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The study of historical waterways as actual historical and modern scientific research

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The historic waterways of the European part of Russia are unique objects with ecotourism and nature-recreational potential. The comprehensive historical-scientific expedition "Hydro-ecological environmental, ecotourism and recreational potential of the historic waterways of the European part of Russia" was began in 2003. In 2003, the expedition studied the Mariinsky water system, in 2005 the lake-channel system at the Big Solovetsky island, Belozersky-Onega waterway in 2006, Northern Dvina waterway in 2007-2008, Vyshnevolotskaya water system in 2009, Tikhvin water system in 2010-2011, rivers Western Dvina, Dnieper, Berezina and Upper Volga on "The way from Varangians to the Greeks" in 2012-2014. As a result geographic information base on historic waterways at the European part of Russia was created, which contains information about hydrological and hydrochemistry data, landscape, map and archival sources. Maps became methodological and technical connecting-link for filling that base. The analysis of contemporary conditions of waterways of Russia and comprehensive cultural and historical landscape with the help of topographic maps, photo and video of areas was supplemented with analysis of old maps from that region. The block of hydrological data about conditions of water objects, which became the base for expert's recommendation for future usage of water systems, was created. The bank of descriptions of hydro and historical monuments with precise geo-references was used to determine the recreational potential. It is allowing better assessment the anthropogenic transformation and evolution of landscapes. It was established that the surviving monuments of culture and hydraulic engineering in the majority need to be maintained or restored. These researches have scientific value as a methodological basis for the formation of the new historical and scientific direction and for the environment friendly land use, tourism and recreation.

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