latvia), "Olmany Mires-Perebrody" (Belarus, Ukraine). There are plans to set up the transboundary biosphere reserves. It is planned that at least three designated conservation areas will be assigned the international status.

The national strategy to develop the system of designated conservation areas is based on the scientific recommendations by the Scientific and Practical Center for Bioresources of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the international experience in developing strategic documents aimed at the development of the system of designated conservation areas.

The system of designated conservation areas of Belarus already includes 1213 objects, including 1 reserve, 4 national parks, 85 nature reserves with the national status (31 landscape, 38 biological, 16 hydrological), 249 local nature reserves, 306 nature monuments with the national status and 568 local ones. "The implementation of the national strategy to develop the system of

designated conservation areas by 1 January 2030 will fully complete the formation of the system of protected areas," said Natalia Zharkina, deputy head of the department of biological and landscape diversity at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Protection.

According to Natalia Zharkina, one of the critical environmental issues for Belarus is the overgrowing of the lowlands with wood-shrub vegetation.

"Loss of peatlands leads to the extinction of some plant and animal species, the increasing incidence of such natural phenomena as droughts and storms, increased risk of fires," she said. The strategy provides for preservation of the natural or slightly modified lowlands ecosystems. There are plans to clear around 3,500 hectares of lowlands of shrubs and reeds with the use of modern technologies and equipment.

It is expected that by 2030, the number of tourists visiting the designated conservation areas will increase by not less than 80%. Plans have been made to develop such tourism activities as bird watching, botanical and scientific tourism. It is planned to develop tourist infrastructure and raise public awareness of the status of designated conservation areas. It is expected that the information

on the designated conservation areas will be widely available in the Internet and media," added Natalia Zharkina.

In addition, the document is designed to improve the mechanisms of management and protection of the designated conservation areas, implementation of monitoring activities, and regulation of economic activities.

Protection and development of designated conservation areas on the



territory of Belarus is exercised on the basis of several documents, including the socio-economic development of Belarus for the period of 2011-2015, the national strategy of development and management of designated conservation areas until 1 January 2015, the plan of rational distribution of designated conservation areas of national significance by 1 January 2015.

During the implementation of these regulations, measures have been taken to improve the regulatory framework of the protection of designated conservation areas. For example, the country has formalized the concept of the national ecological network and its elements, the issues of establishment of biosphere reserves, conservation of typical and rare natural landscapes and biotopes, etc.

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10.07.2014

UNDP considering three new projects in Belarus

The United Nations Development Program jointly with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Belarus are mulling over three new projects, BelTA learnt from UNDP Coordinator in Belarus Igor Chulba following the official opening ceremony of the Ozeravki ecological path at the Yelnya Reserve in Miory District.

One of the projects is aimed at the development of wind energy in Belarus. "We would like to provide cooperation to the country in the development of renewable energy resources. The theme meets the priorities of the donor, the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project application has been approved, and now we are completing the preparations for this large-scale project," Igor Chulba said.

The major partner is the Energy Efficiency Department. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is the performer. The five-year project will be financed by the UNDP and GEF. Its budget slightly exceeds \$3 million. "The UNDP technical support will include the development of the legal framework, business plans to free investors from risks in the future and prove that our projects can and will work in Belarus," the coordinator added.

Another project, named Green Cities of Belarus, is aimed at supporting green urban development in small and medium-sized cities of Belarus.



The project highlights environmental issues in urban infrastructure planning. The project will require about \$13 million. An estimated \$3.1 of them will be provided by the United Nations Development Program. The project will be implemented in the cities of Polotsk, Novopolotsk and Novogrudok. Following a request of the local authorities Novogrudok will focus on economical and ecological lighting of streets and public places. An optimal transport infrastructure will be developed in Polotsk and Novopolotsk being a united conglomerate.

The country is working on an application for a new project to preserve biodiversity. Last year Belarus completed the implementation of the first project, Biodiversity, which aimed to include the issues of biodiversity conservation into the land development plans. The project was implemented in ten pilot districts of Belarus.

The opening of the 1.5km long ecological path Ozeravki was held at the Yelnya Reserve on 25 July. It is one of the longest ecological trails in Belarus. It was created as part of a joint EU/UNDP project to assist the development of the universal structure of international cooperation in environmental protection in the Republic of Belarus to draw the public attention to Europe's biggest highmoor, a unique specimen of the Ice Age.

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28.07.2014

SPOROVSKY RESERVE TO HOST SCYTHING FESTIVAL IN AUGUST

Scythemen from Belarus and other countries will take part in the Sporovskiye Senokosy 2014 scything championship which will take place at the Sporovsky Reserve on 23 August, BelTA learned from director of the reserve Vadim Protasevich.



The Sporovsky Reserve will host the national scything competition for the 8th time. This year it will also host the 9th European scything championship. This competition will take place in Belarus for the first time. The previous editions of the European championship took place at the Biebrza National Park in Poland. The international scything competition will take place at the Sporovsky Reserve because it has unique lowland bogs. Moreover, Belarusian scythemen regularly demonstrate good results at international competitions, Vadim Protasevich said.

Participation entries shall be submitted before 10 August. According to the director of the reserve, they have already received requests from all regions of Belarus as well as from Poland and Russia. According to the rules, participants of the competition must have their own scythes and instruments. Teams of two scythemen and a captain should cut fenny grass on a 100m long and 3m wide strip of land. The best scythemen participate in the individual competition.

The festival has a diverse program. Belarus will host the first bog football competition.

The festival will also feature a fair of projects as part of the GEF Small Grants Program. It will present ten most successful projects sponsored by the fund in Belarus.

The festival will showcase performances of the best art groups in the region, namely Khmelevskiye Volotsugi, Svyatlitsa, Sporovsky Okolot and others. The festival will be crowned by the performance of the legendary Belarusian band Palats. Visitors of the festival will be able to buy souvenirs made by local artisans.

The ecological festival Sporovskiye Senokosy 2014 is organized by the Bereza District Executive Committee and the Sporovsky Reserve with the assistance of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry, the GEF Small Grants Program.

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25.07.2014

YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALISTS FROM BELARUS, RUSSIA GATHER IN BREST

The participants of the 5th gathering of young environmentalists of Belarus and Russia "Environment Without Borders" were welcomed in Brest on 22 July. The gathering started from a patriotic campaign at the Brest Hero Fortress Memorial, BelTA has learnt.

The rally was timed to the 70th anniversary of Belarus' liberation from the Nazi invaders and the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War. The rally was held under the motto "Sacred flame of the Great Victory unites children and youth of Belarus and Russia". Representatives of the delegations laid flowers at the Eternal Flame. State Secretary of the Belarus-Russia Union State Grigory Rapota sent a welcoming address to the participants of the rally. Taking part in the meeting were representatives of the Union State Permanent Committee, Belarus' Education Ministry, the environmental center Ecology and Local Lore.

The gathering brought together about 70 high school students from all over Belarus and a dozen Russian regions, including Bashkortostan, Krasnoyarsk, Moscow, Krasnodar, and the Mari El Republic. The theoretical part of the contest will be held at the Masherov Lyceum, the practical part will be conducted in Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park. For three days the young people will work

at field laboratories where the aspiring soil scientists, ornithologists, entomologists, botanists and hydrobiologists from the two countries will conduct individual and team studies in their field of expertise. Their knowledge and skills will be assessed by scientists and experienced educators from Belarus and Russia.

The program of the gathering includes thematic soirees, a quiz, an eco-disc, excursions across Belovezhskaya Pushcha and the nature museum, the Brest Hero Fortress, the palaces of Pruzhany, Ruzhany and Kossovo, the estate of the Belarusian Father Frost. The final conference "Study. Research. Experiment" will be conducted at the Masherov Lyceum on the last day of the gathering on 28 July. On this day research projects will be presented and winners will be awarded.

The gathering of young environmentalists from the two countries is held once in two years upon the initiative of the Education Ministry of Belarus and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. The first gathering "Environment Without Borders" was conducted at Narochansky National Park in 2006.

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23.07.2014



FIRST COMPONENTS OF BELARUS' ANTARCTIC STATION TO BE DELIVERED TO ANTARCTICA IN DECEMBER

The first components of the Belarusian Antarctic station will be delivered to Antarctica and unloaded at the Russian Antarctic station Molodezhnaya in mid-December 2014, Deputy Head of the National Center for Polar Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, head of the Belarusian Antarctic expedition Alexei Gaidashov told BelTA.

"The deadlines for delivering the first components for the construction of the Belarusian Antarctic station have been finalized today at the meeting of the Belarus-Russia working group tasked to implement the agreement on bilateral cooperation in Antarctica," Alexei Gaidashov said.

In his words, the research vessel Akademik Fyodorov will leave for Antarctica from Saint Petersburg on 1 November. The vessel will approach the continent near the area where the Belarusian Antarctic expedition is stationed (near Mount Vechernyaya). After that, a helicopter will take individual components of the future station ashore.

The vessel will also carry the participants of the 7th Belarusian Antarctic expedition, fuel, gear and foodstuffs. "The expedition will last for about 3.5 months. The Belarusian Antarctic team will conduct preparatory works relat-



ed to the construction of the Belarusian Antarctic station, like assembly of foundations for the subsequent mounting of structural modules," Alexei Gaidashov said.

He emphasized that the Russian partners have confirmed their readiness to provide organizational and logistic support during the construction of the station.

The Belarus-Russia working group tasked to implement the agreement on bilateral cooperation in Antarctica convened in Minsk on 15-16 July. The group assessed the work done and discussed cooperation prospects.

The plan of the Belarusian Antarctic station construction was drafted in 2012 upon the instruction of the Council of Ministers, approved by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and agreed with the Finance Ministry. The first phase of the station will be built by 2018. The facility will consist of 8-10 modules and will have everything polar researchers might need.

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16.07.2014

RUSSIAN POLAR EXPLORERS INVITE BELARUSIAN RESEARCHERS TO STUDY LAKE VOSTOK TOGETHER



Russian polar explorers are interested in the joint study of subglacial Lake Vostok together with Belarusian partners, head of the Russian Antarctic Expedition Valery Lukin told reporters on 16 July, BelTA has learnt.

According to Valery Lukin, the study of Antarctica's biggest subglacial lake can be a joint project if Belarusian scientists are willing to join it.

The scientists are determined to drill down to Lake Vostok for the second time during the Antarctic expedition this year. "Now the winter is in full swing in Antarctica, while the summer will last from December to February. We will do it in the summer, as ice will melt during this period," Valery Lukin said.

After many years of drilling, the Russian researchers managed to reach the lake during the Antarctic expedition of 2013. The subsequent research yielded important discoveries, including a DNA of an unknown bacterium. "This DNA was not listed in the international database that contains genetic materials from all over the world," Valery Lukin informed.

Lake Vostok is Antarctica's biggest subglacial lake located about 4,000 meters beneath the surface of the ice. The lake is 250km long, 50km wide and over 1,200 meters deep. This lake is unique first of all because it was isolated from the surface of the Earth for several million years.

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16.07.2014

Belovezhskaya Pushcha to host youth ecology forum

A meeting of young ecologists of Belarus and Russia Ecology without Borders will take place in Brest Oblast on 22-29 July, BelTA learned from head of the ecology department of the National Center of Ecology and Regional Ethnography Lidia Kalinovskaya.

Partaking in the forum will be 70 students of schools, lyceums and gymnasiums from all regions of Belarus and more than a dozen of Russian regions, namely Bashkortostan, Krasnoyarsk, Moscow, Krasnodar, the Republic of Mari El. The jury will include experienced teachers from Belarus and Russia.

The opening and closing ceremonies will take place in Brest. The contest will be held in Belovezhskaya Pushcha where young scientists will conduct individual and team research in various ecological disciplines.

The meeting of young ecologists is held once in two years under the auspices of the Belarusian Education Ministry and the Russian Education and Science Ministry. It is supported by the Permanent Committee of the Union State. The forum aims to promote Belarus-Russia integration cooperation and strengthen friendly ties between students.

The first meeting Ecology without Borders took place at the Naroch National Park in 2006.

The program of the forum includes visits to the Brest Hero Fortress, Pruzhany, Ruzhany, Kossovo, the Father Frost estate.



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16.07.2013

UKRAINIAN ENTERPRISE STARTS MAKING CONDENSATE PUMPS FOR BELARUSIAN NUCLEAR STATION

The Sumy-based Ukrainian company PAO Sumy Frunze NPO has started making condensate pumps for the Belarusian nuclear power plant, representatives of the company told BelTA.

In line with terms of the contract the Ukrainian company has to design and make two modifications of pumps. The pumps are meant for the first and second power-generating units of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. The first batch of merchandise (three pumps for each modification) is expected to be delivered to the Ostrovets construction site in 2015. The second delivery is scheduled for early 2017.

According to Alexander Chegrinets, Head of the Sales Office of the Ukrainian company, the company has been chosen thanks to the long record of making condensate pumps. "Our engi-

neering and technical divisions have taken into account all the requirements of Belarusian colleagues regarding the parameters of the equipment and now the production of the equipment is about to begin," he remarked.

Construction workers started pouring concrete into the foundation of the facilities that will make up the first power-generating unit of the Belarusian nuclear power plant at the Ostrovets site in November 2013. The Belarusian nuclear power plant will boast two power-generating units with the total generating capacity of up to 2,400MW (1,200MW each). The



Russian design AES-2006 has been chosen to build the power plant. The design is fully compliant with international standards and IAEA recommendations. The Russian merged company OAO NIAEP - ZAO Atomstroyexport (ASE) is the general designer and the general contractor for building the power plant. The timeline for implementing the project is stipulated by the general contract. The first power-generating unit of the nuclear power plant is scheduled for launch in November 2018.

belta.by,
29.07.2013



SUPPLEMENT "NEWS & EVENTS IN BELARUS" TO THE DIGEST "GREEN BELARUS".

http://ecoinfo.bas-net.by/ecology-belarus/ecology_news_in_Belarus.html

The supplement was established in 2013 as an informational and educational resource that can be freely accessed by all users interested in ecology and environmental problems.

It is a digest of the most important news and events.

Published once a month.

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№ 6 (10),
JULY, 2014

REPRINT WITH REFERENCE TO GB

LEAVES IN ENGLISH

INTERNET-BULLETIN
[HTTP://ECOINFO.BAS-NET.BY/ECOLOGY-BELARUS/ECOLOGY NEWS IN BELARUS.HTML](http://ecoinfo.bas-net.by/ecology-belarus/ecology_news_in_Belarus.html)

The room contains materials prepared by the news agency correspondents BELTA.

WORKED ON THE PRODUCTION OF:
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BELARUS, RUSSIA TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ABOUT NUCLEAR SAFETY, RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Belarus and Russia will exchange information about nuclear safety, radioactive waste and transportation of radioactive substances, both routinely and in the event of a risk of radioactive emissions. This is envisaged by the Belarus-Russia intergovernmental agreement on notification about nuclear accidents and exchange of information about nuclear and radiation safety, BelTA learnt from the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Department of the Emergencies Ministry of Belarus (Gosatomnadzor). The agreement has been approved by the Council of Ministers' resolution.

"The information will be exchanged free of charge. The agencies responsible for the implementation of the agreement are the Emergencies Ministry of Belarus and the Russian state corporation Rosatom," Gosatomnadzor informed.

This is a framework agreement, which means that the two countries need to flesh it out. Specialists of Belarus and Russia will determine the communication channels, forms, procedures and regulations of information exchange.

According to Spokesman for the Emergencies Ministry of Belarus Vitaly Novitsky, the agreement is part of the Belarus-Russia cooperation in implementing Belarus' first nuclear energy program.

The Belarus-Russia cooperation in the nuclear field is multi-faceted. It includes cooperation

between Belarusian companies and Russian nuclear technologies suppliers, as well as interaction between the governments, financial institutions, nuclear and radiation safety watchdogs. Examples of efficient cooperation between the regulating agencies of the two countries include the first joint comprehensive inspection of the construction of the first block of the Belarusian nuclear power plant (BelNPP). Taking part in the inspection were representatives of Belarusian nuclear watchdogs and Russia's Federal Service for Ecological, Technological and Nuclear Supervision (Rostekhnadzor). Russian specialists help train their Belarusian counterparts and provide assistance in super-

vision of the acceptance of Russia-made equipment for the BelNPP.

The legal framework of the Belarus-Russia cooperation in nuclear energy includes another five documents. Among them are intergovernmental cooperation agreements on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes dated 28 May 2009, the agreement on cooperation in constructing the Belarusian nuclear power plant dated 15 March 2011, the agreement on the provision of the state export loan to the Belarusian government to build the BelNPP dated 25 November 2011.

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14.07.2014

Nuclear oversight division at Belarusian nuclear station construction site by year end

A permanent division of the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Department of the Belarusian Emergencies Ministry will start working at the construction site of the Belarusian nuclear power plant in Ostrovets by the end of 2014, BelTA learned from Oleg Sobolev, Head of the Communications and Public Information Office of the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Department of the Belarusian Emergencies Ministry.

The division to be deployed at the construction site is supposed to comprise about ten people. Accommodation will be provided to the specialists in Ostrovets, said the source. For now they oversee the construction of the nuclear power plant via scheduled and unscheduled inspections.

Oleg Sobolev also said that the future inspectors that the division will employ are getting complete theoretical and practical training. In particular, representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency will be in Belarus on 15-18 July. The IAEA representatives will offer large-scale training to Belarusian specialists with regard to inspections, he remarked. A visit to the Ostrovets construction site is part of the itinerary.

The source pointed out that the rapid development of the Belarusian nuclear program is the main factor driving the rapid growth of the number of personnel employed by the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Department of the Belarusian Emergencies Ministry. As of 1 July 2013 the Department hired 35



new employees, including 16 university graduates.

An educational seminar focusing on basics of state safety supervision during the construction of a nuclear power plant was held in the National Higher School Institute on 8-9 July for young professionals. The seminar was meant to raise the professional level of oversight efforts during the construction of the nuclear power plant. Specialists of Russian FSUE VO Safety took care of educating Belarusian specialists. Young professionals will apply this knowledge during inspections at the construction site of the Belarusian nuclear power plant.

belta.by,
10.07.2014

Concept to develop Belarus' energy grid till 2020 drafted

A draft concept to guide effectiveness taking into account the development of the national the commissioning of the Belarusian nuclear power plant, said the Belarusian nuclear power plant, said the Belarusian source.

The draft concept outlines goals, tasks, indicators, deadlines, customers and executors of the government program. The document also provides a preliminary evaluation of the necessary re- zation, better reliability and cost sources and possible sources of



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23.07.2014