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**STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT
OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL HABITATS
(CDPE)**

**Group of Specialists on Protected Areas
(PE-S-ZP)**

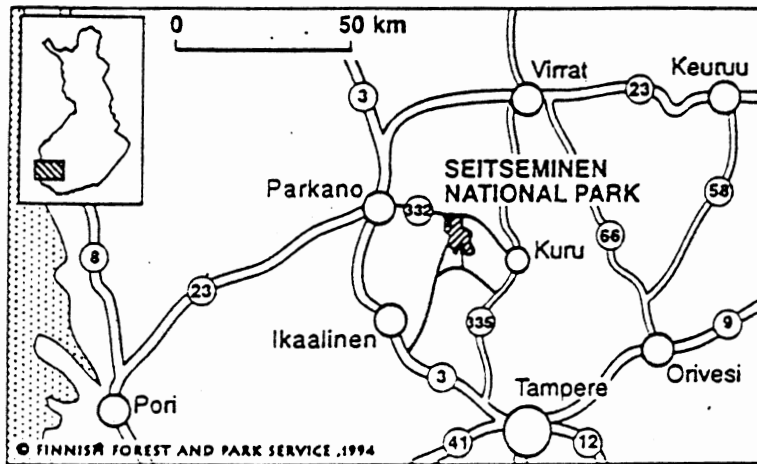
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**SEITSEMINEEN NATIONAL PARK
(Finland)**

Application for the European Diploma

Presented by the Finnish Government

Seitsemeneen National Park
Metsähallitus
- the Finnish Forest and Park Service
West Finland Park Area
PO Box 38
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Metsähallitus - The Finnish Forest and Park Service

APPLICATION FOR THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA FOR THE SEITSEMINE NATIONAL PARK

COUNTRY	Finland
NAME OF AREA	Seitseminen National Park
ORGANISATION RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS MANAGEMENT	Metsähallitus - the Finnish Forest and Park Service, Western Finland Park Area
ADDRESS	P.O.Box 38, FIN-39701 PARKANO, Finland

1. TYPE OF AREA

National Park

2. DESCRIPTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The Seitsemene National Park is located in southwestern Finland in middle boreal vegetation zone. The exact location is 61°55"N, 23°25". The area is located at the southern end of the Suomenselkä watershed area. The height of the territory is some 180 meters above the sea level. A detailed Seitsemene Outdoor Map in the scale of 1 to 30,000 is available from the Secretariat.

3. CHARACTERISTICS AND SCIENTIFIC, AESTHETIC, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL VALUE

Owing to its character, location and history, the Seitsemene National Park, as one of the protected areas of western Finland, has a wide variety of functions. Of these, the most important are the protection of the forest ecosystem and heritage landscapes. Seitsemene is also a nature conservation research area and a location for instruction in natural history and for expeditions into natural sites.

Characteristic of the Seitsemene area are the forest cover and the abundance of eskers and small peatlands. Peatlands cover slightly over 50

per cent of the National Park area and half of them have been drained for forestry once. The most extensive natural peatlands are Kivineva and Soljastensuo, both split up by strips of forest.

The forests are composed of all age classes, from young stands to old-growth forests. The area's speciality is one of the country's most impressive primaeval forests with old Scots pines, snags and giant spruces on Multiharju. Two thirds of the forests in the park are still relatively young, under-100-year-old, one-time commercial stands. The old-growth forests provide excellent breeding places for woodpeckers and other hole-nesting species. Many rare species breed in cavities in trees, including the Eurasian Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium passerinum*), Ural Owl (*Strix uralensis*), Three-Toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*) and Red-Breasted Flycatcher (*Ficedula parva*). Many rare insects specialise on decaying wood burrow into the hollow trees and fallen trees of the primaeval forests.

Despite the long history of forestry, small tracts of valuable old-growth forests with their endangered species have survived in the core area of Seitsemien. As the rest of the forests in the park mature, they may receive further species from the core area, particularly from the Multiharju virgin forest.

The old crown forest estate (remote farm) within the National Park, with its originally cultivated land, has survived exceptionally well. This entity, known as the Kovero estate, forms a historically valuable built heritage landscape, which has already been partly restored to its original form. With the fields and pastures, some of which have already been recleared, in addition to its buildings, Kovero constitutes a valuable overall entity. Its preservation will be ensured by managing the area by traditional methods, as part of the National Park. At the same time, the habitats of the field and meadow plant and animal species will be preserved, since these habitats depend on the old agricultural methods and grazing by domestic animals.

The Seitsemien National Park has been popular with researchers throughout its more than thirty-year history. During the last few years, the area has been heavily used for general studies on animal ecology and other biological studies. The greatest research challenge has been a several-year programme concerned with the effect of the fragmentation of the forest and mosaic formation in which the efforts of researchers have been focused on the ecology of different groups of organisms. The value of the area for the research is immense and the preconditions for studies will be improved. Seitsemien is of particular importance to the rehabilitation and ecological research on forests, peatlands, heritage biotopes and small water bodies. In projects associated with the restoration and care of biotopes of this kind, Seitsemien is a so-called experimental and intensive monitoring area.

The Seitsemien National Park has become highly popular as a place for school and university instruction. Its popularity is partly due to the park's

location alongside good public transport routes not far from urban centres, the varied character of the park and the availability of teaching material on it. The most important public service location is the Kulomäki Visitor Information Centre, opened for public in 1989. This features a basic exhibition of wildlife and other exhibition space, an auditorium, a collection for instruction purposes, a nearby nature trail, and a cafe. The Visitor Information Centre also provides accommodation and work space for the staff and researchers.

The abundance of roads, trails and information services in Seitsemien also offers good opportunities for recreation. Among the protected areas of the region, Seitsemien is the least susceptible to damage, and thus it is possible to encourage a higher level of recreational use than elsewhere. During the last few years, the yearly number of visitors in the park has been some 35,000.

4. EUROPEAN INTEREST JUSTIFYING THE APPLICATION

The Seitsemien National Park is a well-protected and managed area representing middle boreal forest zone with its peatlands and small lakes and rivers. Both peatland and forest restoration projects are important from the viewpoint of the maintenance of European biodiversity. The park also has well-organised interpretative programmes enhancing environmental education which is an important function of all European parks.

5. OWNERSHIP TITLE

The National Park is owned by the Finnish State and managed by the Forest and Park Service.

6. PROTECTION SCHEME

The park was established by an Act of Parliament of 1981 (674/1981) and then extended by an Act of 1989 (116/1989). The Acts are based on the Nature Conservation Act (71/1923). The protection regulations of the park are defined in a Decree (932/1981, amended 117/1989). The Decree calls for the drafting of a master plan for the management and use of the National Park, which is confirmed by the Ministry of the Environment, as well as for a requisite number of special plans. The Ministry of the Environment confirmed the master plan for the Seitsemien National Park in 1984 before the park was enlarged. A new master plan (available from the Secretariat) replaces the afore-mentioned plan.

The Seitsemien National Park area is mainly old State land. Before the establishing of the National Park most of the forests of the area were used for commercial forestry by the Finnish Forest and Park Service, but some parts of the area were protected (by decision of the Forest and Park Service), such

as the Multiharju primaeval forest in 1910, the Seitsemisharju landscape forest in 1955, the Pitkäjärvi landscape forest in 1964 and the Jaulinneva and the Kivineva virgin peatland areas in 1964. Forestry activities in the area came to an end in 1976.

In 1981, the National Park covered an area of 3,060 ha, and now it covers a total area of some 4,170 ha, of which water accounts for 180 ha. There is a plan to extend the park with another 300 hectares.

In Finland a national park is a protected area, owned by the State, with diversified natural features, or otherwise in terms of protection at least of national importance. It is preserved perpetually free from economic activities affecting nature, and an effort is made to maintain or restore its natural state. It is difficult to see any risks or dangers to the protection of the Seitseminen National Park during next few years.

7. MANAGEMENT

Management and activities in the Seitseminen National Park are based on the **master plan**.

During the years of park's existence, the information and recreation services have been developed and improved, and most of the planned facilities are now ready. The Kulomäki Visitor Centre was opened in 1989 to serve visitors. Particular attention is paid to schools and other educational parties. The Visitor Centre is open from 1 April to the end of September. During the winter it is open only on weekends. A guide is also available in the Kovero crown forest estate daily from May to the end of September.

The aim of the interpretative activities in Seitseminen is to make visitors more receptive in their attitude towards the nature conservation. Guidance in various forms is used in an endeavour to improve people's attitude towards Nature. Guide services are arranged by the Forest and Park Service. Visitors are provided with nature walks led by a guide, and in Kovero visitors can take part in the traditional farm work.

Seitseminen boasts more than forty kilometres of signposted trails, and most of the planned trail network has already been accomplished. For hikers there are seven camping sites along the trails. Near the roads there are cooking shelters. Indoor accommodation for groups is provided by the forest cabins within or close to the park, as well as at private farm houses in the neighbourhood of the park.

There are several information sites with shelter-type constructions constantly open to the public. Each of these has its own topics. Two nature trails have been established and another two will be opened during the summer of 1995. Their themes comprise hollow trees and hole-nesting birds in

Kulomäki, old-growth forests in Multiharju, esker geology in Kirkkaanlamminkangas and peatland in Jaulinneva.

A plan, remarkable even globally, for restoration of drained peatlands has been made for the Seitsemien area. According to the plan, an area about 1,200 ha of drained peatland will be rehabilitated during the next ten to fifteen years. The ditches (about 360 km) will be filled or blocked, and the tree stands grown up as a result of the drainage will be removed. Now the rehabilitated area covers more than 120 ha.

A plan for the rehabilitation of tree stands on mineral soil resulting from silviculture is under preparation. The restoration of the Kovero heritage environment has been going on for several years. The restoration of the Pitkäjärvi heritage area was completed in 1993.

8. PUBLISHED DESCRIPTIONS

The following printed matter has been published about Seitsemien:

- Leaflets in Finnish, Swedish, English and German
- An outdoor map including the basic data of the National Park
- Booklets in English and German about the exhibitions of the Visitor Centre and the nature trail close to it
- Leaflets about Kovero and events during the summer in Kovero
- Material for school groups about different themes available

9. PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Seitsemien in winter.
2. Primaeval forest in Seitsemien.
3. The Lake Iso Seitsemijärvi.
4. A Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) with a brood on a small pond.
5. The Kovero crown estate, protection of heritage landscape.
6. A WWF summer camp in Kovero in 1992.
7. The rehabilitation of drained peatland, Kirkkaanlamminneva in 1993. Ditches have been filled in and trees grown after the drainage have been cut down and transported away.
8. A fire scar in an old tree trunk.
9. Tree stands resulting from silviculture. An experimental area of imitating wildfires. Soljastensuo 1993.
10. An experiment of imitating wildfires. Soljastensuo 1994.
11. The Kulomäki Visitor Centre.
12. School children in the yard of the Kulomäki Visitor Centre, on the "Monument of the Forest".

material mentioned under 8 and 9 is available

from the Secretariat.