

Locals' and tourists' perceptions of forest landscape values: need for integrated landscape approach

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The European Landscape Convention aims to encourage public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes throughout Europe. Forests provide important natural resources in Sweden, and there is a continuous discussion about the use of goods, services and values derived from forests (Angelstam et al. 2005). Non-consumptive uses by rural tourism businesses are currently becoming increasingly important locally. New modes of governance and management of landscapes and regions will therefore be important for a variety of reasons. These include, intensified wood production and biodiversity conservation, as well as for ecosystem services (Costanza et al. 1997), the ability to attract tourists searching for recreation and leisure (Bostedt & Mattsson 1995), and as a means to encourage amenity migration.

Bergslagen is an informal region in south-central Sweden (latitude 60 degrees, longitude 15 degrees) with an ancient history of natural resource use as a means of developing human welfare and quality of life. For a long time, use of minerals, wood and streams in Bergslagen were the base for economic wealth based on iron production for the entire country of Sweden. Another side of the coin of the long history of industrial production became low levels of entrepreneurship and education of people. This trend is however now partly changing. Natural resources continue to form the basis for value-added production based on wood, metals and water. However, in addition non-consumptive use values are becoming important for development. The transition from raw material production and industries to services has been and continues to be a major challenge.

Based on interviews with 46 stakeholders at a large resort in a region with a strong focus on wood production, we studied local inhabitants' and visitors' perceptions of natural and cultural landscape use and non-use values. Irrespective of interviewees' attitudes and main interests, whether they are visiting the resort during the winter or the summer, or if they have a specific interest like fishing, natural and cultural landscape, values were important reasons for visiting the resort. The interviews indicated that the surrounding biophysical environment is of decisive importance for the choice of the destination. A majority of the respondents preferred old forests and disliked clear-cuts in association to recreational facilities as ski slopes, long distance footpaths or put-and-take fishing facilities. It was also clear that hills with views, final felling stands with large wood volumes as well as lakes, streams and cultural heritage were appreciated both by locals and visitors.

While the economic importance of the forest industry remains highly important at the national level, mechanisation of operational forestry for sustained yield wood production has led to radically reduced employment both regionally and locally. To support rural development based on non-wood use values and non-use values involves the challenge to integrate planning processes in different sectors at multiple levels (Angelstam & Elbakidze 2006). Additionally, the management of use and non-use values in forests can no longer be managed only at the scale of individual forest stands. In addition, local, regional, national and international levels need to be considered. By sampling different actor's attitudes and opinions it is possible to measure landscape values and to include such knowledge into planning processes.

However, to realise the vision of sustainable forest landscapes in a geographical area, there is a need for an integrated landscape approach which includes (1) transparent knowledge about the state and trends of different sustainability dimensions, and (2) collaboration among stakeholders

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such as entrepreneurs, public administration and universities at multiple temporal and spatial scales. Integration of research disciplines and of academic and non-academic actors can facilitate local capacity building and collaboration between actors and sectors associated to different development efforts by providing knowledge and experiences for sustainable rural development (Angelstam & Törnblom 2004). This provides opportunities for the development of present and new entrepreneurs based on a synthesis of experiences and knowledge concerning the creation of economically, environmentally and socio-culturally sustainable landscapes. A key challenge recognised by many actors and stakeholders is to develop a governance model for intensified use of an increased range of goods, services and values of entire landscapes in Bergslagen as a social-ecological system.

Finally, we discuss and exemplify how information about natural and cultural values could benefit local tourism businesses, as well as constitute a functional tool for local entrepreneurs, visitors, tourists and for forestry planners and land managers concerning landscape planning of landscape values within a sustainability context.

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