



GIS Skills Up!



**PAVE training at the Metsähallitus
Kajaani office**

PARKS & WILDLIFE

FINLAND

PAVE Makes a Difference

Parks & Wildlife Finland (PWF) carried out an extensive upskilling programme from August 2017 to February 2018. The programme was aimed at PWF staff, more specifically field staff and planning officers, although anyone requiring up-dated GIS skills in their work were invited to take part in the training. PAVE is an ArcGis based system used in e.g. path maintenance and implementation planning. It has been introduced in more detail to ASCENT partners in autumn 2017. PAVE replaces an old MapInfo based system that was found out of date and more complicated to use than ArcGis. PAVE also has more practical features.

The upskilling programme was carried out in modules, targeting specific needs of different user groups. Most commonly, PAVE users need nothing more than access to the system and basic skills for finding information. Most field staff perform updating tasks in the system and their training was a step more demanding. The most demanding modules included tailored training in implementation planning, reporting and working on geometry, amongst others.

The programme was put into practice in stages: the main instructor first trained closer to twenty regional

experts. The training was then taken nationwide to all users. The experts were also given general training in ArcGis. The aim is that in the future, these experts will have all knowledge on PAVE and they will be the main point of contact for further training and user help. In all, some 3 500 hours of training was carried out to more than 200 attendees. More training has taken place after the main programme and currently, there are 415 PAVE users in PWF. The duration of the training per person varied from a few hours to two days, depending on which module was in question.

The ultimate aim of the upskilling programme was to make the transition from the old system to PAVE as smooth as possible and to make the most of new features through a knowledgeable staff. Training was therefore very practical: about half of the programme consisted on trainees working on their own existing projects and tasks in the GIS environment. It is worth noting that a test database was used during training, not the final production version of PAVE.

Outcome

The main target of the upskilling programme was to enable the launch of a new GIS system to hundreds of PWF staff members. Engaging up to twenty instructors and hundreds of trainees was a big effort. The goal of the training was achieved in respect of how comprehensively PWF staff was covered. First implementation plans completed through PAVE are starting to emerge and users are gaining more confidence in using the system. As an outcome of the upskilling programme, a very detailed manual was produced. It contains the basic functions of PAVE shown step by step with descriptions and screenshots of every single click needed to complete a task. The manual helps users to solve problems independently and if bigger hurdles occur, the expert network is there to help. The manual will be updated if and when needed. In the future, PAVE will allow better interaction between

other IT systems in place within PWF. It will reduce the need for manual work and therefore make working faster and more accurate.

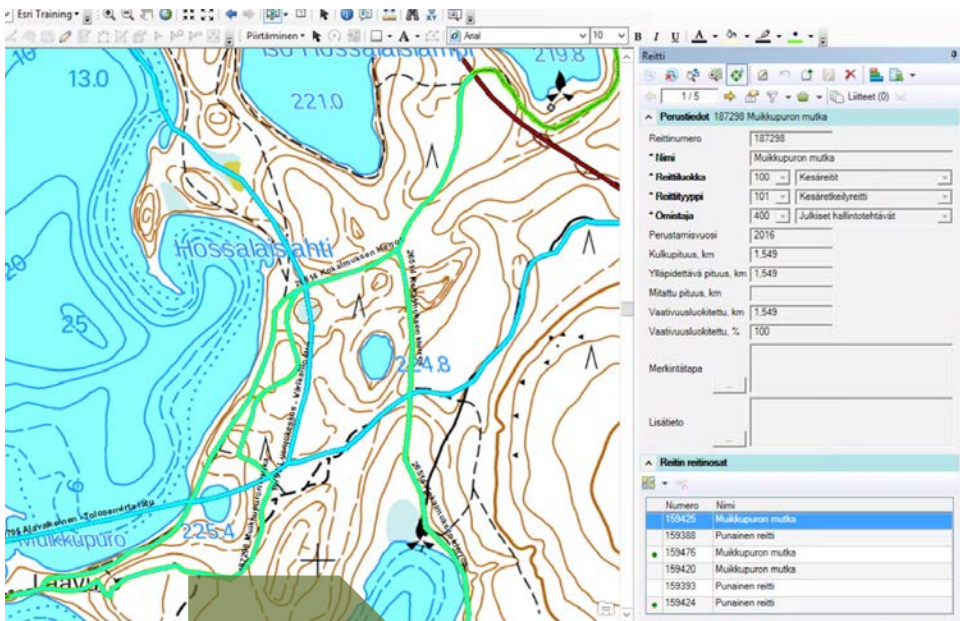
Most attendees were happy with the training, although no formal questionnaires were distributed. No negative feedback was given to instructors spontaneously during or after the upskilling programme. The trained experts were also satisfied with their training; they gave credit for good materials, efficient training packages and thoroughness. No bigger changes in the structure or the content of the programme were suggested although some development ideas have been raised. It may have been beneficial to go through the most difficult modules in smaller groups and to produce video clips - it isn't too late for that. A refresher course may also support users in their ability to use PAVE efficiently.



Key Findings & Learning Points

It is evident that commitment on all organizational levels is of utmost importance in order to carry out and to put into practice such a largescale change in the operational environment of hundreds of users. Implementing an upskilling programme alone may not enable the organization to achieve desired benefits in full if staff is not supported and encouraged to use a new system. Commitment, or the lack of it, was not an issue in the launch of PAVE but this aspect was noted.

Some technical hick-ups occurred during training, which was to be expected. The upskilling programme served as a testing platform for its part and helped to rectify problems at an early stage. Currently, implementation planning skills are required from more people than at the time of the programme. This has resulted in some queries and the need for further training.



PAVE is used in path maintenance and implementation planning