IUCN Conservation Outlook Assessment 2017 **(archived)**
Finalised on 10 November 2017

Please note: this is an archived Conservation Outlook Assessment for Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area. To access the most up-to-date Conservation Outlook Assessment for this site, please visit https://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org.

Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area

SITE INFORMATION

Country:
India
Inscribed in: 2014
Criteria:
(x)

Site description:

This National Park in the western part of the Himalayan Mountains in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh is characterized by high alpine peaks, alpine meadows and riverine forests. The 90,540 ha property includes the upper mountain glacial and snow meltwater sources of several rivers, and the catchments of water supplies that are vital to millions of downstream users. The GHNPCA protects the monsoon-affected forests and alpine meadows of the Himalayan front ranges. It is part of the Himalaya biodiversity hotspot and includes twenty-five forest types along with a rich assemblage of fauna species, several of which are threatened. This gives the site outstanding significance for biodiversity conservation.
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SUMMARY

2017 Conservation Outlook

Good with some concerns

GHNPCA is of global significance for the conservation of Western Himalayan biodiversity. Its size, remote location, rugged topography and inaccessibility contribute to the effective conservation management of important habitats and endangered species present at the property. The property was inscribed in 2014 at the same time at this initial conservation outlook assessment. As such it is difficult to assess trends with respect to its values as a WH site, however it appears that these have been well protected and are stable, profiting from the protection of the GHNP and Wildlife Sanctuaries created in 1999 and 1994 respectively.
The property is legally well-protected and managed as a single unit under a single management plan spanning the period 2010-2020. There are currently no significant threats to the site however, careful monitoring and management is necessary to mitigate negative impacts from human occupation within the Sainj WLS and the adjoining Ecozone which acts as a buffer zone. Efforts to enable rights-based conservation approaches should continue including the phasing out of grazing within Tirthan WLS and strengthening where possible consistently high levels of legal protection across the property. The context of the site within a larger complex of protected lands bodes well for its conservation outlook and provides opportunities for progressive expansion of the property.
Monitoring, especially of populations of key species, needs a technological upgrade and third-party involvement in order to understand trends and also design research studies that can correlate negative trends with impacts of climate change and other threats. Management interventions needs to be based more on researched findings and with reliable monitoring protocols.

Current state and trend of VALUES

Low Concern
Trend: Stable

GHNPCA is of global significance for the conservation of Western Himalayan biodiversity. Its significant size, remote location, rugged topography and inaccessibility contribute to the effective conservation management of important habitats and endangered species present at the property. The buffer zone known as an Ecozone coincides with the areas of greatest human pressure and is managed in sympathy with the core values of the GHNPCA. Human settlement related threats pose the greatest concern and include agriculture, localised poaching, traditional grazing, human-wildlife conflicts and hydropower development. Tourism impact is minimal and trekking routes are closely regulated (WHC 38COM Decision, 2014).
Whilst it appears that the property's values are stable it is difficult to accurately assess trends given the relative newness of this inscription.
Annual census data shows increase in the density of key faunal species per sq. km. between 2010 and 2016. This census if conducted once in 5 years by a Third party like the Wildlife Institute of India along with a trend analysis of the key species could become a firm basis for monitoring change (GHNP Records, 2017).

Overall THREATS

Low Threat

The site is generally well buffered from threats because it is a high elevation remote system located in a larger complex of protected areas. The inclusion of the Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary as part of the property ensures a more complete protection of the GHNPCA within a contiguous area with a more ecologically sound boundary. Whilst concerns regarding the impacts of grazing and human settlements remain, these shortcomings in protective status are outweighed by the greatly improved integrity of the property. The uncertain impacts of Climate Change on biodiversity values and their ecological underpinnings constitutes a potential threat which calls for timely research and adaptive action.

Overall PROTECTION and MANAGEMENT

Mostly Effective

There is an effective management regime in place including an overall management plan and adequate resourcing. The property is subject to sound legal protection however the two Wildlife Sanctuaries permit a degree of human use which requires careful monitoring and management. The property has a buffer zone along its south-western side (Ecozone). Continued attention is required to manage sensitive community development issues in this buffer zone. The extent and impacts of high pasture grazing in the Tirthan area of the property needs to be assessed and grazing phased out as soon as practicable. Impacts arising from small human settlement of the area are being addressed however more local community engagement in management decisions could be fostered in order to fully empower communities and continue to build a strong sense of support and stewardship for the GHNPCA (IUCN Evaluation 2014). While physical protection is fairly sound and now better supported by local people and with fewer cases of illegal grazing in Tirthan WLS, it is the management and more in terms of factoring research into various interventions that could do with improvement. For example, monitoring populations need to expand to include many more species including threatened flora.

FULL ASSESSMENT

Description of values

Values

World Heritage values

▶ **Important natural habitats and associated endemic and threatened species within the globally significant Western Himalayas**
Criterion:(x)

The Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA) is a contiguous protected area of 90,540 ha embedded within a larger mosaic of protected lands covering some 195,000ha. The property contains 25 forest types along with a rich assemblage of fauna species, several of which are threatened. (IUCN Evaluation, 2013), (WHC 38COM Decision, 2014). GHNPCA spans a wide elevational range of more than 4,000 metres and exhibits a significant number of transitional species between two of the world's major biogeographic realms, the Palearctic and Indo-Malayan Realms. The property protects the monsoon-affected forests and alpine meadows of the Himalayan front ranges and is home to 805 vascular plant species, 192 species of lichen, 12 species of liverworts and 25 species of mosses. Some 58% of its angiosperms are endemic to the Western Himalayas. The Park also protects some 31 species of mammals, 209 birds, 9 amphibians, 12 reptiles and 125 insects. The nominated property provides habitat for 4 globally threatened mammals, 3 globally threatened birds and a large number of medicinal plants. Of the 47 species of medicinal plants, 34 are assessed to be threatened in the wild. (WHS, Nomination file, 2011; IUCN Evaluation, 2014).

Other important biodiversity values

► Significant biodiversity values

The property is part of the Himalaya biodiversity hotspot and is a WWF Global 200 Ecoregion. The property is also a Birdlife International Endemic Bird Area (IUCN Evaluation, 2014). GHNPCA supports many restricted-range bird species. There is a total of some 209 birds' species dependent on the Park and its environs, including 50 species that are summer migrants (IUCN Evaluation, 2012).

Assessment information

Threats

Current Threats

Low Threat

There are two threats of significance in the property. The Tirthan WLS is currently subject to traditional grazing and whilst this is being phased out, it requires continual monitoring and management to ensure that it is addressed in an appropriate timeframe. The ongoing settlement of rights in the Tirthan WLS (initiated in Nov 2016) would further help deal with the current rights of grazing prior to the sanctuary’s merger with the GHNP. The Management of the Park has had an ongoing commitment to resolve rights -based issues with respect to local communities and indigenous peoples, particularly in the Sainj WLS where there are approximately 120 inhabitants, but also in the Ecozone. The continuing process to sensitively resolve access and use rights by these communities and the fostering of alternative livelihoods is essential for the ongoing protection and conservation of the area. Whilst local communities are engaged in management decisions, more social engagement work is needed to ensure complete cooperation and involvement of the local communities in the decision making processes. (WHC 38 COM Decision,2014)

► Other Biological Resource Use

Very Low Threat
Inside site, localised(<5%)

At the time of the Evaluation Report in 2012 there was Illegal medicinal plant collection occurring within the Park. The employment of Forest Guards, regular patrols, education, the establishment of nurseries and the alternative cultivation of herbs for sale in the Ecozone have minimised this threat (IUCN Evaluation Mission, 2012). The availability of daily waged work near home under various Government schemes and uncertain markets dissuades many erstwhile herb collectors to opt out of this tough work.

► Hunting (commercial/subsistence)

Low Threat
Inside site, scattered(5-15%)

Hunting was banned within GHNP in 1984. This ban has been effective; however there is still some threat from organised (non-local) poachers within Sainj WLS, despite effective anti-poaching actions being taken in 2012 by the Park (IUCN Evaluation, 2012). In January 2014, a case of poaching was registered in Tirthan Ecozone. No other cases have been registered since then, (GHNP, Records, 2017).

► Changes in traditional ways of life and knowledge systems

Low Threat
Inside site, extent of threat not known

Threats exist related to the interaction of people with the property. An ongoing issue relates to the resolution of rights. However, for the majority of the property community rights and compensation issues have been settled through the Forest Rights Act and Indian government policy. The State Party’s decision not to proceed with the change of protection status of the two Wildlife Sanctuaries to National Park (WHC 38COM Decision 2014) means that people can continue to co-exist with conservation objectives within the property. The World Heritage Committee has, however, requested the State Government to reconsider merger of Tirthan WLS into the national park, (Pt. 5, 40 COM 7B.88). State Government has agreed to this request and the process of Settlement of Rights in Tirthan WLS has been initiated in

November 2016, (GHNP Records, 2017). Nevertheless, continued monitoring and management will be needed to mitigate negative impacts from the 3 villages within Sainj WLS and seasonal grazing in Tirthan WLS. In addition, the interface between the property and the settled Ecozone requires ongoing management. (IUCN Evaluation 2013).

► Livestock Farming / Grazing

Low Threat
Inside site, scattered(5-15%)

Whilst there are no inhabitants in Tirthan WLS there continues to be impacts felt from grazing of sheep and other livestock (IUCN Evaluation, 2014). The incidence of grazing by migratory herds is reportedly declining due to decreasing viability of herding as a result of shortening of the earlier length of the migratory routes by nearly half and loss of interest in transhumance among the younger generation, (Internal assessment by GHNP staff, 2017). Improved patrolling by staff has further checked illegal grazing (GHNP Records, 2017).

► Housing/ Urban Areas

Low Threat
Inside site, localised(<5%)

There are only 120 permanent inhabitants in GHNPCA and they are localized in Sainj WLS. Programmes are in place to provide alternative livelihoods for them. (IUCN Evaluation, 2014). There are approx. 160 villages/15,000 inhabitants in the Ecozone (buffer zone) who are partly dependent on natural resources. Extensive programs have been set in place to provide alternative livelihoods including participation in ecotourism (SP Referral Document, 2013). A slow but steady rise in Park visitation indicates the potential of Eco tourism as a livelihood option. The number of trekkers inside the GHNP climbed from 789 in 2014, to 803 in 2015 and to 1009 in 2016. Many visitors restrict themselves to the Ecozone of the Park, and are not reflected in the figures given above, (GHNP records, 2017).

Potential Threats

Low Threat

The impacts of grazing and human settlements in Tirthan WLS and Sainj WLS are ongoing and continued attention is required to manage sensitive community development issues in the two wildlife sanctuaries and the Ecozone. (WHC 38COM Decision, 2014). Adverse impacts of climate change including extreme weather events pose a potential threat to the property. Research in changing status of threatened species and their populations is important to inform future adaptation measures to imminent ecological changes. Species like the Serow, the Himalayan Tahr and the Musk deer merit urgent conservation breeding programs.

▶ Logging/ Wood Harvesting, Crops, Livestock Farming / Grazing, Hunting (commercial/subsistence)

Low Threat
Inside site, extent of threat not known
Outside site

In general, the Western Himalayas are under significant pressure from livelihood activities such as firewood and fodder collection, grazing, hunting, collection of medicinal plants and adverse impacts of temperate cash crops, commercial forestry, tourism and hydro power development. (IUCN Evaluation, 2013). However, the enlarged property results in a ‘more robust conservation unit thus making it more resilient to the impacts of these threats. The traditional grazing in Tirthan WLS and the small human settlements in Sainj WLS are being actively managed (IUCN Evaluation, 2014).

▶ Dams/ Water Management or Use

Very Low Threat
Outside site

At the time of the 2012 evaluation mission major hydroelectric were constructed downstream of the property within the Ecozone (buffer zone). (IUCN Evaluation, 2013). The fact that these developments are downstream and dependent on the water catchment quality of the property should positively reinforce the need for strict protection of natural values.

▶ Other Ecosystem Modifications

High Threat

Inside site, throughout(>50%)
Outside site

The GHNPCA along with the other adjoining protected areas (PAs) extending to over 285,440 ha., and covering an altitudinal gradient of more than 4000 m. becomes vulnerable to both precipitation and temperature changes in the region. Niche habitats and related species, especially 'Threatened' ones become more vulnerable within the overall landscape. Research in changing status of threatened species and their populations is important to inform future adaptation measures to imminent ecological changes. Species like the Serow, the Himalayan Tahr and the Musk deer merit urgent conservation breeding programs.

Protection and management

Assessing Protection and Management

► Relationships with local people

Some Concern

Prior to the establishment of a National Park in 1999, about 2,500 people collected herbs and mushrooms from the area and about 35,000 sheep and goats grazed the Park. The transition between use and conservation in the property has been a phased process carried out in a socially responsible way. It has included compensation for traditional rights and continuing investments in the Ecozone (IUCN Evaluation, 2012). However, sections of the local community remain seriously concerned about the erosion of rights and the impacts on local livelihoods and access. (IUCN Stakeholder Consultation, 2014). The local people have by and large now accepted the existence of the Park and are more reconciled to ensuing changes. The earlier perceived disruption of livelihoods due to creation of the Park now stands allayed. The earning potential of ecotourism in generally welcomed and better understood and appreciated now, (Internal assessment GHNP, 2017).

► Legal framework

Mostly Effective

The GHNP is afforded the fullest legal protection under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972. Whilst Tirthan WLS and Sainj WLS do not enjoy the same levels of protection as GHNP they are 'designated to protect, propagate, and develop wildlife or its environment in areas of ecological and zoological significance' (SP Referral Document, 2013). However, there are plans to establish National Park status over the Tirthan WLS over time (40 COM 7B.88).
The status of the surrounding lands as protected areas (Khirganga National Park, Pin Valley National Park and Kanawar and Rupi Bharbha Wildlife Sanctuaries respectively) provide enhanced legal protection to the property (IUCN Evaluation, 2013).

The State Board for Wildlife in its meeting on 08.05.2015 while considering the recommendations of 38COM.8B agreed to the amalgamation of the Khirganga NP (710 sq.km) to the existing GHNP (754.4 sq.km), (40 COM 7B.88). A formal notification in this regard is awaited (GHNP Records, 2017).

► Enforcement

Data Deficient

Data Deficient

► Integration into regional and national planning systems

Data Deficient

GHNP is legislated under The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. The Act is supported by small area micro plans in the Ecozone. This is to facilitate the participation of the village councils (called Panchayats) in the Ecologically Sustained Programmes (known as Ecodevelopment). (SP Nomination, 2011). However, data remains deficient on understanding how the GHNPCA Management Plan (see below) is harmonized with surrounding regional and national planning frameworks.

► Management system

Mostly Effective

A comprehensive management plan for the GHNPCA has been prepared for the period 2010-2020. This plan encompasses the GHNP, the Ecozone, and

both Tirthan WLS and Sainj WLS (IUCN Evaluation, 2012). There is a provision in the management plan for a mid-term review. The GHNP having been declared a WHS now, this provision can be invoked to bring and fine tune management objectives more in line with WHS requirements.

► Management effectiveness

Some Concern

The property is managed under one management plan which includes appropriate conservation, protection and management effectiveness requirements for the Park. However, each unit of the GHNPCA has distinct management objectives. For example GHNP, focuses on protection of resources while managing ecologically sustainable tourism; Sainj WLS's priority is management of three villages within its boundaries to minimize their impacts on biodiversity; Tirthan WLS regulates the non-resident shepherds to minimize impacts of grazing by sheep and other livestock (SP Referral Document, 2013; IUCN Evaluation, 2012).
Protection of the property is of paramount importance. The core area is naturally afforded better protection due to its remoteness. However, paucity of staff assigned to the Park leads to unrealistically large areas under just a couple of forest guards. The bulk of GHNP staff is deployed in the Ecozone, which is essentially not a part of the Park. Moreover, equipment, mobility and training of field staff remain a matter of concern (Pers. Com. DFO, GHNP, Aug., 2017). Forests of the Eco-zone are vulnerable to annual fires. These have been quite successfully contained through an incentive based mechanism involving local village forest development societies (VDFSs). Between 2010 and 2016 a sum of INR 614,000 has been disbursed as incentives to 25 VFDSs in the Eco-zone (GHNP Records, 2017).

► Implementation of Committee decisions and recommendations

Highly Effective

The State Party has been very responsive to the Committee's decisions to date. Specifically, a response was submitted to Decision 37COM 8B.11 in September 2013 which addressed all of the recommendations made by the Committee pertaining to the addition of the two Wildlife Sanctuaries, continued strengthening of local community engagement, additional comparative values analysis and a commitment to progressively expand the

property over time (SP Referral Document, 2013).

Follow up to the requests made in the Decision 40COM.7B 88 includes the following actions (numbers reflect the paragraphs in the Decision):
3. Draft notification for amalgamation of Khirganga NP with GHNP prepared and awaits formal notification.
4. Consultative process involving local communities is ongoing and aims to take forward jointly agreed decision making.
5. This has been agreed to by the State party. The Settlement process to integrate Tirthan WLS into the GHNP has been initiated and is underway.
6. (i) No grazing permits are allowed in the GHNPCA. Illegal grazing offences are checked and fined by field staff.
6. (ii) These have been settled.
6 (iii) The Khirganaga Demarcated Proteced Forest (DPF) measuring about 250 ha. Is now managed by the Park authorities.
6 (iv) & (v) These are ogoing and regular activities; some concerns around training for prolonged work at higher altitudes remain.
7. The state party has expressed intention to serially expand the GHNPCA by inclusion of adjacent wildlife areas.

► Boundaries

Highly Effective

The boundaries of GHNPCA are clearly defined and offer both geographic and legal protection. (IUCN Evaluation, 2013).
The property has a buffer zone along its south-western side (the 26,560 ha Ecozone) reflecting the areas of greatest human population pressure. The property is also afforded good protection in the north, east and south due to the rugged and difficult to access high mountains. (IUCN Evaluation, 2014)

► Sustainable finance

Mostly Effective

Financial resources for the Park allow adequate staffing. In 2012 GHNP had an annual salary budget of 19 million Rupees ($US348,000). Annual operational funds in 2012 included 6.9 million Rupees ($US126,350) for flora and fauna conservation, with capital funds including 2.5 million Rupees ($US46,000) for a National Medicinal Pant Board Project; 948,000 Rupees

($US17,350) for a Botanical Garden Project and an allocation of 2,074,200 Rupees ($US38,000) from the Biodiversity Conservation Society. (IUCN Evaluation, 2012).
An ongoing fund raising programme for the management of the GHNPCA has been established through a Park entry fee and income from the facilities created for Community Based Ecotourism.
Rs. 1,000,000 per year has been raised since 2002 and these funds contribute to marinating community related assets (such as the Community Training and Tourist Center at Sai Ropa) and to running training programmes for the staff and villagers (SP Nomination, 2011). Financial position has considerably improved since the GHNP was declared a WHS. During 2015-16 the total budgeted outlay was Rs 40643500 (USD 625284). This increased to Rs 72685950 (USD 1.118 million) in 2016-17. (GHNP Records, 2017)

► Staff training and development

Mostly Effective

In 2012 there were 71 permanent staff members and a number of temporary staff. Staff include 40 personnel for patrolling and nursery duties (IUCN Evaluation, 2012). Several training workshops were held regularly for community groups in Income Generation Activities like handicraft making with local raw materials, value added edible products, training for eco-tourism guides and so forth. About 20 forest guards were trained at the Wildlife Institute of India in 2015 on advanced Census techniques. 4 forest guards were trained in ringing of migratory birds and relevant record keeping. A workshop on ‘Prosecution of Wildlife Offences’ was held in June 2017. A training for field staff for GIS Survey methods was done by the Forest Survey of India in May 2017 (GHNP Records, 2017).

► Sustainable use

Some Concern

Human settlement related threats such as agriculture, localized poaching, traditional grazing, human-wildlife conflicts and hydropower development pose the greatest threats to the GHNPCA. (WHC 38COM Decision, 2014).
The State Party carries out a range of efficient and effective actions which address concerns related to the property’s sustainability. Trekking routes are monitored and managed to ensure no negative impacts on key species (SP

Nomination, 2011).
Seasonal grazing in Tirthan WLS has the potential for adverse impact and requires management and progressive phasing out (IUCN Evaluation, 2014). Hunting has been banned, however localized poaching has been known to take place. Illegal medicinal plant collection also occurs. Management programmes are in place to address these issues. (IUCN Evaluation, 2013)

► Education and interpretation programs

Mostly Effective

There are a number of information centres with conference/training room facilities. At Sai Ropa there is an Ecozone Community Center just outside the Gushaini entrance to the Park. Here there is a 520 m long "Biodiversity Trail" that has trees and medicinal plant species transplanted from the Park and a demonstration site for vermicomposting; a butterfly enclosure, and a solar energy demonstration site (SP Nomination, 2011). The facilities are being adequately maintained and managed as of July 2017.

► Tourism and visitation management

Highly Effective

The annual average visitor numbers to the Park are very low (700 to 1000 per annum) due to challenging access. Use of trekking routes within the Park is managed using a permit system and it is guided by wildlife population monitoring and research. Tourism is encouraged in the Ecozone forests. Education and interpretive materials are provided by various means including a village level Street Theatre group as a part of a local NGO, as well as signage, maps, educational displays, park brochures, posters, and photo exhibitions. The Larji Information Center located outside the Park and near the confluence of Sainj and Tirthan rivers caters to tourists, school children and the village community with a training centre and projection facility. Sai Ropa is an Ecozone Community Center 5km from Banjar and 5 km before the Gushaini entrance to the Park, which caters to tourists with a Forest Rest House and a photo exhibition (SP Nomination, 2011).

As noted above management is directed toward reducing impacts on trekking routes. For example, trekking routes within the Tirthan Valley were closed in deference to declining Western Tragopan numbers; Trails

commonly impacted by heavy rains and mudslides are closed or re-routed to ensure that essential maintenance can be carried out; monitoring programmes evaluate fluctuations in population numbers and the status of certain species and evaluate the regimes adopted for conserving biodiversity (SP Nomination, 2011).

Depending on the breeding season, sections of the Park are closed to trekkers and visitors as part of visitor management. (GHNP, Records, 2017)

► Monitoring

Mostly Effective

The State Party states it recognizes the need for monitoring and considers it "as an essential component of any viable strategy to conserve biological diversity because it provides a basis to track the status of various components of biodiversity over time." The main ways this has occurred at the property are

• Monitoring of large mammals
• Monitoring of visitors: including wildlife tourists, pilgrims, and researchers
• Socio-economic monitoring : gathering information on demography, resource dependency, etc. in villages which are in the vicinity of GHNPCA (SP Nomination, 2011).

Monitoring of population trends among important /key species in GHNP is being carried out. Over a 5-year period there is an upward trend in populations (Number of animals per sq. km) among Western Tragopan, Cheer pheasant, musk deer, black bear and brown bear. Population trends for Monal pheasant, Ghoral and Blue sheep have shown fluctuations, while for Himalayan Tahr numbers indicate no change (GHNP CENSUS DATA, 2017).

► Research

Mostly Effective

A number of large scale research projects have been undertaken in the years from 2002 up until 2011 with the bulk of funding coming from The State Party. These include the following:

• "Conservation & Cultivation of Medicinal Herbs in Sainj and Tirthan Ranges of GHNP";
• "Conservation of the Western Tragopan through wider support of the local

community and Community Based Organisations”
• National workshop on “Ecotourism in Himalayas: Prospects and Challenges” - Product development and Marketing for Ecotourism.
• Conservation and Cultivation of Medicinal Herbs in the Ecozone of GHNP 2007-2011
• Establishment of Botanical Garden at Sai Ropa 2008-2011 (SP Nomination, 2011).

As many as 11 research studies are completed or currently going on in GHNP. Prominent among these are, ”Non-invasive observational study on micro-flora, invertebrates, fishes, herpetofauna, birds and mammals in the protected areas” by the Wildlife Institute of India; for assessment of impacts due to climate change. (GHNP Data, 2017). There is a gap, however, in application of research findings to field level work and most research remains academic. (Detailed under Active Projects, later).

Overall assessment of protection and management

Mostly Effective

There is an effective management regime in place including an overall management plan and adequate resourcing. The property is subject to sound legal protection however the two Wildlife Sanctuaries permit a degree of human use which requires careful monitoring and management. The property has a buffer zone along its south-western side (Ecozone). Continued attention is required to manage sensitive community development issues in this buffer zone. The extent and impacts of high pasture grazing in the Tirthan area of the property needs to be assessed and grazing phased out as soon as practicable. Impacts arising from small human settlement of the area are being addressed however more local community engagement in management decisions could be fostered in order to fully empower communities and continue to build a strong sense of support and stewardship for the GHNPCA (IUCN Evaluation 2014). While physical protection is fairly sound and now better supported by local people and with fewer cases of illegal grazing in Tirthan WLS, it is the management and more in terms of factoring research into various interventions that could do with improvement. For example, monitoring populations need to expand to include many more species including

threatened flora.

▶ **Assessment of the effectiveness of protection and management in addressing threats outside the site**

Mostly Effective

In general GHNPCA is naturally buffered from external threats being a high elevation system in a very remote location. The property's buffer zone along its south-western side which corresponds to the 26,560 ha Ecozone is the area of greatest human population pressure and thus the source of impacts over many years. There is ongoing management of the resultant issues and management programmes to engage local communities in management decisions and to support more sustainable livelihoods. (IUCN Evaluation Mission, 2012). Ongoing and enhanced management efforts are desirable to deal with community empowerment, livelihood and rights concerns (WHC 38 COM Decision, 2014).
This has been reiterated in 40 COM 7B.88. In order to deepen community-Park interface, the property stands to benefit further with engagement of civil society interest groups to broaden the stakeholder base in support of conservation and mutually acceptable conflict resolution.

State and trend of values

Assessing the current state and trend of values

World Heritage values

▶ **Important natural habitats and associated endemic and threatened species within the globally significant Western Himalayas**

Low Concern
Trend:Stable

The site is significant for its conservation of Western Himalayan biodiversity. At the time of the evaluation mission in 2012 it was noted that the site was in an almost natural condition and this was due to the geographic location of the site at high altitude and hence its inaccessibility in conjunction with the abundance of individuals of many faunal species and it had no serious threats from introduced plant or animal species.

The addition of the Tirthan and Sainj Wildlife Sanctuaries to the WH site following the referral has strengthened the integrity and protection of the site by increasing it by 20% and creating a contiguous system of protected areas which is further buffered by nearly 200,000ha of other surrounding protected lands. Whilst the WLS are not designated as National Parks and do not enjoy the same levels of legislative protection, there is sufficient protection to ensure WH values are conserved. There is an ongoing need to monitor the impacts of the three small villages within Sainj WLS and on regulating shepherds to minimize the grazing impacts of sheep and other livestock within Tirthan WLS (IUCN Evaluation Mission, 2012; IUCN Evaluation, 2014).
Whilst it appears that the property's values are stable it is difficult to accurately assess trends given the relative newness of this inscription.

Annual census data shows increase in the density of key faunal species per sq. km. between 2010 and 2016. This census if conducted once in 5 years by a Third party like the Wildlife Institute of India along with a trend analysis of the key species could become a firm basis for monitoring change (GHNP Records, 2017).

Summary of the Values

► Assessment of the current state and trend of World Heritage values

Low Concern

Trend: Stable

GHNPCA is of global significance for the conservation of Western Himalayan biodiversity. Its significant size, remote location, rugged topography and inaccessibility contribute to the effective conservation management of important habitats and endangered species present at the property. The buffer zone known as an Ecozone coincides with the areas of greatest human pressure and is managed in sympathy with the core values of the GHNPCA. Human settlement related threats pose the greatest concern and include agriculture, localised poaching, traditional grazing, human-wildlife conflicts and hydropower development. Tourism impact is minimal and trekking routes are closely regulated (WHC 38COM Decision, 2014).
Whilst it appears that the property's values are stable it is difficult to

accurately assess trends given the relative newness of this inscription. Annual census data shows increase in the density of key faunal species per sq. km. between 2010 and 2016. This census if conducted once in 5 years by a Third party like the Wildlife Institute of India along with a trend analysis of the key species could become a firm basis for monitoring change (GHNP Records, 2017).

Additional information

Benefits

Understanding Benefits

▶ **Traditional agriculture**

The two Wildlife Sanctuaries are clearly important to the livelihoods of a small number of people who either reside within Sainj WLS or graze livestock within Tirthan WLS. The resolution of rights to ensure adequate protection of the site’s values will likely require careful consideration of alternative livelihoods.

▶ **Soil stabilisation, Water provision (importance for water quantity and quality)**

GHNP CA includes the upper (5000-6000 metre high) mountain glacial and snow melt water source origins of the westerly flowing Jiwa Nal, Sainj and Tirthan Rivers and the north-westerly flowing Parvati River which are all headwater tributaries to the River Beas and subsequently, the Indus River. The property includes an elevational range from high alpine peaks of over 6,000m a.s.l to riverine forest at altitudes below 2,000m a.s.l. forming a critical catchment area vital to millions of downstream users (WHC 38 COM Decision,2014). GHNP is critical for soil stabilization and clear water quality in the region, primarily due to its intact forest and grassland cover and the prohibition of any developmental activity.

► **History and tradition**

There are several pilgrimage routes within the property, leading to sacred sites around source/ origin of the Tirthan & Sainj rivers. These are annually visited by local people.

► **Outdoor recreation and tourism**

Growing number of trekkers to the GHNP reflect the growing value of its recreational values. (GHNP Records, 2017). With several Education & Interpretation centres around the property, it contributes actively to dissemination of knowledge and awareness of natural wealth present.

► **Importance for research, Collection of genetic material**

The GHNP harbours perhaps some of the most genetically pure populations of several birds and Himalayan ungulates. Unique eco-types of several medicinal species are most likely located here. It remains one of the most well researched Protected Area in the country. Permission to collect samples for study and research is accorded to recognised research institutions (GHNP Records, 2017).

► **Provision of jobs**

Apart from a regular staff of over 50 personnel, there are seasonal jobs for local people in connection with field work like Census, Soil & Water conservation, maintenance of paths and buildings etc.

Summary of benefits

The management of the park has taken notable steps to work with the community over many years reinforcing the links between investment in local livelihoods and successful conservation of biodiversity in the Park. Prior to park establishment, about 2,500 people collected herbs and mushrooms from the Park and about 35,000 sheep and goats grazed the Park. The transition between use and conservation in GHNP has aspired to be a socially responsible and phased process that has included compensation for traditional rights and continuing investments in the Ecozone designed to support people. Successful

response strategies have included the empowerment of the poor, given that rural poor are the most dependent on forest resources for livelihood needs, with women being the poorest (IUCN Evaluation, 2013). The GHNP currently provides at least 6 of the listed Benefit Types as elaborated above. It provides significant benefits associated with Food, Environmental Services, Cultural and Spiritual Values, Health and Recreational Values and for Knowledge building. All these values have tangible and intangible aspects, both of which perhaps need economic valuation for better appreciation and helping the property to figure at the top of the state's conservation agenda. Its inscription as a WHS provides a basis for the much needed inter-disciplinary research and management GHNP merits.

Projects

Compilation of active conservation projects

№	Organization/individuals	Project duration	Brief description of Active Projects

1	State Party of India	A number of large scale research projects have been undertaken in the years from 2002 up until 2011 with the bulk of funding coming from The State Party. These include the following: • “Conservation & Cultivation of Medicinal Herbs in Sainj and Tirthan Ranges of GHNP”; • “Conservation of the Western Tragopan through wider support of the local community and Community Based Organizations” • National workshop on “Ecotourism in Himalayas: Prospects and Challenges” - Product development and Marketing for Ecotourism. • Conservation and Cultivation of Medicinal Herbs in the Ecozone of GHNP 2007-2011 • Establishment of Botanical Garden at Sai Ropa 2008-2011. Since 2015, the following research studies have been undertaken / are ongoing in the GHNPCA: 1. Status Survey of the Himalayan Musk deer by Zoological Survey of India, Kolkatta; (2 weeks). 2. Research and habitat understanding journey in Khorlipoi to study Western Tragopan habitat in GHNP by BCCL (Times Group), New Delhi (2 weeks) 3. Bio-diversity Assessment through long term Monitoring Plots Joint survey in the selected Landscapes of Indian Himalayan Reg. incl. GHNP by Botanical Survey of India (BSI), Kolkatta; (3 years, 04/2016 to 03/2019). 4. Conservation of critical Habitats for Montane birds through Community Participation by Virat Jolli, New Delhi, (2 months June & July, 2014). 5. Biodiversity assessment, Valuation, Vulnerabilty assessment (Threat categorization), Conservation prioritization and conservation of protected areas (Biodiversity rich areas), sacred shrines and sacred Groves of HP, by GBPHIED, Kullu, (one year, 10/15 to 10/16). 6. Multi-disciplinary studies in floristic assessment, ecological analysis, ecosystem services, conservation and sustainable management of NPs in Western Himalaya by GBPHIED, Kullu (2 years, 5/16 to 10/18). 7. Collection of planting material of endangered medicinal plants for research purposes, by University of Horticulture & Forestey, Solan, HP (3 years, 2/17 to 2/20). 8. Non-invasive observational study on micro-flora, invertebrates, fishes, herpetofauna, birds and mammals in the protected areas, by Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun (3 years, 2016 to 2019). 9. Non-invasive observational study on three target species, viz, brown bear, black bear and common leopard in protected areas by Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun (3 years, 2016 to 2019). 10. Phylogenetic relationship and delineating the taxonomic boundaries of Saurian species in Western Himalayas by ZSI, Dehradun (one year, 4/17 to 4/18). 11. Ecology, distribution and biogeographic study of Himalayan Mammals (rodents and pikas) by National Center of Biological Sciences, GKVK, Bellary Road, Bangalore (3 years, 4/17 to 12/20). 12. In addition several departmental projects / activities related to plantation, grassland development, soil and water conservation have been undertaken in the last 3 years (GHNP Records, 2017).

Compilation of potential site needs

№	Site need title	Brief description of potential site needs	Support needed for following years

1	Regional assessment of further candidate areas with World Heritage potential	The WHC recommended that an assessment of the scope of ecosystems within the Himalayas and adjacent mountain systems be undertaken. It suggested that this could be done with the possible co-operation of IUCN, other partners such as the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the newly established UNESCO Category 2 Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia-Pacific Region in India. The reason for this project would be to identify potential World Heritage candidate areas and boundary configurations in this region, with a view to potential serial nominations and extensions of the current property. (WHC 38COM Decision, 2014)

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