

The project area encompasses the main stream of the River Simojoki and its catchment area, which lies largely in the municipalities of Ranua and Simo in Southern Lapland.

Publicity for the project will take the form of newspaper articles, meetings with local residents, brochures and website presentations. To increase awareness of the nature and ecology of the river as well as the factors affecting its state, leaflets and other types of information will be distributed that describe the sources and effects of diffuse loading and the means to decrease it.



LIFE project supported by the European Union

## THE RIVER SIMOJOKI LIFE PROJECT

### Further information:



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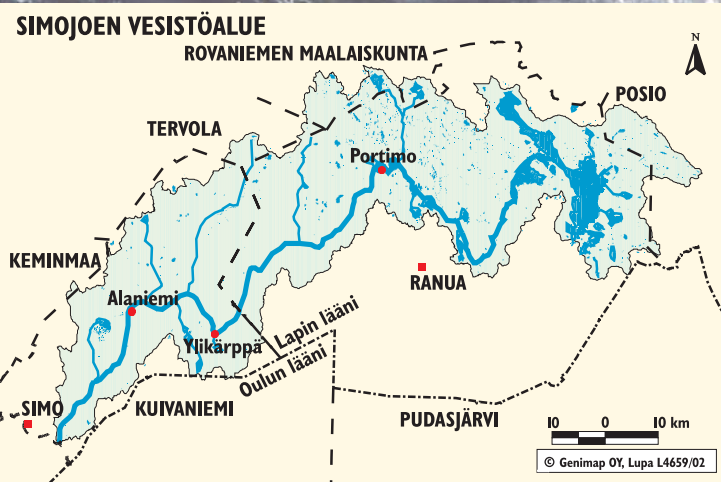
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### Restoration and Protection of the River Simojoki



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The catchment area of the River Simojoki is 3 160 km<sup>2</sup>, of which lakes account for some 5.7 %. The river rises in Lake Simojärvi and descends 176 m over its course of 193 km before emptying into the Bothnian Bay. Rapids form 32 km of the course.

The postglacial history of the catchment area includes sea phases and slow land uplift that continues to this day. Typical landscape features in the lower and middle parts of the basin are large aapa-mire complexes. In the upper part of the basin, the landscape is more variable, characterised by moraine formations covered with forest.

The River Simojoki is a typical Fennoscandian natural river with large annual and seasonal discharge amplitudes. The natural causes of this fluctuation are a lack of flow-balancing lakes downstream, the long winter and related ice-covered period, and the rapid melting of snow in spring .

Human influence on water quality and river ecology in the area has been strong. The river was cleaned for timber floating during the 1950s and 1960s, which resulted in a marked decrease in biodiversity and river channel morphology. Forestry, scattered settlement, agriculture, and peat mining have increased nutrient and suspended solid loading as well as sludge deposition in the river.

The River Simojoki is one of the few unbuilt rivers which empty into the Bothnian Bay. Migratory fish species such as salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), whitefish (*Coregonus lavaretus*) and lampern (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) are able to spawn and breed naturally in the river area.

The main stream of the River Simojoki is part of the Natura 2000 network, representing the Fennoscandian natural river habitat type. The River Simojoki has been protected from the building of power plants in the Rapids Protection Act.

Restoration and Protection of the River Simojoki began in May 2002 and will be completed in 2007. The overall budget is 1.14 million euros. The project is being financed from the LIFE-Nature fund and national funding. The contribution of LIFE-Nature is 0.5 million euros. The project is being implemented by the Lapland Regional Environment Centre together with the municipalities of Ranua and Simo, the Lapland Employment and Economic Development Centre, Vapo Oy, Simon Turvejaloste Oy, Metsähallitus, and the Forestry Centre of Lapland.

The aim of the project is to restore and safeguard a favourable conservation status for the River Simojoki. Restoration and a decrease in loading will make it possible to attain and maintain natural conditions. Plans also call for enhancing opportunities to use the river area for tourism, recreation and education. These efforts will include the following measures:

- Mapping of the ecological state of the River Simojoki
- Ecological restoration of the river
- Implementing of agricultural buffer zones for pilot sites
- Management and re-use plans for three peat mining areas no longer in production
- Survey of water protection measures in forestry
- Survey of wastewater management in scattered settlement in the catchment area of the River Simojoki
- Public awareness and dissemination of results

