

**TASK GROUP**

**World Heritage**

**TG-WH 26**

**31 January – 1 February 2019**

**Bremen**

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**Agenda Item:** 7

**Subject:** WH Logo application Windmill Film

**Document No.** TG-WH 26/7/2

**Date:** 10 January 2019

**Submitted by:** National Park Authorities Lower-Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein

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The application to use the Wadden Sea WH Logo in communicating a new movie “Silence of the Tides” together with a proposal to conclude a licence agreement with the company Windmill Film was submitted to the TG-WH on 4 July 2018 for comments (deadline 1 August).

Whereas from the Netherlands and Denmark, the proposal was approved, there were some concerns raised by the Lower-Saxon and Schleswig-Holstein National Park Authorities (see document TG-WH 25/7/4):

* Human uses adversely affecting the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) might be romanticized,
* Actions might be shown, that are not permitted in the sanctuary or are against species protection law,
* Imitation might be encouraged among viewers.

In an email sent by CWSS (24 September 2018), the company was informed about the concerns and suggested to get in contact with the respective, colleagues in the German National Park Administrations (NPA). The company agreed to visit the National Park Authorities, to talk about the further preparation of the film project, and discuss the possible use of the World Heritage logo.Two meetings were held (05.11.18 Wilhelmshaven; 06.11.18 Tönning) and attended by the responsible NPA personnel and Annemiek van der Hell, producer of the film project. The outcome of these meetings is described in the attached document.

**Proposal**

**The meeting is invited to note the information, consider the concerns and endorse the proposal on how to proceed.**

**Meetings National Park Authorities with Windmill Film**

Both meetings agendas and outcomes were quite similar, a summary and an overall conclusion are given below:

Firstly, Annemiek van der Hell introduced the intention, message and artistic design of the film. She also showed the Lower-Saxon colleagues a short teaser video (ca. 3 min). A film production schedule for film locations in Germany had been sent to the NPA prior to the meeting. An advertising brochure (6 pages) was handed out.

As Ms. van der Hell described, the film will be without voice-over or interviews. The character of the film is intended to be poetic, pictures shall speak for themselves. The universal theme is the interaction between man/human uses and nature and landscape of the Wadden Sea. In the course of the film, several persons will be portrayed and characterised in their way of living and interacting, like a sheep farmer, a postman, biologists (research and monitoring), a preacher, a lighthouse keeper, a cockle fisher (hand raking). The film shall show what is happening there, good things and bad things, and how vulnerable and beautiful the area is. It was described, that the intentional main message to the viewer is meant to show the need to take care of the area, to take care of nature. She assured that the realisation of the project shall not perpetrate any conservation rule. In Lower-Saxony Ms. Van der Hell made clear, that the film shall not be primarily an educational film, no nature documentation. In Schleswig-Holstein, she described, that the film could also be used for educational purposes.

Secondly, roles and responsibilities of the two NPAs were described in short and an overview on diverse features and characteristics of the areas and about the respective protection scheme were given. The attitude towards the film project as expressed by the NPAs was open in general: Information was given regarding the approval procedure for filming in the national park and offers were made on advice on exception procedures from NP law restrictions, and additionally in Lower Saxony on location scouting.

In the course of the following considerations and discussion, information has been exchanged and inquiries were made, which supported a better understanding of the film Silence of the Tides.

Regarding the concerns of the NPA, the producer provided more detailed information on the relation between the contents of the film and the WH inscription criteria as well as regarding threats and pressures on the OUV:

* Issues not planned to be addressed: Climate change, sea level rise, marine litter, gas extraction.
* Issues planned to be shown without comment as part of landscape scenery: Industrial installations, windfarms, f. e. in the Ems delta.
* Issues planned to be shown in particular, f. e. demonstrated by chosen characters: tourism; sheep and cattle farming; cockle fishery; hunting; research and monitoring,
* Kite surfing shall not be shown in particular.
* A quantitative proportion people- versus nature-dominated scenes cannot be given yet.

It was also considered to find appropriate ways to communicate to future viewers how the film was made in accordance to protection rules. Ms van der Hell considered the granting of the WSWH-logo as proof to have obeyed protection regulations. The proposal to add a respective remark as part of the closing credits was rejected by Ms van der Hell.

**Conclusion**

From the discussion about kite surfing, we got the impression that the producer of the film is quite well aware of potential risks of misinformation or imitation of forbidden uses and is reacting to this.

Ths is different when it comes to awareness about more traditional, historic uses and their potential harm to the ecosystem. The film intends to show some scenes (quantity yet unknown) of complex situations of human use in the Wadden Sea that lead to conflicts between human uses and nature protection goals as expressed in the guiding principle of the Wadden Sea Cooperation as well as the statement on the OUV which is, in short, to let natural dynamics rule the ecosystem.

The remaining issue is not whether these scenes should be shown or not , but the complete lack of interpretation and commentary on reality versus OUV mission of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.

For the time being, there is no final information about, what is planned to film and which scenes will be shown in the movie.

Due to the method of the film, the purely visual messages, we feel these complex questions cannot be followed by the public.

As we were told, there are some educational events planned around the film opening like workshops, lectures or Q&A-Sessions, which is a great idea. However, this will probably not reach all audiences, so this important information won`t reach the target group.

**PROPOSAL**

With the information we have now, we are reluctant to grant the logo at the current stage, because the film could lead to misunderstandings or even adverse the OUV. We therefore suggest to postpone the decision to grant the WSWH logo. We would prefer to see the whole, finished film before a final decision is taken.