

On Common Waters – Knowledge provides operational readiness for aquatic management and restoration



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Cooperation partners: Pyhäjärvi Institute, Lake Vesijärvi Foundation, Union of Finnish Water Protection Associations and its regional member associations in the regions of Kokemäenjoki, Vantaanjoki and Helsinki, Länsi-Uusimaa, Savo-Karjala and Saimaa.

The ecological status of the surface waters in Finland is mostly classified as good or in some cases even excellent. During past years, the nutrient load to lakes and rivers has decreased due to positive development in the treatment of industrial and municipal waste waters. In spite of the long-term and versatile efforts in water protection, improvement is still needed in some regions, and especially in reducing the diffuse load of nutrients and combating eutrophication. Enhancing the current situation calls for cooperation among all parties involved in aquatic ecosystem management. A wide range of actors is involved in aquatic management, from land owners and laymen to authorities, specialists and scientists. The administration of aquatic management can be dispersed, different institutions having different objectives and perspectives. The scientific community in aquatic research can be, in the worst case, narrowly specialized and isolated so that research results do not reach those actors who would benefit from new knowledge. Overlapping, short-term projects, and fragmented funding also hamper aquatic research and management.



A large amount of information on aquatic management, restoration and ecology in Finland exists in the Internet in scattered locations. There are also open access portals and databases where e.g. monitoring data and research results can be obtained. However, existing information is not often easily found, interpreted or it is not in a usable format for laymen. Enhancing the communication within the network on aquatic management requires gathering this unpublished or unknown information to increase its visibility and make it more comprehensible and familiar to citizens. Also, training the people interested in aquatic management and restoration to find information and motivating them to use their knowledge in practice is needed. Training can be done in short-term workshops where experts encounter citizens face-to-face and information is processed in a collaborative manner. In carrying out the project, the partner organizations utilize their previous experience and positive results in integrating residents of catchment areas to restoration projects.

Social networking and collaborative knowledge publishing platforms provide new tools for integrating citizens to aquatic management and help to increase interaction and communication among different actors. By combining the efforts as well as practical and theoretical knowledge of versatile functional groups of the community it is possible to gain additional resources to important aquatic restoration and management work, which otherwise is threatened by diminished funding.

