History and values of the Green Belt Fennoscandia

Tapio Lindholm

Showcase ABCGheritage and Workshop on the Development of the northernmost part of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia
SEMINAR AND WORKSHOP
14TH-15TH OCTOBER 2014, SVANVIK NORWAY
The beginning

• The idea of Fennoscandian green belt developed gradually in Finnish – Russian (Soviet Union) nature conservation cooperation.
• Already in 1970’s the protection of forest reindeer (Rangifer tarandus fennicus) revealed the value of boundary forests.
• The nature conservation cooperation started 1979, but in Soviet time the boundary area was closed in Soviet Union.
The Finnish–Russian Working Group on Nature Conservation- 60 years of active nature protection work between Finland and Russia

Formally the co-operation was organised as early as 1955, when an agreement on scientific-technical collaboration was signed between Finland and the Soviet Union. Environmental issues and nature protection were included in the working protocols in 1979. The chair from Finland in this work was Dr Antti Haapanen, who was also the state counsellor for nature conservation in Finland. The present Finnish–Russian nature conservation co-operation dates from the 1970s.

In 1985, Finland and the Soviet Union concluded an agreement on environmental protection. On the basis of this agreement on environmental protection, the Finnish–Russian Working Group on Nature Conservation was established in 1985. Professor of Botany Rauno Ruuhijärvi, from the University of Helsinki, became the chair of this working group on the Finnish side. From 2002 the chairs from Finnish side has been Aimo Saano (MH) and Tapio Lindholm (SYKE)
The Finnish–Russian Working Group on Nature Conservation—active work in developing idea of GBF

An important part of the Finnish Russian co-operation for nature protection is the concept of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia. The green belt is formed by current and planned protected areas on both sides of the border. The green belt stands up as a good example of cross border co-operation even by global standards. And finally also model to European Green Belt Initiative.

The first concrete achievement brought about by the co-operation was establishment of the first Finnish–Russian ‘twin park’, in 1990: Friendship Park, in the territories of Kuhmo in Finland and Kostamus in Russia. In this connection, a scientific working unit was established in Kuhmo, following the Russian zapovednik model.

In 1992, a national park was established also in Paanajärvi, in the northern part of the Republic of Karelia. Oulanka National Park, on the Finnish side of the border, forms another twin park in combination with Paanajärvi National Park. Later came Kalevala park(s) and work continues.
Friendship park. Signing in high level in 1990
Idea starts to develop

• A new policy started in 1985 with new agreement
• Boundary area become active working place.
• Friendship park was established in 1990 in Kuhmo and Kostamus.
• Paanajärvi National park was established in 1992
• Boundary forest inventory in Karelia as part of Finnish – Russian nature conservation activity. Done by KRC in early 1990´s
• Old forest inventory in Finland 1990 – 1995. Special attention to boundary forests.
The collapsing of Soviet union

• During Soviet time the boundary was isolated people by Iron curtain
• Early in the 1990s, scientists from Karelia and Finland put forward the idea of the “Green Belt of Fennoscandia”
• In Finland professor Rauno Ruuhijärvi was active and in Karelia KRC director Alexandr Titov
The green border

By Olga Makarova

Olga A. Makarova, "Pasevik" nature reserve, the Murmansk region.

Due to the special system of state borders protection (along the entire border area between Finland and Russia) the large tracts of the old forests, throughout practically disappeared, are still remained in our country.

Taking into account an acute necessity to retain the biological diversity in nature the urgent measures are to be taken to protect the old forests, especially the pine forests. The organization of the bilateral working group is required for the border green belt study having the target to establish the most valuable areas and to prepare the project on genetic forest reserves within it. It is especially important to emphasize that the border goes along the meridional direction. In doing so there is a unique possibility to gather diverse information about the primary forests northwards up to the tundra. This is especially important regarding the pine forests having their northern limit in the Paa river area. In parallel with the forest study along the border it is possible by far to perform other programmes. In particular to make the winter registration of animals and birds in order to study the condition of the hunting fauna. Scientists of Karelia and Finland set out to this work.

Works on forests reconnoitring survey might be performed within 2 years, and then using its recommendations it would be possible to start implementation of the project named "green border" providing organization of reserves with different regime and purpose on bilateral and trilateral basis. The part of the future project has already been implemented: there are the "Pasevik" nature reserve in the Murmansk region, the Kostomuksha nature reserve and the "Paanajärvi" national park in Karelia.

Works on "green border" project would extend the collaboration between our countries, and by far the border forests could be protected more efficient.
Interest to Green belt of Fennoscandia was great in 1990’s

Early analysis on the Green belt of Fennoscandia sites in Eva Kleinn master thesis
Green belt of Fennoscandia is a part of boreal (here Barents) network of NR
The aim of the BPAN project is to promote and support a representative protected area network in the Barents Region. Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN) consists of established and planned protected areas, which are presented in the map.

The BPAN project will provide compiled information and thematic maps for the decision makers, authorities and general public. The project evaluates and analyzes the protected area network, and will provide recommendations for its development.

More analyses of the representativeness of the protected area network are needed. For biodiversity conservation, it is of outmost importance that connectivity between protected areas is preserved. Functionality of ecosystems depends on natural processes in landscapes with unfragmented habitats.

To maintain the functionality of the ecosystems and ecosystems services, connectivity issues need to be addressed in each region and across national borders.

The Finnish–Russian Working Group on Nature Conservation has in many ways supported BPAN project.
The Finnish–Russian Working Group on Nature Conservation supported and supervised the GAP process and that support also the idea Green Belt of Fennoscandia (GBF)

The Gap project (analysis of gaps and representativeness of the protected area network in northwest Russia) identified the largest high conservation value areas in the Republic of Karelia, the Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Vologda and Leningrad Regions, and the City of St. Petersburg. The Gap project was born of the need of forestry and conservation actors to map the most valuable, large nature areas in northwest Russia, in order to prevent the loss of their unique natural value.

The publication Atlas of high conservation value areas, and analysis of gaps and representativeness of the protected area network in northwest Russia maps the high conservation value forests and mires in northwest Russia. The book consists of a description of the natural areas and a map section. An Internet atlas provides a detailed look at the vast forest wilderness in northwest Russia.
Available since 2013-09-11
Basic mission

• The baseline of the idea was to create and develop the network of protected areas (with focus on PAs in the border area) with detailed management plans meeting the demands of sustainable development (interests of nature conservation, society and economy combined)
Different maps without true GIS information on FGB
Different ways to see GBF, when there is no formal status

• **Frame**: where GBF has got different meanings
• **Metafora**: where GBF is based on different desires, not necessary reality
• **Metonymia**: where some parts of GBF desires has become ”truth”
• **Regime**: Where GBF activities are based on social institutions of agreed-upon principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures.
Memorandum of Understanding between Russia, Finland and Norway on cooperation on the development of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia

- Signed on 17 February 2010 in connection to the Ninth Meeting of Environment Ministers of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council
- will facilitate ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable transboundary cooperation along the Fi-Ru, Fi-No and Ru-No parts of the GBF
- political will to cooperate in the light of the aim to halt the loss of biodiversity
- GBF includes existing protected areas of differing status and enables the inclusion of planned protected areas when established
- GBF enhances the ecological connectivity of the protected areas and offers a unique opportunity for studying and monitoring climate change
- "The main bodies that will develop and follow up the cooperation on the Green Belt of Fennoscandia are the Joint Norwegian-Russian Environmental Commission and the Finnish-Russian Working Group on Nature Protection under the Joint Finnish-Russian Environmental Commission, created under the above mentioned Agreements, and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council’s Working Group on Environment, in particular its Nature Protection Subgroup."
It is important to understand that there is an option to see several other Green belts in European Russia. And in Nordic countries has their own
Geology and geomorphology

• The roots of GBF are old
• Baltic shield: ancient bedrock, low hills, fells (no mountains)
• Example to illustrate Ice Age, which is almost recent
• high diversity of small scale glacifluvial formations
• Together these two processes
• Diversity of geo and bio processes
Baltic shield and GBF

Baltic Shield, the continental core of Europe, composed of Precambrian crystalline rock, the oldest of Europe.

The tectonically stable region was not affected by the Caledonian, Hercynian, and Alpine mountain-building periods of Europe, although mountains did rise along the edges. The exposed portion of the Baltic Shield is found in Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

During the Pleistocene epoch, great continental ice sheets scoured and depressed the shield's surface, leaving a thin covering of glacial material and innumerable lakes and streams. The ancient rocks have yielded a rich variety of minerals, especially iron and copper.

In the Russian Platform is that portion of the Baltic Shield buried beneath a great thickness of sedimentary rock.
The postglacial time

Itämeren vaiheet

- Baltian jääjärvi 10600-9500 eKr.
- Yoldia-meri 9500-8900 eKr.
- Ancylus-järvi 8900-6500 eKr.
- Mastogloia-järvi/meri 6500-6200 eKr.
- Litorina-meri 6200 eKr.
• Fennoscandia is almost an island, connectet by three isthmuses, corridors.
• Fennoscandian green belt is unic belt inside Fennoscandia, and by corridors GBF has contact to east
Plenty of scientific basis

• The GBF idea evolved and its specific plans were implemented through scientific programmes and projects funded by Russian, European and Finnish foundations and organizations, such as Russian Foundation for Basic Research, Russian Academy of Science Basic Research Programme, TACIS (feasibility studies for NP Paanajärvi, Kalevalsky, Ladoga Skerries, landscape reserves Tuulos and Tolvajärvi), project “GAP analysis in Northwest Russia in Republic of Karelia”, and others.
Tasks of conservation-oriented scientific research

- Preservation and of natural ecosystems
- Restoration of degraded ecosystems
- Analysing the ecosystems services on the point of nature conservation
- Ensuring ecological safety
- Sustainable development of the economy, solution of social conflicts
- Involving local people in nature conservation
Development of Green Belt of Fennoscandia - Finnish point of view

• National Strategy and Action Plan for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Finland 2006-2016
  – Action point 104: Conservation of valuable natural areas will be promoted and the establishment of a chain of internationally twinned parks along the Finnish-Russian border will be supported, thereby providing an opportunity to harmonize the ecologically sustainable management and use of these protected areas

• Green Belt of Fennoscandia - Protected areas along the Fi-Ru-No border
  – Geographical connection creates a network of protected areas: main core existing PAs
  – Operational and functional connection between the PAs
Finnish national Green Belt working group established in 2014

Ministry of the Environment nominated the National working group of Fennoscandian Green Belt in the 5th of February 2014. The working period the group will be from the 6th of February to the 31st of December of 2020.

The task of working group is develop cooperation in Fennoscandian green belt according the MOU signed by Finland, Russia and Norway.
The Ministry of the Environment has appointed a national working group to promote the development of the Green Belt in Finland. The tasks of the working group include raising awareness of the Green Belt in Finland and supporting the networking taking place across national boundaries.

The Green Belt of Fennoscandia will be developed into a model area where sustainable development is supported through transboundary cooperation. The Green Belt extends from the Baltic Sea to the Arctic Ocean, and includes valuable natural areas belonging to Finland, Russia and Norway. Its core is formed of national parks and protected areas on the territories of all three nations.
Green Belt of Fennoscandia is developed now – join in and participate

Ministry of environment in Finland has on the 6th of February 2014 nominated the National green belt working group.

At the same MOE is coordinating the developing project in cooperation with Norway and Russia.
Four Future of the Green Belt on Fennoscandia -workshops will be organized in May-June 2014 for regional and local stakeholders. The four workshops with the same programme will take place Inari, Finland (language: English), Joensuu, Finland (language: Finnish), Lappeenranta, Finland (language: Finnish) and Petrozavodsk, Russia (language: Russian, interpretation to English). More detailed information on the workshops (dates and programme) can be found in the invitation.

Workshops are open for all the stakeholders in the area,
The GBF WG suggested to the SC the GBF had two kinds of boundaries: physical and functional.
The lists of the protected areas which are seen to belong within the physical boundaries of the GBF were received from Russia and Northern Finland (Annex 3., 4. and 5.). Norway and Southern Finland still work on their list of PA’s.

Decision:
• The GBF SC decided to accept the approach to have functional and physical boundaries for the GBF.
• Each country may decide independently the PA’s to be included to the GBF. Lists of the PA’s will be noted as they are received.
Finnish GBF boundaries, Salla

Proposal
Finnish GBF boundaries, Inari

Proposal
The European Green Belt forms a transcontinental axis of the European ecological network along the former ‘Iron Curtain’. It has a total length of over 12,500 km. It passes through eight biogeographic regions and touches 24 states. Along the Green Belt a lot of valuable landscapes can be found. Additionally it serves as a refuge for numerous threatened species and habitats.

Main target of the initiative ‘European Green Belt’ is to develop and to protect the Green Belt as one of the most important pan-European habitat axes in the long-run.
The initiative of European green belt

The vision!
To create the backbone of an ecological network, running from the Barents to the Black Sea that is a global symbol for transboundary cooperation in nature conservation and sustainable development.
European Green Belt Meeting 2013, 15-16 May 2013, Berlin
Vision for the European Green Belt

“The European Green Belt, our shared natural heritage along the line of the former Iron Curtain, is to be conserved and restored to function as an ecological network connecting high-value natural and cultural landscapes, whilst respecting the economic, social and cultural needs of local communities.”
The Fennoscandian Green Belt

The Fennoscandian Green Belt stretches along the borders of Norway, Russia and Finland from the Barents Sea to the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic. It is a wild belt. Due to glaciation this zone is dotted with lakes, wetlands, bogs and mires. A highlight of the vegetation here is the vast, old-growth coniferous taiga while further north this vegetation finally gives way to tundra before the and reaches the Arctic Ocean.
The Baltic Green Belt

The Baltic Green Belt boasts a great diversity of plants and animal life, different in character from all other sections of the European Green Belt. The marine and coastal habitats add significantly to this diversity and host many unique species. Some of them are even endemics - they live solely in the narrow Green Belt strip along the Baltic coast and nowhere else in the world, not even in adjacent stretches of country.
The Central European Green Belt

This part of the European Green Belt connects up a whole string of nature conservation areas and pristine landscapes to form a last retreat and migration route for many endangered species in the intensively exploited cultural landscape of Central Europe. Beginning on the shores of the German Baltic Coast in the north, it runs southward through Germany, along the borders of the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia and then branches to follow two routes, one along the Italian-Slovenian border to the Adriatic and the other along the Croatian-Hungarian border towards the Balkans. Along its path the Green Belt forms a last surviving remnant of wilderness and at the same time traces the line of a historical divide through the continent.
The Balkan Green Belt

The Balkan Green Belt is extremely heterogeneous in nature as well as in culture. The lowest point in the Pannonian Plain is the Danube, which rises only 68 m above sea level, while the mountain peaks reach 2,753 m high in the Korab Mountains between Albania and FYR Macedonia. From the Adriatic Sea and the mouth of the Bojana-Buna River, the landscape rises within a distance of only 80 km up to 2,693 m in the Prokletije massif between Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo. Thus, the Balkan Green Belt links extremely important wetlands such as coastal areas, rivers and lakes with the mountain ranges of the Balkan Peninsula. But also traditionally cultivated landscapes with pastures, hedgerows and small villages are characteristic of the Balkan Green Belt.
Strategy of Green Belt of Fennoscandia

Through development of the GBF identity and in the context of biodiversity conservation under the CBD framework, it provides a framework for ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable transboundary cooperation and for developing social well-being in the border areas.

As an oldest part of the European Green Belt, the GBF forms a mechanism for influencing in wider European cooperation in research, biodiversity conservation and economic and social development.
Vision of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia in 2020

“The Green Belt of Fennoscandia is developed into a widely acknowledged transboundary model area for biodiversity conservation, social well-being, environmentally sustainable economic growth generated by the region’s unique nature and cultural heritage.”

(Decision of the GBF Steering Committee 29th Sep, 2014)
Nature has no boundaries. Thank you.