

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2024

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: 2020/2023

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



Alkkia Health Forest was founded in the Geopark area (SDG 3), and the inauguration was held during the EGN Week (SDG 17) with more than 50 local participants. Two guided tours were organized. (Photo: Terttu Hermansson)

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 3 staffs including 1 geoscientist

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): 112 700 visits in 2024 (57 % increase in seven years)

Table 1. Development of the number of visitors in major geosites in the Lauhanvuori - Hämeenkangas Geopark area 2016 - 2024.

Area/year	2016	2017	2019	2020	2021	2023	2024	Development 2016–2024 %
Kauhaneva - Pohjankangas	7 941	10 995	14 240	29 166	29 698	26 300	26 200	230
Lauhanvuori	11 901	13 767	14 502	22 680	20 510	21 300	21 700	82
Hämeenkangas	51 927	44 361	60 163	62 669	69 323	64 800	64 800	25
Total	71 769	69 123	88 905	114 515	119 531	112 400	112 700	57

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

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

Organizer	Number of events
Lauhanvuori - Hämeenkangas UGGp	10
Member municipalities of the UGGp or regional councils (Geopark is participating)	9
LH UGG together with other partners (e.g., Universities of applied sciences, Entrepreneur associations, EU projects)	21
Total	40

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:

Five schools (one less than previous year) have participated in water quality measurement and downloaded and published the results in the "Adjacent water research" database, webpage vesi.geodialogue.com/ we have created together with local schools. All primary schools of the area are invited to participate in the measurements, though.

The schools have monitored the same nearby waters (rivers, lakes) many times since the database was opened.

A new GEOedu international project was applied by the Geopark organization. Almost all the schools of the Geopark area are involved in the project.

11 school classes with 1282 persons (pupils and their teachers) have visited the geosites during 2024.

Number of Geopark press release:

1 press release about Geopark's and Geopark area's development and activities during 2024.

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2024

- Built new Geopark exhibition corners, Geopark panels, and Geopark billboards in every municipality of the Geopark area
- The new Geopark visitor center progressed well, and a large amount of Geopark materials was produced for it.
- The Alkkia Health Forest was founded in the Geopark area, and inauguration was held during the EGN Week.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

Event	Date	Participation from LH UGGp	Organizer	Place
GGN online Workshop on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Agenda 2030	5.2.2024	Terttu Hermansson	GGN	Online
GEOfood meeting	23.2.2024	Terttu Hermansson	Geofood International	Online
49th EGN CC meeting and workshop	5.-9.3.2024	Terttu Hermansson, Pasi Talvitie	EGN, Kula-Salihli UGGp	Turkey
Tourism Working Group	7.3.2024	Terttu Hermansson	EGN, Kula-Salihli UGGp	Turkey
EGN Fossil record and evolution working group meeting	7.3.2024	Pasi Talvitie	EGN, Kula-Salihli UGGp	Turkey
GGN Advisory Committee	8.4.2024	Terttu Hermansson	GGN	Online
The 1st Collaborative Seminar Between Geoparks in Japan and Finland	22.4.2024	Terttu Hermansson	Rokua UGGp + Japanese Geoparks	Online
Welcome event	22.4.2024	Terttu Hermansson, Pasi Talvitie	GGN	Online
Geoeducation cooperation LH UGGp - Muskauer - Faltenbogen UGGp	23.4.2024	Terttu Hermansson, Kalle Männistö	LH UGGp	Online
Younger Dryas meeting	7.5.2024	Pasi Talvitie, Terttu Hermansson	Nordic Geoparks	Online
Geoeducation cooperation LH UGGp - Odsherred UGGp	14.5.2024	Terttu Hermansson, Kalle Männistö	LH UGGp	Online
The North-West Estonia Geopark seminar	15.5.2024	Terttu Hermansson	North-West Estonian Geopark	Online
Geoeducation cooperation LH UGGp - Reykjanes	16.6.2024	Terttu Hermansson, Simo Tolvanen	LH UGGp	Online
North-West Estonia Geopark" action plan meeting	20.6.2024	Terttu Hermansson	North-West Estonian Geopark	Online
Younger Dryas meeting	17.9.2024	Pasi Talvitie	Nordic Geoparks	Online
50th EGN CC Meeting	18.-19.9.2024	Terttu Hermansson, Pasi Talvitie	EGN	Online
EGN Fossil record and evolution working group meeting	19.9.2024	Pasi Talvitie	EGN	Online
17th EGN Conference	2.-4.10.2024	Terttu Hermansson, Pasi Talvitie, Kalle Männistö	EGN, Reykjanes UGGp	Iceland
8th GGN Advisory Committee Meeting	29.11.2024	Terttu Hermansson	GGN	Online
GEOfood Meeting - Winter 2024	10.12.2024	Terttu Hermansson	Geofood International	Online

Management and Financial Status

- No changes in management structure
- 4 development projects (EU funded) going on managed by Geopark (turnover about 200 000 €), two projects managed by partners where our Geopark is a partner ended by the end of the year
- LH UGG had 80 business and association members.
- Several development cases together with universities

- Very fruitful strategic cooperation with other Finnish Geoparks, e.g. created a common sustainable travel development plan and applied for state funding

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)

- Applying for the Sustainable Travel Finland label
- 5 Geopark member firms are following Sustainable Travel Finland program, 1 has a certificate already
- Participating in regional sustainable tourism development projects
- Co-operation with Finnish Center for Cycling Tourism in promoting cycling tourism and cycling friendly services, participation in a tourism fair together
- LAC sustainable tourism system follow-up measurements
- Partnership in the common project of Finnish Geoparks, “Geoparks as attractive factors for sustainable tourism”
- Designing a common UNESCO sites tour brochure together with Impact Crater Lake Geopark and Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site

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

- Created an environmental education plan based on SDGs together with Satakunta University of Applied Sciences: <https://psvsa.samk.fi/en/environmental-education-plan/>
- Developing new educational materials for the new Geopark visitor centre
- Applying for a new international GEOedu project concerning all the school levels

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 the food tourism strategy development process of Satakunta province.
- Participation in steering groups of many regional development projects
- Membership in three provincial Visit organizations

Promotional activities

- Several social media campaigns
- Launching short (1 hour) online info briefs about Geopark and its main themes, Geopark concept and networks, geology, nature and culture of our Geopark
- Participation in many kinds of events and markets
- Travel fair campaigns, two of them together with other Finnish Geoparks
- Active posting to social media
- Creating video content on Youtube
- Creating content for regional Visit organizations' campaigns
- Giving interviews to the media
- Presentations about Geopark to numerous groups
- Writing articles to different publications and media, also to EGN Magazine
- Distributing brochures and guides to our partner companies and municipalities to be presented in different occasions and to be distributed to their clients

4. CONTACTS

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