

from Nordic Forest Research SNS



Brunnskogen, Ronneby, one of the pilot areas part of the project. Photo Robert Ekholm.

## Hardwood forests attract cross-border tourism

**A new EU-financed project will promote tourism in the southern Baltic Sea region by highlighting and marketing the extraordinary values of the hardwood forests.**

*Attractive Hardwoods* aims to develop sustainable tourism in hardwood forests in Lithuania, Poland and Sweden, addressing measures to increase business opportunities. The project is a follow-up of a previous project *Hardwoods are good*, both of them being partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The project is coordinated by the Swedish Forest Agency. Oriana Pfister is the project communicator:

– We launched the project in July 2016 together with our five partners and ten associated partners from the three countries. The project runs until June 2019, and by then we will have

produced and evaluated a toolkit of marketing materials such as web-based applications, films, maps and brochures, as well as recruited and trained nature guides, she says.

### **Hiking trails and nature areas**

The activities will be concentrated on pilot areas in each of the countries. In Lithuania, the Žemaitija National Park will focus on birdwatching and nature guides. The park was established in 1991, and the directorate has been involved in several cross-border projects.

In Poland, three pilot areas will be established in the Pomorskie region in the northern part of the country. These areas are Nature 2000 reserves and have unique natural and historic values. The focus in Poland will be birdwatching and hunting, mainly for boars, roe-deers and fallow-deers.

In Sweden, efforts will be focused on developing and marketing a 240 km long hiking trail in the county of Blekinge in southern Sweden (“Blekingeleden”), along with activities in Brunnsparken and Brunnskogen, nature parks inside and outside the town of Ronneby. Two web-based applications will be developed to help visitors discover the destinations.

– These areas are all very attractive, but we can do much more to market them and provide services to help more visitors enjoy them, says Oriana Pfister.

### **Information and services**

Market research will be conducted among visitors to the areas, and also among those crossing the borders by ferry and other modes of transport.



## Attractive Hardwoods, cont.

The aim is to learn more about the specific features that attract tourists and how the areas can be improved to meet their demands.

– We are convinced that the unique values of our hardwood forests will attract more tourists, but they need both information and services. Tourism has great potential to create jobs, which are particularly needed in the countryside, she continues.

Currently, the Swedish Forest Agency is, together with other partners, setting up public procurement contracts for producers of web-based applications and films, all translated into several languages to promote international tourism.

– We hope to launch the films and apps by the end of 2018, and these will be used for marketing together with our partners, tourism organisations and agencies, she says.

Oriana Pfister: The hardwoods around the southern Baltic Sea offer unique benefits for visitors. Photo private.



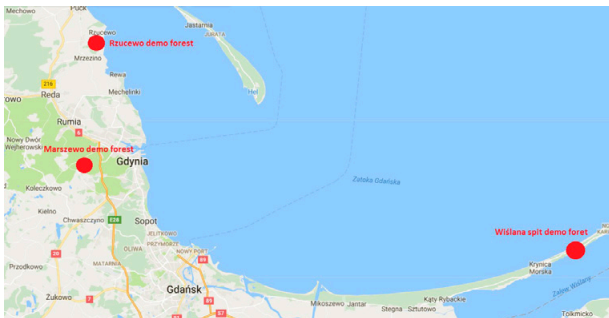
**The project:** *Attractive Hardwoods – best practise in tourism development, marketing and sustainable management of attractive hardwoods.*

[www.skogsstyrelsen.se](http://www.skogsstyrelsen.se). Search for *Attractive Hardwoods*

**Financing:** 1.493 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund.

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**Project partners:** Swedish Forest Agency, Region Blekinge (Sweden), County Administrative Board of Blekinge (Sweden), Regional Directorate of State Forests in Gdansk (Poland), Pomorskie Tourist Board (Poland), Directorate of Zemaitija National Park (Lithuania).



The three study areas in Poland.

## ThinkForest enables science-policy dialogue

The European Forest Institute launched its think tank *ThinkForest* in 2012. It is a high-level discussion forum bringing policy makers, stakeholders and researchers together.

Since it started, ThinkForest has arranged 17 events, attended by

over 1 000 people. The next event is a meeting in Berlin in May 2017 entitled “Leading the way to a new European bioeconomy strategy”.

A series of condensed reports (ThinkForest Briefs) summarises the state-of-the-art in topics currently on the agenda. Briefs exist covering topics such as climate change

mitigation, timber regulations, future of the bioeconomy, bioenergy and so on. All Briefs can be freely downloaded from the webpage.

The chair of ThinkForest is former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson.

**Read more:** [www.efi.int/](http://www.efi.int/) Search for *ThinkForest*



ThinkForest Briefs summarises topical issues in a short format.

"ThinkForest works to identify information needs related to forest policy questions and build a common understanding of the problems at hand. By helping policy makers navigate through the wealth of information on offer and providing them with the best available expertise and the latest research-based information it enables informed decision making on strategic forest issues."

**Source:** [www.efi.int](http://www.efi.int)

## NOFOBE promotes bioeconomy research

### The SNS-supported CAR-project NOFOBE was set up to create research synergies to support the forest-based sector in the European bioeconomy.

The forest-based sector is facing its largest structural changes for more than a century, with closures of pulp and paper plants and investments being moved from Europe to fast-growing or low-cost regions. At the same time, forests are viewed as a solution for an economy based on renewable and fossil-free products.

The forest industry can no longer rely on the traditional large-volume market for pulp and paper. New innovations are needed to meet the demand for renewable materials and fossil fuel replacements. The challenge for the forest-based industry, however, lies not only in technological innovations. Business models and policies also require changes to make greenhouse gas emissions and resource efficiency economically viable.

The changing demands mean there is a significant research gap, and this is a motive for setting up the CAR-project NOFOBE (The

Nordic forest-based sector in the bioeconomy), running for the period 2016-2020. This CAR highlights an interdisciplinary approach by combining research from different perspectives, such as forest economics, forest products markets and forest policy.

NOFOBE is coordinated by the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU/INA) and involves partners from Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, as well as international partners from EFI. The consortium represents the whole forest-based sector, including wood technology, pulp and paper industries, technology foresight, forest product markets, forest sector policies, and modelling and analysis.

The overall objective of the CAR is “to provide a platform for open communication and co-ordination of relevant thematic elements and research projects related to the Forest-Based Sector’s contributions in the bioeconomy in the Nordic and Baltic countries.”

One major output is an annual workshop “Forest-based bioeconomy week”. The last year event took

place in May 2016 with around 70 participants and 80 scientific presentations. A selection of articles will be presented in the journal *Scandinavian Forest Economics*. In 2017, Forest-based bioeconomy week event will be held in Lappeenranta, Finland in June. The theme will be Industrial scale bioeconomy and its requirements.

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**Read more on the project webpage:** [www.nordicforestresearch.org/nofobe/](http://www.nordicforestresearch.org/nofobe/)

**Invitation to Forest-based bioeconomy week 2017:** [www.metsateho.fi/lappeenranta-2017/](http://www.metsateho.fi/lappeenranta-2017/)

The EU defines bioeconomy as: “... encompassing the sustainable production of renewable resources from land, fisheries and aquaculture environments and their conversion into food, feed, fiber and biobased products and bioenergy as well as the related public goods. It includes agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food and pulp and paper production, as well as parts of chemical, biotechnological and energy industries” (European Commission, 2012).

## Shortcuts

### Sweden

#### A good small university

SLU (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences) is ranked number 9 among the “world’s best small universities” 2017 according to a THE (Times Higher Education) ranking. A small university must teach more than four subjects and have fewer than 5,000 students. SLU has 3838 students. The top-ranked small university was California Institute of Technology.

**Read more:** Search for *The world’s best small universities 2017* on [www.timeshighereducation.com](http://www.timeshighereducation.com).

Quoted from THE:

#### 9. Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden

Although there are only 4,000 students at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, they are spread out across several campuses around Sweden. The largest campus is in Uppsala, with other campuses dotted across the country. The university offers far more than just courses in the agricultural sciences. Its remit covers architecture, engineering and economics among others. A strong emphasis is placed on research, and the institution produces about 1,500 papers a year.

### Denmark

#### Africa has become greener

A new study from Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management at University of Copenhagen shows that the woody cover has increased over the past 20 years in 36% of Africa. Although deforestation has been strong in highly populated areas, many areas are becoming greener. The increase in woody cover has mainly been in semi-arid areas, both north and south of the Equator. The study is published in *Nature Ecology and Evolution*.

Source: [www.ign.ku.dk/english/news/2017](http://www.ign.ku.dk/english/news/2017)

## Shortcuts

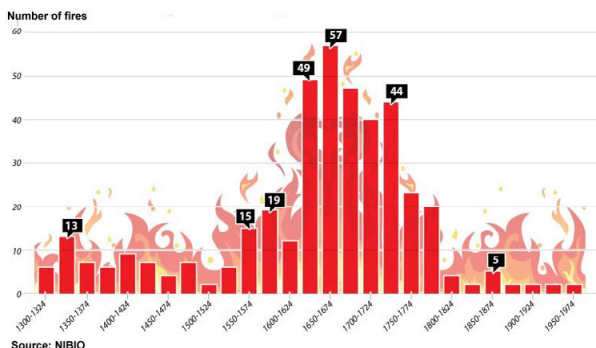
### Norway

#### 700 years of forest utilisation mapped

Annual rings and scars on old stumps reveal a long hidden history of both climatic fluctuations and human activity. Researchers at NIBIO and a former NBMU fellow studied this history in the Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell nature reserve in southern Norway. They sampled 459 wood pieces from old trees and stumps and dated them by dendrochronology back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Fire scars showed that fires occurred in a regular pattern until the early 1600s, mainly caused by lightning. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, humans had a strong impact on the fire history, when burning was used for improving pasture and for cultivation of rye. The average time between fires went down from 73 years to 37 years. Fire frequency declined in the early 1800s when slash and burning was prohibited.

**Source:** [www.nibio.no/en/news](http://www.nibio.no/en/news), search for *Fire-scarred trees*. An animation of the fires between 1300 and 2000 is also available.



Number of fires per 25-year period in the study area.  
Source: NIBIO.no

### Finland

#### Virtual nature to reduce work-related stress

A new research project at Luke investigates the benefits of a virtually produced, natural environment for reducing stress. Studies have shown that spending time in a natural environment or even watching pictures of nature help to recover from mental fatigue. The project is a cooperation between Luke, the University of Helsinki and the production company DocArt.

**Source:** [www.luke.fi/en/news/](http://www.luke.fi/en/news/)

### Sweden

#### Climate change may open for Douglas fir in Sweden

A dissertation at Linnaeus University focused on Douglas fir, the North American tree species being introduced to Scandinavia. With a warmer climate, Douglas fir may have benefits over the native Norway spruce. Cecilia Malmqvist, the author of the thesis, has looked into the possibilities for growing the species in Sweden.

**Source:** [www.lnu.se/en/](http://www.lnu.se/en/)

## Call for new co-operation programme



A new programme for financing co-operation projects between Nordic and North-West Russian partners for the benefit of environment and climate is launching its first call for proposals. The goal is to directly improve the climate in North West Russia, the whole Nordic and Baltic Countries and the Barents region. Deadline for application is May 15<sup>th</sup> 2017.

**Read more:** Search for New programme for environment co-operation on [www.nordicforestresearch.org](http://www.nordicforestresearch.org)

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