METSÄHALLITUS
FORSTSTYRELSEN
MEAHCIRÁÐÐEHUS

Operating in National Parks: Information, Agreements and Good Practices

Parks & Wildlife Finland

Webinar in English
11 November 2026



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Photo: Salamajärvi, Sannamari Ratilainen



Everyone’s rights in Finland 1/2

In Finland, everyone has the right of public access.

You may for example:

- walk, ski and cycle freely except in private yards or fields.
- Stay and set up camp temporarily
- Pick wild berries and mushrooms
- Swim and boat and move around on frozen waterways

You may not for example:

- Light a fire on somebody else’s land
- Collect dry wood or fallen trees
- Collect moss or lichen
- Cut down or damage growing trees

Isojärvi national park. Photo: Jari Salonen



Everyone’s rights in Finland 2/2

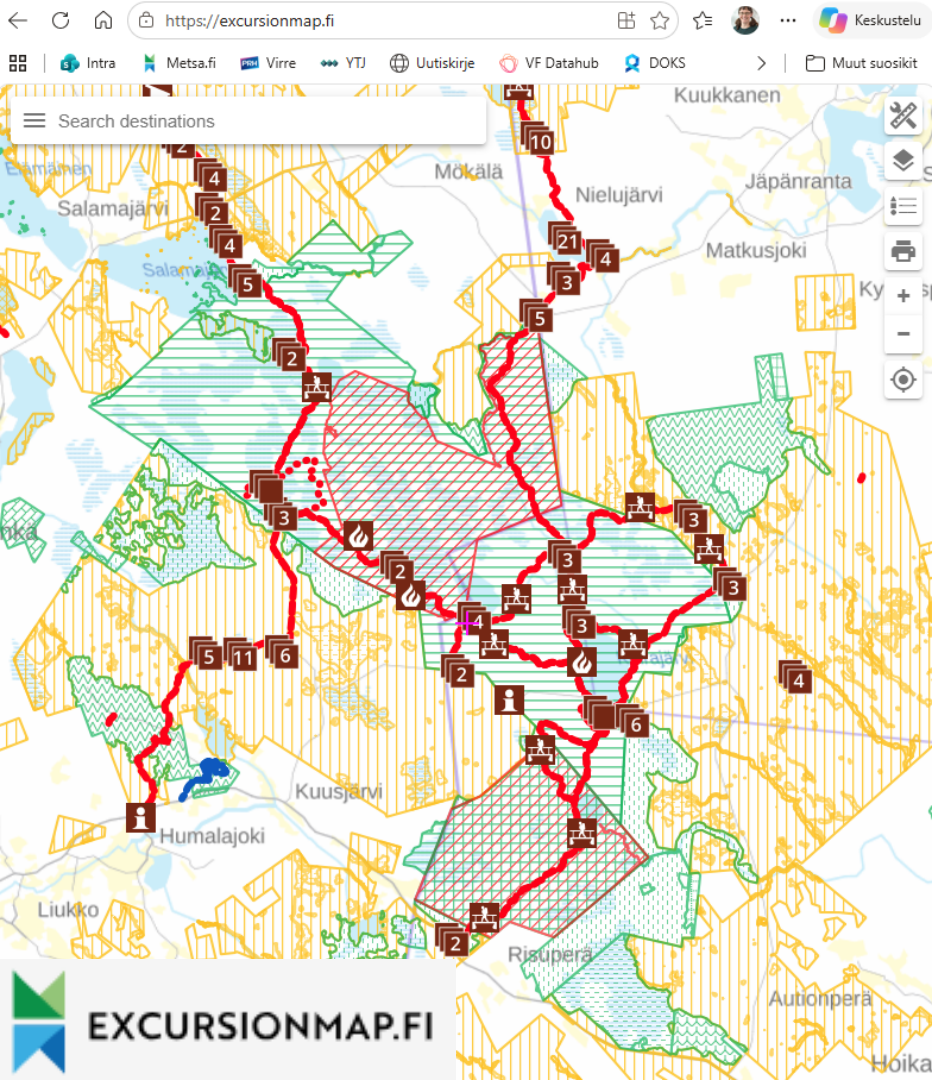
Rights always come with responsibilities. Things to consider:

- Your activity may not cause more than minor inconvenience to the landowner, and it may not interfere with the landowner’s own activities.
- Everyone’s rights do not include creating new paths or marking routes on someone else’s land.
- If you use a private road for business activities, you may have to pay a road use fee to the road association.

To be on the safe side, always check with the landowner that your business activities are acceptable!

Note also that in protected areas everyone’s rights are often restricted.

Photo: Salamajärvi, Minna Jakosuo



Whose land are you operating on?

State-owned or private land?

- See Excursionmap – Metsähallitus

State owned land

- Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife manage protected areas, wilderness areas etc.
- Metsähallitus Forestry Ltd manages multiple-use forests.

➢ Fill in the **Metsähallitus business contact form**. It will reach the right person.

Private land

Ownership information for private land: the National Land Survey of Finland

➢ Who owns this property unit?



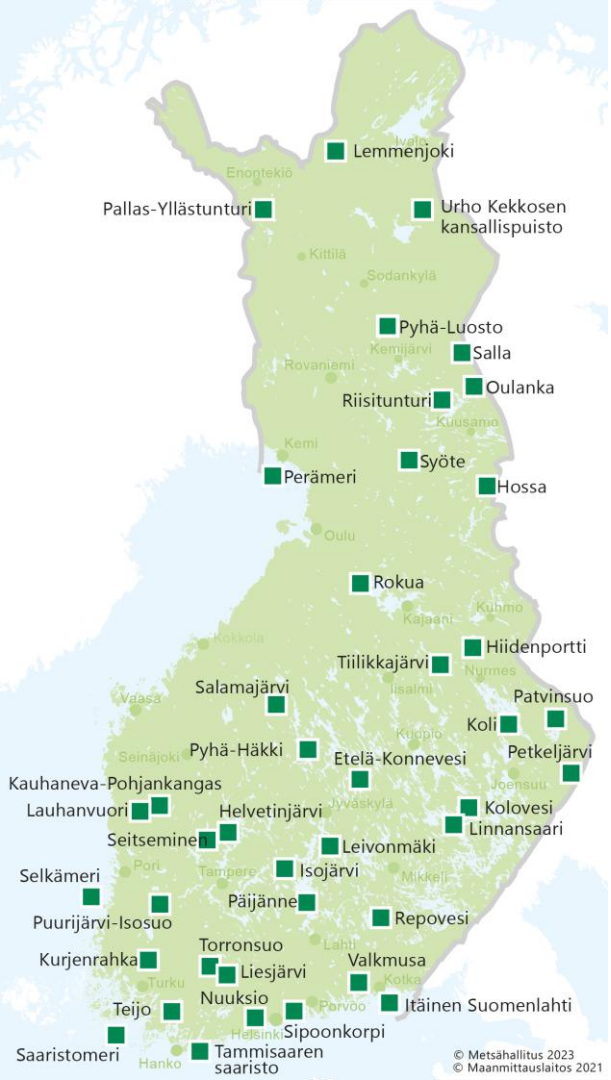
Protected areas in Finland

The backbone of Finland's network of protected areas consists of national parks, strict nature reserves and other protected areas. National parks and strict nature reserves are always on state owned land. Other protected areas are on both state-owned and private lands.

In addition, the network of protected areas includes wilderness reserves of Lapland and sites that have not yet been established as protected areas, sites in various national conservation programmes, and those Natura 2000 areas that are not yet included in the above.

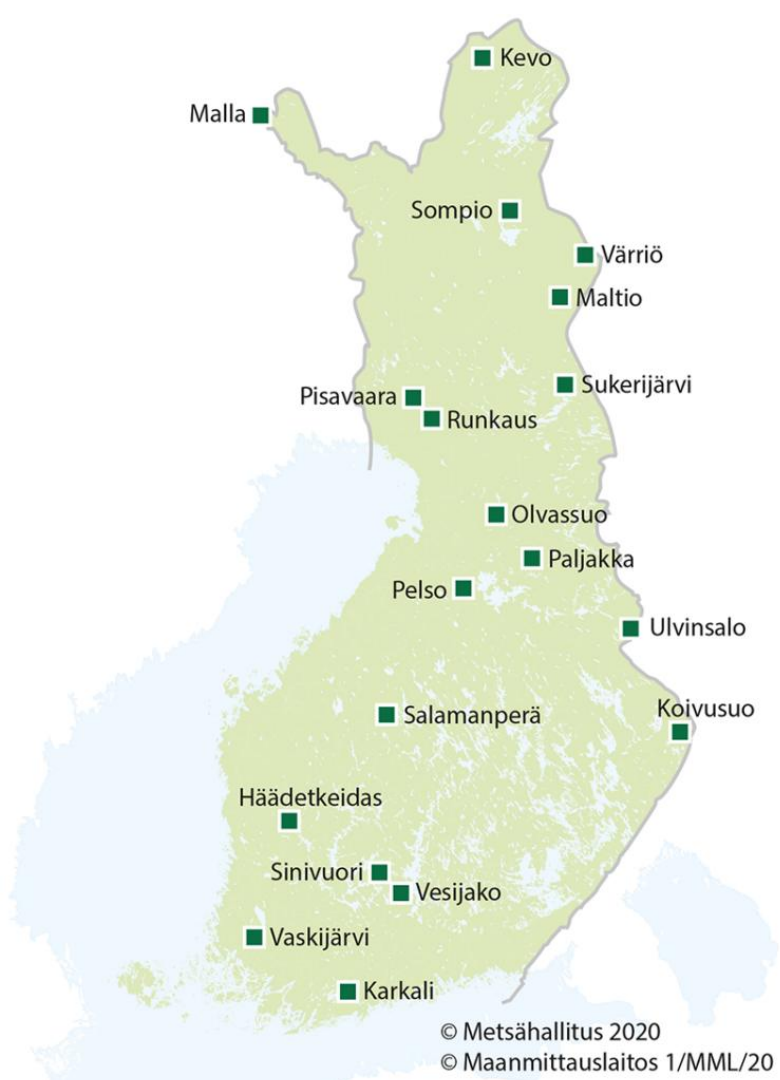
The purpose of the network of protected areas is to safeguard the diversity of habitats and genetic heritage.

Photo: Saana, Ismo Pekkarinen



National Parks

- National parks are protected areas which aim to **preserve Finland´s most valuable natural sites**, along with their species, diverse habitats and landscape features.
- National parks are always established on state-owned land.
- Their main purpose is **nature conservation**. Other purposes include **environmental education and recreation**.
- Year 2025: 41 national parks, area about million hectares, total visits approximately 3.5 million.



Strict Nature Reserves

- Strict nature reserves are established for **scientific research purposes.**
- Access generally requires written permission.
- Some strict nature reserves have marked trails open to visitors, but **you must stay on the trails**. For example, picking mushrooms and berries is prohibited.



Other protected areas

Other protected areas on state-owned land:

- Mire reserves
- Old-growth forest reserves
- Herb-rich forest reserves
- Seal reserves
- Other protected areas

Private land:

- Nature conservation areas

Kuva: Martimoaapa, Anna Pakkanen



Wilderness reserves

- Established under the Wilderness Act, 1991.
- The aim is to **preserve the wilderness character of the areas** and safeguard traditional land uses, including Sámi culture and nature-based livelihoods.
- Wilderness areas are not protected areas as such, but they are part of Finland's Natura 2000 network.



National hiking areas

- Established under the Outdoor Recreation Act.
- They are not protected areas, but most belong to the Natura 2000 network.
- Limited forestry use. Outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing and hiking.
- Six areas currently have official status. Inari Hiking Area does not have official status. (Arctic Circle Hiking Area gained official status in 2024).



Tourism Services in Protected Areas and Hiking Areas



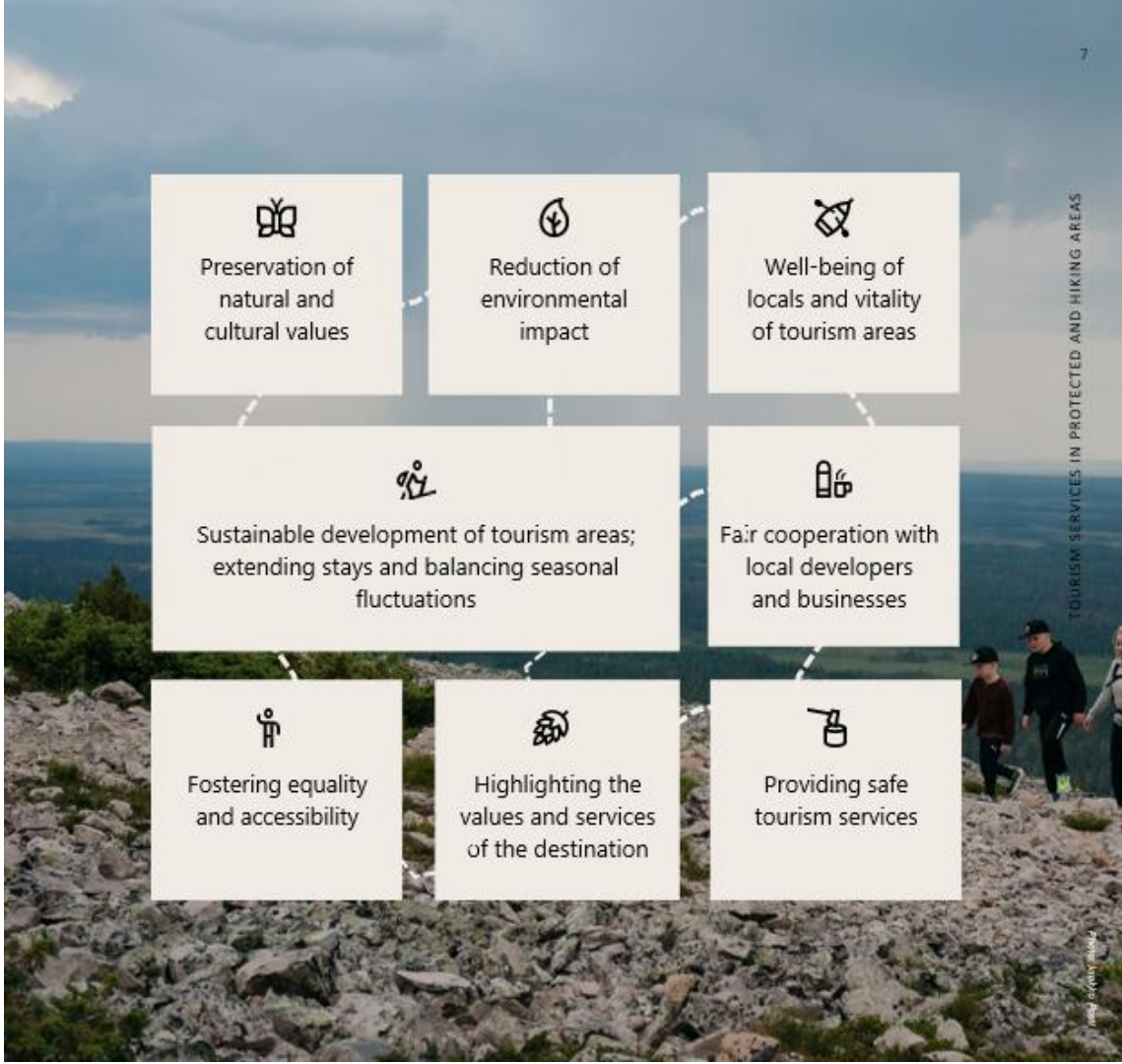
Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Cooperation With Tourism Business

- National parks and other protected areas are established primarily for nature conservation
- Responsible Tourism activities in these areas are permitted when they
  - follow the Principles of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas
  - natural and cultural values are not endangered
  - activities are carried out safely
  - comply with the rules and regulations of the area
    - Note that Everyone’s rights are not valid in protected areas

Principles of Sustainable Tourism

1. Support the preservation of valuable features at the sites and promote their protection
2. Minimise the load on the environment
3. Strengthen local aspects
4. Promote use of the sites to increase health and well-being
5. Promote growth and job creation in the local economy
6. Communicate together the values and services of the site

[Principles of Sustainable Tourism | Metsähallitus]



Tourism Activities in Protected Areas Require a Cooperation Agreement

What kind of agreement should a tourism company have?

What are the benefits and obligations of the agreement?



Photo: Jaakko Posti

Choose the Right Type of Agreement

Does the tourism company organize paid, guided tours in a national park or other protected area?

Tourism Cooperation Agreements

Read more » metsa.f)

Yes



E.g., programme service company

Tourism Cooperation Agreement Including Right of Use

Agreement fee + annual fee

Includes the right to use hiking infrastructure.

Right to do tourism-related business in the protected area.

Annual usage fee is based on the number of customers.

No



E.g., hotel or restaurant

Communicational Tourism Cooperation Agreement

Agreement fee

Does not include the right to use hiking infrastructure.

Gives tourism entrepreneurs the right to use the protected area's brand.



Benefits of the Agreement

1

Visibility in the Luontoon.fi/en - site via Visit Finland DataHub database

Requires a Finnish business ID.

2

Right to use the logos of national parks and other destinations

Additionally, the right to sell national park logo products.

3

Right to use images from Metsähallitus' image bank

4

Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas online training material:

Principles of sustainable tourism
Practical tips and guidelines for sustainable tourism activities in protected areas.

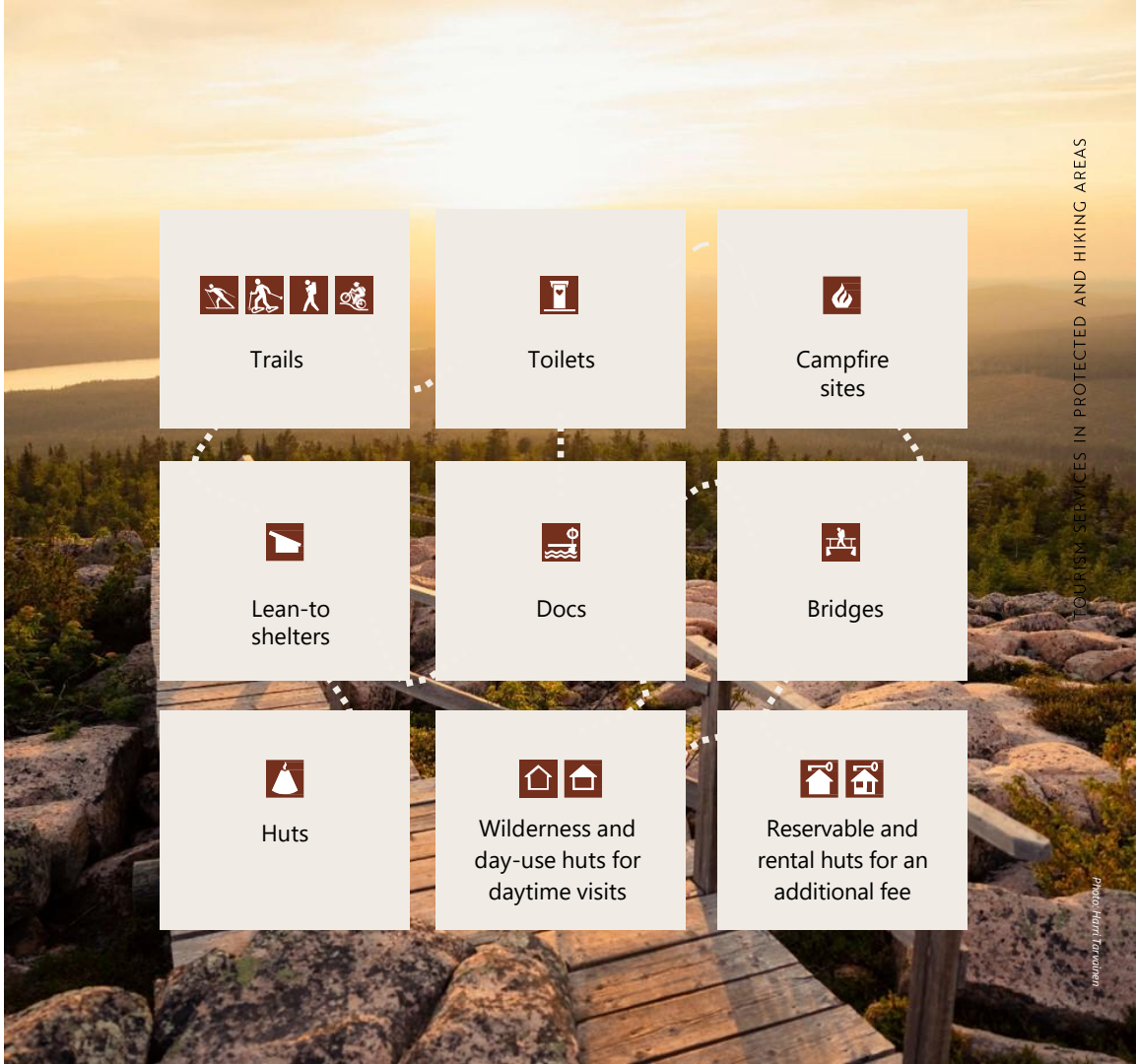
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News and updates on sustainable nature tourism and collaboration

What Hiking Infrastructures Are Included in the Fee?

The right to use hiking infrastructure and firewood

Companies are responsible for removing their own waste from protected and hiking areas.





One-off use of hiking infrastructure

- For one-off activities, there is no point in concluding a cooperation agreement.
- In this case, the company can pay the fee of €75 + VAT 25,5% to the Eräluvat.fi service.

Notification of an organized event

- An event planned to take place in Metsähallitus' nature reserves or multiple-use forests and the camping of large groups must be notified to Metsähallitus
- A notification must be made even if the company has an agreement of cooperation
- More information about oranizing an event.

Salamajärvi, Photo: Rika Nakamura



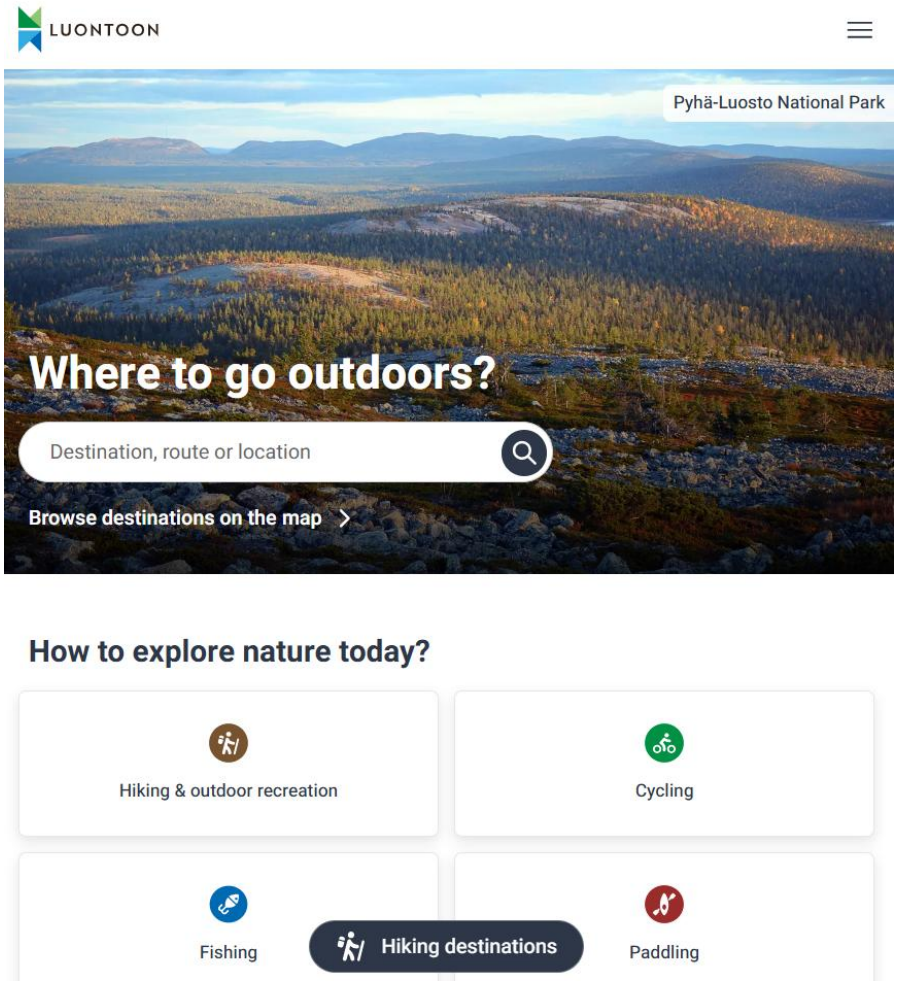
Permits for activities

www.metsa.fi/en/permits/

- Notification of an Organized Event
- Off-road traffic permits
- Permits for Research and Photography
- Permits for Film Productions
- Christmas tree permit
- Consent for Placing a Deceased Person's Ashes
- Use of a metal detector
- Permits for Making a Fire

www.eraluvat.fi/en

- Fishing
- Hunting
- Off-road traffic
- Huts
- Natural products
- Wilderness supervision
- Other services



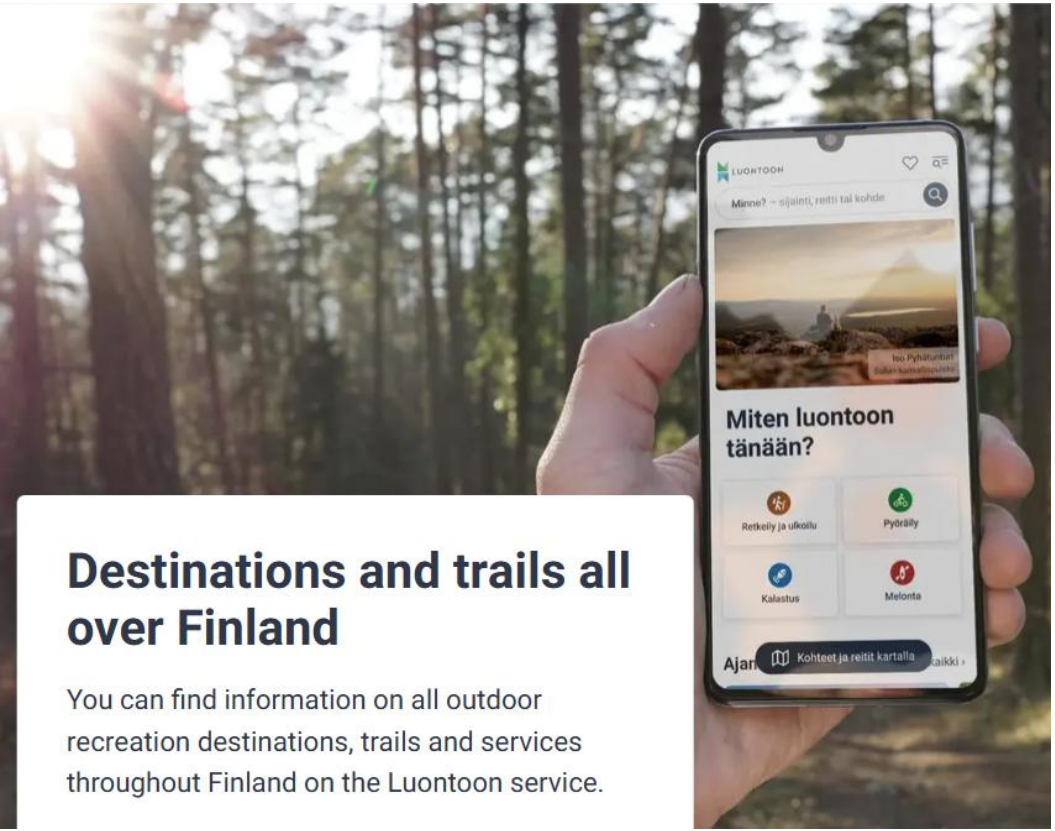
Know Your Destination

[Luontoon - Finland's outdoor destinations and routes]

Information on

- Area and its special features
- Nature and history
- Trails, services, sights
- Maps
- Services of Metsähallitus partners
- Directions
- What's new
- Exceptions, warnings – **ALWAYS CHECK!**
- Visitor's checklist
- Instructions and rules

https://luontoon.fi/en



Luontoon-service is a rich information bank

- **Luontoon app** brings Finland's diverse outdoor destinations, trails, and services straight to your phone.
- General information on different protected areas in Finland
- Articles
- Hiking tips
- Contacts and feedback - Luontoon

Always remember! 1/8

1. Safety

- Tell your clients about the terrain and weather conditions, required clothing and equipment, darkness, poor phone connections etc.
- Be aware of thin ice and ice lids
- Remember to check the latest information about your destination on Luontoon.fi
- Tell your clients about the instructions and rules of the area





Useful articles in Luontoon.fi

- Winter hiking in Lapland: Why you can't go just anywhere on snow – Luontoon
- Winter hiking knowledge bank - Luontoon
- Sledging on hiking trails creates dangerous situations - Luontoon

Always remember! 2/8

2. Respect nature

- Don’t damage trees, shrubs or other plants.
- Don’t disturb birds and other animals
- Bring a trash bag and take the trash with you
  - Could litter picking be a an activity for your group?
- Respect other visitors





Always remember! 3/8

3. Rest places are not for private use

- Rest areas, campfire sites and lean-to shelters are shared facilities and not for the private use of tourism cooperation partners.
- Leave space for other visitors
- For private use make a reservation for a rental hut

For everyone's comfort

- Give your guests instructions on how to use a dry toilet.
- Bring your toilet paper and hand sanitizer.



Always remember! 4/8

4. Wilderness and day-use huts for daytime visits only

- Companies may not use open wilderness huts for over night stays
- For business activities use tents, paid rental huts or other accommodation.
    - Hut reservations for both private individuals and companies are made through the Eräluvat.fi service.
    - Hut reservation tips for companies



Always remember! 5/8

5. Respect the Sámi Cultural Environment

- Respect Europe's only indigenous people and travel responsibly in the Sámi homeland
- When hiking, remember to respect the sacred sites of the Sámi people – Luontoon

- Outdoor Etiquette For The Homeland Of The Sámi - Luontoon



Island Ukko on lake Inarijärvi. Photo: Kirsi Ukkonen.

Always remember! 6/8

6. Don’t disturb the reindeer

- Give way to reindeer, keep on the trail.
- Dogs must always be kept on a leash. Do not approach reindeer with your dog

Reindeer Husbandry Area – Luontoon

Reindeer herding - source of livelihood and a way of life - Luontoon





Always remember! 7/8

7. Leave no traces

- Use marked trails to avoid wear and tear on the terrain
- Don’t modify the terrain
- Don’t pile stones or ruin existing piles

Outdoor etiquette - Hiking & outdoor recreation - Luontoon



Pile of stones on the top of Kiilopää. Photo: Pasi Nivasalo.



Always remember! 8/8

8. Only make fires where it is permitted

- Use only marked and maintained campfire sites
- Always check if a wildfire warning has been issued in the area
- Homepage - Finnish Meteorological Institute
- Use firewood considerately



- A small guide to campfire safety while out in nature - Luontoon



Further information

- News and Updates on Tourism Cooperation | Metsähallitus
  - Newsletters
  - Webinars
- Questions and Answers: Cooperation Agreement Practices for Tourism Companies | Metsähallitus

- Entrepreneurs | Eräluvat
  - Commercial fishing
  - Fishing tourism
  - Nature tourism
  - Safaris and sled transports
- Nature tourism | Eräluvat

Photo: Maija Mikkola



Useful links

- Etiquettes on site Luontoon.fi, e.g.:
  - Outdoor etiquette – Luontoon
  - Mountain biking etiquette – Luontoon
- Etiquettes for fishermen and hunters
  - Outdoor etiquette | Eräluvat
- Everyone's right
  - Recreational use of nature - Ministry of the Environment
- Lapland Travel Safety - Real-time Safety Information
- Important safety instructions

Photo: Harri Tarvainen

Contact us

For additional questions, please contact: matkailuyhteistyo@metsa.fi



Learn more about tourism cooperation »

metsa.fi



Apply to become a tourism cooperation partner »

webropol.fi



Kuva: Jari Salonen / Pallastunturit Särkitunturilta nähtynä