

Ecosystem Stewardship in Swedish biosphere reserves

From conflict to collaboration

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Sustainability Science for Biosphere Stewardship



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Location and social-ecological context

- Emerged from conflict/tension between **conservation** interests and **production** interests
 - (Agri)cultural landscapes in an urbanized, high-income country
 - Dialogue btw key individuals → short-term project → long-term collaboration supported by formal institutions → UNESCO biosphere reserve designation
 - Umbrella concept brought diverse interests together
 - acknowledged tensions, identified synergies
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Purpose of stewardship and collaboration

- Maintain cultural landscapes (biodiversity, history/identity, recreation)
 - Foster rural development
 - Help people re-connect to nature
 - Contribute to something meaningful
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What is being transformed and for whom?

- Parts of the landscape (restoration, development)
- Attitudes and beliefs (among e.g. farmers, politicians, children, conservation activists)
- Relationships (between societal sectors and levels of decision-making, and between people and place)
- Institutions (development policies and conservation policies)

For future generations, the public, children, bird watchers/nature lovers, disabled people, people in need of recreation, tourists, fishermen, **threatened non-human organisms**

**So, who pays?
At whose cost is this transformation
happening?**

Platforms for deliberation, transformation, collaboration

- Biosphere office with staff (part of municipality)
 - Natuurum in KV (Visitor centre)
 - Advisory council of stakeholder representatives
 - Partnerships (ad hoc as well as long-term)
 - Educational activities
 - Social events
 - Face-to-face meetings
 - National and international networks
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Three questions for discussion and a provoking statement

- How do we ensure that transformations are not eroding life-support systems?
- Is all ecological knowledge to be considered equal?
- If not, who are the experts that ensure that transformations are ecologically informed?

In our quest to make trade-offs, winners and losers explicit, let us not forget that in some cases, resource management is so bad that there is room to enhance multiple ecosystem services for multiple people without creating losers.

Thank you!

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