

Assessing the benefits of protected areas with help of visitor information

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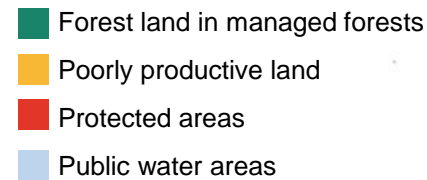


METSÄHALLITUS

Metsähallitus, Natural Heritage Services manages state owned protected areas

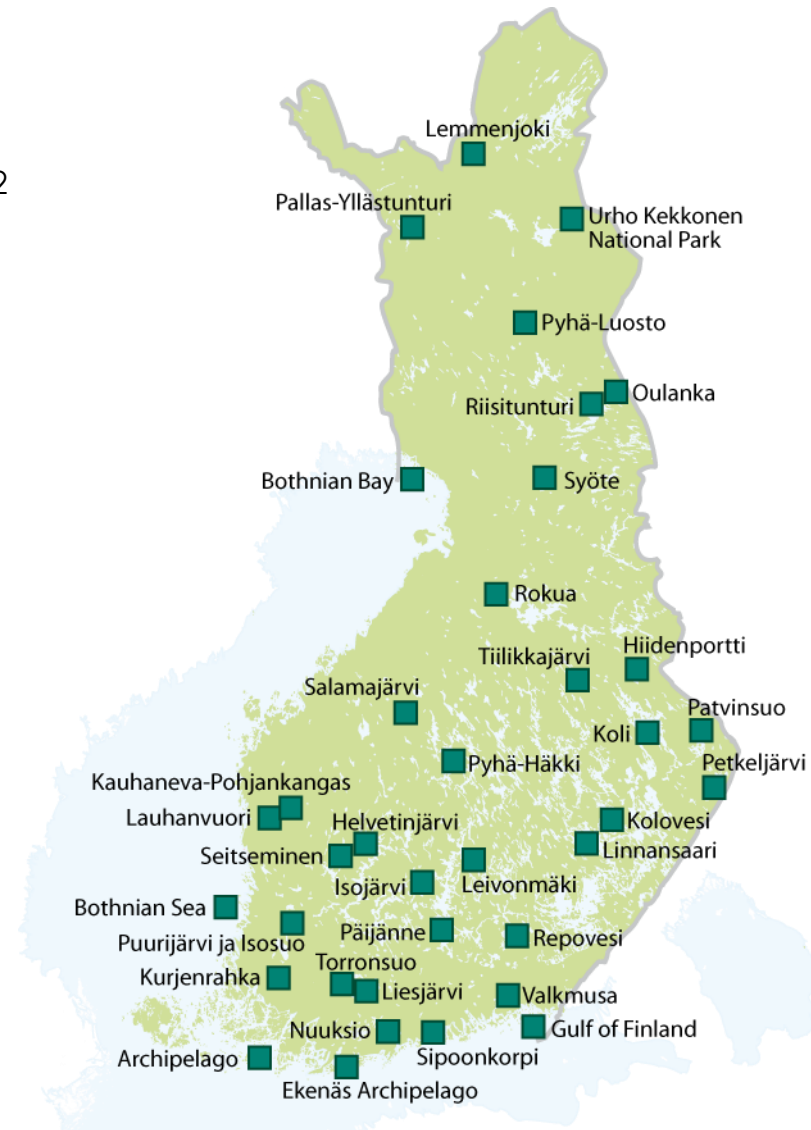
- 37 national parks
- 19 strict nature reserves
- 7 national hiking areas
- 12 wilderness areas
- Almost 500 other protected areas
- Public water areas

Altogether over **7 mill. ha, 18 %**
of Finland's surface area



National Parks

- A total of 37, on an area of 9 790 km²
- Almost 2 million visits in 2010



Natural Heritage Services

- Core processes
 - Management planning
 - Nature conservation
 - Recreation
 - Game and fisheries



Land use planning in a participatory manner

Conservation of habitats and species

Protection of cultural heritage, landscapes and traditions



National supply statistics

Recreational Infrastructure	2009
Number of visitor centres and customer service points	29
Number of interpretation structures	3 424
Number of mountain and rental cabins	389
Number of fire places etc.	3 018
Number of harbours and other structures for boating	470
Number of dry toilets etc.	2 285
Number of fire wood shelters	1 713
Recreational trails and nature trails (km)	6 413
Ski trails (km)	2 182
Managed routes for boats and canoes (km)	1 370
Snowmobile trails (km)	11 274



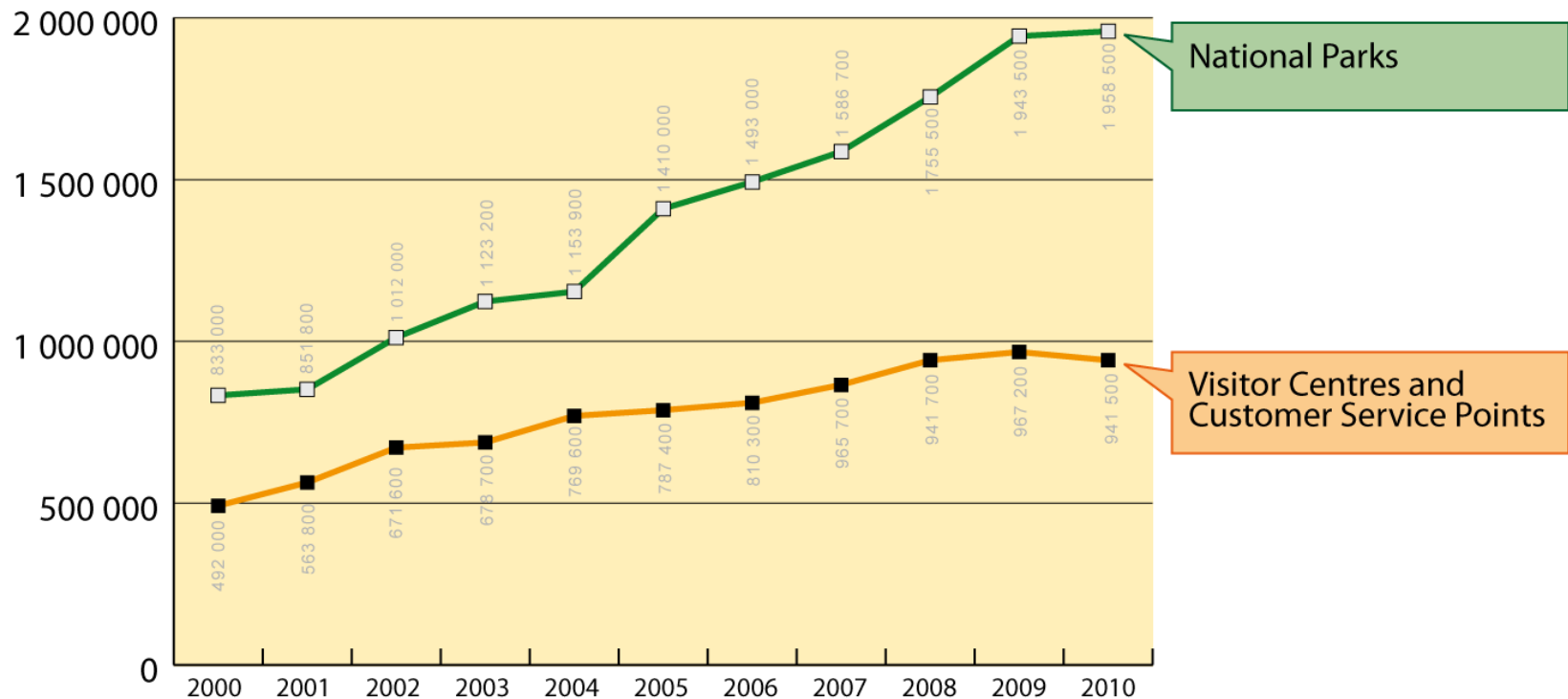
Visitor centers, guidance, interpretation,

Outdoors.fi, Excursionmap.fi

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Number of visits to national parks and visitor centers

luontoon.fi
utinaturen.fi
outdoors.fi
lundui.fi



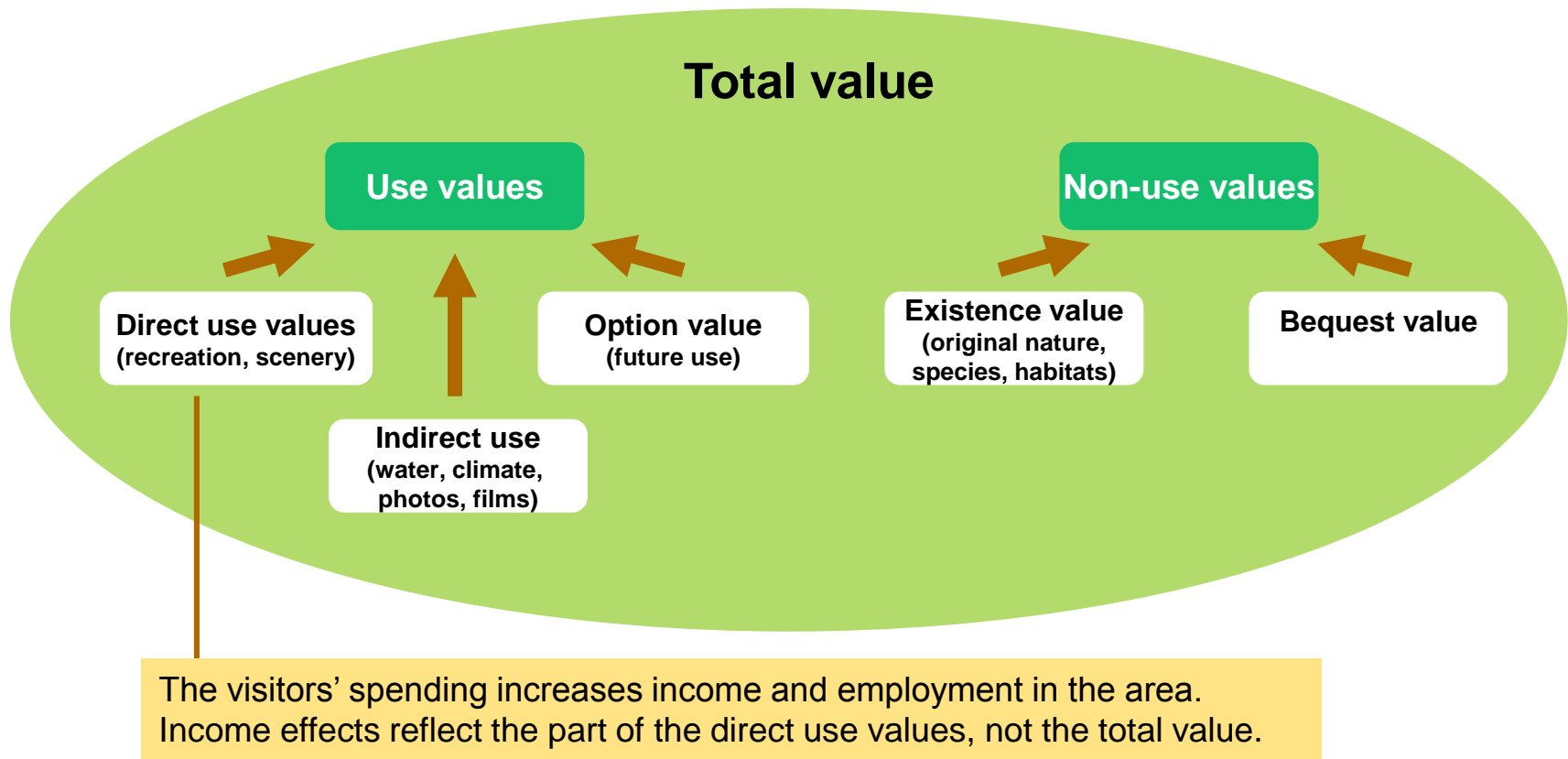
The most popular national parks are part of the appeal of the tourist destinations

Number of visits 2010

Pallas-Ylläs	436 000
Urho Kekkonen np	287 500
Nuoksio	178 000
Oulanka	169 000
Koli	138 500
Pyhä-Luosto	119 000



The Total Value of a National Park



Why to Estimate Economic Impacts of Park Visitation?

1. To justify budget funding
 - Benefits are not obvious
 - Decision-makers prefer numbers
 - State provides facilities, local entrepreneurs benefit
2. To increase general acceptability of national parks
 - Nature protection can be combined with business activities
3. To measure economic effectiveness

The First Step...

Benchmarking

- U.S. MGM2 (Money Generation Model 2): a model developed by Michigan State University for USDI National Park Service to evaluate the local economic impacts of National Park tourism
 - Excel application with three inputs:
 - number of visits
 - average visitor spending
 - multipliers from local input-output tables

What Did We Do?

An application producing

- direct and total income effects (€)
- employment effects (person years)
- annual follow-up of the results

Estimate for each NP

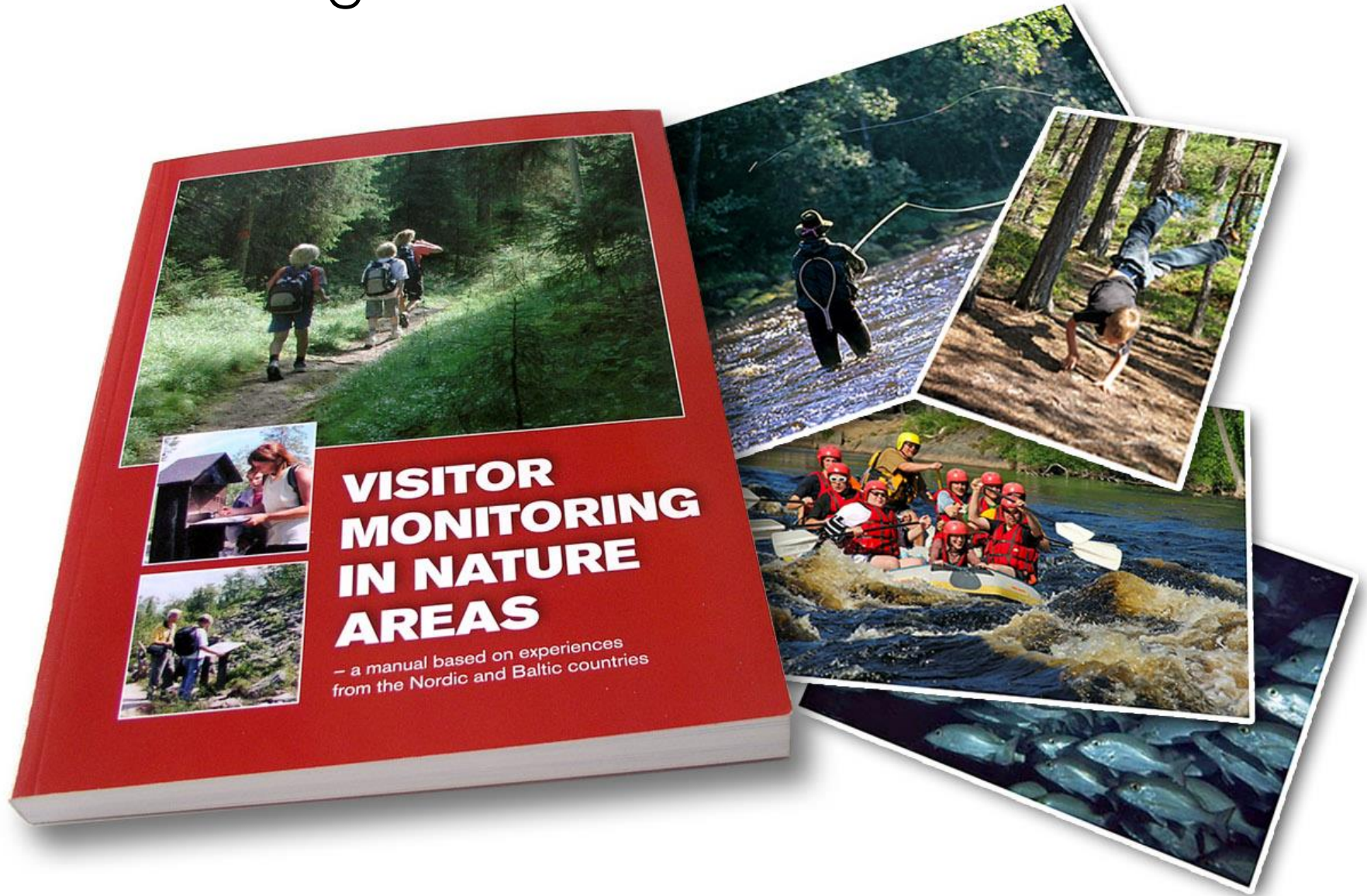
→ for those parks where no visitor data exists, data from similar kind of park is used

Enabling estimation of total, state-level effects annually

Easy-to use, practical tool



Basic Requirement: Harmonised Visitor Monitoring Methods in National Parks



Good Use of ASTA Visitor Information: Number of Visits and Visitor Spending

Annual number of visits

Visitor spending in the park and its surroundings

- Any spending related to the trip: yes / no?
- Costs per visitor / party?
- In 7 categories (accommodation, restaurants etc.)

Other visitor information

- The importance of the NP as a destination
- Municipality (Country) of residence
- Length of stay
- Size of the party



Methodology

Metla Working paper: Local economic impacts of national park visitors' spending: The development process of an estimation method

www.metla.fi/julkaisut/workingpapers/2010/mwp149-en.htm

www.metsa.fi/suojeluvuorokaudenajankohtainen



Regional economic impacts of national park visitation

Money spent on management and services of national parks and other protected areas comes back many-fold through local entrepreneurship and jobs.



Summary of the results

- The economic impacts of visitors' spending in 2010

National Parks

108,9 milj. €

1 403
person yrs

National hiking
areas

15,5 milj. €

201
person yrs



Big differences between the parks

- The impacts are the biggest in Northern Finland, in those parks located nearby a tourist center
 - Pallas-Ylläs 31 milj. €, 402 person years
 - Urho Kekkosen np 22 milj. €, 289 person years
 - Oulanka 15 milj. €, 194 person years
- In Southern Finland impacts per area smaller but many more areas
- Parks in archipelago regions significant, right after Koli NP which is a “tourist center park”
 - Koli kp n. 5,8 milj. €, 76 person years
 - Saaristomeri 4,0 milj. €, 48 person years
 - Linnansaari 3,1 milj. €, 38 person years
 - Tammisaari 3,0 milj. €, 36 person years

Reasons for differences

Differences in

- the amount of visitation
(attractivity, accessibility
etc.)
- visitor profiles
- services in the surrounding
region

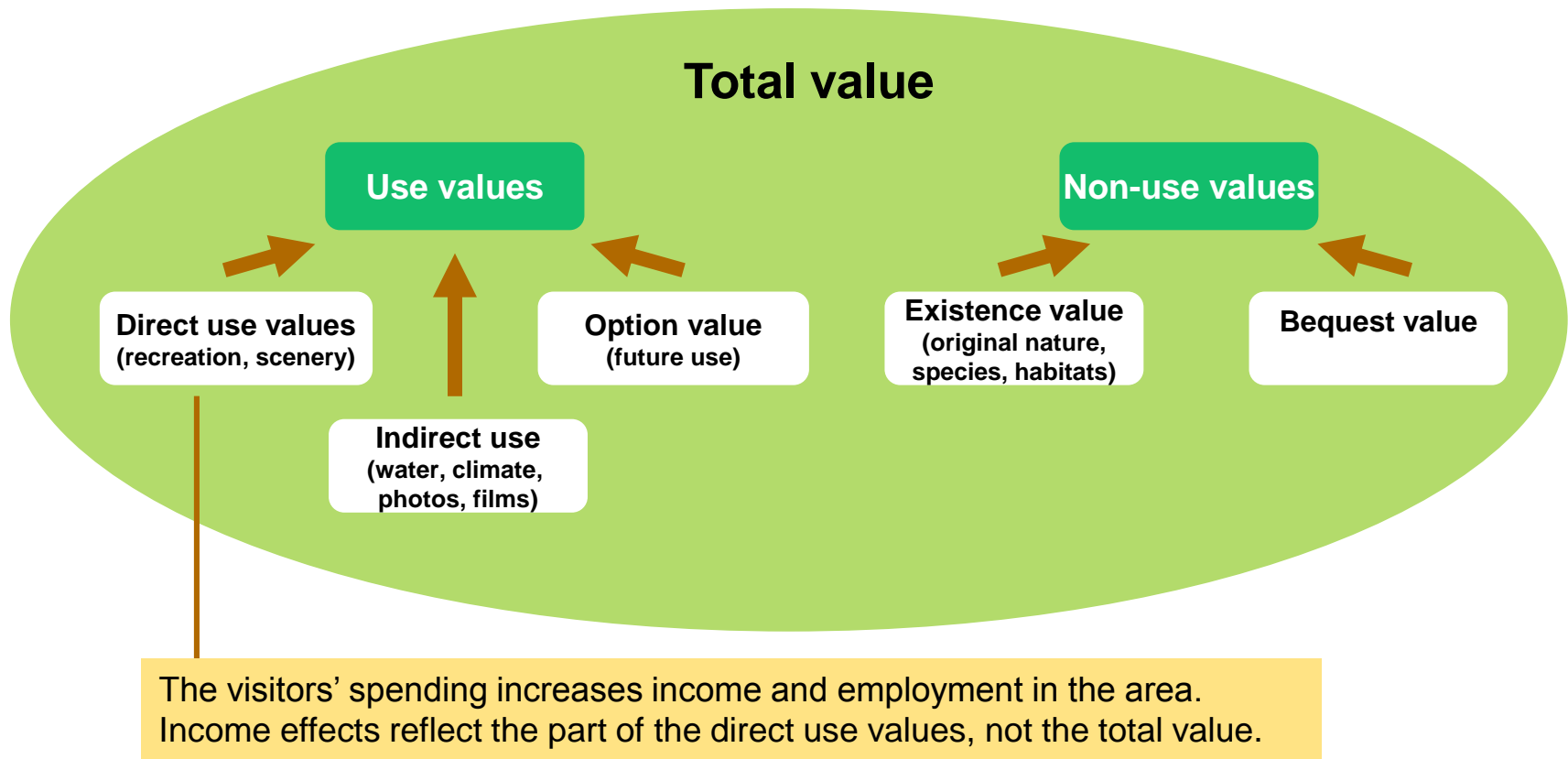
Interpreting the results

- The impacts are the local economic impacts of visitor spending, NOT the total value of the area
- For each park also impacts calculated from those visitors' spending to whom NP was "the only or the most important destination"

→ Minimum impacts, year 2010:

National Parks	54,9 milj. €	700 person yrs
State hiking areas	8,5 milj. €	110 person yrs

The Total Value of a National Park



Nature promotes health

There is research evidence that contact with nature

- prevents diseases
- helps to recover from stress and diseases
- promotes positive attitudes towards life
- increases productivity

→ A therapy based on nature can cure patients even when other cures are not effective

→ Parks and other natural environments are essential in the prevention of diseases

For most of the people health is the single most important issue in their lives



The goal of the programme in NHS

Public health improves as people get out into natural settings, enjoy positive and genuine experiences, and improve their physical health through a wide range of outdoor activities.

- outdoor activities become a more important aspect of Finnish lifestyles, and Finns live active outdoor life
- public health improves
- longer life expectancy
- improved work capacity
- health inequality declines
- attitudes towards national parks become more favourable and funding becomes available from more diverse sources

Objectives of the programme in NHS – Research and monitoring

More research data becomes available on the health benefits of protected areas

- A better understanding of the health benefits of protected areas
- Research findings form a reliable basis for identifying and promoting the health benefits of natural settings

The health benefits of the use of protected areas are monitored and measured, with findings used to enhance services

- The health benefits of the recreational use of protected areas are effectively measured
- A better understanding of these benefits guides decision-making and funding becomes available from more diverse sources

Thank you!

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