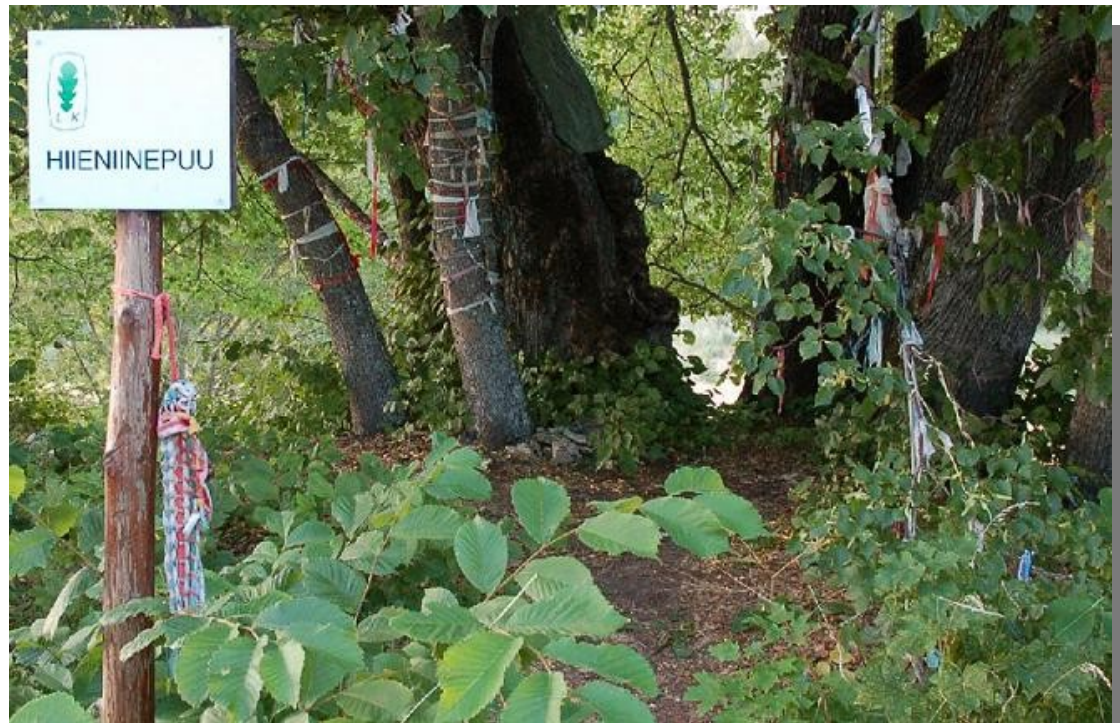


National Development Plan of Natural Sacred Sites of Estonia

Project Cult Identity, Latvia, 05.06.2012

*Ave Anniste
Ahto Kaasik
Hiite Maja Foundation*



Ilumäe Sacred Grove tree, Lääne-Viru County

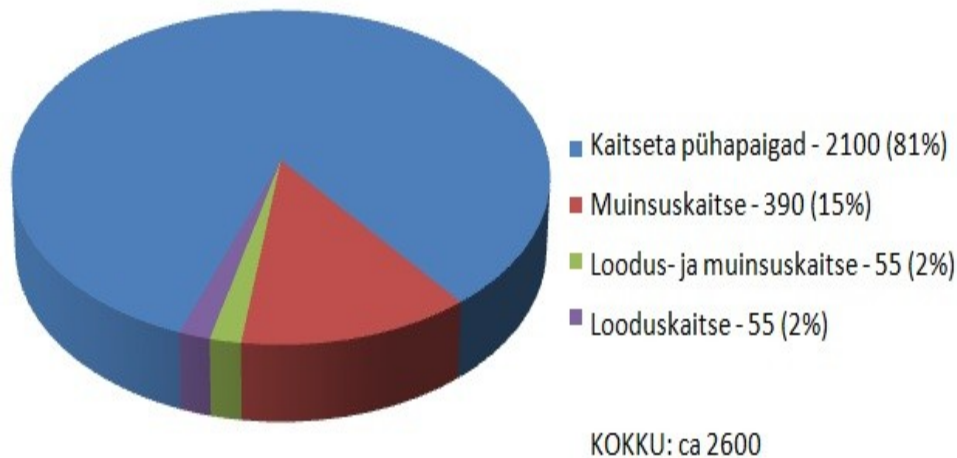
The Oldest Nature Conservation Areas in Estonia

- ~ 10,000 years of settlement and sacred sites
- Protection of soil, water, plants and other living beings
- Protection of indigenous world view, religion and way of life
- Writer Berk Vaher: „Sacred groves protect Estonian identity.“
- Folklorist Mall Hiimäe: „Sacred groves conserve Estonians' sense of home.“



Lake Pühajärv in Otepää parish. Native Estonians used to protect nature here long before the first national park was established in Yellowstone. Photo: Arne Ader

Protection of Sacred Sites



- Ca 500 or 19% of the known 2,600 sacred sites are under protection
- Often only a small part of the total area of the site is being protected



In addition, In Estonia there are 700 cross-trees connected to ancient funerary traditions, only 10 of which are under protection

Little research, insufficient protection and legislation have put the conservation of sacred sites in real danger



Maardu sacred grove was the only preserved grove of Black Alder in Estonia. It was protected by the National Heritage Board as a sacred grove since the Soviet period. In addition, it is situated on Rebala national heritage area. Photo: Tarvo Tiivits

Maardu Sacred Grove



In 2010 the government of Estonia sold the larger part of the Maardu Sacred Grove to a forestry company that cut down all the trees from the area in 2011 and 2012. Regrettably, the state institutions of Estonia approved of the incident.

“Natural Sacred Sites of Estonia. Research and Conservation 2008 – 2012”

- Board: ministries of culture, interior affairs, environment, agriculture, education and science; National Heritage Board, Tartu University, Maavalla koda
- Implementing agency: Centre of Natural Sacred Sites of Tartu University
- Planned actions: mapping, inventories, conservation, rehabilitation, introduction, appreciation, etc.
- Main objective: all preserved sacred sites under protection as sacred sites



Natural sacred sites conserve our oldest cultural and religious heritage. Making porridge for the prayer of All Souls time. Kunda Sacred Grove Hill, Lääne-Viru County

Important Activities

- Research and conservation methodology
- Smaller regional researches
- Database of sacred sites
- Analysis of legislation and elaboration of draft acts
- Training cycle and consultations for civil servants and officials of local municipalities



Ribbons of prayer on a sacred grove oak. Tammealuse sacred grove, Lääne-Viru County

Important Activities

- Lectures about sacred sites in Tartu University and Estonian University of Life Sciences
- Collaboration with IUCN
- Exhibitions, photo competitions, community work and other events
- Public opinion surveys
- Documentary about sacred groves
- More than 400 published articles and interviews



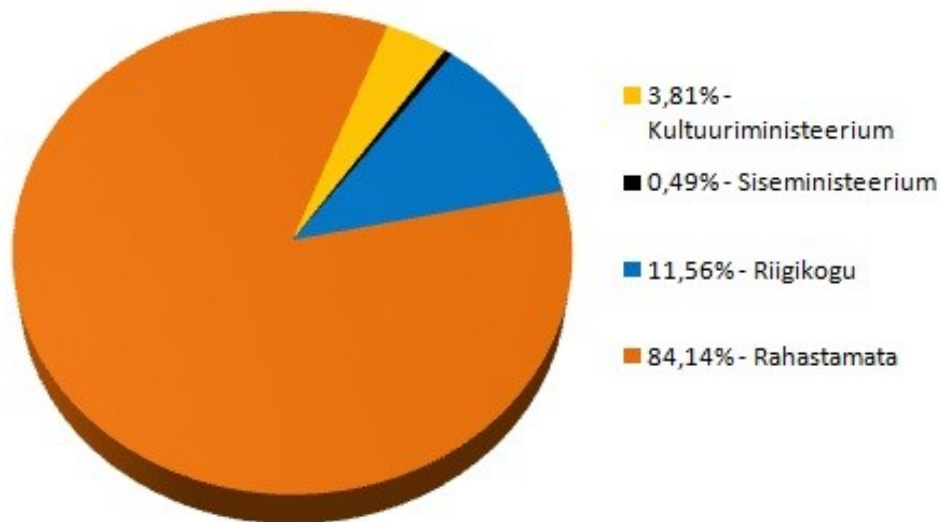
Students of Tartu University on an excursion in the framework of the sacred sites' lecture series. Kiigeoru sacred grove, Tartu County

National Development Plan is Still at the Initial Phase

Future:

- Mapping and inventories of sacred sites
- Amendments to legislation
- Completing the database
- Taking under protection
- Supplementing curricula
- Appreciation
- Rehabilitation

Arengukava rahastamine asutuste lõikes 2008 - 2012



The government has financed only 15,86% of the sum needed to make inventories of sacred sites of Estonia according to the National Development Plan.

Thank you for your attention!

Ave Anniste

Tel +37258035358

ave@hiis.ee

