



Häntälä Nature Path Rekijokilaakso

New stairs and stair gate

The nature path offers visitors a chance to experience features typical of the Rekijoki valley, including ravines, open semi-natural landscapes with their characteristic species, and forest areas suitable for flying squirrels. The path begins near the Häntälä village house and initially passes through a grazing area. At the start of the path, a stair gate and stairs on the slope required renovation. The stair gate ensures access to the path while preventing grazing animals from escaping. The stairs make it easier to ascend the steep slope and thus help reduce erosion. The gate and stairs were renovated in spring 2022 through volunteer work organised by the local association, with materials funded by the project.



Photos 1, 2 ja 3 Top left: newly installed stairs. Top right: stair gate crossing the pasture fence. Both structures were built in spring 2022. Bottom: image of the project label and mention of collaboration. Photos by Jenny Gustafsson.

Three information signs along the path

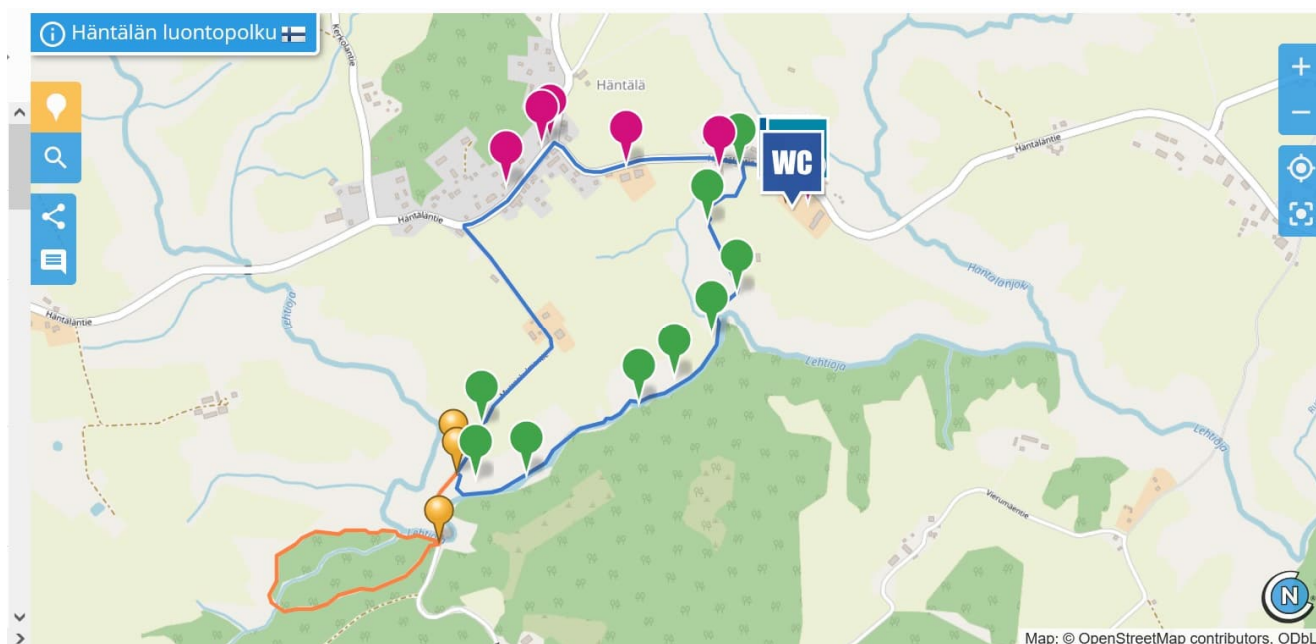
The nature path features A3-sized species information signs in Finnish, created by the local association. As part of the project, three A1-sized information signs were installed along the path. These signs present descriptions of the special features, natural values, and history of the Rekijoki Natura 2000 area. Additionally, a separate sign focusing on the flying squirrel was placed along the forest section of the path. The signs were installed in spring 2024. All three signs include texts in Finnish, Swedish, and English.

The association uses the international City Nomadi app, which allows information about various trails and routes to be uploaded. Visitors can also explore the path's information signs virtually. The texts from the three signs were added to the app, enabling multilingual virtual access for users.



Photos 4 and 5 Left: information sign about the flying squirrel at the beginning of the Peurapolku trail. Right: Sign in the beginning of the trail on the wall of the barn, and another sign near the stair gate. Photos by Jenny Gustafsson.

As observed at many nature sites and trails around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in visitor numbers, and nature hiking has remained a popular leisure activity. The same trend was noted on the Häntälä nature path. Together with the active village association board, efforts were made to explore the possibility of installing a visitor counter, for example at the newly built stairs. Many of the proposed solutions required extensive maintenance, were costly, or were not suitable for this particular path. The association decided to further consider the acquisition of a counter independently. The association has not had an official visitor monitoring system, but some level of visitor activity has been tracked through entries in the paths' guestbook and the number of people visiting the kiosk at the village centre.



Map 1 Häntälä Nature Path Route. The map shows the locations of information signs and available services. The blue trail covers the grazing and semi-natural landscape section. The orange trail covers the forest area suitable for flying squirrels. Screenshot from the City Nomadi map view, dated March 29, 2025. Map base: OpenStreetMap.

Häntälä nature path

The nature path is located in the Häntälä village area of the Rekijoki valley. The route passes through both semi-natural landscapes and forest habitats suitable for flying squirrels.

The stairs and stair gate crossing the pasture fence were renovated in spring 2022.

Three new information signs were installed along the path in spring 2024.

Southwest Somero Village Association web-site: <https://www.hantala.fi/>

Link to the Häntälä nature path in City Nomadi: <https://citynomadi.com/fi/map?route=2fbf6d9fb117129b0dca613cfd0b684a>

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