



Intriguing Landscape

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Southern Konnevesi on Matka Nordic Travel Fair 2018

Stand Program, stand number 6h8

Southern Konnevesi is once again taking part in Matka Nordic Fair in January 2018. Among the participating organizations are: Municipality of Rautalampi, Municipality of Konnevesi, E-K Lines, Vetikko Travel, Tavinsulka, Konneveden kosket, Erä- ja hevospalvelut Huttunen, MVH-palvelut, Hinkkalan kartano, Rämäkkä Holidays, Erä's Pete, Rautalaine, KalajaRetkeily, Ravintola Hetki. Alongside the National Park theme, as a result of successful product testing during 2017, this year fishing tourism will rise as a topic.

You will find the local tourism representatives on the dashing fair stand, which is designed by **Jukola Industries** of Konnevesi and inspired by the pure Southern Konnevesi nature. Also, it is partially produced of recycled materials.

Näyttävä osasto itse on konnevetisen Jukola Industriesin työtä. Se on Etelä-Konneveden puhtaan luonnon inspiroima ja se hyödyntää kierrätettyjä materiaaleja. Other local handicrafts can be seen on the stand, too, for example, local carpenter Harri Pääkkönen's mailbox. At the stand during the event one can also win the famous rye bread of Konnevesi's Manninen home bakery and the heavenly mulberry jam of Rautalampi's Ropola farm.

On Friday fishing researcher Teemu Hiltunen is visiting the stand and answering questions about the responsible fishing, the wild brown trout and the livelihood of fish in general. On Saturday Maija Mikkola from Parks and Wildlife Finland will answer questions concerning the national park. Sunday is a family theme day on Matka Fair, and from our stand one can send post cards with national park landscapes to family and friends.

National park views, rich-in-fish waters and good services – that's what Southern Konnevesi is made of!

In 2014, after its founding, Southern Konnevesi National Park got the unassuming 9 700 visits. After that the growth in visits has been growing steadily, about 47-51,5% each year. Already in 2016 with 21 600 visits Southern Konnevesi became the most popular and economically significant national park of two regions – Central Finland and Northern Savonia.

-Most probably the number of visits in Southern Konnevesi has gotten over 30 000 in 2017. The official data will be released in mid-January, the spokesman of Parks and Wildlife Finland **Tiina Hakkarainen** comments.

Popularity, however, doesn't come on its own. The development of nature tourism in Southern Konnevesi follows the Master Plan 2015-2025. One of the main goals of the plan is to develop Southern Konnevesi as a unified destination, much bigger than the national park itself. The heartland of it are the municipalities of Rautalampi and Konnevesi. The service chain, however, lays wide between both regions city centers of Jyväskylä and Kuopio.





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In the center of this development are the quality of service, sustainability and responsibility. During 2017 eight new tourism startups were founded in Southern Konnevesi. The companies, that already exist, develop new products and join the service chain. For example, in summer 2018 the first combination of a bus ride from Jyväskylä and national park cruise is expected to be scheduled. Next summer a new vessel, M/S Linnea with capacity of about 100 passengers, will sail in Southern Konnevesi Lake.

The problem is still the part-time nature of entrepreneurship, but as a solution the region tries to develop tourism services all the year round.

-More entrepreneurship is needed in the region, so that the offered service is enough for the growing visitors numbers also in future. In addition, all new and innovative services are welcome in Southern Konnevesi, nature tourism project manager **Rositsa Bliznakova** points out.

The responsibility of tourism services in the region develops thanks to the partnership program of Parks and Wildlife Finland. In addition, in the recent years there has been a huge effort to revitalize the stock of wild brown trout. The Southern Konnevesi Lake is the central lake of the historical Rautalampi water rout, known as the best living and breeding habitat of wild brown trout in Southern Finland. Down the lake the rich-in-fish waters flow through the Seven Rapid Route of Konnevesi. In May 2017 the four uppermost rapids of Konnevesi Rapid Route got the highest recognition in Finland for its responsibility towards wild brown trout – the Villi Taimen Pro status.

Responsibility is also demonstrated in regards of using local resources. Local food is a hot trend in Southern Konnevesi – and the visitor has the chance to taste the local delicacies on many levels – from excursion food through lunch restaurants all the way to fine dining -experiences. Typically the food product of Southern Konnevesi only travels a few kilometers from its place of growth to the plate.

The services, however, need infrastructure as a base. During the period 2015-2017 the nature tourism investment carried out in Southern Konnevesi is massive, about 1,5 mil. €. Some measures continue during 2018, too. Parks and Wildlife Finland has built the trails, resting places and harbors of the national park. The municipalities have had the important role of improving the infrastructure surrounding the national park. The Municipality of Konnevesi has invested in the Watergates of the national ark, Kivisalmi and Häyrylänranta. In addition, Konnevesi improves the existing infrastructure and trails along the Rapid Route. In 2017 the municipality bought 22,6 hectares of Silmutsaari -island, which tourism significance is believed to grow in future. The Municipality of Rautalampi is focused on developing a network of harbors, seven to be precise - Koipiniemi, Kierinniemi, Pieni Navettasaari, Vahvalahti, Pitkähöjanlahti, Pitkälähti and Hanhitaipale. The technical director of Konnevesi **Markus Tiihanoff** and his colleague in Rautalampi **Antti Tuppura** believe in cooperation.

-Konnevesi and Rautalampi share the lake basin, so each of us should know what the other one is doing. In future, we will strengthen the cooperation between us and we will continue developing the region consistently regardless of municipality borders, Tiihanoff states.





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Since the infrastructure and services are in good shape, Southern Konnevesi has taken its first steps towards internationalization. During 2017 the region was presented as a winter tourism destination as well as summer fishing and hiking destination to foreign tourist agents, and it proved to be interesting at least to Russians, Central Europeans and Chinese tourists.

The national criteria for internationalization has been taken into account, and Southern Konnevesi tourism services are to be found in Visit Finland's My Stay -portal. In the autumn of 2017 three packages, containing Southern Konnevesi services, participated in Visit Finland's top product competition, which results will be announced during Matka 2018 Travel Fair.

Due to the increased interest from abroad, Parks and Wildlife Finland is updating the website of Southern Konnevesi National Park and will translate them to Russian. In addition, in 2018 Southern Konnevesi has committed to building the partnership with Bavarian Forest, which is Germany's oldest national park.

More information:

- Updates from Southern Konnevesi fair stand during the event (mainly in Finnish): <https://www.facebook.com/events/355563838189576/>
- Website of the national park: <http://www.nationalparks.fi/en/southernkonnevesinp>
- Information about the recent investments in nature tourism (in Finnish): <http://etela-konnevesi.fi/luontomatkailun-koordinointihanke/investoinnit/>

Ajankohtaisia videoita Etelä-Konnevedestä:

- Kansallispuistot tutuiksi – Etelä-Konnevesi: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckpip_jLwPA
- The National Parks of Finland - Southern Konnevesi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ynlN2mxCH4>
- Palveleva Etelä-Konnevesi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHEIBlrOzPQ>
- The Tree Story – Bound for Adventure: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5b-6kmtgdpE>
- Fishing and Hiking in Southern Konnevesi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mh8elrPnx3c&t=4s>

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