

# On the creation of Ladoga Skerries National Park (the Republic of Karelia)

The Ladoga Skerries National Park, with a total area of 122,000 hectares, will be developed in the Lakhdenpokhsky, Sortavalsky and Pitkyarantsky municipal districts of the Republic of Karelia on the northern and northwestern coasts of Ladoga Lake. The reason for creating the park is to preserve the unique natural complexes of the Ladoga Lake skerries that have no analogue in Russia and Europe. The decision will form a legal framework for providing a system of special protection for natural complexes and facilities within the national park's boundaries.

## **Reference**

The Russian Natural Resources and Environment Ministry introduced the measure in line with the federal law On Specially Protected Natural Areas.

The establishment of the Ladoga Skerries National Park (later referred to as the 'national park') has been envisaged by the plan for the implementation of the Concept for the Development of Federal Specially Protected Natural Areas until 2020 (approved by the Government's directive of 22 December 2011 No 2322-r) and the plan for conducting the Year of the Environment in Russia in 2017 (approved under the Government's directive of 2 June 2016 No 1082-r).

The signed resolution approves the establishment of the Ladoga Skerries National Park, with a total area of 122,000 hectares, in the Lakhdenpokhsky, Sortavalsky and Pitkyarantsky municipal districts of the Republic of Karelia on the northern and northwestern coasts of Ladoga Lake.

The reason for creating the park is to preserve Ladoga Lake's unique natural complexes of skerries which have no parallel in Russia or Europe and to maintain biodiversity represented by numerous vascular and non-vascular plants, lichens, seaweeds, mushrooms and softwood of natural origin that have survived in conditions of increasing human impact. The special system of protection for the national park's premises will help preserve a rare endemic animal species, the Ladoga ringed seal, listed in the Red Data Book of Russia and the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The projected national park will include 63 of the Republic of Karelia's cultural landmarks, including those of federal importance – camps, burial grounds, ancient settlement sites (dating back to the period between 6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> millenniums BC and 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries) and the historic centre of Sortavala town with wooden and stones structures from the 19<sup>th</sup>-first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Unique landscapes and relict plant communities together with historic and

cultural sights attract tourists, which will boost educational and ecotourism both in the national park and in the Republic of Karelia.

The results of the comprehensive environmental inspection of the premises validating the attribution of the legal status of a national park to the territory have undergone public discussion and obtained positive reviews from state environmental experts.

The decision will form a legal framework for provision of a special protective regime, effective for natural complexes and facilities within the national park's boundaries.