

DOS AND DON'TS FOR VISITORS

- It is forbidden to stay in the Sinijärve Conservation Zone from 15 March to 17 July, and to hunt waterfowl and game in the Sinijärve Conservation Zone from 15 March to 31 September.
- You can move about on private land from sunrise to sunset unless you do damage to the private property. In case the private land is fenced or marked, you will need the landowner's permission.
- Drive your motor vehicle only on the provided roads and park it only in the car park. Cycle only on the roads and trails.
- Put up your tent and make a fire only in the prepared and marked places. At the time of wildfire hazard, it is forbidden to make an open fire, even on special grounds.
- You can use only non-power driven watercraft on the bodies of water.
- Keep your dog on the leash while moving about in the nature.
- You can pick berries, mushrooms and other forest goods in the protected area.
- Try to act without leaving traces in the nature.

When you see damage done to the nature or visiting objects, inform the Environmental Inspectorate by phone 1313.



ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

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ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD

ARRANGEMENT OF VISITS

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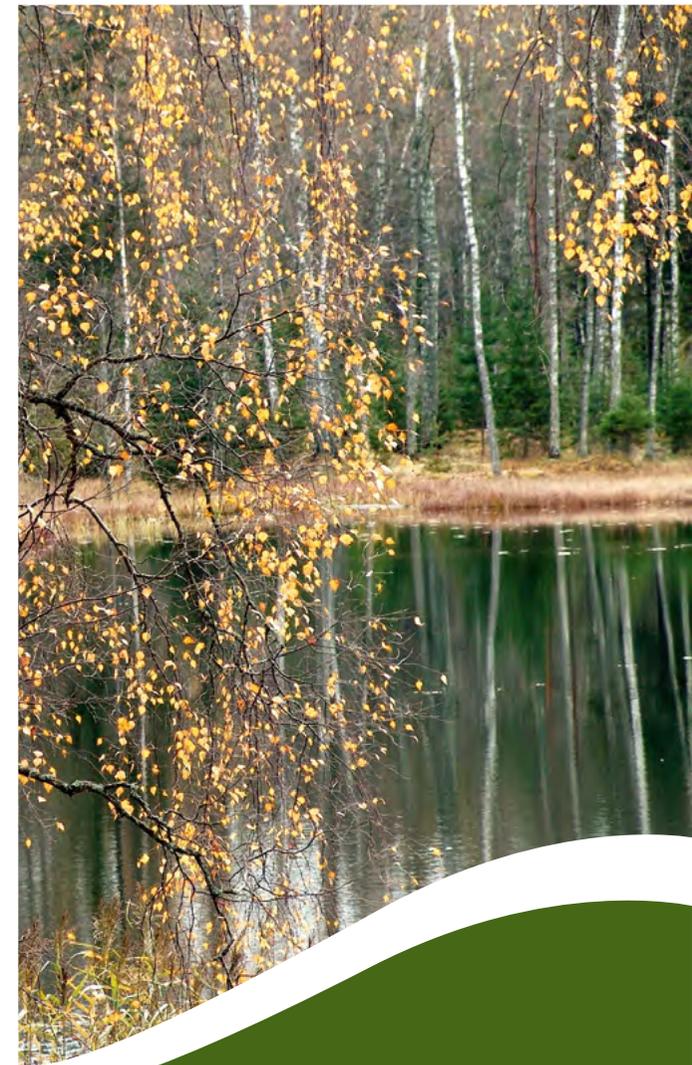
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ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT
CENTRE

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NEERUTI Landscape Protection Area

Photo: West esker in Neeruti, R. Kotter



NEERUTI LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AREA

The Neeruti Landscape Protection Area, located in Kadrina Rural Municipality, Lääne-Viru County, was, with its area of 1,272 hectares, founded in 1957 in order to protect the relief, lakes, forests and bogs in the northern part of the Pandivere Upland. The protected area belongs to the Natura 2000 network of European nature protection areas.

The Neeruti eskers are most imposing in Estonia. The present landscape was formed at the end of the glacial period about 12,500 years ago when the ice melted and the rocks were deposited by the melting waters into the cracks in the glaciers. So eskers – long and narrow ridges in the direction from the south-east to the north-west – were formed. The maximum height of the Neeruti eskers is 126.2 metres and the relative height is up to 35 metres above the sea level; the inclination of the slopes is, in places, 45 degrees and the crests are only two metres wide. There are also irregular bumps and bulges. Between the eskers, mostly in the east, you can also find basins which were formed when banks of ice melted between the hills.

The name 'Neeruti' originates from the name of the Nieroths, the local landowners in the 16th–17th centuries. According to folk tales, however, the local toponyms are related to the Estonian

epic giant hero Kalevipoeg. The lore tells us that the Neeruti hills were formed when Kalevipoeg ploughed his field: the long eskers resemble furrows and the basins are like prints of horseshoes. The saddle set down on the earth became the hill of Sadulamäe (*Saddle Hill*). Where his horse wallowed to avoid horseflies, the long valley of Pikasoo auk (*Long Fen Hole*) was formed. When Kalevipoeg, tired of ploughing, took a nap, his horse was attacked by wolves. The horse snorted and pawed, so forming the valley of Nuuskauk (*Snort Hole*) and the hill of Nuuskaugumägi (*Snort Hole Hill*), but the wolves, unfortunately, defeated him. The horse's kidneys ('neerud' in Estonian) fell into the earth, made up two lakes – Eesjärv (*Front Lake*) and Tagajärv (*Back Lake*) – and gave the name Neeruti to the place.

Fr. R. Kreutzwald, who wrote down the stories of Kalevipoeg into the epic, was born near Neeruti and hence the Neeruti Hills are also called the Kreutzwald Hills.

LAKES

Some basins contain lakes: overgrowing and muddy Eesjärv, clear-watered Tagajärv, Lake Orajärv in the shelter of the woods, Lake Sinijärv with its quaggy shores, and tiny Hobujärv and Tütarjärv in the southern part of the protected area. Some hundreds of years ago Lakes Eesjärv and Tagajärv formed one body of water, but were separated when the water level fell. In the early 20th century, the landlord of Neeruti ordered a canal to be dug between the lakes for boating. Probably, there used to be lakes in the place of the present bogs.

GROVE WOODS

Most of the protected area is woody with some solitary farmsteads and meadows scattered between the hills. Thanks to the varied surface forms, there are old forests in Neeruti, including the ones which correspond to the habitat types defined in the nature directive,



Photo: View of Lake Eesjärv in spring, A. Mägi



Photo: Lady's-slipper orchid, T. Trola

which have plenty of different species. The eskers with fertile soil are predominantly covered with grove woods, eutrophic boreo-nemoral forests, where the liverleaf (*Hepatica*) as well as the shrubs of the common hazel, honeysuckle and Alpine currant grow. The most blooming time is the early spring before the trees burst into leaf and the forest floor becomes too dim.

PROTECTED SPECIES

The protected area with its varied nature offers habitats for numerous protected species. Such protected birds as the common buzzard live here. The rarest lichens are the old man's beard and the tree lungwort. In the marshes and woods, species of wild orchids, such as the marsh helleborine the Lady's-slipper orchid, grow. Some rare species of beetles – the predacious diving beetle and the water beetle – live in the lakes. It is possible to meet the great crested newt and see the white water-lily on Lake Eesjärv.

FOR VISITORS

Several trails and paths suitable for walking and skiing run on the Neeruti eskers. The protected area has four camping and rest areas. Holiday-makers can swim and bathe in the east of Lake Tagajärv.