

Press release

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A proposal for the world's first science national park has been submitted to Finland's Ministry of the Environment with a broad base of support from researchers, environmental organizations, entrepreneurs and the University of Helsinki

The forest of southern Finland has precious little old growth forest left, but the Evo area is a hidden gem where old growth still remains and harbours many endangered and vulnerable species. The old growth areas are surrounded by the largest contiguous forested area in southern Finland, giving it a great value for conservation. The same area has attracted scientists for decades and it is one of the most researched areas in the country.

Finland will renew the idea of what a National Park can be

In the proposed Evo Science National Park, the conservation and recreation values that the original National Park concept were built upon almost 150 years ago are updated for the 21st Century by bringing science to the forefront.

"Evo has such a great scientific history as well as conservation value, and it just made sense to us to combine these two to create the idea of a Science National Park. **We aim to bring everyone together to learn about, participate in and experience science at the same time as marveling at the great outdoors.**" says project member **Pepe Forsberg**.

The project has a great deal of support too, with the **University of Helsinki, World Wildlife Fund Finland, Greenpeace Norden, The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, Natur och Miljö, local outdoors entrepreneurs, social media group 'National Parks of Finland', field biology promoters 'Kentällä – In the field' and over 50 scientists backing the project.**

"It was great to see such broad support for this new idea for conservation and science. **It has been really exciting to develop the concept and very rewarding to bring all of these groups of people together to work for a common goal.**" says University of Helsinki's research station coordinator **Niko Nappu**.

The Science National Park will support and promote long-term research

"The Evo area has been home to many long-term research projects which help us understand how the environment is changing over time. Without this type of research that happens over decades, it is impossible to know what effect things like climate change are having. **The great thing is that at the same time as protecting large tracts of forest, we can make sure that the opportunity to continue research activities is ensured.**" adds **John Loehr** from the University of Helsinki's Lammi Biological Station.

One of the basic principles of the Science National Park is to bring people closer to the work that is done by scientists in Evo. **“By founding the park in Evo there will be many science, health, conservation, cultural history, biodiversity, economic and educational benefits and opportunities.”** explains working group member **Hanna Rosti**.

Along with the Science National Park many new opportunities arise

The proposed Science National Park is also important for generating much needed jobs in the area. The goal is to create up to 1000 new jobs through tourism, park interpretation, and scientific research and the many new opportunities that will come with having the Science National Park close by.

More information and interviews:

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The Science National Park proposal is the common project of the ‘Kentällä – In the field’ working group together with the University of Helsinki, WWF Finland, Greenpeace Norden and The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation as well as a large number of scientists, conservationists and outdoors enthusiasts.

The Evo area has been proposed to be protected in previous years, but the current proposal is much broader and more functional. The concept aims to have a global audience that will be introduced to the possibilities for conservation and science. When implemented, the Evo Science National Park will protect nature, support scientific research and give new possibilities for Finland to bring its innovations to the world.