

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

Protecting Finland's natural treasures

Annual Report 2009



Finland's national parks, strict nature reserves, wilderness areas, national hiking areas and public waters under Metsähallitus's management as of 31.12.2009.

For information on the management of these areas: www.metsa.fi > Natural Heritage
For information on these areas and their facilities: www.outdoors.fi, www.excursionmap.fi



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Metsähallitus celebrated its 150th anniversary during 2009. Our organisation is today responsible for managing 120,000 square kilometres of lands and waters, following the strategic consolidation during the 2000s of lands and waters owned by the Finnish State that were previously managed by various authorities.

Metsähallitus's long history has always been closely linked to Finland's development as a nation. State-owned lands and waters are today very much seen as a source of well-being for society.

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services protects and manages Finland's most precious natural treasures. We also work to ensure that Finns and Finland's foreign visitors can enjoyably explore and experience these natural treasures at first hand.



*Conserving
and utilizing
nature's riches*

METSÄHALLITUS'S MISSION

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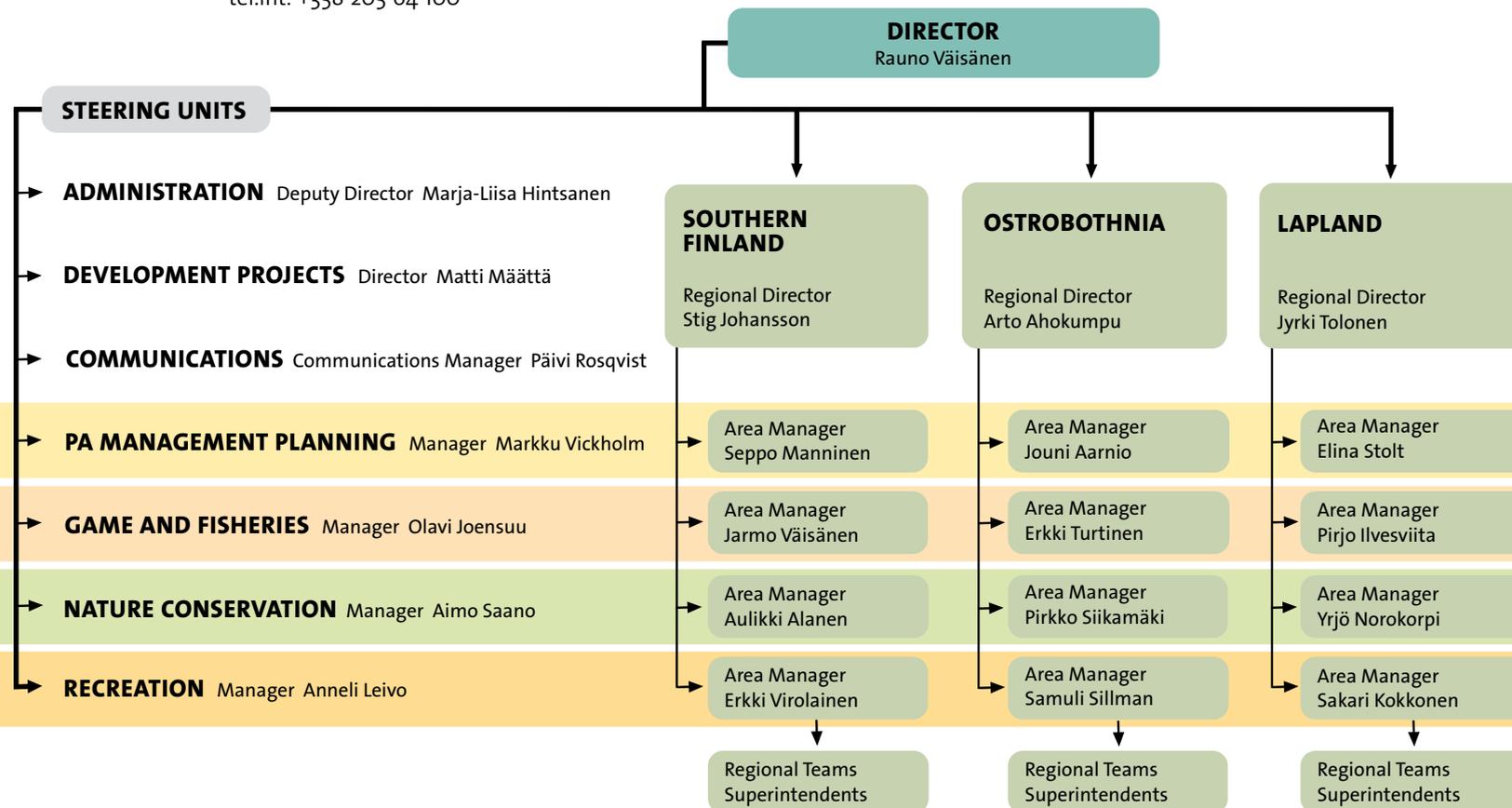
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PROCESSES



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Cover: The island of Jussarö in Ekenäs Archipelago National Park has untouched forests and beautiful coastal scenery. Photo: Jari Kostet.

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www.metsa.fi
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Entrusted with national treasures

The future role of Natural Heritage Services (NHS) came under the spotlight in 2009 as part of wide-ranging debate in Finland on possible changes in the ways Metsähallitus will be organised and run as a State-owned enterprise.

This concern is understandable, since we are entrusted to cherish so much of Finland's prime national heritage by preserving the natural and cultural values of almost all of the country's protected areas, including all of our national parks. We are also entrusted to spend the lion's share of the public funds allocated by Parliament to the Ministry of the Environment for the purposes of nature conservation. Income from Metsähallitus's separate commercial activities is not channeled to NHS.

Society receives value for money from our work in many respects. The need to manage protected areas effectively is an urgent issue both nationally and internationally. The ongoing loss of biodiversity is a global threat on the same scale as climate change, and the most important single tool to combat this threat is a comprehensive and well-managed network of protected areas. Finland's protected areas form vital links in European and global networks.

In addition to their conservation goals, our protected areas aim to meet many other social needs. These objectives can be effectively harmonised, since we are able to run the entire protected area network purposefully and coherently, with the help of our integrated information systems and revamped planning procedures. This comprehensive approach enables resources to be directed to where they are most needed. We also ensure that public resources are used to enhance facilities for outdoor recreation in ways that support nature tourism as effectively as possible. Research conducted in collaboration with the Finnish Forest Research Institute indicates that the public funds channeled into visitor facilities in protected areas create benefits to society that may give as much as a twenty-fold return on these investments, through increased local economic activity.

Although NHS is an essential element of Finland's national administration, our personnel are mainly located away from the capital in all regions of Finland, since the areas that we manage are scattered widely around the country. This helps us to make sure that we never lose touch with local perspectives in spite of our important national and international objectives.

In addition to managing protected areas, NHS also oversees hunting, fishing and off-road traffic in all State-owned lands and waters. Land use in protected areas is often controlled in close coordination with the planning of wider adjoining areas.



METSÄHALLITUS / JARI KOSTET

We are also well equipped to provide expert advice to ensure that areas in the surroundings of protected areas are planned in ways that cost-effectively enhance the ecological interconnectivity of protected areas. As part of the ongoing METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme, Metsähallitus has resolved to set aside some 10,000 hectares of commercially managed State-owned forests for nature conservation.

The fruits of our work fulfil the objectives assigned to Natural Heritage Services by the Finnish State. We are also able to achieve these goals cost-effectively.

In future it would be beneficial to preserve the present organisational model of Natural Heritage Services, and continue to integrate the management of State-owned protected areas and hiking areas, as well as services related to hunting and fishing, under the direct supervision of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.



Rauno Väisänen

Director of Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

“ Under supervision from our foremen, convicts can effectively build or repair structures such as duckboard trails and fences and contribute to habitat management work. This work creates benefits for nature, for visitors, for Metsähallitus, and for the convicts themselves, since they gain work experience that can help them adjust back to life after their sentences.”

ARI VÄÄNÄNEN, PLANNING OFFICER,
AULANKO NATURE RESERVE, Hämeenlinna



Like the Aulanko Nature Reserve, the vast majority of the areas managed by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services are both significant attractions for nature tourism, and valuable recreational amenities for local residents. PHOTO: JARI KOSTET

Effective central administration combined with strong local influence

Metsähallitus is a State-owned enterprise assigned to produce services related to natural resources. The duties are divided into commercial activities on the one hand, and the public administration services provided by Natural Heritage Services on the other. This work encompasses nature conservation, providing facilities for outdoor recreation, and running services related to hunting, fishing, off-road traffic, log-floating and seed bank management. Our activities are well integrated and consistent. The provision of these public services is largely funded from the national government budget.

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services manages State-owned areas designated for nature conservation and outdoor recreation, including all 35 of Finland's national parks, 19 strict nature reserves, 7 national hiking areas and almost 500 other nature reserves, as well as 12 vast wilderness areas in Finnish Lapland, and State-owned public waters.

Productivity rising steadily

Our overall productivity increased by almost 5% compared to 2008, according to a productivity index that uses methodology from Statistics Finland to compare the amounts of work completed to the costs incurred.

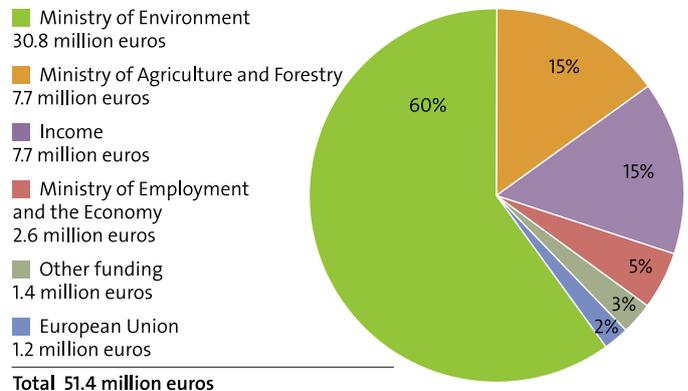
The increasing efficiency of our activities will be a great asset at a time when resources are scarce. We have streamlined our organisation by combining certain administrative units within our Ostrobothnia and Lapland regional units. We are also saving on travel time, costs and emissions, by organising more internet conferences.

Personnel nationwide

Natural Heritage Services' steering unit at Metsähallitus's headquarters in Vantaa accounts for about 5% of our total staff. At the end of 2009 NHS Southern Finland employed 45% of our staff, with the Lapland and Ostrobothnia regional units each employing about a quarter of our personnel.

Our total work input amounted to 513 man-years, as in 2008. At the end of the year we had 385 permanent employees and 131 temporary staff. The proportion of the total workload fulfilled by permanent employees increased by 10 man-years to 68%.

We provide valuable seasonal employment for students and young people every summer, as well as welcome work



The work of Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services is largely funded from the national government budget. Project funding from other sources nevertheless makes a vital contribution to our activities.

experience for inmates of open prisons in the restoration of facilities in protected areas. Last year convicts contributed a total work input of 33 man-years.

Volunteers contributed a total of around 20 man-years of unpaid work during 2009. Participants in voluntary work camps organised together with WWF Finland and the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation carry out valuable habitat management work. Volunteers also help us to survey the nests and dens of endangered species including golden eagles and Saimaa ringed seals.

Areas managed by Metsähallitus as of 31.12.2009.

Type of land use	hectares	of which managed by NHS
Commercial forestry	5 046 000	0
Statutory protected areas	1 455 000	1 455 000
Wilderness areas	1 380 000	1 380 000
Reserved for conservation programmes	598 000	598 000
Other special areas	651 000	465 000*
Total	9 130 000	3 898 000
Lands	9 130 000	3 898 000 (42,7%)
Waters	3 411 000	3 153 000 (92,4%)
All areas together	12 541 000	7 051 000 (56,2%)

The State-owned lands and waters managed by Metsähallitus together make up almost a third of the total area of Finland. National hiking areas (totaling 25,000 ha) are financially administered by Metsähallitus's Forestry unit, but managed in practice by Natural Heritage Services.*

“ Through the EU Life+ funded FINMARINET project, which began in 2009, we will conduct underwater diving surveys of marine Natura 2000 sites and also explore waters in Finland’s economic zone to identify possible new marine Natura sites. In the international ULTRA project we tested new laser bathymetric surveying methods conducted from aircraft over shallow waters in the Kvarken Archipelago, in order to develop effective new ways to classify the sea floor and its vegetation by analysing laser rays reflected from the sea bed.”

MICHAEL HALDIN, SENIOR ADVISOR,
METSÄHALLITUS NATURAL HERITAGE SERVICES MARINE PROGRAMME, VAASA

Metsähallitus marine biologists work beneath the waves searching for precious natural features and cultural relics. METSÄHALLITUS / JAN EKEBOM



Managing protected areas and natural resources cost-effectively and responsibly

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services has been entrusted to run almost all of Finland's protected areas, including all of our national parks. We also oversee the sustainable use of State-owned hunting lands and fishing waters. Towards these ends, we collaborate closely with various universities, research institutes and expert organisations. In 2009 the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation granted its annual environmental award to the staff and management of Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, in recognition of our dedicated long-term work cherishing Finland's natural heritage.

Our conservation work is based on the recognition of valuable natural features. Surveys of biotopes and species form an essential part of our work, by helping us to target conservation measures favourably and use natural resources prudently. Over the years we have effectively reached targets for surveys of terrestrial ecosystems assigned to us by the Ministry of the Environment.

During 2009 we conducted ecological surveys in areas totaling more than 35,000 hectares in the forests of Northern Finland, in nutrient-rich mires in Central Lapland, and on open arctic fells in northernmost Finland. We also carried out habitat restoration work in areas totaling 500 hectares: in mire habitats where willow grouse breed, in wetlands with rich bird-life, and in spruce mires.

Mysteries beneath the waves

Our knowledge of marine habitats is still inadequate, however. We urgently need basic information on underwater ecosystems to enable us to harmonise the use of marine resources with conservation goals. Last year our marine biologist divers successfully conducted ecological inventories in 6,000 hectares of marine waters.

This surveying work is still very slow with regard to the urgent pressures on marine resources, however, so Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services has been testing new ways to survey marine ecosystems more rapidly using aircraft. Laser bathymetric surveying techniques were originally devised to search for submarines and mines, but they have now been adapted to provide detailed ecological information on 30 square kilometres of sea bed every day.

Valuable cultural heritage in protected areas

NHS has also been assigned to cherish cultural relics in Finland's protected areas. Like our nature conservation work, this work is very much based on surveys that indicate where valuable features are found. Last year such surveys were conducted in ten extensive areas in Finnish Lapland, where as many as 250 cultural heritage sites were logged. Our divers also surveyed underwater cultural relics in a lake at Hossa in the vicinity of a set of Stone Age rock paintings.

Cultural heritage inventories have so far been conducted in around 7 % of the lands we administer. Survey methods were also tested in commercially managed forests, and Metsähallitus has prepared proposals for a wider cultural heritage inventory programme in State-owned lands as part of Finland's National Forest Programme.

“ Our knowledge of Lapland's cultural heritage is still limited, and as the person responsible for these surveys I can clearly see their benefits in terms of new archaeological and biological information. We can apply this knowledge to plan land use so as to protect these valuable sites, and also to inform visitors about our cultural heritage.”

PIRJO RAUTIAINEN, SENIOR ADVISOR,
CULTURAL HERITAGE, ROVANIEMI



These pits were earlier used to trap wild reindeer in the Tsarmitunturi Wilderness Area.



ILPO AALTO

Fishing must urgently be controlled in wider areas of Lake Saimaa to enable Saimaa ringed seals to reproduce successfully and increase their numbers. Last year only 44 pups were born in the whole lake system, and 6 of these pups died before leaving their dens.

Protecting endangered birds and animals

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services has special responsibility for protecting and monitoring certain threatened species in Finland. During 2009 white-backed woodpeckers increased their numbers significantly, peregrine falcons bred more successfully than in recent years, and white-tailed eagle breeding figures were normal in Northern Finland; but the breeding success rates of golden eagles and gyrfalcons were very poor due to prey shortages. In spite of intensified conservation measures, no arctic foxes were observed breeding in Finland.

The issue of how Saimaa ringed seals should be protected was the subject of lively debate during 2009. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry aimed to expand the areas covered by voluntary fishing limits to 1,500 square kilometres in the seals' most important breeding areas. The voluntary fishing limits are in force in spring and early summer, when the risks of seal pups becoming entangled in fishing nets and drowning are highest. Metsähallitus has striven to speed the adoption of these voluntary measures, and thanks to cooperation from local residents and fishing organisations the target was almost reached.

Protected area management plans designed to benefit nature and people

Management plans are drawn up for protected areas to control land use and various activities. A consistent and comprehensive planning system ensures that protected areas across Finland are managed coherently – also taking into account Finland's international conservation obligations and the national needs related to outdoor recreation. Cooperation with stakeholders at the local level ensures that the plans are compatible with the needs and wishes of local people.

During 2009 new management plans were drafted for 32 areas, including the national parks of Seitsemäniemi, Liesjärvi, Riisitunturi and Perämeri.

The possible construction of wind power facilities in the Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site provoked lively debate among local residents. Unesco has asked Finland to report on this issue. At the same time, a management plan has been completed to serve as a basis for cooperation between local stakeholders within the site. Natural Heritage Services is responsible for coordinating the management of the whole area.

Sustainability crucial in the management of game and fish stocks

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services closely monitors populations and catches of game and fish species in State-owned areas. Hunting quotas are based on carefully conducted game surveys. In the fells of Northern Lapland, surveyors conduct transects assisted by specially trained dogs, and this new method has improved our knowledge of numbers of willow grouse. Survey data is sent to the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute, who then provide Metsähallitus with final results used in setting hunting quotas.

Methods devised by NHS for the active management of game habitats have now been integrated into routine planning procedures for commercially managed forests. This process involved widespread internal training within Metsähallitus during 2009.

Additional funding granted during 2009 has enabled us to initiate a scheme to diversify fishing and enhance the structures of fish stocks in various waters. Streams in Northern Finland have been restored to provide spawning areas for trout, and in Lapland we have introduced measures designed to support commercial fishing in certain reservoirs.



SAVON ERÄMEDIA / KIMMO PÖRÖ

Boosting forest biodiversity in Southern Finland

The METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland aims to halt the ongoing decline in the diversity of forest species and biotopes, and establish favourable trends in forest biodiversity. The programme also aims to increase the interconnectivity of Finland's network of protected areas, which will facilitate the preservation of biodiversity and improve the capacity of nature to adapt to climate change. The METSO region extends as far north as Southern Lapland.



Natural Heritage Services has helped to implement the METSO programme in privately owned forests as well as in State-owned lands. Good progress was made during 2009. Biotope survey data from areas totaling 18,000 hectares has been stored in a specially designed geographical information system. Many species surveys were also conducted. This data will all be useful in future evaluations of the statuses of threatened species, and when management plans are drawn up for protected areas.

In addition to conducting these surveys, we have actively managed and restored more than 3,000 hectares of ecologically valuable habitat in the METSO region, including wooded marshes, traditional agricultural biotopes and herb-rich woodlands. Together with the Finnish Forest Research Institute we are closely monitoring the cost-effectiveness and economic impacts of such work.

Metsähallitus has now prepared proposals for the permanent protection of 10,000 hectares of ecologically diverse forests that were previously used for commercial forestry. These forests, which are mainly in Southern Finland, have been selected by experts from Metsähallitus with help from nature conservation organisations and Helsinki University's Zonation Programme.

← *Controlling hunting in State-owned lands and ensuring that game stocks are managed sustainably form an important part of Natural Heritage Services' work. Hunting quotas are based on carefully conducted surveys of game bird and animal populations.*

Providing facilities to help people enjoy nature

Increasing numbers of visitors are discovering how to get close to nature in Finland's national parks and other areas managed by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services. People visit these attractions to enjoy their splendid scenery, to benefit from physical exercise and uplifting natural experiences, and to collect natural products such as mushrooms and berries. We maintain extensive facilities in these areas to ensure visitors' safety and to make sure that biodiversity is duly protected even in the most popular parks. Many visits begin from our well-used websites and customer service points.

In 2009 our national parks welcomed a total of around 1,943,500 visitors, up from 1,755,500 in 2008. The most popular parks were Pallas–Yllästunturi, Urho Kekkonen, Nuuksio, Oulanka and Pyhä–Luosto.

National hiking areas welcomed 343,000 visitors, and in total it is estimated that Metsähallitus's recreational areas received around 4.7 million visits during 2009. See inside the back cover of this report for more details.

Natural Heritage Services has also been participating in preparations for the designation of new national parks. Finland's 36th national park should soon be established in the waters and archipelagoes of Selkämeri off the southwest coast. A report on the potential for establishing a new national park at Sipoonkorpi, just east of Helsinki, is due to be finalized early in 2010. Both of these areas would significantly enhance Finland's nationwide network of national parks.



Information about hiking and skiing routes is stored in Natural Heritage Services' data system. The website Excursionmap.fi has useful information for anyone planning a trip in the great outdoors.

Internet services designed to help visitors plan ahead

Metsähallitus runs various internet services for people interested in outdoor activities, in four languages: Finnish, Swedish, English and Northern Sámi.

The Luontoon.fi website (Outdoors.fi in English) became even more popular in 2009, receiving a total of 2,262,000 hits. An internet shop was opened in connection with the site, enabling visitors to purchase products including merchandise featuring the logos of national parks and hiking areas.

The Excursionmap.fi site (Retkikartta.fi) has also increasingly attracted hits from visitors planning walks, treks, and hunting or fishing trips. The revamped Suurpedot.fi website (which features Finland's large carnivores) was opened in November, and soon received a record hit-rate of more than 50,000 visits.

Metsähallitus's Metsa.fi website includes information on nature conservation, endangered species, and the management plans drawn up for many areas.

Recreational fishers have for many years been able to purchase permits by mobile phone. During 2009 this service was extended to hunters, who can now call an automatic service number that will send a short-term permit for hunting small game animals and birds to their own phone.

During 2009 it also became possible to apply for certain kinds of permit through our internet services, and half of all applicants took advantage of this option. Our electronic application system for commercial fishing permits, seasonal hunting permits and elk-hunting permits greatly speeds the processing of applications.

During 2009 we issued a total of 31,900 hunting permits of various kinds and 77,500 fishing permits. The number of snowmobile route permits issued rose to 6,839, reflecting both an increase in the popularity of this activity and a reduction in the unauthorised use of routes.

“ Our game and fisheries wardens are continuing work that has been going on for the 150 years of Metsähallitus's history. Initially the aim was to ensure timber was not logged without due permission. Today our role is more to ensure that in State-owned areas hunting, fishing and off-road journeys are all practiced in accordance with permits. We also supervise protected areas. Our work is largely preventive, and we have to just make people realise that we're keeping an eye on things in these areas. Almost all of us are policemen by training, and we have the same legal authority as the police.”

TIMO RASKU, GAME AND FISHERIES WARDEN, PARKANO



Metsähallitus's recreational areas received around 4.7 million visits during 2009.

Customer satisfaction high in parks and visitor centres

Customer satisfaction levels among visitors to natural areas remained high, averaging 4.2 on a scale of 1–5. Satisfaction levels among hunters and fishers showed little change on previous years, averaging 3.5 and 3.6, respectively.

To enable everyone to enjoy Finland's natural treasures, we have again improved the accessibility of our facilities, providing routes that can be used by disabled people in areas including the Arctic Circle Hiking Area. Many of our areas now feature on a special website set up for travellers with disabilities (Suomikaikille.fi).

Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen took part in a groundbreaking ceremony held in June 2009 to initiate the construction of a youth camp connected to the Evo Hiking Area near Hämeenlinna. The camp is being jointly set up by the Finnish Scouts and Metsähallitus, and will be completed in time to host a major scout gathering in July-August 2010.

Natural Heritage Services runs a total of 29 service points in the vicinity of our popular protected areas and hiking areas. These visitor centres, nature centres and customer service points welcomed around 866,000 visitors during the year. The numbers of people participating in guided tours rose to almost 48,000.

Metsähallitus celebrated its 150th anniversary by highlighting our cultural heritage

Open events were organised at visitor centres in many localities to mark Metsähallitus's 150th anniversary. A special exhibition featuring the importance of forests in Finnish culture toured many visitor centres. The restored farmstead at Kovero Croft in Seitsemäinen National Park hosted public events for a whole week.

Two swans were given a new home in the landscaped parkland of Aulanko Nature Reserve, where no swans have lived for many years. In spring a local radio station organised a competition through which listeners chose to name the swans Janne and Aino (after the locally born composer Sibelius and his wife).

2009 also marked the 60th anniversary of the post-war resettlement of Koltta Sámi indigenous communities in the villages of Sevettijärvi, Nellim and Keväjärv in Finnish Lapland. To mark both anniversaries Metsähallitus supported the Koltta Cultural Foundation by providing notice boards informing visitors about Koltta Sámi culture in Finnish, English and Koltta Sámi.

“Natural Heritage Services systematically compiles useful information on the numbers of visits to national parks and other popular areas, as well as feedback from visitors and details of these areas’ local economic impacts. This helps us to plan the effective management and use of our areas. It also helps local businesses to plan their activities in the long term, based on sustainable nature tourism.”

JOEL ERKKONEN, SENIOR ADVISOR, RECREATION, ROVANIEMI



National parks are major tourist attractions in many Finnish regions. The provision of quality services in their surroundings can encourage visitors to stay longer in the area and also visit other local areas and attractions. PHOTO: MARKUS SIRKKA

Public funding for national parks also supports local tourism

The investments made by the national government in recreational facilities in national parks and hiking areas are repaid to society many times over in terms of the business and job opportunities this funding generates. Public investments in nature conservation and free services for visitors to natural areas provide a robust basis for the long-term development of nature tourism.

Research has indicated that the total value to local economies of spending by visitors to national parks in Finland amounts to 85.7 million euros a year, as well as employment equivalent to around 1,100 man-years. Corresponding figures for national hiking areas are 17.9 million euros and 230 man-years. These figures were calculated using a model jointly devised by Natural Heritage Services and the Finnish Forest Research Institute. These values include the direct and indirect financial impacts of spending by visitors in the vicinity of parks and hiking areas.

For the most popular parks, visitors' spending can give a return of 20 euros to the local economy for every euro invested in a park's facilities. Public spending on facilities in Oulanka National Park, for instance, amounts to around 700,000 euros a year, but visitors bring a total benefit to the region amounting to 14.7 million euros annually. Visitors to Ruunaa Hiking Area in North Karelia, which is popular for fishing and whitewater canoeing, likewise contribute greatly to the local economy, creating benefits in terms of jobs and economic activity with a financial value many times higher than the public investments made in the area.

To make the most of such benefits, suitable services must be available in the vicinity of protected areas and hiking areas for visitors to use. Comparisons of visitor numbers and their economic impacts in different areas can provide useful information to support evaluations of the viability of investments in areas where local services may still be underdeveloped.

Investments in the management of State-owned hunting lands and fishing waters also bring millions of euros in income to rural economies in northernmost Finland.

Collaboration with local firms

NHS enters into cooperation agreements with tourism service providers who are committed to sustainable nature tourism.



Metsähallitus collaborates with local tourism service providers to promote sustainable nature tourism in many areas including national parks in Finland's archipelagoes. Many sites can be reached by regular local ferries or by taxi-boat.

By the end of 2009 a total of 268 such agreements were in force. We collaborate with these partners on marketing and publicity work, aiming to attract visitors to our national parks and other areas, and also encourage them to use local firms' services.

We also draw up regional nature tourism plans setting guidelines for tourism activities connected with the areas we manage. During 2009 an extensive nature tourism plan was completed for the Archipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve, aiming to give visitors better opportunities to learn about the archipelago's unique nature and cultural traditions, without endangering their preservation.

Under the leadership of Natural Heritage Services, 165 tourism service providers have been working within the Kulma Project to developing culture tourism services in the Koillismaa and Oulu regions of Northern Finland. This project also involves surveys and restoration work at cultural heritage sites, aiming to preserve these attractions for future generations to enjoy.

Plans for the International Year of Biodiversity 2010

Highlights of our work

Our work managing Finland's network of protected areas and ensuring that natural resources are used sustainably contributes crucially to the conservation of biodiversity across the country. At the same time we promote material and mental wellbeing by helping people to make the most of Finland's beautiful natural assets.

We manage natural resources and protected areas productively and responsibly.

Highlights of our plans for 2010:

- We will initiate a five-year EU Life+ funded project aiming to enhance marshland habitats by restoring 4,250 hectares of mire habitats to their natural state.
- We will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the management of all of our national parks.
- We will more intensively work to ensure that agreements limiting the use of certain fishing equipment in the waters of Lake Saimaa are signed so as to form a coherent area of around 1,500 square kilometres where Saimaa ringed seals will be protected by such measures.
- We will safeguard crayfish populations by preparing a special programme to ensure that they are exploited sustainably.
- Together with the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute we will study how willow grouse are faring in forest habitats.

We give everyone the opportunity to get close to nature.

Highlights of our plans for 2010:

- We will improve facilities for visitors to Pallastunturi to ensure that targets for increased visitor numbers remain compatible with nature conservation goals.
- We will initiate the construction of a visitor centre for the Nuuskio National Park that will also feature Finland's wider natural attractions.
- A new management plan for the popular Oulanka National Park will be drawn up with improved public participation.
- We will further develop the system that enables hunters to purchase permits by mobile phone.
- We will intensify collaboration with local businesses and policy-makers from municipalities, the regional authorities, and the indigenous Sámi people's organisations.



We are a reliable and attractive partner in the tourism sector.

Highlights of our plans for 2010:

- We will initiate the construction of a nature and culture centre for the Pyhä–Luosto National Park.
- We will purposefully enhance sustainable nature tourism in collaboration with our partners in many areas, including Rovaniemi, Saariselkä, Kilpisjärvi, Inari and the Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site.
- We will help to make Liminganlahti Bay into a leading attraction for birdwatching tourism.
- The Rokua–Oulujärvi area will be added to the international GeoParks network of geologically valuable sites.
- We will build up sustainable nature tourism in the Archipelago National Park through the European PAN Parks network.

Our skilled and satisfied staff achieve good results.

Highlights of our plans for 2010:

- We will build up our resources through involvement in EU-funded and national projects.
- We will improve youth employment by using public funding to hire unemployed young people.
- During the UN's International Year of Biodiversity we will actively participate in the national authorities' communications campaign "Biodiversity – essential to life".
- We will reduce our own carbon footprint by conducting energy audits at our visitor centres to ensure that they can all be granted energy efficiency certificates by the end of the year.

Metsähallitus has restored an old croft in the Linnansaari National Park using traditional local slash-and-burn farming methods. The croft received an award during 2009 as the year's best heritage landscape. There have been few changes around the croft since 1945, when it was photographed by the pioneering Finnish nature conservationist **Reino Kalliola**, who was born a century ago in 1909.



Estimated numbers of visits to visitor centres and customer service points in 2009

(total: 866 000 visits)

Service point	Visits
Blåmusslan	14 700
Ekenäs	20 300
Etiäinen	10 300
Fell-Lapland	26 200
Hailuoto	30 000
Hautajärvi	8 200
Hossa	45 600
Häme	17 400
Ivalo	11 600
Kalajoki	28 100
Karhuntassu	38 400
Kellokas	69 000
Kiehinen	44 000
Kilpisjärvi	13 500
Koilliskaira	15 100
Korvatunturi	7 700
Nestori	27 000
Oskari	10 900
Oulanka	71 700
Pallastunturi	39 900
Petola	16 200
Pyhätunturi	25 800
Ruunaa	7 600
Seitsemäinen	33 000
Siida	108 200
Syöte	32 300
Teijo	26 400
Terranova	20 800
Ukko	46 000

Estimated numbers of visits to national parks in 2009

(total: 1 943 500)

National park	Visits
Arcipelago	53 500
Eastern Gulf of Finland	19 000
Ekenäs archipelago	44 500
Helvetinjärvi	33 000
Hiidenportti	12 000
Isojärvi	10 500

Kauhaneva–Pohjankangas	4 500
Koli	127 500
Kolovesi	7 500
Kurjenrahka	28 500
Lauhanvuori	10 000
Leivonmäki	12 500
Lemmenjoki	10 000
Liesjärvi	30 500
Linnansaari	31 000
Nuukio	179 500
Oulanka	165 500
Pallas–Yllästunturi	419 000
Patvinsuo	12 000
Perämeri	9 000
Petkeljärvi	19 500
Puurijärvi–Isosuo	11 500
Pyhä–Häkki	17 000
Pyhä–Luosto	128 000
Päijänne	15 000
Reposesi	74 500
Riisitunturi	15 000
Rokua	23 500
Salamajärvi	10 500
Seitsemäinen	45 500
Syöte	40 000
Tiilikajärvi	7 500
Torransuo	20 500
Urho Kekkonen	289 000
Valkmusa	7 000

Estimated numbers of visits to national hiking areas in 2009

(total: 343 000 visits)

Hikig area	Visits
Evo	50 000
Hossa	54 500
Iso-Syöte	25 000
Kylmäluoma	28 500
Oulujärvi	21 000
Ruunaa	89 000
Teijo	75 000



Metsähallitus visitor centres and customer service points
Contact information and services: www.outdoors.fi > Customer service.



Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services manages national parks, strict nature reserves, other protected areas, wilderness areas and national hiking areas in ways that preserve their valuable natural features and help visitors to enjoy them.

We also manage State-owned public waters in the Baltic Sea and many lakes. Our other responsibilities include overseeing hunting and fishing in State-owned lands and waters.

The lands we manage, our services and our personnel are spread around all regions of Finland.

For information on natural attractions see: www.outdoors.fi

For information on the work of Natural Heritage Services see: www.metsa.fi

