

Reduction of Forestry Derived Nutrient Inputs to Baltic Sea by the Continuous Cover Forestry

Metsän jatkuvan kasvatuksen yhdistys Silva ry

Grant Agreement dated May 28th, 2021

15.11.2023

1. Executive summary of the project

The initial purpose of the project was to reduce land-based nutrient inputs by supporting Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) service providers to communicate the benefits of CCF practice; especially the leakage reductions, impact on the surrounding nature and the economic profitability. The CCF method has a huge impact on decreasing the nutrient loads by replacing the existing clear-cuttings of the forest and the following operations, soil preparation and the ditching in peatlands, that typically are the main sources of excessive nutrient load for the forest and water systems. For pursuing that goal, a research project was set up, resulting in a forest data based, easy-to-use solution for providing the forest owners more information for comparing forest management methods and for easily seeing the benefits of CCF in their own forests.

The conclusion of the research is that from the water protection point of view, it would be worthwhile to switch from even-aged forestry to continuous cover forestry on both mineral lands and on drained peatlands. According to our calculations, continuous cover forestry is better for water protection than even-age forestry.

Metsälaskuri solution was created in the project and it uses public forest resource data and combines that with the research information and support from professor Timo Pukkala from University of Eastern Finland and leading scientist Mika Nieminen from Natural Resources Institute. This solution is now publicly available on Silva ry web platform at jatkuvakasvatus.fi/metsalaskuri

Communication was also a key focus area. While the interest for more nature-conscious forestry methods kept on increasing, there was still a need to compete the existing, less nature-conscious forestry service providers communication, and therefore we decided to focus even more on finding alternative communication methods for reaching the more conscious forest owners. We did this by promoting it even more on various medias, events and activities and created campaigns for reaching new forest owner audiences.

The conclusions of the project reflect the existing availability of powerful and impactful methods for reducing leakages and land-based nutrient inputs to our nature while maintaining forestry as an important business sector for our country. The study results, the communication activities, and the actual value of Metsälaskuri solution, all highlight a huge potential for reducing nutrient load from our forests. Creating the change in forest management requires continued effort and we are committed to continuing our work for promoting CCF and to further developing Metsälaskuri solution for making an even greater impact on our nature.