



METSO Leaflet

METSO FOREST BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN FINLAND 2003-2007

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FOREST OWNERS PLEASED WITH FIRST TRANSACTIONS OF SITES WITH NATURAL VALUE

The first ten contracts concerning transactions of sites with special natural value under the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland METSO have been signed. The contracts were made for ten years and they cover 77 hectares of land. Preliminary oral agreements have been made on eight other sites. In these transactions the annual payments vary between 50 and 280 euros per hectare. Forest owners have been highly satisfied with the deals made.

So far almost one thousand hectares of sites with special natural value have been offered for trading, and almost 100 land owners have tendered for these.

Mires and southern slopes wanted

In the transaction a land owner gives a commitment to maintaining or enhancing the natural values of the forests for ten years and receives compensation for this. Sites to be traded must meet the nature conservation biological criteria of the METSO Programme. Such habitats include pine forests with decaying wood in abundance, birch-spruce mires, flood forests and meadows, herb-rich forests, southern slopes of eskers, woods in coastal areas where the land is rising, and wooded traditional biotopes. The valuable elements in these may be decaying wood, large aspens and other deciduous trees, and burned wood.

The natural value of the sites offered has been assessed by Ms **Leena Gustafsson** from the South-West Finland Forestry Centre. She tells that the forest owners have been very active - the first ones contacted her in May and now she has discussed with more than 60 land owners. According to Ms Gustafsson, most of the sites have a lot of decaying wood, while no sites from birch-spruce mires or southern slopes of eskers have been offered.

Large aspens seen on field excursion

In October people from the media were taken on a field trip to two farms which had concluded contracts concerning valuable sites. A forest comprising 3.6 hectares in Säkylä (Central Finland) was chosen



Lasts of the Russian flying-squirrel (*Pteromys volans*) were found at the Säkylä stand of trading natural values, left under a giant aspen (*Populus tremula*), shown by Leena Gustafsson and Hannu Lehtovuori, the land owner representative.

because it has large aspens and other deciduous trees and more decaying wood than is usual in commercial forests. The site is partly dominated by birches and partly by pines, with trees of different sizes and ages. The fauna includes the flying squirrel.

The annual compensation paid for the site is 190 euro/ha, and for the whole contract period the compensation totals almost 6,000 euros. The compensation is paid for only 3.1 ha, because the habitats of flying squirrel are already covered by conservation measures. No such areas may be included in the transactions concerning sites with special natural value. However, the presence of flying squirrel increases the compensation to the paid for the site. - "I must admit that I'm somewhat lazy", com-

ments Hannu Lehtovuori on the reasons for trading the site. "Forest with aspen is difficult to manage. One reason was that I wanted to protect the habitat of the flying squirrel." He considers the compensation quite reasonable. "However, I'd have got more if I had sold the site", he points out.

- "Without this transaction I'd have done something myself", Lehtovuori says. "Grown aspen for paperwood or changed the species." Lehtovuori hopes that the contract will be renewed after the first ten-year period.

Burned wood is not a permanent asset

The site located in Eura was traded because almost the whole stand burned in a forest fire three years ago. The fire affected altogether 1.5 hectares of forest belonging to two different owners. The areas belonging to both of these were included in the traded site. The compensation for the whole area totals 1,150 euros.

- "It wouldn't have been easy to sell the charred wood", explains **Jorma Nummela**. "If the area hadn't burned like this, it would probably have been seeded with pine after the final felling and prescribed burning."

Nummela tells that he will probably renew the contract in ten years. However, he reminds that burned wood is not a permanent asset - it will fall down and decay.



Jorma Nummela made a deal of natural values on a burned-over forest, where a forest fire occurred three years ago. Having left the burned trees unlogged made the area now valuable.

According to Gustafsson, burned wood retains its natural value for about the years. "Larger trees may be valuable even longer. It is likely that in the years to come there will be wood in different stages of the decaying process."

Willingness to increase biodiversity favoured in trading in the future

So far all the contracts concerning trading in sites with natural value have been made for ten years. In the future longer periods could be used. The landowners to be involved should be willing to work to increase the biodiversity of the site, for example, by increasing the amount of decaying wood or by blocking ditches. The compensation is paid as a lump sum and it is tax-free.

Text: Liina Kjellberg Photos & Layout: Ahti Kotisaari



NEW PROJECT COORDINATOR FOR THE BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH PROGRAMME "MOSSE"

Dr **Antti Otsamo** started as the project coordinator of the Research and Monitoring of Forest Biodiversity, which is the forest section of Biodiversity Research Programme (MOSSE). Dr Otsamo started on 15 September 2003, and he works at the Department of Forestry of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, tel. +358-9-160 52805, e-mail antti.otsamo@mmm.fi. In the project projects, data collection is over for this year, and the next year's application round for further funding is now underway. For more information, please visit the METSO www-pages at www.mmm.fi/metso.

pdf file at: http://www.mmm.fi/metso/arkisto/metsonlehtia_uutiskirjeet/metsonlehtia_uutiskirjeet.html



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