Estonian Forest Aid

Where we came from and where are we headed?



EESTI METSA ABIKS



Recent history of Estonian conservation movement

Estonian Forest Aid's birth and development

Where to now?

Estonian Parliament 18.12.2018 Recent history of Estonian conservation movement

- In 1966, the Estonian Society for Nature Conservation was created
- In 1987, protests sparked against the phosphorite mine plans
- The 'phosphorite war' became an integral part of Estonian independence movement



Recent history of Estonian conservation movement

- In 1988, the anti-phosphorite protests consolidated into Estonian Green Movement
- In the 90s and during the turn of the century, numerous organisations stood for the protection of Estonian forests



Recent history of Estonian conservation movement

- In 2008, the movement "Save Estonia's Forests" was active for a short while
- In 2011, movement "For Estonia's Forest"
 campaigned against the new forest development plan



Estonian Forest Aid's (EFA) prequel

- In 2015, preparations for a new Forest Act amendment were started. Its main point of controversy was the plan to lower the cutting age of spruce
- In 2016, environmental NGOs started a public protest and social media campaign against the amendment

Jääme metsarahvaks i raiume Eesti lagedak

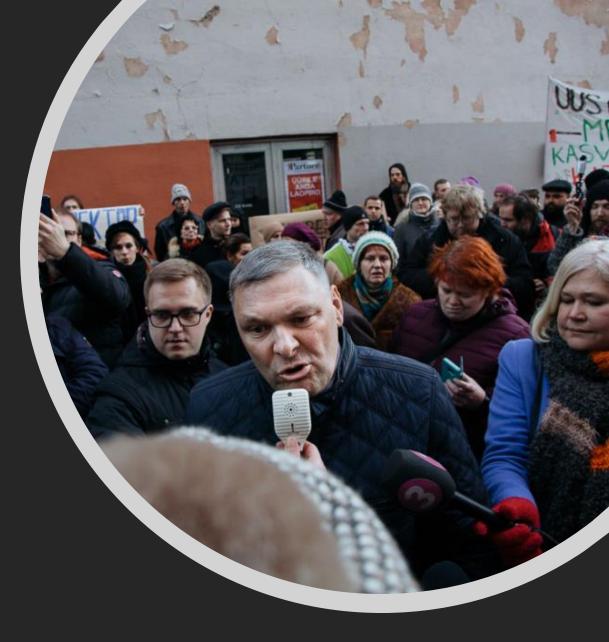
Estonian Forest Aid's (EFA) prequel

• At the end of same year, a few hundred people gathered in front of the Ministry of Environment to protest the lowering of the cutting age of spruce. EFA is formed.

Jääme metsarahvaks i raiume Eesti lagedak

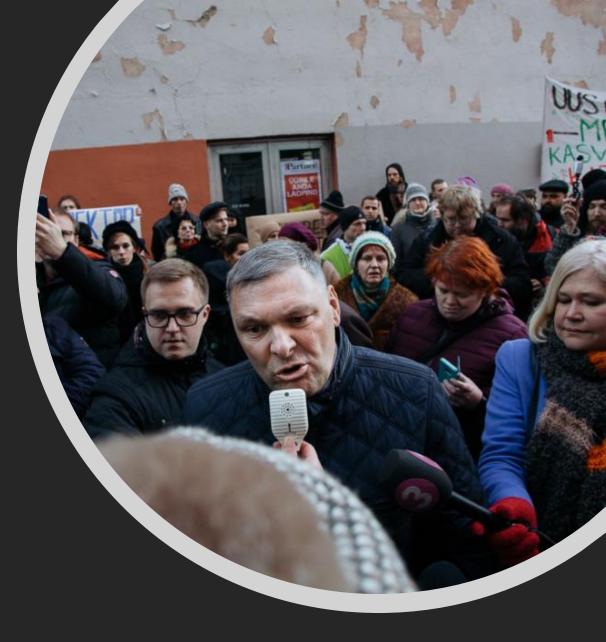
December 16th 2016: EFA's first gathering

- Within two weeks, over 7000 signatures were collected against industrial forestry policy
- In front of the Ministry of Environment, the citizen's initiative Estonian Forest Aid, a.k.a EFA (in Estonian, also doubles as the Mother Movement) was formed



December 16th 2016: EFA's first gathering

At the same time with the protest, due to public pressure, new negotiations were held within the Ministry over the Forest Act amendment.



From the Ministry of Environment building, the procession moves to the Parliament's front door A few days later, EFA's forum is created on social media. People start coming together to protect the forests March 23rd 2017: At the gate of Nursipalu

 Creation of the Keretü nature preserve, close to a military polygon in Southern Estonia, has been years in waiting -> KAIT

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 EFA starts supporting the local community

March 23rd 2017: At the gate of Nursipalu

On March 23rd, EFA's activists welcome the arriving Committee of National Defence at the gate of Nursipalu polygon to express their disapproval of the development harmful to the local forest biota. L) KAITS

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May 1st 2017: EFA hikes to Vorbuse

Although the main dispute happens on the following year, EFA has already informed the state's representatives, municipalities and the public of the dangers of the Est-For pulp mill

In Vorbuse

- This was the first likely place brought out in public sphere as a possible location of the giant pulp mill
- The hike was also covered by Kanal 2 and TV3 news



May 13th 2017: **EFA protest in Tartu**



Before the protest

The developers of the mill received an address specifying the dangers the mill presents to Estonian nature and people.





On the Saturday morning, over 150 people gathered in the town hall square to demonstrate against pulp mill.



Politicians and intellectuals perform with speeches

Among the performers, there were the Mayor of Tartu, Urmas Klaas, and various poets, writers and scientists.



Summer 2017

- Cleaning up Stroomi forest
- Protecting the parks of Tallinn



Saving the forests at the lake Harku

In June 2017, EFA was contacted by citizens of Harku that had accidentally found out about the plans to log the forests next to the lake.

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Saving the forests at the lake Harku

June 29th, EFA sends the Environmental Board an address contesting the logging permits for forests on the shore of lake Harku.

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Saving the forests at the lake Harku

EFA points out that according to the general planning, the forests on the western shore of lake Harku have to be kept intact.

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Saving the forests at the lake Harku

- The course of action:
- The local municipality joins the address
- There is a meeting with the Environmental Board
- The Board recalls the logging permits
- Forests of Harku are standing to this day





Inspecting the logging in Velise

A local resident of Velise had unsuccessfully been trying to initiate an investigation of misconduct in the forest cutting. After the address of EFA, some of the infringements were identified and a misdeed procedure was opened regarding the perpetrator.



Protecting the nature of Velise

The Velise river, on whose shore excessive logging had taken place, is situated next to a Natura 2000 preserve and hosts several protected species.

Protecting the nature of Velise

EFA proposes the Environmental Board to enhance the protection conditions of the Velise river Special Area for Conservation, but as of yet, it has not moved further from the level of thought. Fall 2017: EFA goes to court against Est-For

At the Administrative Court of Tallinn, Estonian Forest Aid pursues the annulment of the nationally designated special plan for building the pulp mill.



Fall 2017.: EFA goes to court against Est-For

The Administrative Court rejects EFA-s complaint. The Circuit Court and the Supreme Court do likewise as EFA attempts to appeal.



October 25th 2017: EFA at the Parliament

EFA organises a conference about sustainable forestry in cooperation with University of Tartu, Estonian Fund for Nature and the Environment Committee of the Parliament.



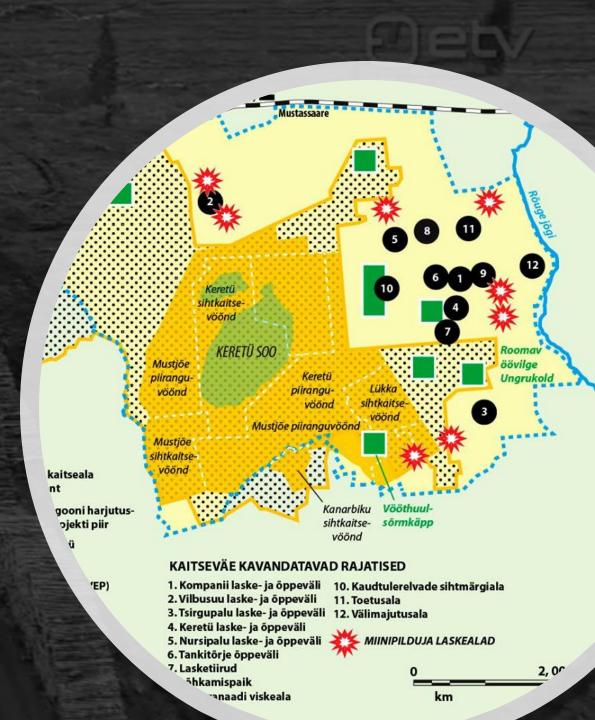
October 25th 2017: EFA at the Parliament

Presentations are given by University of Tartu researchers Anneli Palo and Asko Lõhmus, the Estonian Fund for Nature's chairman Tarmo Tüür, and nature tourism entrepeneur Marika Mann among others



November 6th 2017: EFA goes to court over logging in Nursipalu

- Keretü suffers a hasty logging and conversion of almost 95 hectares of oldgrowth forest
- EFA sues the Environmental Board over issuing the conversion permit, first at the Administrative court, later at the Circuit Court, which accepts the appeal
- Due to legal nuances, the court process reaches a dead end after a year of waiting



December 15th 2017: **Mind-expanding demo**

- EFA organises a gathering in front of the Ministry of Environment where the Ministry receives a People's Hope award
- Musicians Tõnis Mägi and Jaak Johanson perform in support of the forest





The procession moves to the door of the Parliament



- Songs are performed by Jaak Tuksam, Indrek Tammoja, Triinu Taul and others
- A similar event happens at the same time in Pärnu, where the minds are also being expanded with singing and dancing

Marek Strandberg, Mihkel Kangur, Kristjan Piirimäe and others give speeches at the Parliament house

The year 2018 gets a strong start

EFA becomes a member of the Estonian FSC-s social chamber
FSC certificate is an international standard, which is extremely important for participating in today's wood markets



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The year 2018 gets a strong start

In collaboration with the FSC, EFA has issued adjustments to the new local forestry standard and made two audits of the state forest manager, identifying numerous violations of the standard.



March 2018: EFA stops loggings at the Soomaa National Park

- Our contact at Soomaa helps to reveal a grand forest fraud at the very heart of the national park
- As it is a complicated scheme, EFA compiles a thorough analysis to the Environmental Board for confirming its illegality

March 2018: EFA stops loggings at the Soomaa National Park

- Although some of the accusations are processed as misdeeds, most of them remain uninvestigated due to alleged unprovability
- A doubt arises that the discovered scheme may be widespread for logging in protected areas

Forestry Development Plan 2030 and EFA's inclusion

 Already a year before the start of the FDP2030 process, EFA starts mapping the forestry problems on its own

 In March 2018, Estonian Forest Aid is included in the process, but has to strain itself from the start to ensure equal representation



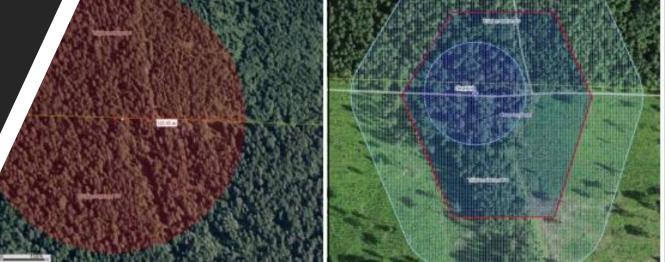
Forestry Development Plan 2030 and EFA's inclusion

- The classifying and swift destroying of the workshops' recordings, unbalanced discussions and vagueness of general working rules creates disappointment in the process
- EFA manages to push through most of the mapped problems but it remains unclear how the collected material will be used later on

EFA informs of logging at sacred sites

On March 20th, EFA publishes an overview of dozens of logged or despoiled sacred sites created by natural sacred sites expert Ahto Kaasik.





Together with the House of Groves and the House of Taara and Native Religions, EFA meets the Minister of Culture and hands him an address requesting speedy action on saving the sacred sites

> • EFA continues to cooperate with the House of Groves, House of Taara and Native **Religions and the Estonian** FSC to protect the sacred sites and to share information about these places

April 2018: **Forests of Narva-Jõesuu**

- Locals contact EFA about widespread logging
- EFA addresses the state and the municipalities in support of the locals
- The SFMC has said it will leave the forests of Narva-Jõesuu alone for a few years
- There is an open process for constituting a landscape preserve

April 23-27 2018: International forest defense meeting

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Representatives of 29 organizations from 24 countries took part in the Forest Movement Europe(FME) and Environmental Paper Network meeting in Noa-Rootsi. April 23-27 2018: International forest defense meeting

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Estonian, Malaysian, American, Indonesian, Nepalian, Congolese and Russian forestry problems were discussed April 23-27 2018: International forest defense meeting

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EFA was helped in organising the event by the Estonian Fund for Nature and the nature tourism firm Estonian Nature Tours.

EFA's art contest

EFA's art contest "The value of forest" received over 200 works from school youngsters from all over Estonia.

EFA's art contest

The purpose of the contest was to inspire the youth to think about the condition of Estonian forests and express their ideas through artistic means.

EFA's art contest

The exhibition of the works has been presented at the Tallinn Zoo, Tartu House of Nature and elsewhere in Estonia.



May 2018: Saving Lohusalu forests

EFA contested the land conversion plans that the locals had opposed and which was related to building a parking lot in the forest.



May 2018: Saving Lohusalu forests

Thanks to the work of the Lohusalu Peninsula Nature Society, we reached a compromise with the municipality and managed to save a large area of the forests that were to be cut down. June 30th 2018: Forest song festival

On Hüpassaare swamp island, EFA held a runic song festival, also marking the 25th birthday of Soomaa National Park. September 5th 2018: Anti-clearcut campaign begins

- The head of the Finnish Nature League, Harri Hölttä and other leaders of the Finnish anti-clearcut campaign meet the EFA's activists at Tallinn Creative Hub
- The campaign informs people about the dangers and the scope of Estonian clear-cut logging and signatures are collected to a petition that requests significant restrictions to clear cuts and a better protection for the values of forest



2018 late autumn: EFA checks on logging activity in the national parks

- On October 27th, EFA organises an operation called "The rut of Lahemaa" at the Lahemaa National Park, monitoring the lawfulness of current logging operations
- Although less than 5% of the active forest notifications can be checked, the Environmental Inspectorate is presented with three possible violations, of which 2 have now been confirmed by the EI.

2018 late autumn: EFA checks on logging activity in the national parks

Taking after the "successful" operation, EFA plans to inspect other national parks in the coming year and to improve our cooperation with the environmental supervision offices

EFA aims to continue participating in the FDP2030 process to move the forest management towards the reduction of logging volumes and a better defense of the ecosystems.

After the pulp mill struggle, more attention can be given to the industry's growing needs for unsustainable biomass and the problems that entails.

Cooperation will be continued with both our international and local partners and the FSC.

We will develop a cooperation with the structures of environmental supervision and try to facilitate a dialogue between opposing interest groups.

We will continue spreading the information about sustainable forestry and educating the forest owners on the alternatives to clear cut economy.

We continue investigating the environment worries of people that turn to us and helping them achieve justice, if need be.

We will encourage people to form local organisations and non-profits for better participation in shaping the local environment policy.

We will consult local associations and work towards a communications network between the citizens' unions.

We will do everything in our power so that our forest and general life environment would become healthier, more wholesome, more diverse and would offer people joy and improvement instead of political quarrels.

Strength be with us all! For the aid of Estonia and the entire world!