

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2022

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Lauhanvuori - Hämeenkangas UNESCO Global Geopark, FINLAND, European Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2020

Representative photo with caption (from the most important event this year)



Geopark cycling event during the EGN Geopark week in the spring. 45 cyclists visited the geosites in Kauhaneva - Pohjankangas National Park. The tour was guided by the geologist of our Geopark. Another guided Geopark cycling event was organized in the autumn in Geopark's nature site Pyhäniemi and the geosite Käskyvuori. Cycling was the special theme of communication and marketing of our Geopark in 2022 and a way to promote sustainable transport in the area.

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 3 staffs including 2 geoscientists

Number of visitors: If total number of the visitors to the geopark is difficult to estimate, show the number of the visitors to the major geosite(s), museum or visitor center.

Number of visitors in the major geosite areas (2 National Parks and 1 hiking/multi use area): 116 000 visits in 2022 (62 % increase in six years)

Table 1. Development of the number of visitors in major geosites in the Lauhanvuori - Hämeenkangas Geopark area 2016 - 2022.

Lauhanvuori - Hämeenkangas UNESCO Global Geopark	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Increase 2016 - 2022, %
Kauhaneva - Pohjankangas National Park	7941	10995	11454	14240	29166	29698	27900	251
Lauhanvuori National Park	11901	13767	14336	14502	22680	20510	21300	79
Hämeenkangas multi use area	51927	44361	47803	60163	62669	69323	66800	29
Total	71769	69123	73593	88905	114515	119531	116000	62

Number of Geopark events: Clarify the events held by management body and cooperative organization

Table 2. Geopark events (celebrations, opening ceremonies of trails, excursions, webinars, presentations, workshops for different target groups).

Organizer	Number of events
Lauhanvuori - Hämeenkangas UGG	12
Member municipalities of the UGG (Geopark is participating)	13
LH UGG together with other partners (e.g., Universities of applied sciences, Entrepreneur associations, EU projects)	23
Total	48

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:

Five schools have participated in water quality measurement and downloaded and published the results in the “Adjacent water research” database, webpage vesi.geodialogue.com/ created together with local schools. All primary schools of the area are invited to participate in the measurements, some of them start their actions later.

Numerous school classes have participated in the activities of the educational Geopark project run by the schools of the area. 11 school classes have visited the geosites during 2022.

Number of Geopark press release:

5 press releases about Geopark’s and Geopark area’s development and activities during 2022.

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2022

- The new geopark-wide Two billion year tours cycling route network was launched in a tourism fair in April

- Geopark staff was awarded the Satakunta province community medals
- 10 new Geopark Rangers were certified
- A Geopark photo exhibition was opened and circulated in municipalities of the Geopark (still going on)
- Geopark was awarded an honorary certificate in a category of the promotion of the attractiveness of the area at the 25th anniversary of Leader activities

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Participation in the EGN Spring meeting in de Hondsrug UGGp, Netherlands
- Participation in the Tourism Working Group
- Participation in the IGCP GEOfood project: digital meetings
- 4 persons participated in the 16th European Geoparks Conference in Sesia Val Grande UNESCO Global Geopark in Italy
- Two poster presentations from our Geopark in the EGN conference
- Cooperation with all other Nordic Geoparks was activated (going on)
- A common project with other Finnish Geoparks was launched to e.g., promote geotourism, Geoparks, and national cooperation

Management and Financial Status

- No changes in management structure
- Geopark staff became members of three scientific societies
- 4 development projects (EU funded) going on managed by the Geopark (turnover about 200 000 €), two projects ended by the end of the year, other two projects managed by partners where our Geopark is a partner were founded
- LH UGG had 62 business and association members.
- Several development cases together with universities

Geoconservation

- Participating in the LAC (limits of acceptable change) sustainable tourism management process in the Geopark area in co-operation with Metsähallitus, Parks and Wildlife Finland. Follow-up measures were taken.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Participation in the Sustainable Travel Finland program
- 6 Geopark member firms signed in the Sustainable Travel Finland program (Valkoinen Puu which has a certificate already, Korsuretket, SyVilla, Taikapolku, Kirkkokadun Hyvän Olon Keskus, and Visoko)
- Managing a cycling tourism project
- Participating in regional sustainable tourism development projects, especially cycle tourism development projects
- Starting a GEOfood project in our area together with Satafood association
- Co-operation with Finnish Center for Cycling Tourism in promoting cycling friendly services, for example helping companies to get the Welcome Cyclist -certificate
- Helping companies to build and develop their web shops by arranging workshops
- Developing new sustainable cycling tourism routes in the Geopark and to the Geopark
- Cooperation with Visit Tampere e.g., in Sustainable Tourism Mobility project
- LAC sustainable tourism system follow-up measurements
- Partnership in the common project of Finnish Geoparks, "Geoparks as attractive factors for sustainable tourism"

New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction

- New educational materials (coloring pages) have been published for the youngest children and all of the materials are now visible at the national Mappa.fi portal for environmental educational materials
- Geopark Ranger education was completed and 10 new Rangers were certified

Strategic partnership

- Close regional management and development cooperation with Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland
- Development cooperation with universities of Turku and Tampere, Universities of applied sciences of Satakunta and Seinäjoki and research institutes
- Participation in our provinces strategic work with different actors, Universities of applied sciences, Regional councils and The Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment
- Membership in four provincial Visit organizations
- Founding a Scientific team for the Geopark. 15 universities and research institutions are invited.

Promotional activities

- Several social media campaigns
- Participation in many kinds of events and markets
- Travel fair campaigns
- Active posting to social media
- Creating video content to Youtube
- Creating seasonal content for regional Visit organizations
- Giving interviews to different media
- Presentations about the Geopark to numerous groups
- Writing articles to different publications and media
- Hiring young people to make social media posts in the geosites
- Hiring vloggers to make promotional videos about cycling in the Two billion year tour cycling routes and in our geosites
- Making promotional videos presenting the cycling routes, and sites and services along the routes

4. CONTACTS

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