



Parks & Wildlife Finland

Manages all state-owned protected areas and 18% of Finland's surface area

- 39 national parks
- 19 strict nature reserves
- 6 national hiking areas
- 12 wilderness areas
- over 500 other nature reserves
- Finland's state-owned waters

→ Most of the established protected areas belong to Natura 2000 network



Healthy Parks Healthy People Finland

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



Cooperation and partnership

P&W Finland and service providers in the wellbeing and health sector collaborate on the design, production and marketing of products

P&W Finland is a reliable and desirable partner for the health service and organisations promoting health at the local, national and international level

Accessibility

Protected areas form an integral part of the networks of green spaces and protected areas of various kinds offering opportunities for outdoor recreation near urban communities

Protected areas are easily accessible, and barriers to outdoor recreation are low, encouraging people to enjoy outdoor activities all year round

Health benefits for people of all ages

*Special focus on (re)connecting
children and nature*



Research and monitoring

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

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

Perceived health and wellbeing benefits



Development of the survey instruments in 2012

Modified on-site visitor surveys in four protected areas (n=2052) with a small set of health and well-being questions in summer 2013.

Extensive WEB based questionnaire for those visitors who were willing to participate the health & well-being survey and who gave their e-mail address.

The health & well-being questionnaire link was sent to 1 197 respondents appr. 1-3 weeks after the on-site survey.

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Health and Well-being from Finnish National Parks – A Study of Benefits Perceived by Visitors

Executive summary



Metsähallituksen luonnonsuojelujulkaisuja. Sarja A 208

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Committee of the Regions



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Perceived health and well-being benefits - On-site visitor survey questionnaire (Kevo)

16. How did this visit to Kevo Strict Nature Reserve influence the state of your health and well-being in the following sectors?

(Answer, please, each point and choose the alternative, which describes your feeling the best.)

5 = totally agree, 4 = somewhat agree, 3 = no opinion, 2 = somewhat disagree, 1 = totally disagree)

	totally agree	5	4	3	2	1	totally disagree
Increased social well-being (f. ex. strengthened social relations, improved working capacity, enjoyed doing things alone or together)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Increased psychological well-being (f. ex. satisfaction with life, improved mood, recovery from mental stress, learned something new)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Increased physical well-being (f. ex. enjoyed sensing the nature, maintained the fitness, learned new skills, physical well-being)		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

Perceived health and well-being benefits

- Extensive WEB survey

Comprehensive questions on

- **Relationship with nature**
- **Psychological well-being:** life satisfaction (background variables), the mood during the visit, experience of recovery, cognitive skills
- **Social well-being:** the impact on social well-being of the visit
- **Physical well-being:** general health (background variables), the experience of sensations and physical presence during the visit, physical activity, height and weight (background variables)
- **Duration of health and well-being impacts**
- **Financial evaluation of health and well-being impacts**
- **Children's health and well-being**
- **Open ended questions**

National parks promote social, psychological and physical well-being

	Responses		Evaluation, %					Average
	n	%	Totally disagree	Some-what disagree	No opinion	Some-what agree	Totally agree	
Increased social well-being	2011	98	0	2	14	40	43	4,24
Increased psychological well-being	2007	98	0	1	8	39	52	4,41
Increased physical well-being	2010	98	0	1	9	38	52	4,41

National parks move people

An average hiking distance on a typical national park trip was about 15 km (2013)

- *Visitors walk about 34 million kilometers in Finland's national parks annually*



National parks promote mental well-being

- *Park visits improve the mood and enhance the psychological well-being*
- *help recovery from stress*
- *Psychological well-being benefits last longest, especially in the areas where visitors stay more than one day*



Nature is the best playground for children

According to the adults' evaluations, children...

- enjoyed being in nature
- enjoyed spending time together
- felt the joy of being on the move
- learned new skills
- gained positive experiences of self-expression, using their imagination and developing their creativity



National parks promote public health for millions of euros

- The average value perceived by visitors was 208 EUR in 2013 (median 100 EUR)
- The estimated total value of health benefits of all national park visits in Finland was 226 million EUR in 2013





Thank you!

[www.nationalparks.fi/en/hikinginfinland/
healthandwellbeing](http://www.nationalparks.fi/en/hikinginfinland/healthandwellbeing)