

R&D-needs mapped in intensive SNS-seminar

Traditional forestry and experience economy

Adventure forests, burial sites for dogs and parrots, mountain bike tracks, destinations for hunting expeditions and playgrounds for role-players. And/or ecosystem services. And/or improved traditional forestry focused on timber production and biofuels. Yes, there was a really wide range of possibilities on the table at the seminar “Profitable forestry in the Nordic and Baltic Countries”.

Around 50 representatives from industrial enterprises, research institutes and universities in the Nordic and Baltic Countries discussed various ways of improving profitability in forestry. It was a tight one-day programme, with a total of 16 presentations providing a broad

background to the final discussion. Two main routes to increase profitability became clear: more effective traditional timber-focused forestry and the experience economy.

Traditional forestry

Several ways of increasing the profitability of traditional forestry were suggested: on the supply side, it was considered as important to further develop silvicultural methods in order to increase per hectare production and to raise the value per cubic metre, mainly through higher quality trees.

Increased harvesting productivity was also discussed as being another vital challenge for forestry practice and research. This has been a success story for decades in Nordic forestry, but to stay competitive, the pace of

Hunting rights form the main part of the forest owner's income from the experience industry. Photo: Mats Hannerz

innovation must continue to be rapid.

There are also new challenges: Forest fuels represent new opportunities of increasing importance, both for the forest owner and the community.

Technical developments are not only a question of productivity, but were regarded as being vital in reducing negative impacts on land and water – and reducing fuel consumption.

One way that was discussed to increase the value of the timber was the biorefinery concept. A biorefinery is a plant that together with traditional wood-based products such as paper, also produces energy and chemicals. This can be a boost for forestry profitability.



Experience economy

The discussions of the experience economy were very much inspired by the presentation by Bo Jellesmark Thorsen, professor in applied economics in Denmark. More than half of the income from forest land in Denmark comes from sources other than timber, he said, and the proportion is growing. Hunting rights are, of course, the most valuable aspect, but there are also



Bo Jellesmark Thorsen

other activities, such as habitation. In the future, a creative forester could arrange dog-activity-courses, horseback riding tours, guided mountain bike expeditions, tree top

cabins, pet cementaries, role playing facilities and services

The experience economy is one of the fastest growing sectors worldwide, and people are willing to pay a lot of money for their desired activity, he said. Forestry can definitely contribute to a fair share of this sector, he said.

The problem for a forest owner today is how to get paid – outdoor activities are traditionally free. This is the million-dollar question for forestry practice and research, he concluded.

Ecosystem services

The forestry of tomorrow will not only involve timber-production. Ecosystem services were discussed as being an important complementary

activity. Examples given included governmental funding for non-timber “products” such as carbon sequestering, biodiversity and recreation.

Input into research priorities

Niles Elers Koch, Director of Forest and Landscape in Denmark, and board member of the SNS, concluded the meeting. He promised to forward the action points from the discussion to the Nordic Council of Ministers, as an important guideline for their future priorities for forest research.

All presentations are available on Skogforsk's homepage www.skogforsk.se Go to English version/Courses and Conferences.

One future? A stockpile of forest fuel. Photo: Areca



The seminar was arranged by the SNS, Nordic Forest Research Cooperative Committee, together with the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Swedish forest research institute Skogforsk and the SNS-funded project OSCAR.

Shortcuts

Statoil supports research on bioenergy

The Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute is increasing its research into bioenergy. The Institute is, for example, one of three members of a newly established centre for bioenergy at Ås, outside Oslo. The other contributors are Bioforsk and the University of Life Sciences.

Part of the research is conducted in cooperation with the state-owned energy company Statoil. One of the aims of the project is to improve the quality of solid fuel from forests. The transformation of wood chips, pellets and briquets to heat, gas or liquid fuel will be studied.

– In some areas of Norway, it is most profitable to harvest pulpwood-sized trees for bioenergy purposes. There

are discussions underway about producing pellets from whole stems including bark, says Tore Filbakk at the Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute. It is, therefore, important to investigate the effect of the bark on the quality of the fuel.

Source: www.skogoglandskap.no



More carbon sequestration in Norwegian forests

The current volume of standing wood in Norway amounts to 736 million cubic metres; more than twice the volume present in 1925. Furthermore, new estimates from The Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute show that the annual increment has increased from 10.7 to 25.7 million cubic metres over the same period.

Increased growth means increased carbon sequestration, as the standing volume increases.

The growth of noble hardwoods has increased most, in relative terms, but the growth of Scots pine has started to level out.

Source: www.skogoglandskap.no

Metla reorganizes and closes three research units

Metla – the Finnish Forest Research Institute – has decided on a major reorganization to be accomplished in 2010. The current nine research units will be merged into four regional units. Three of the Institute’s research stations, Punkaharju, Kannus and Kolari, will be closed and the staff will be offered positions within the other units.

These changes are exceptional in the history of Metla, according to a press release from the Institute. The savings will amount to €6–7 million and a staff reduction of 154 persons until 2012. The ongoing research projects will not suffer as a result.

– The extent of the research will remain at the current level, and may even be increased, Hannu Raitio, director of Metla, told the Finnish News Agency.

The four new units and their centres will be: Southern Finland (with the centre in Vantaa outside Helsinki), Western Finland (Parkano), Northern Finland (Rovaniemi) and Eastern Finland (Joensuu).

Research stations to be closed:

Punkaharju, located close to the Russian border in Savolax, undertake research focused on forest genetics and testing exotic tree species and provenances of coniferous trees. The first experiments with exotic tree species started as early as in 1840, and the first research in forest genetics took its place in the 1920s. A breeding station was founded in 1965, and Punkaharju was upgraded to a research station in 1988. The number of permanent staff is 33, including eight researchers.

Kannus is located in Ostrobothnia and focuses on wood energy, forest management planning, coastal forests, afforestation of agricultural land, and the utilisation of peatland forests. The staff of 25 includes seven researchers.

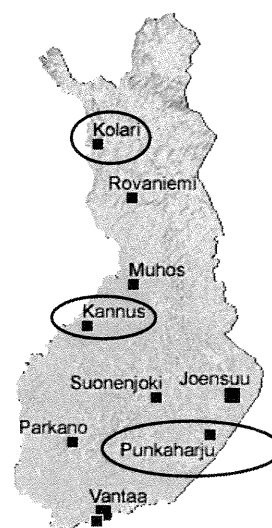
Kolari is the most northerly research station, located about 100 km north of the Arctic Circle. The research here focuses on northern timberline forests, especially the effects of climate change. There is also research on nature-based tourism. There are 16 members of staff, including three researchers.

About METLA

Metla was established in 1917 and is the main forest research organization in Finland, and one of the largest forest research institutes in Europe.

It is a government-funded organisation with about 800 employees.

It’s activities are distributed over a national network of research centres, research stations and research forests. There are currently nine research units with the general management located in Vantaa outside Helsinki.



Shortcuts

Norwegian forest research saves human lives

A method derived from biotechnology research on spruces will be used in UK for early diagnosis of breast cancer from just a blood sample. The Norwegian company Dia-Genic has developed the method.

Two former Skog og Landskap-researchers, Praaven Sharma and Anders Lønneborg, started the company. They had worked on the genetic fingerprinting of diseased spruces. The method of mapping gene activity under stress has now been further developed for human disease diagnostics.

Source: www.skogoglandskap.no

Swedish forest owners optimistic

The annual survey “Skogsbarometern” shows that Swedish forest owners are more happy about their income from forest than they were two years earlier. Most owners also believe that it is still profitable to buy forest.

Source: www.nordicforestry.org

Danish forest owners are losing money

Danish forests produce a deficit of €80 per hectare. This deficit is the result of accumulated taxes on inheritance.

Source: www.nordicforestry.org

Provoking ads

“Global warming is a bluff”. “Carbon dioxide is our future”. “The polar bears are just fine”. These provocative statements will be seen in newspapers and advertisement from SLU, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. But, they are always counteracted by an SLU statement on the need for scientific facts.

The campaign has become controversial even before its launch. Some researchers think that it means that SLU will ban all results that are not politically correct, while others love the approach.

The campaign films can be seen on Youtube or www.slu.se. Look for “Koldioxidens vänner”.

World's premier plan to take place in Finland

The first village-level forestry programme has been completed in eastern Finland.

The programme will support the development of local enterprises, based on forest resources. It presents objectives for the development of the forest resources for the next two years. In addition, it describes the current status of the forests, and identifies sources of financing for community initiatives.

The programme is the result of three years work by the Finnish Forest Research Institute (Metla) together with the Regional Forestry Centre and the Forest Management Association of North Karelia.

The project is also part of the international project "Enhancing Local Activity and Values from forest land through community-led strategic planning", ELAV.

The specific aim of the Finnish project is to develop a local forestry programme for the area of Koli and Hattusaari; this is the first of its kind in Finland. Preparation of the forestry

programme was carried out by a local working group, composed of private forest owners, other entrepreneurs and village members. Additional support for the work of the group came from public events and international exchange visits.

The total land area of the two villages covered by the programme is 11375 ha.

– This is not only the first village forest programme in Finland, but probably in the world, says Professor Tuula Nuutinen, who led the project.

She also stresses that a village is a natural unit for collaborative planning in Finland: all the other administrative units keep on changing their boundaries all the time, but villages have survived for centuries because they are based on communities, not on administrative decisions.

– We prefer to call it a forest programme, not a plan, she says. This is because we want to emphasize similarities with the National Forest Programme and the Regional Forest Programmes carried out in Finland.

The programme involves various measures to develop the rural area:

- The commercial markets for forest products and services will be supported by information about demand.
- Local working groups will implement concepts derived from the National and Regional Forest Programmes.
- Technical assistance will be given to the local group to ensure that new knowledge from the scientific community is implemented in the villages. This includes the analysis of future developments using remote sensing based forest inventory, numerical land-use maps and detailed forest scenario modelling.
- Individual forest owners will receive assistance in producing forest management plans and information about how they could better utilize their forest with respect to the products and services for which a demand has been identified at the village level.



Contact: Professor
Tuula Nuutinen
tuula.nuutinen@metla.fi



Contact News & Views

Write to the scientific editor:
Mats Hannerz,
Silvinformation AB
mats.hannerz@silvinformation.se
More info about SNS:

www.nordicforestresearch.org

We strongly encourage our readers to contribute to a lively and interesting journal. Letters to the News & Views section will be published if they are:

- short
- relevant to the Journal
- interesting for the readers.

Examples: comments on papers published in the Journal, views on ongoing research, trends in research policy, opinions about forestry practice etc.

News & Views is edited by
Mats Hannerz, Silvinformation AB
mats.hannerz@silvinformation.se
and produced by
Carl Henrik Palmér. chp@areca.se