

# Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy 2011

**Syöte National Park**



Veikko Virkkunen

veikko.virkkunen@metsa.fi

Translated by Translatinki Oy  
Översättning: Tmi Pimma Åhman

Cover photo: Adventurers in the snowy Syöte National Park (Johanna Määttä, Erä-Ohto Oy).



© Metsähallitus 2011

ISSN-L 1796-2943  
ISSN 1796-2943 (online)  
ISBN 978-952-446-866-4 (pdf)

# Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy 2011

## Syöte National Park



European Union  
European Regional Development Fund

Leverage from  
the EU  
2007–2013

POHJOIS-POHJANMAAN LIITTO  
Council of Oulu Region



METSÄHALLITUS

## DOCUMENTATION PAGE

PUBLISHED BY	Metsähallitus	PUBLICATION DATE	4.4.2011
COMMISSIONED BY	Metsähallitus	DATE OF APPROVAL	11.1.2011
CONFIDENTIALITY	Public	REGISTRATION NO.	1412/530/2011
TYPE OF PROTECTED AREA/CONSERVATION PROGRAMME	National Park, Hiking Area, Recreational Forest, Nature Reserve, Natura 2000 Site		
NAME(S) OF PROTECTED AREA(S)	Syöte National Park, Iso-Syöte Hiking Area, Syöte Recreational Forest, Soiperoinen Nature Reserve		
NATURA 2000 SITE NAME(S) AND CODE(S)	Syöte (FI 1103828), Maaselkä (FI 1103813), Latva-Korte-Kärppävaara (FI 1105407), Salmitunturi-Räätäjäjärvi (FI 11054405)		
REGIONAL UNIT	Natural Heritage Services, Ostrobothnia		
AUTHOR(S)	Veikko Virkkunen		
TITLE	Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy 2011, Syöte National Park		
ABSTRACT	<p>This Strategy was compiled as an update to the Nature Tourism Plan 2001 for the Syöte area. With the realisation of the action programme described in the Nature Tourism Plan, and the development that has taken place in the operational environment, a need to update the goals of nature tourism and compile a new programme has been created. In addition to Metsähallitus, the area's central tourism operators have participated in the planning process, for example, through workshops and joint meetings. In 2010, the Syöte enterprise and visitor surveys were completed in support of the plan.</p> <p>In 2004, the Syöte National Park was granted membership of the Europarc Federation's European Charter network of protected areas. The objective of this programme is to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas. The main target of the Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy is to promote the nature tourism exercised in the natural attractions of Syöte, i.e. the Syöte National Park, Iso-Syöte Hiking Area and Syöte Recreational Forest. Another target is to observe the sustainability of nature tourism using the Limits of Acceptable Change method. The plan's realisation results in the controlled growth of nature-based tourism, as well as the increase of local return from tourism and the well-being of the local communities.</p> <p>In 2010, thirteen partnership enterprises were operating in the Syöte Protected Areas. Annually, some 100,000 visits are made to these nature attractions and the spending of visitors created a local economic effect of approximately MEUR 3.8 or 50 person-workyears to the municipalities of the neighbouring area. An extensive infrastructure for recreation has been built in the Protected Areas for locals, independent tourists and guided activities. This infrastructure is being developed into products. Hiking and skiing are the most popular activities, but along with new trends, new activities are gaining popularity. The Syöte holiday resort's target is to substantially increase their number of visitors and the turnover in tourism caused by this. By developing the services in the Protected Areas and improving the tourism operators' competence and quality of services, we are well on the way to achieving the vision specified in the Strategy.</p> <p>According to the target situation established for 2020, nature tourism in Syöte is founded on the area's nature, culture and locality. Syöte's high-level services provide for the sustainable growth and success of domestic and international tourism. Success creates jobs and attracts new residents to the area. The development measures taken in order to achieve the target situation include the updating of the area's communication, improvements to the quality of the hiking services and the development of these services into products on the basis of target groups. The activities of the Visitor Centre will be developed to meet changing requirements and, in cooperation with the area's tourism operators, new modes of operation will be created with the aim of improving the quality of tourism products and the competence of the operators. Advancing international networking through the European Charter network will promote the growth of Syöte's visibility on the national and international stage. At the centre of all these activities is the local population, who produce content for the tourism products and events through their culture.</p>		
KEYWORDS	sustainable tourism, nature-based tourism, Syöte, national park, hiking area		
OTHER INFORMATION	The Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy was produced as a part of the Syötteen lumoa 2010–2012 (Enchantment of Syöte) project. Most of the funding for the project came from the European Regional Development Fund, administered through the Council of Oulu Region.		
SERIES NAME AND NO.	Nature Protection Publications of Metsähallitus. Series C 94		
ISSN-L	1796-2943	ISBN (PDF)	978-952-446-866-4
ISSN (ONLINE)	1796-2943		
NO. OF PAGES	60 pp.	LANGUAGE	English
PUBLISHING CO.	Metsähallitus	PRINTED IN	
DISTRIBUTOR	Metsähallitus	PRICE	

# KUVAILULEHTI

JULKAISIJA	Metsähallitus	JULKAISUAIKA	4.4.2011
TOIMEKSIANTAJA	Metsähallitus	HYVÄKSYMISPÄIVÄMÄÄRÄ	11.1.2011
LUOTTAMUKSELLISUUS	Julkinen	DIAARINUMERO	1412/530/2011
SUOJELUALUETYYPPI/ SUOJELUOHJELMA	kansallispuisto, valtion retkeilyalue, virkistysmetsä, luonnonsuojelualue, erityissuojelualue, aarnialue, yksityinen suojelualue, Natura 2000 -alue (SCI/SPA), harjijensuojeluohjelma, lehtojensuojeluohjelma, rantojensuojeluohjelma, vanhojen metsien suojeluohjelma		
ALUEEN NIMI	Syötteen kansallispuisto, Iso-Syötteen retkeilyalue, Syötteen virkistysmetsä, Soiperoisen luonnonsuojelualue		
NATURA 2000 -ALUEEN NIMI JA KOODI	Syöte (FI 1103828), Maaselkä (FI 1103813), Latva-Korte-Kärppävaara (FI 1105407), Salmitunturi-Räpysjärvi (FI 11054405)		
ALUEYKSIKKÖ	Pohjanmaan luontopalvelut		
TEKIJÄ(T)	Veikko Virkkunen		
JULKAISUN NIMI	Syötteen luontomatkailusuunnitelma 2011		
TIIVISTELMÄ	<p>Tämä luontomatkailusuunnitelma laadittiin päivittämään vuoden 2001 Syötteen alueen luontomatkailusuunnitelma. Toimintaohjelman toteutuneisuuden ja toimintaympäristössä tapahtuneen kehityksen myötä on syntynyt tarve päivittää luontomatkailua koskevat tavoitteet ja laatia uusi toimintaohjelma. Suunnitelmaprosessiin ovat osallistuneet Metsähallituksen lisäksi alueen keskeiset matkailutoimijat muun muassa työpajojen ja yhteisten tapaamisten avulla. Suunnitelman tueksi valmistui vuonna 2010 Syötteen yritys- ja kävijätutkimukset.</p> <p>Syötteen kansallispuisto hyväksyttiin vuonna 2004 Euroopan kansallispuistoliton European Charter -suojelualueverkoston jäseneksi. Ohjelman tavoitteena on kestävän luontomatkailun kehittäminen suojelualueilla. Tämän suunnitelman päätavoitteena on edistää Syötteen luontokohteilla eli Syötteen kansallispuistossa, Iso-Syötteen retkeilyalueella sekä Syötteen virkistysmetsässä harjoitettavaa luontomatkailua. Tavoitteena on myös seurata luontomatkailun kestävyyttä <i>Hyväksyttävän muutoksen rajat</i> -menetelmällä. Suunnitelman toteutumisen seurauksena on luontomatkailun hallittu kasvu sekä paikallisen matkailutulon ja paikallisväestön hyvinvoinnin lisääntyminen.</p> <p>Vuonna 2010 Syötteen suojelualueilla toimi kolmetoista Metsähallituksen yhteistyöyrittäjä. Luontokohteille tehdään vuosittain vajaat 100 000 käyntiä, jotka aiheuttavat lähialueen kuntiin noin 3,8 miljoonan euron eli 50 henkilötyövuoden paikallistaloudelliset vaikutukset. Suojelualueille on rakennettu kattava retkeilyn palveluvarustus, jonka tuotteistaminen on kesken sekä oma-toimisia matkailijoita että yritysten asiakkaita ajatellen. Retkeily ja hiihto ovat suosituimmat aktiviteetit, mutta trendien myötä uudet lajit nostavat suosiotaan. Matkailukeskusten tavoitteena on lisätä tuntuvasti kävijämääriään ja näin myös matkailun liikevaihtoa. Suojelualueiden palveluita kehittämällä ja matkailutoimijoiden palvelujen laatua ja osaamista parantamalla päästään kohti suunnitelmassa määriteltyä tavoitetilaa.</p> <p>Vuodelle 2020 laaditun tavoitetilan mukaan Syötteen luontomatkailu perustuu erämaiseen luontoon, kulttuuriin ja paikallisuuteen. Korkeatasoiset palvelut mahdollistavat kotimaisen ja kansainvälisen matkailun kestävän kasvun ja menestyksen. Menestys luo työpaikkoja ja houkuttelee alueelle uusia asukkaita. Tavoitetilan saavuttamiseksi alueen viestintää ajantasaistetaan, retkeilypalveluiden laatua parannetaan ja palveluja tuotteistetaan kohderyhmälähtöisesti. Luontokeskuksen toimintaa kehitetään vastaamaan muuttuvia tarpeita ja alueen matkailutoimijoiden kanssa luodaan uusia toimintatapoja, joiden tavoitteena on matkailutuotteiden laadun parantaminen ja toimijoiden osaamisen lisääntyminen. Kansainvälisen verkostoitumisen edistäminen European Charter -verkostossa lisää Syötteen valtakunnallista ja kansainvälistä tunnettua. Kaiken tekemisen keskiössä on paikallisväestö, joka kulttuurillaan tuottaa sisältöä matkailutuotteisiin ja -tapahtumiin.</p>		
AVAINSANAT	Syötteen kansallispuisto, Iso-Syötteen retkeilyalue, luontomatkailu		
MUUT TIEDOT	Suunnitelma on tehty osana Euroopan aluekehitysrahaston osarahoittamaa Syötteen lumoa 2010–2012 -hanketta.		
SARJAN NIMI JA NUMERO	Metsähallituksen luonnonsuojelujulkaisuja. Sarja C 94		
ISSN-L ISSN (VERKKOJULKAISU)	1796-2943 1796-2943	ISBN (PDF)	978-952-446-866-4
SIVUMÄÄRÄ	60 s.	KIELI	englanti
KUSTANTAJA	Metsähallitus	PAINOPAIKKA	
JAKAJA	Metsähallitus, luontopalvelut	HINTA	

# PRESENTATIONSBLAD

UTGIVARE	Forststyrelsen	UTGIVNINGSDATUM	4.4.2011
UPPDRAAGSGIVARE	Forststyrelsen	DATUM FÖR GODKÄNNANDE	11.1.2011
SEKRETESSGRAD	Offentlig	DIARIENUMMER	1412/530/2011
TYP AV SKYDDSSOMRÅDE/ SKYDDSPROGRAM	nationalpark, statens strövområde, rekreationsskog, naturskyddsområde, urskogsområde, privat naturskyddsområde, Natura 2000-område (SCI/SPA), skyddsprogram för åsar, lundskyddsprogram, strandskyddsprogram, skyddsprogram för gamla skogar		
OMRÅDETS NAMN	Syöte nationalpark, Iso-Syöte strövområde, Syöte rekreationsskog, Soiperoinen naturskyddsområde		
NATURA 2000-OMRÅDETS NAMN OCH KOD	Syöte (FI 1103828), Maaselkä (FI 1103813), Latva-Korte-Kärppävaara (FI 1105407), Salmi-tunturi-Räapysjärvi (FI 11054405)		
REGIONENHET	Österbottens naturtjänster		
FÖRFATTARE	Veikko Virkkunen		
PUBLIKATION	Naturturismplan för Syöte 2011		
SAMMANDRAG	<p>Denna naturturismplan har utarbetats i syfte att uppdatera den år 2001 gjorda naturturismplanen för Syöte. Det uppstod behov av att uppdatera målen för naturturismen och att utarbeta ett nytt handlingsprogram, eftersom det tidigare handlingsprogrammet redan har förverkligats på många punkter och verksamhetsmiljön har utvecklats. I planeringsprocessen deltog utöver Forststyrelsen även de centrala aktörerna inom turismen på området, och samarbetet genomfördes bl.a. under workshopar och möten. Som stöd för planen fanns de företags- och besökarundersökningar i Syöte som blev klara år 2010.</p> <p>Syöte nationalpark godkändes år 2004 som medlem i EUROPARC:s European Charter-skyddsområdesnätverk. Målet för programmet är att främja hållbar naturturism på skyddsområdena. Det huvudsakliga målet för denna naturturismplan är att främja naturturismen i naturobjekten i Syöte, dvs. i Syöte nationalpark, Iso-Syöte strövområde och Syöte rekreationsskog. Syftet är också att följa upp naturturismens hållbarhet med metoden <i>Limits of Acceptable Change</i>. Verkställandet av planen leder till att naturturismen växer kontrollerat och de lokala inkomsterna från turismen och den lokala befolkningens välfärd ökar.</p> <p>År 2010 idkade tretton av Forststyrelsens samarbetspartners affärsverksamhet på skyddsområdena i Syöte. Naturobjekten har årligen sammanlagt knappt 100 000 besökare, och den totala inkomsteffekten av besökarna på närkommunerna är 3,8 miljoner euro dvs. 50 årsverken. På skyddsområdena har det byggts en omfattande serviceutrustning för friluftsliv. Produktifieringen av utrustningen är ännu inte färdig med tanke på såväl självständiga besökare som företagens kunder. De populäraste aktiviteterna bland besökarna på områdena är att idka friluftsliv och att åka skidor, men i takt med att nya trender dyker upp blir också nya grenar allt populärare. Målet för turistcentrumen är att öka besökarantalet betydligt och sålunda också turismens omsättning. Genom att utveckla tjänsterna på skyddsområdena och genom att förbättra både kvaliteten på de tjänster aktörerna inom turismen erbjuder och aktörernas kunnande strävar man efter att uppnå målen i naturturismplanen.</p> <p>Enligt målen fram till år 2020 baserar sig naturturismen i Syöte på den ödemarksartade naturen, kulturen och det lokala. Då tjänsterna är av hög kvalitet ökar och frodas den inhemska och internationella turismen på ett hållbart sätt. Framgången skapar nya arbetsplatser och attraherar nya invånare till trakten. För att uppnå målen kommer man att uppdatera informationsverksamheten, förbättra friluftstjänsternas kvalitet och produktifiera tjänsterna utgående från målgruppernas behov. Naturumets verksamhet utvecklas att svara på nya behov, och tillsammans med de lokala aktörerna inom turismen skapas nya verksamhetsformer för att förbättra produkternas kvalitet och öka aktörernas kunnande. När det internationella samarbetet främjas inom nätverket European Charter blir Syöte mer känt både nationellt och internationellt. Den lokala befolkningen utgör kärnan för all verksamhet och producerar utgående från sin kultur innehållet i de produkter och evenemang som riktas till turisterna.</p>		
NYCKELORD	Syöte nationalpark, Iso-Syöte strövområde, Syöte rekreationsskog		
ÖVRIGA UPPGIFTER	Planen har utarbetats inom projektet ”Syötteen lumoa 2010–2012”, som delfinansieras av Europeiska regionutvecklingsfonden.		
SERIENS NAMN OCH NUMMER	Metsähallituksen luonnonsuojelujulkaisuja. Sarja C 94		
ISSN-L	1796-2943	ISBN (PDF)	978-952-446-866-4
ISSN (ONLINE)	1796-2943		
SIDANTAL	60 s.	SPRÅK	engelska
FÖRLAG	Forststyrelsen	TRYCKERI	
DISTRIBUTION	Forststyrelsen, naturtjänster	PRIS	

# Preface

For several decades, Syöte has been a loved and well-known destination for hikers. The founding of the Syöte National Park in 2000 raised the area's profile, and during its first ten years, the Park has become established as a significant part of the network of Finnish national parks. Its hill sceneries play an important role for Northern Finland's magnetism and image as a tourist destination. The National Park is a fixed part of the wider destination of Syöte, but, at the same time, it is recognised as an important resource for both the tourism regions of the Oulu region and Kuusamo Lapland.

The goal is to take the Syöte destination in a more international direction, since the most significant growth potential for tourism enterprises is in international target groups. The National Park already took a step towards international recognition when it was granted the European Charter certificate in 2004. Syöte's target is to renew the Charter membership, after which the businesses cooperating with the National Park can apply for Charter certification for themselves.

The National Park's primary responsibility is the protection of its natural and cultural heritage, and active participation in the development of nature-based tourism is by no means out of keeping with this task. It is essential to secure ecological and socio-cultural sustainability and analyse demand – this creates an excellent foundation for preparing a cooperative development plan which also aims at assuring economic sustainability. After all, a good tourism destination is one that offers its local residents work, livelihood and services.

The new Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for Syöte has been compiled under Project Manager Veikko Virkkunen in a way that has encouraged the involvement of interest groups and, indeed, parties that are interested in developing Syöte have participated commendably in target setting. The plan expresses excellently the area's common goal-orientation. The Syöte National Park's Cooperation Group, founded in early 2011, has approved the plan for implementation. The Group will follow the implementation of the plan closely in the coming years.

This is a good start and an excellent place to continue on – together.

Matti Hovi

Park Superintendent

Metsähallitus, Natural Heritage Services





# Contents

1 INTRODUCTION.....	11
2 THE AREA AND THE AIMS OF THE PLAN .....	12
3 OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT.....	14
3.1 The General Trends of Nature-based Tourism .....	14
3.2 The Plans that Guide Tourism and the Area's Central Operators .....	14
4 SYÖTE AS A TOURISM ATTRACTION .....	17
4.1 Syöte of the Wilderness, "the Land of the Hill Forests" .....	17
4.2 Syöte of Services, "Close, Easy, Versatile" .....	18
4.3 Syöte of Stories, "From the Trails and Trail Sides" .....	19
5 THE PRESENT STATE OF TOURISM .....	20
5.1 Demand.....	20
5.2 Supply.....	22
5.3 Marketing and Communications .....	26
5.4 Position of Syöte National Park in destination.....	27
5.4.1 SWOT Analysis.....	28
5.4.2 The Effects the Protected Areas Have on the Local Economy .....	29
6 SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM .....	31
6.1 Principles of Sustainable Tourism.....	31
6.2 Evaluating the Sustainability of Tourism .....	32
6.2.1 Present State of Sustainability .....	32
6.2.2 Updating the Set of Indicators for Monitoring Sustainability .....	35
7 TARGET SITUATION OF NATURE-BASED TOURISM.....	36
7.1 Kuusamo Lapland and the Oulu Region .....	36
7.2 The Syöte Protected Areas and the Surrounding Environment.....	36
8 ACTION PROGRAMME.....	42
9 MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY .....	44
REFERENCES .....	45
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1 The Materialisation of the Nature Tourism Plan 2001 for the Syöte Area.....	49
Appendix 2 The Charter of Foundation of the Syöte National Park Cooperation Group ....	52
Appendix 3 Results of the Workshop "Factors Contributing to the Attraction of the Syöte National Park" .....	53
Appendix 4 Principles of Sustainable Tourism .....	54
Appendix 5 The Monitoring Equipment for Environmental Impacts Caused by Naturebased Tourism in Syöte 2011–.....	56
Appendix 6 Results from the Workshop "From Targets to Action" .....	58
Appendix 7 This strategy is endorsed by the Syöte National Park Cooperation Group.....	60



# 1 Introduction

According to the Tourism Strategy for Northern Ostrobothnia 2006–13 (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan liitto 2006b) and the Strategic General Plan for North-Eastern Finland (Nesenta Oy 2004), Syöte is one of the tourism focus areas where the demand for tourist services and the expected growth require persistent planning of tourism. The Management Plan for the Syöte National Park (Metsähallitus 2006, 22) states the following: *“The National Park has a significant importance for tourism and thus also for the local economy. The target of management is to make the National Park into an area upon which environmentally friendly recreation and nature-based tourism activities can lean without endangering the values of nature conservation.”* The Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy (STDS) supports the Management Plan towards achieving this target. The action programme described in the Syöte Area Nature Tourism Plan (Aarnio 2001), compiled in connection with the founding of the National Park, has been realised and thus the updating of the Nature Tourism Plan is topical.

In the autumn of 2004, the Syöte National Park was selected into the Europarc Federation’s European Charter programme, whose target is to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas in Europe. By signing *The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas*, the Park has committed to the programme. The Strategy is compiled to implement the principles of the European Charter programme, whose aim it is to develop sustainable tourism.

The STDS is connected to the frame of reference of sustainable tourism, for which there are numerous different definitions. In this Strategy, *sustainable tourism* refers to *financially vital tourism which does not destroy the resources on which such tourism will depend in the future, especially the physical environment and the social texture of the resort’s community* (Swarbrooke 1999, 13). In planning and developing tourism, sustainable tourism pays attention to its financial, socio-cultural and ecological sustainability in the short and long term and at different regional levels (Saarinen 1998).

Another central concept of tourism planning is nature-based tourism. There is no one coherent, generally accepted definition for it. In this Plan, nature-based tourism is perceived in the way that it is defined in the Development Programme for Nature-based Tourism and Recreation (VIL-MAT), which is authenticated by the Finnish Government (Valtioneuvosto 2003):

*“Sustainable nature tourism means all tourism which is based on nature. A somewhat narrower definition for nature tourism is tourism which involves people relaxing in nature. Nature tourism combines recreation with tourism in nature. In nature tourism, nature is the main attraction or operational environment. Nature tourism encompasses all recreation which does not reoccur daily in nearby surroundings. In other words, nature tourism also includes the use of holiday residences and related recreation.”*

The tourism planning process for the Syöte National Park started in May 2010 and continued until December 2010. Simultaneously, Strategies were compiled for Oulanka National Park, Wild Taiga region in Kainuu and the Kvarken World Heritage Site. This made teamwork between the regions possible, under the guidance of Senior Advisor Matti Tapaninen. During the process, visitor and enterprise surveys were implemented in the area. The Strategy was prepared and implemented in cooperation with the tourism operators, municipalities and other stakeholders in the Syöte National Park area. Project Manager Veikko Virkkunen was in charge of the process, and of writing and editing the Plan. The Strategy was approved by Metsähallitus on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2011 and by the Syöte National Park Cooperation Group in its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011. The publication of the Strategy is followed by the execution stage, the monitoring of sustainability and implementation and finally the updating of the Plan in 2015.

## 2 The Area and the Aims of the Plan

The Strategy has three dimensions:

1. Syöte National Park and the surrounding environment,
2. The regional and national levels and
3. International cooperation.

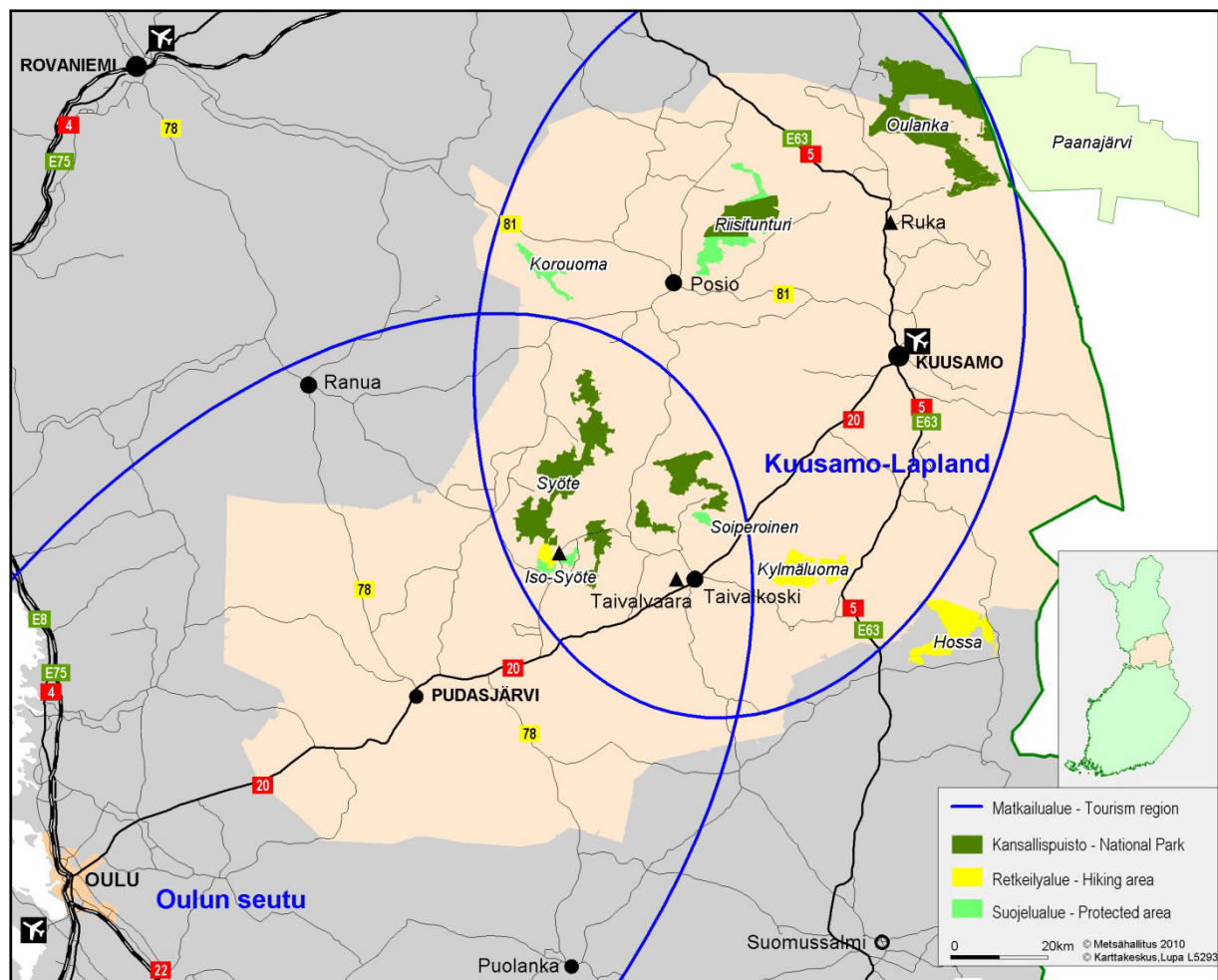
The Strategy concentrates on the description, planning and development of the nature-based tourism that takes place in the Syöte National Park (Fig. 1). Although the regional focus lies mainly on the Syöte National Park, also the Iso-Syöte Hiking Area, Syöte Recreational Forest and the Soiperoinen Nature Reserve, which are located nearby, are taken into account. In this Plan, the Syöte Protected Areas refer to the above-mentioned natural attractions which are managed by Metsähallitus.

Henceforth Syöte will here refer to the resort in the immediate vicinity of the Iso-Syöte and Pikku-Syöte Holiday Resorts, which is where the most tourism activities and services are located. Syöte comprises the neighbouring areas of the national park, the Iso Syöte Recreational Area, Syöte Recreational Forest and the surrounding private- and state-owned areas. The Syöte National Park area encompasses the City of Pudasjärvi, as well as the municipalities of Taivalkoski and Posio and specifically Park's neighbouring villages. Kylmäluoma Hiking Area in Taivalkoski also supports the National Park in terms of tourism.

The regional development and marketing of tourism sets Syöte as a part of a broader regional entity that crosses municipal borders. Syöte and the Protected Areas are attractions within both the Oulu and Koillismaa regions (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan liitto 2006b, 19). At the same time, Syöte belongs within the operating region of the internationalisation project for tourism in the Kuusamo Lapland area (Naturpolis 2008a), which will be referred to as Tourism Region in this Strategy. The strategic choices of resorts made in 2010 indicate that the marketing position of Syöte has two directions: the Oulu region and Lapland. Marketing in these areas is based on active tourism development in Oulu and the integration of north-east Finland and Lapland. Within nature, landscape and other factors contributing to tourist attraction, the Syöte National Park is a natural part of the Koillismaa region. These broader regional viewpoints are taken into account especially in the Strategy's goal setting and steps.

The Strategy's nationwide scope is connected to Metsähallitus's national methods, which this Strategy observes. The most central of these are *Principles for Sustainable Nature Tourism* (Appendix 4), *Principles for the Management of Protected Areas* (Metsähallitus 2010c) and *The Metsähallitus Environment and Quality Manual*. In addition, national instructions have been compiled for cooperation within tourism. Metsähallitus, Natural Heritage Services has its own nationwide communication plan that directs the communications performed in the locations. The plan provides guidance in the planning and use, for example, of brochures, Metsähallitus web services and park emblems.

The international scope relates to the Syöte National Park's European Charter membership and the international tourism cooperation that will be carried out within this. Syöte is the most northern member park of the Charter network. In addition to Syöte, of all Finland's national parks, only Koli belongs within this network. By the end of 2010, the network will comprise a total of 77 sites all over Europe.



**Fig. 1.** The location of the Syöte Protected Areas in relation to the tourism regions of Kuusamo Lapland and the Oulu region. © Metsähallitus 2011. © Karttakeskus, Lupa L593.

The main object of this Strategy is to strengthen the significance to the region's tourism industry of the nature-based tourism which leans on the Syöte Protected Areas. At the same time, the realisation of the principles of sustainable nature tourism within tourism activities is ensured in order for the conservation values of the Protected Areas to endure and develop to support the local livelihoods. The Plan determines long-term goals and the steps required which will aid in promoting nature-based tourism and creating practices for continuous improvement and cooperation to support nature-based tourism. Successful planning results in nature-based tourism whose development promotes the well-being of the local community and increases tourism's local economic impacts.

In order to measure and manage the environmental impacts of nature tourism, the method of *Limits of Acceptable Change* are utilised in the Strategy to define the monitoring of sustainability. Another aim is to match the requirements set by the Charter's principles on the part of the National Park and to secure its membership in the Charter network.

The following chapter describes the region's most central operators who work together with Metsähallitus to develop nature based tourism in Syöte. It also presents the different level strategies and instructions whose targets and definitions of policy form the basis on which the STDS for Syöte has been prepared.

# 3 Operational Environment

## 3.1 The General Trends of Nature-based Tourism

Nature-based tourism is often said to be the internationally fastest growing and developing form of tourism (for example, Fennell 1999, Weaver 1999, Koivula et al. 2005, p. 18). It has been estimated to be growing by approximately ten percent annually. Nature- and culture-based tourism is also believed to be growing, as the western population structure grows older and tourists seek new and alternative resorts and ways to travel. Tourists' spending is aimed ever more at guided activities, because urbanisation has caused people's relationship with nature to change and their independence when travelling in nature to decline (Kajaanin ammattikorkeakoulu 2010).

Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020 (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2010) highlights three significant trends. The current emphasis on environmental consciousness is changing tourists' attitudes, and the tourism industry should take environmental issues more into consideration in developing their activities and in marketing. The aging of the western population structure, and generations and customer groups separated by different life styles, cause the fragmentation of customer segments. This makes demands on the line of business to recognise the different customer segments and respond to their various needs. The increasing importance of the Internet makes it easier for customers to get acquainted with the resorts beforehand and to organise trips independently. It also gives consumers the opportunity to compare and share their travel experiences through social media, which is something that the industry must take into account in their marketing and ability to handle customer feedback.

## 3.2 The Plans that Guide Tourism and the Area's Central Operators

The STDS for Syöte is based on the strategies and directions of several regional levels. On an international level, the European Charter principles, prepared by EUROPARC, guide the administration and development of the Syöte National Park. On a national level, the internal instructions of Metsähallitus and the strategies of different government departments guide the operations. There are development plans for tourism at the regional and destination level as well, and the STDS ensures also the realisation of these targets.

### International strategies and directions

- European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, Charter Principles (EUROPARC 2010).

### National strategies and directions

- Principles for Sustainable Nature Tourism (Metsähallitus 2010c, p. 49)
- Principles for the Management and Utilisation of Protected Areas (Metsähallitus 2010c)
- Finland's Tourism Strategy to 2020 (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2010)
- Action Programme for 2007–2013 (Valtakunnallinen matkailustrategiatyöryhmä 2006).

## Regional strategies and directions

- Northern Ostrobothnia's Regional Plan (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan liitto 2006a)
- Northern Ostrobothnia's Regional Development Plan 2030 and Regional Strategic Programme 2011–2014 (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan liitto 2010)
- Northern Ostrobothnia's Tourism Strategy for the Programme Period 2007–2013 (Pohjois-Pohjanmaan liitto 2006b)
- Lapland's Tourism Strategy 2011–2014 (Lapin liitto 2010)
- Oulu Region's Master Plan for Tourism (FCG Planeko Oy 2008)
- Update of the Kuusamo Lapland Tourism Industry's Internationalisation Strategy 2008–2010 (Naturpolis 2008a)
- Preliminary Report on the Image Marketing of the Lappi-Koillismaa Tourism Industry (Naturpolis 2008b)
- North-Eastern Finland's Strategic General Plan (Nesenta Oy 2004).

## Local strategies and directions

- Syöte Tourism Development Plan 2010–2023 (Pudasjärven kaupunki 2010)
- Taivalkoski Tourism Master Plan (Taivalkosken kunta 2008)

## Strategies and directions concerning the Syöte National Park

- The Management Plan for the Syöte National Park (Metsähallitus 2006)
- The Management Plan for the Iso-Syöte Hiking Area (Metsähallitus 2004)

The most central operators within the Syöte National Park area are the region's tourism enterprises and associations, village societies, reindeer herding co-operatives, municipalities and Metsähallitus.

The tourism enterprises functioning within the National Park area are generally small family businesses that most commonly have two regular and four temporary workers. The main branches of these enterprises are accommodation and restaurant and programme services (Sarajärvi & Virkkunen 2011). The tourism enterprises have become organised in the Syöte and Taivalkoski Tourist Associations.

**The Syöte Tourist Association** (Syötteen matkailuyhdistys) is in charge of developing the tourist activities and especially tourism marketing and communications in Syöte, as well as organising events. **The Taivalkoski Tourist Association's** (Taivalkosken matkailuyhdistys) activities cover the whole Taivalkoski area, although the Taivalkoski municipal centre and Taivalvaara Ski Centre and its hotel form an operative centre for tourism. The tourist associations have no hired staff. The Natural Heritage Services of Ostrobothnia cooperates actively with both tourist associations.

Some of the Syöte tourism operators are also members of the **Iso-Syöte Cooperation Group NYT** (Iso-Syötteen yhteistyöryhmä NYT ry). The group's purpose is to present visitors with the current issues and events in Syöte and to advertise the services of the local enterprises through the website and the Syöte NYT magazine. In addition, the group aims to:

- promote the members' general and shared issues in Syöte, related to engaging in tourism and owning real estate, and to promote cooperation between members and improve operational preconditions
- to promote members' marketing cooperation
- to follow the general development and projects of Syöte and to make suggestions and proposals concerning these and issue statements when necessary.

**The Syöte Village Society** (Syötteen kyläyhdistys) and **Sarakylä Village Association** (Sarakylän kyläseura ry) promote the local people's affairs and organise various village events and markets, together with other operators in the area. Over the last few years, village societies and associations have actively participated in organising events at the National Park. The cooperation between them and tourism enterprises in organising events is also active.

Reindeer husbandry is pursued throughout the National Park area, for example, in **the reindeer herding co-operatives** of **Pintamo, Livo** and **Taivalkoski**. Reindeer husbandry is still concentrated on meat production, but there are also tourism and handicraft enterprises in the area that base their operations on the reindeer.

**The City of Pudasjärvi** and **Municipality of Taivalkoski** maintain most of the recreation services on privately owned land. The City of Pudasjärvi has invested heavily especially in the trail network located between Syöte and the Pudasjärvi centre. In addition, the city is developing Syöte through significant investments and it supervises the planning and implementation of the Syöte Tourism Development Plan. The Taivalkoski municipality maintains hiking routes between the Syöte National Park and Kylmäluoma Hiking Area, as well as several rest spots in the municipality area.

**Metsähallitus** administers the state-owned land and water areas located within the Pudasjärvi and Taivalkoski municipalities. They constitute approximately half of the total area of the municipalities. **Natural Heritage Services of Metsähallitus** manages the Protected Areas and their services, which are available to both individual visitors and customers of tourism enterprises.

For business activities taking place in the Protected Areas, a partnership contract is made between the enterprise and Natural Heritage Services. Contract gives an entrepreneur the right to use the area's recreation structures and other facilities in their business operations, for a charge and with certain conditions. In addition to these, a partnership contract entails agreeing on a deeper partnership which contains, as an essential part, joint marketing and communications (visibility in visitor centres, in the guidance material for Natural Heritage Services, on the outdoors.fi website and the marketing channels of the enterprises) and a shared product development.

As well as the Protected Areas, commercial forests are an important sphere of operation for tourism entrepreneurs. When operating also in commercial forests, the entrepreneur makes contracts with the **Forestry Business Unit**. Business unit **Villi Pohjola (Wild North)** is Metsähallitus' own tourism operator. Its activities in Syöte include renting cabins, mediating rental cabins and supplying meeting and recreational services.

**The Syöte National Park Cooperation Group** was established during the Tourism Strategy process. The Cooperation Group supervises the preparation and implementation of the STDS. Represented in the Cooperation Group, in addition to Metsähallitus, are the City of Pudasjärvi, Taivalkoski municipality, the Nature Conservation Society of Pudasjärvi (Pudasjärven luonnon-suojeluyhdistys), the Syöte and Taivalkoski Tourist Associations, the local reindeer herding co-operatives, Syöte Village Society and Sarakylä Village Association. The Cooperation Group acts as an advisory body in issues concerning the administration and development of the Syöte National Park. It is also an important internal communication channel in the area. The Cooperation Group also acts as a communicator to the EUROPARC Federation (*Charter Forum*). Its purpose, tasks and working methods are defined in more detail in the Charter of Foundation (Appendix 2).



## 4 Syöte as a Tourism attraction

The essence of the ten-year-old Syöte National Park is captured in the words *The Land of the Hill Forests*. The multimedia presentation of the National Park during different seasons, shown in the Visitor Centre, carries the same name. The modern, safe and comprehensive tourist service supply offers visitors a great opportunity to get to know the old-growth forests on the hill slopes, the expansive hanging bogs between them and the fantastically vast hill-top bogs that unfurl on the summit areas. Hidden in the hill forests there are clear spring brooks and, along them, herb-rich forests vibrant in colour and rugged exposures of rock surfaces. Here and there you come across a landscape that will bring the words ‘the land of the hill forests’ to a visitor’s mind.

Defining the attractions of the National Park creates a foundation for all tourism development work taking place in the Protected Areas, from communications to building routes. The following words are a citation from the preliminary report on the image marketing of the Lappi-Koillismaa tourism industry (Naturpolis 2008b): *“Nature is the most important attraction for tourism both in Lapland and the Koillismaa region, whose natural environments are similar. Especially international target groups are attracted to the same things: the Arctic wilderness, snow and ice, northern lights, midnight sun, distinctive seasons, activities in nature and the peace and quiet.”*

The above statement is in line with the Syöte Tourism Development Plan 2010–2023 (Pudasjärven kaupunki 2010: 5) which notes that the core of Syöte’s attraction is based on the area’s conditions, environment for activities, competitive advantages, existing and future services and targets. The core of this attraction has been summed up as follows: *“Good year-round natural environments on Finland’s southernmost fells and the outdoor activity options they offer and that can be utilised.”*

The Taivalkoski Tourism Master Plan (Taivalkosken kunta 2008) mentions, as the strengths of the area, the wilderness-like nature and strong cultural heritage which can be made into commercially profitable activities. According to the Master Plan, Taivalkoski is responsible for running the Koillismaa region’s cultural promotion.

What attracts roughly one hundred thousand visitors annually to the Protected Areas in Syöte? In a workshop organised in Syöte on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2010, the local tourism operators were given the task of defining the attractions that are characteristic of the Syöte National Park. The analysis of the results of the workshop and the Syöte visitor survey (Sarajärvi 2011) produced the following trisection of the Syöte National Park’s attractions:

- Nature: wilderness-like character, species, landscapes – “Syöte of the Wilderness”
- Services: accessibility, safety, versatility – “Syöte of Services”
- Culture: cultural heritage, stories, locality – “Syöte of Stories”.

### 4.1 Syöte of the Wilderness, “the Land of the Hill Forests”

As an area, Syöte is uniquely located on the hilly zone of the Maanselkä water divide and also at the western side of the taiga forest belt reaching from Siberia to Scandinavia and this location gives it its own special features. The relief of the area is highly variable – the river valleys between the large areas of hills separate the hills from each other and, here and there, individual summits stand out from the rest of the landscape. What is also characteristic of the Land of the Hill Forests is the constant change caused by the alternating, clearly distinguishable seasons, which offer tourists new kinds of experiences time after time. Syöte can be experienced in bloom, in its autumn foliage, with thick icy snow on the trees and in glittering crusty snow in the spring.

The most important things in Syöte for visitors are the landscapes, experiencing nature and relaxing with friends and family in the peaceful natural environment (Sarajärvi 2011).

A special feature of the National Park is its division into four parts. These parts are located in the highest hill sceneries in areas where forestry has not yet extended its activities to any significant degree. Thanks to this, the National Park is able to offer an opportunity to experience pristine forests. A pristine forest maintains biodiversity with its various habitat types and species, and the attraction of hill forests is partly based on their surprising biodiversity at different levels of visitor experience.

The abundance of decaying wood is one of the most concrete manifestations of forests in their natural state, and makes the existence of truly rare species, such as the polypore *Skeletocutis brevispora*, possible in the National Park. The Syöte National Park is extremely important for the protection, for example, of the threatened red-flanked bluetail (*Tarsiger cyanurus*) and Siberian flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans*), to say nothing of large carnivores. Syöte offers a superb option for bird-watchers interested in the forest and marsh birds of the wilderness.

The National Park's natural heritage has been carefully studied in connection with the Park's founding. In the text "Nature and History in the Syöte area – Syöte LIFE Project's Basic Report" (Lehtonen 2001) the most central research results are presented in relation to the area's geomorphology, land use history, habitat types and species.

## **4.2 Syöte of Services, "Close, Easy, Versatile"**

From both the national and international points of view, Syöte is in a fairly easily accessible location. Within a couple of hours of driving there are three airports: in Kuusamo, Oulu and Rovaniemi. Iso-Syöte is marketed as Finland's southernmost fell and its location is indeed a significant competition factor when considering accessibility of domestic tourism. Syöte is situated within a reasonable distance of Highway 20, which is one of the most important traffic routes in Northern Ostrobothnia. During school times there are buses to Syöte. The area offers functional local public transport services.

The strength of the National Park is its closeness in relation to Syöte and its two holiday resorts. The starting point for the trails and the versatile recreation services can be accessed right by the National Park's gate, at the Syöte Visitor Centre. Hiking excursions to the peace of the National Park's wilderness can be started from the hotel or rental cabin's door on foot or ski. At the same time, there are also more peaceful sites available, which can be easily reached by taxi or own car.

Since the year 2000, intense investments have been made in the Syöte recreational services. The area has a safe hiking infrastructure, which is presented in more detail in Chapter 5. The various recreational services ensure the supply of versatile programme services and plenty of independent activities for many target groups. Cross-country skiing and hiking are the traditional favourites of Syöte visitors, but snowshoeing and mountain biking are growing in popularity. The enterprises in Syöte offer varied opportunities for activities in their schedules, all year round. Lately various well-being services have gained ground alongside activities.

### 4.3 Syöte of Stories, “From the Trails and Trail Sides”

Alongside animals, the Land of the Hill Forests has offered humans a home for millennia. People have lived hand in hand with nature in Syöte, adapting to the harsh environment and making a success of it. As time has passed, the human hand has formed the land in many ways. The mythical, ancient ‘table rocks’ on the slopes of Pyhitysvaara Hill awaken wild images of the natives of the Stone Age sacrificing a share of their wealth to the spirits of the forest. At the Rytivaara Crown Tenant Farm, you can almost hear the farmer’s scythe swishing and the cow mooing in the cowshed. Still today, reindeer herding is engaged in within the Protected Areas and this occupation benefits from the primeval old-growth forests abundant with hanging moss.

The varied cultural heritage of Syöte, and the stories connected to it, bring the hill forests to life. Genuine relics of the past way of life can still be seen in the forests and mire meadows. A strong research approach has been instigated in Syöte to chart this cultural heritage. When the National Park was being founded, chief Jouni Aarnio investigated the area’s history of land use and wrote the work ‘Maankäytön historiaa Syötteen alueella’ (The History of Land Use in the Syöte Area) (Aarnio 2001). This research is now continuing in the Syötteen lumoa (‘Enchantment of Syöte’) project, started in 2010, in which the National Park’s cultural heritage is charted and developed into products from the point of view of tourism.

As well as in research data, history has been preserved in tradition in the form of experiential stories which, for example, Teo Sorri has compiled in his books ‘Tarinoiden Syöte’ (The Syöte of Stories) (Sorri 2007) and ‘Syötteen poluilta ja polkujen varsilta’ (Stories from the Syöte Trails and Trail Sides) (Sorri 2009). The Visitor Centre’s exhibition “Tales from the Backwoods” also offers stories told by locals that are based on folklore. The stories open a window to the past and can enrich tourism products by their content. Many events held in Syöte, such as the Traditions Day, obtain their contents from the charm of the bygone lifestyle.

The culture, sources of livelihood and local way of life are also transmitted to visitors through food and drink. Traditions offer a valuable content for menus in Syöte’s restaurants, as well as for picnics enjoyed on excursions to nature. On the one hand, occupations typical of the area, such as animal and reindeer husbandry, and fishing, make it possible to offer customers locally grown produce. On the other hand, visitors to Syöte can also catch or hunt for their own food.

It is clear that the attractions of the Syöte National Park are similar to the nature, silence, quality, safety and experiences which have been defined as the most important attractions of the Kainuu and Kuusamo Lapland tourism region in the report made by the Research and Development Unit of the Kajaani University of Applied Sciences. (Kajaanin ammattikorkeakoulu 2010). On the other hand, the report also found that sustainable tourism and ecological values are considered important: tour operators think that the “soft” outdoor activities offered in the area are very attractive. Activity and nature-based tourism can, in the future, be considered the selling points and leaders in tourism development in the Kuusamo Lapland tourism region.

## 5 The Present State of Tourism

Already in the 1970s, Syöte's hill forests tempted travellers to the area to ski and hike. The construction of the ski slopes on Iso-Syöte in the early 1980s increased tourism and the Iso-Syöte Hiking Area was established in 1985 to increase the supply of hiking services. Ahmatupa, the first reservable open wilderness hut, was built in the area of the current National Park in 1989 to serve hikers and skiers. As downhill skiing grew more popular, ski slopes and additional services were built also on Pikku-Syöte, and the area's tourist services began to diversify.

The founding of the Syöte National Park in 2000 gave a new growth impact for the development of tourism in Syöte. The Syöte Visitor Centre was opened in 2003 to present the special features of the National Park's nature and historical land use, and also to serve hikers. After the National Park was founded, the recreational services in Syöte have become rich and of high-quality, on a national level, which offers an excellent framework for developing the tourist services also in the future. These days, approximately 95,000 visits are made annually to the Syöte Protected Areas. The following Chapter presents a more in-depth discussion about the area's tourism activities.

### 5.1 Demand

The visitor numbers to the Syöte National Park's area have been systematically measured with counters for ten years now. The visitor ratings observe Metsähallitus' national directions for their monitoring. As experience has accumulated, counting has become more accurate and the technical reliability of counters has improved. Table 1 describes the development of visitor numbers over the last five years. The visitor numbers to the National Park and the neighbouring areas have grown steadily over the last few years with the exception of the downswing in 2010. The visitor numbers to the Syöte Visitor Centre have increased slightly, but their annual variation is quite strong. Typically, the Visitor Centre has had some 30,000 visitors per year.

**Table 1.** Visitor numbers in 2005–2010 to the Syöte National Park (SNP), Iso-Syöte Hiking Area (HA), Syöte Recreational Forest (RF) and Syöte Visitor Centre.

Year	Number of visits		
	to the National Park	SNP+HA+RF	to the Visitor Centre
2010	31,147	81,109	28,192
2009	39,727	95,878	32,258
2008	36,457	91,309	30,544
2007	35,908	87,701	34,231
2006	32,844	74,539	29,520

In the spring and summer of 2010, a visitor survey was implemented in the Syöte Protected Areas (Sarajärvi 2011), which gives up to date information about their visitors, for example, in terms of their length of stay, motivation of visit, spending and satisfaction. In addition to the visitor survey, information about visitors' customer satisfaction in the Syöte Visitor Centre was gained through a customer survey conducted in 2009 (Airaksinen & Kuusiniva 2009). The activities, needs and satisfaction of the businesses in the Protected Areas were studied with an enterprise survey in the summer of 2010 (Sarajärvi & Virkkunen 2011). The surveys are repeated approximately every five years. As well as the survey, the Visitor Centre continually collects customer feedback. The most essential visitor data from the above-mentioned surveys has been compiled in Table 2.

The visitor number of the Syöte Protected Areas has increased steadily from 2000 to 2010. According to the visitor survey of 2010, most (98%) of the visitors to the Protected Areas were domestic tourists. Then again, about 30% of the tourism businesses' customers are foreigners, according to the enterprise survey. This suggests that there are foreign visitors to Syöte but their visits to the Protected Areas are not based on independent excursions but on the services offered by enterprises. A great majority (96%) of the visitors are day-trip visitors who stay in the Protected Areas for approximately four hours. Overnight visitors (4%) stay for a few days and nights and make mainly one-night trips to the National Park or other protected areas. This amounts to a total of 23,394 visitor days, based on the visitor number in 2009.

On the basis of the repeated surveys, visitor satisfaction in the Syöte Visitor Centre and the Protected Areas has remained high. The customer satisfaction *of the Visitor Centre* is comparable to the national level, but the visitor satisfaction of the Protected Areas is above the national average. According to the visitor survey, visitors were especially pleased by the very small quantity of distractions, the fulfilment of expectations and the quality of the environment. Tourism operators are also generally very satisfied with the services in the Protected Areas. This leads to the conclusion that Syöte has the preconditions to increase its visitor numbers.

**Table 2.** Information describing the visitors and visits to the Syöte Protected Areas and the Syöte Visitor Centre.

Proportions of visitors and tourists <sup>1</sup>		
Local visitors (%)	7	
Domestic visitors (%)	91	
Foreign visitors (%)	2	
Proportions of day-trip and overnight visitors and lengths of stay <sup>1</sup>		
Day-trip visitors		
Proportion of visitors (%)	96	
Length of stay (h)	3.7	
Overnight visitors		
Proportion of visitors (%)	4	
Length of stay (days)	2.2	
Visitor number 2009	95,878 <sup>2</sup>	
Visitor days	23,394 <sup>3</sup>	
Visitor satisfaction (scale 1=extremely dissatisfied – 5= extremely satisfied)	Syöte (survey year in brackets)	National average (survey year in brackets) <sup>4</sup>
Customer satisfaction (Syöte Visitor Centre)	4.27 (2008–2009) <sup>5</sup>	4.28 (2008–2009)
Visitor satisfaction	4.22 (2010) <sup>1</sup>	4.11 (2009)
Enterprise satisfaction for the services	4.13 (2010) <sup>6</sup>	3.61 (2009)

1 = Syöte visitor survey 2010 (Sarajärvi 2011)

2 = Syöte National Park + Iso-Syöte Hiking Area + Syöte Recreational Forest

3 = The number is based on the visitor number in 2009 and the visitor survey 2010 (Sarajärvi 2011)

4 = Customer information storage system (ASTA)

5 = Customer survey of the Syöte Visitor Centre in 2008–2009 (Airaksinen & Kuusiniva 2009)

6 = Syöte enterprise survey 2010 (Sarajärvi & Virkkunen 2011)

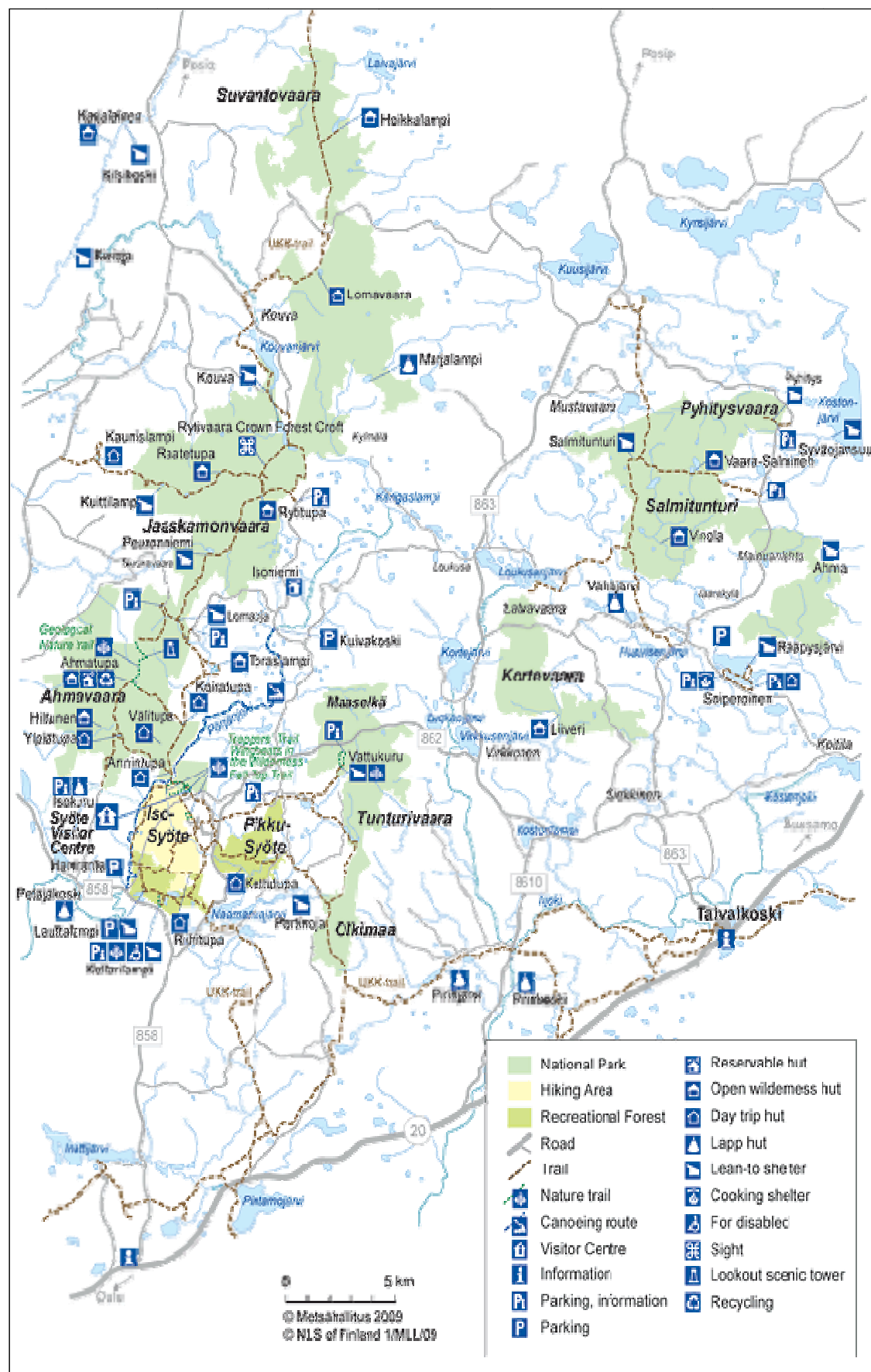
## 5.2 Supply

The recreational services supply in the Syöte Protected Areas is one of the most plentiful and diverse in Finland. Figure 2 displays a part of the recreational services located in the Syöte Protected Areas and their surrounding environment. The map shows the hiking and nature trails and the River Pärjäanjoki Canoe Route. The main part of the National Park, on the western side from Jaaskamonvaara to Ahmavaara, is the richest in services and it has the greatest number of summer and winter visitors. In the summer the nature trails and day trip trails in Syöte attract hikers. On the side of Taivalkoski, the Pyhitysvaara Hill (420 m) in the National Park's Salmitunturi area is a popular destination in the summer with its fabulous views over Kostonjärvi Lake. The easy esker trails and clear ponds in the Soiperoinen Nature Reserve offer families with children a suitable day trip destination. A more extensive idea of Metsähallitus' recreational services supply in the area can be found on the [Excursionmap.fi](http://Excursionmap.fi) website.

From Syöte's diverse route network, five new day trails were developed into products for the summer of 2010 by compiling a high-quality trail guide. The most popular of the day trails is the Ahmankierros Trail which is 17 km long and heads towards the heart of the National Park. Along the trail there is the popular open wilderness and reservable wilderness hut Ahmatupa. The reservable wilderness hut with its sauna lures many visitors to the National Park for an overnight trip. As well as for day trips, the National Park's routes, with their huts, are excellently suited for longer treks. The Syöte National Park is one of the few places in Finland where you can spend the night in complete peace in the middle of the wilderness.

In addition to hiking trails, other recreational routes have been built in Syöte. The mountain bike trails that were established in the summer of 2009 have been enthusiastically received and mountain bikers are now a common sight on the trails of Syöte. You can easily form a comprehensive image of the area's nature and landscapes within a few days when seeing them from a bike. The mountain bike trails run partly in the Protected Areas and partly outside them, on both state and privately owned land.

Syöte is a popular winter destination. The National Park's skiing trails are very popular, especially in the spring time, and the café at the end of the Ahmatupa Ski Trail is well-known for its fresh doughnuts. The area's ski trail network is wide: Syöte has a total of 120 km of ski trails. After the popularity of snowshoeing increased in the Syöte area the Ansapolku Snowshoeing Trail was introduced in the winter of 2009–2010. Syöte's snowy winter and the varied landscape of the National Park offer an excellent setting for snowshoeing also outside the actual routes. The National Park's network of huts is also utilised by the occasional enthusiasts for skiing off trail in unbroken snow. The area's motorised activities (snowmobile and quadbike tracks) are located in the Syöte Recreational Forest and the surrounding forestry and privately owned land. The most important of the Syöte Protected Areas' trails are compiled by activities in Table 3.



**Fig 2.** The hiking trails and related facilities in the National Park and its area. © Metsähallitus 2011, © Maanmittauslaitos 1/MML/11.

**Table 3.** The trails of the Syöte Protected Areas and their services and sights.

Trails	Length (km)	Services, sights
<b>Day Trails</b>		
Ahmankierros Trail	17	Open and reservable wilderness hut, 3 day trip huts, Stone exhibition (Ahmatupa hut) Restored meadow dam and hayrick, cultural heritage destinations
Rytivaaran kierros Trail	9	Open wilderness hut, campfire site Rytivaara Crown Tenant Farm Restored Latolampi meadow barn and meadow sauna
Syötteen kierros Trail	17	3 lean-to shelters Pytkynharju Esker, Visitor Centre
Romevaara Hill Summit Trail	9	Day trip hut Hill top landscapes of the National Park, Iso-Syöte Fell and Pytkynharju Esker
Pytkyn pyrhähdys Trail	9	Day trip hut, 2 lean-to shelters Kellarilampi Nature Trail
<b>Nature Trails</b>		
Ansapolku Nature Trail	3.7	Day trip hut and lean-to shelter Replicas of traps and snares displaying the history of hunting culture, and information boards Guidebook to the nature trail (FIN/SWE/ENG)
Vattukuru Ravine Nature Trail	2.1	Lean-to shelter Information boards about the National Park's nature Vattukuru Ravine, carved by the meltwaters of the ice sheet Guidebook to the nature trail (FIN/ENG)
Kellarilampi Nature Trail	0.9	Lean-to shelter Information boards about mire and esker environments Suitable for the disabled Guidebook to the nature trail (FIN/ENG)
Salojen siivekkäät Nature Trail	0.5	Lean-to shelter Information boards about the area's stationary birds, bird silhouettes, eagle's nest, woodpecker's nest Suitable for the disabled if accompanied by an escort
Geological Nature Trail	3	Open and reservable wilderness hut Ahmakallio observation tower, a deposit of semi-precious stones Stone exhibition (Ahmatupa hut)
Huippupolku Nature Trail	0.9	Scenery trail, lookout points on the summit of the Iso-Syöte Fell Suitable in parts for the disabled if accompanied by an escort Guidebook to the nature trail (FIN/ENG)
<b>Hiking Trails</b>		
Toraslammen kierros Trail	27	Open wilderness hut, 2 day trip huts, lean-to shelter Ahmakallio observation tower
Ruuhensuo - Kaunislampi - Rytivaara Trail	17	2 open wilderness huts, day trip hut and lean-to shelter Kaunislampi Pond, Vatisuo Mire, Rytivaara Crown Tenant Farm Restored Latolampi meadow barn and meadow sauna
Kirkkopolku Trail	30	Open wilderness hut and lean-to shelter Remnants of slash-and-burn farming and meadow culture
<b>Mountain bike trails</b>		
Syötteen kierros Trail	17	3 lean-to shelters, Visitor Centre
Pitämävaaran lenkki Trail	25	Lean-to shelter
Toraslammen taival Trail	36	Open wilderness hut, day trip hut, ford with hand ropes
<b>Canoe Routes</b>		
River Pärjänjoki Canoe Route	22	Day trip hut
<b>Skiing Trails</b>		
Ahmatupa Ski Trail	8	Open and reservable wilderness hut, sauna, 2 day trip huts, Lapp 'kota' hut, Ahmatupa café (open during skiing season)
Other skiing trails in the National Park	26	Open wilderness hut, 2 day trip huts, observation tower
<b>Snowshoeing Trail</b>		
Ansapolku Snowshoeing Trail	3.7	Day trip hut



According to the Syöte enterprise survey 2010, the area's tourism businesses are satisfied with the quantity, quality and safety of the services in the Protected Areas (Sarajärvi & Virkkunen 2011). For example, the services situated along the trails and routes were rated as extremely good (4.57 on a scale of 1–5). Signposts in the terrain were rated at 4.29 and the safety of structures and trails at 4.29. Only the services for special groups (e.g. the disabled) were valued as slightly poorer (3.72). The results of the Syöte visitor survey 2010 are similar (Sarajärvi 2011). The observation was made in the visitor survey, however, that visitors would like to have more tourist services supplied by enterprises.

The trails in the Syöte Protected Areas are connected to the other routes in the surrounding environment. For example, there is an access to Pudasjärvi from Syöte along the recently built Syöte – Kurenalus network of hiking and canoeing routes. There is also a trail connection from Syöte through Taivalkoski to Kylmäluoma. The nearby rivers Livojoki, Pärjänjoki and Iijoki are popular fishing, rowing and canoeing destinations with additional services.

The Syöte Visitor Centre provides information about the Protected Areas. Customer guidance, map and permit sales, the “Tales from the Backwoods” exhibition and audiovisual presentations are integral parts of the Visitor Centre's basic operations. Groups are also offered guidance packages presenting the area's nature. The Visitor Centre's auditorium offers conference services. The Visitor Centre's café and restaurant services are available every day (Metsähallitus 2010a).

Information about the services offered by Metsähallitus' partnership enterprises in the Syöte Protected Areas can be found in the Syöte Visitor Centre, enterprises' customer service points and the area's tourism websites (outdoors.fi, syote.fi and taivalkoskelle.fi). The partnership enterprises have entered into an agreement with Metsähallitus and, in their operations, implement the principles of sustainable nature tourism (Appendix 4) when operating within the Protected Areas. In the Pudasjärvi and Taivalkoski area (in 2010) there are a total of 18 cooperating enterprises offering tourist services, of which 13 are operating in the Protected Areas. In their supply of services concerning the Protected Areas, they concentrate on activities and restaurant services (Table 4). Some of the partnership enterprises offer their services outside the National Park. These services include accommodation, café and restaurant activities and specialised activities.

**Table 4.** Customer service points in Syöte and tourism enterprise activities in the Protected Areas.

<b>Services</b>	
<b>Metsähallitus customer service points</b>	Syöte Visitor Centre
<b>Tourism enterprise activities in the Protected Areas</b>	13 partnership enterprises (Pudasjärvi and Taivalkoski, situation in 2010) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dog sled rides</li> <li>– Snowshoeing</li> <li>– Hiking (staying outdoors overnight)</li> <li>– Guided trips</li> <li>– Snowmobile riding</li> <li>– Fishing</li> <li>– Mountain biking</li> </ul>

## 5.3 Marketing and Communications

The use of the funds budgeted by Metsähallitus for communications about the Syöte Protected Areas is carefully planned in advance, and they are used for advertising, newspaper advertisement expenses, expenses for the National Park's own events, buying visibility, visibility in the tourist associations' material and own publications. The Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services' own and partner communications in Syöte are specified in more detail in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Syöte Protected Areas' own and partner communications.

<b>Communication about the Protected Areas Produced by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services</b>	
Syöte Visitor Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Guidance</li> <li>– AV presentations</li> <li>– Exhibitions</li> <li>– Customer guidance</li> </ul>
Brochures and other publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Brochures of destinations, etc.: Syöte National Park, Iso-Syöte Hiking Area</li> <li>– Brochures of trails, etc.: Syöte's day trails, Syöte's biking trails, Syöte National Park's canoeing guide and map</li> <li>– Guidebooks to nature trails, etc.: Vattukuru Ravine Nature Trail, Kellarilampi Nature Trail, Ansapolku Nature Trail</li> <li>– Guidebook on Nature for Tourist Enterprises</li> <li>– Nature and History in the Syöte area – Syöte LIFE Project's Basic Report</li> <li>– Publications of the Metsähallitus publication series in the Syöte area</li> </ul>
Luontoon.fi (Outdoors.fi) Web Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Presentations of destinations: Syöte National Park, Iso-Syöte Hiking Area, Soiperoinen Nature Reserve, Rytivaara Crown Tenant Farm, Kylmäluoma Hiking Area</li> <li>– Services: Syöte Visitor Centre, services offered by cooperating enterprises</li> </ul>
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Facebook: Syöte National Park</li> <li>– The area's blog on luontoon.fi (Outdoors.fi)</li> </ul>
The Hiking Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Hiking Site (the electronic information point) introduces the area's nature destinations and the services available in them. The Hiking Sites will be implemented in Syöte in 2011.</li> </ul>
Guidance along the trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Starting points for trails: information and map boards</li> <li>– Signposting</li> <li>– Information boards along nature trails</li> <li>– Trail markings</li> <li>– Instruction boards and folders for rest spots</li> </ul>
The National Parks bulletin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Issued once a year, circulation 20,000 copies</li> </ul>
Own events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– European Day of Parks</li> <li>– Nordic Wild Flowers Day</li> <li>– Traditions Day</li> <li>– Day of Silence</li> <li>– Fair Trade weeks</li> <li>– Children's Event Day</li> <li>– Theme days, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Partner Communication</b>	
Visibility in the tourist associations' and enterprises' material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Brochures</li> <li>– Magazines</li> <li>– Web services</li> </ul>
Fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participation, for example, in the Nordic Travel Fair and GoExpo! together with tourism enterprises.</li> </ul>
Articles and texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Regional tourist magazines: KesäSyöte and TalviSyöte, SyöteNYT</li> <li>– Theme issues of local papers, etc.</li> </ul>
Visibility in different media in Finland and abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Journalist visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- newspapers</li> <li>- magazines</li> <li>- TV and radio</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Shared events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Marketplace events (for example, Syöte Autumn Colours Market 2010)</li> </ul>

According to the Syöte visitor survey 2010 (Sarajärvi 2011), the visitors to the areas receive the most information about the Protected Areas from their acquaintances, friends and relatives (43 %). The second best sources of information were brochures or guidebooks (29%), the Visitor Centre (28%) and the Metsähallitus website (23%). From 2011 on, the the Hiking Sites (the electronic information points) will complement the information supply of the Koillismaa region's nature destinations in the Syöte Visitor Centre, Iso-Syöte Hotel, Safaritalo and Syötekeskus Hotel. The Hiking Site will also be installed in Taivalkoski in the Herkko Hotel.

In the Syöte enterprise survey 2010 (Sarajärvi & Virkkunen 2011), the tourism entrepreneurs operating in the Protected Areas valued the quality and availability of the guidance material produced by Metsähallitus (brochures, maps, other material) as quite good (4.14 on a scale of 1–5). The web service Luontoon.fi was similarly rated as quite good (4.12). Enterprises mostly sought information about the Protected Areas from the Syöte Visitor Centre (25 %), the luontoon.fi website (22%) or from brochures and guidebooks (18%).

In the survey, enterprises also rated the usefulness of the information produced by Metsähallitus. The luontoon.fi website, the Visitor Centre's exhibition, brochures and other printed materials were considered quite or very useful (4.4–4.5). The National Parks bulletin, which was issued for the second time in Syöte, was rated as quite useful (3.9). What is remarkable is that almost a quarter of the enterprises have not used the Luontoon.fi Web Service or acquainted themselves with the National Parks bulletin (Sarajärvi & Virkkunen 2011).

The joint communication Metsähallitus carries out with the tourism operators is wide ranging. Communication cooperation with tourist associations is carried out by presenting the destinations and tourist services offered in the Protected Areas in, for example, brochures, papers, magazines and web services. Quality assurance by updating contents is an essential part of this cooperation. The cooperation partners' services are introduced on the luontoon.fi website. Up-to-date information is transferred to the web service annually with the questionnaire that is attached to the enterprise feedback form. The Syöte Visitor Centre displays the brochures that partners have supplied.

According to the tourist associations, regional and national tourism fairs are offered various communication material produced by the National Park area to support the Park's marketing. The Koillismaa region's Parks also participate in important fairs together. The Visitor Centre also participates in events organised by local operators.

The staff of the Syöte Visitor Centre produce bulletins and articles and offer the area's tourist and local papers opportunities for articles. The Visitor Centre hosts journalist visits in connection with events and other current themes.

## **5.4 Position of Syöte National Park in destination**

According to the Syöte Tourism Development Plan (Pudasjärven kaupunki 2010), the revenue for tourism in Syöte in 2008 was MEUR 24.1. The number of customers (overnight and day-trip visitors) to Syöte in 2008 was approximately 383,000, of which 20,000 were estimated to be day-trip visitors. The annual distribution of customers demonstrates that the holiday months December, February, March, April and July are the most popular, exceeding 40,000 visitors. December is overwhelmingly the most popular month with over 100,000 customers. May, October and November are quiet months with less than 20,000 customers per month.

A target of 530,000 customers for 2013 has been set for the Syöte resort and of a million customers for 2023. The target for revenue is MEUR 35 in 2013 and roughly MEUR 70 in 2023 (Pudasjärven kaupunki 2010). Taivalkoski aims at increasing both the numbers of tourists and tourism

operators by 2020 (Taivalkosken kunta 2008). The realisation of development targets inevitably means the growth of visitor numbers also in the Protected Areas, which is taken into account in this strategy. The following chapter discusses the development prospects of Syöte on the basis of a SWOT analysis.

### 5.4.1 SWOT Analysis

The strengths, weaknesses, possibilities and threats determined in the Kuusamo Lapland Tourism Industry's Internationalisation Strategy (Naturpolis 2008a) are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** A SWOT analysis of the Kuusamo Lapland area (Kuusamo, Posio, Salla, Taivalkoski and Pudasjärvi).

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nature, national parks, hiking areas</li> <li>○ High-quality nature services, nature infra, ski centres</li> <li>○ Versatile accommodation supply</li> <li>○ Certainty of snow</li> <li>○ Not a destination for the masses – room to breath</li> <li>○ Skilful entrepreneurs, experience, tradition of cooperation</li> <li>○ Will to develop and to invest</li> <li>○ Reliability</li> <li>○ Domestic market know-how</li> <li>○ Knowledge of the Russian market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Few air connections</li> <li>○ Unknown in the market</li> <li>○ Sales competence</li> <li>○ Availability, where to buy</li> <li>○ Language proficiency and cultural competence</li> <li>○ Off-season products</li> <li>○ Service situation readiness</li> <li>○ Inexperience in the international market</li> <li>○ Online store</li> <li>○ Lack of accommodation suitable for charters</li> <li>○ Lack of family housing for staff</li> </ul>
POSSIBILITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Shared airport, other airports</li> <li>○ New seasons and products for current customers</li> <li>○ Developing summer into a product, summer charters</li> <li>○ Events, sports competitions, conference premises</li> <li>○ Growing interest in the market</li> <li>○ New tour operators</li> <li>○ Cooperation "across borders"</li> <li>○ Lapland, Arctic Circle, Russian border, Karelia</li> <li>○ National parks, Pan Parks</li> <li>○ Certainty of snow</li> <li>○ New WWW world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Underdeveloped air traffic</li> <li>○ Short attention span in the market</li> <li>○ Weakening of quality (masses)</li> <li>○ Dependency on charters – price and quality</li> <li>○ Disappearance of locality / authenticity</li> <li>○ Disappearance of VIP service competence</li> <li>○ Rise in the price of fuel</li> <li>○ Strengthening of the euro</li> <li>○ Finding skilled workers</li> <li>○ Distortion of accommodation capacity</li> <li>○ Weakening of natural heritage</li> </ul>

When evaluating the SWOT results, the Syöte Protected Areas with their recreational services form a strong buttress in tourism. Syöte has managed to maintain a wilderness-like impression. Both experienced old and fresh new enterprises operate in the Protected Areas and they have different kinds of tourism competence between them. The functionality of the cooperation between tourism operators is illustrated by the on-going tourism development projects and events. Syöte is constantly being developed through various projects and the area's operators are investing considerable sums in the development of service supplies.

In some respects, weaknesses also apply to the National Park. Syöte has not yet developed into an internationally known tourist and protected area, although it is better known domestically. According to the enterprise survey (Sarajärvi & Virkkunen 2011), there are also deficiencies in the tourism operators' knowledge of the area's natural and cultural values.

The international connections that will increase through the European Charter programme will improve Syöte's recognition in the world as an exotic northern destination. The national park

status is a strong marketing tool in the international market. The increasing cooperation between and inside tourism regions provides opportunities to develop tourism. Syöte and Taivalkoski will be some of Finland's most snowy areas also in the future, which is a strong competition factor for winter in the tourism market.

The threats concerning the Syöte National Park include especially the weakening of the quality of services with growing visitor numbers, the availability of a skilled workforce in the long-term and the weakening of natural heritage. The Kuusamo Lapland Tourism Industry's Internationalisation Strategy will be updated in early 2011, which is when the above-described SWOT analysis will be renewed to correspond to the current situation. The strategy can be seen on the Naturpolis website at [www.naturpolis.fi](http://www.naturpolis.fi).

#### 5.4.2 The Effects the Protected Areas Have on the Local Economy

The financial significance of the Protected Areas to their neighbouring regions has since 2009 been calculated with a comparative and standardised method. The effects of all national parks and hiking areas on their local economy are calculated annually using a method developed by Metsähallitus and the Finnish Forest Research Institute. These figures describe the cash flow created for the neighbouring area by visitors' spending and the jobs related to the cash flow (Metsähallitus 2010b).

The total income effect of the spending of visitors to the Syöte National Park and Iso-Syöte Hiking Area in 2009 amounted to approximately MEUR 3.8 and the total employment effect was 50 person-workyears, based on the visitor number in 2009 and the visitor survey data of 2010 (Table 7). When the National Park was the most important reason to travel, the income effect was almost MEUR 2 and the employment effect 26 person-workyears. Therefore it is clear that the National Park has an important positive effect on the local economy and employment.

The distribution of spending by type of expense is described in Table 8. The majority of the money spent by visitors to the National Park and hiking area is spent on accommodation, shops and café and restaurant purchases. The persons who answered the visitor survey had made fairly little use of the area's programme services.

**Table 7.** The spending of the visitors to the Syöte National Park and Iso-Syöte Hiking Area and the effects on the local economy, based on the visitor number in 2009 and the visitor survey data of 2010.

<b>Syöte National Park and Iso-Syöte Hiking Area</b>	
Visitor number (2009)	64,634
Visitor survey	The Syöte visitor survey 2010
Area classification	resort
Total income effect:	€ 3,767,004
Total employment effect	50 person-workyears
Income effect when the park is the most important destination	€ 1,968,187
Employment effect when the park is the most important destination	26 person-workyears
Average spending of domestic tourists	€ 57 / visit
Average spending of foreign tourists	-
Average spending of local visitors	€ 21 / visit

**Table 8.** The spending of the visitors to the Syöte National Park and Iso-Syöte Hiking Area and the effects on the local economy by type of expense, based on the visitor number in 2009 and the visitor survey data of 201 (n = 275).

Type of expense	Spending (incl. VAT)	Income effect (€ without VAT)	Employment effect (p-wy)
Fuel and other service station purchases	6.26	25,257	0
Costs of travelling locally	0.44	26,272	0
Grocery and other retail purchases	9.57	195,969	5
Café and restaurant purchases	8.60	433,395	7
Accommodation	25.25	1,501,611	25
Programme services <sup>1</sup>	0.55	32,555	0
Other expenses <sup>2</sup>	3.30	166,532	3
<b>Direct effects in total</b>		<b>2,381,591</b>	<b>40</b>
Indirect effects		1,385,413	10
<b>Total effects</b>		<b>3,767,004</b>	<b>50</b>

<sup>1</sup> Programme and recreational services, e.g. guided trips, entrance fees to events and exhibitions

<sup>2</sup> Other expenses, e.g. fishing, hunting or snowmobiling permits, rent for equipment.

The features that describe the current situation (2010) of the nature-based tourism which relies on the Syöte Protected Areas:

- the spatially extensive scope and distribution of the services (network of trails, sights, tourist services)
- the development of the recreational services into products is partly unfinished
- the services are high in quality, varied and easily attainable
- the development of the local nature and culture into products in tourist services has been slight.

The service supply of the Syöte nature-based tourism has good preconditions for growth. The growing streams of visitors can be directed to more remote sites through user guidance to prevent an excessive pressure of visitors on the core area. On the other hand, especially the marketing of more remote services for hiking, and the development of service entities required by this, promotes their use and thus complements the area's service supply. Chapter 6 presents a method with which the environmental impacts of tourism are monitored and controlled.

The Syöte Protected Areas offer excellent settings, for example, for nature photography, observing birds and other animals, getting to know the cultural heritage and for products based on reindeer tourism, silence and peaceful nature. Syötteen lumoa ('The Enchantment of Syöte') project, started in 2010, supports the development of new kinds of tourist products which are based on nature conservation values, and increases the cooperation between the National Park and tourism enterprises. Chapters 7 and 8 deal more broadly with the above-mentioned themes using the means of targets and operations.

## 6 Sustainability of Tourism

The supporting idea behind sustainable tourism is to offer people magnificent experiences without endangering natural and cultural heritage. Metsähallitus has established principles for sustainable tourism, which take into account the ecological, socio-cultural and economic dimensions of sustainability.

Ecological sustainability means maintaining nature's capacity for endurance and biodiversity despite human activities; the recreational use of, and tourism taking place in, the National Park must not jeopardise the area's conservational values. Socio-cultural sustainability involves the perpetuation and cultivation of both cultural heritage and modern culture. Tourism should promote knowledge of local culture and cultural heritage. At the same time, tourism should generate benefits in local people's lives and give the visitors to the area the experiences they are seeking and the fulfilment of their expectations. Economic sustainability gauges the effects of the National Park and nature-based tourism on the local economy and the profitability of business activities within tourism. At its best, tourism brings financial benefits for local trade, while also enabling the preservation of other means of livelihood and traditional ways of life.

The development of sustainable tourism is a cooperation process between Metsähallitus, tourism enterprises and local interest groups. The sustainability monitoring method described later in this section is also founded on the principles of sustainable tourism.

### 6.1 Principles of Sustainable Tourism

The principles of sustainable tourism (Appendix 4) are the cornerstone of the joint activities and development of Metsähallitus and its cooperating enterprises. Through all the dimensions of sustainability, these principles describe the aspired target situation. The same principles govern the activities of the local residents, tourists, Parks's partnership enterprises, municipalities and other communities in surroundings of the Protected Areas. At the same time, the realisation of the targets established in these principles requires continuous investment and an active touch from all the parties. These nine goals have each been set more detailed targets which govern the activities.

The partnership enterprises of the Syöte National Park have committed themselves to act according to the principles of sustainable tourism. The partnership enterprises that participated in the Syöte enterprise survey estimated that the local operators had succeeded in implementing these principles at least to an average degree (an average of 3.45 on a scale of 1–5) (Sarajärvi & Virkkunen 2011). The enterprises' estimation of their own activities was slightly more optimistic (an average of 3.86). The enterprises' opinions about the principles of sustainable tourism were very positive: they considered them both acceptable and feasible (Sarajärvi & Virkkunen 2011).

A method to evaluate and monitor the different dimensions of sustainability in the Syöte area has been derived from the principles of sustainable tourism. This method is described in the following section.

## 6.2 Evaluating the Sustainability of Tourism

The environmental impacts of nature tourism and recreational use are monitored continually in Syöte. Since 2006, the LAC method (*Limits of Acceptable Change*) has been applied for this purpose. The indicators used in this monitoring describe the way Metsähallitus's principles of sustainable tourism are being realised in the area. In accordance with the principles, this monitoring takes into account the ecological, socio-cultural and economic effects of this type of tourism.

The LAC method is founded on the decision about how much nature-based tourism is allowed to impact the environment. In addition to a target value, each monitoring indicator is specified with a limit which, depending on the indicator, is the lowest or highest value that is acceptable for it. When the limit is met, the pre-planned methods for rectifying the situation are applied.

A total of 31 monitoring indicators have been used in Syöte (Turunen 2006). The indicator data has been collected, for example, through the monitoring of visitors, species and erosion, as well as through various studies. The visitor survey, which is implemented every five years in the Syöte Protected Areas, has had a significant role in monitoring environmental impacts, as is demonstrated by the fact that a third of the indicators have been obtained through questions surveying customers' opinions. So far, monitoring data has been acquired from the results of two visitor surveys completed in the National Park, the first of which was completed in 2005 and the second in 2010.

### 6.2.1 Present State of Sustainability

#### *Ecological sustainability*

According to the results of monitoring performed in 2006–2010, nature-based tourism and recreational use have not jeopardised the values of the National Park. Zoning the Park and good visitor management has helped to diminish the impact on nature, despite the growth in the number of visitors. The methodical placement of service structures has prevented, for example, harmful effects on the area's endangered species.

Significant erosion problems have not been found along the hiking trails, nor have visitors to the Park complained about erosion. This is mostly due to the fact that most of the sites that are vulnerable to erosion were strengthened with duckboards during the construction of the trails. In places, trails have been strengthened also afterwards when problems have been discovered through use. The first measuring ranges for monitoring erosion were established in Syöte in 2003 and, with the adoption of the LAC method, the measuring method for erosion surveillance was modernised in 2007. Only the initial data obtained when the monitoring system was established is available for the current measuring ranges.

The consumption of firewood in proportion to the number of visitors has been followed annually in the area's rest spots and it has remained fairly evenly close to the target level. It has not been necessary to ask visitors to use firewood sparingly. Hikers to the area have also used the existing services commendably and there are no unauthorised campfire sites along the trails.

Some mixed waste is collected from the Protected Areas' rest spots annually during servicing, despite the fact that the principle of litter-free hiking is in operation in the Syöte area. This is not a huge problem, but educating visitors about litter-free hiking should be paid attention to in the future. Another indication of this problem is the information collected from along the trails about litter in the terrain, which narrowly exceeds the limit set for the indicator. As a whole, however, there is not much litter in the area and proof of this is the fact that visitors have been only very slightly disturbed by it.



The annual total amount of compost waste collected from the rest spots has increased in direct proportion to the growth in visitor numbers. However, the handling of compost waste has been very manageable, due partly to the follow-on composting equipment adopted in 2007, which is situated by the National Park's service warehouse.

### *Socio-cultural sustainability*

The aim of the National Park and Visitor Centre's information services is to increase visitors' appreciation and knowledge of the local culture and nature. When stopping off at the Visitor Centre, visitors can view the exhibition, which is strongly embedded in the local cultural heritage. The number of visitors to the Visitor Centre has annually been close to the target value (30,000 visits) or slightly over. More in-depth information about the area's cultural heritage and nature is provided through guided tours of the Visitor Centre's exhibition or guided excursions to the National Park. In accordance with the target level, these guided services have been used annually by approximately 100 groups, totalling more than 2,000 visitors.

The Rytivaara Crown Tenant Farm, located in the National Park, is one of the locations that showcase the area's cultural heritage and it is marketed to visitors in the area. The visitor volume to Rytivaara has been one of the indicators measuring how well visitors learn to know the special characteristics of the local culture. This indicator has been monitored annually and when the visitor number has been low, attempts have been made to boost the Farm's attractiveness, for example, by organising the Traditions Day event there. The development of the Rytivaaran kierros day trail into a product, and promotion in various media have also increased the number of visitors to Rytivaara.

The tourism enterprises in Syöte have an important role in passing on information to visitors to the area. A cooperation and training event has been organised annually for tourism enterprises, in which entrepreneurs have been informed about the issues related to the National Park's nature and cultural heritage. The number of participants at the cooperation events describes how well the information about the Park's nature and culture is transmitted to the area's visitors through tourism enterprises. The number of participants at these events has remained close to the target level during the monitoring period.

The quality and enjoyability of the recreational environment has been surveyed through visitors' opinions. Both visitor surveys (Muikku 2005, Sarajärvi 2011) show that almost 80% of visitors considered the recreational services they had used and the quality of the environment either fairly good or extremely good. Visitors' general satisfaction is also made evident by the visitor satisfaction index which has remained stable at a fairly good level throughout the monitoring period: in 2005, the index was 4.28 and, in 2010, 4.22 (on a scale of 1–5 where 5 signifies extremely good and 1 extremely bad). Also, the congestion of hikers on the area's hiking routes has not been a problem so far, despite the growth in visitor numbers. Only a small section of the area's visitors have found the behaviour of other visitors disturbing, or the number of visitors excessive.

The key target of the Protected Areas is to offer visitors inspiration and experiences in nature which promote their mental and physical well-being. During the monitoring period, visitors have regarded mental well-being and relaxation as the central values of their visit. For almost all visitors, their expectations of the area's natural environment were fulfilled. Another essential factor in visitors' well-being is the safety of the recreational infrastructure, which is monitored regularly during maintenance and with the help of Metsähallitus's infrastructure GIS, known as Reiska, in which the location of the structures and other related information is managed. If there is just one structure in poor condition in the area, the quality limit for service structures is exceeded. The hiking structures in Syöte are still fairly new and therefore most of them are in good condition. The majority of visitors also consider the Park's services safe.

All communication about the National Park and its neighbouring area is performed as well as possible. Marketing should be founded on openness and correct information about the area's services. The realisation of Park's target has been gauged by how well visitors' expectations have been fulfilled in terms of the area's nature, services and opportunities for outdoor activities. Visitors' expectations were best fulfilled by the natural environment, and over 80% of visitors were satisfied with the services and opportunities for outdoor activities (Sarajärvi 2011).

### *Economic sustainability*

The objective of the National Park and Visitor Centre's services is to promote the positive development of the local economy and employment. Over the last few years, the significance of the National Park as the primary attraction in the destination has increased, especially as regards summer tourism. Metsähallitus enters into a partnership agreement with enterprises that use the service structures of the National Park and other protected areas in their tourism activities. The number of cooperation agreements is a marker of how important the services produced by Metsähallitus are for the operation of local tourism enterprises. During the monitoring period, the number of these agreements has grown slightly, and currently 18 tourism enterprises in the Syöte area have such an agreement.

Research was published in 2005 which examined the local population's attitude towards nature protection and tourism in the Syöte area (Rämet et al. 2005). For this study, they were asked for their opinions on whether the financial benefits of tourism in Syöte were greater than the disadvantages it causes. 82% of the residents thought that the benefits were greater than the disadvantages. The study has not yet been renewed and therefore there is no research data available on the development of residents' opinions since 2005.

When pursuing growth in tourism revenue, regular and functional cooperation between Metsähallitus, tourism enterprises and other local operators is vital. The realisation of this cooperation has been advanced annually by organising cooperation events for local operators and by involving them in the planning of the National Park's activities. Metsähallitus has also participated annually in several dozen events and meetings organised by other parties which are related to the development of the Syöte area. Over the last few years, cooperation between various operators has become closer and has produced good results, for example through the implementation of different tourism development projects.

Metsähallitus examined the effects of spending of the visitors to the national parks and hiking areas on local economies thoroughly first in 2009. The method for this was developed jointly with the Finnish Forest Research Institute. The total income effect of the spending of visitors to the Syöte National Park and Iso-Syöte Hiking Area amounted then to approximately MEUR 3.8 and the total employment effect was 50 person-workyears, based on the visitor number in 2009 and the visitor survey data of 2010 (table 7, p. 29). In future, the effects on the local economy will be calculated annually.

### 6.2.2 Updating the Set of Indicators for Monitoring Sustainability

Metsähallitus has further developed their monitoring of the impact that nature-based tourism and recreational use have on the environment. Development cooperation has been specifically carried out with the University of Oulu. The LAC method has been found to be a good monitoring tool and its use will therefore be continued. Attempts have been made to simplify monitoring by reducing the number of standard indicators and paying even more attention than before to the quality of the indicators instead. The aim is to exclude the indicators that require a great deal of work and resources, if they do not provide essential additional information on environmental impacts. In choosing the indicators, attention has also been paid to qualities which make the information provided on different protected areas as easily comparable as possible.

There is a need in Syöte to update the previously used set of indicators to correspond with Metsähallitus's current specifications. In future, 21 indicators will be used in Syöte, which is 10 less than in the previous set. The excluded indicators include, for example, ones relating to the monitoring of erosion, such as the width and depth of the hiking trails and the number of exposed roots and stones on trails, which were observed through permanent monitoring lines and sample areas. Also, the amount of litter and number of unauthorised campfire sites are no longer supervised on specific monitoring lines. The above mentioned methods proved too labour-intensive in comparison to the benefits their results yielded. The Park's staff continually monitor possible erosion damage and litter problems along the hiking trails and at rest spots while performing their work and through customer feedback. Often the staff can intervene in possible problem areas well before they emerge through the indicator data.

In future, a larger part of the indicator data will be received through the opinions of the users of the area. Syöte's updated set of indicators for the environmental impacts of nature-based tourism and recreational use is presented in Appendix 5. The indicators' present values, target values and limits will be determined or updated in early 2011.

# 7 Target Situation of Nature-based Tourism

## 7.1 Kuusamo Lapland and the Oulu Region

The shared vision of the Kuusamo Lapland tourism destination is to develop “*from nationally known resorts into an internationally attractive outdoor tourism destination.*” The area’s target is year-round activities, with the snow and winter as its spearhead. Kuusamo Lapland wants to be a forerunner and to form networks across the traditional product-based, regional and administrative borders (Naturpolis 2008a).

Kuusamo Lapland has established as its target the strengthening of the area’s basic attraction by emphasising its nature, local culture and authenticity, and to increase the area’s competitiveness as an event organiser that attracts enterprises specialising in sports, outdoor and cultural events.

The Oulu region’s vision for 2020 (FCG Planeko Oy 2008) is this: “*The Oulu region is a hospitable and inviting Northern European centre that offers tourists the events and services of a lively metropolitan area, a rich supply of cultural attractions and the inspiring experiences provided by the sea, forest, river, lake and fell. Space! Light! Northern power!*” The idea behind the vision is that, as a destination in the tourism region’s neighbourhood, Syöte complements the supply of local tourism offerings. From the point of view of Oulu tourism, Syöte is easily accessible.

The vision and targets of Syöte’s nature-based tourism, presented in the next chapter, support and fulfil the tourism regions’ vision of developing the year-round and international Outdoor tourism and the services in the Protected Areas which complement urban tourism.

## 7.2 The Syöte Protected Areas and the Surrounding Environment

The central contents of the target situation for Syöte’s nature-based tourism were defined in the workshop entitled “From Targets to Action” held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2010 (the results are presented in Appendix 6). The workshop was attended by 16 active operators from the area’s tourism enterprises, tourist associations, municipalities, local population, various Metsähallitus units and reindeer husbandry. On the basis of the material the workshop produced, the target situation for nature tourism for 2020 was specified as follows:

**The wilderness-like nature, culture and locality form the foundation for the attraction of Syöte. The high-grade services in Syöte, provided and marketed by professional tourism operators, make it possible for domestic and international tourism to succeed in a controlled and enduring way.**

**The Syöte Protected Areas will be developed as a coherent whole together with local operators. Syöte is an important resource for the internationalisation and competitiveness of tourism in both Kuusamo Lapland and the Oulu region.**

**Syöte offers nature tourists diverse experiences founded on natural and cultural heritage and locality. Success in tourism creates jobs and increases the attractiveness of Syöte as a place of residence.**

The attainment of the target situation requires a variety of actions from both Metsähallitus and the other interest groups. The target situation encapsulates the harmony formed by nature and the services connected to it: experiences and well-being are produced together through quality services which safeguard conservation values. Alongside the developing tourism, the well-being and economic circumstances of the local population improve.

The tables below (Tables 9–14) present, by themes, the specified targets for medium-term (5–10 years) and the solutions for achieving the set targets in the short term (1–5 years). The themes are:

1. Communication
2. Recreational Infrastructure
3. Visitor Centre
4. Cooperation and partnership
5. Internationality

**Table 9.** The communication targets of the Syöte Protected Areas.

<b>Theme: Communication</b>	
<b>The target and its description</b>	<b>Solution</b>
<p><b>The National Park's communication reaches target groups.</b></p> <p>The media's various distribution channels are recognised and efficiently utilised. Different target groups are approached through the right channels. The holiday residents are identified and served as loyal customers of the Park.</p>	<p>Establish together with tourism operators, where and how the National Park should be visible in order to reach the target groups.</p> <p>Intensify partner communication, for example, the production of materials; visibility at fairs and events together with tourism operators.</p> <p>Communicate about barrier-free services through the communication channels of Metsähallitus and its cooperating parties.</p> <p>Communication campaign that has been planned for holiday residents and holiday cottage dwellers. Electronic newsletters. An issue for cottage dwellers supplied with the local paper.</p>
<p><b>The information supplied about the Park and its services is available through modern media.</b></p> <p>Advertising material is produced on the basis of demand. The needs of foreign visitors are also taken into account in all communication. Metsähallitus's communication instruments conform to the needs of tourism operators and are actively used.</p>	<p>Ensure internationality in communication material.</p> <p>Develop the use of social media in order to reach new customer groups, while also taking into account regular visitors.</p> <p>Develop and maintain the outdoors.fi service.</p> <p>Develop mobile communications as regards the National Park's services.</p> <p>Transfer the focus of communication from printed matter to electronic communication.</p> <p>Present Syöte's services in the National Parks magazine.</p> <p>Update excursionmap.fi as regards all trail maintainers.</p>
<p><b>Communication is founded on the area's conservation values, tourism attractions and the benefits generated by the Park.</b></p> <p>The National Park brand is used as the spearhead point of communication. Nature, culture, locality and services constitute the contents of the core message. People's consciousness of nature and the environment will improve and the acceptability of nature conservation will grow.</p>	<p>The training programme and orientation material for Syöte's tourism operators.</p> <p>Intensify partner communication, for example, the production of material, visibility at fairs and events together with tourism operators.</p> <p>The quality assurance and content production of cooperating parties' communication.</p> <p>Communication about Metsähallitus's hiking services as functional wholes, "products."</p>
<p><b>Communication guides the behaviour of visitors in the Protected Areas.</b></p> <p>Visitors understand the rules and restrictions of the Protected Areas and observe them. Communication assists in directing visitors' movements within the area, preventing conflicts and safeguarding the sustainability of tourism.</p>	<p>Ensure the visibility of the principles of sustainable tourism in our communication material.</p> <p>Trail difficulty classification and the distribution of information over the Internet and in brochures/maps.</p> <p>Instruction materials guide visitors towards litter-free hiking.</p>
<p><b>Metsähallitus is a sought-after and valued partner within the tourism sector.</b></p> <p>Cooperation brings partners added value. Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services treats its cooperating enterprises fairly but requires them to be active. Partner communication is interactive and functional.</p>	<p>Give directions for the use of the National Park emblem and make its use more effective. Give cooperating enterprises the right to use the emblem.</p> <p>Clarify the European Charter local partnership with an emphasis on its benefits.</p> <p>The meetings of the Syöte National Park Cooperation Group and its utilisation in interacting with the local community.</p>

**Table 10.** The targets concerning the recreational infrastructure of the Syöte Protected Areas.

<b>Theme: Recreational infrastructure</b>	
<b>The target and its description</b>	<b>Solution</b>
<p><b>The Syöte trail network will be developed as a whole.</b></p> <p>The day trails are a key service product and their quality will be systematically developed. The existing services will be examined critically on the basis of their utilisation rate and maintenance costs. Information and signposting along the trails is functional and responsible.</p>	<p>Develop the trails and other service structures methodically.</p> <p>Plan services in cooperation with the area's operators.</p> <p>Discard unnecessary services.</p> <p>Update the area's information and signposting plan and improve signposting, if necessary.</p> <p>Ensure the consistency of the information chain from the trails to the Internet in all languages.</p>
<p><b>The trail network is founded on the attractions in Syöte.</b></p> <p>The trails support year-round tourism and showcase the area's known conservation values, nature and the landscape in a versatile way. Culture and locality are included in the services and products. The trails support visits to the destinations.</p>	<p>Chart the conservation values (nature and cultural heritage), report on them on this basis, and popularise and distribute information through various means of communication.</p> <p>Develop an action plan for the Rytivaara Crown Tenant Farm.</p> <p>Utilise of the survey results of Syöte's cultural heritage to benefit tourism.</p>
<p><b>Syöte has suitable trails for different kinds of visitor groups.</b></p> <p>Recreational services are produced in the area on the basis of demand and the needs of user groups are known. The trail network includes what are called full-service trails and wilderness trails whose levels of service differ considerably. Barrier-free service supply is also taken into account.</p>	<p>Follow demand with the help of customer segmentation, visitor monitoring and visitor surveys.</p> <p>Plan services in cooperation with the area's operators.</p> <p>Classify the trails and provide information about them so that visitors know how demanding the trail is and what level of maintenance the trail has.</p> <p>Transfer the focus of maintenance on the upkeep of the most popular trails.</p> <p>As demand increases, barrier-free services will be developed.</p>
<p><b>The trail network does not threaten the most significant natural heritage.</b></p> <p>Practically laid out and maintained trails reduce the need for maintenance and threats to nature. The trails can, however, be laid out so that they bring visitors where natural and cultural heritage can be observed.</p>	<p>Strengthen and perform erosion control on existing trails.</p> <p>Improve guidance and marking on trails.</p> <p>Discard unnecessary services.</p>
<p><b>All Syöte's trails are developed into products as service entities.</b></p> <p>Each of the trails is its own whole. The functionality of the trails is developed on the basis of target groups. Visitor monitoring provides reliable data about the number of visitors to the Park.</p>	<p>Evaluate the trails as trail-specific service products and determine the development needs required by their development into products.</p> <p>Develop communication so that target groups find the products they are looking for. Provide an inviting and descriptive name and profile for each trail!</p> <p>In the visitor monitoring plan, take into account possible changes in the trail network and the use of the trails.</p>

**Table 11.** The targets for the Syöte Visitor Centre.

<b>Theme: Visitor Centre</b>	
<b>The target and its description</b>	<b>Solution</b>
<p><b>The Syöte Visitor Centre is the functional centre of the National Park.</b></p> <p>The Visitor Centre offers diverse customer service and settings for organising various events year-round. Information about the Park's affairs travels through the Visitor Centre.</p>	<p>Provide quality customer service.</p> <p>Provide communication about the Visitor Centre's services.</p> <p>Provide communication from the National Park to customers and vice versa.</p> <p>Provide communication to other operators in the area and vice versa.</p>
<p><b>The Visitor Centre's guidance services for groups and individuals will be developed to meet changing requirements.</b></p> <p>Environmental education and nature guidance is offered on the basis of demand, in cooperation with local operators.</p>	<p>Marketing aimed directly at the target groups at educational establishments and youth centres.</p> <p>Develop the guidance services for groups and individuals which takes place at the Visitor Centre and in the National Park.</p> <p>Network with operators in the field.</p>
<p><b>The Visitor Centre provides information about the National Park in an interesting manner, taking into account the needs of different user groups.</b></p> <p>The Visitor Centre's permanent exhibition is of high quality and supports the nature guidance activities that are offered. The temporary exhibitions and other supplies complement the Visitor Centre's services. Services are offered to people of all ages and in many languages.</p>	<p>Renew the permanent exhibition.</p> <p>Update the auditorium's supply of services.</p> <p>Provide a supply of temporary exhibitions.</p> <p>Update the product range on sale (incl. brochures and maps).</p> <p>Present the Visitor Centre's services at least in Finnish and English.</p> <p>Launch cooperation with municipal cultural operators.</p>
<p><b>Popular events are organised in the National Park all year round.</b></p> <p>The events belong to the whole Park and the operators within its neighbouring area. The target group consists of the locals, cottage dwellers, tourists and tourism enterprises. When planning new events, partners play a vital role. Nature, culture and locality create the contents of the events.</p>	<p>Seek cooperative partners among the area's operators for event planning – offer opportunities, not obligations.</p> <p>Place customer feedback and demand at the centre of event planning.</p> <p>Launch cooperation with municipal cultural operators.</p> <p>Take part in other events in the area.</p> <p>Educate the tourism operators of the area in the local natural and cultural heritage.</p>

**Table 12.** The targets concerning cooperation and partnership within the Syöte National Park's neighbouring area.

<b>Theme: Cooperation and partnership</b>	
<b>The target and its description</b>	<b>Solution</b>
<p><b>Metsähallitus is a sought-after and valued partner within the tourism sector.</b></p> <p>Cooperation brings partners added value. Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services treats its cooperating enterprises fairly but requires them to be active. Partner communication is interactive and functional.</p>	<p>The meetings of the Syöte National Park Cooperation Group. Two-way interest group cooperation.</p> <p>Launch joint ventures and seek new modes of operation with the right partners.</p> <p>Answer the call of enterprises seeking partnership – joint targets and activities.</p> <p>The Visitor Centre offers its customers the services of the cooperating enterprises.</p>
<p><b>Metsähallitus functions as the source of information about the Protected Areas to the tourism operators in Syöte.</b></p> <p>The area's tourism operators are offered information about the natural and cultural heritage of the Protected Areas. Tourism operators can take part in the training programme dealing with the above-mentioned themes.</p>	<p>Launch and maintain the training programme "SyöteGuide".</p> <p>Develop communications material: the electronic media, popularisation of science.</p> <p>Events, theme days and training as orientation methods for tourism operators.</p> <p>Participate in partner communication, for example, the production of materials; visibility at fairs and events together with other operators.</p>
<p><b>Travelling in Syöte is safe.</b></p> <p>Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services and the tourism operators together make certain that the tourist services are safe. The trail network and structures increase safety, and the cooperating enterprises have safety plans for the Protected Areas' tourism products.</p>	<p>Ensure that the trails and structures are in good order and the contents of signposting support rescue operations.</p> <p>Inform rescue authorities about the hiking services and familiarise them, when necessary.</p> <p>Agree on practices for common safety planning in Syöte; .</p> <p>Develop safety plans for the Protected Areas' tourism products.</p>
<p><b>Local communities are active and healthy.</b></p> <p>Local communities act on behalf of the National Park. The Visitor Centre functions as the local cooperation centre. The Protected Areas produce ecosystem services in the form of tourism revenue and health effects. Tourism is socially sustainable.</p>	<p>Local communities' participate in planning processes through the Cooperation Group.</p> <p>Organise events, theme days, courses at the Visitor Centre and in the neighbouring area.</p> <p>Participate in local events, present the services of the Protected Areas to the local population.</p> <p>Utilise local service providers and products; employ locals.</p> <p>Develop the Junior Ranger activities together with partners.</p>



**Table 13.** The targets concerning Syöte's internationalisation.

<b>Theme: Internationality</b>	
<b>The target and its description</b>	<b>Solution</b>
<p><b>Syöte is an active European Charter member park.</b></p> <p>Syöte has local Charter partners with whom communications about the membership are jointly performed, and the Charter principles are observed in all activities.</p>	<p>Cooperate in communications especially for the Internet. Verify the quality of the contents of the outdoors.fi website and enterprise websites.</p> <p>Clarify the European Charter local partnership with an emphasis on its benefits.</p> <p>Encourage genuinely interested operators to become local Charter partners.</p> <p>Participate in the network activities of the Charter parks.</p>
<p><b>The recreational infrastructure of the Syöte Protected Areas serve international visitors.</b></p> <p>Multilingualism has been taken into account in the information material. The services support both international visitors' independent hiking and the organisation of guided excursions.</p>	<p>Provide information material (except signposts) at least in Finnish and English.</p> <p>Promote the Hiking Site (the electronic information point) into active use in different languages.</p> <p>Make sure the working logic of the information chain works also in English. The same names in brochures, maps and signposts!</p>
<p><b>Syöte serves the needs of the Kuusamo Lapland and Oulu region's tourism regions.</b></p> <p>Syöte and its Protected Areas are an inviting destination in the international marketing of resorts. Those natural attractions are the tourism media's trump card.</p>	<p>Regional cooperation in communications.</p> <p>Develop Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services' involvement in the projects of the resorts (marketing and communication campaigns, etc); content production, quality control and supply of material.</p> <p>Promote the targets of the resorts.</p>

On the basis of the targets and solutions specified in the tables, an action programme has been prepared for the development of nature-based tourism in Syöte for the period 2011–2015. The following chapter discusses this action programme in more detail.

## 8 Action Programme

In addition to an enterprise survey (Sarajärvi & Virkkunen 2011) and workshops (see Appendix 6), the development needs of Syöte's nature-based tourism have been charted, together with interest groups, during the planning process. Metsähallitus also collects annually an enterprise feedback form from cooperating enterprises, which provides information about deficiencies concerning the Protected Areas, as well as suggestions for improvements and development. Likewise, those actions which the municipality sector or tourism operators have suggested in other contexts will be taken into account in the preparation and compilation of the action programme. The action programme is presented in Table 14.

The focus in developing nature-based tourism in Syöte lies on increasing the quality of tourist services and the competence in supplying them. This is essentially related to international networking and developing the area's internal cooperation. Another central object for development is the improvement of Syöte's trail network and recreational infrastructure, and the development of sights and other services into products by visitor profiling.

The municipalities, local village societies and tourism operators play an important role in all tourism planning and development. The table 14 shows the responsible parties, both primary and co-operating. The estimated execution period for the action is also given in the table. The action programme will be updated during annual operational planning.

Many of the actions relate to general development. The development activities for nature tourism in Syöte implemented by Metsähallitus so far have been founded mainly on the EU's LIFE and relief work programme funding, in addition to budget financing.

Some of the activities presented in the action programme will be implemented as regular work or within the Syöteen lumoa ('the Enchantment of Syöte') project, which is underway and for which the Council of Oulu Region has granted EU's ERDF funding. Other actions will be performed either as regular work or with project funding, which must be applied for. Project funding for the activities in the programme will be applied for, for example, from the European Regional Development Fund or relief work programme.

**Table 14.** The action programme for the development of the Syöte Protected Areas in 2011–2015.

Theme and actions	Responsible and cooperating parties	Schedule	Need for extra financing
<b>Communication</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- communicating about the principles of Metsähallitus's partner communication (the use of the National Park's logo)</li> <li>- the statistical classification of visitors to the Syöte Protected Areas</li> <li>- Hiking Sites' maintenance and content production</li> <li>- Participating annually in the production of the National Parks magazine</li> <li>- Koillismaa region's Hiking Site, i.e. electronic information point, in Oulu</li> <li>- preparation of and applying for the mobile communication project</li> <li>- the brochure <i>Day Trip Trails in the Koillismaa region</i></li> </ul>	<b>Metsähallitus,</b> tourism operators	2011  2011 2011–2013 2011–2013  2012  2012 2013	Travel Marketing Oulu       ERDF? Relief work programme funding

Theme and actions	Responsible and cooperating parties	Schedule	Need for extra financing
<b>Recreational infrastructure</b>			
Developing the trail network: strengthening and restoration of day trails - Syötteen kierros Day Trip Trail - Ansapolku Nature Trail - Vattukuru Nature Trail - Ahmankierros Day Trip Trail - Rytivaaran kierros Day Trip Trail	<b>Metsähallitus</b>	2011–2013	Relief work programme funding
Information and signposting: - planning the guidance system for hiking in the Soiperoinen Nature Reserve - Syötteen kierros Trail, supplementation of signposts - Ansapolku Nature Trail, new information boards - Rytivaaran kierros Trail, new information boards - constructing road signs for Soiperoinen and Pyhitysvaara Hill - improving the road signs to the Syöte Visitor Centre in the Syöte core area	<b>Metsähallitus</b>	2011–2013	Relief work programme funding
Recreational services: - preparing a trail network plan for Syöte (a comprehensive examination based on demand, needs for discarding and new development, updating the information and signposting plan, updating the visitor monitoring plan) - defining a service concept for Rytivaara - restoring the structures of the Kellarilampi Nature Trail	<b>Metsähallitus</b> , interest groups	2011  2011–2015	  ERDF ?
Developing the Syöte resort: - developing public transport in Syöte - developing pedestrian and bicycle routes in Syöte: Iso-Syöte–Pytkynharju, Iso-Syöte–Pikku-Syöte	<b>Tourism enterprises</b> <b>City of Pudasjärvi</b>	2011 2011–2015	
<b>Visitor Centre</b>			
- temporary exhibitions offered every year, at least 4 per year - renewing the permanent exhibition - executing customer and visitor surveys - collecting continuous feedback and customer feedback of the quality programme (Green DQN) in the Syöte Visitor Centre	<b>Metsähallitus</b>	2011–2015 2015 2013–2015 2011–	ERDF?
<b>Cooperation and partnership</b>			
Ensuring the sustainability of tourism: - LAC monitoring - visitor monitoring in the Protected Areas and the Visitor Centre	<b>Metsähallitus</b>	2011– 2011–	
Enhancing local ownership: - organising the Junior Ranger camp, at least 1 camp per year - 3 themed events in 2011 - themed event 2012	<b>Metsähallitus</b> , Oulu Vocational College, tourist association, tourism enterprises, village societies	2011–2013 2011 2012	ERDF ERDF ERDF
Promoting local livelihood: - promoting handicraft traditions  - promoting local cuisine in Syöte	<b>Metsähallitus</b> , handicraft manufacturers, tourism enterprises <b>Syöte Tourist Association</b>	2011  2011	ERDF
Culture: - charting the cultural heritage, reporting on it on this basis and launching the product development - launching cooperation with the City of Pudasjärvi (Cultural Adviser) and the municipality of Taivalkoski (Cultural Producer)	<b>Metsähallitus</b> , tourism enterprises, municipalities	2011  2011	ERDF
Tourism and interest group cooperation: - regularising the meeting routine of the Syöte National Park Cooperation Group - training programme and orientation material for tourism operators in Syöte - participation in the Syöte Green DQN programme (Laatutoni, environmental survey and programme)	<b>Metsähallitus</b> , municipalities, Syöte Tourist Association, tourism enterprises, Haaga-Perho	2011  2011–2011–	ERDF
<b>Internationality</b>			
Internationality: - renewing the National Park's European Charter membership - adopting the Charter certificate for tourism enterprises - participation in international Charter meetings, etc. (partners too)	<b>Metsähallitus</b> , cooperating enterprises of the Park	2011 2011 2011	ERDF ERDF ERDF

## 9 Monitoring of the Strategy

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services is following the realisation of the STDS closely. The activities accordant with the targets and the funding of budget financed operations are confirmed during the Natural Heritage Services' annual operational planning. Operations requiring external financing will be included in project applications. The Syöte National Park Cooperation Group, which assembles at least twice a year, follows the materialisation of the action programme. The Group may also put forward supplementary contents for the action programme.

At five year intervals, the STDS is brought up to date where necessary. At the same time, an examination of how well the whole strategy has been realised over the previous period takes place. The action programme is examined and the priority of actions and their implementation is assessed and updated annually in connection with operational planning.

# References

- Aarnio, J. 2001a: Maankäytön historiaa Syötteen alueella. – Metsähallituksen luonnonsuojelujulkaisuja. Sarja A 133. 74 p.
- 2001b: Syötteen alueen luontomatkailusuunnitelma. – Metsähallituksen luonnonsuojelujulkaisuja. Sarja B 61. 49 p.
- , Lehtelä, M. & Lehtonen, H. 2002: Matkailuyrittäjien luonto-opas. – Metsähallitus, Oulu. 82 p.
- Airaksinen, S. & Kuusiniva, M. 2009: Syötteen luontokeskuksen asiakastutkimus 2008–2009. – Metsähallituksen luonnonsuojelujulkaisuja. Sarja B 145. 25 p.
- EUROPARC 2010: Charter Principles. – <<http://www.european-charter.org/about-the-charter/>>, 9.12.2010.
- FCG Planeko Oy 2008: Oulun seudun matkailun kokonaisvaltainen kehittämissuunnitelma (master plan). – Raportti, Oulun kaupunki, Oulu. <[www.ouka.fi/kehittamishankkeet/](http://www.ouka.fi/kehittamishankkeet/)>, 9.12.2010. 40 p.
- Fennell, D. A. 1999: Ecotourism. An introduction. – Routledge, London. 315 p.
- Kajaanin ammattikorkeakoulu 2010: Tausta-aineistoa Kainuun ja Kuusamo-Lapland alueen matkailutoimijoiden ennakointityöhön vuoteen 2020. Matkailun ennakkoinnin tutkimus ja kehittäminen Kainuussa ja Koillismaalla (A30249) 2010. – Kajaanin ammattikorkeakoulu, tutkimus- ja kehitysyksikkö, Kajaani. 111 p.
- Koivula, E., Saastamoinen, O., Hentinen, L., Loikkanen, T., Määttä, M., Peltonen, A., Saarinen, J. & Tyrväinen, L. 2005: Metsät ja luontomatkailu: nykytila ja kehittämistarpeita. – In: Koivula, E. & Saastamoinen, O. (ed.), Näkökulmia luontomatkailuun ja sen tulevaisuuteen. Joensuun yliopiston metsätieteellisen tiedekunnan tiedonantoja 165. Joensuun yliopisto, Joensuu. Pp. 7–61.
- Lapin liitto 2010: Lappi. Elämänvoimaa. Matkailustrategia 2011–2014. Luonnos 27.10.2010. – Lapin liitto, Rovaniemi. <[http://www.lapinliitto.fi/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?folderId=90644&name=DLFE-6930.pdf](http://www.lapinliitto.fi/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=90644&name=DLFE-6930.pdf)>. 62 p.
- Lehtonen, H. 2001: Luontoa ja historiaa Syötteen alueelta – Syöte Life -projektin perusselvitykset. – Käsikirjoitus, Metsähallituksen arkisto, Oulu. 146 p.
- Metsähallitus 2004: Iso-Syötteen retkeilyalueen hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma. – Metsähallituksen luonnonsuojelujulkaisuja. Sarja B 72. 44 p.
- 2006: Syötteen kansallispuiston hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma. – Metsähallituksen luonnonsuojelujulkaisuja. Sarja C 2. 61 p.
- 2010a: Luontoon.fi-verkkopalvelu. – <[www.luontoon.fi/syote](http://www.luontoon.fi/syote)>, 17.11.2010.
- 2010b: Kansallispuistot ja retkeilyalueet tärkeitä paikallistaloudelle. – <[www.metsa.fi/suojelalueetjapaikallistalous](http://www.metsa.fi/suojelalueetjapaikallistalous)>, 18.11.2010.

- 2010c: Luonnonsuojelualueiden hoidon ja käytön periaatteet. – Metsähallituksen luonnonsuojelujulkaisuja. Sarja B 127. 93 p.
- Muikku, M. 2005: Syötteen kävijätutkimus 2005. – Raportti, Metsähallitus, Vantaa. <<http://www.metsa.fi/sivustot/metsa/SiteAttachments/Kavijatutkimus2005.pdf>>, 18.11.2010. 50 p.
- Naturpolis 2008a: Kuusamo Lapland matkalla kansainvälisyyteen 2010, Strategiapäivitys 2008. – <<http://www.naturpolis.fi/aluekehitys/strategiat-ja-suunnitelmat>>, 18.11.2010.
- 2008b: Lappi-Koillismaa matkailun imagomarkkinoinnin esiselvitys. – <<http://www.naturpolis.fi/aluekehitys/strategiat-ja-suunnitelmat>>, 18.11.2010.
- Nesenta Oy 2004: Koillis-Suomen strateginen yleiskaava. Kuusamo, Posio, Salla, Taivalkoski. Yhteenveto – visio, tavoitteet ja strategiset painopisteet. – Koillis-Suomen aluekeskusohjelma/Salla, Posio, Taivalkoski ja Kuusamo. 22 p.
- Pohjois-Pohjanmaan liitto 2006a: Pohjois-Pohjanmaan maakuntakaava. – <[http://www.pohjois-pohjanmaa.fi/maakunnan\\_suunnittelu\\_ja\\_kehittaminen/maakuntakaavoitus/voimassa\\_oleva\\_makuntakaava](http://www.pohjois-pohjanmaa.fi/maakunnan_suunnittelu_ja_kehittaminen/maakuntakaavoitus/voimassa_oleva_makuntakaava)>, 9.12.2010.
- 2006b: Pohjois-Pohjanmaan matkailustrategia 2006–2013. Matkailu kasvaa ja kansainvälistyy. – Pohjois-Pohjanmaan liitto. Julkaisu A:41. 20 p.
- 2010: Pohjois-Pohjanmaan maakuntasuunnitelma 2030 ja maakuntaohjelma 2011–2014. – <[http://www.pohjois-pohjanmaa.fi/maakunnan\\_suunnittelu\\_ja\\_kehittaminen/maakuntasuunnitelma\\_ja\\_makuntaohjelma](http://www.pohjois-pohjanmaa.fi/maakunnan_suunnittelu_ja_kehittaminen/maakuntasuunnitelma_ja_makuntaohjelma)>, 9.12.2010.
- Pudasjärven kaupunki 2010: Syötteen matkailun kehittämissuunnitelma 2010–2023. – Kesken-eräinen luonnos, Pudasjärven kaupunki, Pudasjärvi. 33 p.
- Rämet, J., Törn, A., Tolvanen, A. & Siikamäki, P. 2005: Luonnonsuojelu ja luontomatkailu paikallisväestön silmin – kyselytutkimus Kuusamossa ja Syötteen alueella. – Metsähallituksen luonnonsuojelujulkaisuja. Sarja A 151. 48 p.
- Saarinen, J. 1998: Kestävyys, kantokyky ja matkailun kehittäminen: näkökulmia kestävän matkailun problematiikkaan. – Teoksessa: Saarinen, J. & Järviluoma, J. (toim.), Kestävyys luonnon virkistys- ja matkailukäytössä. Pp. 15–31.
- Sarajärvi, K. 2011: Syötteen kävijätutkimus 2010. – Käsikirjoitus, Metsähallitus, Vantaa. 60 p. 17.11.2010.
- & Virkkunen, V. 2011: Syötteen yritystutkimus 2010. – Käsikirjoitus, Metsähallitus, Vantaa. 50 p. 17.11.2010.
- Sorri, T. 2007: Tarinoiden Syöte. – Omakustanne. 291 p.
- 2009: Syötteen poluilta ja polkujen varsilta. – Omakustanne. 271 p.
- Swarbrooke, J. 1999: Sustainable tourism management. – CABI Publishing, New York, USA. 384 p.
- Taivalkosken kunta 2008: Taivalkoski. Matkailun masterplan. Luonnos 28.10.2008. – Taivalkosken kunta, Taivalkoski, ei julkaistu.

- Turunen, T. 2006: Syötteen alueen luontomatkailun seurantasuunnitelma. – Julkaisematon suunnitelma, Metsähallitus, Pohjanmaan luontopalvelut. 20 p.
- Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2010: Suomen matkailustrategia vuoteen 2020 – 4 hyvää syytä edistää matkailutoimialojen kehitystä. – <<http://www.tem.fi/index.phtml?s=2548>>, 9.12.2010.
- Valtakunnallinen matkailustrategiatyöryhmä 2006: Suomen matkailustrategia vuoteen 2020 & Toimenpideohjelma vuosille 2007–2013. – Kauppa- ja teollisuusministeriö, Helsinki. KTM julkaisuja 21/2006. 102 p.
- Valtioneuvosto 2003: Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös toimintaohjelmasta luonnon virkistyskäytön ja luontomatkailun kehittämiseksi 13.2.2003. – Ympäristöhallinnon verkkosivut. <<http://www.ymparisto.fi/download.asp?contentid=2296>>.
- Weaver, D. W. 1999: Magnitude of ecotourism in Costa Rica and Kenya. – *Annals of Tourism Research* 26: 792–816.





## The Materialisation of the Nature Tourism Plan 2001 for the Syöte Area

Aarnio (2001b) described the development situation of nature tourism in Syöte in the first Nature Tourism Plan, using a life-cycle model. He estimated that the area was in Stage 2, where the number of tourists to the destination was growing and the services were taking shape. When the National Park was founded, the annual level of Syöte's tourism revenue was 40–60 million Finnish marks (MEUR 6.7–10) and it was expected to double within the next ten years (Aarnio 2001b). In 2008, the turnover of tourism in Syöte was MEUR 24.1 (Pudasjärven kaupunki 2010) and therefore it can indeed be stated that the tourism revenue has doubled.

On the basis of the life-cycle model in question, it can be estimated that Syöte will reach Stage 3 in the near future. According to Aarnio (2001b), by then all the necessary services and infrastructure will have been built, in and around the resort. A fundamental part of this stage is the creation of new jobs and the emergence of enterprises specialising in tourism in the area, as well as growth in tourist numbers. The targets set in the Syöte Tourism Development Plan (Pudasjärven kaupunki 2010) conform to the above.

The central aim of the Plan was to match the requirements of various land use needs and nature tourism (Aarnio 2001b). The solution that was decided on in Syöte was zoning, which has since been implemented in the following way: in the Syöte Recreational Forest, Iso-Syöte Hiking Area and Soiperoinen Nature Reserve, nature-based tourism activities that require servicing by snowmobile, such as reindeer and dog sled safaris, are permitted, whereas in the Syöte National Park, only those nature-based tourism activities which consist of travelling by muscular strength, and do not require the enterprise to use a motor vehicle, are permitted. As an exception to this rule, the servicing of some dog sled and skiing routes by motor vehicle in the remote parts of the Park is allowed. The trail markings used in such cases have been strictly defined in cooperation with tourism enterprises and it has been ensured that the route does not endanger conservation values.

One of the previous planning period's targets was to organise the monitoring of the sustainability of tourism (Aarnio 2001b). The monitoring method presented in the previous plan was updated when the Park gained its European Charter membership, so that the LAC method, which included 31 indicators, was adopted in Syöte. These indicators were used to gauge the ecological, social, cultural and economical sustainability of tourism. The sustainability of tourism in the previous planning period, and the indicators that will be used in the future are described in Chapter 6.2 of this Plan.

The previous plan presented an action programme for 2002–2003, whose target was to create the conditions for developing nature-based tourism in the Syöte area (Aarnio 2001b). The action is described below with an estimation of its realisation.

1. **Preparing a guidebook on nature:** In 2002, the *Guidebook on Nature for Tourist Businesses* (Matkailuyrittäjien luonto-opas) was compiled for enterprises in the Syöte area (Aarnio et al. 2002). This guide met the goals set for it and is still an up-to-date work which functions as a data bank on the Syöte National Park and sustainable tourism.
2. **Preparing a service structure that supports business activities:** Between 2002 and 2003, the buildings of the Rytivaara Crown tenant farm and their yard were restored to become a destination showcasing the tenant farmer tradition. In addition, a barn, meadow sauna and meadow dam were built on the nearby fen meadow at Latolampi Pond. The area's trail network was restored after the above-mentioned works. After 2003 and joining

the European Charter network, a new action programme was prepared, and new service structures, which support businesses, have been built in accordance with the programme, for example, through projects involving relief work programmes. The steps taken have included, for example, making signposts, compiling brochure material and building new trails and rest spots.

- 3. Training and entrepreneurial cooperation for nature-based tourism enterprises:** Training events that are open to all entrepreneurs have been organised in Syöte since 2002. At the initial stage, the training events offered information about managing the traditional landscapes and Syöte's cultural sights. Later, the events have focused on current topics concerning, for example, the operations of Metsähallitus's units, the development projects for nature tourism and the cooperation issues connected to them. Cooperation between enterprises has been fruitful: there are several enterprises in the National Park offering nature-based tourism products which meet the jointly agreed upon quality criteria.
- 4. Defining the operating model for the Syöte Visitor Centre and launching operations:** The operating model for the Syöte Visitor Centre was determined in 2002 and operations started in early 2003 after the construction work was completed. Since it began operating, the Visitor Centre has been available for the area's tourism enterprises to be used in many ways. An essential part of the Visitor Centre's activities, performed alongside regular customer service, is education about nature, whose target group consists, among others, schools and educational establishments. The Visitor Centre has adopted the Syöte School as its "sponsored" school. Cooperation with the school has been active every year.
- 5. Participating in the Pudasjärvi municipality's development project "New Syöte":** Metsähallitus participated in the development project as planned. Metsähallitus's target in this project was to make the Syöte National Park and Iso-Syöte Hiking Area a part of Syöte's tourism system, and nature tourism a part of the area's image and image creation. This target was only partially reached and therefore the work is continued within the Syöteen lumoa ('Enchantment of Syöte') project, which is funded by the ERDF and is currently underway. The project's main target is to make Syöte's nature destinations a major tourism resource.
- 6. Participating in the project "The Taivalkoski Service Complex":** Metsähallitus participated in the development project as planned. The project resulted in the preparation of guidelines and plans for the development of the tourist services and their marketing in the municipality of Taivalkoski. More specific results of this operation include, for example, the founding of the Taivalkoski Nature Fitness Park and setting up a marketing website for the area.
- 7. Participating in the research project "Landscape Level Indicators for the Sustainable Use of Forests", funded by the Academy of Finland:** Syöte participated in this project which researched the attitudes of the local population, living around the Syöte area, on tourism and its development. The research was used in gauging the social sustainability of nature tourism as a part of the LAC method.
- 8. Gaining an international status for nature-based tourism in the Syöte area:** Syöte National Park applied and was accepted into the Europarc Federation's European Charter programme in 2004. The programme's target is to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas in Europe. As a requirement for joining the network, Metsähallitus and the cooperating enterprises functioning in the National Park have committed themselves to developing sustainable tourism in the long term. The instrument for development is the STDS which is updated every five years.

**9. Charting cooperation possibilities between the Syöte area and Värmland in Sweden:**

In 2001–2002, the administrative staff of Syöte and Värmland made reciprocal excursions to chart the possibilities for cooperating in nature-based tourism and the research on the history of forests. The journey to Sweden generated an idea for Syöte's service structures' architecture for which the building tradition in the area gives an individual appearance. The cooperation with Värmland was continued with a visit in 2006.

## APPENDIX 2

# **The Charter of Foundation of the Syöte National Park Cooperation Group, confirmed 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

## THE CHARTER OF FOUNDATION OF THE SYÖTE NATIONAL PARK COOPERATION GROUP

**NAME:** The Syöte National Park Cooperation Group

**PURPOSE:**

1. An advisory body for the administration of the Syöte National Park
2. Communication and information
3. The local body of the European Charter (*Charter Forum*)

**TASKS:**

- 1.1. Handling the current operations and projects concerning Syöte
- 1.2. Functioning as the steering group for management and utilisation planning
- 2.1. Getting interest groups involved
- 2.2. Communicating about Syöte National Park's operations and projects
- 2.3. Passing on feedback about the Park
- 3.1. Explaining the principles of the Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy to enterprises and interest groups
- 3.2. Assessments, recommendations and monitoring of the local enterprise partners for the European Charter

**MEMBERSHIP AND AUTHORISATION:**

- Metsähallitus
- City of Pudasjärvi
- Taivalkoski municipality
- Nature Conservation Society of Pudasjärvi (Pudasjärven luonnonsuojeluyhdistys)
- Syöte Village Society (Syötteen kyläyhdistys)
- Sarakylä Village Association (Sarakylän kyläseura ry)
- Syöte Tourist Association (Syötteen matkailuyhdistys)
- Taivalkoski Tourist Association (Taivalkosken matkailuyhdistys)
- Reindeer husbandry, Pudasjärvi reindeer husbandry area

Official organisations (Metsähallitus, municipalities, the Nature Conservation Society, tourist associations, village organisations) elect and authorise their representatives themselves. Tourist associations represent the area's tourism enterprises. Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services communicate about the Group's activities.

**WORKING METHOD:**

The City of Pudasjärvi and the municipality of Taivalkoski act as the Syöte National Park Cooperation Group's chairs on alternate years. Metsähallitus acts as the Group's secretary.

The Cooperation Group shall assemble at least twice a year (for example, in January and June), in addition to which extraordinary meetings can be held as necessary on the invitation of the chair.

The Cooperation Group performs the assessment of an enterprise that is applying for European Charter certification and provides a letter of recommendation for the Europarc Federation. A majority vote of 3/4 from the Group is required in order to accept a letter of recommendation. A member of the Group can enter a dissenting opinion in the report relating to verification.

**FINANCING:**

Participation in the Syöte Cooperation Group in an official capacity is lobbying and is paid for by the organisation itself. Metsähallitus is responsible for the meeting expenses of the representatives of the tourism enterprises and local residents who have been invited to the Group.

## Results of the Workshop “Factors Contributing to the Attraction of the Syöte National Park”

**Workshop: Factors Contributing to the Attraction of the Syöte National Park, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2010 – The Results**

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
1. Excellent location and accessibility 2. Cleanness, unhurried pace 3. Professional approach to development, modern moves 4. The resort as a whole 5. Tradition on hand and on offer	1. Seasons 2. Wilderness-like nature 3. Easy to reach, easy to find the beginning of the trail 4. Excellent collection of services (Park and enterprises) 5. Stories: people in the wilderness	1. Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- built-up environment (=service structures)</li> <li>- no natural catastrophes</li> <li>- controlled amount of extreme conditions</li> </ul> 2. Wild elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- wilderness-like environment</li> <li>- cleanness</li> <li>- congestion-free space</li> <li>- predators</li> </ul> 3. Destination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- services</li> <li>- activities</li> </ul> 4. Nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hill scenery</li> <li>- mires</li> </ul> 5. Locality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- authenticity, cultural history, traditions, village</li> </ul>	1. Untouched nature, the status of a national park 2. Resort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the services of enterprises (in the National Park)</li> <li>- the proximity of the Park</li> </ul> 3. Services at the Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- trails, etc.</li> </ul> 4. Distinguishable seasons 5. Events

## **Principles of Sustainable Tourism**

In order to develop nature-based tourism and its requirements, Metsähallitus has compiled principles of sustainable tourism for protected and wilderness areas, as well as for destinations within conservation programmes. Sustainable tourism is being developed in cooperation with enterprises, local residents, municipalities and other communities working in tourism. The principles of sustainable tourism are not a list of what must and must not be done. If anything, they are about our common ambition to reach a target situation that conforms to these general principles.

Sustainable tourism is pursued in the protected, wilderness and conservation programme areas, which are managed by Metsähallitus, in such a way that...

### **1. Natural heritage is preserved and the activities promote nature conservation**

- Nature is an important reason to travel
- Visitors are told about the area's nature and its protection
- Tourism does not disturb nature, not all areas are suitable for tourism use
- Groups are small, they travel along the trail whenever possible
- Tourism is channelled by the location of the service structure and the instructions provided
- The environment is built into in an adaptable way, scenic areas are preserved without added constructions
- The wear on the natural environment and other environmental effects are monitored and, when necessary, intervention takes place

### **2. As little burden as possible is placed on the environment**

- All action is taken on nature's terms, any kind of burdening the environment is refrained from
- The target is environmentally friendly and litter-free hiking
- Firewood is used sparingly
- Emissions in water and the air are minimised and renewable energy sources are favoured
- Metsähallitus and the entrepreneurs set a good example of environmental protection

### **3. Local culture and traditions are appreciated**

- Visitors are encouraged to find out about the local culture with an open mind
- The local culture is taken into account as far as possible in the supply of information and opportunities for experiences
- Guides who know the local conditions well are used in the services

### **4. Customers are appreciated and their knowledge of nature and culture increases**

- Information is acquired beforehand
- Information can be found easily and is offered in an interesting way
- Visitors are given the opportunity to participate in the area's management
- Guides are well trained

## **5. Customers' opportunities for finding recreation in nature are improved**

- All recreational users of nature are taken into account
- Services are suited to demand and destination
- Peace and quiet in nature and guided nature excursions are offered
- Tourism products are developed together with enterprises

## **6. Customers' mental and physical well-being is strengthened**

- Travel by muscular strength is preferred to motor vehicles
- Visitors are encouraged to make sure that they carry appropriate hiking equipment
- Both easy and demanding excursion destinations are available
- An opportunity to enjoy the wonders of nature is offered
- The structures, trails and programme services are safe

## **7. A positive effect on the local economy and employment is made**

- The products and services of local enterprises are used as much as possible
- Locals are employed as far as possible, without discarding the fact that ideas and people coming from elsewhere may also be a valuable resource in developing the home district

## **8. Communication and marketing are high in quality and responsible**

- Information is reliable
- Communication is open and interactive
- Marketing is not inconsistent with nature conservation

## **9. Operations are planned and implemented cooperatively**

- Customers' opinions are important
- Training is organised together with enterprises
- All interested parties are given an opportunity to participate in planning
- In cooperation, priority is given to those who commit themselves to the principles of sustainable tourism

## The Monitoring Equipment for Environmental Impacts Caused by Naturebased Tourism in Syöte 2011–

Principle of sustainable tourism	Monitoring indicator	Method of measurement
<b>1. Natural heritage is preserved and the activities promote nature conservation:</b> tourism and recreational use do not endanger threatened or rare species; nature-based tourism promotes, or at least does not deteriorate, landscape values.	Inhabited territories of the golden eagle in the Syöte area	Monitoring inhabited territories
	The coverage area of the trail and road networks (in hectares) per Park's square area (in hectares)	Buildings, Structures and Trails Information System (REISKA)
	Visitors' opinions about the quality of the landscape	Visitor survey
<b>2. As little burden as possible is placed on the environment:</b> the wear on the terrain is within acceptable limits, marked trails and maintained structures are used when present, environmentally friendly hiking is common, firewood is used sparingly.	Visitors' opinions about the wear on the terrain	Visitor survey
	Visitors' opinions about litter in the terrain	Visitor survey
	The consumption of firewood at rest spots per 5 years	The REISKA system
<b>3. Local culture and traditions are appreciated:</b> The operations of Metsähallitus and its cooperating enterprises are locally acceptable.	The number of tourism cooperation agreements	Information system for the trails used by an enterprise within forestry or protected areas (VUOKRA)
	Utilising the area's cultural heritage in tourism	Enterprise survey
<b>4. Customers are appreciated and their knowledge of nature and culture increases:</b> customers know the special characteristics of the local culture, they are interested in nature, they ask questions and acquire additional information, nature is an important motive for travelling.	Visitors' opinions about the importance of nature as part of their journey	Visitor survey
	The Visitor Centre's visitor number per year	Visitor ratings
	The visitor number to the Rytivaara Crown tenant farm per year	Visitor ratings
<b>5. Customers' opportunities for finding recreation in nature are improved:</b> maintaining a high-quality and welcoming recreational environment, taking other customers into account.	Visitors' opinions about the obtrusiveness of excessive visitor volume	Visitor survey
	Visitors' opinions about the obtrusiveness of other visitors' behaviour	Visitor survey
	Visitor satisfaction index	Visitor survey
<b>6. Customers' mental and physical well-being is strengthened:</b> visitors feel that they are revived in nature, visitors gain personal experiences and inspiration in nature, the safety of the service structures is guaranteed.	Visitors' opinions about the importance of relaxation when visiting the area	Visitor survey
	Visitors' opinions about the importance of mental well-being when visiting the area	Visitor survey
	The condition of the service structures (% value good/average/bad)	The REISKA system



<p><b>7. There is a positive effect on the local economy and employment:</b> The nature tourism that takes place in Syöte promotes the area's economy.</p>	<p>The effect of visitors' spending on the area's economy (euros/year) and on employment (person-workyear/year)</p>	<p>Customer information storage system (ASTA)</p>
<p><b>8. Communication and marketing are high in quality and responsible:</b> telling customers openly and comprehensively what actions are and are not appropriate in the Protected Areas.</p>	<p>The fulfilment of visitors' expectations in terms of the natural environment, opportunities for outdoor activities and hiking structures</p>	<p>Visitor survey</p>
<p><b>9. Operations are planned and implemented cooperatively:</b> The cooperation between Metsähallitus and tourism enterprises is easy and interactive, customer feedback is collected and processed, interest group cooperation is good and regular.</p>	<p>Cooperating enterprises' assessment of Metsähallitus's operations</p>	<p>Enterprise feedback form</p>
	<p>The Visitor Centre's customer satisfaction index</p>	<p>Customer feedback form</p>

## Results from the Workshop “From Targets to Action”

### Workshop: “From Targets to Action,” 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2010 – The Results

The essential elements of the target situation	Value
Finding common ground in the management and use of the area's nature among different operators and the local community 1 1 2 2 +	3.25
Controlled and sustainable growth of tourism 1 1 1	3
Carrying on a business professionally 1 1 2	2.5
Developing the area's culture into products (making the local way of life the focal point of tourism; people's relationship with nature now and before) 1 2 2 +	2.25
Involving quality in all work from top to bottom (competence at all levels) 2 1 2	2
Growth in customer numbers 2 + 1	1.75
Cooperation (all operators in the area) and networking 1 2	1.5
Locality, broadly understood 2 1	1.5
Guiding visitors to observe traditions, culture, nature – to open their eyes to their environment 2 1	1.5
Increasing interadministrative cooperation (for example, tourism and training) + 1	1.25
A sufficient number of suitable areas in use for tourism + + +	0.75
Utilising the area more broadly 1	1
The area's operators actively produce quality products in nature tourism 2 2	1
Multifaceted nature tourist + + 2	1
Salvaging clean natural products + + +	1
The attributes of nature tourism products (locality, quality, durability) 2 +	0.75
Quality marketing that supports the area's image – expectations and experiences match +	0.75
Tourism revenue benefits the surrounding area +	0.25
Developing sustainable programme services	0.25
Attitude training for travelling in nature	
Respect for nature	
Finding service producers among local operators and operators from elsewhere and gaining their commitment	
Conserving the wilderness-like qualities of the environment	
Easy accessibility from many points of view	
Internationality	
Treasuring traditions	

## Attainable key results

### Communication:

Increasing marketing and visibility both on a national and international level. People know about Syöte and become interested in the area.

Improving cooperation: increasing and developing marketing cooperation towards the Oulu region and Kuusamo Lapland. Taking quality and durability into account in marketing. We can reach a better level of cooperation by doing things together, by participating.

Area guide: a guide booklet that would provide all the essential information about the area to visitors (nature destinations, services, etc.)

Taking internationality into account when designing signposts

### Cultural heritage:

Culture, tradition, history: different kinds of destinations for the area that would present life that has been characteristic of the region through time, from far back in history to modern day. Being aware of where we come from in product development. At the same time, we live in a culture that is a product of earlier cultures – the present day is also interesting and we can influence the way it presents itself to tourists. Increasing consciousness of traditions and culture, cooperation with educational establishments in relation to this.

Information boards in the terrain which inform visitors about the local culture, especially along the trails

Developing culture into products at a general level: for example, Nature & Culture tours, visiting cultural sights on safaris. In developing service structures, their ability to support the organisation of tourism products should be taken into account.

### Locality:

Locality: the local community's approval for the growth in tourism and the utilisation of the local community as a resource. Concretely: events and testing tourism products with them.

### Developing the services:

Customer segmentation: not to "shoot in the dark" but being aware of customers' needs and wishes, as well as of the characteristics of customer groups. Making active choices as regards our product supply. Directed marketing on the basis of the above. Tailored customer/visitor surveys as research instruments.

### Quality and competence:

Awareness of quality in the various fields of tourism and taking durability into account in tourism activities.

Staff and customer service: improving the competence of staff with various training, the target of which is to improve the quality of products and services.

## **This strategy is endorsed by the Syöte National Park Cooperation Group**

**Syöte 11.1.2011,**

---

**Kaarina Daavittila, pj.**  
**City of Pudasjärvi**

---

**Jukka Mikkonen**  
**Municipality of Taivalkoski**

---

**Juha Kuukasjärvi**  
**Syöte Tourism Association**

---

**Juha Schroderus**  
**Taivalkoski Tourism Association**

---

**Mirjami Särkelä**  
**Syöte Village Society**

---

**Kaisa Nivala**  
**Sarakylä Village Association**

---

**Pirkko-Liisa Luhta**  
**Nature Conservation Society of Pudasjärvi**

---

**Reijo Kenttälä**  
**Reindeer Herding Co-operatives**

---

**Matti Hovi**  
**Metsähallitus**

---

**Veikko Virkkunen**  
**Metsähallitus**

# Newest Nature Protection Publications of Metsähallitus

## Series A

- No 191 Marika Yliniva ja Essi Keskinen 2010: Perämeren kansallispuiston vesimakrofyytit – peruskartoitus ja näytteenottomenetelmien vertailu. 66 s.
- No 192 Juutinen, R. ym. 2010: Lähteikköjen ennallistamistarve – kasviyhteisöjen ja ympäristön rakenteen tarkastelu. 59 s.
- No 193 Juutinen, R. (toim.) 2010: Lähteikköjen ennallistamistarve – hyönteislajiston tarkastelu ja koko hankkeen yhteenveto. 133 s.

## Series B

- No 145 Airaksinen, S. & Kuusiniva, M. 2010: Syötteen luontokeskuksen asiakastutkimus 2008–2009. 39 s.
- No 146 von Boehm, A. 2010: Nuuksion kansallispuiston kävijätutkimus 2009–2010. 60 s.
- No 147 Laukkanen, M. 2010: Kolin kansallispuiston yritystutkimus 2009–2010. 67 s.
- No 148 Leinonen, K., Seppänen, M., Raasakka, N. & Magga, A. 2011: Urho Kekkosen kansallispuiston kalastus- ja retkeily selvitys 2008. 36 s.
- No 149 Metsähallitus 2011: Metsähallituksen julkisten hallintotehtävien tilinpäätös ja toimintakertomus 2010. 62 s.

## Series C

- No 84 Metsähallitus 2010: Muotkatunturin erämaa-alueen hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma. 179 s.
- No 85 Kyöstilä, M., Erkkonen, J., Sulkava, P. & Lohiniva, S. 2010: Pallas-Yllästunturin kansallispuiston luontomatkailusuunnitelma. 82 s.
- No 86 Pulkkinen, P., Partanen, T., Kiiskinen, A. & Laakkonen, M. 2010: Pallas-Yllästunturin kansallispuiston kalavesien hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma. 40 s.
- No 87 Laukkanen, M. 2010: Kolin–Ruunaan alueen luontomatkailusuunnitelma. 39 s.
- No 88 Metsähallitus 2010: Pyhä-Häkin kansallispuiston ja Natura 2000 -alueen hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma. 104 s.
- No 89 Metsähallitus 2011: Lätäsenon–Hietajoen soidensuojelualueen hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma. 136 s.
- No 90 Pulkkinen, E. 2011: Idän Taigan luontomatkailusuunnitelma. Hossa, Kalevalapuisto, Ystävyyden puisto. 49 s.
- No 91 Metsähallitus 2011: Kalevalapuiston hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma. 143 s.
- No 92 Metsähallitus 2011: Tarvantovaaran erämaa-alueen hoito- ja käyttösuunnitelma. 166 s.
- No 93 Virkkunen, V. 2011: Syötteen luontomatkailusuunnitelma 2011. 59 s.
- No 94 Virkkunen, V. 2011: Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy 2011, Syöte National Park. 60 s.

ISSN-L 1796-2943  
ISSN 1796-2943 (online)  
ISBN 978-952-446-866-4 (pdf)

[www.metsa.fi/julkaisut](http://www.metsa.fi/julkaisut)