



Success Story: Combining tourism and wilderness in Soomaa through PAN Parks

Zoltán Kun and Murel Merivee
PAN Parks Foundation / Environmental Board Estonia



What is PAN Parks?



What is PAN Parks?



PAN Parks works to **protect**
Europe's wilderness, the continent's most
undisturbed areas of nature

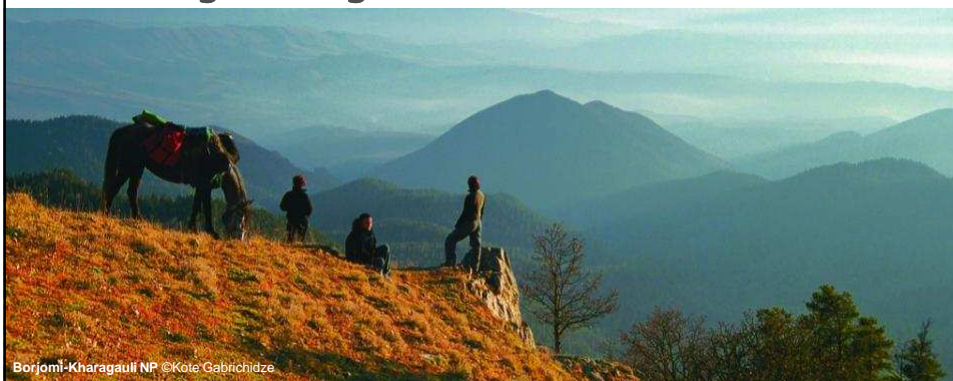


Paanajärvi NP ©Viktor Gritsuk

What is PAN Parks?



Applies a truly integrated approach to
mobilise sustainable tourism development
for strengthening wilderness conservation



Borjomi-Kharagauli NP ©Kote Gabrichidze

What is PAN Parks?

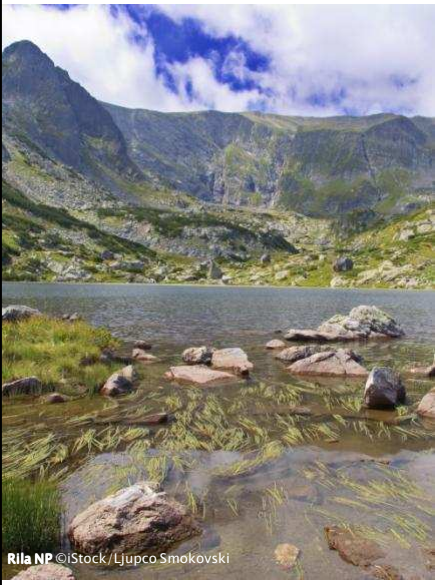


As of October 2009 there are 11 certified PAN Parks.

PAN Parks develops a network through linking wilderness protected areas in Europe



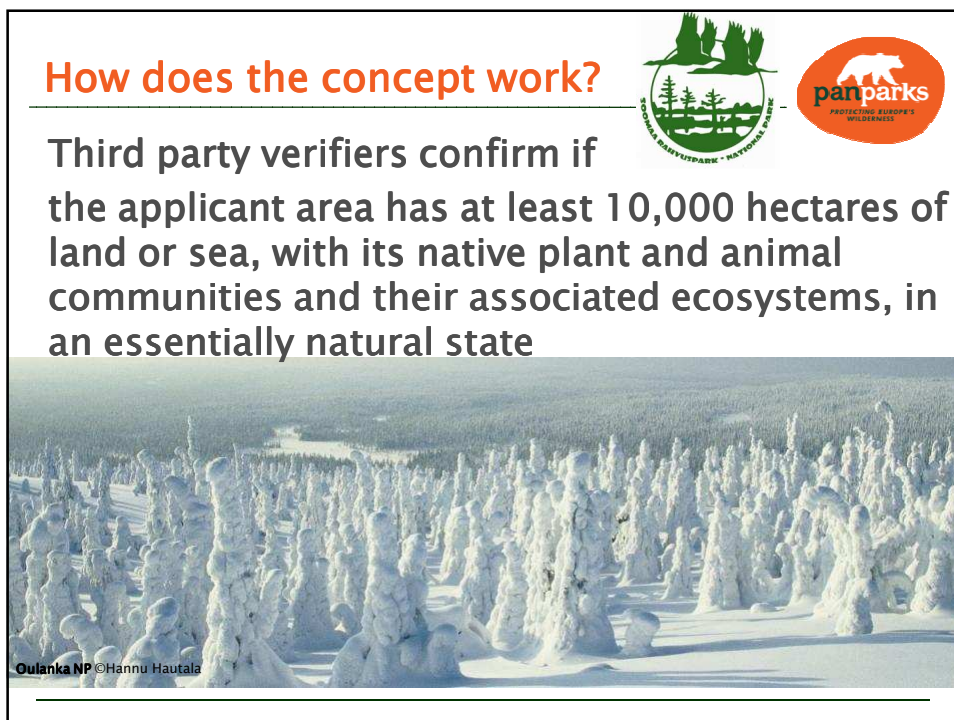
What is PAN Parks?



The PAN Parks network represents the best of Europe's wilderness – the most undisturbed expanses of Europe's remaining natural landscapes



Rila NP ©iStock / Ljupco Smokovski



How does the concept work?



It requires the support of local municipalities and businesses in order to provide the opportunity to visitors to enjoy wilderness!




How does the concept work?



It requires wilderness management in the core area, but builds on cooperation:



Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy

The process implemented in Retezat is used as a model in Romania





Why and how did it work in Soomaa?

Lynx ©Andy Gehrig



Why and how did it work in Soomaa?



The verification took three years after the first contact!
Complex discussion as governance changed during the process

Why and how did it work in Soomaa?



Key aspects of success:

- The support of Environmental Board
- The eagerness of local conservationists
- The support (push?) of local businesses
- The community engagement

Why and how did it work in Soomaa?



For the certified protected areas:

- Improved management effectiveness
- Independent audit
- Easier access to funding
- Expertise exchange in a living network
- Co-operation with rural communities
- Tools to control and monitor tourism
- Support in lobbying at decision makers
- International recognition

Why and how did it work in Soomaa?



For local people and businesses:

- Increased collaboration in park management
- Developing a destination
- Small business promotion
- New jobs and economic benefits

For visitors:

- Guarantee of real wilderness areas
- Unique wilderness experience
- Certified tourism facilities
- Contribution to wilderness conservation



What is the European relevance?



What is the European relevance?



- Only 1% of Europe remained wilderness, it is a scarce resource which increases its value
- European Parliament adopted a special report on wilderness (February 3, 2009)
- The European Commission accepted an 'Agenda for Wilderness' (Prague, May 28, 2009)
- Presented during the World Wilderness Congress which might be organised in Europe in 2013
- The European Commission is planning to develop management guidance for wilderness areas within the Natura 2000 network



PAN Parks works to protect Europe's wilderness, the continent's most undisturbed areas of nature



www.panparks.org
www.soomaa.org