



**Local
Flavours**
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Sustainable nature tourism in protected areas – Guidelines set by Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland

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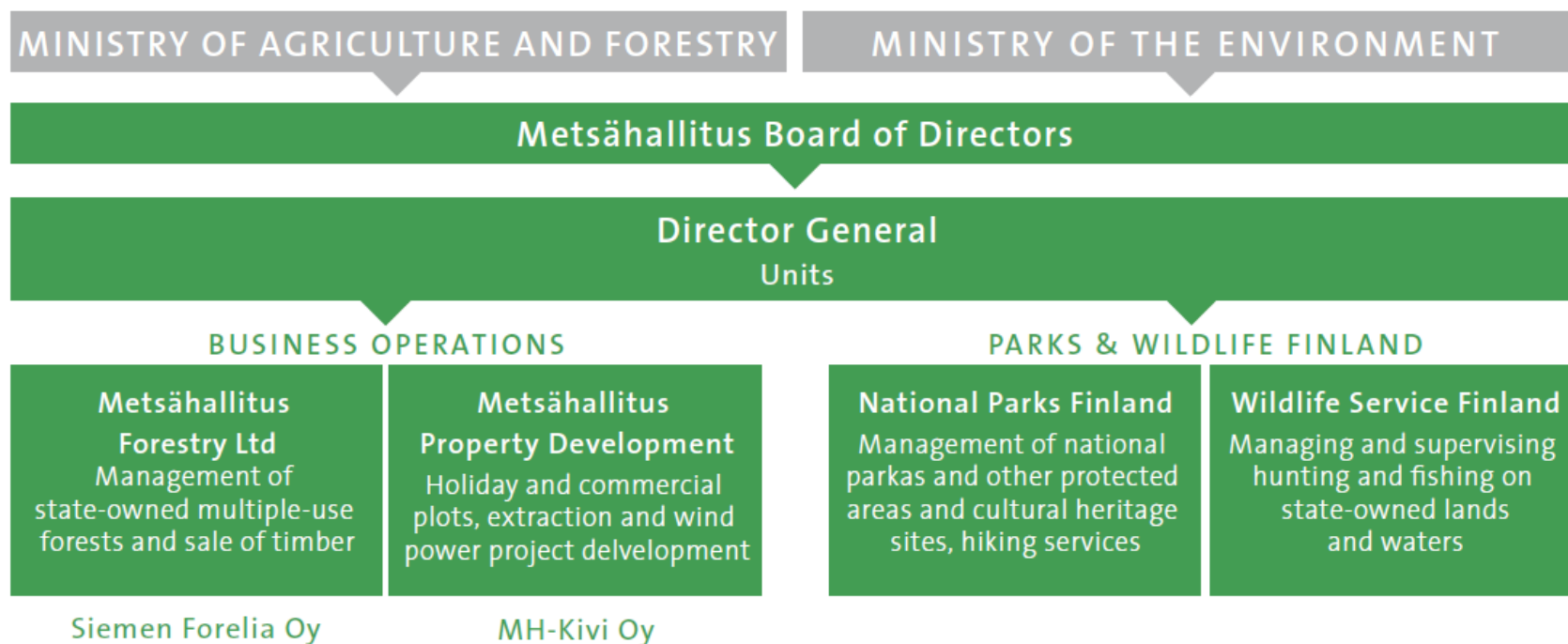
Why is it documented as good practice?

For Savonlinna two national parks and Punkaharju nature protection area are significant assets for recreation and nature tourism. Nature tourism has since 2003 been the single most important driver of tourism growth in Savonlinna.

- As a spin-off of nature tourism in Linnansaari national park alone, private investment of c. 60 mEUR has realized 2003-2019.
- Further investment in schedules for nature tourism resorts in the immediate vicinity of Linnansaari national park is scheduled for 2021-2023, worth c. 16 mEUR.
- Recreational opportunity spectrum offered by the protected areas and the operation of tourism enterprises within the areas - enabled by Metsähallitus policy – have been one of the main opportunities enabling this tourism growth.
- Due to highly significant sites, Metsähallitus experts located in Savonlinna – strengthening the expertise in tourism development and strategic partnership on contractual basis

What is Metsähallitus

METSÄHALLITUS ORGANISATION 2019



Types of areas managed by Metsähallitus

= Protected areas on state owned lands

National parks

Strict nature reserves (recreational use prohibited)

Mire reserves

Nature reserves

Hiking and recreation areas

Areas of cultural and historical significance managed by
Metsähallitus

Excluding e.g. forests in forestry use, state owned land used for property development or extraction of minerals or other natural resources.

Overview of service and management

- **Provision of free-for-use facilities and amenities in the areas**
- **Master planning for each area separately**
 - Implementation of masterplans and monitoring of results
- **Multilingual marketing and promotion:**
 - www.nationalparks.fi (Finnish, Swedish, Enara Sami, North Sami, English, Russian, Chinese)
- **Quality management**
- **Visitor monitoring**

Main Metsähallitus assets in Savonlinna



Linnansaari
national park



Kolovesi
national park



Punkaharju
protection area



Lake
Pihlajavesi



Linnansaari national park



The heart of the Finnish Lake District, is an ideal place to spot rare lake seals (Saimaa ringed seal) and majestic ospreys. The waters of the park are dotted with lush green islands and rocky islets. At Linnansaari Croft traditional slash-and-burn farming practices are preserved.

Services:

Oravi resort and village
Järvisydän Hotel & Spa Resort
Boat taxi to the islands
1 new resort under construction, 1 investment ready

Activities:

Canoeing, camping, fishing, long-distance ice-skating, hiking, boating

Kolovesi national park



Kolovesi is a paddler's paradise, where rocky cliffs rise over the narrow lake channels that form part of the vast labyrinthine Saimaa Lake System. Ancient rock paintings give insights into how Finland's early settlers lived in harmony with nature thousands of years ago. With luck you might encounter a curious Saimaa ringed seal. This is one of the best places to spot these unique lake seals.

Services: Enonkoski village, Savonlinna.

Activities: Nature-watching, canoeing, hiking.

Punkaharju nature reserve



Punkaharju esker ridge has been an internationally known tourist destination already for two hundred years due to the natural beauty of its landscape. It is one of Finland's national landscapes and the beautiful lake views seen between its majestic pines are still the biggest attraction of the area.

Services: Tuunaansaari resort, Hotel Punkaharju, Punkaharju village, Kruunupuisto health resort, Forest museum Lusto etc. 3 train stops!

Activities: Nature-watching, canoeing, hiking, ice-skating, arboretum, forest museum...



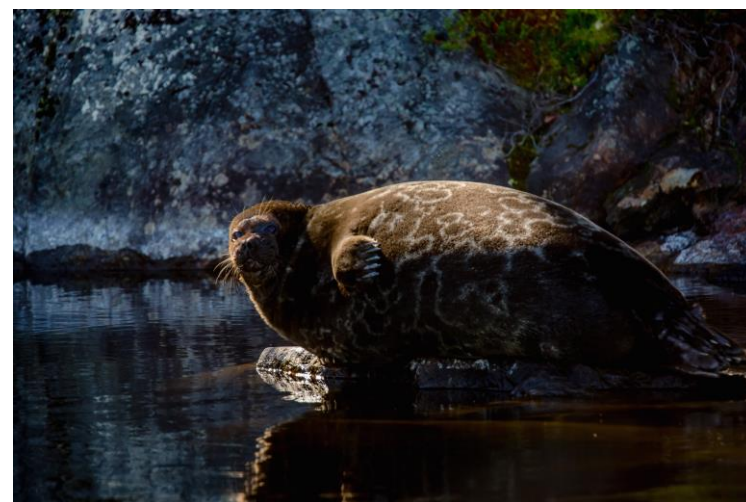
Lake Pihlajavesi shore protection area



Pihlajavesi represents Lake Saimaa nature at its best with labyrinthine archipelagos and large open fiords alternating. It frames the national landscape of historic St. Olav's castle. It carries a strong population of Saimaa seal.

Services: Savonlinna services, otherwise undeveloped. Open excursion harbors with fireplaces for boaters and paddlers.

Activities: Boating, nature-watching, canoeing



Saimaa ringed seal (*Pusa hispida saimensis*).
One of the three genuine populations of freshwater seals in the world. 11

Saimaa nature centre Riihisaari



Year-round visitor centre in the premises of Riihisaari museum in the historical landscape of St. Olav's castle in Savonlinna

Nature in culture and culture in nature

Parks and wildlife Finland and cultural heritage

- Traces of traditional lifestyles and farming
- Natural and historical monuments in the areas managed by Metsähallitus
- Archeological sites and heritage in the protected areas
- Iconic national landscapes – e.g. Punkaharju nature preserve
- Cultural events in national parks and protected areas

Six principles of sustainable nature tourism

The following principles are intended to guide the sustainable tourism operations in all national parks, nature sites and historical sites managed by Parks & Wildlife Finland. These principles are implemented also in all UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Finland. Each principle is followed by more detailed objectives helping in implementing the principles in practice.

1. Support the preservation of valuable features at the sites and promote their protection
2. Minimise the load on the environment
3. Strengthen local aspects
4. Promote use of the sites to increase health and well-being
5. Promote growth and job creation in the local economy
6. Communicate together the values and services of the site



1. Support the preservation of valuable features at the sites and promote their protection

- Natural and cultural values are important factors in terms of attracting tourists.
- We inform visitors of the values of the site and their protection and encourage visitors to act responsibly.
- We develop services and direct the use of the sites, taking into account demand and the site characteristics.
- We mainly use existing routes and service structures.
- In construction, we also take account of local natural and cultural values.
- We ensure that tourism does not compromise natural or cultural values and we prevent any harmful impacts proactively.

2. Minimise the load on the environment

- We promote opportunities to travel to the destination on public transport with low emissions.
- We increase the duration of visitors' stay in the area.
- We operate with energy and material efficiency.
- We set a good example in environmental issues.
- We enable and encourage visitors to act in an environmentally friendly manner.

3. Strengthen local aspects

- Local knowledge, research information, experience and culture provide a starting point for delivering experiences.
- The guidance provided is of high quality, and operators know the area and local conditions well.
- We increase the appreciation of the site by means of high-quality tourist services.
- We cooperate and offer local residents and visitors the opportunity to take part in the management and development of the site.

4. Promote use of the sites to increase health and well-being

- We encourage visitors to engage in versatile natural and cultural experiences on their own and in guided groups.
- We ensure the safety of all sites and services.
- Our services promote equality.
- We enhance visitors' opportunities to increase their social, psychological and physical well-being.
- We promote local residents' recreation and improve living conditions in the area.

5. Promote growth and job creation in the local economy

- We offer visitors high-quality services based on the attraction of the site.
- We cooperate actively with other operators in the management of sites and the provision of services, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- We provide easily accessible and interesting information on the sites and services in advance using various channels.
- We encourage visitors to stay longer in the area.

6. Communicate together the values and services of the site

- We are committed to the values and basic messages of the site.
- We communicate consistently and responsibly with different target groups both in Finland and abroad.
- We collect feedback from stakeholders in order to improve customer satisfaction and our activities.
- We organise training and cooperation events for operators in the area.
- We encourage operators to commit themselves to these principles of sustainable tourism.

PPP with tourism enterprises to enhance sustainability

Objectives of cooperation:

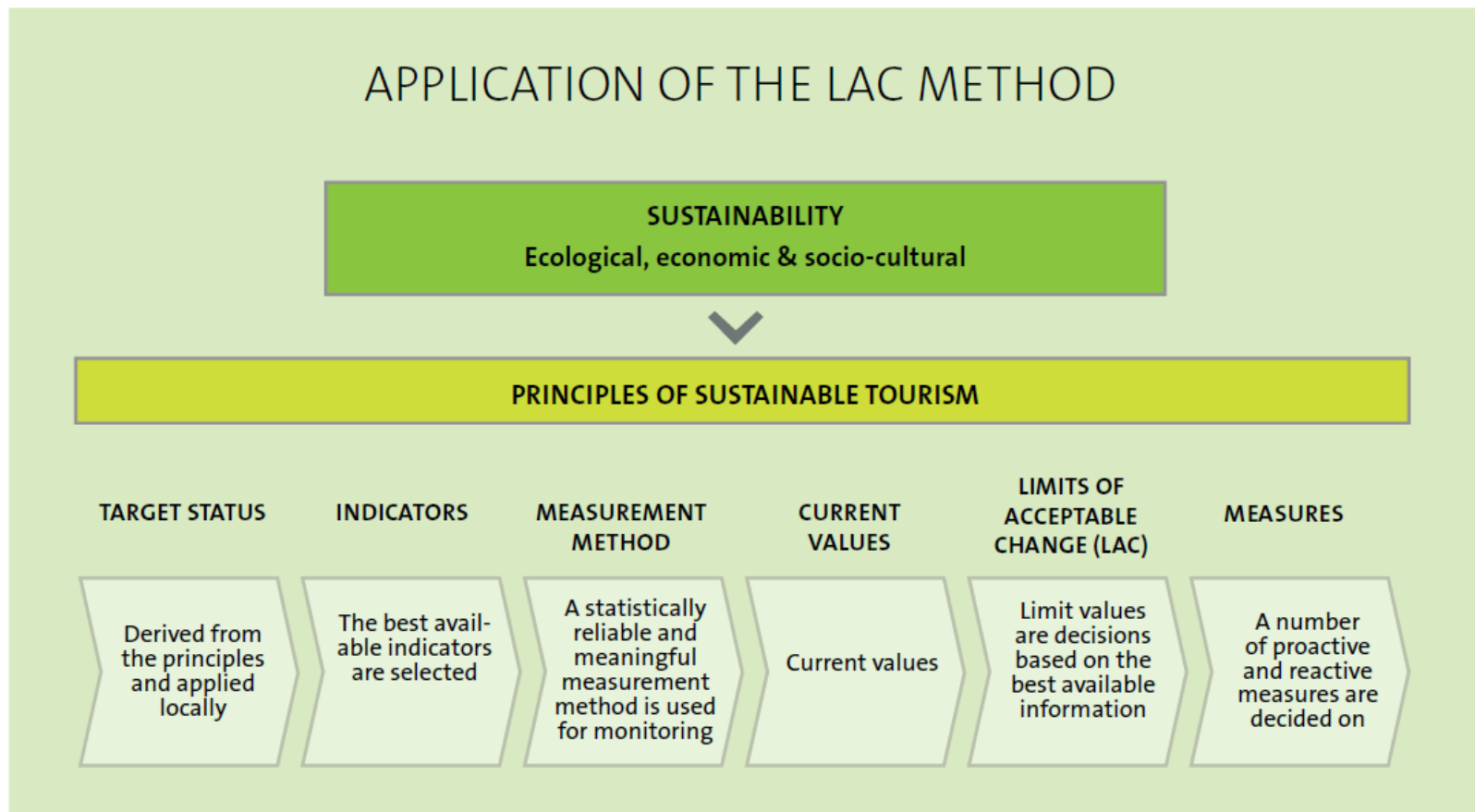
- Increase the visitor numbers and attractiveness of protected areas
- Implementing policies for sustainable tourism, increasing the impact of policy through cooperation
- Providing in cooperation best possible service for visitors
- Implementing uniform practices
- High quality joint marketing and promotion
- Through interaction creating mutual benefits

Partnership agreement with enterprises

- Contracting individually with enterprises wishing to operate (bring customers) to protected areas.
 - Partnership agreement for companies and organisations not using the campfire sites and rest stops in the protected area. This agreement is free of charge.
 - Partnership agreement for companies and organisations offering services subject to a charge, which use the campfiresites and rest stops on the site or in the area. This type of agreement is subject to a charge for companies and organisations, and a fee will be charged for the use of rest stops or similar structures.
 - All agreements are concluded for a fixed term (3–5 years) at first, and can be renewed later for a fixed term (3–5 years) or until further notice.
 - Right to use the logos of national parks of protected areas

Partners committed to monitoring and evaluation

LAC: Limits of acceptable change method



Litter-free hiking principle

- Pack your food in durable and washable boxes and bags. This helps to reduce the amount of waste.
- Place food scraps and other biowaste in the composter dry toilet at the campfire site.
- Burn clean paper and cardboard in the campfire or fireplace in a hut.
- Bring other waste away from the wild to the waste sorting points
- Clean up after yourself and maintain general cleanliness.

Respecting the natural environment and biotopes



Further reading

Summary of Parks & Wildlife Finland PPP policy in English:

Sustainable tourism in protected areas, 2019

<https://julkaisut.metsa.fi/assets/pdf/lp/Muut/sustainabletourism.pdf>

Savonlinna areas on nationalparks.fi:

Linnansaari

<https://www.nationalparks.fi/linnansaarinp>

Kolovesi:

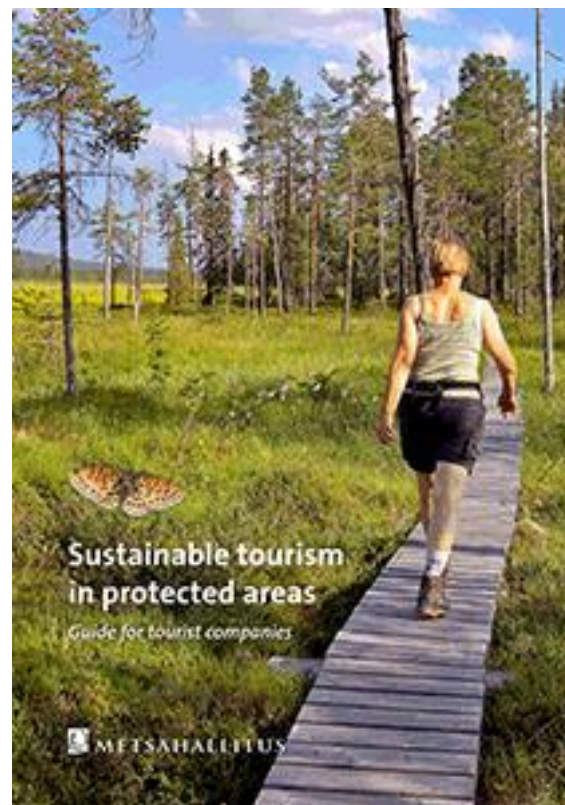
<https://www.nationalparks.fi/kolovesinp>

Punkaharju

<https://www.nationalparks.fi/punkaharju>

Pihlajavesi

<https://www.luontoon.fi/pihlajavesi> (in Finnish)





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Kiitos - thank you!

Questions welcome



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