

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2022

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Salpausselkä UNESCO Global Geopark, Finland, European Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2022



Various events were organized during the European Geopark Week to celebrate the outstanding geological heritage of our Geopark and the UNESCO designation. The photo is from one of the events: “Tunes from the lakes” featured acoustic live music along the Tiilijärvi Lakes Trail.

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 3 staff members including 1 geoscientist

Number of visitors: Total number of the visitors is difficult to estimate. Below as examples are estimated numbers of visitors to some of the major geosites and museums / visitor centres:

Lahti Sports Centre 500000, Lahti Ski Museum 16600, Tiilijärvi Lakes Trail 50000, Pirunpesä Gorge 30000, Päijänne National Park 25000, Päijänne House Visitor Centre 30000, Paistjärvi Nature Reserve 5000, Heinola DiscGolfPark World at Heinolanharju Esker geosite 60000.

Number of Geopark events: 19 held by management body, 17 by cooperative organizations

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 9 school classes and 4 kindergartens

Number of Geopark press release: 8

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2022

- UNESCO Global Geopark designation in April
- The first Salpausselkä Geopark Guide course as part of formal vocational education was organized by Salpaus Further Education Department of Tourism, in cooperation with the Geopark staff.
- The first common development project of all the Finnish Geoparks started in late 2022 after a successful funding application process.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Participation in the UNESCO Global Geoparks Workshop on valorization of water in February
- Providing material for the promotion of the new UNESCO Global Geoparks of 2022
- Participation in the Welcome digital event for the new UNESCO Global Geoparks in April
- Participation in EGN CC meeting in April
- Participation in EGN CC meeting and EGN Conference (3 oral presentations) in September
- Contributing an article to the International Geodiversity Day publication “Geodiversity in UNESCO Global Geoparks”
- Contributing and article to the EGN Magazine 20
- Submitting a bid to host the EGN 2024 Conference in cooperation with the University of Helsinki / Lahti University Campus Coordination Unit and the Department of Geosciences and Geography
- Participation in the collaboration of the Finnish UNESCO Global Geoparks and in the work of the Finnish National Committee
- Participation in the online meetings for collaboration of the Nordic UNESCO Global Geoparks

Management and Financial Status

- Salpausselkä UGGp is managed by a regional non-profit tourism organization Lahden seutu - Lahti Region Ltd (DMO Visit Lahti). The Geopark’s management and development is coordinated by the Geopark unit within the company, in close cooperation with the Geopark municipalities: Lahti, Hollola, Heinola, Asikkala, Sysmä and Padasjoki. The annual funding and the operating budget of the Geopark coordination unit is 154000 euros. All of this funding comes from the six Geopark member municipalities, based on a permanent financing

agreement. The Geopark management also makes use of project funding. The Geopark executive manager is in charge of the operations with the support of the steering group, which consists of representatives of the municipalities, Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland and the business partners. Daily operations of the Geopark include the environmental educators of the City of Lahti developing and coordinating Geopark education programmes for children and young people. This is covered by the City of Lahti and the costs are not included in the annual budget of the Geopark unit. The municipalities, Metsähallitus and other landowners take care of the geosite maintenance at their cost.

Geoconservation

- The renovation of the duckboard trail crossing the Linnaistensuo mire by the City of Lahti Environmental Department ensures safe access and protects the geosite from erosion. Smaller improvements were made to the infrastructure of several other geosites.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Lahti Region Ltd, the organization in charge of the Geopark management, achieved the Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) label in April, following the national travel industry sustainability programme. Lahti Region Ltd continues to lead the process towards achieving the STF destination label for the region.
- Process for creating a sustainable tourism action plan for the Geopark started in the autumn as part of an EU funded development project, in cooperation with the LAB University of Applied Sciences. The first workshop was organized in November.
- Five more companies joined the Geopark's business partnership programme, committing to sustainable tourism development.

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

- Based on a pilot course organized in 2021 by the Salpausselkä Geopark staff, the Salpaus Further Education Department of Tourism developed formal training for Geopark guides, in cooperation with the Geopark staff. The new course "Salpausselkä Geopark Guide – Sustainable Travel Expert" ran between March and October and was part of "Further Vocational Qualification in Tourism Services".
- Salpausselkä Geopark Environmental Education working group, with a representative from each Geopark municipality, started the process of integrating Geopark themes into the cultural education programmes of the municipalities.

Strategic partnership

- Salpausselkä UGGp collaborated closely with the region's largest vocational training and education institution Salpaus Further Education, integrating Geopark themes and contents in the curriculum, and with LAB University of Applied Sciences, planning and carrying out

common development projects.

Promotional activities

- Lahti Region, with Salpausselkä UGGp as part of the region, was voted among the top 10 European travel destinations of the year 2022 and was also selected as the best sustainable tourism destination of Europe, promoted on the European Best Destinations travel website.
- Salpausselkä UGGp was one of the attractions promoted in the national campaign “100 reasons to travel in Finland” and the one reaching the largest audience in the campaign’s Instagram feed.
- Several international media fam trips were organized to the region by Visit Lahti / Lahti Region Ltd, some in cooperation with Visit Finland, with Salpausselkä UGGp geosites among the attractions visited and Geopark as one of the main themes promoted.
- In the Visit Lahti summer campaign, the scenic geosites of the Salpausselkä UGGp were promoted, as well as cycling in the Geopark.

4. CONTACTS

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