



"The Baltic landscape project will lay the foundations for new Model Forests in northern Europe".

Gun Lidestav, coordinator

Photo: Mats Hannerz

Photo: Leif Jougda, Swedish Forest Agency

Baltic landscape in change

Every landscape has its own profile. Reindeer husbandry is an important issue in Vilhelmina Model Forest.

Sustainable landscape management in practice

The new EU-project “Baltic landscape in change” has a bottom-up approach, adopted from the international Model Forest (MF) concept. Local understanding of problems and solutions associated with sustainability issues should guide decision making on a national and pan-national level, rather than being driven from the top.

“There is currently a paradigm shift, from governing to governance of forest landscapes,” says Dr Gun Lidestav, researcher at the Swedish

University of Agricultural Sciences. “In an ideal situation, the government agencies should develop directives that are based on solid knowledge on the ground in harmony with international and political conventions and frameworks.”

The 3 million euro project aims to establish a network of Baltic landscape sites in connection with the International Model Forest Network. It focuses on advancing good governance in forest landscapes by developing the capacity of society and the landscape stakeholders. Gun Lidestav is coordinating the project, which involves partners from eight

countries in northern Europe and western Russia.

Few Model Forests in Europe

The Model Forest concept was introduced by the Canadian Government at the UN conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Today, there are 60 Model Forests in more than 20 countries across the world. Experiences clearly indicate that the concept is successful in advancing sustainable land use in different countries and under different conditions.

cont. next page →

“Europe is lagging behind in establishing Model Forests, and this was one of the incentives for the project,” says Gun Lidestav.

She stresses that the current project (January 2012 – March 2014) will be too short to complete the establishment of new Model Forests in all partner countries and at all proposed sites, but the Baltic Landscape project will lay the foundations.

The project includes the *Vilhelmina MF* in northern Sweden, which was the first Model Forest in Europe connected to the international network. Vilhelmina MF covers 850 000 hectares, and was inaugurated as a Model Forest in 2004. It has attracted international attention despite having a limited budget.

“Through this project, we expect to develop the Vilhelmina Model

Forest further in terms of projects and deliverables, as an ‘exemplar’ Model Forest, showing the way for other sites in the Baltic landscape network,” says Gun Lidestav.

Different goals

Gun Lidestav stresses that each Model Forest has a unique profile within a common framework. Local issues and problems associated with landscape use and management define the profile and direct the outcomes of the project.

“For example in Vilhelmina, reindeer husbandry in relation to other land uses is an important issue,” she says.

Previous work in Vilhelmina has promoted reindeer husbandry plans, in order to facilitate consultation and avoid conflicts between different reindeer herders, and between those practicing reindeer husbandry and forestry, mining, wind power and

others who exercise their rights to use the land.

The focal issue in the *Helge River Baltic Landscape*, southern Sweden, is blending timber production and nature conservation values from the perspective of small forest owners. Water quality is another major issue in this landscape. The water quality in the Helge River is affected by the activities of small forest owners up-stream in the catchment and, of course, by farmers further downstream.

In the Polish *Mazury* landscape, the focus is, instead, on tourism and its potential conflicts with nature conservation and forestry.

Besides Vilhelmina, three established Model Forests in Russia are associated with the project: *Pskov*, *Komi* and *Kovdozersky*. The Russian partners will provide experience of great value.

The ultimate goal of the project is to develop approaches to sustainable forest use on a landscape scale. The focus is on establishing processes rather than on delivering specific outputs in terms of the number of new jobs, environmental impact etc.

“We do not set these goals in advance. They are instead set as a result of the project, based on many stakeholders’ needs,” says Gun Lidestav.

The involvement of many stakeholders opens the way for a wide range of constructive discussions, and it is not taken for granted that there will be final complete agreement. Every stakeholder has to be flexible and give up some of their interests for the good of the entire group. As one person involved in a Model Forest said: “No-one was satisfied, therefore the project was a success”.

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Read more about the Model Forest Network: www.modelforest.net

Country	Partner	Baltic landscape site
Sweden	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)	Vilhelmina
	Swedish Forest Agency	Vilhelmina, Bergslagen and Helgeå River
	Såfsen Forest Foundation	Bergslagen
Belarus	Belarusian State Technological University, Minsk	Neman
	Novogrudok Forestry Enterprise, Novogrudok	Neman
	Republican Forest Inventory Enterprise “Belgosles”, Minsk	Neman
Estonia	Estonian University of Life Sciences	
Finland	University of Eastern Finland	Ilomantsi
Latvia	SC Latvia State Forest	
Norway	Hedmark University College	
Poland	Regional Directory of State Forest in Poznan	Warta
	University of Life Sciences, Poznan	Warta
	Office of the Marshal Office of the Warminko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, Olsztyn	Mazury
	Regional Directory of State Forest in Olsztyn	Mazury
Russia*	Green Forest Foundation	Pskov
	Silver Taiga Foundation	Komi
	NGO Kovdozersky Model Forest	Kovdozersky

* Associated with the project, with outside financing.

Euroforester students value their network

Over a decade, the Euroforester education programme has evolved from a small experiment to an established international Masters programme in forestry. With 450 students from 36 countries having been involved, Euroforester forms an international network of great value for former participants' careers.

“The students stress the benefits of the international education for their professional lives”, says Desiree Mattsson, who is coordinating the Euroforester programme for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Alnarp.

In a poll of previous graduates conducted in 2008, the majority were employed in forestry-related occupations. Net earnings also exceeded the average net earning in each country examined. The alumni were, overall, highly satisfied with their current job situation and their contacts with other students.

Alumni conferences

Pressure from students led to a Graduate Conference being arranged, at which Euroforester alumni met to maintain the network. The first conference was held in Tuchola, Poland, in 2009, and a second is planned to take place in Kaunas, Lithuania in June 2012.

“The first conference was a big success, and it was decided to repeat it every three years”, says Desiree Mattsson.

Masters programme since 2006

The programme has been running since 2000, and in 2006 it became an official 2-year Masters programme entitled Euroforester. The students are enrolled at Alnarp in southern Sweden. Several study trips abroad and teachers recruited from all over the world guarantee the international profile.

The programme is now run in cooperation with 13 forest faculties in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Denmark, Russia, Ukraine and Sweden. Special arrangements are also in place with faculties in China and Uruguay. More than half of the students come from the Baltic Sea region, but students from all over the world are participating.

“We have, so far, had students from 36 countries and all continents,” says Desiree Mattsson.

Company scholarships

The programme has benefited greatly from scholarships provided by the industry. IKEA is the largest donor, but Stora Enso is also supporting several students each year. Many students make contact with these companies already during the

course. Some become trainees after graduation, others are employed in different international positions.

“Stora Enso is particularly interested in supporting students from Asia and South America, and IKEA in supporting those from eastern Europe, Russia and China,” says Desiree Mattsson. “They see the students as an important recruitment base.”

Facebook group

The students do not just keep in touch through the alumni conference. There is also a community portal, and a Facebook group “Euroforester Alnarp”, which recruited 250 members in a single month.

“You have to understand that the students become very close during their time in Alnarp. They live together, study together and travel together. It is not surprising that they will continue to network, even if they end up spread all over the world,” concludes Desiree Mattsson.

Read more:

About the programme:
www.euroforester.org

About the community:
www.euroforester-community.eu

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Euroforester students meet Ingvar Kamprad, founder of IKEA. Photo: Desiree Mattsson



Shortcuts

EFINORD office expands

The office of EFINORD in Copenhagen recruits more staff. Dr Ragnar Jonsson becomes a researcher, along with Dr Vilis Brukas, and Ms Desiree Mattson is the research and administrative assistant. All will have part-time positions at EFINORD, while their permanent positions are at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Besides the on-site staff, EFINORD has in-kind personnel: Dr Arvo Tullus in Estonia, and Dr Ewa Zin and Dr Rafal Paluch in Poland.

Read more: www.efinord.efi.int

Birds move northwards with climate warming

Southerly bird species in the United Kingdom expanded their ranges northwards at an average speed of 0.9 km/year between 1968–1972 and 1988–1991. A similar, but more rapid, change was found in Finland, where southerly species moved 1.6 km/year over a 12-year period. An even quicker northerly movement has been found in North America, of 2.3 km/year. These different studies indicate that birds are more sensitive to climate change in the north (Finland compared to the UK), and that climate warming is greatest within continents (North America compared to the UK and Finland).

Source: *FAO Forestry Paper 167, 2012. Wildlife in a changing climate.*

Scientists propose restrictions to plant material trades

The Montesclaros declaration (IUFRO) was signed by scientists from 25 countries, expressing their concern about the risk to forest health resulting from the growth in the international trade in plant material. The scientists propose a phasing out of all trade in plant and products found to be of high risk in terms of spreading forest pests and pathogens, but of low overall economic benefit. One Nordic example could be the transport of tree seeds from Finland to countries with lower labour costs for seedling production, after which the seedlings are transported back to Finland for planting.

Read more: *Metla Bulletin 1/2012. www.metla.fi*

Norway spruce Norwegian even during the last glaciation

Scientists from Norway and 10 other countries have found evidence that both Norway spruce and Scots pine were present in Norway long before previous records. Lake sediments contained DNA from the species dating back to 22,000 and 17,700 years ago for pine and spruce, respectively. The findings challenge current views on the survival and spread of trees as a response to climate change.

The article was published in *Science*, and the news can be read on www.skogoglandskap.no.

SNS board member appointed Dean

Niels Elers Koch, currently Director of Forest & Landscape Denmark, is appointed as acting head (dean) of the Faculty of Life Sciences at the University of Copenhagen for 2012. He replaces Per Holten-Andersen.

The faculty covers academic areas such as veterinary medicine, food, health, plants, biotechnology, natural resources and the environment. It will merge with the Faculty of Natural Sciences into a super-faculty “SCIENCE” in 2013.

Professor Koch is currently a Danish representative on the SNS board and also President of the international union for forest research organisations (IUFRO).

Read more about the faculty: www.life.ku.dk



Been here for a long time. Photo: Mats Hannerz

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More info about SNS:

www.nordicforestresearch.org

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