

Working Papers of the Finnish Forest Research Institute 38: 85–88

Interactive and Participatory Forest Planning in Särna and Idre parish - Case Study Area of Sweden

Denise Fahlander

Swedish Forest Agency

1 Introduction

There are many stakeholders in the forest land of North West of Dalarna County, where the ELAV area is located. The communication between stakeholders works very well in some cases but less so in other cases. The ELAV project was initiated by the Swedish ELAV partners to look into the matter of rural development from a local perspective. What possibilities are there of practical forest management to benefit this rural area and how may the Partners extend a good dialogue between “all” woodland stakeholders? In Sweden the ELAV project includes four Partners, Swedish Forestry Agency, Dalarna County Administration, Sveaskog AB and Älvdalen Municipality. The social values of the forests are a growing part in the Partners’ daily work. Initially the project has started in two pilot villages where the dialogue will be more intense; within these areas the project also will look at the dialogue in a smaller scale, within communities.

2 Aims of the project in Sweden

There are three main objectives in the Swedish part of ELAV: forestry forum; communication; and exchange between communities.

Forum

The forestry forum will invite all actors interested in the forest. Forest companies, authorities, tourist entrepreneurs, community participants using the forest for recreation etc. This forum will give the partners a possibility to express their views of forest land use and management, and to discuss common solutions to local challenges. A great deal of the forum is also to be aware of other values of the forest than one owns.

Social values

Forestry production has a long history in Sweden, during the last 100 years the humans has developed efficient methods to manage the forest with the results of greater timber yields. Since the 80-ties environmental questions has been an important issue for the society and even so for forest

management. New methods were developed for the forestry sector to sustain greater concern for nature conservation. During the last period of time, a new subject to deal with has entered the forestry sector – the social values of the forest. There are many ways to deal with human interest in the forest. Two growing parts within social values are; recreational possibilities and nature tourism. Within ELAV one aim is to make a survey of the social values in the pilot areas.

Exchange

To acquire more knowledge of how the forest land may be managed to benefit the development of this area, both national and international exchange of local communities are arranged. Local community involvement in forestry are obviously growing in some small places in Sweden and much so in Scotland. Networks between countries and communities concerning woodland interests, aim to be established. The exchange will be not only for community participants but for all stakeholders of the forest land. What arranged meetings will actually give, is difficult to prophesy. The gain of the project is depending on e.g. the individuals attending and what development stage the actual community is in. Benefits of woodland use, management and planning will be experienced.

3 Description of the case study area of Sweden

The case study area of Sweden (Figure 1), Särna and Idre parish, cover round 450 000 ha of land. The woodland soundings are owned mostly by the state and managed by Sveaskog AB and Dalarna County Administration (DCA). Other stakeholders are e.g. forest companies, common forest society and private land owners. The pilot projects with more intense dialogue are initiated around two villages, Mörkret/Gördalen and Drevdagen, those communities consists of 40 respective 100 inhabitants.

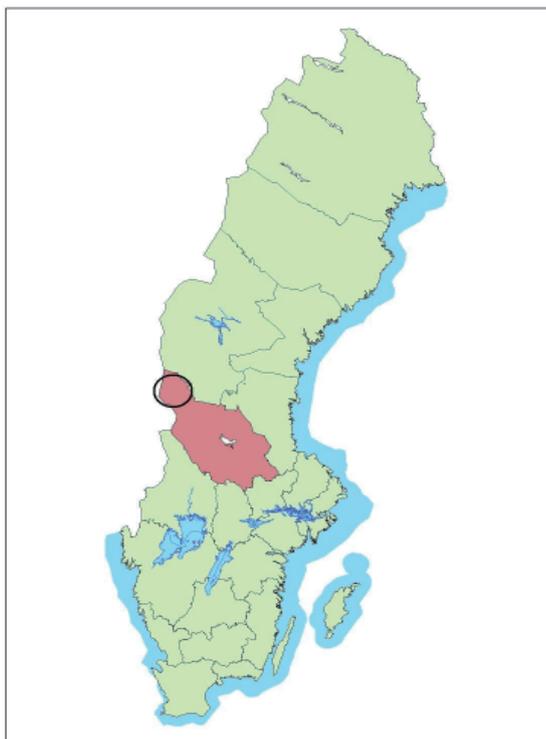


Figure 1. The case study area (marked by the black circle) is located in Dalarna Country.

Sveaskog manage the forest mainly for forest production while Dalarna County Administration manages the nature reserves and national parks, mainly for nature conservation. The area DCA manage is 190 000 ha and contain 30 nature reserves and two national parks. The amount of forest land Sveaskog manage is 111 000 ha. Idre Fjäll, a tourist centre, is another big stakeholder in the area, which employs many local participants and offer winter and summer events in the forest land. Idre Fjäll got 600 000 guest nights a year. A considerable part of the forests in North West of Dalarna are production forests of forest companies. Other actors interested in forest land are tourist entrepreneurs, tourists, craftsmen and the Sami people. Tourism activities are e.g. snowmobiling, hiking, fishing and dog sledging.

4 Involvement of local people and other interest groups

The project identifies social values of the forest through communication with a variety of forest stakeholders. Project participants increase knowledge of each others interests as well as identifying possible common ways for use of divergent interests in forest land. Meetings are set up in small scale (people with similar interests or few participants) and wider scale (participants of great variety of interest or several people). Through human meetings we learn from each other and hope to gain more acceptable and useful common solutions.

To involve the people, a suitable way is to have short meetings, small groups and the talk of the subject should be of present interest. This is noticed so far in ELAV, but is also a result from an evaluation of another forest project (Entreprenörskap i Finnmarken och Skogslandet, Swedish Forest Agency), trying to increase new ways for income of local occupation considering forest as a resource. Engage people and bigger attendance are more often reached when the invitation are made trough close contact, by telephone, village notice board or trough village participants “from one to another”. Different ways ELAV Sweden used for communication is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Four topics of the communication in the area are shown in the figure; Invitations to meetings, information about ELAV, collecting information about stakeholders’ interests and ongoing joint initiatives. This picture shows different ways used for communication.

	Letter	Local news-papers	Meetings	ELAV web site	Box	Media releases	Working group	Telephone	Email	Community participants	Village notice-board	Village web site	Partners	inter-national exchange	Mapping	Binder in village hall
Invitations to the meetings																
Information about the project																
Finding out the aims of interest groups																
Finding out the joint initiatives and projects																

5 Survey of social interests

Today, ELAV Swedish Partners use digital information of the forest frequently, mainly concerning forest production and nature conservation, e.g. to show fellings and Natura 2000 areas in digital maps. ELAV will try to extend this material to include local social values in the forest, both from the view of recreation and occupation. With also this kind of forest interests one will get a more comprehensive picture over the land use.

The digital work is managed together by Partners and community participants who developed the method in a common work group. Information of social interests is collected by letting people draw their interest into a map. This is transferred by GPS or by hand in to a digital map. Each single interest; track, point from which there is a view, restaurant dependent on wild nature tourism etc. are described in the same way in a data base. Information to the data base is collected through an interest formula, where the questions were developed by the working group. If the stakeholder of the interest like to show more information (e.g. a website) this will be linked from the data base.

6 Experiences

1. The project has gained large interest from many categories in the project area. One likes to find a way for communication of woodland use and management among stakeholders.
2. Communication, meetings, talks – this takes time. The geographical distances are often very long. Many of the stakeholders, authorities as well as tourist entrepreneurs also has very tight schedule for their business and duties. Also local participants lack time, which will use a lot of their spare time in local associations to work for the survival of that association. Though the majority like the idea of forestry forums – lack of time seems to be a big issue to deal with to get it going.
3. When people get together and share issues the energy grows. Groups getting together for social aspects, such as to talk, to walk or to have a gathering seems to raise energy for community development.
4. Real enthusiasts seem to be working a lot alone. When you ask someone else in that community of their opinion or to participate, they almost always refer to that single person that is very interested, instead of attending themselves.
5. To a great extent the community participants in the pilot villages seems to be positive to the survey of social values.

More information:

denise.fahlander@skogsstyrelsen.se
www.elavproject.com
www.minskog.se
www.drevdagen.se
www.gordalen.nu