

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

Protecting Finland's natural treasures

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

During 2012 at Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services we successfully achieved and even exceeded targets set by Parliament and the ministries who oversee our work. Our achievements have also been acknowledged by the commercial sector throughout Finland. This recognition is due to our successful collaboration with many different partners. Thanks to these successes our work is also deservedly trusted by the authorities and our other funders.

The scope and aims of our work are defined by Finnish legislation, EU directives and UN agreements. Our activities promote employment and well-being, while also helping Finland to reach global goals on the conservation of biodiversity. We actively preserve and enhance shared natural values and the vital services that natural ecosystems provide.

Our achievements have been highly rated in international comparative studies. Two factors have been crucial to these successes. A national strategy on state-owned properties has effectively entrusted the management of Finland's protected areas to a single organisation, namely Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services. In this respect Finland differs from other European countries. This policy has facilitated the administration of protected areas and the provision of related public services.

The establishment of our national Natura 2000 network has also been a success, in spite of early problems. The fact that we have the world's most comprehensive and coherent network of protected areas illustrates the high value of our natural assets on a European scale. This has also helped us to define ambi-

Building trust



METSÄHALLITUS / JARI KOSTET

tious targets and effectively evaluate the results of our work.

Our participation in the EU's Natura network and other forms of international cooperation also gives us access to foreign funding sources. We have widely benefited from the availability of EU project funding for suitable initiatives. This has enabled us to channel EU funds into local economies around Finland, while also promoting a European identity.

Increased networking with local Finnish businesses and international partners has been very motivating for our own staff. Our personnel are well trained, committed and able to work independently on issues ranging from waste management in national parks and the provision of permits for hunting and

fishing in state-owned lands and waters, through to surveys of undersea ecosystems in the Baltic. Overseeing tasks that involve such a wide range of expertise can be challenging. It is not possible to get good results using blunt instruments. We motivate our personnel by allowing them to define for themselves how they can work most effectively. New practices that are carefully thought out and then proven in reality become a source of satisfaction and inspiration. Natural Heritage Services' steering units play an important role in this context. We aim to effectively encourage continuous learning.

During 2012 progress on the construction of the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia continued apace. Haltia provides an excellent example of how we like to work collaboratively. The company building the centre is owned jointly by Natural Heritage Services, the City of Espoo and local property developers Solvalla Nedre. The centre is also being funded by neighbouring cities and municipalities including Helsinki. Many local tourist service providers will also be involved, making Haltia a genuine public-private partnership.

We aim to keep on working in the same cooperative spirit during 2013. We believe that this is a very positive way to continue earning the trust of our funders and partners.

Rauno Väisänen,
Director of Metsähallitus
Natural Heritage Services



Koli National Park was voted as the Hiking Destination of the Year for 2013 at a major outdoor recreation fair. Model and TV personality Saimi Hoyer, here enjoying the view from Koli's highest hilltop, is one of several celebrity national park ambassadors appointed to spread the message about Finland's top natural attractions. PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / JOHANNA KOKKOLA.

Finland's natural attractions promote tourism and create jobs

Finland's 37 national parks form a network of natural attractions whose status serves as a guarantee of their quality. They contain prime examples of the best of Finnish nature, which are also valuable on an international scale. Metsähallitus's Natural Heritage Services unit manages all of Finland's national parks, strict nature reserves and other important natural areas, including the Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site.

In 2012 our national parks welcomed a total of more than two million visitors. Their visitor numbers have doubled in just ten years.

Natural Heritage Services uses public funds to maintain wide-ranging outdoor facilities from impressive visitor centres to well marked trails and picnic sites. We also run an extensive and detailed website in four languages. These services are designed to encourage people to enjoy nature, and to promote sustainable nature

tourism. Studies have proven that public investments in national parks give society a more than tenfold return through benefits to local economies. More information on visitor numbers and economic impacts is given at the end of this report.

Through visitors' spending, Lemmenjoki National Park brings more than 750,000 euros a year into the local economy in this remote rural region of Finnish Lapland. Surveys have confirmed that most visitors come to Lemmenjoki

to experience the vast park's truly wild natural settings – though services provided by local firms also enable less adventurous visitors to enjoy easy day-trips offering a taste of the wilderness. Visitors stay in the area for six days on average, and particularly contribute to the local economy through their spending on accommodation, transportation and food.

New nature tourism partnerships

Development projects in parks likewise create jobs, while also providing facilities to enhance the experiences of future visitors. In Hammastunturi Wilderness Area in northern Finnish Lapland, Metsähallitus, the municipality of Inari and the local gold museum have collaborated on the restoration of historic gold-miners' buildings by the River Ivalojoiki, aided by finance from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The most popular and valu-

able relics of almost 150 years of local gold mining heritage will thus be preserved as attractions and as traditional cabin accommodation for future travellers.

The chance to experience historic sights in splendid natural settings also brings many visitors to our marine areas. Popular events in 2012 included the World Heritage Days in the Kvarken Archipelago and International Lighthouse Weekend in August. Together with local firms and associations we organised events in Kvarken, in the Bothnian Sea National Park, and on the island of Söderskär in the Gulf of Finland. On the busiest day more than 600 people visited the lighthouses in the Bothnian Sea – and a further 600 people enjoyed breathtaking views from the 150-year-old Söderskär lighthouse.

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services manages many important cultural and natural sites on offshore islands in cooperation with local associations

and volunteers. We are also working collaboratively to attract funding to keep archipelago communities active. Renovation work on old pilots' and lighthouse-keepers' houses at Söderskär began during 2012. In the Bothnian Sea we are currently building partnerships with eight local tourism service providers.

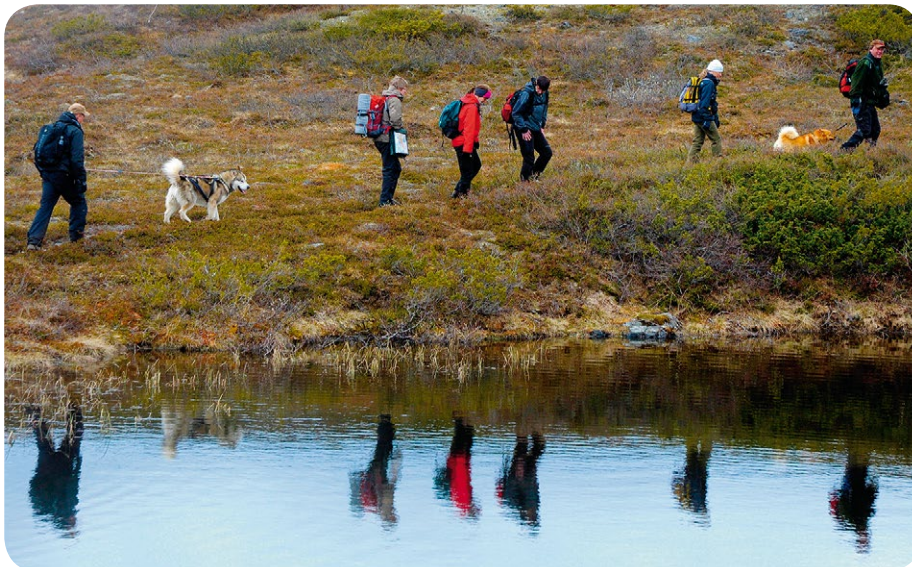
A wide-ranging collaboration agreement covering the Kvarken Archipelago aims to use funding and expertise from Metsähallitus and local municipalities to promote sustainable tourism in this UNESCO world heritage site.

We are also building significant international partnerships across Finland's borders. The Finnish-Russian Quality-CET Project aims to promote the borderlands of Karelia as a destination for cross-border ecotourism. We already have positive experiences of such cooperation between twinned national parks on either side of the Finnish-Russian frontier in Lapland and near Kuusamo. Pairs of protected areas in Finnish and Russian Karelia have been twinned to facilitate exchanges of conservation and marketing expertise and build up collaboration on nature tourism.

Work experience for unemployed youngsters

Through a state-funded youth employment scheme Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services hired 138 young people in the summer and autumn to work in our national parks and visitor centres. In return we also learnt a lot from these youngsters about communication channels we can use to make young people become friends of our national parks.

– As the organisation responsible for managing almost all of Finland's protected areas we have been well placed to offer plenty of work to large numbers of young people across the country in professions and regions with high unemployment, says development manager **Pertti Itkonen**.



Through the Village to Village tourism development scheme local businesses and authorities around Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park are creating a network of routes and services to enable visitors to trek through the park, enjoying the wilds each day with only light rucksacks, but over-nighting in villages with all modern conveniences. Almost 400 hikers have already booked such packages for summer 2013. PHOTO. METSÄHALLITUS / SEIJA OLKKONEN.



The coastal waters of the Baltic Sea, like these in the Ekenäs Archipelago National Park, have diverse seabed conditions and marine life. PHOTO: MATS WESTERBOM

Fruitful nature conservation work

Natural Heritage Services conserves nature in Finland's forests, arctic fells, lakes and marine waters. This work involves surveys of occurrences of important species and the sensitive management of ecologically valuable habitats.

We continued to survey and protect marine ecosystems intensively during 2012. Work on the Finnish Inventory Programme for the Underwater Marine Environment (VELMU) was stepped up thanks to the increased availability of funding for the protection of the Baltic Sea. New personnel and boats

were acquired for this purpose, as well as new underwater video equipment shared with the Finnish Environment Institute. Though conditions were often stormy in the Baltic we were able to make video surveys of 9,000 underwater sites during 2012 (compared to 5,000 sites in 2011).

Saimaa ringed seals on the rise

Metsähallitus's experts reckon that there are now approximately 310 freshwater seals in Lake Saimaa. The endangered Saimaa ringed seal is an endemic subspecies found only in Finland's largest lake system.

– This is the third year running that the seals' numbers have risen, says senior

advisor **Tero Sipilä**. – This is thanks to wider limits on the use of fishing nets, as well as three successive winters when plentiful snow on the frozen lake has made it easier for the seals to make good breeding dens.

It is hoped that the seals' numbers will rise to about 400 by 2025. Experts believe this is the minimum level for their population to be truly viable. Deaths in fishing nets still remain a serious threat, even though legislation to prevent such accidents has been in force since 2011.

Metsähallitus's rangers and game and fisheries wardens monitored the use of fishing nets in the waters where the seals

breed, starting when the ice melted in spring. Representatives from local fishing associations were also involved in this work. The regional authorities have made agreements with about 260 local fishing associations banning nets between mid April and the end of June. Hardly any nets were found in the restricted areas during the monitoring period.

Wardens contribute to nature conservation

Metsähallitus now employs 11 regional game and fisheries wardens, following the establishment of a new position during 2012 covering state-owned lands in Central and Southern Lapland.

– There has long been a need to intensify our work preventing poaching of large carnivores and overseeing the increasing use of off road vehicles, says area manager **Pirjo Ilvesviita**.

Game and fisheries wardens monitor hunting, fishing and off-road traffic to ensure that legislation and permit procedures are duly observed. They are empowered with the same legal authority as the police, but they also depend on assistance from the police force. In late winter a campaign reminded snowmobilers in the north to avoid disturbing golden eagles during their nesting season. A single careless intrusion too close to an eagle's nest could stop the birds breeding successfully.

Snowmobiling is widely permitted on frozen waterways and other designated snowmobiling routes. Metsähallitus maintains half of Finland's 20,000 km of snowmobile routes and tracks.

– To use the tracks you need a permit, which can also be purchased by mobile phone these days, explains game and fisheries warden **Markus Aho**.

– Almost all of our tracks run through forests that are commercially managed, outside protected areas.

Under new fishing legislation, fishing supervisors must obtain an official qualification from the regional authorities. So far 13 of our own staff and around 200 volunteer supervisors have obtained the new qualifications thanks to training provided by Metsähallitus.

Expanding protected areas and innovations in park planning

Metsähallitus National Heritage Services has been actively helping the Ministry of the Environment to prepare legislation that will designate new protected areas around the country. We are also preparing for the protection of further areas of ecologically valuable forests in Southern Finland as part of the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme.

We actively collaborate with other authorities and organisations on land use planning issues related to our areas. An international nature conservation conference highly praised our efforts to plan the management of the Hammastunturi Wilderness Area together with the Finnish Sámi Parliament to ensure that the needs and desires of Finland's indigenous Sámi people are duly taken into account right from the start. Finland is the first country to apply the United Nations' related AkWè:Kon planning guidelines in practice in this way.

Work has commenced on land use planning for two national parks established in 2011: Sipoonkorpi and the Bothnian Sea. Vital issues at Sipoonkorpi include routes into the park, the provision of trails and other facilities in suitable locations for visitors, efforts to safeguard natural features, and collaboration with local residents and stakeholders. Feedback and ideas were compiled for this purpose using a special map-based web interface.



Wardens monitor snowmobile traffic in the wilderness areas of Finnish Lapland. PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / HANNALEENA MÄKI-PETÄYS.



Bloody cranesbill (*Geranium sanguineum*) flowers bloom in the Archipelago National Park. PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / KATJA RAATIKAINEN.

Managing diverse woodland and meadowland habitats

During 2012 we launched the extensive Species-rich LIFE Project, under which almost 1,000 hectares of diverse meadowland or herb-rich and deciduous woodland habitat in 59 sites across Finland will be purposefully managed to enhance their biodiversity.

– The project sites are mainly small, and their valuable species diversity could be lost if they are not suitably managed, says conservation biologist **Katja Raatikainen**. The EU will provide half of the project's budget of 3.65 million euros. Other partners include WWF Finland and the Finnish Environment Institute.

Luonnonhoito-LIFE



Species-rich LIFE

Before management work begins, sites' cultural heritage values are assessed. Local residents can contribute, and also find out for themselves how such protected areas are managed. At Puijo Nature Reserve in Kuopio, for instance, where cultural relics and the occurrences of moss species have been surveyed, local people have provided useful information about historical sites as well as occurrences of invasive plant species such as hogweed and Himalayan balsam. These aggressively spreading plants are to be eradicated to benefit threatened native species.

New discoveries in Lapland

– Certain species groups such as butterflies and crane flies are good indicators of different natural values, says conservation biologist **Jukka Salmela**, who recently discovered five previously unknown populations of the arctic ringlet butterfly (*Erebia disa*) in a survey of Lapland. – We know, for instance, that marshes hosting this species are unlikely to host certain endangered fly species. This kind of connection shows why it's useful to build up a wide range of data.

Moss researcher **Riikka Juutinen** has also recently made some notable discoveries.

– It's hard to identify moss species reliably in the field, and much of this work is done afterwards with a microscope, she explains. During 2012 Juutinen found several earlier unknown occurrences of endangered mosses. Such species often grow only in uncommon biotopes that also tend to host other rare species. Such surveys have built up valuable new data on poorly studied biotopes in Northern Lapland including springs with Palustriella mosses, sites with calcium-rich bedrock, fens, and heathlands with mountain avens flowers.

In Lapland we are also assessing the status of the freshwater pearl mussel and testing new methods to promote the spe-

cies' recovery in an international project involving collaboration with Swedish and Norwegian scientists.

Protecting cultural heritage

The freshwater pearl mussel is one of many wild species used by people in Finland over the centuries. In another project we are assessing the status of this threatened mollusc in the northeastern region of Kainuu. This project will also compile historical material on the collection of pearls, and assess whether local mussels could be boosted by introducing more of the fish that serve as the mussels' hosts in their parasitic larval stage.

We have also continued to compile new information on cultural heritage across Finland. In the Hossa Hiking Area archaeologist **Oili Rähälä** surveyed traces of human activity from recent centuries, to complement information previously compiled on prehistoric relics, old buildings and underwater cultural heritage. The 85 sites documented during the summer of 2012 included traces left by former tar-burners, reindeer-herders, loggers and hay-makers. All this information now gives us a good picture of the story of human activity in Hossa over the past ten thousand years. Such cultural heritage surveys primarily aim to increase awareness of local history. This material can then also be used to promote tourism.

Archaeologists and building experts have also been at work in Finland's archipelagos. The outer islands of the Bothnian Sea National Park were surveyed, and plans have been made for the repair and restoration of heritage buildings. In the Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site Metsähallitus has worked with local residents, the University of Oulu and the National Board of Antiquities to produce guidelines for the renovation of culturally valuable heritage buildings in this unique coastal region.



Guided canoeing trips take visitors through the beautiful lakeland scenery of Linnansaari National Park. PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / TEA KARVINEN.

Many enticing paths lead to natural treasures

To encourage all kinds of people to visit our national parks and hiking areas we provide services and facilities ranging from trails and wilderness huts to guided excursions and informative websites. Natural Heritage Services' wide-ranging collaboration with local tourism service providers, municipalities and associations also helps to attract visitors.

Repovesi National Park was chosen in a public vote as the Hiking Destination of the Year for 2012, when the park welcomed almost 90,000 visitors,

compared to 78,500 in 2011. Repovesi provides an ideal setting for outdoor activities from berry-picking and canoeing to rock-climbing and snowshoe-trekking. Families have particularly been discovering the charms of Repovesi and the Aarnikotka Forest Nature Reserve which is connected to the park and owned by UPM.

Realising that we need to provide more facilities for our visitors, we created the new Fox's Trail, leading to safe adventures including an attractive hanging bridge and a small ferry that walkers operate themselves. We have also provided more park-

ing spaces and traditional kota shelters for visitors to rent.

Children's guides help kids enjoy healthy activities in natural settings. The association Metsämörrihajaajat was awarded a prize by Metsähallitus and the Finnish Sports Gala for its nationwide work getting children and young people to enjoy outdoor activity. An interest in nature and outdoor pursuits aids youngsters' physical and psychological development. Studies have shown that even short periods of outdoor recreation can lead to significant improvements in well-being.

Popular new visitor centres at Pyhä-Luosto and Liminka Bay

In June the new Naava Visitor Centre opened on the fringes of Pyhä-Luosto National Park, giving Eastern Lapland an exciting new centre for events and exhibitions. The centre is run by Natural Heritage Services. Many local organisations in the public and private sectors collaborate to promote sustainable nature tourism in Finnish Lapland.

Liminka Bay's greatly expanded visitor centre reopened in spring, providing a base for visitors to this wetland area near Oulu, which is internationally renowned for its rich bird life. The centre's beautiful exhibition, which illustrates the eight seasons of a bird's year and the wonders of bird migration, has been highly praised.

Both of these new centres have exceeded their visitor targets, jointly attracting more than 111,000 visitors by the end of the year.



New Finnish Nature Centre approaching completion

In March the prefabricated wooden walls of the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia were erected on the fringes of Nuuksio National Park in Espoo. In August, over 500 visitors were given a sneak preview of the new centre, which will feature the best of Finland's natural treasures from the arctic highlands to the Baltic islands. Haltia and its high-tech exhibitions are due to open in May 2013. The building itself has been designed with nature in mind. The first major public building in Finland to be made completely of wood, Haltia will also be heated using ground-source and solar energy.

From the centre visitors will be able to get out into the lovely natural scenery of

Nuuksio National Park, where Metsähallitus has built many new trails during 2012, especially considering the needs of school groups and disabled visitors.

Well-being from parks in Oulu region

Over the next couple of years a network of services and facilities will be set up in and around the northern city of Oulu, designed to promote both urban parks and the region's national parks and other outdoor recreation areas as networked amenities that can enhance local residents' well-being. Information on these attractive areas will be available from a single source. A special information package will be produced to inform immigrant residents about nature in Finland, the region's natural attractions, and related opportunities for outdoor activities.

Through collaborative research we also aim to find ways to effectively demonstrate the health impacts of outdoor recreation in natural settings, enabling the managers of natural areas to help promote public health by increasingly providing suitable facilities.

Durable trails made of steel

Sustainability is the key issue in the construction and maintenance of trails, which must be stable, safe and long-lasting. The sensitivity of natural terrain must also be considered by channeling visitors through areas less vulnerable to erosion. Economic sustainability is also important when new trail construction materials and methods are developed.

Duckboard trails, wooden steps and small wooden bridges have a typical lifespan of just 15 years or so, and replacing wooden structures can be costly.

– In Lapland we've been testing steps made of recycled steel, says planning officer **Sulo Norberg**.



Young naturalists enjoying an educational event in Nuuksio National Park, near Helsinki.

PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / EMILIA RÜF.

– This material blends into the terrain well, is not slippery, and requires no maintenance. Such steps are also easy to build, and costs over the whole life cycle are lower than for wooden steps. Trials are to continue, with feedback also obtained from users.

Virtual paths to outdoor amenities

The Outdoors.fi website for people interested in outdoor recreation in Finland's natural areas was visited by 923,000 internet-users during 2012. The Finnish version of this popular website also has an associated web community, where national park visitors can share their experiences. The number of visits to the Excursionmap.fi website also increased, by 15% compared to 2011.

Web services for purchasing fishing, hunting and off-road permits were revamped at the end of 2012. Since the beginning of 2013 these Metsähallitus permits have been on sale through the website Eraluvat.fi, which features our areas and services, describes conditions for permits, and explains how we manage state-owned hunting grounds and fishing waters.

Fishing and hunting permits by mobile phone

In Finland landowners' permission is required for hunting, fishing and the use of off-road vehicles. For state-owned lands, such permits should be obtained from Metsähallitus. For the convenience of applicants we provide many hunting permits, snowmobile track permits, recreational fishing permits and lure-fishing permits by mobile phone. Since 2012 it has also been possible to pay the national fishing management fee by mobile phone.

Using this system fishing permit applicants can use their mobile phones to call this service (in Finnish) and enter

details of the permit required. The applicants will subsequently receive a text message asking for their name, after which a permit message will be sent to their mobile phone. Permits for hunting game birds may also be issued in this way. Fees for such permits are paid as part of applicants' telephone bills.

Promoting fishing tourism in Kainuu

Tourists including recreational fishers have become more aware of ecological issues,

and the popularity of recreational fishing waters stocked artificially with rainbow trout has decreased. To meet such changes in demand we have launched two EU-funded projects in Kainuu in NE Finland that will improve amenities for sustainable fishing tourism.

New plans will be made for the development of existing and new recreational fishing waters in Kainuu, with the focus on native Finnish fish species and their sustainable management.

A new website in Finnish and Swedish has been launched for fishers, hunters and snowmobile users, providing information and advice, and enabling them to purchase permits online. The website will open in English by the year 2014.



This old islander's croft in the Bothnian Sea National Park has been restored with the help of international volunteers in a work camp project run by Metsähallitus and the volunteers' organisation KVT. PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / HENRIK JANSSON.

Volunteers enjoy working to support nature conservation

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services has continued to expand schemes where volunteers help with surveys or habitat management work. Almost 2,000 people participated in such schemes during 2012, working in natural areas such as national parks.

Last year many keen volunteers contributed their time to help compile information on the occurrence of important species, manage valuable landscapes, and maintain healthy game

and fish stocks. We are grateful for the useful support of organisations such as the friends of national parks, as well as people who even pay for the chance to enjoy working holidays in a form of nature tourism that is rapidly expanding through Finland's national parks.

Rewarding work for nature-lovers

Due to changes in Finnish farming fewer animals graze in traditional pastures and meadows these days, and such habitats

have become scarce. Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services manages almost three thousand hectares of meadowland, swidden fields earlier cleared and burnt from forest, and other traditional agricultural landscapes across the country. Such habitats are vital to many threatened species. They also provide beautiful pastoral settings where volunteer workers can enjoy rewarding and memorable experiences contributing to nature conservation with like-minded people.

The chance to work for a week as a volunteer shepherd in Koli National Park or Isojärvi National Park again proved popular. Volunteers were also keen to work as farm hands or maids at Kovero Heritage Farm in Seitsemien National Park, which is preserved just as it was in the 1930s.

Volunteers again collectively managed many other heritage landscapes around Finland, including a forest ranger's croft on an island in Linnansaari National Park, where volunteer camps have been run by Metsähallitus and WWF Finland since the 1970s, using old tools and methods to manage meadows and practice traditional slash-and-burn farming. The area's flora and fauna have become more diverse thanks to this work. Last summer the rare chequered blue butterfly (*Scolitantides orion*) was seen here for the first time in many years.

To mark International Volunteer Day in December Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services granted Volunteer of the Year 2012 awards to WWF Finland's volunteer work camp organisation and to **Pentti Järvisalo**, who has participated in such camps over many years.

Valuable contributions from volunteers

Friends associations have been set up for parks by agreement with Natural Heritage Services. We appreciate their

→ *This fledgling Caspian tern (Hydroprogne caspia) lives in a thriving colony of these rare seabirds protected in the Eastern Gulf of Finland National Park, which was established 30 years ago. A survey of trends in the park's bird populations, published in 2012 by Metsähallitus, shows that some species are declining, however. The report was produced by Tatu Hokkanen with valuable help from many amateur ornithologists.* PHOTO: METSÄHALLITUS / MIKA ROKKA.

contributions towards shared goals such as increasing our awareness of nature and cultural history in the archipelago. Collaboration in the Archipelago National Park started with volunteers surveying occurrences of the rare elder-flowered orchid.

Expert amateur naturalists can greatly contribute to surveying and monitoring work, including surveys of the dens of Saimaa ringed seals in late winter. Members of WWF Finland and ornithological societies annually help Metsähallitus and personnel from the regional environmental authorities to survey the nests and territories of the endangered white-backed woodpecker. In 2012 almost 150 breeding territories and 98 nests were found, with one nest containing a record five woodpecker fledglings. In spite of a cold spring, breeding rates were favourable, and the number of successfully raised broods only fell five short of the record number observed the previous year.

Metsähallitus is also responsible for monitoring the Finnish populations of several other species. Golden eagles bred well in summer 2012, successfully nesting in 130 sites. A total of 150 eaglets were ringed. White-tailed eagle breeding rates remained stable, but peregrine falcons did not breed as well as normally, and gyrfalcon breeding rates were very low for the fourth year running.

Metsähallitus offered bounties of 100 euros for anyone discovering previously unknown golden eagle nesting sites anywhere in Finland or white-tailed eagle nests in the north. This campaign resulted in information on 14 newly discovered golden eagle nests and two white-tailed eagle nests.



Managing our natural areas

For nature and people in 2013

Natural Heritage Services preserves our shared heritage by sustainably managing Finland's national parks, other protected areas, and game and fish stocks. This work also promotes public well-being and brings income to rural regions. In 2013 our work will continue to be guided by the same objectives. Here are examples of our planned actions:

Well-being from natural areas

- Facilities in the new Sipoonkorpi National Park will be improved.
- Physical recreation in nature will be promoted through a special project targeting improvements in public well-being.
- Recreational fishing waters will be developed.

Partnerships for nature tourism

- The Finnish Nature Centre Haltia will become a major attraction within easy reach of Helsinki.
- We will enhance cross-border nature tourism together with our partners in Russia.
- Pallas–Yllästunturi National Park will become part of an international network of nature reserves promoting sustainable nature tourism.

The sustainable management of protected areas and natural resources

- We will protect more areas within the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland.
- A major project will be launched to restore natural trout populations in the River Oulanka.
- We will start ecological surveys of inland waters.

Improving our productivity

- A new information system will improve the management of data on nature and our areas.
- We will prepare a report for the Ministry of the Environment on the prospects for the establishment of four new national parks.
- We will increasingly network with organisations working with health and well-being.

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services 2012 in numbers

NATIONAL PARKS BRING VISITORS AND INCOME TO RURAL AREAS

Investments made by the government in the provision of facilities for recreation in national parks and hiking areas are paid back to society many times over through the opportunities they create for enterprise and employment.

In 2012 Finland's national parks welcomed around 2.09 million visitors, whose spending brought in income to the surrounding areas worth ca. 109.5 million euros and 1,412 person-years in employment. Considering the costs of running their facilities, this corresponds to an overall 10-time payback.

These economic impacts are calculated using methodology devised by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services and the Finnish Forest Research Institute on the basis of data on visitor numbers compiled by Natural Heritage Services, survey findings on visitors' spending levels, and factoring figures that account for the cumulative impacts of visitors' spending in local economies.

WORKING FOR NATURE

Half of our employees work in Southern Finland, a quarter work for our Ostrobothnia regional unit and a quarter work in Finnish Lapland. The total work input over the year amounted to 562 person-years. We continued to provide work for inmates from open prisons, amounting to 34 person-years.

Volunteers contribute greatly to our nature conservation work. In 2012 our volunteers worked a total of 16 person-years.

NATURE CONSERVATION IN NUMBERS 2012

- 1,897 hectares of forest and mire habitats restored
- 3,388 hectares of traditional agricultural biotopes managed
- 77,610 hectares of terrestrial biotopes surveyed
- ca. 10,000 hectares of underwater biotopes surveyed
- species surveyed on 3,390 hectares
- cultural heritage surveyed on 18,653 hectares

VISITOR FACILITIES IN NUMBERS 2012

- 2,940 campfire sites and maintained picnic sites
- 2,290 maintained waste collection points and dry compost toilets
- 7,310 km of maintained trails, including informative nature trails



NATURAL HERITAGE SERVICES' FINANCES IN 2012

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services' activities are largely financed from the national government budget. Additional income is obtained from fees paid for hunting and fishing permits, and rents.

■ Ministry of Environment
38.0 mil. €

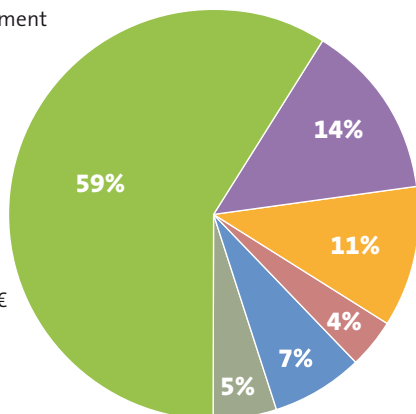
■ Income 8.7 mil. €

■ Ministry of
Agriculture and
Forestry 6.9 mil. €

■ Ministry of
Employment and
the Economy 2.4 mil. €

■ European Union
4.7 mil. €

■ Other funding 3.1 mil. €



Total: 63.8 mil. €

METSÄHALLITUS'S PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FUNCTIONS

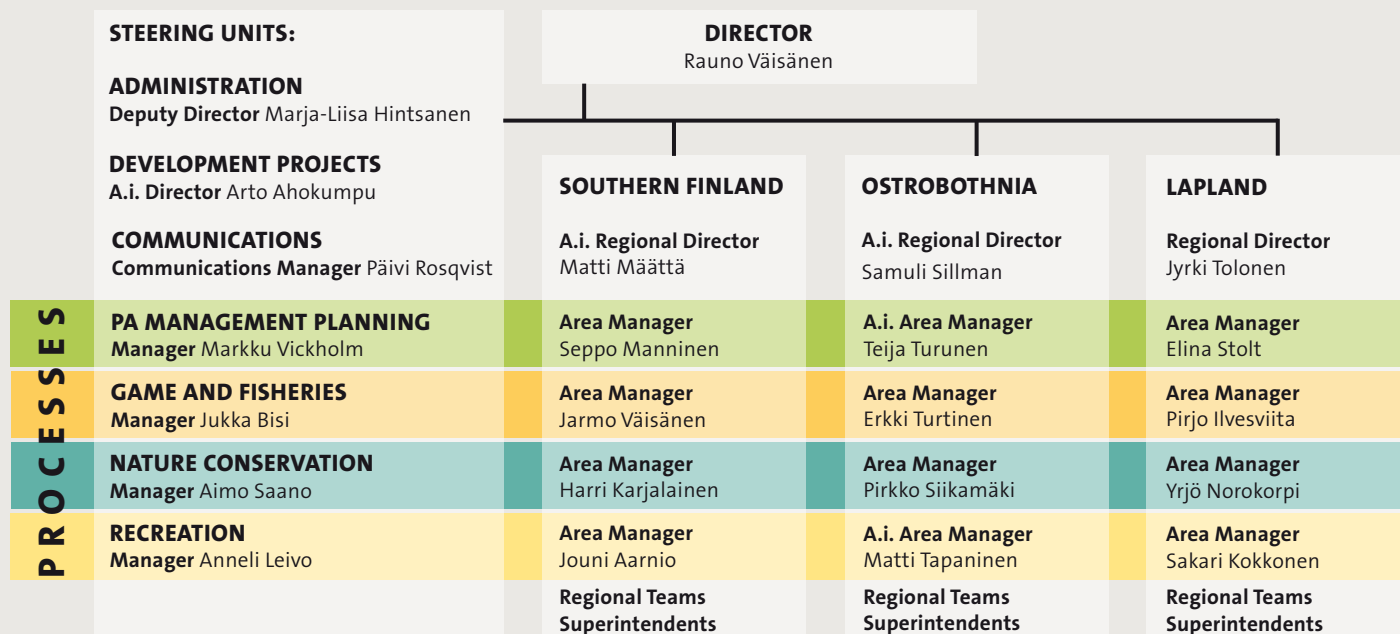
Metsähallitus is a state-owned enterprise that provides services related to natural resources. Metsähallitus's activities are divided into commercial operations (including forestry and real estate deals) and the public administration services provided by Natural Heritage Services (including nature conservation, hunting and fishing services and the provision of free facilities for outdoor recreation). The public services are largely financed from the national government budget.

OUR AREAS IN NUMBERS 2012

The administration of lands and waters owned by the Finnish State (which amount to about a third of the country's total area) has been placed in the care of Metsähallitus.

- *Metsähallitus administers areas with a total extent of 125,000 square kilometres, including 91,000 sq km of state-owned land and 34,000 sq km of state-owned waters.*
- *Of these totals Natural Heritage Services manages 39,000 sq km of land and 32,000 sq km of waters (totaling 71,000 sq km), including:*
 - 37 national parks, 19 strict nature reserves, and about 500 other nature reserves (together totaling 17,000 sq km)
 - 12 wilderness areas (with a total extent of 15,000 sq km)

ORGANISATION OF NATURAL HERITAGE SERVICES 1.1. 2013





Metsähallitus visitor centres and customer service points 2012. Contact information and services: www.outdoors.fi > Customer service.

CUSTOMER SERVICE IN NUMBERS 2012

- 5.1 million visits to areas managed by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services
- 965,500 visits to customer service points
- 54,000 participants in client groups provided with guidance
- 923,000 visitors at the Luontoon.fi (Outdoors.fi) websites
- 1.3 million visits to the Retkikartta.fi (Excursionmap.fi) website
- 77,000 fishing permits purchased
- 47,000 hunting permits purchased
- customer satisfaction ratings averaging 4.2 (on a scale of 1–5)
- satisfaction ratings among fishers and hunters averaging 3.8 (on a scale of 1–5)

ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF VISITS TO VISITOR CENTRES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE POINTS IN 2012

(total: 965,500 visits)

Service point	Visits
Blåmusslan	15 600
Ekenäs	15 300
Fell-Lapland	25 300
Hailuoto	18 000
Hautajärvi	8 300
Hossa	38 100
Häme	17 400
Ivalo	13 500
Kalajoki	30 900
Karhuntutassu	26 600
Kellokas	76 200
Kiehinen	48 300
Kilpisjärvi	10 300
Koilliskaira	13 400
Korvatunturi	7 000
Naava	63 300
Nestori – Saimaa Nature Exhibition	28 000
Oskari	11 900
Oulanka	66 400
Pallastunturi	32 700
Petola	12 500
Ruunaa	8 800
Seitseminen	28 700
Siida	111 900
Syöte	31 600
Teijo	16 000
Terranova	20 400
Ukko	51 500

ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF VISITS TO NATIONAL PARKS IN 2012

(total: 2.087 300)

National park	Visits
Archipelago	57 400
Bothnian Bay	8 700
Bothnian Sea	32 200
Eastern Gulf of Finland	14 400
Ekenäs Archipelago	41 500
Helvetinjärvi	23 000
Hiidenportti	10 200
Isojärvi	11 000

Kauhaneva–Pohjankangas	4 000
Koli	125 600
Kolovesi	7 800
Kurjenrahka	30 700
Lauhanvuori	9 400
Leivonmäki	14 700
Lemmenjoki	12 400
Liesjärvi	19 500
Linnansaari	29 500
Nuuskio	183 400
Oulanka	162 400
Pallas–Yllästunturi	473 000
Patvinsuo	11 400
Petkeljärvi	16 400
Puurijärvi–Isosuo	7 600
Pyhä–Häkki	14 300
Pyhä–Luosto	109 400
Päijänne	11 100
Repovesi	89 200
Riisitunturi	20 900
Rokua	23 400
Salamajärvi	13 000
Seitseminen	37 600
Sipoonkorpi	95 000
Syöte 33	400
Tiilikkajärvi	7 700
Torransuo	18 300
Urho Kekkonen np	300 400
Valkmusa	7 400

ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF VISITS TO NATIONAL HIKING AREAS IN 2012

(total: 354,000 visits)

Hiking area	Visits
Evo	59 500
Hossa	51 100
Iso-Syöte	25 700
Kylmäluoma	26 300
Oulujärvi	35 600
Ruunaa	84 500
Teijo	71 300

Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services

Metsähallitus is a state-owned enterprise that provides services related to Finland's natural resources. Natural Heritage Services is a unit of Metsähallitus, providing public administration services which are largely financed from the national government budget.

Natural Heritage Services

- manages national parks, strict nature reserves, wilderness areas, national hiking areas and most of the state-owned public waters of Finland
- protects and manages species, habitats and cultural heritage in state-owned protected areas
- provides outdoor recreation services for hikers
- sells permits for hunting, fishing and snowmobiling.

www.metsa.fi/naturalheritage – information on the activities and organisation of Natural Heritage Services

www.outdoors.fi – information on the protected areas and services for hikers

www.excursionmap.fi – hiking-destinations and hunting and fishing areas on a map

www.eraluvat.fi – new web service for purchasing hunting and fishing permits (will be available in English in 2014)

www.haltia.com – Finnish Nature Centre Haltia opens in May 2013 and brings all of Finland's nature under one roof and closer to the visitor in the Helsinki region.

