

Mineral Mining Could Harm Protected Park

By [The Moscow Times](#)

June 14, 2012



Environmentalists are up in arms over government plans to allow mining on the very edge of a prospective national park.

Scientists and campaigners had long fought to have the area that will become the Khibiny national park included on the government's list of specially protected nature reserves.

But those efforts could now be in vain after the government granted Northwestern Phosphorus Company the rights to extract apatite and nepheline — both rare minerals — from a deposit just to the north of park, the Russian office of the World Wildlife Fund said in a statement on its website.

The digging of the mine and the laying of the roads necessary to transport equipment and minerals would be disastrous for those visiting Khibiny, the organization said.

"The mine and licensed plot are located outside the park's limits, but the fact that the planned road will cross all [the park's] tourist routes and split it up will make developing opportunities

for recreation impossible," said Igor Chestin, director of WWF Russia.

Khibiny is home to the largest mountain range in northwestern Russia and has been visited for more than 80 years by tourists, school groups and scientists.

Northwestern Phosphorus Company refused to discuss its plans with environmentalists or publicly disclose details of its project, the conservation organization added, and will start digging and laying roads this summer.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/06/14/mineral-mining-could-harm-protected-park-a15439>