



METSO Newsletter

FOREST BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN FINLAND (METSO) 2003-2007

Published by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Ministry of the Environment

English Edition, January 2005

METSO PILOT PROJECTS UP AND RUNNING

The METSO Programme's new measures for protecting forest biodiversity attracted plenty of interest during year 2004. The *natural values trading* pilot project in Western Finland is now in its second year, and possible natural forest management measures for sites in the project were discussed at a special seminar and excursion in August. Natural values trading schemes also attracted plenty of interest from landowners in Häme, where sites were visited as part of a publicity event organised for METSO's *co-operation networks* scheme. About thirty offers from landowners have also been received for the third conservation scheme to be piloted in METSO - *competitive tendering*, where selected sites are designated for longer-term conservation. In all METSO pilot conservation schemes, sites are approved on the basis of ecological criteria drawn up for METSO.

Landscapes as natural values

METSO Häme, one of the four *co-operation networks* pilot projects, organised media visits in September 2004 to four sites around Evo, where landowners have offered to conserve ecologically valuable features in their forests. Around twenty offers have been received in all by METSO Häme, with landowners particularly interested in *natural values trading* schemes. Such natural values trading schemes are already successfully into their second year in a trial region in Western Finland.

Co-operation networks are designed to form an alternative framework for natural values trading, based on local co-operation between different organisations and individuals. The first natural values trading contracts within co-operation networks schemes were signed in the end of 2004.

The sites visited in Evo contain scenic features such as wooded esker ridges, so their conservation can promote tourism as well as forest biodiversity.

The positive socio-economic impacts of METSO Häme have led to a local initiative proposing the project as an example of best practice for the EU



Landowner Heikki Hokka shows participants in the *co-operation networks* excursion around a scenic lakeside site in Evo that is used for nature tourism.

Commission's Original SIN Project, which seeks ways to prevent social exclusion, and sets guidelines for policies to promote social well-being around Europe.

Early successes with competitive tendering

The *competitive tendering* pilot project, launched last spring in three Finnish provinces, attempts to acquire forests for long-term or permanent protection. More than 30 offers from landowners were received for forest sites ranging in size from a few hectares to over 100 ha, adding up to a

total area of 900 ha.

Most of the sites proposed in these tenders were found to meet the relevant quality criteria. Most of the landowners have offered sites for temporary protection, or for the designation of private nature reserves. Few landowners have been prepared to sell their forests to the State

METSO BACKED UP BY RESEARCH

Forest biodiversity was surveyed under the Finnish Biodiversity Research Programme (FIBRE) over the period 1997-2002. FIBRE and METSO are both key elements of Finland's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 1997-2005, the major national umbrella programme for biodiversity.

The follow-up and the evaluation of the METSO Programme is strongly backed up by research. A total of 12.5 million euros 2003-2007 was allocated to research through METSO, which includes an intensive biodiversity research and monitoring programme known as MOSSE (2003-2006). With its 44 projects, of which 19 concentrate on forests, MOSSE particularly focuses on the ecological, economic and social impacts of the instruments used to conserve biodiversity. MOSSE also involves the development of a monitoring system for forest biodiversity. The annual budget for MOSSE is 2.3 million euros, half of which is allocated to forestry-related projects.

The MOSSE programme is already in its third year, and additional funds have been allocated to research the ecological impacts of the METSO pilot projects. The evaluation of the METSO Programme will also cover social and economic impacts.

More research needed on poorly known forest species

By international standards, biodiversity in Finland is well surveyed and documented. However, recent surveys of threatened species have nevertheless revealed that where many species are concerned more information is still needed for their conservation status to be accurately assessed.

As part of the METSO Programme, additional funding has consequently been provided to

outright. The first such contracts were signed by the end of 2004.

In *natural values trading* schemes, which are now in their second year in Western Finland, price levels have settled a little lower than last year, at an average of EUR161/ha per year.



Epiphyte lichens and mosses under survey in an area of forest covered by a *natural values trading* agreement.

establish a research programme examining Data Deficient Forest Species (2003-2007). More than 1,000,000 euros a year has been allocated to this programme until 2007. This unprecedented level of funding has enabled the initiation of several research projects that will considerably increase our knowledge of data deficit species in Finland.

During the period 2003-2004 a total of 22 research projects examining poorly known species have been financed through the Data Deficient Forest Species Programme, employing more than 20 researchers full time. These projects have mainly focused on data deficit groups of invertebrate animals and fungi, including plant lice (*Aphididae*), thrips (*Thysanoptera*), army worms (*Sciaridae*), *Cortinarius* fungi, and microfungi associated with mosses and lichens. The size of Finland's flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans*) population is also being estimated through a three-year research project.

For more information:

- MOSSE biodiversity research and monitoring programme:

www.mmm.fi/metso/international/MOSSE_english.html
 • National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 1997-2005: www.environment.fi/default.asp?content-id=92894&lan=EN

• Finnish Biodiversity Research Programme (FIBRE), 1997-2002: http://fibre.utu.fi/

ALMOST 100,000 HABITATS OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE FOUND IN PRIVATE FORESTS

The 1997 Finnish Forest Act obliges landowners to conserve the ecologically valuable characteristics of certain habitats listed as **habitats of special importance for biodiversity** in commercially managed forests. A major national habitat inventory, known as METE, was coordinated by Forestry Development Centre Tapio and implemented by regional Forestry Centres during the period 1998-2004, with results submitted during 2004. METE is supporting the implementation of METSO. The inventory has involved both the assessment of new data collected for forest management planning schemes, and special field surveys. Landowners were advised during the survey how to conserve biodiversity in their forests.

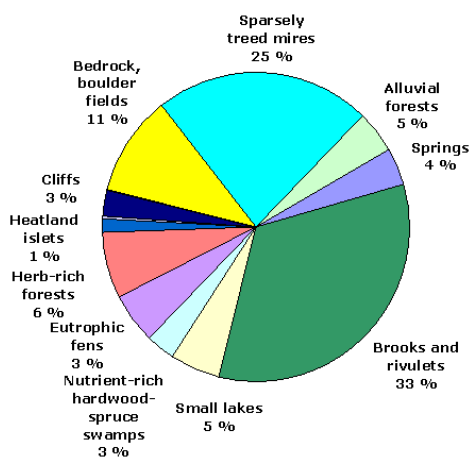
The project has so far covered 97% of a total survey area of 15.5 million hectares of privately owned forest in Finland. A total of 96,000 sites containing important habitats were defined, with a total extent of 60,000 hectares - almost 0.5 % of the total area. Other areas, with a total extent of 67,000 hectares, which did not meet the specific criteria of the Forest Act, but were ecologically valuable for other reasons, were additionally designated as **other valuable habitats**.

The inventory facilitates the preservation of very many areas of ecologically valuable forest habitat at little cost to the authorities.



Brooks and streams and their surroundings are the most widespread habitats of special importance.

Brooks and streams and their surroundings account for 33% of the total area classified as important habitat. Other important habitats include sparsely wooded mires, rocky habitats, nutrient-rich spruce mires, herb-rich forests and small lakes.



Relative shares of various habitat types in areas of surveyed private forests defined as habitats of special importance.



The shores of small lakes and ponds are classed as habitats of special importance.

FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION WORKSHOP VISITS METSO PILOT PROJECTS

The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) initiative, which was set up in March 2003 by the IUCN, WWF International, and the Forestry Commission of Great Britain, involves governments and organisations aiming to co-ordinate efforts to restore forest landscapes. The initiative emphasizes the role of partnerships and networking in finding suitable solutions that can be achieved through local implementation. The Partnership is already being supported by many more countries and organisations, including the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). Finland joined the Partnership in September 2003.

An Expert Workshop on Forest Landscape Restoration held in Aulanko, Finland in October 2004 focused on opportunities to implement FLR in Central and Northern Europe.

During the workshop field trip, the participants visited forest sites that will be covered by voluntary conservation schemes within the METSO Programme. Many aspects of the Co-operation networks piloted in the METSO Programme (see page 1) fit in well with the whole idea of FLR.

For more information on the FLR workshop, see: www.efi.fi/events/2004/landscape_restoration.



Mike Dudley of the U.K. Forestry Commission (speaking), Stewart Maginnis of the IUNC and other participants in the workshop field trip ask forest-owner Antti Rikala about the inclusion of this part of his land in a voluntary natural values trading conservation scheme set up through the local METSO pilot co-operation network.

METSÄHALLITUS TO RESTORE 33,000 HA

Metsähallitus, responsible for managing State-owned forests in Finland, is greatly involved in the implementation of METSO. As part of Programme, Metsähallitus will carry out habitat restoration work over a total area of 33,000 hectares by 2012. About half of this area consists of forests growing on mineral soils, while the other half is made up of mires that have previously been drained artificially. These restoration measures will permanently convert these sites from managed forests into areas reserved for conservation. See:

<http://www.metsa.fi/natural/habitatrestoration/index.htm>

<http://www.metsa.fi/page.asp?Section=1191&Item=1641>

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METSO AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The METSO Programme is an integral part of Finland's implementation of various international agreements. METSO makes significant contributions to meeting the objectives for sustainable development set out by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). Maintaining and enhancing the biological diversity of forests is one of the resolutions of the MCPFE Vienna Conference (April 2003)

METSO IN BRIEF

METSO - the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland 2003-2007 - is part of Finland's National Forest Programme 2010. METSO contains 17 sub-programmes, including pilot projects designed to test innovative voluntary means for landowners to promote biodiversity in the forests of Southern Finland. The METSO Programme aims to design and test cost-effective measures to acquire the most ecologically valuable forest sites in Southern Finland for temporary conservation or permanent protection.

Forestry is typically practiced on a small scale in Southern Finland, where average cutting areas are only 1-2 ha. METSO is piloting new ways to increase biodiversity under such conditions, complementing the work done through several other programmes since the 1997 Forest Act.

The METSO Programme was carefully prepared through processes involving many stakeholders such as forest industry associations, forest owners' organisations, the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation and WWF Finland, as well as the two ministries responsible for the Programme, so as to complement and supplement Finland's National Forest Programme 2010. Like the rest of the National Forest Programme, METSO is backed up by intensive research and survey work and will be evaluated.

METSO Programme: www.mmm.fi/metso or www.ymparisto.fi/metso



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