"ANCIENT CULT SITES FOR COMMON IDENTITY ON THE BALTIC SEA COAST" CULT IDENTITY CB 35

Inventory Methodology of Historic Natural Sacred Sites
by Hiite Maja Foundation

Preliminary version

Tartu, 2011

Sisukord

INTRODUCTION

In Estonia, Latvia, Sweden and other countries situated on the coast of the Baltic Sea, there are sacred groves, springs, stones, trees and other historic natural sacred sites that form an important and valuable part of local and regional cultural heritage. Even though the values of these sites have evolved during hundreds, sometimes even thousands of years, they remain important also today. Sacred sites in good condition are sources of biodiversity, they give meaning and importance to people's physical as well as emotional environment and keep continuity of cultures. The intangible cultural heritage of natural sacred sites – beliefs, customs, rituals, knowledge, place tales, etc – is an inherent part of the natural identity of the people who live here. These sites have both religious meaning and religious importance for the indigenous people.

The inventory methodology of historic natural sacred sites has been compiled in the framework of the Central Baltic Sea Program for the project "Ancient Cult Sites for Common Identity on The Baltic Sea Coast" (Cult Identity, CB 35). According to the project, the objective of the inventory methodology is to establish common grounds for sacred sites related research and understanding. This will be the basis of developing successful cooperation in the field of sacred sites.

Estonia has become one of the leading countries of sacred sites related research on the coast of the Baltic Sea. The Republic of Estonia has adopted a national development plan designated for the research, protection, introduction, appreciation and management of the sacred sites. In Tartu University an inventory methodology of sacred sites has already been prepared. This methodology has been simplified and adopted to the needs of the current methodology, taking into consideration the fact that it must be structured and generalized to meet the needs of the project partners as well as possible future projects.

WORKING DEFINITIONS

Even though the term *Cult Sites* is being used in the official documentation of the project, we do not approve of it. The term is out-of-date, has connotations to the Soviet atheist propaganda in Estonia, and does not correspond to the Central Baltic program nor to the objectives of the current project. Instead of this term we suggest using the term *natural sacred sites* that has been approved by the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as well as Estonia. This term is both impartial and scientifically exact.

Historic sacred natural sites (hereinafter sacred sites) are natural looking sites within nature that have been connected to making sacrifices, worshiping, healing, praying or other religious or ritual activities according to folkloric, archaeological, historic, ethnological or other data. The definition encompasses territories and monuments that were in active use already before the 20th century.
Historic sacred natural sites include complexes of monuments as well as single monuments.
Complexes of monuments are situated on a certain area of land where concrete **single monuments** (e.g. trees, springs, stones, heaps of stones or cup-marked stones situated in sacred groves and carrying a special meaning according to folk tales or toponyms) with religious or ritual meaning can be found.
The definition of a sacred site includes the relief of the area, single objects situated there and the flora.
Inventory in this context means humanistic and scientific research to define, describe and preserve the location, boundaries, natural, ethnographic and, if possible, also archaeological structure of a

sacred site as well as intangible cultural heritage connected to it.

DEFINING SACRED SITES: STARTING POINTS

- Folkloric and ethnological data – place tales from archives and interviews, including information from source materials and research papers on local history.
- Toponyms – historic place names expressing the holiness of the site, ritual acts and healing activities or diseases being cured.
- Archaeological data: findings and information about findings, results of excavations referring to sacred sites.
- Historic data: information in chronicles, historic maps and other written sources.
- Living tradition (e.g. collecting healing water, healing, sacrificing, praying, etc.) or signs referring to it (objects left behind after sacrificing or healing).

RESEARCH ETHICS

The provisions of research ethics of sacred sites are expressed in IUCN Guidelines. According to the Guidelines, sacred sites are historic religious sites that some people continue to consider sacred until today. Sacred sites are an inseparable part of the culture and faith of indigenous people. For example, 65% of Estonians believe that trees have souls, and 51% of all Estonians follow Estonian native faith or earth faith if possible. People identify themselves with their sacred sites and everything happening there relates to them personally.

Therefore, researchers have to be respectful in their attitude and actions towards both sacred sites as well as people who worship them. In sacred sites a researcher must act according to the historic traditions of each site. In Estonia, for example, it means the following:

- a growing/upright tree/bush or its branch may not be broken;
- other people's offerings may not be taken along;
- one may not ease himself;
- one may not curse or quarrel;
- one may not step into the spring.

It must also be remembered that people who are being interviewed have to do it out of their own free will, and that recording the conversation as well as photographing must be done with their consent. Also, their personal data or the location of a sacred site may only be published with their consent.

STAGES OF WORK

Inventory of sacred sites is done in three stages.
The first stage is the preparation of field works. All historic, folkloric, scientific, etc. information about sacred sites of a specific region is gathered, systematized and analyzed. An expert work group is formed, instructed, and equipped with the necessary technological and other equipment.

During **the second stage** field work is carried out. Field work is divided into interviewing local people and making an inventory of sacred sites in the specific region. Additional information about the location, structure, and intangible cultural heritage of sacred sites is gathered in the course of conversations and methodological interviews with the local people. During an inventory of a sacred site its location in the landscape is defined and described both scientifically and ethnographically.

The third stage is meant for systematizing, archiving and analyzing the data gathered during the field works. Additional field works are carried out if necessary.

1st STAGE OF WORK

PREPARATION OF FIELD WORKS

1. **Materials:**

    1.1. Database and maps

Before the beginning of the field works, all information about the sacred sites of the region where the inventory is going to be carried out will be gathered. Information from different databases will be digitized and systematized in the alphabetical order by villages and sites. All doubts and questions that have risen and remained unanswered during the analysis will be added to chapters talking about the corresponding sites.

Folkloric information about all heritage sites will be gathered in a separate file and systematized by villages and sites. Such databases will give a good overview of heritage landscape, including less known local toponyms that contribute to the research about sacred sites.

Files of sacred sites and other site heritage will be printed, put into folders and equipped with labels facilitating their use.

Maps will be needed to interview people and make site inventories. A paper map of the area being researched drawn to a scale of approx. 1:20,000 has to be used during field works as well as a road map. Contemporary specific maps and copies of historic maps of the area are advised to take along in the form of computer files.

Comparing the data of different maps enables better interpretations of folkloric and other data about sacred sites.

2. **Research workers**

The appropriate size of a work group suitable for interviewing local people and making inventories of sacred sites is 2-3 people. One person alone is not capable of conducting an interview, making notes, recording conversations and making photographs all at once at a satisfactory level. More than 3 people in a work group make local people feel uneasy and, therefore, it will be complicated to start a sincere conversation - the basis of a successful interview.

In each research group there should be at least one person experienced in the fields of sacred sites' related research and folkloric field works, and one person educated in botany.

Before the start of field works, the research group has to study the research manual and learn to use the research technology. In addition, legends and geography of the sacred sites and other sites of the area have to be studied.

3. **Tools**

Tools needed to describe sacred sites:

1. A questionnaire and a manual about how to fill it in

2. Collection of sacred sites of the area (described above)
3. Maps (described above)
4. Blank A4 sheets – at least 3 sheets per site
5. A notebook for making notes
6. A waterproof pen
7. A plastic case for maps
8. A writing case with a clip
9. A stapler
10. Tape measures (10 m and 50 m)
11. A compass
12. A GPS
13. A voice recorder: high-quality SD dictaphone
14. A photo camera: high-quality digital SLR camera with all the necessary equipment
15. A laptop suitable for field works (light and weatherproof)
16. A backpack to fit all the necessary tools

INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL PEOPLE

6. Interview methodology

6.1. Objectives of the interviews

The aim of the interviews is to preserve valuable and partly almost extinct place legends; use them to find, map and describe sacred sites, and establish provisions for their scientific research, national protection and planning of management and use.

6.2. Making contact

The key to a successful interview is a good contact with the person being interviewed. The attitude of the research group must be dedicated, open, respectful and friendly at the same time – all this will carry over to the people being interviewed who tend to keep their distance in the beginning.

If possible, it is advised to agree upon making the interview beforehand, give a general overview of the objectives of the research and tell about the plan to use a voice recorder and a photo camera. It is not allowed to tell people beforehand that the aim of making the interview is to gather data about sacred natural sites - it is insinuation and may therefore influence the talk of the people being interviewed.

Introducing the research, it is enough to say that its purpose is to gather people's memories about their surroundings and historic sites situated there. It may be added that people's opinions and knowledge about their surroundings as well as folk tales about it are important and interesting also for researchers. People must be convinced in the fact that the outcome of an interview is nothing unnatural, and that all answers given are valuable to the researchers.

Already in the beginning of an interview it must be explained to people in which institution the recording and the photographs will be stored in future, and that they will be used on scientific purposes. It must also be added that in case somebody wishes to use the recordings together with the personal data in a book or in a film, permission for it will be asked separately.

Experience shows that village people are more willing to talk if a local authority or a good acquaintance has recommended to do so. That is why it is advisable to start the interview by mentioning the person who recommended to interview the person being interviewed. Trust between the interviewer and the person being interviewed is built that way – he or she will know that there are more families in the village who have met the researchers, and that the things happening to him/her have already happened to others. A certain feeling of collective security is created.

7. Questionnaire and its implementation

7.1 Structure of the questionnaire

The structure of the questionnaire must be built up keeping in mind that each person's subjective or mental landscape is unique and has many layers. Sites and stories related to daily activities or actual social relationships are remembered the best. The less daily and the less connected to people the sites are, the harder it is to remember them in conversation. People may be reluctant to talk to strangers about sites of personal importance and stories about personal experiences because they are too intimate. Researches carried out in Estonia so far have shown that those who use and believe in the special power of sacred natural sites may not reveal them to strangers.

Knowledge and memories connected to sacred sites are usually not in daily use and it takes time to reach them. That is why the questionnaire of folk tales about sites has been structured to move from daily folk tale landscape to sacred sites step by step. The aim of such approach is to awaken the personal folk tale landscape in a person's memory by asking general questions. Leading but not insinuating questions help people to reach their memories about sacred sites.

Specific questionnaires will be compiled by research groups of each country, taking into account the characteristics of local sacred sites, culture and research traditions. The following questions must be answered with the help of the questionnaire:

1) which sacred sites do people know around their home;
2) what kind of tales are being told about these sites today;
3) what meaning do the sacred sites and the folk tales about them have for people today, how do people appreciate these sites and these tales, what is their attitude towards them;
4) are there any sites and folk tales that have not been mentioned in archive sources yet and are only known to village people;
5) what is the exact location of the sacred sites that have not been mapped nor scientifically described yet;
6) what is the context of the folk tales about sites: location of the interviews, names, dates of birth and present addresses of the people who were interviewed; also the personal data of the people from whom the tale had been heard.

7.2. Notes

During the interview the researcher has to take notes that help to lead the interview and organize and use the gathered data later.

These notes contain information about the tales, sites and the people who were interviewed. The following data about the people having been interviewed must be gathered in the course of the interviews: names and surnames; maiden names of married women; dates of birth (the more exact the better); places of birth; addresses. In the end of each interview the contacts of the person must be asked to be able to specify the information or ask permission to publish the data later.

7.3. Listening and leading skills

Implementation of the questionnaire as well as the interview itself will have better results if the interviewer knows how to listen and does not pressure the person being interviewed by asking new questions all the time. It is recommended to leave pauses to think, to remember. It is important to keep eye-contact.

Leading skills must be used when the talk is going too astray from the questionnaire. People's stories about their daily lives, etc. should be listened to – they give information about the context – but it is important to understand when this talk has lasted long enough. Then the interviewer should use his/her leading skills and lead the interview delicately back to place tales.

The interviewer must ensure exact and unambiguous representation of all important factors (location, boundaries, structure, historic events, people and religious rituals connected to them, the storyteller's personal attitude and connection to the site) connected to sacred sites. If necessary, one and the same question must be asked repeatedly or specified.

8. Visiting sacred sites

In case a sacred site under discussion has not been mapped yet or new important details about its location or structure have come up, it is necessary to go there together with the person being interviewed. The storyteller should show to the interviewer the sacred site and its details that were talked about during the interview.

It must be emphasized that the interview should continue in the sacred site in an informal manner. Being in a known place, a person often remembers additional details about it. If the site beholds personal importance to the person, he/she will be more open about his/her connection and feelings that tie him/her to the site.

9. Guidelines to recordists

Recording should be done continuously and interrupted only in case the memory card is full. The voice recorder should be switched on before the first hello and switched off only after saying goodbye. This way, also the context is recorded and the recording will be complete.

The recordist is responsible for placing the recording technology so that it would not vibrate on the table, that the microphone would be covered when recording outdoors, that the recorder would be close enough and inclined towards the person being interviewed, that all other devices (radio, TV) that could interrupt the recording would be switched off (with the permission of the owner, of course). The members of the research group must also switch off (not use the silent mode) their mobile phones for the time of the interview because the waves of the telephone damage the quality of the recording.

The recordist must tell the interviewer when there is little space left on the memory card or if it is full. This must be done taking into consideration the course of the interview – neither the talk nor the thinking pauses should be interrupted.

10. Guidelines to photographers

The interview must be shot from as many different angles as possible. In addition to the person being interviewed, also the other members of the research group should appear on some photos together with him/her.

In case a part of the interview takes place in a sacred site, the storyteller must be photographed with the sacred site in the background, also together with other members of the team. A more detailed description of recording sacred sites can be found in the chapter about making an inventory.

2nd STAGE OF WORK

ETHNOGRAPHIC AND SCIENTIFIC INVENTORY OF SACRED SITES

11. The purpose and organization of an inventory

The purpose of an inventory is to gather scientific, ethnographic and, if possible, also archaeological data about sacred sites to be able to define them and their natural, cultural and religious values. The overall purpose of inventories is to gather data to take sacred sites under national protection and to organize their management and use.

A sacred site can be ethnographically and scientifically described only after it has been defined as well as possible by describing its location, boundaries, structure and interviews with the local people. Preliminary data must include assessment data of the forest registry and data from previous scientific, archaeological and other research. Inventories of sacred sites and interviews with the local people may both be done by the same research group, or separate research groups may be set up. It is important to make an inventory only after methodological questioning of the local people.

Inventories must be carried out according to the questionnaire and the manual. Sites must always be described on the spot. Measuring results are written down right away together with an explanatory text.

If there is need for more contact with the local people during an inventory, then a clear distinction should be made between personal remarks and information heard from them. The information gathered from the local people should always be complemented by a person's full name, and it must be clearly separated from the remarks of the interviewer. Other personal data of the person who gave the information must also be written down on a questionnaire (see 7.2).

Tasks within the research group are divided according to the individual skills of the researchers. For example, flora must be described by a person who has a degree in botany, sacred sites and their details must be recorded by the person most experienced in photographing natural objects, etc. To make the inventory less complicated, it is recommended that researchers dealing with different fields make notes independently, and that all descriptions be gathered after the inventory of the specific sacred site.

The inventory questionnaire about sacred sites includes 22 questions. If some questions cannot be answered, an explanatory note must be written behind the corresponding number. A zero or a dash behind the number means that there are not any corresponding phenomena/objects in the area (not that point 11 has not been filled in because the researcher did not recognize the species of birds).

12. Content and implementation of the questionnaire

1. Number of the inventory sheet
2. Date of the inventory
3. Names of the researchers making the inventory
4. Known place name(s)
5. Place name(s) gathered on the spot
6. Location and position of the sacred site, including its coordinates; relation to its

surroundings
7. Location plan
8. Landforms (description, measurements)
9. Flora
10. Old trees
11. Fauna
12. Stones, stone fences and other heaps of stones
13. Water bodies (springs, wells, creeks, rivers, ponds, lakes)
14. Offerings and other signs of human activity referring to a sacred site
15. Other human activity: buildings, constructions, excavations, drainage, cultivation, mowing, herding, cutting trees, fires, tourism, other influence
16. Protection signs
17. Evaluation of the site's condition (preservation/damages)
18. Evaluation of the possibility of restoring the site
19. Urgent tasks
20. Photographing
21. Gathering folk tales
22. Notes

Manual for filling in the questionnaire

1. Number of the inventory sheet

The initials of the leader of the research group and the number given by him, for example MK078. It is recommended that the supervisor write the last number in his personal notebook. If the last number has been forgotten, a bigger number may be chosen instead. For example, if nobody remembers whether the last number was 34 or 36, 40 can be chosen instead. If nobody remembers whether the last number was 36 or 56, 60 or 100 can be chosen.

2. Dates(s) of the inventory

Date, month, year. For example: 31.05.2011.

3. Supervisor(s)

Name(s) and surname(s).

4. Known place name(s)

If field works are started with some preliminary knowledge, the name(s) of the object(s) are also often known beforehand.

5. Place name(s) gathered on the spot

Name(s) heard from the local people. Also the name, date of birth and address of the person who told the place name must be written down as well as the personal data of the one from whom the name had been heard.

6. Location and position of a sacred site, including the coordinates; its relation to the surroundings

1. The boundaries of the sacred site must be marked as exactly as possible on the map sheet. The boundaries are drawn on the map even if the coordinates are recorded by GPS. It is not possible to draw the boundaries if the sacred site is very small; in that case it is marked with a point on the map. In both cases the number of the inventory sheet must definitely be added to the map (see 1).

2. GPS coordinates are taken from the middle of the sacred site or from an object permanently situated in the sacred site. If the area of the sacred site is larger, coordinates are also taken from a couple of places on the sides of the object to be able to grasp its extension. Coordinates and the place of recording them are written down. Coordinates together with the name of the sacred site are recorded firstly in the GPS and later copied into the computer.

Coordinates must be recorded in metrical system. For example:

x = 6508595,5

y = 640045,5

3. Describing the location of a sacred site in the landscape. What is the landscape like and what kind of objects are situated near the sacred site? Describe the location of the sacred site in relation to the objects around it using cardinal points and approximate distances.

   More permanent objects like landforms, water bodies, roads, buildings and other structures should be preferred in the description.
4. Relation to the surroundings. Does the sacred site relate to its surroundings, for example forest biome, or is it different from it? For example: 1) Hiiemägi (Sacred Grove hill) covered with young birches and aspens is clearly different from the rest of an uncultivated field; 2) a cult stone differs from the pasture around it only as a stone or a landmark; 3) the surroundings of a spring differs from the field around it because of trees growing there and natural shrub and herb layers underneath them.

7. Location plan

If there are several historic objects (e.g. sacred stone, tree, spring, burial mound) of if the object is quite large (water body, sacred grove), a location plan is drawn on a sheet of A4. On the sheet, the distance between the historic objects and other objects is shown as well as their position in relation to the cardinal points. If possible, the distances should be measured with a tape measure. Landforms, roads/paths, stone fences and other structures and ant hills more than 30 cm of height should also be marked on the location plan.

8. Landforms (description, measurements)

What is the landform of a sacred site (e.g. plain, hill, esker, dune, bank, cliff, valley, canyon, concavity, island in a bog or a lake). Measure/evaluate the diameter, form, height, depth. If the sacred site is situated on a slope, then what is its exposition and approximate angle of inclination in degrees.

9. Flora

Describe the flora of the sacred site. Count the species of trees and bushes as well as these of the underbrush, and the dominating species that you definitely recognize. Define the habitat types according to national or international classifiers.

If trees have particular shapes, they should also be described.

Evaluate whether the flora of the area seems valuable enough to carry out a complementary botanic inventory.

10. **Old trees**

If there is an old tree connected to folk tales growing on the site, it should be described despite of its measurements. The basis for measuring other trees is their smallest perimeter that is defined separately in each country, depending on their species and local characteristics.

Each old tree is described separately and the following data must be written down:

1. The species of the tree
2. The perimeter from the height of 1,3 m from the ground. If there are branches already at this

height (or lower) that have caused thickening of the trunk, the thinnest part of the trunk must be measured.
3. Height of the first thick branch
4. The width of the foliage by steps or tape measure.
5. If possible, evaluate the height of the tree
6. Describe and count the peculiarities of the tree (e.g. broken branches, cavities, heavily bent trunk (in which cardinal direction?), mushrooms, conspicuous lichen or moss, claw and/or teeth marks of animals, traces of lightning, etc.
7. The condition of the tree's health (5 categories):

5 – the tree does not have any exterior damage, the foliage is pretty and the tree is in excellent health;
4 – the tree has had some damages, a thicker branch has broken or dried but, however, the tree is in good health;
3 – the tree has noticeable damages but it is still vital;
2 – the tree has substantial damages, part of the tree has perished and/or some big branches have broken, the tree may perish in near future;
1 – the tree has perished, there is only a stump or its former location left.

11. Fauna

1. Name the species of birds present at the site or nesting species of birds well known there.
2. Name the traces of mammals' activities: lairs, traces of eating, scrubbing, scratching and sleeping, excrement, paths.
3. Ant hills higher than 30 cm – measure the height and the diameter, mark them on the location plan.

12. Stones, stone fences and other heaps of stones

Mark on the location plan all stones connected to folk tales as well as other peculiar stones, stone fences, piles of stones, circles of stones and other heaps of stones.

Stones and heaps of stones connected to folk tales must be measured, and schematic sketches of them must be drawn. The following measurements must be taken:

1. perimeter at ground level;
2. the largest perimeter if it is not situated at ground level;
3. the biggest height;
4. the biggest width (measured crosswise as to height);
5. the highest point from ground level.

The following things must be drawn:

1. the ground plan of the stone together with bigger cracks and concavities, and signs and concavities made by people (show the north direction);
2. 2 lateral views of the stone (show the direction of the view).

13. Water bodies (springs, wells, creeks, rivers, ponds, lakes)

Springs: describe the type of the spring, its banks and bottom. Evaluate the flow rate. Measure the depth, diameter and length of the bed. With the help of the compass determine the direction(s) of the bed.
Are there any signs about taking water (construction of a well, stones placed by people, a path to the spring, water recipient) or offerings?

According to folk tales, wells situated in sacred sites are usually described in detail only if they have been considered sacred The depth and diameter of such wells must be measured and the construction of the parts of the well must be described. Other wells situated in sacred sites must also be marked on the location plan and photographed.

A general description of the location, size, position in the landscape, flora and fauna of sacred creeks, lakes, areas in the sea or wetlands must be given. If a sacred site is situated on its bank or on an island, it must be described according to the inventory manual.

14. Offerings and other signs referring to human activity

Offerings may be wool straps, short strings, ribbons, shreds of cloth, etc. tied to trees, bushes and even straws. Offerings may be coins, food, candles or other objects that have been placed on and by stones, into the cavities of trees or close to trees. In Western Estonia it is possible to find pieces of glass and iron on the stones that have been put there during healing rituals. Nails that have been hammered into trees or incisions into the bark of trees may also refer to healing. A path leading to a stone, spring or heap of stones may also refer to healing and/or sacrificing.

The characteristics and the number of offerings as well as their location must be described about each object separately. Incisions in the bark and other such signs must also be described. Offerings must be described and photographed.

15. Extraneous human activity: buildings, constructions, excavations, drainage, cultivation, mowing, herding, deforestation, fire, roads, communication and power lines, littering, tourism, other influence

Extraneous human activity includes all activities that cannot be connected to the intended use of sacred sites. Traces of activities in and around sacred sites must be described. Examples: now a potato field; ~3 years ago an uncultivated field; a field that has not been cultivated for at least 10 years; an uncultivated field covered with (naturally grown) young trees; there are traces of thinning the forest 10 years ago in a sacred grove; a sacred grove is separated into two halves by a ~30 year old drainage ditch in north-south direction. The ditch is up to 2 m wide and up to 1 m deep; there are irregular shaped concavities in the eastern edge of the sacred grove in an area of 10x30 m – possibly an old gravel pit; Maltsa farm's living quarters are situated on the south-western slope of the sacred grove hill; a national heritage conservation plaque with the text "..." has been placed right next to the sacred stone. Right next to it there is an information board with texts in Estonian and English saying "..."; here and there on the sacred grove hill there are plastic bottles, paper and other household garbage; smaller branches have been teared off from trees and bushes.

16. Protection signs of sacred sites (environment protection, national heritage conservation, other protection)

Is there a protection sign and, if yes, then in what condition? If no protection sign is found at a site that is known for being under protection, it must be noted that it was not found.

17. Evaluation of the preservation/ damages of sites

The objective of this task is to give a general evaluation of the preservation of a sacred site. Even though evaluations are somewhat subjective, they can give a quick overview of the general condition of a sacred site.

Single trees must be evaluated according to the methodology described in 10. The condition of all other sacred sites must be evaluated according to the following scale:

5 – In excellent condition. There is no extraneous human activity or it cannot be noticed.

4 – In good condition. Some human influence can be noticed but it does not damage the overall

condition.
3 – In satisfactory condition. Extraneous human influence is noticed, part of the sacred site has perished but it is still possible to use it as intended.
2- In bad condition. Human influence is strongly noticeable, (almost) all sacred objects have perished, a single object is about to perish. Examples: instead of a sacred grove there is a field; a single sacred tree has dried up.
1 – Perished. Examples: a sacred grove hill has been taken away; a spring has dried up because of agricultural activity and it is not possible to find it anymore; a tree or a stone has perished and it is not possible to find their site anymore; buildings have been constructed all over the territory.

18. Evaluation of the possibility of using sacred sites

The objective of this task is to evaluate the possibilities of using sacred sites as intended in the past. For example, sacred groves can be used for communal and individual praying, celebrations of folk calender days, etc. From the point of view of using sacred sites both their condition and accessibility to them as well as a possibility to follow historic traditions in private are important.

Examples of restoration or recovery of sacred sites: a new tree can grow from an old stump; a sacred grove that has been cut down will recover in the course of time and, if properly taken care for, will turn into a natural forest characteristic to a sacred grove. Instead of a sacred stone that has been broken or taken away it is possible to bring a new stone, it is only important to know the location of the old stone and that the ground that used to be underneath the old stone is still there and free. It is not possible to restore a sacred site only if the area of its location has perished. Construction and excavation are the main activities that reduce the possibilities of reusing sacred sites.
The possibilities of using sacred sites are evaluated according to the following criteria:
5 – Possible to start using right away. There are no excavations, buildings, constructions or extraneous human activity in and around a sacred site. Single objects have preserved.
4 – Possible to start using after some restoration works. Influence of extraneous human activity is noticeable but it will disappear during time or it can be repaired.
3 – In principle, possible to start using in near future. Influence of ongoing extraneous human activity is still noticeable but it can be repaired by careful planning and intentional work. At least some of the territory of a sacred site is not being used for other purposes.
2 – Not possible to start using in near future. The objects of a sacred site have perished partly or completely and the area may partly be covered by buildings.
1 – Not possible to start using at all. The object and its site have perished (covered by buildings, excavated, changed into land improvement fields, etc.)

19. Urgent works

Is there a threat to a sacred site's present condition and is anything needed to be done urgently? Examples: a crumbling burial mound on the edge of a gravel pit dug into a sacred grove needs urgent archaeological research to have something from it saved. Waste that presents danger to the environment must quickly be removed from sacred groves. A sewage pipe polluting a spring must be shut. Land cultivation next to a sacred stone impedes its use and presents danger to the cultural layer, a limited management zone prohibiting land cultivation around the stone must quickly be established.

20. Photographing

The objective of photographing sacred sites is to record their general appearance and more important details, including the traces of extraneous human influence. The shots of general appearance must be taken from at least two directions and from the existing access roads and characteristic viewpoints. Members of the research group making the inventory should also be photographed. As to the rest, then everything described in this manual beforehand about making an inventory should also be taken into consideration.

21. Gathering oral heritage

Oral heritage is gathered as additional information when describing natural objects to:

1. specify the location of a sacred site;
2. specify or explain the historic facts connected to the site;
3. gather (additional) folk tales.

Folk tales that have been written down as well as those having been recorded are accompanied by the following data: the location of the place where the story was told, the name and surname of the storyteller (for women also their maiden name), year of birth, place of birth, address (city, borough, village).

21. Other notes

Other notes must include important details about gathering information: whether any measuring tool did not correspond to the manual or had trouble functioning; whether there were any other problems that interfered the description process; whether there were any doubts about the authenticity of the sites being described; etc.

3rd STAGE OF WORK

POST-PROCESSING

13. The purpose and organization of post-processing
The purpose of post-processing is to make the information gathered during filed works usable. In order to do that, the information gathered during field works must be systematized, verified and archived.

13.1. Sound files must be copied from the memory card to the hard disc of a computer and saved into separate folders according to areas and sites. Then a registry file of the recordings is compiled including the date(s) of recording the file(s), speakers, interviewers and places of recording. Lists of recordings with specific details about the duration and content of the sound files must be made in the course of future projects as well as selection and literation of the parts connected to sacred sites and back-up copies of the sound files.

13.2. Photographs must be copied from the memory card to the hard disc of a computer and saved into separate folders according to areas and sites. It is also recommended to start compiling a registry file of the photographs right away including the time and place of making the photographs as well as descriptions of the sites, the names of people who appear on them and the name of the photographer. If it is not possible to register the data immediately, it must be done in the course of a next project when also back-up copies of the photographs must be made.

13.3. Inventory sheets and other important written data is typed, saved in a computer and added to the data file of the specific site. Inventory sheets are accompanied by location plans, and the sketches are scanned and saved in the photographs' folder of a specific sacred site.

13.4. Verifying the data. While verifying the data file of sacred sites it will be checked whether all necessary data has been saved in the database and whether all data saved there is correct and true. The coordinates of sacred sites are also verified on digital maps.

13.5. Additional field works. If necessary, additional field works are organized in the course of post-processing to specify or verify the locations of sacred sites or other important details.