



WWF work camps
for volunteers
(and other WWF activities)
in Finnish protected areas

Petteri Tolvanen
WWF Finland

6.10.2011



Seminatural habitats are highly endangered in Finland

- Different kinds of open and wooded habitats resulting from traditional agriculture (grazing, mowing)
 - E.g. meadows, pastures, slash and burn agriculture
- Often very high species diversity
- Because of the modern agricultural methods, only a small fragment of the original area remaining
- Most of the seminatural habitat types are now endangered
 - ca 20% of the species are endangered
- Maintaining the diversity of seminatural habitats requires continuous management and restoration





WWF work camps

- WWF introduced nature conservation work camps in Finland in 1977
- The aim of the WWF camps is to:
 1. Contribute in the restoration and management of valuable habitats / sites
 2. Offer possibilities to take part in practical nature conservation work for volunteers
- Metsähallitus (or the regional environmental administration) is usually the inviting and hosting local co-operation partner
- The main motive of the volunteers to participate is the possibility to take part in practical nature conservation





WWF criteria for selecting the camp destinations

- Nature conservation values: valuable site (e.g. national park) and/or valuable flora and fauna
- Continuation of the management is ensured
 - Existing management plan
- Suitable jobs for anyone
 - no special skills required from volunteers
- Suitable site for the base camp
 - Site for washing / swimming / sauna
 - Supply of drinking water
- Reliable local co-operation partner that is committed and willing to invest in the supervision of the work!





Statistics of WWF work camps in 1977-2011

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| (Long) camps organised | 182 camps |
| Volunteer participants | 2890 persons |
| Working days | 20315 man-days |
| Effort in man-years (215 d/y) | 91 years |

- + ca 95 short (weekend) camps not included above
- Majority of the camps in Finland, but a couple of camps also abroad (EST, RUS, SWE)





How does the WWF camp work in practice?

- Typical jobs of the camps are:
 - Mowing, clearing of over grown areas
 - Construction and renovation of buildings and structures (duckboards, fences, information signs...)
- WWF organizes:
 - Invitation and selection of the participants
 - Leader of the camp
 - Tools and field officer taking care of the tools
 - Cook, canteen, all meals
 - Insurance of the participants
- The local co-operation partner organizes:
 - Supervision of the work (for each separate project)
 - Materials
 - Usually covers part of the direct costs



Typical camp jobs

Mowing and clearing
overgrowing meadows



Typical camp jobs
Clearing forested areas
for grazing



Typical camp jobs

Removing Juniper
on coastal meadows



Typical camp jobs
Maintaining hiking trails



Typical camp jobs

Renovating buildings
in national parks



Typical camp jobs

Building fences, duckboards etc



Typical camp jobs
Burning the clearing waste





How does the WWF camp work in practice?

- The age limit of participants is 18 years
 - Oldest participants over 70 years
- Accomodation is normally in tents
- Top physical condition is not required but endurance in the field circumstance is needed
- No participation fee
 - But the participants pay themselves their own travel to the meeting point in the vicinity of the camp site and back
- WWF (with partners) covers the costs for food, insurance and transportation during the camp (including the excursion day)





Programme of the WWF work camp

- The length of the camp varies between 4-9 days
- In long (full week) camps one excursion day in the middle

| | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 07.00 | wake up |
| 07.30 - 08.00 | breakfast |
| 08.00 - 10.00 | work |
| 10.00 - 10.15 | break |
| 10.15 - 12.00 | work |
| 12.00 - 13.00 | lunch |
| 13.00 - 15.00 | work |
| 15.00 - 15.15 | break |
| 15.15 - 17.00 | work |
| 17.00 - 18.00 | dinner |
| 18.00 > | free evening programme |





Other practical aspects

- A planning visit with the local co-operation partner is nearly always necessary
 - WWF has a register of ca 200 volunteers
 - An information letter about the camps of the coming summer sent in February – March
 - Registration for the camps opens in March
 - many camps booked full immediately
 - Usually ca 18 volunteers / camp
 - Increasing number of cancellations
 - Often need to invite/recruit volunteer participants with special skills
 - "Quota" for 1-3 foreign participants
-



New: Work camps
for families
Liesjärvi national park
2010 and 2011



Environmental education
for schools in national
parks and visitor centers,
Nature Adventures
brochure for families



Naturewatch
research activities for
school children





Pan Parks

- started as a WWF project in 1997
- creates a network of European protected areas certified in accord with PAN Parks quality standards
- 11 parks included
- promotes sustainable, responsible tourism “to foster love, respect and pride for Europe’s wilderness”
- offers benefits for protected areas, local communities, visitors and business partners while preserving the best of Europe’s wilderness for future generations



Thank you!

petteri.tolvanen@wwf.fi

