

“Shepherding Weeks”, Metsähallitus Parks and Wildlife Finland



The “Shepherding Weeks” project represents a unique concept that combines landscape management and an experience-rich holiday, developed by Metsähallitus Parks and Wildlife Finland’s Southern Finland regional unit in Koli National Park. During shepherding weeks, volunteer shepherds take care of a herd of sheep for a week, as they perform landscape management in national parks and conservation areas. The week is subject to a charge, in exchange for which the shepherds get to stay in an old house in the midst of breathtaking scenery. The payment is used to cover the costs of landscape management and the maintenance costs of the buildings in the area. The operations are organised in co-operation between Metsähallitus, volunteer shepherds and sheep farmers. Thanks to Shepherding Weeks, valuable traditional rural landscapes are maintained and public awareness of the importance of landscape has increased.

The Committee of Ministers acknowledged and praised the great value of each project presented for the 5th Session 2016-2017 of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe’s European Landscape Convention and recommended making it well-known to the general public for its exemplary value, and as a source of inspiration. “Shepherding Weeks” is a remarkable project for the upkeep of a rural and woodland landscape. The commitment of citizens enables pastoral areas to be maintained, which is fundamental for the region’s ecological and agricultural future. This commitment is also essential to the preservation of traditional rural buildings, which contribute to the quality of the landscape.