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ТЕХНИЧЕСКИЙ ПРОЕКТ 2013 ТРАНСПОРТНАЯ ЧАСТЬ

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- БЦГ-ын хилийн цэг
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Lake Hovsgol National Park General Management Plan 2012
Transportation Section

Introduction

The purpose of this General Management Plan is to set forth clear direction for the management of Lake Hovsgol National Park. The plan consists of four separate sections:

Foundation Document
Transportation Section
Visitor Services Section
Interpretation and Education Section

The legal authority for the development of new and the maintenance of existing transportation facilities in Lake Hovsgol National Park is provided for in the 1995 Law for Mongolian Specially Protected Areas. This law requires establishment of management zones and further declares that the zoning of national parks be based on their natural state, location of animals and plants, requirement of conservation of historical and cultural monuments, and condition for developing tours and tourism. The law provides for three different zones:

1. **Special Zone** - transportation facilities are not authorized
2. **Tourism Zone** - nature tours and tourism are authorized under specific itineraries and directions according to established procedures.
3. **Restricted or Limited Use Zone** - construction of roads, car parks, and related facilities is authorized in accordance with approved projects, drawings and permission.

Park roads, car parks, and related facilities often represent a high percentage of the area’s built environment and, even if great care is taken to avoid damage, to the park’s environment. Decisions regarding the location, type, and design of transportation facilities can significantly impact the natural and cultural resources of the area as well as the quality of the visitor experience.

**Proposed Policies and Standards**

Decisions regarding transportation facilities require a full, interdisciplinary consideration of alternatives and a full understanding of their consequences. Traditional practices of building wider roads and larger parking areas to accommodate ever-increasing numbers of motor vehicles are not always the right approach. The park must find transportation solutions that will preserve the natural and cultural resources in its care while providing a high-quality visitor experience.

It is essential that the Special Protected Area Administration (SPAA) leaders participate actively and from the very beginning whenever transportation studies are contemplated within Lake Hovsgol National Park. Full engagement with any such planning processes is critical to the long-term protection of park resources. Likewise, SPAA must participate in transportation planning forums that may result in links to parks or impacts on park resources.
Working with state, aimag, and soum officials, the SPAA will seek reasonable access to parks and connections to external transportation systems. The SPAA will also advocate corridor crossings for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife and other accommodations to sustain biodiversity and avoid or mitigate harm to individual animals, fragmentation of plant and animal habitats, and disruption of natural systems.

The SPAA will, where appropriate, emphasize and encourage transportation systems that provide an alternative to the individual or family use of the automobile. At Lake Hovsgol National Park this may include a mix of buses, ferries, non-motorized modes (horseback, bicycle) of access to and moving within parks. In general, the preferred modes of transportation will be those that contribute to maximum visitor enjoyment, and minimum adverse impacts on, park resources and values.

Before a decision is made to design, construct, expand, or upgrade access to or within a park, a “no construction” alternative must be fully explored. If a “no construction” alternative will not achieve satisfactory results, then a construction proposal should consider whether the project:

1. Is appropriate and necessary to meet park management needs or to provide for visitor use and enjoyment;
2. Is designed with extreme care and sensitivity to the landscape through which it passes;
3. Will not cause unacceptable impacts on natural and cultural resources and will minimize or mitigate those impacts that cannot be avoided;
4. Will reduce traffic congestion, noise, air pollution, and adverse effects on park resources and values;
5. Will not cause use in the areas it serves to exceed the areas’ visitor carrying capacities;
6. Will incorporate the principles of energy conservation and sustainability;
7. Is able to demonstrate financial and operational sustainability;
8. Will incorporate Universal Design principles to provide for accessibility for all people, including those with disabilities;
9. Will take maximum advantage of interpretive opportunities and scenic values;
10. Will not violate applicable air pollution control plans or regulations;
11. Is fully consistent with the vision and desired future conditions set forth in the park’s general management plan; and,
12. Will enhance the visitor experience by offering new or improved interpretive or recreational opportunities, by simplifying travel within the park, or by making it easier or safer to see park features.

Park roads are generally not intended to provide fast and convenient transportation; rather, they are intended to enhance the quality of a visit while providing for safe and efficient travel with minimal or no impacts on natural and cultural resources.

Before roads are chronically at or near capacity, the use of alternative destination points or transportation systems or limitations on use will be considered as alternatives to road expansion.
The Short Road along the lakeside causes siltation and pollutants to run into the lake as well as creating an eye sore and difficult travel conditions. This road should be relocated away from the shoreline and travel should be restricted to a Lake Road Bus required for park and ger camp visitors.
National parks may contain roads that were not constructed by the SPAA and are not under SPAA jurisdiction. In these cases the SPAA must rely heavily on the Ministry of Transportation, aimag and/or soum authorities to maintain the roads consistent with park management goals. These other authorities sometimes propose to expand an existing road or construct a new road within a park, with significant potential for adversely affecting park resources and values. Park managers must consider road proposals in strict accordance with the above policy statement. Where practicable, and after concurrence of the entity with road jurisdiction, non-SPAA roads that are no longer needed will be closed or removed, and the area will be restored to a natural condition.

Unimproved and unmaintained, the East Side Road creates uncomfortable travel, erosion, and detracts from the scenic qualities of the park. This road should be improved with proper drainage and an on-going maintenance plan.
Commercial Use of Park Roads

The SPAA will work with appropriate governments and private organizations and individuals to minimize the impacts of commercial transportation of goods on park roads. Whenever possible, commercial traffic will be prohibited on roads within parks, except when necessary for the purpose of serving park visitors and park operations. When a determination is made that commercial utilization of existing routes has adverse impacts on park resources and values, the SPAA will work with the appropriate government authorities to minimize these impacts, or to have the commercial use redirected over an alternative route.

Proposals for Construction or Expansion of Park Roads

The park director must take an active role in community and transportation planning activities to educate all parties about the SPAA mandate to protect park resources. The SPAA will work closely with the Ministry of Transportation and aimag departments of transportation when new roads or expansions of existing road corridors may impact park lands are proposed. The SPAA will object to any proposal to route a state or local road through national parklands, or to increase the size of a right-of-way for an existing road, unless the SPAA first determines (or concurs with a Ministry of Transportation determination) the following:

• There is no feasible and prudent alternative;
• All possible planning has taken place to minimize and mitigate harm to the park;
• It will not be contrary to the public interest, or inconsistent with the purposes for which the park was established;
• It will not cause health and safety risks to visitors or park staff; and,
• It will conform to SPAA standards and practices for road design, engineering, and construction.

In making these determinations, the SPAA will take into account the 12 factors previously listed. Responsibility for future maintenance must be identified before SPAA approval of a proposal.

Bicycle Trails

Bicycle travel should be integrated with park roads whenever it can be determined that such use would be safe and feasible.

Motorcycles and All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

ATVs may use park roads and parking areas and must conform to uniform traffic rules. ATV use is not permitted in Special Zones. Off-road routes for ATVs may be designated in Tourism and Limited Use Zones based on a written determination that such use is:

• Consistent with the protection of a park’s natural, cultural, scenic, and esthetic values.
• Consistent with safety considerations.
• Consistent with management objectives.
• Will not disturb wildlife or other park resources.
Traffic Signs and Markings

• Road signs will be limited to the minimum necessary to meet information, warning, and regulatory needs and to avoid confusion and visual intrusion.
• Signs should be planned to provide a pleasing, uniform appearance.
• Traffic signs and pavement markings on park roads will be consistent with Mongolian highway standards.
• All roadside signs and markings will conform to pertinent traffic engineering practices.
• Park signs—especially those that display the SPAA and protected area logo—are an important part of the total identity system (branding) for the SPAA and must conform to a uniform set standards established by the SPAA.

This section of the Short Road, with its downhill slope to the lake, causes erosion and detracts from the scenic qualities of an entrance road to the park. This road should be improved with proper drainage and maintained. Car tracks should be graded and seeded with native vegetation.
Parking Areas

• Parking areas will be located so that they will not unacceptably intrude, by sight, sound, or other impact, on park resources or values.
• When parking areas are judged to be necessary, they will be limited to the smallest size appropriate, and they will be designed to accommodate motor vehicles and other users.
• When large parking areas are needed, appropriate plantings and other design elements will be used to reduce negative visual and environmental impacts.
• Permanent parking areas will not normally be sized for the peak use day, but rather for the use anticipated on the average weekend day during the peak season of use.
• When extra parking is needed during periods of peak visitation, it should be in areas that have been stabilized or are otherwise capable of withstanding the temporary impacts of parking without causing unacceptable impacts on park resources.
• Major developed parking areas should have several spots designated “Handicap Parking” with hard-packed surface treatments for wheelchair access.

Laws Pertinent to Transportation

The 2nd Appendix of Government Resolution #169 (1995) further established General Procedure of National Park Conservation Areas and the 3rd Appendix of Government Resolution #169 (1995) contains special provision to be followed in Lake Hovsgol National Park. Park administration shall enforce this procedure by the following:
1. Freight types, amount, shipment time through the ice and water routes shall be determined, monitored accordingly, and permits to be issued in cooperation with relevant organizations;
2. Inspect motor boats, ferry boats on lake water, and issue permits after ensuring no pollutants such as oil and petroleum entering the lake;
3. Borrow pit locations for rocks, gravels, sands and pebbles shall be set for repairing and maintaining roads from Hatgal to Hankh and from Hatgal to Jankhai;
4. Require travellers not to pollute lake water with petrol, fuel and trash, floating device must meet technical safety requirements and not to be overloaded.
Road improvements on the Hatgal – Murun Road will dramatically reduce travel time to the park and result in increased domestic and international visitation.
The General Management Plan provides an overview of current park conditions and makes recommendations for improvement and preparation for expected increased visitation.
Stone or Gravel Pits

Materials from borrow pits, quarries, and other clay, stone, gravel, or sand sources on park lands, including submerged lands, will be extracted and used only for in-park administrative uses after the proper environmental assessments. The assessment report will include written findings that:

- Extraction and use of in-park borrow materials does not or will not impair park resources or values.
- It is the park’s most reasonable alternative based on economic, environmental, and ecological considerations.
- No outside sources are reasonably available.
- After compliance with other applicable state, aimag and soum requirements.

To the extent possible, such materials should be taken only from existing pits, quarries, or sources.

All existing spoil areas within the park that meet the definition of “solid waste disposal site” will be brought into compliance with the appropriate SPAA policies.

The development of new spoil areas or borrow pits, or the expansion of existing ones, will be analyzed through the environmental assessment process.

Proposed borrow pits and spoil areas outside the park will also be evaluated to ensure that use by the SPAA or its contractors does not impair resources or values inside the park, and that extraction operations comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Existing transportation networks and facilities are extremely limited within Lake Hovsgol National Park. Long-used unimproved or unmaintained improved roads serve transportation needs in most sections of the park. The very poor condition of many of these routes, however, is such that only local families and few others drive over them.

There are few established parking areas for motor vehicles. Instead, cars are normally driven off road to a convenient site and park randomly along the lake, in camping areas, at trailheads, or simply at places where visitors want to enjoy the view.

The opening of the paved road now under construction between Hatgal and Murun, the rehabilitation of the Hatgal airport, and the opening of the Mongolian – Russian border to all international travelers north of Hankh will provide major new input into the Lake Hovsgol National Park transportation network. All this is expected to happen between 2013 and 2015.

Most immediate is the nearly completed Murun – Hatgal road. At a distance of approximately 100 km the driving time will be reduced from the current time of two and one-half hours to less than one and one-half hours, and the ease of travel will increase exponentially. Combined with a one and one-half hour flight from Ulanbataar visitors will soon be able to leave the capital city and arrive in Hatgal three to four hours later. Long-term improvements to the road from Ulanbataar to Murun will also facilitate easy travel from the capital city to Hatgal. Current improvements to the Hatgal Airport may bring commercial passenger flights to Hatgal as early as 2013. Completion of these two major projects will result in a significant increase in the number of tourists arriving in Hatgal. Longer term, a new road from Hatgal to Hankh is under consideration.
General Recommendations to Improve Transportation

1. The most important long-term transportation priority for Lake Hovsgol National Park is to establish a permanent set of primary and secondary vehicle roads and a network of routes for mountain bikes and ATVs. Once established, it is imperative that these roads are maintained.

2. Before a final decision is made regarding the route of the proposed new road between Hatgal and Hankh an environmental assessment needs to be conducted. This would include a citation of the law or proposed law authorizing such action, and scientific peer review conducted under direction of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, with the Hovsgol aimag, and the five soums surrounding the lake, (Alag-Erdene, Chandmani-Undur, Tsagaan-Uur, Hankh, and Renchinlkhumbe). This assessment must be made available for public comment in Ulanbataar and must also include an evaluation of a commercial ferry service between the north and south end of the lake and a life cycle cost analysis of the three or more alternatives.

Existing Conditions – Hatgal and the Southern Portion of the Park

A transportation network of roads for the southern portion of the park radiates outward from Hatgal. From this gateway town, three roads enter the park. Two roads on the west side, the Huzuuvch Road and the Jankhai Road, were built to serve the park and its visitors. The unimproved, often braided Eastside Road was built before the park was established to meet commercial transportation needs between Hatgal and Hankh. Today it is used infrequently to transport petrol and other commercial products between Hankh and Hatgal. It has deteriorated badly and few tourists use it. More than 99% of park visitors enter the park via the Murun – Hatgal road. Hatgal village, although outside of the park boundary, serves as a “gateway” community and provides visitors with their first impression of Lake Hovsgol National Park. The main street through the middle of town will be paved by 2013 and will then create a more positive impression to the arriving visitor. The small hill located at the eastern edge if Hatgal is a frequent destination for many visitors to Lake Hovsgol National Park. The vista there offers the first view of the lake to the north. From the village several unsightly and erosion prone dirt tracks run up the hillside to the ridge line then east to the bottom of the rock outcropping at the east end.

Recommendations for Road Improvement in Hatgal

The village of Hatgal should designate, maintain, and sign a system of roads to provide routes and guide motorists through the village to the three different park entrance roads. The dirt tracks up to the ridge line north of town should be closed and a new gravel road running from the height of land on the Huzuuvch Road to an established parking site on the east end should be constructed. The road scars and ruts on the hillside should be regraded and reseeded.

Huzuuvch Road

The Huzuuvch Road extends northwesterly from the main street of Hatgal at the north end of the village. It crosses into the park at the top of a low ridge that is located within sight of the village and from there runs northeasterly downhill to the lake. The road is unimproved, drainage is poor, and the road is severely braided. Upon reaching the lake the road generally
disappears and is replaced by a badly braided set of semi-parallel routes that extend north a few kilometers immediately adjacent to the lake. At this point, all vehicles are crossing tree roots, crossing mud holes full of standing water, and sometimes sliding around in the mud. This road from the village is very unsightly and the ride to the end of the road is extremely uncomfortable. Inevitably, runoff and erosion from this route pollutes the lake.

**Recommendations for Huzuuvch Road**

- Travel from Hatgal should be over a paved or well maintained gravel two-lane road terminating at a parking area at the bottom of the hill.
- A gated, gravel road should be constructed as far away from the lakeshore as possible and located along-side the ger camp boundaries.
- Visitors to this area would then be required park their cars in a parking lot located at the bottom of the hill. As further discussed under recommendations for the West-side road, visitor travel beyond that point would be limited to recurring trips by a single private van operator who would be authorized by permit to carry passengers to the end of the road. This commercial operator would be authorized to charge a fee sufficient to make a reasonable profit.
- Otherwise, travel along this re-aligned road will be authorized by permit issued by the park, and will include vehicles needed for hauling sewage and garbage, service vehicles hauling supplies to ger camps, park staff, and others with special needs.
- Ger camps may choose to meet and transport their guests and their luggage to their camps, and would be encouraged to provide opportunities for access by boat as well.
- All visitors to this area would travel along the lakeshore by walking, bicycle boat, horse, horse and wagon or ger camp vehicle; and
- Between the new road and the water, the erosion and ruts should be restored and a walking/horseback/bicycle trail should be designated in this corridor.

Clean up the construction debris and grade and seed with native plants.
General Management Plan 2013
Transportation Section

Jankhai Road

The second west side road, Jankhai Road, departs from the Murun – Hatgal road at the south end of Hatgal just north of the Hatgal park entrance station ("post") and travels north over several ridges until it crosses into the park at Jankhai Pass. From there, it follows a valley northeasterly to the lake, thence traveling north. The driving route from Hatgal is a comparatively recently graded gravel road and extends approximately 35 kilometers northward along the west side of the lake. As the road runs down the valley to the lake, trenches and mounds left by the construction activities, along with dead trees and pulled up stumps, litter both sides of the road. For some 15 kilometers the Jankhai Road occupies the space, narrow at times, between the lake and most of the ger camps, guest houses, and the homes of nomadic herders and other residents. At the end of the Jankhai Road, a forest track used for hiking and horseback riding runs along the lake to the Jigleg Pass Trail. Also at the end of the road, a mountain road continues some five kilometers to the top of Khyasaa (Mountain Top), a high point that offers commanding views of the islands and the northern portion of the lake. A “do not enter sign” intended to prohibit vehicles from driving further on this road has been placed at this point; however, compliance appears optional and enforcement rare. Because of the gravel surface, vehicle travel along this west-side road results in noise and considerable dust. Ger camp owners, especially, complain about how this noise and dust intrudes on the opportunities for their guests to enjoy views of the lake from their camps, a problem that will only become worse as more and more visitors visit this area.

Recommendations for the Jankhai Pass and West Side Road

This road occupies a special and very scenic space along the shores of Lake Hovsgol. It is currently among the most popular destinations in the park, and will only become more crowded as visitation increases dramatically, as expected, in the near future. It can and should be a place where park visitors, including those staying at ger camps, in designated campgrounds, and especially day-use visitors, can enjoy the scenic values of the lake without suffering the dust, noise, pollutions, and other impacts of ever-increasing levels of motorized travel. Achieving this desired future condition should be considered in terms of short-term and long-term actions.

Short-term Actions Designed to Minimize and Reduce Traffic on This Road

• Clean up the construction debris and grade and seed with native plants the Jankhai Road shoulders between Jankhai Pass and the lake.

• As proposed for Huzuuvch Road, most visitors would be required to park their cars in Hatgal or in a large parking area created at the bottom of the hill north of Jankhai Pass before arriving at the shore. Visitor transport along the lake beyond that point would be limited to recurring trips by a single private van operator who would be authorized by permit to carry passengers from either Hatgal or the designated parking area to the end of the Jankhai Road. This commercial operator would be authorized to charge a fee sufficient to make a reasonable
profit. Safety and equipment requirements must be established. For the privilege of being the sole proprietor; the operator will be required to set a fixed schedule of service of at intervals appropriate to the need, and perform the operation on a daily basis from mid-June to the end of August. The right to provide this exclusive service will be advertised. The contract will be issued for two years with the right to renew without competition. The renewal will be based on the quarterly inspections of the safety and equipment standards.

- Ger camp operators, individually or collectively, should be encouraged to provide opportunities for clients to travel from Hatgal via boat.

- The existing lake-side road will still be utilized, under the authority of a permit issued by the park, by vehicles hauling sewage and garbage, service vehicles hauling supplies to the ger camps, park rangers, and others with special needs.

- Nomadic families will be encouraged and assisted to relocate away from this route for many reasons, including a necessary reduction in the impacts on lake quality and the visitor experience that result from their free-roaming domestic animals.

**Long-term Proposals to Achieve Desired Future Conditions for the Huzuuvch Road**

- Consider construction of a new road that would be located in the forest several hundred meters or more west of the existing Jankhai Road. Should such a new road be approved, access to the ger camps would be made available by specially constructed spur roads that would extend to each of them as well as to established campgrounds.

- Such a new route is absolutely essential if the proposed new road connecting Hatgal to Hankh is constructed on the west side of the lake, for it would be necessary to separate visitors to the lakeshore from the Hatgal to Hankh traffic. East-west roads should be established from the cross-country road to access the ger camps and established campgrounds. This alignment would allow the traffic on the existing Jankhai Road to be limited to the park contracted van services, walking, bicycles, and horseback riding.
The Jankhai Pass Road, an Improved gravel route parallel to the lake, produces large dust clouds that settle in the lake and ger camps and also high noise levels from traffic. Travel speed should be reduced and a Lake Road Bus required for park and ger camp visitors.
**Eastside Road**

The Eastside Road crosses a bridge over the Eg River from the Murun – Hatgal road just north of the park entrance station (“post”) in Hatgal. This road is mostly unimproved dirt and skirts the lake for about 180 kilometers to the village of Hankh. In many sections this road is braided many times as drivers seek a dry or a less rutted route. Near Hatgal several ger camps have been developed near the lake. Further north several tracks run east and provide access to the Chandmani-Undur and Tsagaan-Uur soums. Inspiring vistas along this route provide views of Lake Hovsgol and the Munkh Saridag Mountains along the western shore, valleys of mountain steep, and ridge lines blanketed with Asian larch forests. Several nomadic families inhabit the stream valleys that flow westerly into the lake. It takes approximately 10-12 hours to make this journey under dry conditions and travel is best done in high suspension, 4-wheel drive vehicles. After the few ger camps near Hatgal, there are no visitor facilities until travelers arrive at a couple of ger camps located immediately south of Hankh.

**Recommendations for the Eastside Road**

Improving and maintaining the now-very primitive dirt road along the existing eastside route is a high priority. The aimag and three soums within the park boundary on the eastside should cooperate to achieve the following:

- Improve and maintain the eastside road and bridges so that a minimum speed of 40 kilometers/hour can be maintained along most of the route.
- Regrade and revegetate the rutted braided tracks.
- Monitor the use of this improved road to determine if a new paved Hatgal to Hankh road is necessary and appropriate.

**Hankh**

The Russian border is the major access to Hankh and Lake Hovsgol National Park. Virtually all tourists who visit the Hankh Soum come from Russia, and speak only Russian. The border crossing is 23 kilometers north of the village. Currently the border station is open Monday – Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. The Hankh park post is just south of the border crossing. The road from the border is an improved and maintained dirt surface that carries both commerce and park visitors to and from Hankh village. The road from Hatgal and the road from Russia join in the village. From Hankh a slightly improved dirt road extends northwesterly over a ridge and down to the lake. From there an unimproved road follows the shoreline to the north end of the lake, then west and eventually south along the upper end of the western shore of the lake. Many nomadic families inhabit the valleys and ridges at the north end of the lake and one ger camp and one guesthouse have been established, but serve very few visitors. Increasingly, however, Russian tourists travel into this section for camping, river/lake fishing and they bring with them boats and ATVs; the ATVs use the network of nomadic road traces, animal paths and the open countryside for access and recreation. Russians tour groups travel over some of these unimproved roads to ride horseback and hike on the lower slopes of the Munkh Saridag Mountains along the Mongolian side of the border and to a mountain lake for fishing.
Recommendations for Hankh

- Designating and maintaining a permanent road system and eliminating travel on undesignated roads are a priority in Hankh and vicinity.
- Roads in Hankh should be removed from the lakeshore and setback at a minimum of 50 meters.
- Establish a network of roads and trails where ATV may operate and establish and enforce policy and rules clearly establishing that ATVs can only operate on these designated routes.