

Healthy Parks
HEALTHY PEOPLE
F I N L A N D

PARKS & WILDLIFE FINLAND
Health and Wellbeing 2025 programme



METSÄHALLITUS

Our knowledge of the benefits of nature and outdoor recreation for human health and well-being has increased tremendously over the last few years. Nature has a highly positive impact on our physical, mental and social well-being. Visitor surveys and feedback support this - visitors gain a wide range of health benefits from outings in the wild.

Our common goal is to inspire people to move and stay in the natural environment more often and for longer periods. Outdoor recreation activates people and promotes their health, regardless of their age and condition.

In cooperation with partners, Metsähallitus is responding to future challenges through the Healthy Nature, Healthy People health promotion programme which will last until 2025.

Nature is good for us and we encourage everyone to enjoy the great outdoors - whether in the nearby natural environment or a national park!



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Kvarken Archipelago World
Heritage Site, Ritgrund lighthouse

THE GOAL

Healthy Parks **HEALTHY PEOPLE**

Finland's diverse natural environment improves the health and well-being of its people.

The Finns are an active, outdoor people, for whom nature is an essential part of everyday life and leisure time. Their social, physical and mental well-being has improved due to the varied Finnish wilderness and their active relationship with nature.

THE ROLE OF PARKS & WILDLIFE FINLAND

- Guardian of the diverse natural environment and a provider of high-quality services that meet the needs of local recreation, tourism, hiking, hunting and fishing
- Inspiring people to go out into the natural environment and strengthen their relationship with nature
- An active developer, partner and coordinator in collaboration



T H E M E S



From nearby nature to national parks

- The opportunity to experience nature forms the basis for building a relationship with it.
- Both easily accessible, nearby nature and attractive natural areas that provide an escape from the grind of daily life are necessary for outdoor recreation.
- Natural areas and historical and wilderness sites form part of nature destinations offered by municipalities and cities; they create a well-functioning, continuous green space serving the outdoor recreation requirements of local residents and tourists.
- The high-quality, attractive destinations with a range of natural attractions and the services offered by Parks & Wildlife Finland provide health and well-being benefits for local residents and tourists.

> *Nature areas and services*



Everyone outdoors

- Everyone has equal opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors. Our services create well-being, prevent public health problems and promote an active lifestyle.
- The threshold for outdoor recreation becomes lower, making it an easy and fun activity throughout the year. Experiences in nature motivate people to exercise.
- Finns learn to love outdoor recreation at an early age and make active use of various natural sites and nature's riches.
- People are encouraged to engage in and are inspired by outdoor recreation; this counteracts sedentary lifestyles and their detrimental effects.

> *Customer relations*



Results based on communications and cooperation

- Good communications in cooperation with the other actors encourage Finnish people to get out and about in the natural environment, in everyday life and during their leisure time.
- We reach a broad population base in cooperation with our partners.
- Parks & Wildlife Finland produces and compiles easily understandable, entertaining and reliable information on the health benefits of nature for in-house use, customers and decision-makers.
- The importance to public health and the economy of a diverse and healthy natural environment has been acknowledged.
- Nature's effects on well-being are important to the development and productisation of nature tourism.
- Parks & Wildlife Finland engages in active international cooperation in the production and sharing of knowledge and best practices.
- An increasing number of partners communicate about nature and outdoor recreation via their forums.

> *Everyone outdoors*

Lake Meekonjärvi, Käsivarsi wilderness area
in northwestern Lapland.



T H E M E

**From nearby nature
to national parks**

GOAL

Easy access to nature

Information is easily accessible - it is easy to venture out into nature. Collaboration enhances the visibility of sites and their range of attractions. Service development emphasises productisation, communications and marketing.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Cooperate with interesting social media actors to motivate children and young people, in particular, to engage in outdoor recreation



Ristikallio in Oulanka
National Park



GOAL

A wide range of destinations and opportunities for outdoor recreation meeting diverse needs

Versatile, high-quality destinations and services provide equal opportunities for outdoor recreation regardless of the individual's functional ability. This increases physical activity in everyday life and reduces time spent sitting.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Engage in graphic and high-profile communications on the suitability of sites for different user groups

“ I feel that the close proximity of a national park has hugely improved my quality of life. Clean nature, good trails and spectacular fell scenery make me a happier person.



G O A L

The importance to health and well-being of our sites and services has been understood

The importance and effectiveness of Parks & Wildlife Finland's operations is well understood with respect to their impacts on health and well-being. Our motivated staff have sufficient expertise in health and well-being.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Monitor and report on the use of protected areas and their benefits for health and well-being





GOAL

Continuous green space as a functional entity

Natural destinations in the everyday and leisure time environment form a functional whole, created through collaboration between the state, local authorities and public organisations. Land use planning and the planning of the management and use of protected areas support the development of continuous green spaces.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Include the health and well-being perspective in natural resource planning, while examining state-owned land as a whole

GOAL

Continuous green spaces generate added value for health care and businesses

Continuous green spaces create new business opportunities and customer relationships. The benefits of nature and outdoor recreation are recognised within the health care system. Nature-based services are utilised in maintaining health and in rehabilitation.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Developing nature prescriptions together with partners, to meet the needs of public health care and well-being at work



Tiilikajärvi National Park.

Vallisaari island outside Helsinki.



T H E M E

Everyone
Outdoors

- 2
- 3 Kyälvä
- 4 Lampi • Träsket • Pond
- 5 Pohjolan Gibraltar • Nordens Gibraltar • Gibraltar of the North
- 6 Niitty • Ängen • Meadow
- 7 Tuhansien perhosten koti • Hem av tusentals fjärilar • Home of thousands of butterflies
- 8 Aleksanterin patteri • Alexandersbatteriet • Alexander Battery
- 9 Sotilaiden jäljet • Soldaternas fotspår • Military mementos
- 10 Kuolemanlaakso • Dödens dal • Valley of death
- 11 Torpedolahti • Torpedoviken • Torpedolahti Bay
- 12 Kuninkaansaari • Kungsholmen • Kuninkaansaari Island
- 13 Hiekkapoukama • Sandviken • Sandy cove





Selfie time in Oulanka National Park.

GOAL

Bold initiatives lower the threshold for engaging in outdoor recreation

The staff of Parks & Wildlife Finland have the skills needed to cooperate with the well-being, sports and health sector. Customers and partners are involved in the planning, development and evaluation of services that encourage people to enjoy outdoor recreation. Service design is commonplace and takes account of equal opportunities. Children and young people in particular have low-threshold opportunities for leisure activities.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- More information is being provided, region by region, on the diverse use and possibilities of “wild food” as an integral part of the nature experience (integration of eräluvat.fi and Nationalparks.fi, the role of Visitor Centres)

“ Beautiful scenery, rocks,
twigs, heather - rest for
the eyes and mind alike.

GOAL

Strengthen family ties

Nature is an integral part of the everyday life and leisure time of families: time spent in a natural environment strengthens family ties. Early childhood experiences have a strong effect on the formation of a good relationship with nature, a physically active lifestyle and its retention in adulthood.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- In cooperation with partners, organise events that strengthen family ties (for instance, a fishing rod day and a heritage day for children)



GOAL

Manage better and for longer in working life

Working age people manage better at work and know how to use nature as a resource for maintaining their ability to work and functional capacity in general.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Activate well-being service providers to use nature as a resource in their business activities, communicate actively about this, and participate in product development

A man wearing a dark cap and sunglasses is smiling broadly while holding a large grayling fish. He is outdoors, near a body of water, with trees in the background. The fish is held horizontally, showing its distinctive silvery scales and reddish-brown spots on its side.

A grayling caught in the River Korvuanjoki, at the border between Northern Ostrobothnia and Kainuu.

A person with short blonde hair, wearing a striped tank top, dark shorts, and hiking boots, is walking away from the camera on a wooden boardwalk. The boardwalk is made of weathered wooden planks and leads through a lush green meadow. In the background, there is a dense forest of tall, thin pine trees under a blue sky with light clouds. The scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a clear day. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

”Spending time outdoors in a spectacular landscape helped me to put things into perspective and appreciate nature and life in general.”



GOAL

Everyday exercise in nature increases and people spend less time sitting

People take more exercise on an everyday basis and feel that they receive ongoing support from their nearest and dearest, peers and peer groups. Natural venues are within easy reach of everyone.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Prepare an information package on the effects of nature on health and well-being as part of the wilderness passport material on the eräluvat.fi website and use this in the wilderness sponsor network (also implement this as part of the national park sponsor programme)

GOAL

An active relationship with nature helps people to maintain their health and ability to function as they grow older

Activate the elderly to venture out in the wild. Enhance cooperation on promoting functional ability. We contribute to securing well-functioning services in support of health, well-being and functional ability.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- The existing "Strength in Old Age" materials are linked to the Nationalparks.fi site and staff have been trained in the "Strength in Old Age" activities



GOAL

Activities in nature support sociability and rehabilitation

Active outdoor recreation supports physical and mental rehabilitation and prevents loneliness and social exclusion. Particular attention will be paid to disadvantaged and socially excluded individuals. Our services support mental health at all stages of life and reduce loneliness. Reduce inequalities and enhance integration and activity.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Exploit nature in the integration of immigrants and target communications more effectively at people who are new to Finland



Nuukio National Park.



T H E M E

**Results based on
communications and
cooperation**



GOAL

Increase understanding of the effects of nature on health and well-being

Knowledge on the benefits of nature and outdoor recreation for health and well-being increases, reaching key actors and influencing decision-making. Staff understand the importance of health and well-being as an objective of the operations of Parks & Wildlife Finland.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Highlight the effects of nature on health and well-being, as part of the essence of the Parks & Wildlife Finland brand

” Beautiful scenery and a natural environment that are different from my home region. Blissful sleep in a tent and waking up without an alarm clock. In general, living so basically helped me to realise, at least momentarily, how little you need to get by and remain happy.



GOAL

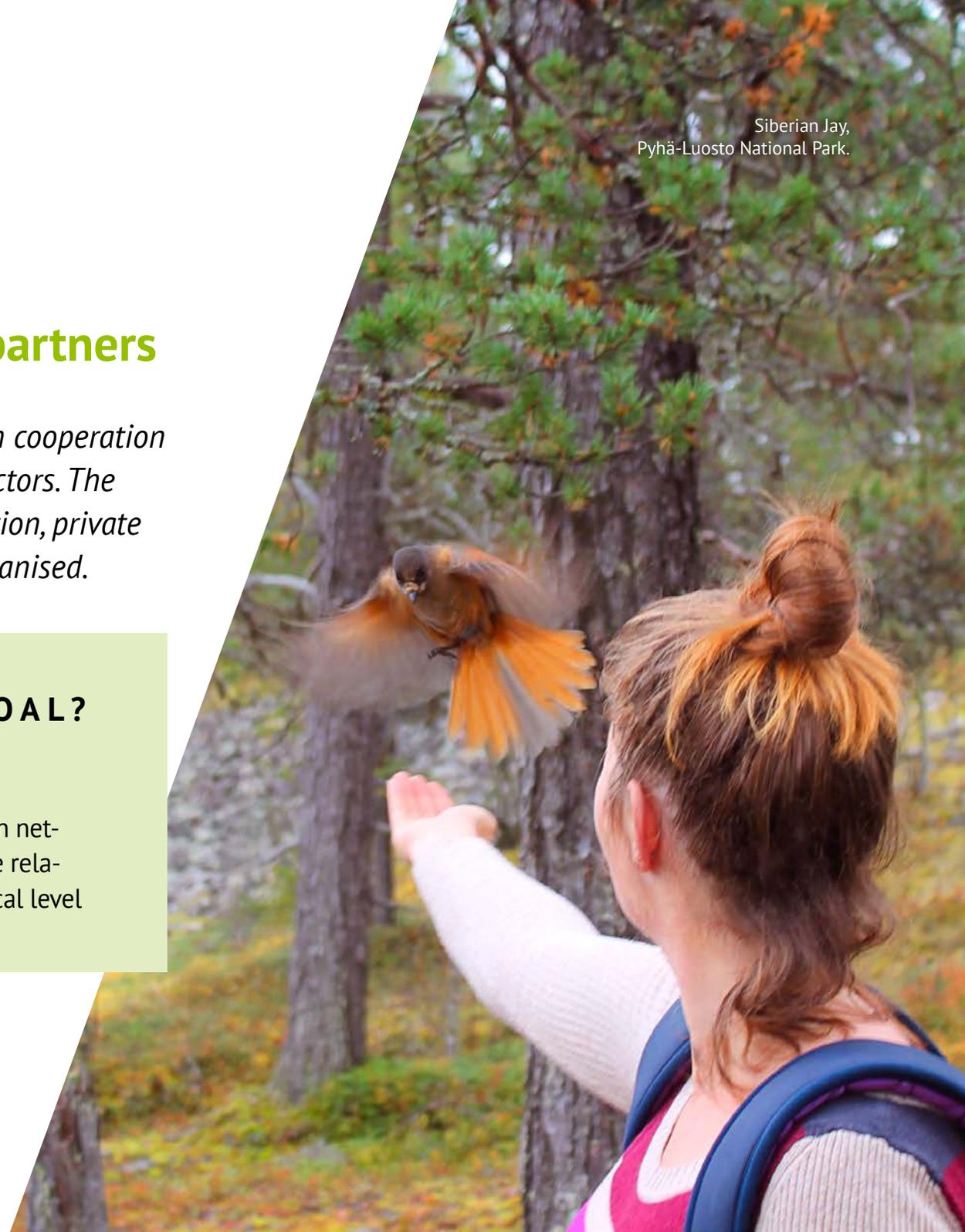
Smooth cooperation with partners

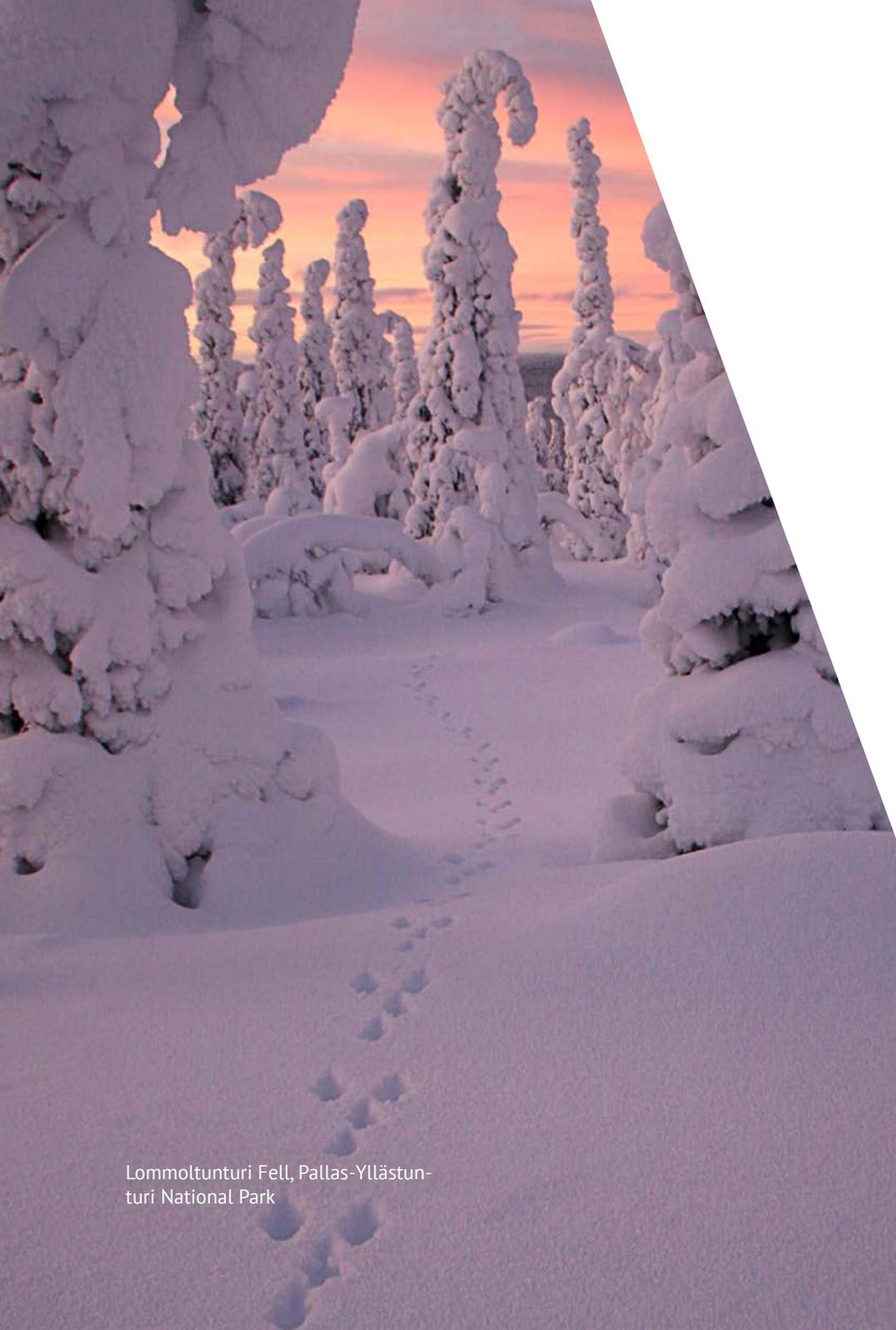
Parks & Wildlife Finland engages in smooth cooperation with key national organisations and local actors. The collaborative roles of the public administration, private companies and the third sector are well organised.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Exploit the Suomi Finland 100 cooperation network and establish permanent cooperative relationships with partners at national and local level





G O A L

Jointly communicate with customers

We and our partners use uniform themes, goals and messages to communicate with our mutual customers.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Introduce “luontoilu” (referring to an active interest in and activities in nature) as a neologism in the Finnish language and establish it in general use (launch as part of the Suomi Finland 100 events)

GOAL

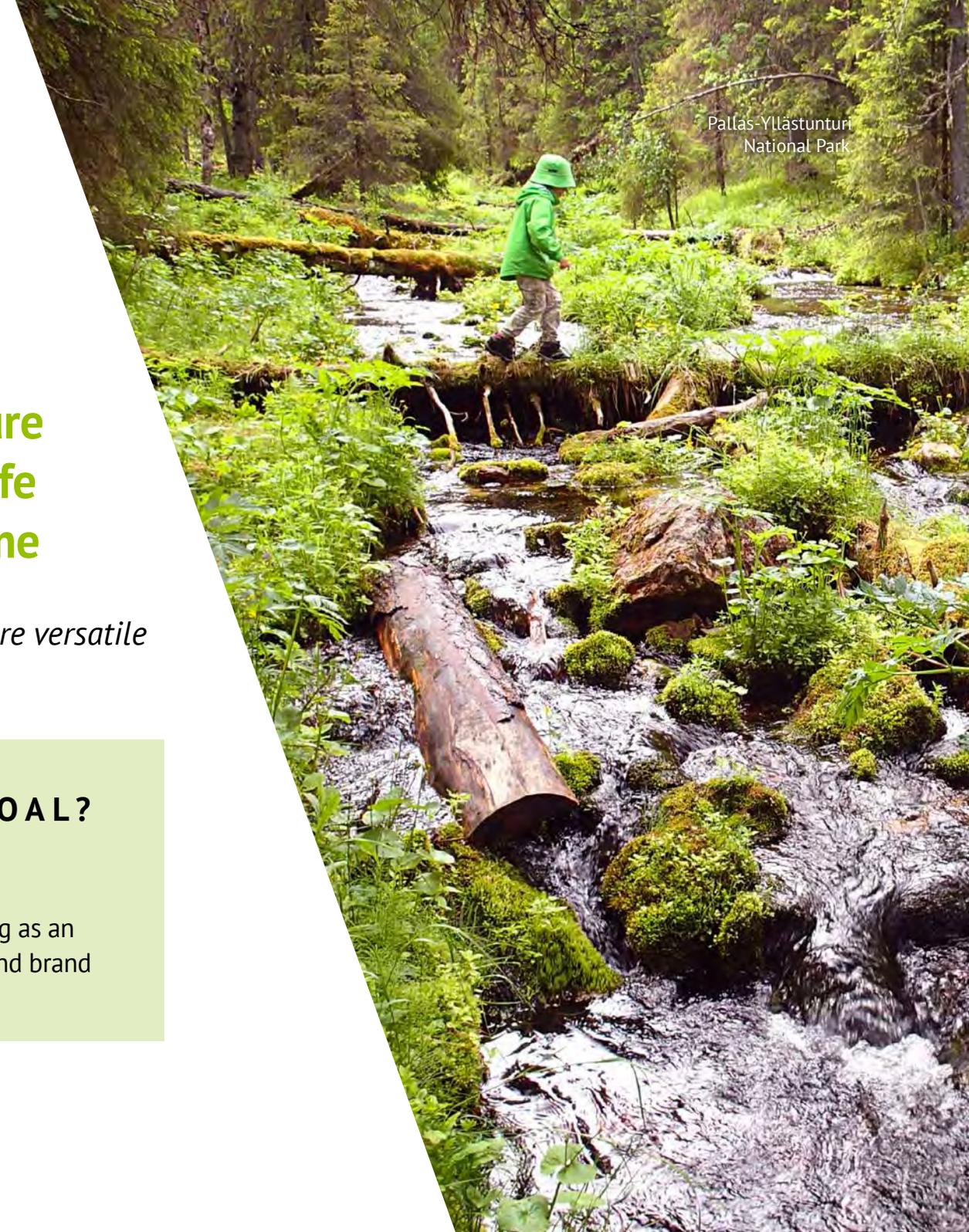
We inspire people to venture into the wild in everyday life and during their leisure time

Finns enjoy outdoor recreation on a more versatile basis and more enthusiastically.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Include the effects of nature on well-being as an integral part of the Parks & Wildlife Finland brand



” Nature, time spent in the natural environment and hobbies are the best therapy, just what a person needs. And all this in the company of good friends!





Syöte National Park.

GOAL

Process local results into broader sets of practices and success stories

Good results from projects will be widely deployed in smooth cooperation between Parks & Wildlife Finland and partners.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Communicate on the results of successful projects as best practices within organisations (e.g. outdoor physical exercise groups for obese men and activating socially excluded young adults by means of nature and outdoor recreation)

G O A L

Our position as an internationally acclaimed promoter of health and well-being is strengthened

Parks & Wildlife Finland is internationally known for promoting health and well-being. International cooperation will increase our knowledge, understanding and awareness and the effectiveness of our communications.

HOW TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL?

Example of measures

- Have an active influence in international forums on the themes of nature, health and well-being





” After a long period of ill health, even a short hunting trip had a greater rehabilitative effect than other periods of rehabilitation, adding up to several weeks in total.

EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME



From nearby nature to national parks

- The number of continuous green spaces
- The development of visitor numbers
- The use of nature prescriptions in health care



Everyone outdoors

- Health indices and effectiveness factors derived from visitor surveys and customer feedback (e.g. walked kilometres)
- Targeted Indicators for key target groups (e.g. families with children)
- The number of letters of intent (analyse their effectiveness)
- Stakeholder surveys (repeatability)
- The numbers of participants in events and licenses (e.g. fishing rod day and the number of young people's and family licences)



Results based on communications and cooperation

- Communications indicators
- The development of partnerships



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