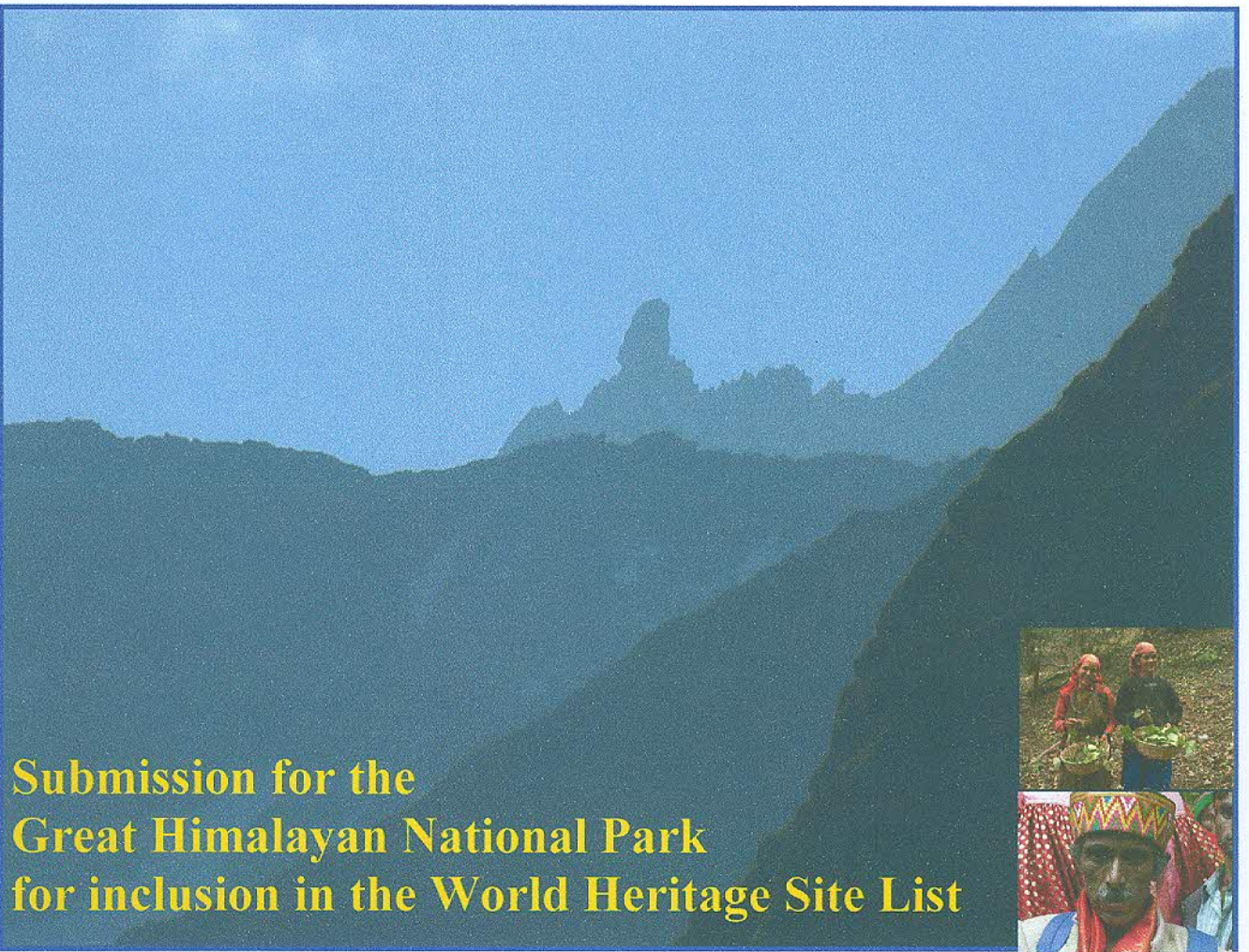
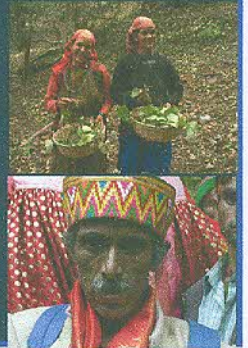




**Submission for the  
Great Himalayan National Park  
for inclusion in the World Heritage Site List**



Great Himalayan National Park mountain range at Khandedhar  
Inset: Efforts to bring community and conservation together

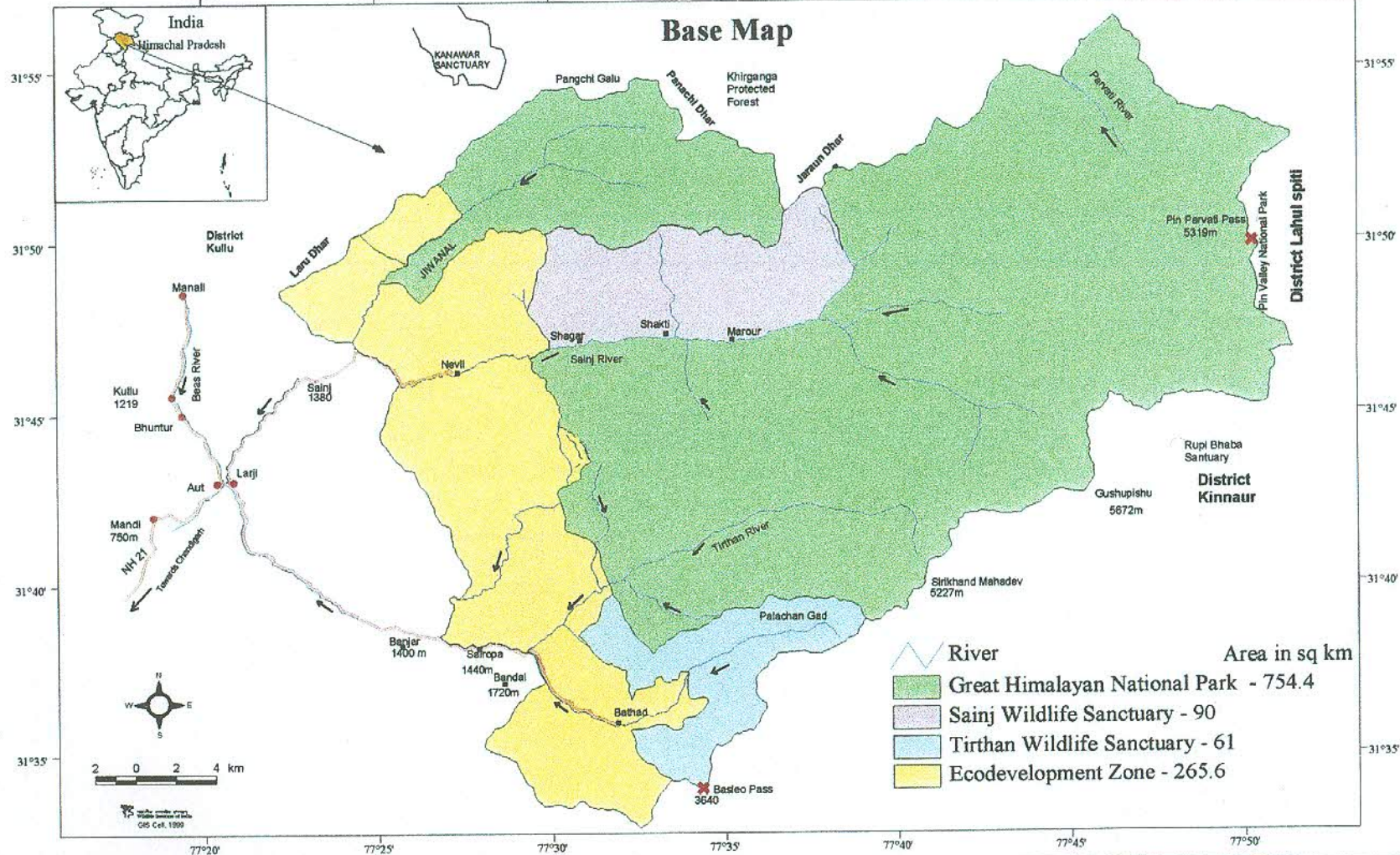


**GREAT HIMALAYAN NATIONAL PARK**

**ग्रेट हिमालयन नेशनल पार्क**

# Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA), Himachal Pradesh

## Base Map

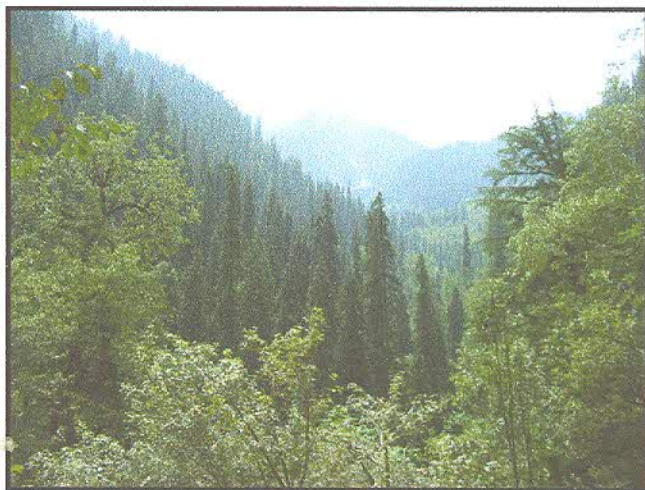


**Submission for the  
Great Himalayan National Park  
for inclusion in the World Heritage Site List**

Name of Country : India  
List drawn up by : Director, Great Himalayan National Park  
Telephone : 0091-1902-265320  
Fax : 0091-1902-265320  
E-mail : dirchnp@sancharnet.in  
Date : January, 2006  
Name of Property : Great Himalayan National Park  
Geographic Location : 31° 38'28" and 31°54'58"N Latitude  
77° 20'11" and 77°45'00" E Longitude  
Altitudinal Range : 1700-5800 metres above mean sea level

**Description**

1. Located in the Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh in the Himalayan state of India, the area of the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) is 754.4 sq km. The GHNP is naturally protected on the northern, eastern and southern boundaries because of area being under permanent snow or with steep ridges (please see map). To facilitate ecologically sustained development (ecodevelopment) an area upto 5 km. from the western periphery of the Park has been notified as Buffer zone, popularly known as Ecozone. The Ecozone has an area of 265.6 sq km with about 160 small villages, comprising 2200 household, a population of about 14000 people. Two wildlife sanctuaries of Sainj (90 sq km) and Tirthan (61 sq km) exist close to the Park.
2. GHNP is a major source of water for the rural and urban centers of the region with four major rivers (Tirthan, Sainj, Jiwa Nal, and Parvati) originating from the glaciers in the Park. The Park is nowhere connected by road. Being remote and insulated within the Kullu valley, the Park has its own microclimate. At higher elevations, unexpected thunderstorms can build up any time. And just as quickly, the storm can pass, leaving the sky saturated with azure blue.
3. A total of 832 plant species belonging to 427 genera and 128 families of higher plants have been recorded within Park. The GHNP has 17.0% of its area under forests. The low percentage of forest area in GHNP is due to preponderance of high altitude meadows beyond tree line and rocky and snow bound areas in the Park. The forest consists of extensive stands of Oak (*Quercus semecarpifolia*), coniferous forests of Blue Pine (*Pinus wallichiana*), West Himalayan Silver Fir (*Abies pindrow*), West Himalayan Spruce (*Picea smithiana*) and Himalayan Cedar or deodar (*Cedrus deodara*). The broad-leaf forests contain Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus indica*), *Rhododendron*



**Coniferous forest in Tirthan Valley of the Great  
Himalayan National Park**

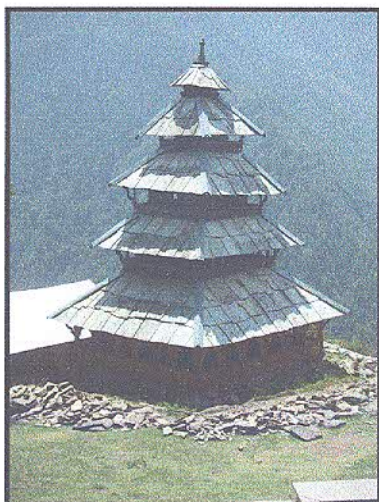
*arboreum*, *Quercus leucotrichophora*, *Q. floribunda* at the lower altitude, and pure patches of Birch (*Betula utilis*) at higher altitude. Yew (*Taxus baccata*) is an important medicinal tree of the understorey. A rich variety of shrubs and patches of ringal bamboo (*Arundinaria spathiflora*) are found as a dense understorey. The shrubs of (*Rhododendron campanulatum*) form the Krummholz patch in the sub-alpine zone. Other shrubs that are found about 3700 m are *Juniperus communis*, *J. pseudosabina*, *Lonicera*, *Berberis*, *Cotoneaster*, *Viburnum* and *Rosa*.

4. Among the large mammals that one can encounter, there are several species of herbivores that are characteristic of the Park: the Goral (*Naemorhedus goral*), the Himalayan Tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*), and Serow (*Capricornis sumatragensis*). These mammals are the prey for Leopards (in the forest zone). The Himalayan Black Bear (*Selenarctos thibetanus*) inhabit the forests, while Asiatic Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*), Blue Sheep and Snow Leopard occur on the alpine meadows.
5. The Park falls within one of the globally important Endemic Bird Areas (D02: Western Himalaya) identified by the ICBP Biodiversity Project. Galliforms in GHNP constitute a very important and spectacular component of biodiversity, the most prominent being the endangered Western Tragopan (*Tragopan melanocephalus*). Another endangered pheasant, the Chir (*Catreus wallichii*) is present on the steep, south-facing grassy slopes. Monal (*Lophophorus impegenus*), and Koklas (*Pucrasia macrolopha*), are in abundant in the temperate forest zone while Kaleej (*Lophura leucomelana*) occurs in small numbers below 2,000m. The sightings of Snow Partridge (*Lerwa lerwa*), Hill Partridge (*Arborophila torqueola*) and Himalayan Snowcock (*Tetragallus himalayensis*) are good within the Park area.



Western Tragopan (*Tragopan melanocephalus*),  
an endangered species conserved in the  
Great Himalayan National Park

6. The region wherein the GHNP is located has maintained a geography of sacred places. Most villages in Kullu and Seraj had temples to ancient local gods and goddesses (devtas and devis). Temple groves of the sacred deodar trees were under the care of the devtas, protected against cutting. Some temples were within the villages; others, such as Manu temple in Shenshar Valley are sited on prominent and dramatic locations. These gods' homes were constructed of stone and deodar timber, most of them in similar style to human homes. They held rent-free land and granaries, and were supported by one or more pujaris (the priest), a manager (kardar), an oracle or shaman, chelas (interpreters), and musicians for festival times. Isolated for centuries from the large urban centers, these remote hamlets developed a highly distinctive culture, based on the worship of local devta, which are celebrated in numerous local, regional and national festivals. From the characteristic architecture of the houses and temples, and the folk wood carvings that decorate them, to the



An old temple of sage Manu in  
the Sainj valley of the Park

silver jewellery and woven wool shawls and blankets, there is a great range of local crafts in these villages. The village life even now is a relatively self-sufficient local system of subsistence, and inter-relations with the natural world and the supernatural. As an agroecological system, it is integrating croplands, forests and grazing lands.

## ELEMENTS

### Justification of "Outstanding Universal Value"

1. The GHNP is one of the most picturesque area in the Western Himalayas well known for its exquisite floral and faunal biodiversity. The Park is a highly protected "Ecological



Mountains at Tirath, the origin of Tirthan River



Khandedhar, the origin of JiwaNal River



A waterfall in Sainj Valley



Spring in JiwaNal Valley

Reference" or a natural laboratory for future scientific, ecological and conservation studies of Himalayan flora specially the endangered species in the Himalayas.

2. The GHNP is unique and has got outstanding universal value in many ways. Bounded to the East by the Himalayan Mountains, the Park forms part of the boundary between four ecological zones: (1) the dry deserts of interior Asia and the well-watered lowlands of the Indian plains, (2) the Oriental and Palearctic faunal realms, (3) the high plateau of Tibet and the jumbled Himalayan peaks, and (4) the catchments of the Beas and Sutlej Rivers, both mighty tributaries of the Indus. Because of its complex geography and its great variations in altitude, the limited area of the Park encompasses an enormous range of species, which span the subtropical to the alpine and include those characteristic of the south-east Asian forests as well as those found across Siberia and the Asian steppes. Few ecological sanctuaries present such a variety of wildlife habitat and biological diversity in such a small area.

3. In the continental drift when the Gondwanaland mass welded with Asia, the Tethys sea became obliterated progressively towards westward from the east. This resulted in formation of gigantic fold mountains of the Tertiary Himalaya-Alpine System of Eurasia. Due to welding of Gondwanaland and Asiatic landmasses, exchange of flora and fauna could be possible, which ultimately led to the biogeographical peculiarities in the Park.
4. The flora of GHNP shows affinities with Mediterranean, Tibetan as well as cis-Himalayan region. For example, *Valeriana jatamansi*, *Dactylorhiza hatagirea*, *Taxus baccata*, *Leycesteria formosa* are typical taxa which extends upto Afghanistan and west China. Other affinities that are met with here are in form of *Hippophae* of palaeartic region; *Cedrus deodara*, *Viola biflora*, and *Poa alpina* of mediterranean region; and *Euphorbia* of Peninsular India. In addition, the Himalayas have evolved a high proportion of their own endemic taxa, for example several species of balsams *Impetience*, *Androsace primuloides*, *Hedysarum cachemirianum*, *Draba lasiophylla*, etc. and Himalayan Tahr *Hemitragus jemlahicus* which are well represented in GHNP. Occurrence of less disturbed temperate and alpine ecosystems in a geographical compact area, and inaccessible and rugged terrain representing the ecological, geomorphological and biological values of the North-west Himalaya make GHNP the biggest conservation unit in the region.
5. The GHNP is the most important gene pool of western Himalayan flora and fauna. The Park's natural attributes have tremendous genetic significance for posterity due to its biological and



Musk Deer



Himalayan Tahr



Himalayan Brown Bear

ecological richness. There are several species of herbivores that are characteristic of the Park: the Himalayan musk deer *Moschus chrysogaster*, is classified as low risk, near threatened by the IUCN. In the higher forests of the rugged mountain country, the Himalayan Tahr (*Hemitragus jemlahicus*) considered vulnerable by IUCN occurs. Above the tree-line the Snow Leopard (*Uncia uncia*) is found which has been declared endangered species by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) since 1972. Himalayan Black Bears inhabit the forests, while Asiatic Brown Bears occur on the alpine meadows.

6. The Western Tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus*, is a charismatic creature, which inspire conservation efforts for itself- and for the thousands of lesser known, but vitally important, plants and animals with which it co-exists. The spectacular bird is a symbol of the grandeur of pheasants and is among the most beautiful of birds and aptly named the King of Birds. It is endemic to the North West Himalayas, a fact that makes the species the leading choice to represent the full range of avian diversity in the region. The Western Tragopan is in the Vulnerable category of IUCN's Red List of Threatened Birds. There is an extremely limited area in the world where this pheasant is found, the most of which is confined to Himachal Pradesh. The biggest and possibly the most viable population of the Western Tragopan are found in the GHNP.
7. Jujurana as they call the Western Tragopan in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh means king of the birds. According to a local legend god created this colourful pheasant with the help of the most beautiful feathers of each bird in the universe. The name relates the grandeur and

beauty of WT that it enjoys among the local villagers. At the same time the bird is quite known in the region for its beauty and endangered status. There are a number of folk songs and folklores in name of this bird. The Western Tragopan has been adopted as logo of the Great Himalayan National Park. The other 'Vulnerable' to extinction species on the *IUCN Red List* criteria is Chir Pheasant *Catreus wallichii* found in GHNP. The local people are well acquainted with the behaviour of the bird, which hides itself in the grasses and does not take to wings unless one has reached very close.

8. The GHNP stands out as an important conservation area in the North-West Himalayas with global conservation significance. It addresses some of the concerns relating to
  - a. conservation of bio-diversity in a "megadiversity" country
  - b. conservation of a compact and un-fragmented Himalayan ecosystem
  - c. developing linkages between conservation and development
9. The boundaries of GHNP are contiguous with the Pin Valley National Park (675 sq km) in Trans-Himalaya, the Ruppi-Bhawa Wildlife Sanctuary (503 sq km) in Sutlej watershed and the Kanawar Wildlife Sanctuary (61 sq km). Together, the varied wildlife habitats of these protected areas (PAs) support the full range of western Himalayan biodiversity, from tropical to alpine and Tibetan. Thus, the Park is a crucial protected area because it connects other islands of biodiversity, which increases the availability of migration routes between PAs, which is essential for the survival of many animals.
10. The traditional rights of the local people in the GHNP were settled in May 1999 through an elaborate procedure, as prescribed in the Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972. This has led to the issuance of final notification of the GHNP. The post-settlement-of-rights situation is affecting the Park in the following ways:
  - a. the biological processes, free of current biotic disturbances, are bringing positive changes in the status of biological diversity in the Park;
  - b. the GHNP experiment of addressing the local community concerns and enhanced conservation interface through a livelihoods based approach has been well received by the people in the ecozone. This model primarily routed through women's saving and credit groups has largely been contributing towards economic empowerment of the poor and women, nature conservation education, participatory forest management and development of enabling policies.

#### **Criteria met :**

#### **Criteria under which inscription is proposed.**

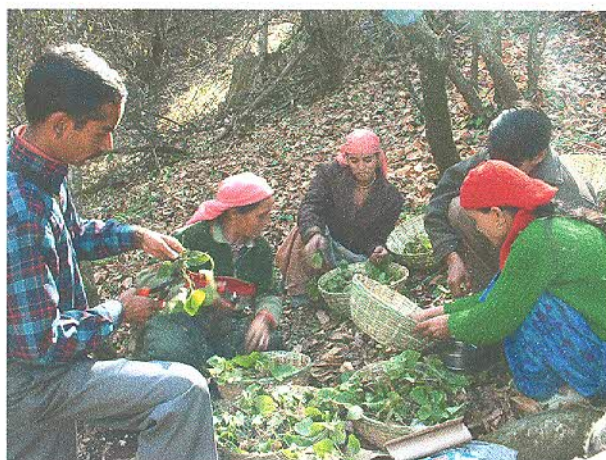
1. Exceptional Natural Beauty.
2. Population of rare and endangered high altitude flora and fauna.  
(Natural Criteria (vii) and (x) of UNESCO's nomination criteria)

#### **Assurances of Authenticity and Integrity:**

1. The Great Himalayan National Park was declared as National Park under Wildlife Protection Act (1972) by the Himachal Pradesh Government in 1999 vide No. FFE-B-F (3)-2/99- Dated 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1999. This pristine area of temperate forests and alpine meadows surrounded by high mountains has remained without any human interference since 1999.
2. There is a five year Management Plan (2004-2009) for the Park. The plan deals with the management of habitats for the wild animals and plants which may be a difficult exercise if

the local people keep on using the natural resources of the Park. The Management Plan encourages working with the local people so that the animals and plants could remain safe from their interference. The process of planning and implementation should continue on a regular basis, because consensus cannot be reached on all issues and options in one term of a Management Plan. Experimental approaches and flexibility will be needed, demanding subsequent review and adaptation by stakeholders. The present Management Plan, based on a livelihood approach, is a precursor to ongoing strategic planning, and is considered to be a leading example of such processes in India.

3. The buffer zone or Ecozone is an area on the western boundary of the Park which contains villages that have historically had some economic dependence on the resources of the land incorporated into the Park. The formal designation of the Park boundaries and the resulting loss of these resources has economically impacted these villages. In recognition of this adverse economic impact various programmes have, and are being, developed by the state government of Himachal Pradesh, NGOs (non-government organizations), and the villagers themselves to create alternative sources of economic well-being. Ecotourism, one such program, offers rewards to both the visitor and the villagers and helps protect GHNP.
4. The GHNP is being developed in a model to demonstrate participatory management of natural resources. The experiential learning from the Park suggests that there is a need to first



**Medicinal plants propagation : a livelihood option  
for the local community**



**Capacity building programme to develop  
livelihoods for the local community**

resolve the socio-economic issues (mainly livelihoods) of the local people in order to take their support in the biological diversity conservation. The habitat of wild animals and plants are better protected as the local villagers stand by the forest guard and assist him in protection of natural resources.

5. The remoteness and inaccessibility of the Park ensures the fewer disturbances for its biological diversity. More than 85% area of the buffer zone is under forest, which is effectively fulfilling the forest based needs of the local community.

#### **Comparison with other similar properties:**

1. The Great Himalayan National Park has unique geological, biological and ecological characteristics. It represents one of the few areas of semi-natural flora and fauna in the temperate, subalpine and alpine zones of the western Himalayas, an area of high species diversity.
2. In comparison with other parts of the Western Himalayas, the GHNP is unusual more for the preservation of its temperate and subalpine areas. On a worldwide scale, the value of the

GHNP lies in protecting those species characteristic of the naturally occurring flora and fauna, because this Park represents the best chance of survival for many of these species.

3. Because of its range of species assemblages, and availability of a compact area for conserving the habitat and biological diversity, GHNP is the foremost priority for conservation in the biogeographic zone North-West Himalayas.
4. The area of the Park is well insulated, untouched by the modern development, devoid of any habitation, and not connected by road. All these aspects facilitate the evolutionary processes of Nature to continue, unhindered by the biotic interferences. As such, in comparison with other parts of the Western Himalayas, the GHNP is unusual more for the preservation of its temperate, subalpine and alpine areas.
5. The GHNP model of addressing the local community concerns and enhanced conservation interface through a livelihoods based approach primarily routed through women's saving and credit groups has been largely appreciated and adopted by the wildlife managers. Thus, on a worldwide scale, the value of the GHNP lies in protecting the species characteristic of the naturally occurring flora and fauna, because this Park, as compared to other PAs in the region, represents the best chance of survival for many of these species.