

Nature as a Protected Attraction in Teivo- Mäkkylä



This policy brief is a student work related to course Urban Lab 2: Policy and Infrastructure organized by Tampere University's Bachelor's degree program Sustainable Urban Development.

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Introduction



Teivo-Mäkkylä is characterized by pine-dominated ridge forests in Teivaalanharju and the Teivo Racetrack, giving the area significant natural value and a unique landscape identity in the Ylöjärvi and Tampere urban region. The main future challenge is to integrate new housing and infrastructure development with the preservation of residents' connection to nature and the area's attractiveness, ensuring that natural spaces are valued rather than treated as residual space.

As urbanization in Teivo-Mäkkylä advances, nature in Teivaalanharju can face increasing strain and pressure. However, rather than treating ecological preservation and urban development as competing goals, research shows that they can be mutually reinforcing. Studies show that high-quality natural environments increase the attractiveness and long-term value, and health benefits of residential areas.

Our analysis shows these challenges require going beyond conventional approaches and intentionally integrating future residents for nature conservation. In the context of Teivo-Mäkkylä, actors such as Pro Teivaalanharju and future residents are critical stakeholders and contributors to long-term nature conservation efforts.

Based on our insights, research, and analysis of similar areas, relevant literature, and Finnish and EU frameworks, we recommend:

- **Integration:** By integrating Teivaalanharju into Ylöjärvi's wider forest network, fragmented green plots become a cohesive urban amenity, creating a recognizable "gateway" to the area and strengthening its unique landscape identity.
- **Community Action:** Engaging residents through platforms like iNaturalist and programs like "Park Pal" fosters a direct.
- **Sustainable Movement:** Creating "integrated green pathways" and wooden bridges to connect smaller forests into a united body. These corridors serve as a sustainable transportation option, while designated trails and nature paths encourage residents to engage in low-impact movement within the sensitive esker environment.

Proposed Actions

1. Observational and Active Community Conservation

Specifically, in Teivaalanharju, implementing observational conservation efforts along the planned nature trail can engage local residents in using and learning to conserve the ridge's delicate nature. With the ready-made iNaturalist platform, integrated QR codes along the trail allow recreational users to take pictures and identify plants and animals, while the data is saved on the iNaturalist platform and is usable by city officials and employers. By opening a project in iNaturalist, observations are saved and visible in the Teivaalanharju area, where data gathered by residents can contribute to the area's observations and conservation efforts by city experts.

Active Engagement by Community Conservation

We suggest adopting engaging, observational methods for the conservation of Teivaalanharju and the surrounding areas. Through resident participation programs such as "Park Pal" and "Park Ambassador," implemented in multiple cities and municipalities in Finland, Ylöjärvi can engage residents in active, independent nature conservation cost-effectively. The proposal advances through three phases: assessing citizen-led conservation opportunities in Ylöjärvi, submitting an initiative to the City Board, and conducting citizen consultation to guide site selection and implementation.

How does resident participation work?

- 01 Resident signs-up for the programme
- 02 Area and responsibilities are agreed upon with the city
- 03 Instructions and possible supplies are given to the resident
- 04 Resident conserves and cares of the agreed upon area accordingly

Benchmarking from City of Espoo:

"The activities have been found to have a wide range of positive impacts on the environment. The maintenance measures improve the quality and cleanliness of the environment, the increased supervision reduces unauthorised measures, vandalism and disturbing behaviour, and the activities increase people's responsibility for their environment, also providing incidental exercise. The most significant impacts are protecting valuable nature, strengthening the sense of community and ensuring that local green areas are in good condition and beautiful." - City of Espoo on Our Park initiative (2021)

2. Natura 2000 Framework

Designating Teivaalanharju under the Natura 2000 framework would offer a policy-aligned approach to long-term conservation. As an EU-wide network established under the Habitats and Birds Directives, Natura 2000 aims to protect biodiversity by conserving valuable habitats and species while allowing sustainable human activity, thus it is well-suited for a peri-urban area. Rather than imposing strict protection, the framework focuses on maintaining a favorable conservation status. It enables recreational use and community-based initiatives to coexist with ecological goals. Designation can also provide access to funding, project-based financial support, and compensation mechanisms for land-use restrictions. Although municipalities do not receive automatic direct payments. Management by authorities such as Metsähallitus and other environmental bodies would ensure professional oversight while still allowing local engagement. Natura 2000 designation would push conservation efforts legally, while supporting sustainable development and community participation.

3. Connected Green Network

Additionally, our policy recommendation proposes integrating Teivaalanharju into Ylöjärvi's broader forest network to create a more extensive, cohesive green infrastructure for recreational purposes. Teivaalanharju creates a unique opportunity for human attraction, and its impact can be even greater if people perceive it as part of a larger forest body in Ylöjärvi. Quick access to the green area and recreational value will influence human relocation and visits. An example of this is Helsinki Central Park, where multiple green plots are reserved, connected, and extended from the Helsinki city center to Vantaa airport. Investing in green infrastructure, such as green pathways and wooden bridges, as connecting tools is essential to turn distinct, smaller forests into a united, larger forest.

How Can a Connected Green Network Be Implemented?

In the first stages of planning, it is crucial to understand how to manage and develop the natural environment to achieve user satisfaction. Green spaces need to be designed with specific characteristics to generate recreational value for their users. According to Attention Restoration Theory (ART), four components, including (1) being away, (2) extent, (3) fascination, and (4) compatibility, should be considered when developing a green area. These factors act as policy guidance for spatial regulation and design. Decision-makers should identify where and how green connective infrastructure can be most feasibly implemented after understanding how Teivaalanharju is used as a recreational area.

Ensuring Recreational Engagement

Once these areas are identified, the next step is to design designated trails within Teivaalanharju to support both biodiversity and visitor connectivity. Activities and activity-related infrastructure, such as bird-watching towers or unique plant observation areas, should be attached along the esker to enhance its attractiveness. To ensure active engagement among recreational users, we recommend labeling places and established spots, such as nature reserves, bird-watching towers, and MTB trails, highlighting their significance and intended use. Coherent green corridors can thereby enhance user engagement and help make Teivo-Mäkkylä a recognizable gateway to the Teivaalanharju area.



Image created by CoPlanAI



Image created by CoPlanAI

Nature as an Urban Asset

The recommendation repositions Teivaalanharju as an asset for urban pull instead of a constraint. A well-planned forest network will not only enhance recreational use but also preserve the ridges' sensitive biodiversity. Moreover, it functions as a key urban amenity in the area, supporting family-friendly living and increasing the area's attractiveness for residential relocation

Summary

With these policy implementations, Teivo-Mäkkylä and Teivaalanharju can position themselves as a residential area with a clear “nature from the doorstep” identity, as identified as one of the guiding themes in the quality book. The delicate nature of Teivaalanharju can be feasibly conserved with the active engagement of the area's residents and community, and with a connected green network, the recreational value of Teivaalanharju can be extended and maximized while protecting the habitat. These policy recommendations should be implemented with well-paired research of the area and its users to ensure comprehensive positive impacts.



01 Observational and Active Community Conservation

By combining observational and active participatory conservation approaches in the planned Teivaalanharju nature trail, such as the iNaturalist platform and community-based initiatives, Teivo-Mäkkylä can foster cost-effective, community-led conservation efforts. These methods combined can help in e.g., invasive species management



02 Natura 2000 Framework

Designating Teivaalanharju under the Natura 2000 framework would provide a basis for long-term conservation of the area. The Natura 2000 framework supports nature conservation while allowing sustainable human activities, making it usable in peri-urban contexts like Teivaalanharju. This, together with community conservation efforts, would support sustainable development in the area.



03 Connected Green Network

Integrating Teivaalanharju into Ylöjärvi's wider forest network by creating connected green corridors can enhance recreational value and attractiveness. Drawing on examples such as Helsinki Central Park, this approach emphasizes connecting fragmented green areas to strengthen the area's role as an urban amenity and green pathways as a method of sustainable transportation.

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