What is PAN Parks?

PAN Parks is an innovative initiative to create a network of Europe’s best wilderness areas stretching from the Arctic to the Mediterranean. Founded by the WWF, the non-profit PAN Parks Foundation aims to raise awareness of and help protect some of the most important natural areas in Europe.

Conservation and Sustainable Tourism

By combining nature conservation and economic development through sustainable tourism development it provides a method of promoting best practice in protected area management. At the same time it cultivates wide ranging partnerships that bring park management, local communities and business together. It is this integrated approach that produces real success and truly collaborative management.

A Quality Brand

The verification process means that a PAN Park is one of the best managed protected areas in Europe. By ensuring that local tourism partners are committed to supporting the Park and operating in a sustainable manner, the PAN Parks brand provides a reassurance to visitors that their visit is contributing to the protection of nature and they will receive a high quality experience.

Independent Audit

Each park has to undergo an independent and detailed verification process before it can be accepted as a PAN Park. This covers several criteria including the quality of the environment of the Park, habitat and visitor management along with sustainable tourism development. Local tourism business partners working with the park also undergo verification before they are allowed to use the PAN Parks logo.
Building partnerships that work on the ground

The PAN Parks process is dedicated to bringing partnerships together involving park managers, local communities, local and international businesses and other key stakeholders to provide a sustainable future for Europe’s wilderness.

That make a difference

PAN Parks works closely with the park management and other partners to facilitate projects that benefit both the natural environment and local communities. These involve work to improve the conservation management, visitor management and sustainable tourism development to high quality standards. Recent examples include the creation of the first no hunting zone in a Swedish National Park in Fullufjallet and Bieszczady is the first Polish park to have a sustainable tourism development strategy developed with full community involvement.

An essential criteria for each certified PAN Park is a core zone that is free from human intervention - a true wilderness area. PAN Parks has been instrumental in supporting parks across Europe implement this policy.

That bring international promotion

An important part of our sustainable tourism development work is the promotion of PAN Parks as destinations to the specialised eco-tourism sector. Partnerships have been built with a range of operators from across Europe. All the tour operators who promote PAN Parks products are committed to supporting the conservation of the parks and make use of our local certified tourism partners to provide their services. From each customer a fee is paid back into PAN Parks to support our work in the field.

The PAN Parks team is now working with our tourism partners, and both regional and national tourism organisations to raise awareness of the best of Europe’s wilderness to the European tourism market.

That work with local businesses

An essential part of the PAN Parks principles is the development of sustainable tourism in and around the parks. A sustainable tourism development strategy is developed together with local communities.

Local businesses are encouraged to join a Local PAN Parks Group and undergo verification. They are supported in ensuring that their activities are not detrimental to the local environment and follow best practice.

Local PAN Parks businesses provide a wide range of services to enhance visitors experiences: from cosy accommodation with excellent traditional cooking, hiking guides, husky tours to horse trekking in the mountains.

Small scale tourism development is a key to supporting rural development in and around protected areas.

For more information contact:

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PAN Parks Accommodation

The PAN Parks Foundation collaborates with Dutch tourism company Molecaten - one of the founding partners, to set up high quality PAN Parks Accommodation near some of the certified parks.

These bring the capability to deal with larger groups of visitors and increase the capacity of local business partners. They bring a much needed boost to local economies.