

# Snow Magic



## Snow Magic Workshop Mývatn, Iceland 18 – 20 February 2005



European Union

[www.snowmagic.nu](http://www.snowmagic.nu)



## 1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP

Snow Magic is a Northern Periphery project that aims at designing and promoting attractive products, services and events based on the sustainable use of snow and ice, local traditions, tales and legends and new technologies. The partners are:



- The municipality of Sorsele, Swedish Lapland
- The municipality of Rovaniemi, Finnish Lapland
- The Development Agency for the Region Thingeyjarsýsla (DART), Iceland)

One of the activities of the Snow Magic project is the organisation of three transnational workshops to gather, exchange and disseminate knowledge, experience and strategies about the following specific themes:

***Workshop (1) Snow and land– contrast of landscape and environment.***

*Venue: Lake Mývatn, Iceland*

***Workshop (2) Snow and man – human resources and local involvement.***

*Venue: Sorsele, Sweden*

***Workshop (3) Snow and technique –virtual reality and new technologies.***

*Venue: Rovaniemi region, Finland*

All workshops are meant to reflect in different ways the question:

### **How to use snow as a tool for sustainable development?**

Some topics are common for all workshops:

- the use of snow and techniques in snow creations
- story telling and involvement of children and young people
- tourism development, strategies for designing Snow Magic offers, publicity and marketing

## 2. LECTURES

### **Friday February 18<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Opening, Leopold Sjöström, Snow Magic International Co-ordinator, Sweden**



Gunnar Johannesson the project manager at DART addressed the assembly, welcomed guests and invited Leopold Sjöström from Sorsele in Sweden to open the seminar.

Leopold briefly reflected on the aim of the Snow Magic project, the theme of the seminar which will focus on “the importance of landscape and environment”. He lit a candle, which will be done at every Snow Magic workshop in the future.

**Ásta Price from Mývatn**, took over from Leopold and chaired the seminar.

## **Einar Kr. Guðfinnsson, chairman of the Icelandic Tourist Board**

Einar Kr Guðfinnsson spoke about the increase of tourism in Iceland, the knowledge and experience of people working in the field of tourism and the importance of continuing to offer a high standard of service. He emphasised the need to extend the short summer season and promote the seasons either side of the summer period, namely spring and autumn, in an effort to have people in tourist related jobs employed all year round.

Statistics show that much progress has been made within the tourist industry. The number of tourists passing through Leif Eiriksson airport in July 1998, are similar to those recorded in January 2003. Einar shared his view of a bright and positive future of tourism in Iceland, reinforcing the importance of working together and the importance of marketing. He expressed his thanks for the opportunity to address the assembly and made a special welcome to the foreign guests involved in the project.

## **Rögnvaldur Guðmundsson, Tourism Research and Consulting. “Status and future opportunities of tourism in Thingeyjarsýsla area”**

Rögnvaldur Guðmundsson, a consultant and specialist in his field of research in the tourist industry, presented some very interesting figures and information about the structure and increase of tourism in Iceland and explained some of the aims and policies of marketing within the industry itself.



## **Elín Aradóttir, Research Institute at the University of Akureyri “Preparation for Snow Magic, some thoughts on focus and methods”**

Elín Aradóttir shared some general aspects on tourism development and she also spoke about the importance of the quality and the variety, development and marketing of holiday packages.

### **Questions and reflections from the audience were as follows:**

*What are the plans for the national park?*

*What are the politicians' views about improving access and building roads to the planned national park area?*

*Are there any plans to improve the roads at Dettifoss?*

*Have any plans been discussed about the new road over Sprengisand? If so what are these plans?*

*The need to increase co-operation between all individuals and companies within the tourist industry and the need to improve quality of packages and service offered to tourists.*

*The need of more money for information and access to special tourist spots.*

*The Minister of Transport realizes the importance of improved infrastructure and has emphasized this by working on ideas for new and better roads.*

*One of the goals of the Tourism Board is to encourage individuals and companies in the tourist industry to work together instead of on their own.*

**Hanna-Mari Kyläkoski, Finland, Marketing & communication Manager of the “Christmas brand in Rovaniemi”**

Hanna-Mari Kylakoski spoke about the importance of foreign media groups and how to make them interested in visiting the area.

**Ludmilla Wieslander, Sweden, Manager of the Visitor Centre, Ammarnäs.**

Ludmilla Wieslander is manager of the visitor centre at the Vindel Mountain Nature Reserve (Vindelfjällen) in the mountain village of Ammarnäs. She enlightened us about her duties as manager there and gave us an overview of Vindelfjällen. One of the largest protected areas in Europe.

**Saturday February 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Erkki Touvinen, Finland, Senior Planning Officer of Metsähallitus**

Erkki Tuovinen explained and showed with pictures a lot of examples of how to construct and integrate facilities in the nature areas.

**Helena Ifrig, Sweden, Manager of Ammarnäsfjällens Islandshästar. ”Company presentation and reflections on the importance of landscape in my business”**

Helena Ifrig presented her tourist company offering tours with Icelandic horses as well as other facilities like sauna and hot tubes and reflected upon “the importance of landscape” for her business.



**Bernard Girya, Finland, CEO of Santatelevision**

Bernard Girya lectured on “How to combine ICT, Story telling and Snow” to create new tourist experiences. He showed us an example of a DVD his company has produced and presented different possibilities of products for the Snow Magic project.

**Johnny Jacobsson, Sweden, Project leader for the tourism business network RTN Swedish Lapland.**

Johnny Jacobsson explained with the support of the website [www.destinationlapland.se](http://www.destinationlapland.se) how to use ICT for business development, marketing and sale of tourism offers.

**3. WORKSHOPS**

On Saturday and Sunday the lecturers and other participants took part in workshops. The participants were divided into three groups and the topics were:

1. **What are the unique features of our Snow Magic partner areas?**
  - (a) **What is common?**
  - (b) **What is specific?**
2. **How can we even better utilize our unique features to benefit the Snow Magic areas?**





3. Identify story telling ideas, especially focusing on the involvement of children and young people
4. Winter product ideas

#### 4. EXCURSIONS, VISITS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Friday afternoon the participants made a **tour around Mývatn**, guided by a **geologist Ragna Sigrún Sveinsdóttir**. The first stop was at **Dimmuborgir**, after which **Porkell Lindberg Þórarinnsson** from the **North East Iceland Nature Centre** gave an interesting lecture on the biological aspects and fascinating ecosystem in the Mývatn area. “Lummukaffi” (coffee & Icelandic crumpets) was much appreciated before visiting the **new nature baths** where the **manager Stefán Gunnarsson** presented development activities and plans for the future.



The next stop was made at **the hot mud pools at Námaskarð**. On the way to the **power plant at Krafla**, where **Pétur Gíslason** spoke about the history, role and mechanics of the

Power station, a short stop was made at the **ski lift**.

At the end of the day the Ministry of Trade and Industry invited everyone to a delicious dinner at Hotel Sel. **Sigfús Ingi Sigfússon**, **assistant to the Minister of Trade and Industry** was the guest speaker and **Ásta Price** one of the participants from the **Snow Magic Mývatn Group** translated to English and she also told the very lively and funny **story of Kráká**, a troll woman from the Blue Gorge (Kráká frá Bláhvammi). **Hrafnhildur Geirsdóttir** and **Hrönn Björnsdóttir**, two members of the Snow Magic Mývatn Group, collected this story among others, from an 80 year old local inhabitant, who retold the story as he remembers it from his childhood. There are different versions of the same story, but this is believed to be the one and only original version. Hrönn knitted a shawl which was used for dramatic effect as part of the storyteller's costume.



#### Arctic Garden, Outdoor leisure and the lagoon

Saturday afternoon the foreign guests and the project leader from the Icelandic group took part in an exciting **adventure on the frozen water of Lake Mývatn**. There were go-karts to drive, competitions in golf, croquet, bowling, and last but not least the newly completed horse sleigh was planned to be used, but to the disappointment of all the horse was not yet comfortable with the apparatus which after a little more training is now in full swing and has aroused a lot of media attention.



After a stop at **“Dyngjan” the craft shop** where the locals sell their handwork and crafts, everyone was invited to visit the **“Cow Shed Café” (Vogafjós)**. There all were treated to have raw lamb, homemade mozzarella cheese, newly baked rye bread and milk. There was a chance to milk a cow and /or taste the milk straight from the cow still warm and frothing! At the end of a long day everyone headed off to the **new baths** which needless to say was thoroughly enjoyed by all, before a splendid dinner at Hotel Sel.

On Sunday at the closing of the Snow Magic Workshop and lunch at Hotel Sel, the group went to Húsavík where they visited the **Whale Museum** guided by **Ásbjörn Björgvinsson** and then to **Húsavík Folk and Maritime Museum**, guided by the knowledgeable curator **Guðni Halldórsson**. A meal was served at Gamli Baukur, hosted by the Municipality of Húsavík, before the guests resumed their return journey to Akureyri where the plane was waiting to take them to Reykjavík.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Thanks to Gunnar and Jóna at DART, the Snow Magic Mývatn Group, the Sel Hotel and all other committed Snow Magic actors for organising an interesting workshop and a pleasant stay in Lake Mývatn.

Welcome all to the next workshop in Sorsele, Swedish Lapland, in February/March 2006

