

LLI-10 Introducing nature tourism for all **UniGreen**

Everyone Outdoors



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Metsähallitus, Parks & Wildlife Finland

Accessible Nature Tourism -Conference

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Interreg V-A Latvia - Lithuania Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020
www.latlit.eu

Metsähallitus, Parks & Wildlife Finland Accessibility



METSÄHALLITUS



Metsähallitus

A state enterprise governing all state-owned lands and waters

- Business activities include a forestry company Metsähallitus Metsätalous Oy, seed production and selling of holiday plots and forest estates
- Public administration duties and services are under Parks & Wildlife Finland -unit
- responsibility covers an area over 12 million hectares – one third of Finland's total area
- www.metsa.fi/web/en



- **Parks & Wildlife Finland (P&WF)** is a Metsähallitus unit responsible for public administration duties and services in the fields of:
 - Nature conservation
 - Outdoor recreation
 - Sustainable game and fisheries
- **Parks & Wildlife Finland**
 - We protect and manage Finland's most valuable nature; species, natural environments and cultural heritage
 - We provide free facilities for outdoor recreation and create opportunities for sustainable tourism
 - We collaborate actively with other sectors and players on land use planning





The strategy of P&WF

- The value of our national property increases
- Citizens obtain health and well-being from nature
- Cooperation with tourism industry generates growth
- We work on important things with joy

Areas managed by Parks & Wildlife Finland



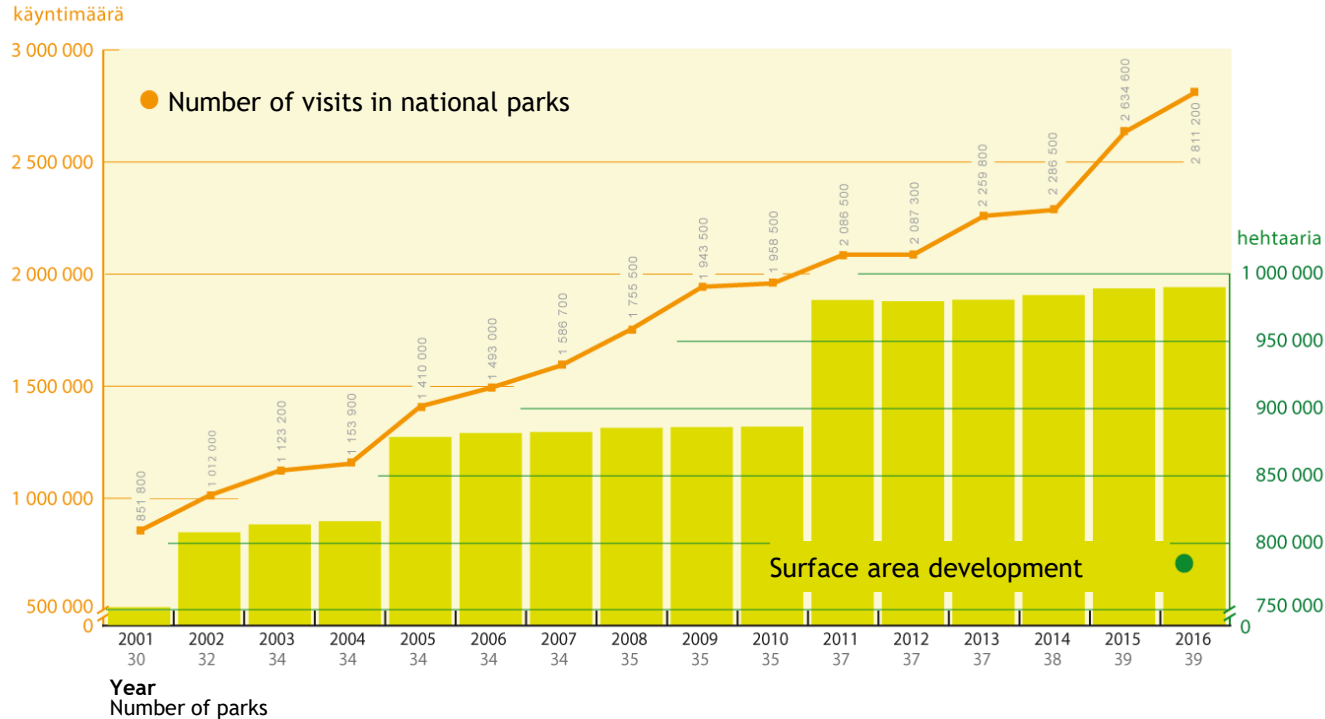
- 40 National Parks (the newest, Hossa, established on 17.6.2017)
- 19 strict nature reserves
- More than 600 other statutory nature reserves
- 12 wilderness areas in Finnish Lapland
- 5 national hiking areas
- More than 3000 other sites protected under various conservation programmes
- Approx. 350 legally protected buildings and structures and 2000 ancient sites
- Some 3.6 million hectares of state-owned lands and 0.8 million ha. of state owned waters



Visitor numbers in 2016

- National Parks: 2,811,200
- National Hiking areas: 319,600
- Historic sites: 837,400
- Nature centres: 1,130,900
- Other popular attractions: 647,500

Development of visitation numbers and surface area of Finland's National Parks





Top 5 reasons to visit National Parks

- Scenery
- Experiencing nature
- Relaxation
- Being away from noise and pollution
- Being together with one's own group

Easy access to nature and
exercise, facilities and
services

More than 6 000 km

of marked trails and other routes

Some 3 000

rest stops, picnic and campfire sites

maintained for hikers

Ca. 70 accessible destinations

nationalparks.fi excursionmap.fi Eräluvat.fi



www.nationalparks.fi

nationalparks.fi

SUOMEKSI · PÅ SVENSKA · ANARĂȘKIELĂ · DAVVISÁMEGIELLA · 中文 ·
НО-РУССКИ

Search



Nationalparks.fi

Destinations

Volunteer Work

Hiking in Finland

What's New

Nationalparks.fi / Destinations

Top Natural Attractions

Wilderness Areas

Historical Sites

National Parks

Other Nature Sites

Nature Centres

World Heritage Sites

Hiking Trails

Accessible Destinations

National Hiking Areas

Huts

Search on Map

Area

☐ Southern Finland

☐ Western Finland

☐ Eastern Finland

☐ The Oulu region and Kainuu

☐ Lapland

Destination type

☒ National Park

☐ World Heritage Site

☐ National Hiking Area

☐ Wilderness Areas

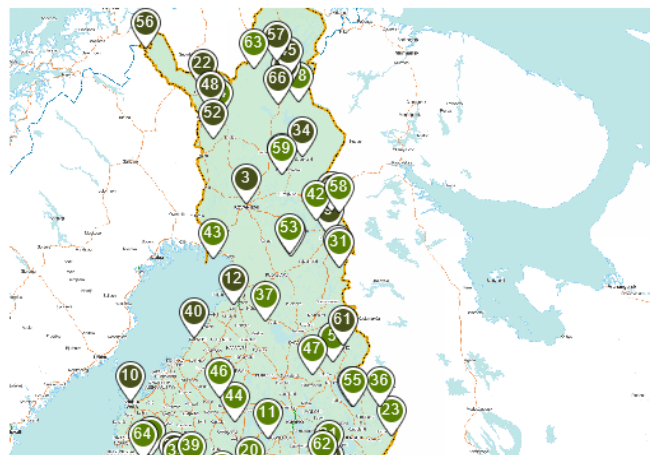
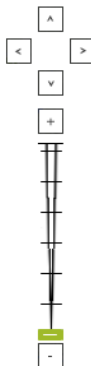
☐ Other areas

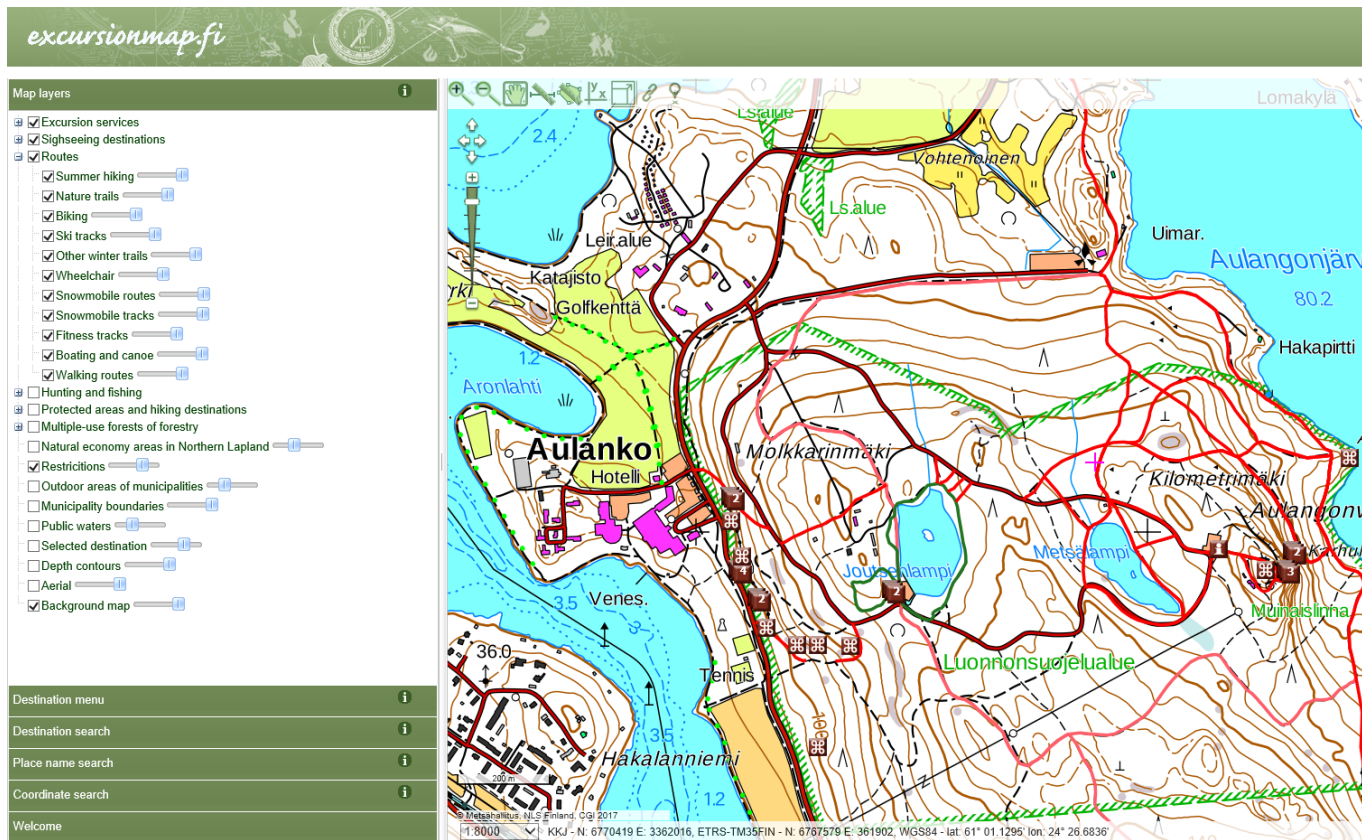
☒ Nature Centre

☐ Historical site

☐ Hiking trail

Activities





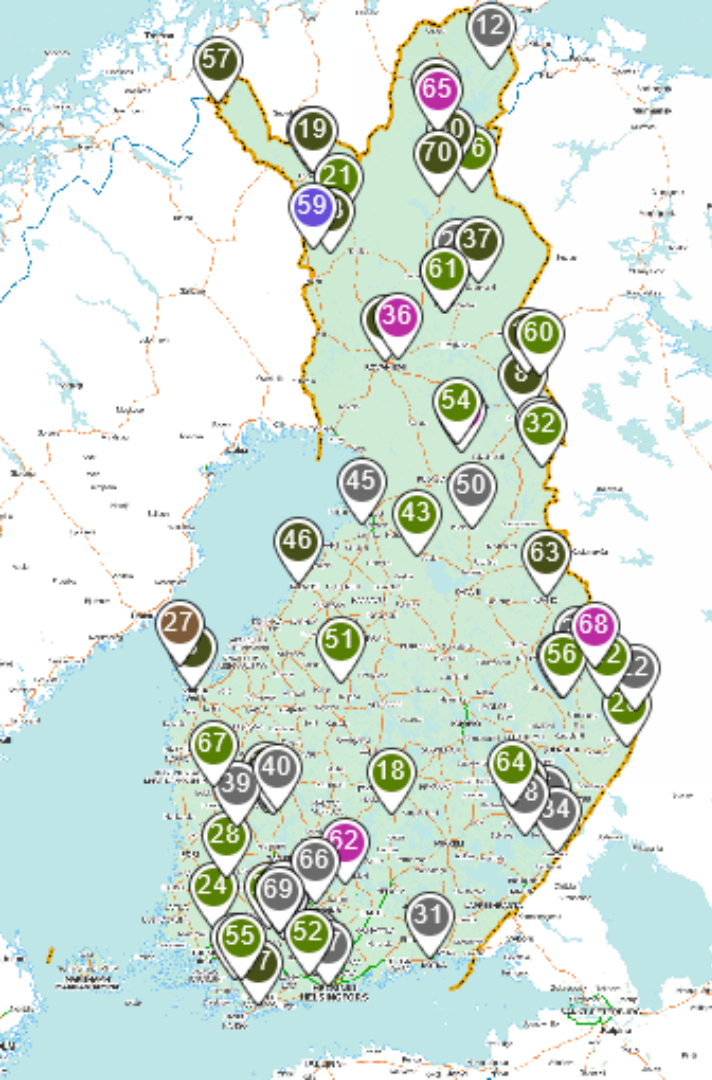


Accessibility

- It's important that different organisations create the opportunities for an active and healthy life and nature experiences.
- **Over a million Finns (more than 20%)** require adapted physical activity and special expertise related to physical activity. Regarding disabled and chronically ill people, this need is permanent. (www.soveli.fi)
- Investing in low-threshold outdoor destinations pays off. Accessible, easy routes benefit everyone and enable, for example, families, tourists and different communities to spend time in natural environments.

P&WF Accessible destinations

- Access to nature for all!
- Different sorts of illnesses, injuries, traveling with small children or, for example, challenges that come along with old age don't need to be obstacles for enjoying outdoors and gaining unique nature experiences.
- We maintain accessible and easy nature destinations that are suitable for those moving with aid or for those who are seeking easy trails.
- Over 70 barrier-free routes and services.
- http://www.nationalparks.fi/en/accessible_destinations





What Is a Typical P&WF Accessible Trail like?

- The shape of land surfaces and weather conditions create certain boundaries for planning and maintaining national parks and other nature sites in different parts of Finland. This is why each accessible/easy hiking trail is one of a kind.
- Nearby many of the accessible hiking trails there are typically accessible toilets as well as camping sites
- Many of the destinations also have a bird watching tower or a view spot. Also different kind of services by local enterprises and organizations are offered in many of the nature areas.
- Recommendations of specialized organizations (The Outdoor Association of Finland, The Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities) are being applied while building accessible trails. Almost all of the Finnish Visitor Centres and other customer service points are built accessible.





How to Find Accessible and Easy Hiking Trails?

- **Search the Destinations**
- Accessible and easy hiking trails can be found at [Nationalparks.fi](https://nationalparks.fi) by choosing Suitability criterion -> Barrier-free routes or services.
- Before traveling outdoors, we recommend to carefully explore information about the chosen nature destination.
- And if needed, to contact customer service and visitor centres for any questions.
- Service provided by partners are linked to nationalparks.fi



Parks & Wildlife Finland Healthy Parks Healthy People - programme



Inspiring experiences and well-being outdoors!



- Promoting Health & Well-being
- 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 and outdoor recreation has a highly impact on our physical, mental and social well-being
- *Healthy Parks & Healthy People* - programme
- Service provided by partners and tourism are a part of health and well-being promotion

Sustainable tourism



- Create opportunities for sustainable nature tourism
- The visitors' spending brings in direct income to the local people and business ca. 10 € for every € the state has spent on the services
- Sustainable tourism based on national parks creates jobs
- Service provided by partners are linked to the website nationalparks.fi



P&WF Healthy Parks Healthy People

- *Healthy Parks Healthy People, Health and Well-being 2025* -programme
- The goal: Finland's diverse natural environment improves the health and well-being of its people
- The Finns are active, outdoor people, for whom nature is an essential part of everyday life and leisure time
- The social, physical and mental well-being has improved due to the varied Finnish wilderness and their active relationship with nature
- <https://julkaisut.metsa.fi/julkaisut/show/2112>





Health and Well-being through Nature

Research shows that nature has an impact on our health and well-being

- When we spend time outdoors, we can enjoy the health and well-being effects of both the natural environment and physical activity
- Physical activity increases in natural environments, and nature drives us to be active
- Nature revitalises us and helps us to recover from stress
- Nature improves our social well-being and sense of community





Themes

1. From nearby nature to national parks the goal 2025

- Natural areas and historical and wilderness sites form part on 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´.
- 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.
- The high-quality, attractive destinations with a range of natural attractions and the services offered by Parks and Wildlife Finland provide health and well-being benefits for local residents and tourists.





Themes

2. Everyone Outdoors

The goal 2025

- Everyone has equal opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors. Our services create well-being, prevent public health problems and promote an active lifestyle.
- A high-quality destinations and services provide equal opportunities for outdoor recreation regardless of the individual's functional ability.
- Activities for children, young people, adults and old people, tourists etc.



Themes

3. Results based on communications and cooperation

The goal 2025

- 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.
- Nature's effects on well-being are important to the development and productisation of nature tourism.
- Parks & Wildlife Finland produces and compiles easily understandable, entertaining and reliable information on the health benefits of nature for in-house use, customers, decision-makers, private companies, third sector etc.

Cases and projects





Project Everyone Outdoors

(4/15-6/2016)

- The objective was to take advantage of the effects of nature on health and well-being and to encourage everyone to enjoy Finland's magnificent nature; diseases and disabilities are not an obstacle to have outdoor activities
- Implemented by Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland, with the Finnish Federation of Adapted Physical Activity as the main partner
- A nationwide project
- Budget: €106 000
- The project has received a grant from the Ministry of Education and Culture





Overall objectives

- To offer people with disabilities and chronic illnesses better possibilities for an active lifestyle and taking part in health-enhancing outdoor activities in nature
- To offer people with disabilities and chronic illnesses better information about outdoor activities, nature sites, destinations and other services
- To develop website nationalparks.fi easier to use
- To evaluate accessibility by different aspects
- To collect recommendations on accessibility and cooperation for the future





Aims

- Make it possible for all to experience nature and encourage people to engage outdoor activities
- Intensify collaboration between different sectors (sports, health environment, tourism)
- Expand the understanding of various organisations of accessibility, applied physical activity, the health and well-being effects of nature, outdoor activity opportunities, cooperation opportunities and services
- Ensure the continuity of collaboration well into the future



Parts of the Luupään Lenkki trail are suitable for the disabled. Photo: Maija



Recommended at Leivonmäki



The Accessible Harjujärvi Trail, 700 m/each way



When there is no snow on the ground, travel time 1h

Category: an easy trail ☐, a demanding wheelchair trail ☒

Starting Point: [Harjujärvi campfire hut](#) (pdf 2 173 KB, julkaisut.metsa.fi)

[Description of the Accessible Harjujärvi Trail](#)

Summary of the key measures and results of the project

Revising the information on outdoor destinations in the nationalparks.fi webservice

- To make it easier for customers to assess the suitability of outdoor destinations
- Photos and symbols were added to the pages
- Text was simplified and restructured so as to make it easy to browse and read
- Information on customer services and partner companies is clearly highlighted on the pages



Summary of the key measures and results of the project

Develop a model for on-site inspection to support participatory planning

- The objective of on-site inspection was to assess the functioning and communications of a destination, increase cooperation, establish regional networks and generate ideas for the development of the outdoor destination from the perspectives of applied physical activity.
- Local representatives of sports, public health and disability organisations, professionals and those who maintain nature destinations participated in the piloting of the model for on-site inspection.
- The model can be used in participatory planning, and it can be applied to different types of outdoor and nature destinations.



Summary of the key measures and results of the project

Creating a training model for applied green exercise

- The objective was to increase knowledge of the health and well-being effects of nature, applied outdoor activities in natural environments, the importance of the natural world to disabled and chronically ill hikers.
- The training model brings together regional sports, public health and disability organisations, those who maintain outdoor destinations, customer service staff of nature centres, partner businesses, and experts of health and well-being and outdoor recreation.
- The training model can be used in and applied to different types of outdoor destinations.





Observations made along the way

- Nature is a huge resource. Spending even a little time in a forest or marsh or near water is calming and empowering.
- Sensations, experiencing the natural world and being together are an important part of being outdoors. In planning outdoor destinations and services the importance of these aspects to experiences and well-being could be taken even better into account.



Observations made along the way

- People experience accessibility in different ways and have different needs.
- Special attention should be paid to the information and online-descriptions of routes and destinations. Then customers can themselves assess whether the destination is suitable for them.



Observations made along the way

- Investing in low-threshold outdoor destinations pays off. Accessible, easy routes benefit everyone.
- Basic elements are the route, easy access toilet facilities and campfire site.
- Destinations should be designed together with customers and multisectoral cooperation between organisations is an extremely important aspect when planning and developing accessible services.
- Collaboration between experts has increased the multidirectional sharing off information and the exchange of know-how.



Hossa National Park

- Newest National Park, established on 17.6.2017
- Accessibility important aspect, participatory planning with public health and disability organisations.
- 90 km of trails in the national park, mostly easy to walk on, but some offer more challenge, various kinds of accessible routes and facilities for everyone.
- Water routes for a few hour paddling trip as well a water excursion of several days.
- A lot of nature tourists who need accessibility have visited Hossa NP this summer.
- <http://www.nationalparks.fi/hossa>,
<http://www.nationalparks.fi/en/hossa/trails>,
<http://www.nationalparks.fi/en/hossa/accessible>

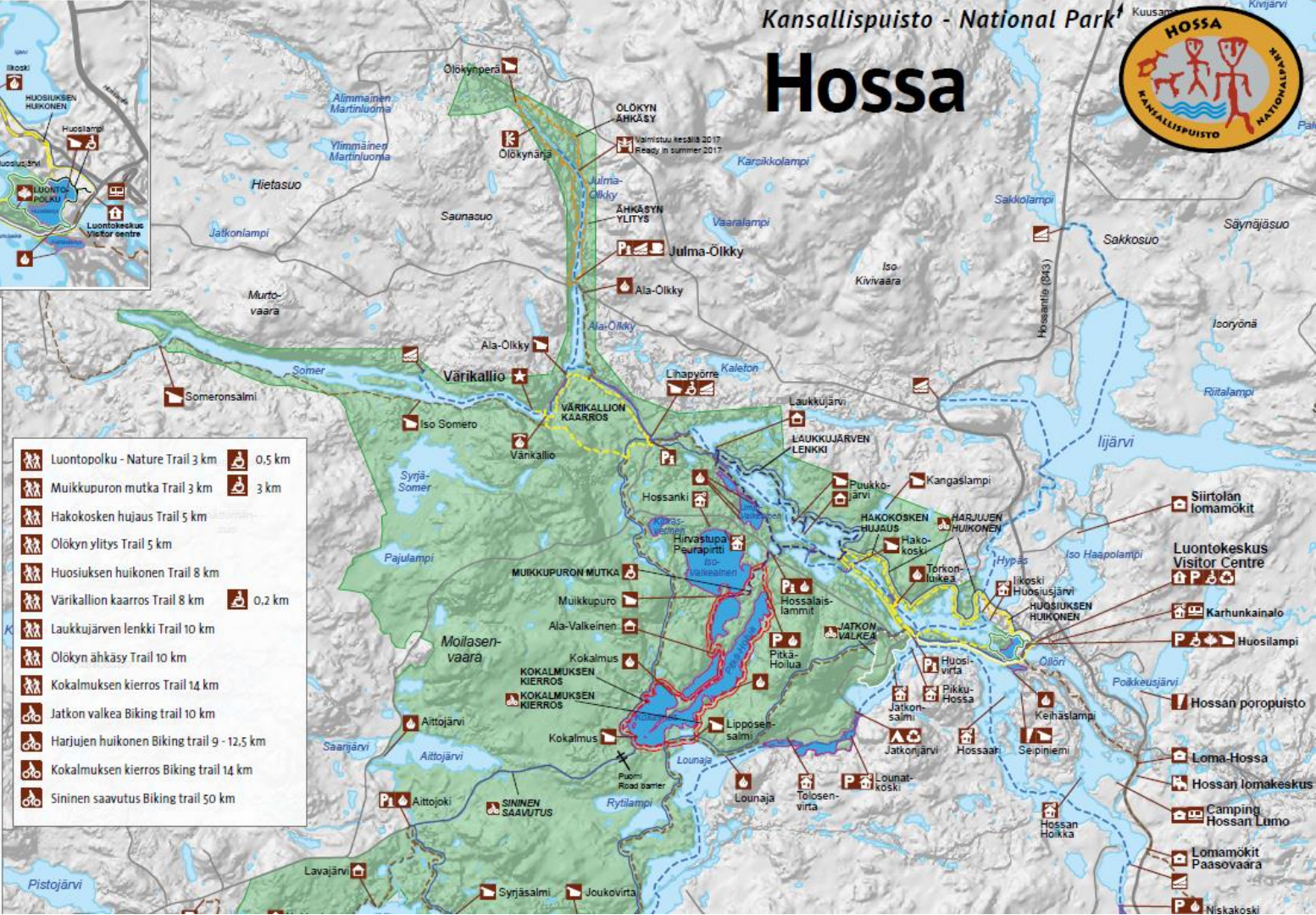




Hossa



- Kansallispuisto - National park
- Tie - Road
- Polku - Trail
- Luontopolk - Nature trail
- Pyöräilyreitti - Biking trail
- Vesiretkeliikenne - Canoeing route
- Luontokeskus - Visitor centre
- Pysäköinti ja opastus - Parking and information
- Pysäköinti - Parking
- Vuokramökki - Rental cabin
- Leirintäalue - Camping ground
- Mökkimajoitus - Cottages
- Hotelli - Hotel
- Kahvila - Café
- Telttailualue - Tent site
- Autiotupa - Open wilderness hut
- Laavu - Lean-to shelter
- Kota - Lapp hut
- Keittokatos - Cooking shelter
- ★ Nähtävyydet - Sight
- Näköalatasanne - Scenic look-out place
- Ohjelmalvelukohde - Programme service cabin
- Jätteiden lajittelu - Recycling
- Liikuntaesteisille - For disabled
- Riippusilta - Hanging bridge
- Kalastuslupa-alue 5502 - Hossa fishing permit area



Developing accessibility continues



- Accessibility project *Trail to Nature* (5/2017–4/2019)
- To increase knowledge about accessible services, outdoor recreation and nature's health and well-being impacts.
- Cooperation between different sectors, customers, experts etc., increased multidirectional sharing of information and expertise.
- Local and nationwide networks related to accessibility, outdoor recreation, adapted physical activity, outdoor destinations and services and tourism.
- Service design, accessible equipments
- www.metsa.fi/polkuuontoon





Thank you!

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www.metsa.fi, www.nationalparks.fi,
www.excursionmap.fi



METSÄHALLITUS

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19.10.2017

Plateliai



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