

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN COMMENTS TO ICOMOS

ALPINE AND PRE-ALPINE MEADOWS, PASTURES AND WETLANDS IN THE AMMERGAU, THE LAKE STAFFELSEE AREA AND THE WERDENFELSER LAND (GERMANY)

IUCN provides the following comments to ICOMOS based on a review of the nomination by the IUCN World Heritage Panel and the views of one external desk reviewer. The nominated property is a serial site consisting of 54 component parts proposed under criterion (v). There are seventeen individual component parts and 37 component parts grouped in 11 clusters that the nomination dossier suggests represent as a whole the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, which is centered on the local grassland farming system. The nominated component parts total an area of 19,403.95 ha with no buffer zone proposed. According to the nomination dossier, traditional grassland farming and livestock husbandry has sustained the livelihoods of small communities in alpine and pre-alpine meadows and pastures for centuries bearing testament of the connection of the local population to this Upper Bavarian cultural landscape.

The nominated property overlaps with several protected areas: Landschaft südlich des Estergebirges; Wettersteingebiet einschließlich Latschengürtel bei Mittenwald; Murnauer Moos; Estergebirge and Ammergebirge; Wettersteingebirge. In this respect, IUCN notes the presence of several different habitats resulting from the varied landscape comprising raised bogs, alpine hummock meadows, mountain meadows, alluviums and moors and original wet meadows as well as litter meadows. In the 'Murnau Moor' area, the nominated property comprises litter meadows and raised bogs. Raised bogs are the final ecosystem resulting from a succession starting from lakes that have progressively silted up. However, raised bogs have been reduced by more than 98% since 1750 and have been assessed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems. The remaining alpine raised bogs are therefore a conservation priority. They currently have a favorable conservation status according to the second national report to the EU Habitats Directive. The raised bogs of the 'Murnauer Moos' Nature Reserve enjoy protection status under German Federal Nature Conservation Law and the EU Habitats Directive (habitat type 7110), which recognizes the reserve as the largest, largely intact bog complex in Central Europe and as habitat for meadow-breeding bird species. The nominated property also includes areas that host a number of threatened species, such as butterflies, including the Endangered *Lycaena helle*, the Near-threatened *Phengaris nausithous*, the Vulnerable *Phengaris teleius*, and plant species, including the Vulnerable Creeping Marshwort, *Apium repens*, and the Near-threatened Fen Orchid, *Liparis loeselii*.

Whilst the nomination dossier highlights the biodiversity values of the nominated property, it also draws particular attention to human-wildlife conflict in relation to the return of the Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus*, LC), other predators, and the Eurasian Beaver (*Castor fiber*, LC), which the dossier suggests can undermine the maintenance of traditional land use. IUCN notes that the nomination dossier includes a summary of management plans for managing large predators as well as beaver management guidelines. IUCN also notes that the wolf and other large predators are provided with a strict protection status under the Bern Convention and the EU Habitats Directive. In addition, the wolf is strictly protected through the Federal Nature Conservation Law of Germany. In this respect, IUCN notes that the dossier presents the grassland farming system as "a harmonious interaction of man with the environment (...) which has been maintained for centuries" and whose essential features date back to prehistoric time. However, the previously extinct keystone species are portrayed as a threat to the nominated property even though they were evidently interacting with this system before they became extinct. Therefore, IUCN recommends ICOMOS to explore if the reintroduction and presence of top predators, beavers and the species found in the overlapping protected areas could be integrated as an essential element of the proposed cultural attributes, managed through species and habitat monitoring and careful management and compensation measures to mitigate human-wildlife conflict. Regarding the protection and management of the proposed cultural landscape, IUCN notes with concern that no buffer zone is foreseen for the 54 component parts. Ecological connectivity does not appear to be reflected through the nominated property's configuration and the protection regime does not appear to explicitly support this. Therefore, IUCN recommends ICOMOS consider with the State Party how a buffer zone could be established to serve as an additional layer of protection ensuring both ecological connectivity between the nominated component parts and the integrity of the wider cultural landscape overall.

Finally, IUCN notes that the nomination dossier states that essential prerequisite for the preservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property is the continuation of the centuries-old system of grassland farming and animal husbandry. However, it goes on to note that the inscription of the nominated property on the UNESCO World Heritage List would not imply “any obligation on the part of the farmers to continue to cultivate the land (in any form whatsoever), nor does World Heritage status lead to the introduction or designation of additional restrictions, protected areas or legal levels”. IUCN recommends ICOMOS seek to clarify with the State Party this seemingly contradictory statement which appears to be at odds with the framing of the property’s proposed OUV and the need for management objectives which would maintain these values.