Tourism, health, well-being and nature

Pertti Itkonen
Development Manager
Parks & Wildlife Finland
National Parks and recreation

Until 1980’s: Stronghold for nature
-> ”Hedgehog defence”, visitor management to minimize their impact on nature

1990’s: Oasis of recreation
-> Recreational services for individual hikers

2000’s: Tourism attraction
-> Cooperation with business for positive impact on local economy

2010’s: Healthy Parks, Healthy People
-> Wellbeing by nature
Standard of living is rising and average lifetime prolonging in urbanised world, but...

- Allergy and asthma are increasing
- Autoimmune diseases like type 2 diabetes are becoming more common
- Stress symptoms caused by noise, artificial light, pollution, crowding and intensive working are severe problems
Increasing evidence shows that contact with nature

- Reinforces mental health
- Prevents chronic diseases
- Strengthens immunodeficiency system
- Helps to recover from stress and illness
- Promotes positive attitudes towards life
- Improves perceived quality of life

Briefings by Natural England
… and perceived by NP visitors, too

- Survey from Pyhä-Luosto NP (2016)
- Health benefit index is 4.25 (scale 1 – 5).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pyhä-Luosto NP 2016 (n = 1271)</th>
<th>Evaluation, %</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Totally disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased social well-being</td>
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<td>Increased psychological well-being</td>
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<td>Increased physical well-being</td>
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Healthy Parks – Healthy People

Ecological

Health & Well-being

Social & cultural

Economic
Development by Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife

NP’s promoting public health – programme 2010-2015
- Cooperation with operators in health sector
- Research and monitoring impact of nature on health
- Accessibility of nature
- Lifecycle covering

Results
- Too ambitious related to starting point and time span?
- Increased knowledge through research and monitoring
- Large visibility in medias
- Successful pilot projects, extending results is problem
- Change of behaviour is slow process

- Journal of Sustainable Tourism 2016:
  “The results emphasize the importance of both close-to-home recreation and nature-based tourism destinations for human health and well-being.”
National Parks promote public health

- An average hiking distance on a typical national park trip was about 15 km (2013)
- Visitors walk about 34 million kilometers in Finland's national parks annually
- The average value national park visit perceived by visitors was 208 EUR in 2013 (median 100 EUR)
- The estimated total value of all national park visits in Finland was 226 million EUR in 2013
Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife and Health 2025
Updatet programme 2016

Survey and workshop for stakeholders.
Other national projects.
Several levels of cooperation: national, regional, local

**Goal:** Health and wellbeing are improved in Finland by diverse nature
- Healthy nature, healthy people

*Finns are active outdoors people who enjoy nature as an essential part of life. Social, physical and mental wellbeing has improved as a result of diverse nature and active connection to nature.*

**Theme:** From local nature to national parks
**Theme:** Everyone outdoors
**Theme:** Effective communication and partnerships
Theme: From local nature to national parks

Objectives for 2025:

- There is easy access to nature
- There are plenty of possibilities to see and do in nature
- Importance of our sites and services to public health is well understood
- Major cities offer accessible greenspace continuums from urban green areas to national parks
- Greenspace continuums are an asset to health care and new business ventures

Prioritized actions by 2020 to annual plan and budget
Theme: Everyone outdoors

Objectives for 2025:

- Bold moves are made to provide easy access to nature for everyone
- Families’ integrity is improved by quality time in the outdoors
- Access to nature increases productivity and wellbeing at work
- Everyday exercise in nature is increased and sitting down reduced
- Active connection to nature supports healthy aging
- Activities in nature support social inclusion and rehabilitation

Prioritized actions by 2020 to annual plan and budget
Theme: Effective communication and partnerships

Objectives for 2025:

- Health and wellbeing benefits of nature are recognised
- There is active co-operation with key partners
- We communicate together to customers
- We inspire people to go outdoors
- Local achievements are turned into widespread success stories
- Parks & Wildlife Finland is internationally recognized in promotion of health

Prioritized actions by 2020 to annual plan and budget
How to restore a positive connection of human and nature?

1. Clear goal and objectives of management
2. Impacts on wellbeing and nature have to be studied and monitored
3. Present situation: “market research”: Role and position in the wellbeing sector and the production process
4. Partnership and cooperation: public sector, NGO’s, private companies
5. Connection to wellbeing tourism?
6. Pilot projects and extending good practices
7. Communication in cooperation with partners, tailored to target groups
8. Promoting wellbeing measures in political processes by facts and partners
9. ”No reason are wrong reasons to enjoy nature”
10. Connection to green belt and other international cooperation?
11. Ecosystem approach?
Kiitos!

Спасибо!

Takk!

pertti.itkonen@metsa.fi