

Development of Scientific Tourism and Environmental Education Using the Potential of PSRER: Prospects, Problems and Limitations

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Abstract

Polesie State Radiation and Ecological Reserve has a huge natural potential. This report provides a brief assessment of the institution, shows a high diversity of vegetation cover and richness of flora and fauna. After the accident at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant (in 1986), there has been no economic activity at the bigger part of the reserve over the past 35 years. Consequently, it's possible to observe the natural development of slightly disturbed and the restoration of the transformed ecosystems. The geographically determined forest vegetation is being restored on the abandoned fields and in evacuated villages; swamps, forests and shrubs are formed in the place of reclaimed land. This is happening on the background of a powerful radiation factor as well as warming and aridization (drying out) of the climate which is most visible here in the southeast of the country. The result of the changing climate is a change in the vegetation of its floristic composition and the fauna inhabiting plant complexes.

Many scientific problems and questions arise in the current conditions of the combination of the interaction of many environmental and human-induced factors of the natural environment and various processes occurring in natural complexes. Some problems related to botanical and forest topics close to the author are outlined. To solve them, it is necessary to involve a wide range of scientists from various fields of knowledge. To this end, it is proposed to develop scientific tourism at the reserve with the creation of a scientific research centre in the future. International scientific field forums can be the first effective step on this path which will be organized with the participation of experts from the NGO "Green Cross Belarus". Scientific results and visual materials of the forums will be included in the interdisciplinary informational guide on the Reserve. It will be regularly updated.

Natural complexes and objects of the Reserve have great potential both for the development of environmental education and for educating the population in various fields of knowledge.

The report also covers a number of problems that limit the development of scientific tourism, environmental awareness and education on the territory of the Reserve in Polesie.