

Iceland, october 2011

I will turn to some basic facts about forests and forestry in Sweden and then how we cope with our challenges, politically and practical.



Corine Land Cover



Forests in EU
SKOGSSTYRELSEN
SWEDISH FOREST AGENCY

Forests and Forestry in Sweden

Some forest facts

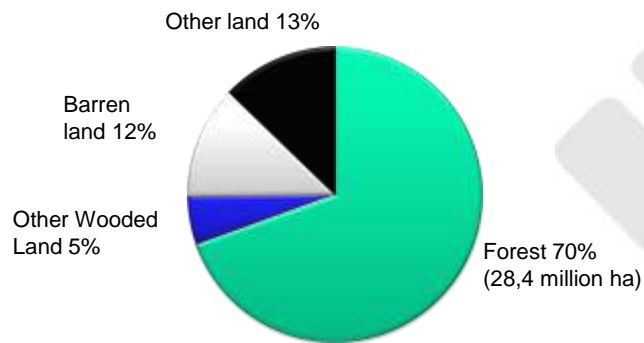


- Forest cover 70% of land area
- 11% of export income of Sweden
- Gives employment to about 100.000 people
- Public access provides for forest multifunctionality
- The growing season is 240 days in the south and 120 days in the north
- Normal precipitation is 400-1200 mm/year



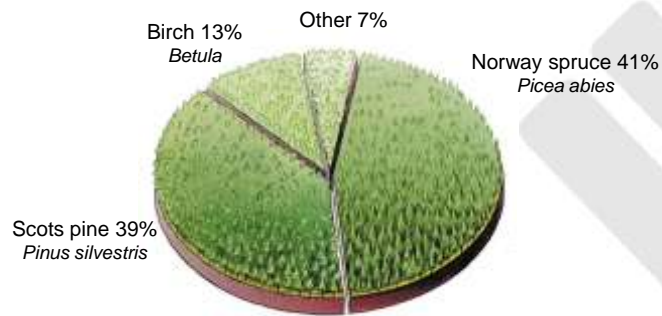
Forests and Forestry in Sweden

Land distribution

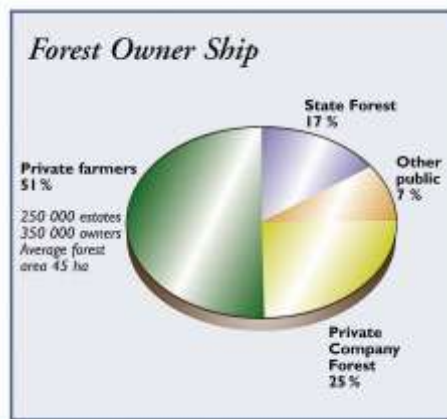


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Species distribution

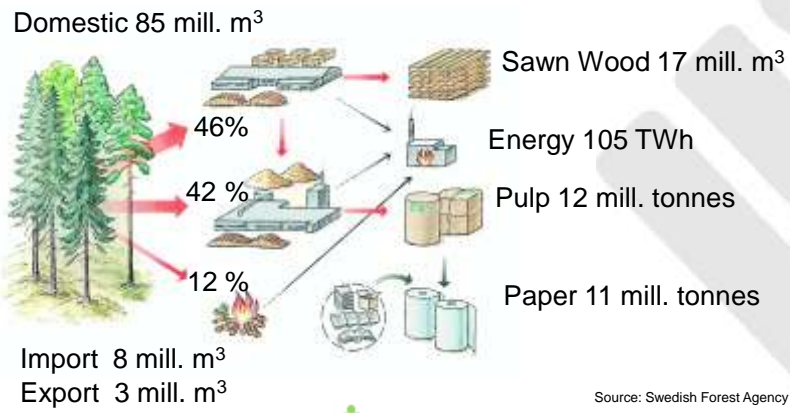


Forests and Forestry in Sweden



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Uses of felled timber





Frihet under ansvar

The policy that sets the frame for forestry in Sweden took shape between 1990 and 1993. It describes on the one hand which characteristics the Swedish forest should have, from the perspective of society. The other part deals with the “how” question – which instruments are to be used to achieve what we want. The forest policy

that was formed at that time can be described (in a simple way) as:
less regulatory than before and production and environmental goals
are put on equal footing. The users of Swedish forests were given a lot
of freedom AND responsibility for achieving the development of
Swedish forests in the set direction. Those who own the forest, the
state of those forests and how they were used were important factors
when the Swedish forest policy was revised. In the final decision,
which was taken by the Swedish parliament, a clear description was
given of how the desired Swedish forest should like and which
characteristics it should have:

- High, valuable and sustainable production
- It should comprise of more broadleaved forests – the reason why
special rules for “hardwoods” (or valuable broadleaves) were
introduced.
- There should be a bigger variation in harvesting methods.
- Environmental functions were put on equal footing with
production.
- And young forests should be properly thinned.

Well, how were we going to achieve this?

Freedom AND responsibility became the operative word. A lot of
detailed rules were taken away. Based on the property structure I
showed you earlier it was decided that we could make use of the
existing variation in individual goals and intensity of use. The basic

concept was that with the existing differences among forest owners we could achieve the overall forest policy targets throughout the country, if all would take their responsibility.

And yes, we do have legislation that puts limits even though these limits are wider than before 1993. Apart from legislation that indicates the “lowest level of production allowed” there are also rules on which form of consideration has to be taken to the environment; and forest owners are obliged to take such consideration when harvesting.

Society at large also contributes: namely, to financial resources to set aside forests for biodiversity, in the form of nature reserves and national parks. Forest owners themselves contribute by voluntarily set-asides...

Personally I have had the privilege of having been part of the forest policy committee as an expert. Therefore it may not come to you as a surprise that the current Swedish forest policy is something that lies close to my heart.

The forest kingdom

It has now been 17 years since we launched the current forest policy. Parts of it work well and other parts have potential to be improved.

PAUS

This year we have been thinking about the reasons why it takes such a long time in certain areas to achieve the goals we have set.

Even other actors from within the sector (especially nature protection organizations) are becoming impatient. There are those that currently question whether or not it was such a smart idea to give forest owners and entrepreneurs so much freedom...

The main issue has been the way in which forestry operations take nature conservation goals into consideration.

This autumn we have therefore started with a “roadmap” in order to create more common understanding among all actors in the sector.

This means that we will for example, together:

- Achieve a common vision within the sector, especially concerning nature conservation goals
- Create more clarity on the limits of the law when it comes to consideration for nature (i.e. we need a praxis)
- Forestry itself has also started working on its own views towards nature conservation

Overall, my experience is that when you remove detailed rules as instruments to achieve society goals we – as government agencies – need to find new methods and instruments. It’s about both supporting and motivating good practices as well as clarifying the rules we have left.

Society’s support is essential in this respect. Therefore I am glad that our Minister for Rural Affairs, Eskil Erlandsson, took the initiative to start the *programme* ”The forest kingdom”.

In short: The forest kingdom is the ministers vision for creating conditions for new jobs related to Sweden's forests and, in so doing, helping economic development in the countryside and in small towns and villages. The vision is based on the sustainable use of forests and the coequal objectives of environment and production.

Besides the facts that I earlier told you about - the forest industry employs more than 100 000 people and gives us our largest export industry (with an export value of SEK 129 billion), it also accommodates values in the form of recreation, experiences and essential ecosystem services. And in the forest we also find nature's larder, with culinary ingredients such as game, wild berries and mushrooms.

The forest kingdom is built up around four initial branches:

Sustainable use of forests – we have to use the resources without using them up;

Processing and innovation – we are looking for new ways to earn money from forests, from raw materials or from the living forest itself;

Experiences and recreation - widens the scope for experiences and activities, both within the tourist industry and for people who simply enjoy spending time in their local forests.

And **“Sweden in the world”** – we want to share our forestry expertise with the rest of the world.

Sverige en del av Norden, EU och världen

In 2008 the Nordic forestry ministers agreed on a declaration here on Iceland. The so called Selfoss-declaration. It highlights many of the common issues concerning viable forests and competitive forestry in our countries. Some of them:

The forest is linked to many other aspects of our lives and societies, most important of them are Climate change and water resources.

We need more knowledge. The Nordic Council will support essential research for the development of forestry on behalf of our countries.

Nordic conditions are in focus, but our knowledge will also be an important contribution to the European work within for example Forest Europé.

Avrundning:

As you can probably understand, Swedish forests mean a lot to Sweden, Swedish people, and to the Nordic countries. At the same time Sweden has been a member of the EU since 1995. EU citizens of course also have a stake in and views on how Swedish forests are to be used. We don't have a common EU forest policy. But there are many other policy areas where the EU legislations effect the use of

Swedish forests, such as energy policy, biodiversity legislation, water regulation etc.

At the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe in June this year in Oslo, 46 European forest ministers decide to start negotiations on a “legally binding agreement on forests in Europe”. This “Forest Convention” should lift the concept of sustainable forest management (SFM) to a higher political level. Most likely it will set overall targets for SFM and promote a better implementation of SFM in the whole of Europe. The idea behind it is also to make sure that the concept of SFM is taken into account by other policy areas when they come with policies that have an effect on forests and forestry.

Sustainability is the key issue not only for us in Sweden, or the Nordic Countries, or Europe. The International Year of Forests 2011 highlights the necessity of wise and foresighted forestry on a global scale. I hope I have been able to convey my knowledge and beliefs from the part of the world I know best.

Thank you...