

Desired Forest Landscapes in 2044

- Two Swedish case study areas

Julia Carlsson and Ida Wallin, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Julia.Carlsson@slu.se, Ida.Wallin@slu.se



This study investigates the potential for strengthening the participatory aspects of forest governance in Sweden by engaging local forest stakeholders in discussions concerning their future visions for the landscape.

A forested landscape contains multiple both interlinked and conflicting values, to a large extent managed in smaller units by individual forest owners in Sweden, and represented by various stakeholders acting in different societal settings. There are needs to strengthen the participatory aspects of forest governance in Sweden, to enable an integrated forest management.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Has local visioning of future forested landscapes the ability to:

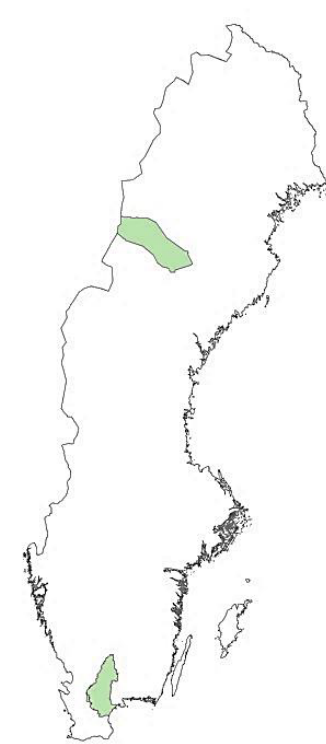
- Lift local stakeholders' focus from individual interests and views to a more **holistic landscape perspective**?
- Encourage them to discuss future land-uses and contribute to a **common vision for the landscape**?

CASE STUDIES

Vilhelmina municipality in northern Sweden, and **Helgeå** river catchment area in southern Sweden.

We applied a participatory future workshop **METHODOLOGY** inspired by Critical Utopian Action Research, where participants discussed:

1. What is not working in the present situation? - *Critic phase*
2. What is the desirable situation? - *Utopian phase*
3. How can we make this happen? - *Implementation phase*



We held one full-day workshop with 13 participants in Helgeå, and four focus-group-meetings with 12 participants in total in Vilhelmina.

RESULTS

The outcome of both case studies was **critic** towards the present situation, **desired future goals** and suggestions for **policy means** needed to implement the visions.

Desired goals in Vilhelmina and Helgeå

- Local decision-making regarding natural resources on a landscape-level
- Local planning coordinators and tools
- High understanding of ecosystem services
- Local refinement of forest products
- Increase resident forest ownership
- Increase variation of forest management practices
- Secure aesthetical and recreation values
- Strengthen societal services in rural areas
- Increase entrepreneurship possibilities
- Increase children's knowledge and relation to the forest

CONCLUSIONS

- Visioning of future forested landscapes is a functional exercise to better integrate the landscape perspective into land-use planning.
- Creating desired future visions was highly appreciated by the participants regarding meaningfulness, learning and knowledge exchange.
- Securing time, resources and good representation in the workshops is crucial.
- Forest policy is closely connected to other policy sectors and rural development, creating a complex governance challenge.


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