



OTGONTENGER

STRICTLY PROTECTED AREA

OTGONTENGER PROTECTED AREA ADMINISTRATION

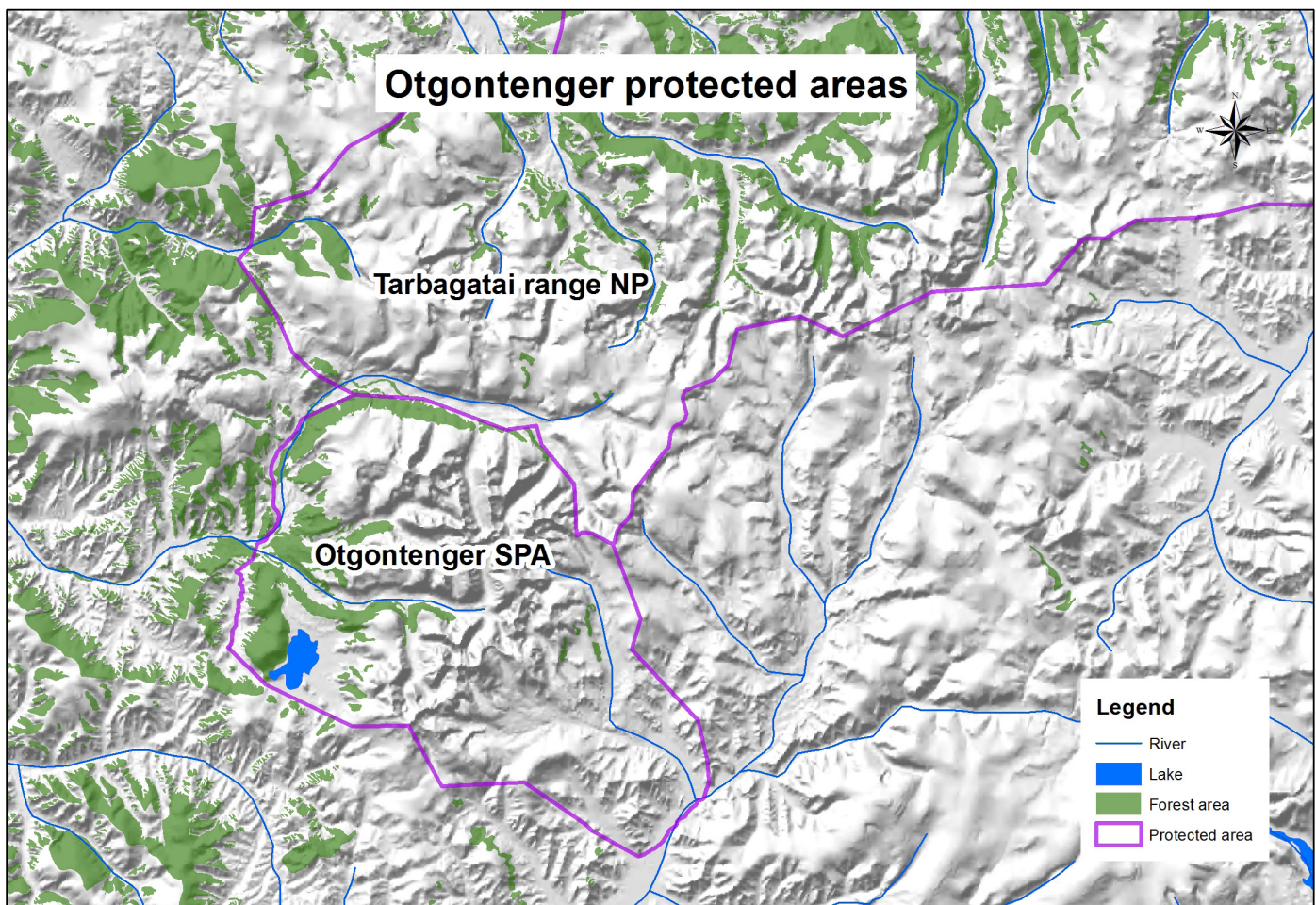
Otgontenger protected area administration (PAA) was established in 1994. Otgontenger PAA in charge of a total of 552,710 hectares of protected areas conservation management including 200,000 ha of Tarbagatai range national park, 253,800 ha of Ulaagchinii khar Lake national park, and 95,510 ha of the Otgontenger strictly protected area (SPA).

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide an effective management on conservation for future generations: a region with sacred mountains worshipped by Mongolians, a source of freshwater and watersheds, landscapes with unique natural formations and habitats of endangered species; while supporting the development of community-based sustainable tourism that helps to create income for local communities to improve their livelihoods.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Ensure Law enforcement
- Organize public awareness activities
- Conduct research and monitoring and create a database
- Rehabilitation of Natural resources
- Develop responsible tourism



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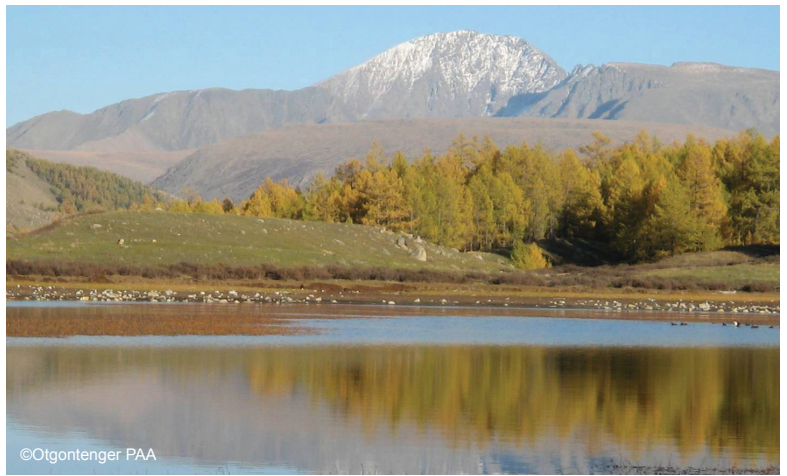
PROTECTION HISTORY

Mongolians have a long history of protecting the environment; the worship of nature especially that of sky, mountains and water bodies has long been practiced. Back in the Chinggis Khan Era, Mongolian laws and rules had specific articles for regulating issues of environmental protection and conservation. Otgontenger Mountain, a worship site of Mongolian ancestors, was originally called “Etugen”, meaning “homeland”, and later took the name of Otgontenger.

- It was recorded in the Tang Dynasty scripture that Turkic kings ruling in the Orkhon River valley in the 7th century A.D, worshipped Otgontenger Mountain and used its spring water for medical/healing purposes.
- The state worship ceremony of Otgontenger Mountain started in 1779, during the Manchu rule.
- Otgontenger Mountain was known to be set aside for protection in 1818; hunting, exploiting trees and plants, digging land were prohibited by the law “Khalkh Juram” (Khalkha Rules).
- In 1914, during the rule of Bogd Khaan of Mongolia, historically worshipped mountains of Khan Khentii, Bogd Khan and Otgontenger were declared as the mountains of state-wide worship.
- Taken under the state special protection in 1992 by the decision of State Baga Khural (Parliament’s Lower house). It has been declared as a Strictly Protected Area in 1995.
- Declared as a State Sacred Mountain by the Decree 110 issued by the President of Mongolia in 1995. As per the Decree 181 issued by the President of Mongolia in 2012, State Ceremony to worship Otgontenger Mountain is to be held once every five years.
- Included in tentative list of World Heritage Site in 1996.



HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PLACES



OTGONTENGER MOUNTAIN

Otgontenger Mountain, the highest peak of the Khangai mountain range, is located in Otgon Soum, Zavkhan Province. Its elevation is 4031 m above sea level (a.s.l). It has snow-capped peaks and glaciers which remained from the "Ice Age". The area covered with snow is 13 sq.km and continues upward starting at 3752 m.

From early generations it has a history of protected and worshipped mountain by Mongolians. Earlier people used to worship Otgontenger Mountain with shamanic perspective and rituals. At present, a State Ceremony to worship the mountain has been conducted once in every five years.



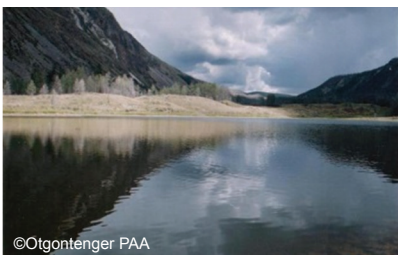
OCHIRVAANI DEITY COMPLEX

In the Valley of Otgontenger Mountain, Ochirvaani deity complex was created in 2003. Ochirvaani deity is one of the ten wrathful deities of Buddhism and it is believed that people born in the specific years have to worship the deity for their lifetime.



ALAG YAMAAT

The place refers to the steep southern slopes with white and red rocks, located between Yamaat and Altan Tolgoi. The place has a unique natural formation, where ibex inhabit, wild onions grow and forests and Yamaat River intersperse.



DAYAN

Dayan is located in the north-west of Otgontenger Mountain and between the Blue and White lakes. This is one of the traditional worship area where people who came to worship Otgontenger Mountain usually pray from Dayan, from where one can see the Otgontenger Mountain and the Blue Lake all at once.



WHITE LAKE

It is located between the Ider and Tsagaan Rivers in the Valley of Serven Mountain. This is a sacred lake worshipped since long time ago. When worshipping, lamas used to first offer ingots of silver as much as of 50 lans (=1.865kg) to the lake and then to read the sutras. The Locals still worship the lake.



GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The terrain of the Otgontenger Mountain is of volcanic origin: rugged with steep rocky slopes, permanent snow cover and crevices. According to the physical geographic zoning of Mongolia, the area belongs to Khangai region of Khangai Khentii mountainous region. The most of the terrain consists of areas in high mountain region,

major rivers of Bogd and Ider, other smaller rivers, and mountain. The highest mountain is Otgontenger at 4021 m above sea level and the set of lower mountains extending from Otgontenger are 3000-3650m.

The Central Asia's high mountain ecosystem dominates in the area, where forests, mountain grasslands/steppe, lakes and swamps intersperse. The area mostly consists of high mountain landscape, dome-topped plateau mountains and numerous small lakes formed from ancient glaciers. In general, high mountain taiga, forest, forest and mountain steppe characteristics occur and larch, where mixed forests dominate in the mountain and meadow with larch forest continues along the rivers and streams in the mountain valleys.

CLIMATE

Climatic conditions in the area are extreme with high seasonal and diurnal range differences. In winter, land surface is covered with snow relatively early and often the snow depth reaches 40-70 cm with temperature as cold as minus 50C°. Therefore, soil freezes to 3-4 meters deep during winter time. The mean temperature reaches its lowest of -22C° to -30C° in January and the highest at 13C° and 15C° in July. The mean annual temperature is between -2.6C° and 6.5C°.

SOIL

A high mountain landscape dominates in Otgontenger Mountain, forest meadow peaty, loam-like alpine soil, and semi-alpine forest meadow soil are usually found along with meadow tundra soil and bare rocks at the mountain top. Meadow steppe and semi alpine soil are common along the southern slopes and side hills, whereas mountain black soil is common in the foothills. In the narrow mountain valleys meadow swamp soil is common.



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SURFACE AND MINERAL WATER

Approximately 30 rivers, namely the rivers of Bogd, Arshaan, Ovor Jonsht, Khukh Anag and Shiree begin in the north, west and south sides of Otgontenger Mountain and together they form the Zavkhan River Basin. The Bogd and Chuluut Rivers flow from the southern part of the Otgontenger Mountain and drain into Buyant River, a major tributary of Zavkhan River.

There is a hot spring reservoir located in the north of Otgontenger Mountain, at the intersection of tectonic fault lines stretching along Arshaan River and a second-

system fracture. A resort established near the hot spring reservoir is located 85 kilometers away from Uliastai City and is surrounded by landscapes of high mountainous region (2500 m) with harsh climate conditions. Temperatures of hot springs in the reservoir differ considerably with the range of 13-55 C°, with about fifty springs of cold, warm and hot water. Therapeutic benefits of the springs were known since the 13th century. Depending on various ingredients of sulfate, carbonate and silicic acid, spring water is used for different ailments such as arthritis, joint pain and gastrointestinal diseases.

BIODIVERSITY



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S.Gombobaatar



S.Gombobaatar



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FLORA

Otgontenger Mountain is dominated by Valley of High Mountain and consists of mixed grasses. There are a variety of plants representing the northern forest ecosystems. 164 species and 93 genera of plants are recorded in SPA of which 7 species are categorized as very rare and 77 species are medicinal plants. The most valuable fruits are blueberries, black berries, and red berries.

FOREST

The territory of Otgotenger is composed of a variety of landscapes such as high mountains, forests, steppes and meadows. Behind the mountain, forests dominated by pine and mixed trees. Otgotenger SPA has a forest area of 13494 ha. The forest fund of SPA is 8.53% of a total forest fund in Zavkhan province.



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FAUNA

There are 32 species of mammals, 5 species of fish, 2 species of amphibians and reptiles and 53 species of migrating and resident birds in the Otgontenger SPA.

MAMMALS

Out of 32 species of mammals, 1 of them is classified as endangered, 4 of them are classified as potentially endangered, while 8 of them are classified as less concerned species. Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), marmot (*Marmota sibirica*), snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*), siberian musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*) and argali sheep (*Ovis ammon*) were recorded in the Mongolian Red Book. Potentially threatened and endangered species e.g. snow leopard, musk deer, wild board (*Sus scrofa*), and ibex (*Capra sibirica*) were found in small numbers. Among these species, the snow leopard is globally and regionally endangered and a potentially threatened species.



FISH

5 species of fish were identified in the SPA; of which Lenok (*Brachymystax lenok*), Mongolian Graying (*Thymallus brevirostris*), and Small osman (*Oreoleucisces hunilis*) occur in all rivers, and Northern pike *Esox lucius* occur in lakes. Taimen (*Hucho taimen*) found in Ider river source and its basin, plus few in Nogoon (Green) lake (Sanna-Cisa, 2001).

AMPHIBIANS

There are 2 species of amphibian recorded. Elaphe dione is more common in the area close to Otgontenger sanatorium and resort, Ulaan khaalga sanatorium, while Agkistrodon halys snake inhabit in a more rocky and stone covered mountain area.

BIRDS

According to the study findings, birds of this area are mostly recorded living in the high mountain temperature zone. There are 53 families recorded in the Otgontenger SPA and among the birds 4 species of birds recorded in the Mongolian Red Book, namely Great white egret (*Egretta alba*), Black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), White tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and Whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*). There are a number of species of birds that are considered as rare species. Also, due to status, there are many rare species of birds in the area.



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