

Reindeer hunting as world heritage

Annual report 2007



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General

The year 2007 was a very important year for the Wild Reindeer Hunting as World Heritage project. The expert work was continued by obtaining opinions and advice from international expertise, providing vital support for the project's justification.

The project also worked actively in relation to the national political community, both the Government and the Storting.

Finally, the project worked to make its mark both regionally and nationally by participating in seminars, meetings and conferences. And, at the request of the Dovrefjell Mountains Council, the project has also provided input in connection with the establishment of the Norwegian Wild Reindeer Centre and the Europarc (European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in protected areas) certification of Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjella national park.

The board consisted of the following members: Member of the Storting Børge Brede (chair), mayor Per Dag Hole (deputy chair), County Governor Kristin Hille Valla, county curator Dagfinn Claudius, museum director Egil Mikkelsen and museum director Harald Jacobsen. Børge Brende resigned as chair of the board in December 2007 when he took up the position of managing director of the World Economic Forum. Per Dag Hole is acting chair of the board for the time being.

The expert group did not work as a group in 2007, but individuals participated, for example during visits from international experts.

The project manager was archaeologist John Olsen.



Per Dag Hole
Styreleder



John Olsen
Prosjektleder

Work in 2007

The expert group submitted its report in 2006, and in 2007 the full report was made available in English both in a printed version and online. Reasons for translating the report included a wish to make the expert knowledge collected by the project available to a wider audience, and the hope of obtaining expert opinions from the international expert community. This succeeded and input was received from Lars Larsson and Christopher Young. Their contributions were submitted to the Ministry of the Environment, the Directorate for Cultural Heritage and the Directorate for Nature Management.

Lars Larsson is a professor at Lund University and an internationally renowned expert on early hunting cultures in the Nordic countries. Professor Larsson gave his support to the academic work that had been carried out and also emphasised the importance of giving this type of cultural heritage site the kind of recognition that a UNESCO nomination would bring.

Christopher Young works for British Heritage and has worked with UNESCO-related matters for a number of years. He has, among other things, given UNESCO expert recommendations relating to cultural landscapes in Mongolia through ICOMOS. Mr Young visited our area in April 2007. During his three days here, he visited large parts of the area and was given an introduction to the cultural heritage sites, culture and nature management, wild reindeer's habitat requirements and local food traditions etc. In addition to the board and the expert group, several other people from the region participated (mountain management boards, the Norwegian Nature Inspectorate, the chair of the regional council, famous chef Arne Brimi etc.). In his report, Mr Young supported the project's scientific basis and the international importance of the cultural values that we are trying to get on to the list. He was also of the opinion that this project would contribute to making the world heritage list more thematically balanced.

Political contact

In spring 2007, the project was on the politic agenda. Information meetings were held with members of the Storting from the counties of Møre og Romsdal and Oppland. After the meetings, these MPs sent a joint letter to the then Minister for the Environment, Helen Bjørnøy, in which they requested that the project be included on Norway's tentative list. In addition, chair of the board Børge Brende briefed the MPs from the county of Sør-Trøndelag.

After the meetings, the matter was raised during the Storting's Question time by MP Inger Enger. She too requested that the project be included in Norway's tentative list and asked how the minister planned to contribute to this.

The minister and the ministry's reply to both the letter from the MPs from Møre og Romsdal and Oppland and the Question time question was that the matter was under consideration.

In December, the project managed to arrange for another meeting with the political staff of the ministry, this time with State Secretary Heidi Sørensen. The goal of this meeting was threefold: firstly, to introduce her to the background for the project, secondly, to ensure that the positive signals from the international community had been received, and thirdly to obtain more specific feedback on the progress with respect to inclusion on the Norwegian tentative list. Ms Sørensen showed great interest in both the topic and the project. After the meeting, the board of directors concluded that they had great expectations of the further progress and the result of the process.



Other external activities

The project participated in several meetings, seminars and conferences in 2007, and the project manager or the board addressed most of them. Participation spread across all the thirteen municipalities in the area. The project also sent representatives to regional/national events outside the area. The topics of these meetings range from specialist events relating to cultural heritage and wild reindeer, to tourism conferences and political meetings such as local council and executive committee meetings.

The expert report was printed in both Norwegian and English. A copy was sent to each municipality and other relevant bodies, and the report has also been sold to interested parties. The report is also available online.

In winter 2007, the project developed a simple folder that has been printed and distributed free of charge at meetings, seminars etc. The folder is available both in Norwegian and English, and is also available online.

In 2007 the website continued to be updated regularly with news. It was also extended with a photo gallery with photos of trapping systems, wild reindeer etc. The front page had a total of approx. 22,000 visits during the year.

Two newsletters were distributed during the year.



Finance

In 2007, the project received NOK 910,000 from county governors, county administrations, municipalities and mountain management boards. In addition, the project's income from sale of the expert report and reimbursement of expenses relating to the contact forum meeting in 2006 totalled NOK 33,000.

The project spent NOK 422,794 in 2007. Major expense items were related to translation of the report and other texts into English, printing of the report and brochures, the project manager's wages and costs relating to visits from international experts.

At the end of the year (31 December 2007), the project had a total of NOK 751,128.41 transferred to a fund. In 2007, the board of directors decided to continue the project in 2008, but without applying for further financial support for operating expenses this year. The plan is to use the saved funds instead.

See also accounts and the auditor's report on www.villreinfangsten.no.



Goal achievement status

Wild Reindeer Hunting as World Heritage had expected a clarification of whether the project would be included in Norway's tentative list some time during the first six months of 2007. The Directorate for Cultural Heritage and the Directorate for Nature Management submitted their recommendations to the Ministry of the Environment before the summer. They recommended that the two existing places in the tentative list, Lofoten and an expansion of Swedish World Heritage Site the Laponian Area to include Tyssfjord/Hellemobotn in Norway. Two new places were added: Svalbard and the Mid-Atlantic ridge. Three sites were proposed for further consideration: Hydroelectric plants in Tyssedal and Rjukan, the Sami cultural heritage area in Mortensnes and Wild Reindeer Hunting as World Heritage.

Chair of the board Børge Brende received direct signals from Director General of the Directorate for Cultural Heritage Nils Marstein that the further consideration proposed could take as long as until autumn 2008.

The project has had a parallel goal of spreading knowledge and interest of the topic of wild reindeer and wild reindeer hunting. We consider our efforts in this respect to have been very successful in the renewed interest in wild reindeer hunting that has become evident over the last few years. This is supported by the fact that the project website, www.villreinfangsten.no, had 22,000 visitors in 2007.



Contact information:
Wild reindeer hunting as world heritage
Project manager John Olsen
Lesja kommune
N-2665 Lesja

Telefon: 61 24 41 43/ 93 00 75 67

E-post: john.olsen@lesja.kommune.no

www.villreinfangsten.no