

Estonia's State
Conservation Plan:
*Historical Sacred
Natural Sites
Study and
Preservation*

Heiki Valk

University of Tartu



Background

Numerous sacred
natural sites

Reflected in:

- 1) archive sources
- 2) living oral tradition



Threats and dangers

Vanishing tradition

-> forgetting the sites

Economic activities

- > destruction of site



Sacred places and heritage protection

Occasional approach

Some protected as archaeological objects

Some protected as nature monuments

Many – not protected at all



Preparing the Conservation Plan

Initiative of Estonian House of Native Religions:
meetings at ministeries, preparing the ground

2005-2006: work group at the Ministry of
Culture

Conference in National Library in March 2005

Book on sacred natural places 2007

April 1, 2008 signing the Conservation Plan

Preparing the Conservation Plan

Determining the object and aims of the program

Estimating the suggested amount of work

Preparing the text of the document

Main target: heritage protection (not research)



Estimation of situation in tested areas

(ca 10% of Estonia's territory)

	Total number of sacred natural places	Preserved/ protected	Destroyed	Status unknown
West Estonia (3 parishes)	100	44/41	10	46 (46%)
South-east Estonia (4 parishes + Setomaa)	101	28/13	27	46 (45%)
Central Estonia (4 parishes)	49	8/6	5	36 (73%)
Total	250	80/60	42	128 (51%)

Supposed field work results

In tested areas: 129 sites of unknown status

For all Estonia: ca. 1300 sites of unknown status

Presumably:

- 1/3 perished,

- 1/3 preserved, possible to find

- 1/3 impossible to find

Main expected output:

- ca. 400-500 sacred natural places will become identified and state protected

Presently protected as archaeological monuments

• Stones	198
• Places / groves	107
• Springs	110
• Trees	30
• Others	1

Total:	446
--------	-----



State protection

- Presently protected by the state:

446 (archaeological)+
ca. 100 single objects
(nature)

Total: ca. 550 sites

- Estimated former total number of sacred natural sites: 2500–3000



Estimated amount of work

2500-3000 sites to be visited by field works

-> field works for 10 years

inventory of ca. 10 parishes per year

+ making a database of sites

+ organizing state protection for preserved and discovered sites (ca. 400-500 objects)

KULTUURIMINISTEERIUM

Kinnitatud
kultuuriministri
01.04.2008. a käskkirjaga nr 146

EESTI AJALOOLISED
LOODUSLIKUD PÜHAPAIGAD.
UURIMINE JA HOIDMINE
VALDKONNA ARENGUKAVA
2008–2012

TALLINN 2008

State Conservation Plan of Sacred Natural Sites

s

2008-2012

State Conservation Plan: *Historical Sacred Natural Sites*

<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>1. FOUNDATIONS OF THE CONSERVATION PLAN</u>	<u>5</u>
– <u>1.1. CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS</u>	<u>5</u>
– <u>1.2. OBJECT OF THE CONSERVATION PLAN AND THE BASIC TERMS</u>	<u>7</u>
– <u>1.3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</u>	<u>9</u>
– <u>1.4. ANALYSIS OF PRESENT SITUATION</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>2. STRATEGIC AIMS AND ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>19</u>
– <u>2.1. VISION</u>	<u>19</u>
– <u>2.2. AIMS, METHODS AND OUTPUT INDICATORS</u>	<u>19</u>
• <u>AIM 1 FIELD INVENTORY OF SNP HAS OCCURRED IN 1/3 OF ESTONIA</u>	<u>20</u>
• <u>AIM 2 ORGANIZING STATE PROTECTION FOR PRESERVED SITES</u>	<u>22</u>
• <u>AIM 3 THE DATABASE OF SNS IS AVAILABLE FOR PLANNING INSTITUTIONS</u> <u>AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AUTHORITIES</u>	<u>24</u>
• <u>AIM 4 CONTINUOUS PR ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>26</u>
• <u>AIM 5 MAINTAINANCE ACTIVITIES OF SNS</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>3. SUGGESTED COSTS</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>4. PRACTICAL ESTABLISHMENT AND MONITORING</u>	<u>31</u>

OBJECT OF THE CONSERVATION PLAN

WHAT IS SACRED NATURAL SITE?

- Sites of natural appearance
- Folkloric, archaeological, historical, ethnological etc. data referring to offering, sacredness, healing, praying, religious or ritual activities
- Areas and sites actively used since before the 20th century



Source material for identification

- Folkloric and ethnological archive data + publications
- Oral tradition
- Toponyms (NB! *hiis*)
- Archaeological finds and findings
- Historical records
- Historical maps
- Living practices

Levels of involvement:

1. Full inventory (dull description of sites)

- stones, trees, groves,
- water bodies (springs, rivers, lakes), elements of landscape (hills, caves, cliffs, denudations),
- stone heaps,
- enclosed areas for offering,
- sites with forced need for gift-giving,
- archaeological cemeteries related to tradition of sacredness and offering,
- sites of Catholic chapels
- “cross-trees” bound with funerary rites
- “lautsipuu-trees” bound with funerary rites
- nature objects bound to other ritual and magic activities

Levels of involvement

2. Partly inventory (location data + collecting oral tradition)

- Archaeological cemeteries/graves, church and chapel sites not bound with tradition of sacredness and offering
- Central Midsummer assembly sites
- Single stone crosses in the landscape
- Places bound with misleading and visions
- Cup-marked stones

Sites not involved

- Architecture: churches, chapels
- Churchyards, modern cemeteries and other Modern Times' burial sites

Responsible institution

The University of Tartu

State budget means

Treaty of co-operation between the National
Heritage Board and the University of Tartu

Institutional overhead: 10% ->12%

Practical organization

- Steering Committee for the program
 - Headed by the Head of the National Heritage Board
- Ministries of Culture, Education and Science, Internal Affairs, Environment, Agriculture
- House of the Native Religions
- 2-3 meetings per year

STRATEGIC AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

AIM 1. FIELD INVENTORY OF SNP

2008-2012 - FOR 1/3 OF ESTONIA

MEASURE 1.1 *Making preconditions and infrastructure for inventory of sites*

- Elaborating a methodology of field works
- Making collaboration network
- Organizing field work projects

MEASURE 1.2 Field inventory of sacred natural places

Preparing the field work

Field works

Afterworks: organizing the collected materials; delivering to Estonian Folklore Archives

STRATEGIC AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

AIM 2. ORGANIZING STATE PROTECTION FOR PRESERVED SITES

MEASURE 2.1 *Specification of the iudical status of SNS*

Making a respective work group

Analysis of iudical acts

Making suggestions for changes in laws

NB! Changing the status: SNS should become a specific group of monuments

STRATEGIC AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

AIM 2. ORGANIZING STATE PROTECTION FOR PRESERVED SITES

MEASURE 2.2 Organizing the protection of SNS

- Making a methodological basis for the protection of SNP
- Making and expert council for SNP at National Heritage Board
- Institutional changes within the NHB: a special Head Inspector for SNP
- Expanding the state protection
- Composing individual protection orders for single sites
- Making a network of trusted persons

STRATEGIC AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

AIM 3 WEB-BASED DATABASE OF SNS: FOR PLANNING INSTITUTIONS AND HERITAGE PROTECTION AUTHORITIES

- Planning and ordering a web-based database of SNP
- Inserting data:
 - 1) archive data;
 - 2) data gained in field works
- Administration of the database

STRATEGIC AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

AIM 4 PR ACTIVITIES

MEASURE 4.1 Increasing the awareness of the public

- Media projects, TV, radio
- Home page for SNP
- Advising state and local authorities at making regional and local development schemesChanges in school curricula; making teaching materials
- Public events and campaigns
- Organizing competitions (photo, fine arts)
- Making education programs for museums

MEASURE 4.2 Disseminating the investigation results

- Exhibitions (also using the Internet);
- Publications and articles;
- Workshops, seminars etc.
- Regional publications

STRATEGIC AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

AIM 5 MAINTAINANCE ACTIVITIES OF SNS

- Composing the principles of designating the SNS in the landscape
- Designating the SNS
- Maintenance of SNS
- Creating a system for supports for land owners

Context: economic decline

Drastic reduction of the planned budget (EEK; 1 EUR = 15,6466 EEK)

	Planned	Ministry of Culture	Extra means from the Parliament	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Total
2008	500 000	500 000	0	80 000	580 000
2009	4 533 000	100 000	0	80 000	180 000
2010	6 272 000	100 000	1 500 000	0	1 600 000
2011	7 173 000	100 000	650 000	0	750 000

New crisis strategy: state budget means for self-budgeting of projects

Results 2008-2011

AIM 1. FIELD INVENTORY OF SNP

MEASURE 1.1 *Making preconditions and infrastructure for inventory of sites*

- Expert council at the University of Tartu
- Making methodology of field works
- Looking for projects partners
- Translating the main chapters of Conservation Plan into English
- Preparing projects

MEASURE 1.2 *Field inventory of sacred natural places*

- 2008: Muhu island; Kose and Kuusalu parishes (partly)
- 2009: Juuru parish



Field work results
on Muhu Island
before: 28 SNS
after: ca 80 SNS

Results 2008-2011

Aim 2: ORGANIZING STATE PROTECTION FOR PRESERVED SITES

- Negotiations with ministries, Parliament members
- Participation in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) conference in 2010
- Application for translating IUCN guidelines for the protection of SNS

Results 2008-2011

Aim 3. MAKING AND DEVELOPING THE DATABASE OF SNS

- Making the ideology of database
- Strategy: independent part of web-based State Register of Protected Sites
- Cooperatin with National Heritage Board
- Applications

Results 2008-2011

AIM 4: PR ACTIVITIES, INCREASING THE AWARENESS OF THE PUBLIC

- Annual photo competition
- Annual title of “Friend of Grove”
- Re-print of the book on SNP
- Course on SNP at the Agricultural University and the University of Tartu (different lecturers)
- 204 articles and interviews
- 44 lectures and public events
- Advising preparations of a film
- Analysis of treatment of SNS in school text books

Problems

- Financial situation
- SNS: still regarded as a sub-group of archaeological monuments



Will continue since 2013

Thank you!