

Water and Environmental Governance in Finland

And how regional government reform might impact it?

WAT-E2080 Water & Governance, 22.1.2019

Things to learn and discuss

- What regional water and environmental governance do (and what it doesn't do)?
- How it is organized?
- How the regional governance reform might impact it?

Contents

- 1) Tasks and duties of regional water and environmental authorities in Finland
- 2) Brief history of water and environmental governance in Finland
- 3) Regional government, health and social services reform
- 4) Possible impacts on water and environmental governance
- 5) National Supervisory Authority
- 6) Careers in water and environmental governance
- 7) Summary

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How is (water and environmental) governance organized in Finland?

- National level:
 - Ministries
 - Authorities working nationally (e.g. Tax administration, National Land Survey)
- Regional level
 - E.g. rescue (22) and police (11) departments
 - Within certain regional and legislative jurisdiction (tasks and duties in legislation)
- Municipal level
 - 311 municipalities
 - General jurisdiction
- Focus on Regional level for the rest of the lecture

Tasks and duties on regional level of governance

Environmental protection:

- Environmental and water permits, notifications and registrations
- Supervision and monitoring of permits, notifications and registrations
- Environmental impact assessment authority
- Contaminated soils
- Producer responsibility

Steering and monitoring of land use:

- Promotion and steering of land use planning and the organisation of construction activities in municipalities
- Preservation of cultural environment and heritage

Nature conservation:

- Establishing nature conservation areas
- Habitats and species, decisions and permits
- Landscape protection
- Nature conservation in land use planning and environmental permitting

Water resources management

- River basin management, planning, implementation and monitoring
- Flood risk management, planning, implementation and hydrological monitoring
- Steering watershed regulation operations
- Dam safety authority
- Drainage
- Support for municipal water supply operations

Discuss briefly with person(s) near you: your impressions on what regional w&e governance does and what it doesn't

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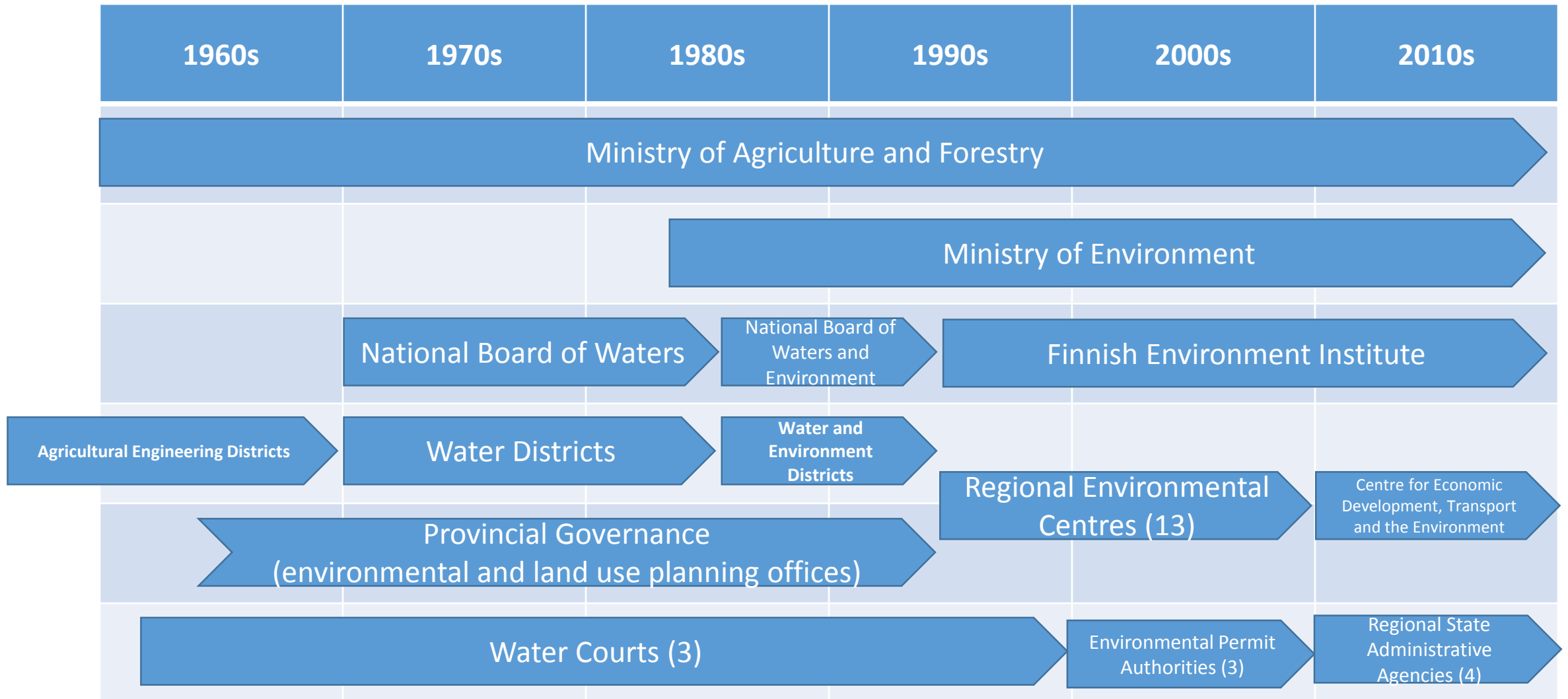
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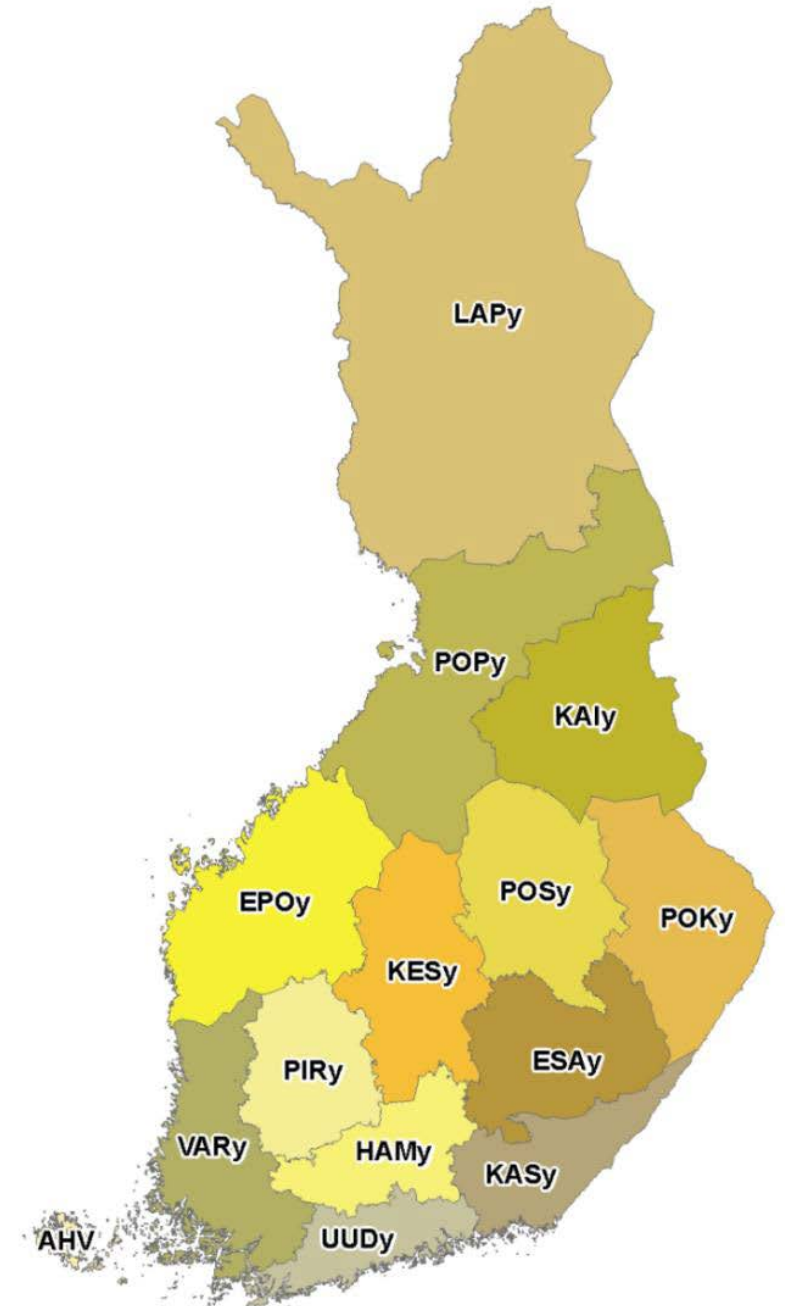
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Brief history of water and environmental authorities in Finland



Important milestones

- Water Act 1961 (renewed in 2011)
- Ministry of Environment 1983
- Finland became an EU member state 1995
 - Basis for essential w&e laws



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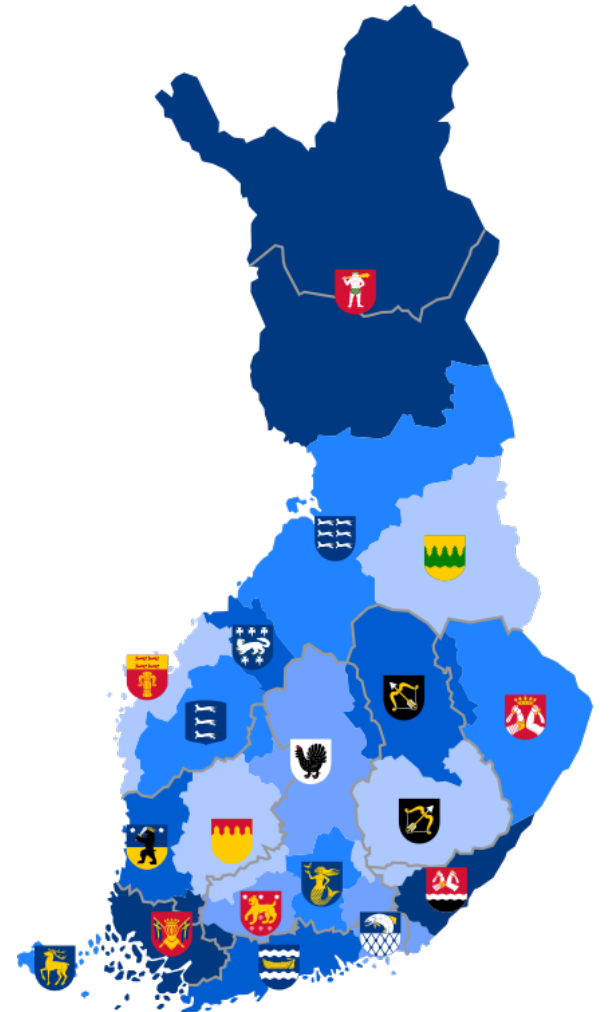
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Regional government, health and social services reform

- Reform moves a number of tasks (26) from municipal, regional and state authorities to a new regional governance (18 counties)
- Funding from state, no right for county to tax citizens
- Regional governance acts as an organizer (mainly health, social and employment services) with varying number of service producers (both private and public)
- Citizens have freedom of choice over their service producer
- Organizer-producer –model is not applied in regional authority work (e.g. in water and environment tasks and duties)
 - No systemic change in water and environmental legislation or governance

Discuss briefly with person(s) near you: what do I know/don't know about the reform

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New organisations, old tasks

National Supervisory Authority

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Nature conservation:

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Counties

Steering and monitoring of land use:

- Promotion and steering of land use planning and the organisation of construction activities in municipalities
- Preservation of cultural environment and heritage

Nature conservation:

- **Promoting nature biodiversity and landscape protection**

Water resources management

- River basin management, planning, implementation and monitoring
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Worst-case scenario?

- Other (e.g. economical, regional development) than water and environmental factors will be considered more valuable in political decision-making
- General funding (county can decide independently how to allocate its funds and resources) favors larger task areas than water and environment
- Not enough water and environment know-how (personnel) for 18 counties, no co-operation between counties

Best-case-scenario?

- Counties recognise water and environment as a significant factors for regional well-being and development
- As a result, bigger percentage of general funding and resources are allocated into these themes
- Several planning systems (e.g. regional general plan, river basin management plans, flood management plans, traffic system planning, preparedness planning) are integrated on county level producing more effective planning and execution
- Multiplex county can acquire external funding (e.g. EU) for multiplex water and environment related projects

Discuss briefly with person(s) near you: your impressions on the presented scenarios

- Decision making (political or independent authority)
- Funding
- Divided resources and know-how, co-operation between counties and state
- Synergy of a multiplex county or synergy of current w&e governance

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National Supervisory Authority

- Merges certain regional and national authorities into one, focusing on permit and enforcement actions linked to rule of law and safeguarding the fundamental rights
- Office in every county (18), no head office
- Four main lines of activity with environment being one of them

National Supervisory Authority

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National Supervisory Authority: Impacts on governance

Possibilities and/or threats:

- National best practises instead of different regional ones
 - Equality for both operators and stakeholders
 - Process efficiency and impressiveness
- National resources and know-how instead of regional
 - Workflow optimization
- Possibility for one-stop-shop –model in environmental procedures
- Co-operation with counties and shared data (e.g. in water-related issues)

Discuss briefly with person(s) near you: your impressions on threats and possibilities

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Career in water and environmental governance in Finland?

Example 1

Permitting and enforcing a harbour dredging project

Example 2

Responsible for a lake/watershed regulation operations

Example 3

Flood management or water framework directive planning and implementation

Fourth example (in Finnish only): <https://twitter.com/MaveplanO/status/1081087105038774272>

Skills needed?

- Hydrology, hydraulics (both conceptual and physical models)
- Water construction, geotechnics
- Water and environmental legislation
- Groundwater

- Holistic, systemic approach to environment and society
 - Megatrends, ecosystem services
- People skills (communication, negotiation), business skills (e.g. project and process management)
- IT, GIS and digitalization in general
- Lifelong learning

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Summary and discussion

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