

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Pamirs

Date: Sat, 22 Jun 2013 18:36:22 +0200

From: Robert Pamirs <robert@pamirs.org>

To: r.amelan@unesco.org

Dear Mr. Amelan

As co-author of the first tourist guide to Tajikistan (Odyssey Publications 2008/2011), I was delighted to learn of the designation of the Pamirs as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. I regret, however, that this designation is defined by the appellation "Tajikistan National Park", that bears no relationship to facts on the ground. The "Park" has no clearly defined (much less publicly designated) boundaries, no ranger personnel and no funding. Apart from those like myself who are only concerned to promote ecotourism in the Pamirs, those most interested in this new honour will certainly be the Tajik government - which has an excuse to levy fees from tourists for non-existent park services and non-planned investments in the protection of the site - and the many officials, semi-officials and plain local frauds who try to shake tourists down for a few dollars.

I would not wish that UNESCO withdraw the nomination, only that there be some follow-up by UNESCO to ensure that areas designated and recognised as national parks be effectively managed as a natural national resource.

With best regards

Robert Middleton

