Friends Groups in Finland

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Case study 1
Friends of Parks movement

• Integration 3rd sector in Park planning and management
• Success story over one hundred years where been active
• Begin in US NP:s
• Active in UK, Germany, Austria, Italy, Finland and ???
• Public participation, volunteering, lobbying, education, training, research and hobbies, e.t.c.
International trend 80 years

- Friends of Yellowstone association, USA 1933
- Friends of the Lake District, GB 1934
- Verein der Nationalpark-Freunde e.V., D 1970
- Freunde des Nationalpark Hohe Tauern, A 1993
Friends of Parks in Finland

- Six Friends of Parks associations as legal bodies
- Koli NP
- Nuuksio NP
- Bothnian Sea NP
- Leivonmäki NP
- Archipelago NP
- Liminga Bay PA
Membership in Friends

- Private persons
- Other associations and clubs
- SMEs
- Municipalities
- Regions

- Annual membership fee average €30 for persons
- €100 for partner associations and SMEs
- €500 for regions and other supporters
- Members 30-150 per each Friends association
Organisation of Finnish Friends of Parks

- Annual meetings 1-2 for all members
- 2-5 meetings in elected executive board incl. 4-6 persons
- External experts - park managers
- Projects and task groups
- Annual national get-together event for Friends and Forest and Wildlife service

Parks Friends Council meeting in Nuuksio NP
Pilots and projects

- Developing and testing new models to organise co-operation between officers, businesses and 3rd sector associations
- Environmental education programmes
- Cultural heritage inventories
- EU Regional Dev projects
- LEADERs
- INTERREGs
- LIFEs
- TACIS
- Research programmes
Organisation for visitor guidance services in 2004

Koli National Park

Finnish Forest Research Institute
  Park director

Enterprises
  Field guidance

Heritage Centre
  Ukko
    Manager

Cultural Centre
  Kolin Ryynänen
    Guidance enterprise

Treinees

Visitor guidance services
  Friends of Ukko-Koli
    Secretary general

Enterprise A
  Guidance
  Nature Shop

Enterprise B
  Guidance
  Customer feedback
  Library

Enterprise C
  Guidance
  Ecological products

Enterprise D
  Guidance
  Technics
  Cleaning service

Trainees

Handicraft enterprises
  57 suppliers
National park partnership model 2

- Authorities
- Local communities
- Parks and Wildlife Service
- SMEs
- Association 1
- Friends association
- Club/society
Activities of Friends

- Mutual planning and participation
- Events and volunteering in park management
- Research, Education and Information
- Networking in projects

Traditional meadow management by Friends in Leivonmäki NP
Fun for the Friends – Resources for the Park

Cleaning a meadow by Friends in in Nuuksio NP
Koli – a source of inspirations for Parks Friends
Partnership meadow “Soikkeli” in Koli NP since 2014
Experiment - Passport Fee to Visitor Centre

- Feedback in the first year 2000
- mean 8.3 (n=316).
- Median = 9.
- Critical (score = 4-5) = 11 %
- Positives (score = 9-10) = 58 %
Trust among SMEs towards Actors in Sustainable Tourism at Koli NP 2005
(n=75, school score 4=min 10 =max)
New strategy of Koli NP Friends in 2013

• Key Objectives;
  – Protection of Koli Landscape-UNESCO WH
  – Social capital gain in networking
  – Internationalisation of Koli

• Activation of European Network for parks Friends and Partners

• Changing experiences, actions, projects

• EUROPARC membership 12.6.2014
Partnership commitment with Parks and Wildlife Finland 2013

Friends of Bothnian Sea NP
Fisherman’s island as a first volunteering target 2014

Some hundred working hours
Food costs covered
Another hut in planning.
Fisherman and culture EU regional development project by Friends of Bothnian Sea NP

- Parks and Wildlife Service as the lead party
- Friends interviewing 4 old fishermen in one village
- Collecting and publishing in home pages the dictionary for fishermen
- Collecting and publishing a googlemap about sites and place names for fishermen and sailors
- 300 hours work volunteering, 500 € travel costs covered
- Continuum in another village with LEADER funding (12 000 €).
Renovation of 2 harbour docks as a second volunteering target 2015

- Remarkable (25 000 €) support from sea industry
- 4 SMEs in actions
- Several weeks volunteering
- Good publicity (>600) in SOME
Selkämeren kansallispuiston ystävät ry

Seminar in Koli NP for European Friends of Parks in 2015

- 12 Friends Associations participating
- 16 presentations
- Published in home pages of Friends of Ukko-Koli, see:
  - [www.ukko-kolinystavat.fi](http://www.ukko-kolinystavat.fi)
- Long list of recommendations for national and international level
Finnish local level development ideas produced from the participants of the seminar

- Develop Junior Ranger movement locally
- Youth+Senior together work for nature
- Have clear responsible coordinators
- Local activities and the self-helping-power to future network
- To involve private sector
- Adopt sites locally
- Ask the big NGOs for special parks help-own park ngos
- Provide facilities and food
- Provide a place for the NGOs
- Find out to activate different groups not just nature people
- Inform and get contacts to local hunting clubs – cooperation with them
- Use of new media – fb and so on
- Parks & Wildlife staff more actively involved (but not the wrong way)
- New ways to reward the most active and innovative ones
- Make a communication project to active people to join friends of the national parks
Practical park-friends partnership practises

- Mutual commitment and Annual working plans+
- Contact person on both sides+
- Information flow to 2 directions+
- Event support with tools+
- Education, research, publications+
- Electrical communication services+-
- Project activation +- 
- Membership in WGs -
- Direct funding support -+
And these

• Organising actions and events for youth and seniors; volunteering
• Networking local societies, seminar held in Rauma town 2014 with 26 associations representing the 3rd sector
• Information channel to SMEs
• Databank and research ideas to schools
• Environmental education and awareness rising for public
Cooperation with the third sector for the protected areas in Finland

- Parks & Wildlife Finland has managed volunteer work and cooperated with local associations for the nature for decades.
- Parks & Wildlife Finland strategy 2012-2020 gives a strong statement about the importance of volunteers and associations.
- Volunteer management in Finnish protected areas project 2012-2014 started the ongoing development.
- Hundreds of local associations and over 40 national NGOs cooperate with us to bring people closer to nature or to protect it.
- Early over 2500 volunteers.
- Metsähallitus full time staff members involved as coordinators, planners, contact persons and managers.
Friends of the national park offering inspiring experiences and developing ownership

- We strongly believe that parks need friends.
- National development work since 2012, when the principles for the Friends of the national park organisations were made.
- Cooperation towards a more structured model:
  - A declaration/contract about the friendship,
  - Named local contact person from Parks & Wildlife Finland,
  - Early planning of the cooperation locally,
  - more communication.
- Support for national cooperation of the friends as a form of an early meeting together with the 6 associations.
Why I’m here: I want to know how can we be a better friend?

Private thinking of a park manager

- We need friends, so what can we do to attract them, nowadays when short term volunteering is a trend, but a long term commitment is harder to achieve?
- We need to make it personal and make a commitment ourselves
- Shall we Give freedom! Loose control. Give chance to make a difference,
- How can we Reward and appreciate the Friends
Thank You

• “With a little help from my Friends”
  – Resources for parks
  – Fun for the Friends
  – Social capital gain
  – Innovation potential activated

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