

## Reflection paper: Sustainable forestry

The climate crisis has raised requirements on Swedish forestry and the inquiry of how to preserve biodiversity in Swedish forests. The EU goal for the conservation of forests until 2030 is 30%, however, Sweden has currently only preserved 15%. The current debate regards what constitutes sustainable forestry and how it should be managed, which are the questions leading this reflection paper.

The first interview represents the thoughts of a 53-year-old woman who believes that the proprietorship must be strengthened. She inherited 80 hectares and 7 of these 80 hectares have natural values and are classified as a key biotope. The trees in the area are about 90 years old and have been managed by the woman's father and grandfather. From the interview, it is evident that the knowledge of the importance of biodiversity is modest. The Norwegian Forestry Agency and County Agency have explained that there is a certain, rare orchid growing in the area and that is the reason why it is classified as a key biotope. My interpretation is however that she does not understand the importance of sustainable forestry including these natural values in the global aspect.

Following this aspect, she is critical of the management process of the classification of the key biotope area with regard to emotional and financial arguments. The most important aspect is the emotional aspects of the forest and she believes that it is unreasonable that it is the ones that have taken such good care of the forest that are “punished” with these regulations. Furthermore, she is afraid that the County Agency is somewhat incapable of preserving the forest in the best way possible as they are the responsible authority which shall manage all biotope areas. Since there is a somewhat contradictory view regarding the rate of allowances for environmental inquiries in the Swedish parliament, she feels uncertain about the future management of the forest if it is not prioritized. Lastly, the management regarding the finances of the key biopic area has not improved the attitude towards the key biotope. She has been offered a lump payment for the classified area, however according to her, the sum does not correspond with the value of the forest and the future value of it. Therefore, she advocates receiving a “replacement forest” instead. However, no decisions have been taken since there is no available “replacement forest” geographically close to the remaining forest at a corresponding value of the one that's key-biotope classified.

A 36-year-old student has a clear view of Swedish forestry, but a vague view of what constitutes sustainable forestry. Her interpretation is that it is usually “old males in Wellingtons”, with conservative views that work in the forest industry, and that if the forest is not sustainable today, the old males would be the main reason. Considering the management of sustainable forestry, she does not highlight any regulation, nor does she know about the current regulations. Instead, she emphasizes the importance of a diversified group of forest owners, including young people and more females as a solution to a sustainable forestry.

The last interview represents the view of an 18-year-old female who highlights the importance of diversification among plants and animals in order to keep the balance in the

ecosystem. She notices the importance of keeping the balance between preserving and cutting down trees to maintain a high level of biodiversity in nature. Moreover, she mentions “rewilding” as a solution to sustainable forestry. However, she has little knowledge of the management process and current regulation to preserve sustainable forestry.

In order to achieve sustainable forestry in Sweden, I believe it is important that forest owners and the general public understand the importance of sustainable forestry locally in a global perspective. For example, sustainable forestry and high levels of biodiversity strings and stores carbon which reduce the emission in the atmosphere. Furthermore, unsustainable forestry increases the emission that affects the temperatures and thus increases the spreading of spruce engraver beetles which affects the quality of woods and the financial outcomes for forest owners.

Furthermore, I believe that one must improve the management process by increasing the incentives for sustainable forestry, both national and universal. Small-scale farmers appear to have the most environmentally friendly approach toward their forests. Instead, the problem is the large-scale corporations. Many forest owners are under financial pressure and sometimes completely dependent on the few large forestry companies that focus on plantation forestry with clear-cutting, intensive land preparation and one-sided planting material. Therefore, a corresponding approach may be to regulate the unsustainable forest corporations through embedding the environmental impact of the way of cultivating in the price of woods (like a tax), and convert the tax to compensation to environmentally friendly forestry producers or owners of key biotopic areas. In that way, owners would be more prone to sustainable forestry, key biotopic areas and it would solve the financing issue.

The evident conclusions from the interviews are the lack of knowledge and understanding of the forest industries’ impact on climate change at a global scale. For example, the natural values in the forest are usually “invisible” and one does not understand the importance at a global scale of preserving an orchid. Additionally, politicians must consider a sustainable, long-term approach of preserving areas with high natural values and how to increase the incentives.

Alma Jonsson