

Volunteer work in Metsähallitus: Labour of love or just hard labour?



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Presentation content

- Introduction to the volunteer work managed by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services
 - Best practices from 3 successful cases
 - Challenges we face
- The Volunteer work development project 2011-12
 - Background and benefits
 - New potential, forms of volunteer work, new partnerships
 - Labour of Love? Connecting people to wilderness

Volunteer work today

- Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services has successfully managed volunteer work in Finnish protected areas for more than three decades.
- Approximately 2000 man-days per year j1
- 50 Metsähallitus full time staff members involved as coordinators, planners and managers
- Includes all protected areas

Dia 3

j1

Full time vapaaehtoistyössä?

jannicap; 23.8.2011

Case 1: Monitoring of bird populations and the endangered Saimaa Ringed Seal

- Metsähallitus cooperates with nature enthusiasts in monitoring species.
- Bird ringers work contribution is remarkable in monitoring of Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) and Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*)
- Volunteers bring considerable resource savings to many monitoring tasks



Case 1: Monitoring Saimaa Ringed Seal (*Pusa hispida saimensis*)

- Volunteer work focuses on monitoring of the Saimaa Ringed Seal population and breeding grounds.
- Metsähallitus provides training, equipment, insurance cover and permits.
- Over 200 man-days in 2010
- 130 volunteers involved in 2011







Case 1: Monitoring of Golden Eagle, Peregrine and Gyr Falcon

- Volunteers monitor nests, ring young birds and report their findings and observations. They also search for new nests and report of them.
 - Metsähallitus is responsible for monitoring species on the areas which it manages. It is nationally responsible for monitoring a number of threatened species or species which are protected under the EU Habitats Directive or the Birds Directive.
 - Volunteers play an important part in achieving these goals
- Volunteers and Metsähallitus have a written agreement on co-operation
- Over 320-350 man-days per year
- Done by bird enthusiasts. Almost all of them have a ringing permit
- Metsähallitus covers traveling expenses



Case 2: Volunteer camps, “conservation holiday”

- 20 camps yearly
- Approximately 1600 man-days in 2011
- Most of the camps are in southern Finland
 - Emphasis in managing of traditional landscapes which are mainly in the archipelago
 - Volunteers clear meadows, burn branches, cut hay.
- Arranged in co-operation with WWF
- The most traditional volunteer work form that has been a success for over 30 years
- Still there is need for new openings and renewal of the concept



Case 2: Volunteer camps, “conservation holiday”



Case 3: Basecamp. "It's all about the journey"

- Volunteer work organized as a co-operation between private- and governmental sectors.
- The co-operation between Basecamp and Metsähallitus started in 2009 with a common project KULMA



Case 3: Basecamp. “It’s all about the journey”

- The means are more important than end result
- It’s all about having fun, learn new skills, try something new, challenge oneself and make social contacts.
- Clients of the Basecamp are very international
 - Their product needs to be internationally attractive
 - **Global competition over volunteers?**



Challenges we face

- Regardless of our long history of effective and profitable volunteer work there is a need for development and innovation
- The role of Metsähallitus as an organizer of volunteer work is locally strong, but we lack coordination at the national level
- We need to gain a better understanding of the motives of the volunteers and expand our co-operation and strengthen our partnerships with volunteer organizations



Challenges we face

- The role of volunteers in wilderness protection is recognized, but has not yet been clearly defined. We need
 - more informative statistics on the output of the volunteer work
 - the right analytical tools for follow-up in order to develop the volunteer scheme
 - comprehensive and summarized information on the practical aspects of volunteer work
 - encourage our own park staff to participate in the development process – volunteers will not replace full-time staff



Metsähallitus' Volunteer work development project 2011-12: Background and benefits

- 2011 is the European Year of Volunteering
- Volunteering plays an important role in many different sectors such as education, youth, culture, sports, environment, health and social care, consumer protection, humanitarian aid, development policy, research, equal opportunities and external relations.
- Many countries are far ahead of us when it comes to engaging volunteers. We can benefit and learn from their experience.



Metsähallitus' Volunteer work development project 2011-12: Objectives

The project is expected to:

- define new strategic goals for volunteer work
- test new forms of volunteer work
- benchmark best practices
- improve volunteer management.

Starting-points

The idea is to:

1. Create a win-win situation by combining the interests of the volunteers with the interests of Metsähallitus
 - Volunteers: personal motives and communal benefits
 - Metsähallitus: Volunteer work offers opportunities for public participation generating benefits for protected area management
 - Focus on motivation, interests, abilities and time resources of volunteers

Starting-points

2. Define the division of labor: who should be “the operator”, who organizes volunteer work?
 - It's not possible for Metsähallitus to increase its expenses
 - we need to find partners
 - Metsähallitus in a coordinating role
 - Volunteer organizations in an implementing role
 - Partnering up with tourism entrepreneurs (“the Basecamp model”)

Labour of Love- a new way of thinking

- The Volunteer work development project started with the “Ready for labour of Love”- campaign that called for new and fresh ideas from the general public for volunteering in protected areas.
- The campaign made it possible to take a closer look at the needs, hopes and desires of potential volunteers while encouraging and inspiring our own full-time staff at the same time.
- People are bursting with fantastic, new volunteer work ideas, which sets huge expectations on development of coordination





Labour of Love- a new way of thinking

- Reasons for volunteering:
 - "Love for nature"*
 - "It gives you access to interesting and unattainable places"*
 - "The joy of working with people with similar interests"*
 - "For the fun of it"*
 - "to build social networks"*

(BMU 2004 – Federal Environmental Ministry (Germany). Katja Raatikainen, Metsähallitus)



Competing over volunteers? Brand management

- U.S National Park Service attracts more volunteers than it can use

" The Park Service is held in such high regard by the public that people are eager to associate themselves with it"

Global competing over volunteers?

PAN Parks brand attracts volunteers?



Labour of Love- a new way of thinking: Conclusion

At its best, co-operation becomes something far better than just working together - it grows into deep respect and friendship.

With that achieved, continued success is guaranteed.

Managing wilderness is about engaging people, not so much of managing them



Thank you for your attention!
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