



# LAHTI ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT



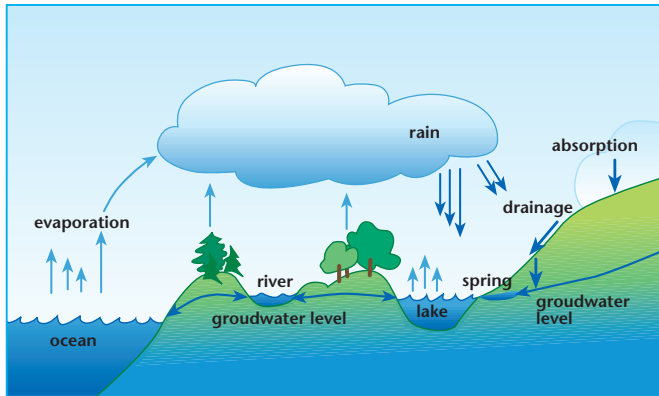
# Introduction

*The City of Lahti is located in southern Finland and has about 100 000 inhabitants. The environmental report of the city of Lahti is concerned with the development of the state of our environment and activities to improve it. It is the first joint report of the offices and business organizations of the city of Lahti. The report is reproduced every four years. The larger and up-to date web-version of the report is to be found in: [www.lahti.fi/vyk/ymparistoraportti](http://www.lahti.fi/vyk/ymparistoraportti).*



# Groundwater and soil

The protection of groundwater is emphasized in Lahti because the city centre is situated on a groundwater formation area. The quality of groundwater is good but the negative influence of human activities on it has lately increased. Threats to groundwater are, for example, air pollution, consumption of chemicals and environmental hazards. It is important that people pay attention to groundwater protection in their everyday lives.



# Water systems

People in Lahti and the surrounding area have wide experience in water systems' restoration and rehabilitation. One of the biggest problems in the area is the eutrophication of lakes and rivers. Therefore, the main target in restoration and rehabilitation is to prevent algae blooms, which are caused by eutrophication and to improve recreational use and fishing opportunities. Voluntary workers such as fishermen play a significant role in these actions.



# Air pollution



Air pollution can cause health hazards particularly to children, elderly people and asthmatics. Pollution also effects on vegetation. Air pollution emissions are caused, for example, by traffic, energy production and industry. "A northern speciality" in air pollution are problems with dust. Sand is used on roads during winter, when driving conditions are bad. The problem with dust is worst in the spring before the sand has been collected. A good example of how we can improve the quality of our inhaled air is to decrease the use of private cars. This way we can also save fossil fuels.

# Noise



Every third inhabitant in Lahti lives in an area where the noise level is too high, in comparison with the directives set by the government. Approximately 5000 pupils study in schools where the schoolyard is too noisy. Various noise reduction projects have already been carried out in Lahti, for example, to minimize noise pollution on busy streets. One of the goals in this area is to increase the level and the amount of noise reduction practises and to conserve so called silent places.

# The consumption of natural resources



Every year, the city of Lahti buys a large amount of goods and services that altogether cost about 70 million euros. In these actions it can directly take into account environmental objectives. The city of Lahti tries to save energy, for example, by implementing the energy saving agreement. One inhabitant of the Päijät-Häme region produces approximately 200 kilograms of waste per year. Almost a half of this ended up being recycled in 2001.

# The nature of Lahti

Lahti is situated in the border district of two national landscape areas. These landscape areas are the lake area and the coastal area of Finland. In the spite of its small surface area Lahti has a great deal of nature habitats. There are 8 nature protection areas, which are protected by the nature conservation act. These areas sum up to almost 270 hectares. Residents of the city can use several nature trails and, for example, the bird watching tower of Luhdanjoki.



# The constructed environment

Constructed environment consist of, for example, streets, yards, houses and parks. A strong emphasis on economic values in planning and decision-making, rapid changes in business and increasing traffic are threats to the constructed environment. These threats focus particularly on pleasant surroundings and on cultural and architectural values. There are about 260 valuable subjects in Lahti, which are of high architectural value as well symbolize pleasant surroundings, manners and traditions. Parks, trees and arrangements are a part of a pleasant city. Parks are very valuable recreational areas for city residents. Older parks in Lahti date back to the beginning of the 20th century. A fine example of modern parks is the Laune family park.



# Effects on health

Healthy living contains a sufficient amount of safe food and drinking, pleasant home, clean air, a possibility to work as well as physical and mental recreation. Respiratory diseases, such as asthma have lately notably increased in Finland generally. The quality of air inside houses is threatened by mould fungus caused by damp.



# Public participation in environmental practice



People can nowadays take part in improving their living conditions in many different ways. There are clubs and organizations that take a stand on environmental issues as well as public events and inquiries that can serve as a way of influence on the city environmental policy. Shared environment requires open and cooperative planning as well as cooperative decision-making.

## Environmental education



The importance of environmental issues in education and business has year by year gained more attention. Nowadays, environmental issues are seen as an important part of education. In business, companies have realized the significance of positive environmental image and the economic savings that have resulted from preliminary environmental protection.

There are about 350 students of environmental sciences in Lahti and about 2000 posts for environmental specialists.

## The economic value of environmental issues



The total costs of environmental protection are a sum of a group of small elements, which cannot be separated from other production costs. Environmental profits and costs consist of, for example, the costs of environmental protection, environmental taxes and energy savings.

For more information, please contact Lahti Health Control and Environmental Centre or see: [www.lahti.fi/vyk/ymparistoraportti](http://www.lahti.fi/vyk/ymparistoraportti)

# Environmental policy of the city of Lahti

decision of the Lahti City Council on February 2, 2002 §39

*The main environmental objectives of the City of Lahti. The administrations and companies of the city will set more specified targets to attain the main environmental objectives:*

- Protecting the quality of groundwater
- Rehabilitating the recreational and natural values of lakes
- Decreasing environmental load
- Promoting the sustainable use of natural resources
- Protecting biodiversity
- Rehabilitating the scenic and cultural values of the constructed environment
- Improving the quality of environment in relation to health of the city residents and comfortable surroundings
- Developing the environmental cluster
- Connecting environmental themes to education
- Increasing city residents' opportunities for participatory action

All the levels of municipal decision-making take into consideration the impacts of the decisions on environmental issues. The City of Lahti will promote the state of environment in co-operation with the residents, private companies, organizations and other stakeholders.



## For More Information



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**Lahti Environmental Report**  
ISSN 1237-6426  
ISBN 951-849-540-8 serie A5/2002



Printed matter  
441 042

Markprint Oy, Lahti, 2002