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Communication and Environmental Education Plan for Koli National Park 2006-2010



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1 Introduction

The communication and environmental education plan of Koli National Park (2006-2010) is an action plan which is related to the development plan of the sustainable tourism. The plan will be carried out according to the management and operation plan which has been confirmed by the National Park in the year 2004 (the structure plan 2003-2010). The basis and principles of planning have been described in the structure plan.

The communication and environmental education plan of Koli National Park has been prepared as a part of the NEST-project of EU/Interreg IIB-program, which also partially funds it. MSc. Hanniina Manner was responsible for collecting the data and for the preliminary preparations. Lasse Lóven and Hanniina Manner are responsible for the final revision of the plan.

In summary, the term communication means exchanging messages or information between the sender and the receiver (e.g. Wiio 1998). The background factors of the communication are the background factors of an individual and the community, like the sex and age of an individual, social environment, other people, reference groups and social classes. Also material environment, breakdowns in communication, possibility of feedback and available media have an impact on the communication. According to the communal point of view, the function of the communication is to produce and maintain a communal atmosphere. In communication it is also all about building and strengthening the identity between the communicators (Kunelius 2002).

Environmental education can be seen as a field of communication, which has the purpose to cherish the diversity of the nature and further the sustainable development. The basis of environmental education is to experience the nature and the cultural environments as a sensitive and rich in experiences. By environmental education one can create preconditions and give substances to perceive a positive future for the environment and also to carry out them through the education (Opetushallitus 1994).

2 Koli National Park as a planning target of communication

Koli National Park is located in Eastern Finland, in the Northern Karelian district, in the area of three municipalities: Lieksa, Kontiolahti and Eno. Its primary target is to protect the old forests and their set of organisms in the area of the tree covered hills in North Karelia, and to secure the future of the national landscape of Koli and the landscapes and plant communities that are created through the slash-and-burn agriculture. Besides maintaining nature and culture-historical values, the National Park provides environmental education. (The law of Koli National Park 581/1991). National Parks have been established to protect the species as to be a place where people can easily get acquainted with the nature. In the treatment and function plan of the Koli National Park the National Park is defined as: *'a park for conservation, culture and research and for nature tourism and environmental education based on these values'* (Loven 2005, p.8).



There are annually about 100 000 visitors in the Koli National Park, so the National Park is an important tourist attraction, especially on a rural scale. In the year 2003 it has been estimated that there were about 448 600 people staying overnight in the area of North Karelia, from which about 144 000 stayed in the area around Lake Pielinen (Karjalainen 2005). Most of the tourists are day visitors (Pyykkö 2005), so the rates can not be compared directly. The visits focus on the seasonal peaks, such as midsummer, during autumn tints, summer vacations and circular tour weeks (weeks 26 – 39) and springs skiing weeks (weeks 8- 13). Outside the seasonal peaks, the travelling focuses on special events such as conventions, culture events and meetings, education events and seminars held in the Ukko-Koli service gear. The busiest season is the summer. About 57 % of annual visitors visit the Heritage Centre Ukko in the summer, from June to August, which in all makes about 50 000 visitors. About 11 % of the visitors are foreigners.

3 The principles of communication

According to the law, the targets of the National Park are the conservation of the nature in the tree covered hills and the preservation of the cultural landscape. Environmental education is also an important task. The following targets derive their origins from the tasks above:

- To awaken and to increase the interest of the visitors of Koli National Park in the nature and the culture of the area;
- To increase the knowledge about the nature and the interest in the Nature;
- To provide information about the nature, culture and research that related to Koli and the sources of livelihood in the region;
- To announce the basis of the protection in the Koli National Park and the regulations & the instructions which are related to the area;
- The introduction of the nature, culture and sources of livelihood in the area are - whenever it is possible - based on the research work which has been carried out in the area of Koli.

Harmful environmental impacts of tourism are tried to control by the means of communication (Middleton 1998). For example nature trails and other products are planned only in those areas that can deal with the consumption. Like this the susceptible areas can be saved from the wearing.

Environmental education will be carried out, besides proper teaching, in all guiding material and information that concerns the National Park. While tending the Park and carrying out consumer services, one should favour choices that improve the environmental education that leads towards the sustainable development. The Park will utilize and



popularize research made in the area in its environmental education and communication.

The experiences that travellers obtain and the information about the resort passed through them is one of the most effective means of communication (Bagoglu & McClearly 1999). In practice this means that the information about the resort's qualities spreads very wide through the visitors' human relations and stories. Therefore, the plan especially takes into account the quality of structures and guidance in Koli National Park.

The communication will be directed to the main user groups: travellers, hikers, customers of nearby travelling agencies, pupils and students. The National Park will prepare for the fact that the amount of foreign customers will increase and strives towards international co-operation. There will be handled closer with different traveller groups in chapter 4.

The basic services that include oral guiding services from the information desk of the Heritage Centre during normal working hours, the guiding boards and the common brochures, are free of charge for the customers. Special guiding, exhibitions, program services and product and maintenance services can be liable to charge because they are based on customer's responsibility (individual environment and resource responsibility).

The communication material will be distributed to the reach of the customers through co-operation networks. The important partners in the network are provincial marketing organizations (Karelia Expert), national information centres (for example Lusto, Heureka, Juminkeko and the Finnish Stone Centre) and the guiding centres of the National Parks that are in the care of Metsähallitus, especially those situated in Savonlinna, Rantasalmi and Kuhmo.

4 The tourist segments of Koli National Park

4.1 *The domestic holiday travellers*

Although the main message of the National Park - the enhancement of the environmental protection and education - is a value that cannot be compromised, the understanding of the message can be promoted through customer-based communication. Information about the visitors in Koli is needed for this, because the allocation of information for different target groups according to their needs increases the effect of the communication remarkably (Morgan & Pritchard 2000). Two researches that dealt with summer visitors were completed in the year 2005. In the studies the visitors of the Koli National Park were divided into groups. This information can be utilized by developing the operations of the National Park in a way that they correspond to 1) customers' needs and 2) at the same time promote the communication targets of the National Park.

Pyykkö (2005) has segmented the visitors of the National Park during the summer season (n=315) into three groups: 1) **Interested in nature** (about 50 % of visitors), 2) **Home district-centric nature tourists** (about 25 % of the visitors) and 3) **Nature tourists that are looking for services** (25 % of visitors).



The visitors of the first group came to admire the beauty of the nature in Koli, but they hardly used the services in the area. The greatest part of this group have been the so-called “two-hour visitors”, who don’t consume the nature of the National Park, but they also bring hardly any income to the area. The visitors of the second group came to Koli mainly to meet friends and relatives. At the same time they enjoy different kinds of services and also use the shop in the village. The travellers of the third group used the services more than the others. All three groups were interested in nature.

Puhakka (2005) has studied tourists' opinions through quality measures and he has reached parallel conclusions with Pyykkö. According to Puhakka, the visitors to Koli can be divided into four classes by their attitudes towards the use of tourism of the National Park: **The tourism-centric travellers** are looking for nature experiences in a clean package. For them, the symbol of the National Park is a guarantee of a good nature tourism resort. They lay emphasis on the accessibility of recreation and tourism services developing the area. **The nature-centric travellers** draw their attention to nature while choosing a tourist resort and emphasize in its intrinsic value. They are critical about the development of the resorts, but utilize the structures like campfire sites that the National Park provides with pleasure. **The traditional travellers** visit Koli frequently because it is a well-known sight, not so much because of its nature values. They visit there mostly to admire the landscape. Nature is often a part of their everyday life, so there is no need to search for it separately in a nature tourism resort. **The class of indifferent travellers** includes people that visited Koli because it is a sight. They don't visit National Parks very often and they haven't got any opinions on the increasing recreation activities in the National Parks (Puhakka 2005)

There are different kinds of attitudes towards the tourism use and development of the National Parks. This means balancing between partly conflicting attitudes towards the care and use of the National Park. In accordance with customers' opinions, the National Park should be developed by means of different kinds of zones, so that there are available both tourism services and nature experiences.

This happens inside the National Park, where the services have been concentrated in the northern part and in relation with the wider tourism area in Koli. There are more services created in Loma-Koli than in the Koli National Park. Loma-Koli is located about 10 kilometres north from the central area of the Koli National Park.

Because visitors look for nature experiences in Koli, protecting these values will be the primary target in all development measures of the National Park. Also the communication of the National Park should be concentrated on the nature, because it is the most important reason for visitors to come to the area. For example the introduction of the Finnish Forest Research Institute’s administrative actions is not useful from the point of view of the customer service, and its part can be reduced in the communication. It can be replaced by the popular introduction of research results.



4.2 Visitors of meetings, happenings and nature schools

By means of above represented researches, information has been obtained primarily about the leisure-time visitors of Koli. Many visitors come to Koli National Park due to different kinds of meetings and happenings. The other important group is pupils and students that come to Koli as a part of their studies. Although there aren't any researches made, these groups are a crucial part of the communication planning.

4.3 International travellers

There is no exact information about the international visitors in the National Park, because the empirical customer researches have only dealt with Finnish travellers. As far as the distribution of nationalities is expected to follow the distribution in the area of North Karelia, about 11 % of visitors are estimated to be foreigners (Luusua & Boxberg 2003). According to the statistics on whole North Karelia, the accommodation days of the foreign travellers are divided into Russians 27 %, Germans 19 %, Swedish 6%, Dutch 10 %, British 5 %, Swiss 4%, Italian 3 %, Japanese 1 % and other nationalities of travellers 25 % (Luusua & Boxberg 2003, Karjalainen 2005). The international travellers segment calls for its own attention in the communication planning.

It seems that especially the Russian tourists in the area of Koli are not interested in the National Park. In accordance with the estimation made by the personnel of the Heritage Centre, Russian customers visit the National Park less than Germans, although in the entire area of North Karelia they are the biggest foreign group.

The small amount of the Russian customers can be seen as a clear problem that is linked to the communication. There are two Russian nature trails in the National Park and there are texts in Russian in the exhibition of the Heritage Centre, but obviously the information about their existence does not relay. It is possible that the National Park that provides services is a new and unknown phenomenon for Russians, so the demand for information and educational knowledge has not emerged. Services should therefore be developed in co-operation with the EU-project which promotes the tourism of the Russians in the area of Koli. Taking control of the Russian marketing segment is made more difficult due to the lack of personnel with appropriate linguistic skills.

While putting together the communication material, it shouldn't be forgotten that the different nationalities interpret the communication material in different ways (Tuohino and Pitkänen 2003). In the resorts where the foreign tourists are an important target group, it would be important to test what kinds of images foreign tourists get from the resort and how it affects them. The understanding of the messages differs remarkably while examining the pictures (Tuohino & Pitkänen 2003). For example the foreign tourists don't associate the female figure of the communication material with Finnish Maiden like the Finns do. In the case of Koli, the messages that the pictures represent have not been researched.

There are several international trainees in the National Park annually, to whom it is



important to direct environmental education and communication promoting tasks. The international trainees could for example examine the images that the pictures arouse among the different nationalities.

5 The practices of the communication and their development 2006-2010

5.1 The guidance activities

The guidance activities in the Koli National Park are carried out through the co-operation network of several actors. The Finnish Forest Research Institute has the main responsibility for contents and quality, as well as taking care of the National Park. A part of the guidance services are carried out by the paid guidance personnel, which is in the Finnish Forest Research Institute's service. The partners that have been promoted on grounds of the co-operation contract assist the guidance services. A part of the guidance services is carried out by private entrepreneurs who sell the guidance services that are made to customers' order. In the Koli National Park, primarily the guides of the Friends of Ukko-Koli Association offer individual customer services. The trainees of the National Park assist them during the busy seasons. Koli Yachting Club has been responsible for the information point at the harbour of Koli since the year 2005. The Activ Ltd supports the action as an entrepreneur. The Ryyinänen's cafe that is functioning as a guidance point of Koli Village is run by the entrepreneur Eija Hyvönen.

According to the customer feedback collected in the Heritage Centre Ukko, the most central factor that influences the image of the whole Heritage Centre is the actions of the guides. Therefore, the quality of the guidance activities can be understood to be the most important factor. In the environment, where several small companies and associations work in co-operation with the National Park, the protection of the internal flow of information that guarantees the quality of the external communication is a challenging task that influences the accumulation of the social capital. Using the trainees as guides can easily lead to the situation where the personnel are not well-informed enough.

The quality of the guidance will be enhanced through additional and regular resources directed to the guidance, improvement of personnel skills, balancing the timing of actions, as well as through co-operation with local companies and partners. In this way the Park can be prepared for the increase in the amount of customers, from the current 100 000 persons to 150 000 persons yearly.

- The skills of the guidance personnel will be improved.
- They will draw an extra attention to the guidance activities and to the effectiveness of the actions, which will be followed through the feedback of customers.
- The internal flow of information will be improved with a system where the new information can be collected from one place. The new information should be also updated into common sources of information, like topical and local information files.



- They will increase the initiation of the trainees.
- The companies or other actors outside the administration of the National Park that carry on the guidance services in the area of the National Park as a trade or in other organized way should be licensed by the Finnish Forest Research Institute. The following principles will be included in the license conditions:
 - 1) The company has to be committed to function in accordance with the principles of the sustainable development. The company is obliged to attend to their environmental responsibility and own production & functioning responsibility in the way it is required by the law; companies that function without the customer and environmental responsibility are not admitted as providers of the services.
 - 2) The company has to adapt their functions to the functions of other companies that are located in the area.
 - 3) The company that does business recompenses its used services and resources such as wood or waste maintenance that the Finnish Forest Research Institute supplies, on the principle of the cost responsibility.

5.2 *Products for guidance*

While segmenting the visitors, one has observed that the major part of travellers is interested in the guided actions of the National Park. Although the development and productization of the individualized travel services according to customers' desires is not included in the basic tasks of the National Park, the regulations of the National Park don't hinder its realization if the basic values of the area are not endangered. The role of the National Park as a promoter of the local employment and economy supports the product development of the guidance. There are individualized travel service entrepreneurs in the area that can productize these services. At present, only the Koli Activ Ltd provides guided nature tours in the National Park. More guided activities should be developed for those who need the services.

- The National Park will promote the guidance and educational work by encouraging the activities of the companies and offering the contents of the researches for their use. Because the National Park guides the actions of the entrepreneurs on grounds of the contract, it is also possible to promote the basic tasks of the National Park, for example environmental education, through the development of new services that is carried out according to the principles of the sustainable development.
- The availability of the pedagogy nature programs produced by the school camp project, are planned to extend also for other travellers.



5.3 The interpretation centres in Koli National Park

5.3.1 Heritage Centre Ukko

The main customer service point for guidance is in the Heritage Centre Ukko, for which the Finnish Forest Research Institute is responsible for. The Heritage Centre is located in the Ukko-Koli Service Gear. The following services are included in the versatile guidance arrangements of the Heritage Centre:

- The permanent exhibition, of which themes are geology, living nature and the culture of Koli
- Changing exhibitions, this will be reorganized 2-3 times a year
- Free guidance service in the international INFO-point
- Guided sale of local handicraft and organic products and guidance material
- Guided and educational slide shows
- Digital databanks
- Handbook library which distributes the research works that deal with Koli

The Heritage Centre Ukko was a great success shortly after it was opened in June in the year 2000. The services of the Heritage Centre have been made for 50 000 customers in a year. During the first two years of activity the amount of customers was 70 000-75 000 persons per year, but the amount has decreased into 45 000 visitors in the year 2005.

- The permanent exhibition of the Heritage Centre will be improved in the latter half of the planning season due to the technical deterioration. The central target in developing the services of the Heritage Centre is to transfer the scientific information into the use of customers, through phenomenal and educational methods that are adapted to its purpose.
- The exhibitions and programs of the Heritage Centre will be produced in three languages: Finnish, English and Russian.

The concentration of the guidance services in the Ukko-Koli service gear will cause backlogs in the guidance services especially at the peak periods of tourism and cause unnecessary traffic on the road of Ylä-Koli. Therefore the guidance services have been decentralized into the most favoured places, to the village of Koli and to the harbour.

5.3.2 Kolin Rynnänen

Kolin Rynnänen is a cafe and a heritage building that provides outbuilding accommodation in the centre of the village of Koli. The company is under the Finnish Forest Research Institute's control and it is run by the co-operation entrepreneur Eija Hyvönen. Kolin Kotiseutumuseo and the artist residence managed by Kolin Kulttuuriseura are located in the same real estate. The service point has an advantageous situation from the tourists' point of view and it is also located in close proximity to other local services.



Also the tourist information in the real estate of Kulmakivi serves customers in the village of Koli. The well-informed guides can also tell travellers about the National Park and its services.

5.3.3 Alamaja at the harbour

The Alamaja is a real estate that is under the control of the Finnish Forest Research Institute. Since the beginning of the year 2005 Koli's Yacht Club has carried out the guidance services and in the year 2006 the Yacht Club subcontracted the guidance service to an entrepreneur (Koli Activ Ltd). The intention of the company is to purchase incomes for the guidance services by running a cafe and a restaurant. The Alamaja was only open in summer until now, expect of a short-term testing in the winter season 2005. The testing was not profitable. The special target groups of Alamaja are the tourists who use boats or ferries and the customers of the culture and slope events that are arranged beside the hillside. The information centre of the port has been profiled to introduce the waterborne traffic in Pielinen and fishing traditions.

- The supply of Alamaja will be developed from various aspects by Koli's Yacht Club and its subcontract partner. The opening hours of Alamaja will be tried to prolong outside the summer season as far as possible if the amount of customers will increase.

5.3.4 The new cooperation targets of the guidance

The camping centre Kiviniemi, owned by the municipality of Kontiolahti, is located in the area of Herajärvi in the vicinity of the southern boundary of the National Park. The actions of the company have been developed on the basis of entrepreneur as a service point for hiking and experience tourists. Kiviniemi is a point of support for the Herajärvi Tour-hiking trails which are linked to the Karelian Tour that begins at Ukko-Koli.

The Suomen kivikeskus (Finnish stone centre) is located in Nunnalahti, half an hour drive away from Koli. The stone centre includes an information centre about stone fields and versatile exhibitions. The stone centre is trying to develop environmental education and school camp services. The Finnish Forest Research Institute has a cooperation contract with the Finnish Stone Centre, Geological Research Center, Tulikivi foundation and Ukko-Kolin Ystävät to develop environmental education and exhibition activities.

- The co-operation between Koli National Park and the municipality of Kontiolahti will be developed so that Kiviniemi, which functions presently as a hiking centre in the are area of Herajärvi, could function also as an information point in the southern end of the National Park in the future.
- Environmental education and exhibitions of the Koli National Park will be developed together with the Stone Centre.



5.4 *Environmental education and thematic trails for schools*

Environmental education was included as a firm part in the curricula of occupational education in the year 1998. In the occupational education the environmental know-how is a part of the expert knowledge. The environmental education is a field in the existing curriculum of the comprehensive school. The updating education has been offered only a little to the teachers, although there is a great need of the updating education. The small amount of appropriation for the education can be seen as an important restrictive factor. The environmental education has been traditionally approached through the natural sciences. Not until in the 1990's the environmental education was seen as a part of the comprehensive development of teaching, where the environmental educational approaches are integrated into all learning processes.

Koli National Park has been used for teaching mainly in connection with the school camp services. The teaching material is concentrated on the exhibitions and the slide shows run by the Heritage Centre Ukko and on seven theme trails. The contents and structures of the trails have been carried out by the coordination of Ukko-Kolin Ystävät. The teaching material is mainly financed by the following programs: Koli's school camp-project (2001-2005) fund partial by EU/LEADER-fund, LIFE to Koli-project fund partial by EU/LIFE-fund and NEST-Koli-project fund partial by EU/INTERREG IIB-program. The civil working team of Pohjois-Karjalan Osuuskauppa and other local companies have remarkably financed the other parts. Ministry of the environment, Pohjois-Karjalan Liitto and the city of Lieksa were answerable for the Finnish public foundation of the programs.

The theme trails can be applied to the needs of school camps and to the teaching outside the school. The learning will be intensified through communicational guidance, games, stories, revision tasks, observation and recognition practices. Besides the notepads, the learning material package (a teachers guide and exercise notebooks for different stages of education) are included in some theme trails (4 trails).

- **The Swidden Circuit.** The oldest thematic trail that concentrates on the slash-and-burn culture in the National Park. The trail is established in the year 1998 and improved in the year 2004.
- **The Shepherds Trail.** On the trail one can encounter the nature diversity and get acquainted with different forest types, especially with deciduous woodland. Duckboards, streamlets, giant ant hills and shelf fungi sustain the hiker's interest.
- **The Kolinuuro Circle).** The geology of Koli and the other phenomena of the nature and the culture that are linked to the geology are treated on the tour. The earth's long history, from the continental drifts to the postglacial time period, has prepared the soil beneath the feet. On the tour one can examine the development of the national landscape and identify the rock types and the minerals that are characteristic for the area.
- **The Restoration Trail.** The trail is the newest route of the pedagogical thematic trails. It will be opened in the summer 2006. The trail will represent the



enhancement of the forests' conservation through different restorative treatments, like burn-beating, increasing the amount of decaying trees and reconstructing the cultural landscape in the clearings of the National Park.

The following trails are for tours conducted by a field guide:

4. **Culture and history trail.** leads through the hills of Koli to the traditional courtyard and the areas of slash-and-burn culture of the National Park. During the tour the group can sense the life in olden times. In the end of the tour one can get familiar to the traditional game *Kyykkä* and the museum of Koli.
5. **Heritage builder's trail.** The old, renovated buildings of the Lakkala heritage farm, which is situated on the shore of Herajärvi offer information about heritage buildings and the life in olden times. Majavalampi and the barrages skilfully made by beavers tell us about non-human builders in the nature.
6. **The Koli of artists** – conducted tour leads us to the national landscape of Koli, where one can capture the beautiful scenery as a work of art. During the tour the views change and each one can record them into their artist leaflet, in the manner of artists that have visited Koli (Järnefelt, Aho, Sibelius ja Halonen).
7. **Wilderness expedition.** guides the group to equip well for camping, to move in the nature and the elements of orienteering by the help of map, compass and nature signs.
8. **The nature competition of Koli.** In the nature competition of Koli, the pupils compete with each other in small groups with the following themes: culture, history, hiking skills and geology. The following elements, cooperation, insight and quickness, are needed for the group to be successful in the competition.

The Finnish Stone Centre with geological information points and stone workshops located in Nunnalahti and the exhibition of the lake culture in the Koli harbour supplement the teaching material of Koli.

- The teaching will be carried out during the visits of the educational establishments and as distinct programs offered for schools. The Finnish Forest Research Institute provides and reserves physical settings for school camps, produces pedagogical material on the grounds of the databanks and researches that deal with the National Park and supports functionally other use of the National Park through guiding the actual providers of the school camps. The teachers with school camps and the actor network specialized in the mission are responsible for the teaching.
- The school camp services in the National Park will be developed. The researches linked to Koli will be applied and brought out into the development work.
- The environmental education material will be translated into English for the following most important parts of the thematic trails (4), so that also the international groups can use them.



5.5 *Guides and Signs*

5.5.1 Signposts

The signposts are a part of the environmental educational material of the National Park. There are information about the National Park in the form of maps and texts and the rules of the National Park.

The signposts are situated in the central locations. At the moment there are only few signposts. The current ones are located:

- At the harbour
- In the starting point of Paimenen polku
- In Lähtevänsärkkä
- In the courtyard of Ukko-Koli

The signposts will be also located in the following places:

- Besides the entry roads, on the boundaries of the National Park.
- The courtyard area of Ukko-Koli is an important station for signposts if they will convey information about targets, nature and cultural heritage of the National Park at least in briefly to the “two hour visitors” and the tourists that visit outside the opening hours.
- The parking lots.
- The starting points of the theme trail (the description of the trails theme).
- The signposts are planned to be located also in the central places outside the National Park in co-operation with the local quarters and land owners (for example the resting places located beside trails that lead to the National Park and the holiday resorts).

The signposts will be manufactured in a consistent style, using authentic wooden materials.

5.5.2 The guides of the resorts

The guides will provide information about characteristics of a certain place, like unique landform, view point, research target and cultural heritage. The guides will be located also along the pedagogical theme tracks. The guides will be made out of round timber applying the Karelian building tradition.

The current guides are located in the following places:

- Lähtevänsärkkä
- The tour of Herajärvi (traditional locations; Turusenautio, Havukanaho, Purola, Ikolanaho, Mäkränaho)
- The guides of the nature trails



The new guides will be located in the following places:

- Pirunkirkko
- Tarhapuro
- Mäkrävaara
- Uhrihalkeama

5.5.3 Signboards along the roads

The signboards are located along the main roads to guide customers into the National Park and to the Heritage Centre Ukko. The signs are made on the basis of the standards of the road administration.

5.5.4 Boundary marks

They are trying to make the boundaries of the National Park more visible. The boundary marks are located in the terrain sporadically, because the National Park became enlarged constantly until the beginning of 21st century. Therefore there are only a limited number of landmarks erected in the terrain.

- Marking out the boundaries will be completed during the coming planning season.

5.5.5 The National Park's gates

- The entrance gates and “welcome”-signs will be situated on the main entry roads beside the boundaries of the National Park. The gates will be built out of partial burned-out wood.

5.5.6 Route signs

The route signs will be renewed in the whole area of the National Park during the planning season in accordance with the National Parks own style and the information of the signs will be amended. At the moment there are new signs in Ukko-Koli and near to the village of Koli. The signs are either low “grass root” signs or more visible signposts.

- The destination of the route (the near and long-distance goals), the distance and the number of crossings can be found on the route signs.
- In the top area of Ukko-Koli the routes will marked out so that the hikers can move safely on the tracks without any map and compass.
- Distinctive or thematic symbols will be used in the signs. The route between the signs will be marked out on the trees with colours, so that the hikers would



experience the route as safe. It isn't recommendable to use the colours that represent the theme routes, because generally the colour used in the signs shows the routes degree of difficulty (for example ski tracks and ski slopes).

- The length of the routes will be standardized in the signs and on the maps. The route signs will be maintained to ensure safe and clear trails for hikers.
- Merely the signs of the National Park that meet the requirements of the hiking customers will be located in the area of the Koli National Park. The entrepreneurship outside the National Park won't be advertised on the signs or on the tracks.

The Finnish Forest Research Institute is responsible for the renewing and maintaining of the guides and signs in the area of the National Park.

5.6 *Printed products*

The Finnish Forest Research Institute prepares in co-operation with the interest groups a wide range of printed information for the needs of the different customer groups.

The following print products are prepared and maintained by the Finnish Forest Research Institute:

The general brochure (Finnish, Swedish, English and German) provide information about nature, cultural background, services and rules of the National Park. The general brochures of the National Park are distributed in the following places: In the Stone Centre, the Carelicum in Joensuu, the offices of Karelia Expert Ltd, the tourist information point of Vuokatti in Sotkamo, and the regional research units of the Finnish Forest Research Institute and the nature centres of the National board of forestry. The general brochures are also distributed to the cooperation companies that use them in their customer service.

The guest files in the cottages, the material on the signposts and the information mentioned on the hiking map of the Koli National Park supplement the contents of the brochure.

- The general brochure and other information material will be kept up to date and it will be translated in other languages, like into Russian or Spanish, if there is a need.

The guide of Koli – tourist guide publication has been used up already in the beginning of the 1990's.

- The guide directed to tourists and hikers will be revised. The Finnish Forest Research Institute will edit the material into the revised booklet. The location names used by the National Park will be applied and the repaired theme routes will be introduced in the booklet.
- **The Koli magazine** will try to be edited in cooperation with the local community 2-3 times in a year. The magazine includes articles on historical



events in the village of Koli, memories and current issues about the nature, culture and services of Koli.

The tourist map of Koli was completed as a joint production of local actors the first time in the year 1999. The map has been updated in the year 2003.

- The map will be updated during the planning season, when the current edition will run out.

The geological hiking map of Koli is published by the Geological Research Centre in the year 2005. The map is on the scale of 1:20 000. The map deals with the hiking routes and soil in the area of Koli and it includes also information about the bedrock and a separate guide.

5.7 *Internet*

The web pages represent the National Park from various points via the koli.metla.fi-portal (<http://koli.metla.fi>). The Finnish Forest Research Institute is answerable for maintaining and developing the web pages. There are currently over 200 web pages, which are joint to the web pages of Metla, Metsähallitus, North Karelia, Lieksa and the action network of Koli. On the Finnish website of the National Park there were almost 20 000 visits in the year 2005 (the front page).

The National Park gains visibility also through the channels of the common marketing. For example the web portal (luontoon.fi) is an extremely useful channel for nature tourist to look for visiting resorts. In the year 2005 the web pages were visited about 17 000 times, in other words almost as much as the webpage of the National Park (Katariina Hopponen, Metsähallitus). The hiking route guide of North Karelia represents also the routes of Koli. The National Park has also a separate website linked to the website of Hotel Koli (www.koli.fi). That website was viewed about 9000 times in the year 2005 (Contentum Oy).

The fact that the website can be viewed with ease is an essential precondition for how well the information is distributed to the users (Gretzel, Yan & Fesenmaier 2000). It is easy and advantageous to bring a website into use, but unfortunately updating the websites use noteworthy resources of an organisation (Gretzel, Yan & Fesenmaier 2000). On the website one can find a lot of irrelevant information and therefore finding the useful information takes time. On grounds of user experiences, it can be estimated that the website (luontoon.fi) meets the needs of hikers that are interested in the nature and the National Park better than the homepage of the Koli National Park. There is a need to replace the websites and to improve the usability during the planning season.

- They will try to renew the websites, so that it will meet the needs of the customers better. The website will also be updated regularly. The websites will be also translated into other languages by means of the language guidance programs. Researches, like thesis and scientific publications, will be added to the website in



an electronic form.

5.8 *Electronic guide and pedagogical map service*

The electronic map service and introduction of destinations for nature-oriented tourism, produced as a part of the iEnvironment-project funded by TEKES, have been linked to the website of the National Park. It is possible to develop the website through linking more environmental educational and scientific material and creating the website as an information system that also meets the needs of an international tourist.

- The map service linked to the website will be improved so that the content of the pedagogical theme trails and educational locations are within the reach of the customer in a cost-efficiently way through the information system. The content will be developed so, that it meets the needs of the extra-mural school program. By the means of electronic communication one can replace and unify the oral teaching and guidance needed otherwise.

5.9 *Geographic information system*

The geographic information system (GIS) of the National Park will be developed as a database scientific, and guidance and teaching material. The structure of the database is based on the basic settlements made by the National Park.

- There will be created a user connection to the database, by means of which the customers can study the information collected before and also save their own observations on the database both in the Heritage Centre and at home. The Finnish Forest Research Institute is responsible for developing the database.

5.10 *Notifications*

Notifications will be delivered to the media and to the local community members when there is a need for notices. The Finnish Forest Research Institute (Metla) is answerable for the notices. In the years 2000-2005 Metla has published annually about 40 press conferences, of which 6 to 10 are nation-wide.

- Metla notifies frequently of the events in the National Park. There are no grounds to increase the amount of notifications because it could decrease the liability of the notifications. A smaller amount of the nation-wide notifications ensures that they will be noticed. They should be carried on in the current well-functioning practice.

5.11 *Media*

A very cost effective way to gain visibility for the National Park and for the conservation is



to appear in the media. The amount of how many times the Koli National Park appeared in the press in the year 2003 has been calculated according to own follow-ups. There were over 450 articles, interviews etc. in the press, like newspapers, radio and television, during the year. The amount of publicity can be explained through the development of the National Park during the last ten years. Several new attractions can be reported.

- The Koli National Park appears in the press so often that it can be considered that the relations between the National Park and media are in order and in efficient use. The action will be carried out in the same way in the future.

5.12 Events

Different kinds of events are also important for the communication. By means of those the National Park can be made better known. The events also induce a lot of people to the Koli National Park, to which the National Park can send environmental educational messages through the lines of actions and the contents of the events.

- It is important to increase the amount of services in the form of events. The importance of different kinds of events to the development of the tourist resorts is significant (Dimanche 2002). Convening events around the theme of the slash-and-burn culture and scheduling the burn-beating according to the possibilities at the same week, would bring a new way to inform visitors about the nature of area in an interesting way. Corresponding to the Lieksan Vaskiviikko (brass instrument week), there could be Kaskiviikko (slash-and-burn week) in the area of Koli.
- Also other actors, like associations, arrange events in the Koli area. The National Park work in co-operation with these actors and motivate them to promote also the nature.

5.13 Slide shows

The slide shows shown in the Heritage Centre represent nature, cultural background and experiences gained in the National Park. Also other issues, which are adapted in the profile of the National Park or in representations of other National Parks, can be shown. The slide shows are directed mainly to tourists and school camps.

- Slideshows and thematic digital media programs will be developed. The Finnish Forest Research Institute is responsible for developing the programs in co-operation with interest groups.
- Multivision representation will be renewed, although it is well-functioning, because the major part of tourists visit regularly Koli and it gives an occasion to develop the material to keep up the interest.



5.14 Brand of Koli

- The brand of Koli will be prepared in co-operation with different parties so that besides the Finnish Forest Institute also other communities and actors on the tourist sector in the area of Koli can use that brand. The brand should symbol important values of the area of Koli.

5.15 Building up a coherent image in the area of Koli

The communication will be reconciled systemically so that the messages form a coherent image for the receiver. This is the most effective way to communicate. In this way one can also maximize the effectiveness of the message in relation to the costs (Morgan & Pritchard 2000). The Koli National Park can not build up a coherent, systemic message, because there are many other activities in the area of Koli. There is a noteworthy amount of companies in the area of Koli that take advantage of the vicinity or the views of Koli in their own marketing or work up the image of Koli through their own activities. Also the regional tourism marketing organisation, Karelia Expert tourism service, takes much advantage of Koli in the marketing materials.

- The National Park will market or communicate their values and services through their own channels, but also other tourism companies in the area take advantage of the national landscape of Koli in their own marketing. It's impossible for the National Park to direct single-handed the marketing communication of the area according to its own targets. An aim has been set to create a coherent opinion, how the area of Koli should be developed in the future. The National Park takes actively part in this project and brings out the importance of the natural values for the tourism in the area of Koli.



6 Table, schedule and costs of the development plan during the years 2006-2010

The table stated below shows the schedule of different operations and estimated costs for the National Park.

Operation	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Cost €
Training of the guidance personnel	x	x	x	x	x	1000
Customer feed-back system	x	x	x	x	x	0
Internal flow of information will be improved	x					0
The Finnish Forest Research Institute supervises the quality of guidance of the cooperation partners through the licence system	x	x	x	x	x	0
Promoting guided nature services	x	x	x	x	x	0
Updating the exhibition of Ukko					x	50 000
Improving the guidance in other languages	x	x	x	x	x	15 000
Guidance services will be continued at Ryyinänen	x	x	x	x	x	0
The operations of Alamaja will be developed, whereupon the availability of the guidance services will be improved	x	x	x	x	x	0
Developing Kiviniemi as a guidance point	x	x	x	x	x	1000
Cooperation with the Stone Center	x	x	x	x	x	0
Teaching in Koli will be continued through the services planned	x	x	x	x	x	0
Taking notice of researches in developing the teaching material	x	x	x	x	x	0
The pedagogical supplementary material of Geotrail, Shepherds Trail and Swidden Circuit will be translated into English	x					8 000
Adding general guides (5)	x	x	x	x		5 000
Adding location guides (5)	x	x	x	x		2 000
Marking of the boundaries of the National Park		x	x	x		10 000
Building up the gates of the National Park					x	10 000
Developing the route signs	x	x	x			20 000
Improved revision of the general brochure	x		x		x	1 000
Translating the general brochures into other languages		x	x		x	1000
Updating the heritage of the Koli-publication				x		0
The hiking guide of Koli	x					5000
Koli magazine		x				1000
Renewing the tourist map of Koli		x				1000
Renewing the homepages		x				5 000
Developing the electronic guidance book	x	x				30 000
Improving the Geographic Information System	x	x	x	x	x	5 000
Active communication	x	x	x	x	x	0
Developing events		x	x	x	x	5000
Reorganising the multivision representation				x		10 000
Creating a brand of Koli	x					2000
Enhancing the nature theme in the communication	x	x	x	x	x	0
Taking part in the process, which creates a coherent image of Koli	x	x	x	x	x	0



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