

IN THE ZONE?

Nature and culture in a Swedish Biosphere Reserve

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In this presentation I will present a study conducted within the research project *Landscape Diversity and The Nature/Culture Divide*:

The Nature/Culture Divide in a Swedish Biosphere Reserve

Specific aim of this study: analyze the role of the concepts nature and culture in the recently appointed biosphere reserve *Lake Vänern Archipelago and Mount Kinnekulle* in Sweden, in relation to the wider context of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme.

Methods: Document analysis and interviews with key actors in the process.

A photograph of a wooden A-frame structure, possibly a shelter or a piece of art, situated in a grassy clearing surrounded by trees. The structure is made of dark wood and has a series of horizontal slats at its base. It is secured with ropes. The background shows a dense forest of birch trees and a distant view of a valley. The text "NATURE?" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the upper left quadrant.

NATURE?

CULTURE?

Landscape research has a long tradition of questioning views on culture and society as external to nature, and assumptions that 'human impact' presents threats to nature.

Today, the effects of the conceptual and practical separation of nature and culture in many areas, are critically examined from new academic view-points, including for example 'posthumanism', and actor-network-theory.

Within **landscape management** many efforts have been made to bridge or dissolve the nature/culture divide And yet, *most projects still rely on well-recognised nature/culture boundaries.*

Biosphere reserves:

”seek to reverse the practices of much protected area management that seek to exclude local peoples”

”are explicitly positioned as a contrast to the ‘closed jar’ approach of sealing off nature from the human world”

(Lesley Head, in Progress in Human Geography 31(6), 2007, p 841)

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)

Biosphere reserves have three complimentary functions:

- conservation of biodiversity
- sustainable development
- logistic/supporting function (education, research, etc)



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Ecological Sciences for Sustainable Development

UNESCO » Natural Sciences » Environment » Ecological Sciences » Biosphere Reserves

A- A+

Ecological Sciences

Man and Biosphere Programme

Biosphere Reserves

- › Main Characteristics
- › World Network (WNBR)
- › Advisory Committee
- › Designation Process
- › Periodic Review Process
- › From Strategy to Action
- › Regional and Subregional Collaboration
- › Biosphere Reserves in Practice

Biodiversity and Climate Change

Capacity Building and Partnerships

Biosphere Reserves – Learning Sites for Sustainable Development



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Animation auprès des scolaires. Visite du chantier de réhabilitation des sources de la Dordogne.

Biosphere reserves are sites established by countries and recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme to promote sustainable development based on local community efforts and sound science.

As places that seek to reconcile conservation of biological and cultural diversity and economic and social development through partnerships between people and nature, they are ideal to test and demonstrate innovative approaches to sustainable development from local to international scales.

Biosphere reserves are thus globally considered as:

- sites of excellence where new and optimal practices to manage nature and human activities are tested and demonstrated;
- tools to help countries implement the results of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and, in particular, the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Ecosystem Approach;
- learning sites for the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development.

RELATED INFORMATION

- › About Biosphere Reserves
- › Biosphere Reserves around the world
- › Biosphere Reserve Directory (English/French/Spanish)
- › MAB Database Search Engine
- › National Committees and Contacts
- › Map of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)
- › Official Documents
- › Newsletter
- › BiosphereSmart initiative

PHOTO GALLERY

- › NEW Biosphere Reserves, 2013
- › Biosphere Reserves in 2012
- › 2011 Biosphere Reserves
- › 2010 Biosphere Reserves



Biosphere Reserve

Lake Vänern Archipelago and Mount Kinnekulle





Men and women in the biosphere, celebrating the new MAB area
at Kinnekulle on a rainy afternoon in September 2010.

Biosphere Reserve since 2010

www.vanerkulle.org

Why study *this* biosphere reserve?

- A biosphere reserve which has embraced the the current, perspectives, focusing primarily on sustainable development rather than “only” conservation of biological diversity.
- Led by a young, ambitious team. Coordinator Johanna MacTaggart has become an important actor in Swedish and international MAB.
- A model area, acknowledged by UNESCO as a good example of a biosphere reserve based on a holistic approach

THEIR VISION:

”Biosphere Reserve *Lake Vänern Archipelago and Mount Kinnekulle* is an area where there is a balance between use and conservation. Through collaboration between stakeholders, by investment in research and education will Biosphere Reserve Lake Vänern Archipelago and Mount Kinnekulle become a role model and a model area for sustainable development”

OUR QUESTIONS:

- What kind of geographical and conceptual boundaries related to nature and/or culture have been drawn within this reserve?
- How does the MAB principle of zoning affect the roles ascribed to nature and culture within the biosphere reserve?
- Which stories are told about nature and culture when the biosphere reserve is presented to the public?



According to the application, the proposed biosphere reserve included:

20 species on the global IUCN Red List

At least 33 species mentioned in the EU Birds Directive

At least 18 species mentioned in the EU Habitats Directive

At least 171 species that are nationally red-listed as vulnerable (VU), endangered (EN) or critically endangered (CR)

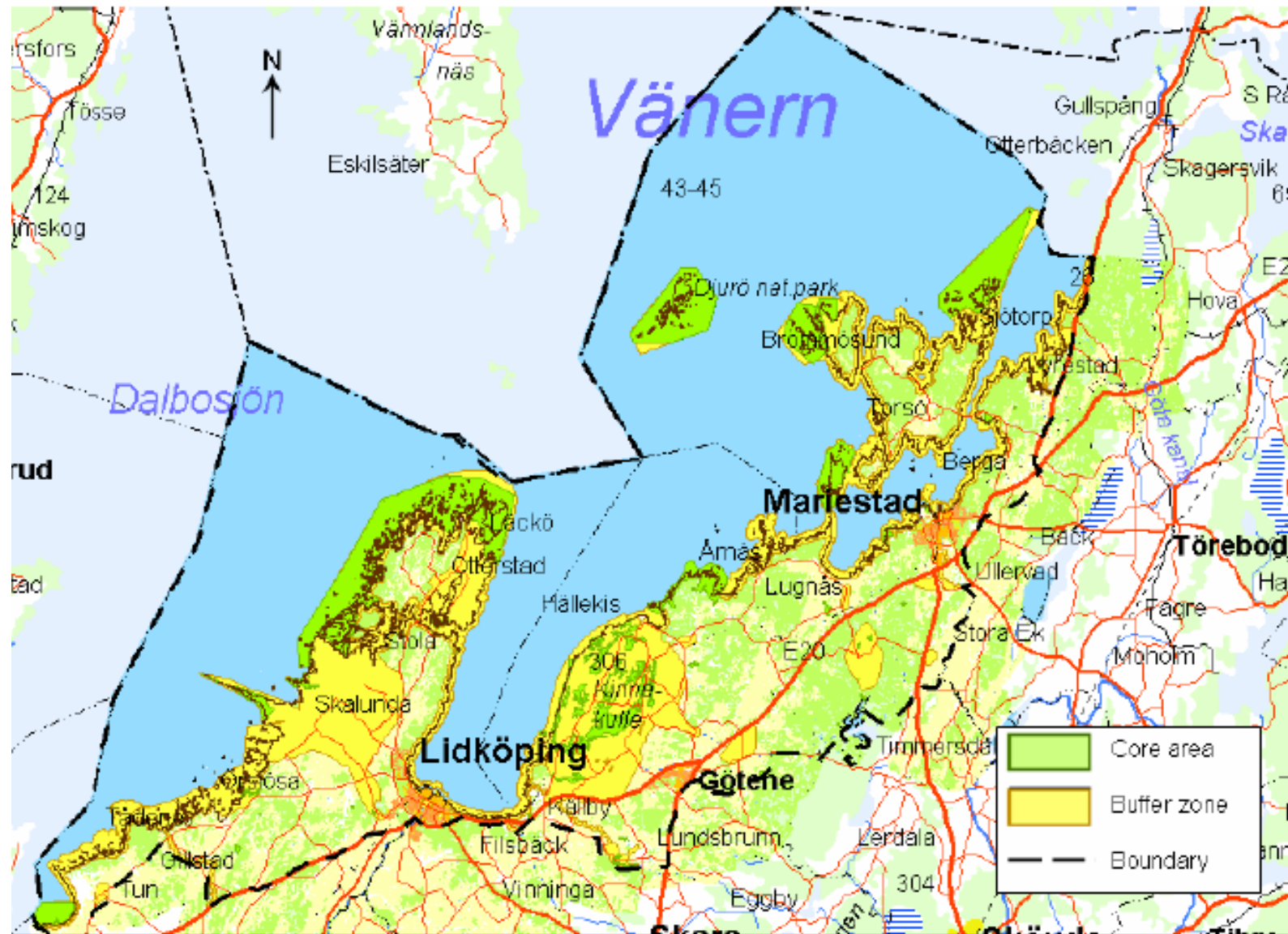
27 Natura 2000 sites

One national park

One Ramsar site

35 nature reserves

Zonation within the MAB area



MAB zonation principles:

- **Core area(s):** securely protected sites for conserving biological diversity, monitoring minimally disturbed ecosystems, and undertaking non-destructive research and other low-impact uses.
- **Buffer zone(s):** which usually surrounds or adjoins the core areas, and is used for cooperative activities compatible with sound ecological practices, including environmental education, recreation, ecotourism, and applied and basic research.
- **Transition area:** area with a central function in sustainable development which may contain a variety of agricultural activities, settlements and other uses and in which local communities, management agencies, scientists, non-governmental organizations, cultural groups, economic interests and other stakeholders work together to manage and sustainably develop the area's resources.

The zonation in the *Lake Vänern Archipelago and Mount Kinnekulle* biosphere reserved was formed in accordance with specific guiding principles, expressed by the Swedish MAB committee, stating that:

- In Swedish Biosphere Reserves, protected areas (national parks, nature reserves, Natura 2000) should constitute the core areas.**



The biosphere reserve includes also several protected cultural heritage sites such as the medieval Husaby church and well, but these are not regarded as core areas.

“It’s a building, there is no life...”

Interview with Biosphere Reserve Coordinator



Implicit focus: Rural landscapes with biological values that are dependant on human use and influence



The biosphere reserve has a pre-history:

“young trees and bushes were cleared and spruce plantations were removed all over Kinnekulle ... Orchids, butterflies, red-backed shrikes and ancient oaks have got more space to live. In all, 600 hectares were cleared”.

The Life-project *Kinnekulle plateau mountain – restoration and conservation* (2002-2007)

The issue of boundaries...

On the motives for the outer boundary of the biosphere reserve:

"Historically, there has been a closer relationship, when Lake Vänern was used for transportation. Now, it is a bit about getting back ... And you have to draw the line somewhere. After all it was these three municipalities that started..."

Interview with County Administrative Board official

"Is it the boundary that is important, or is it the process? For me, it is the process that is the biosphere reserve"

Interview with Biosphere Reserve Coordinator

In Lake Vänern and Kinnekulle, nature reserves, Natura 2000, and other legally protected areas for nature conservation were pointed out as the core areas of the biosphere reserve – with one exception:

Although the entire Mount Kinnekulle is a Natura 2000 area, it was designated as a buffer zone, and not a core area.





Kinneulle – why not a core area?

*"It is so large, and there are activities going on...
People live there... It would be very strange to have it
as a core area!"*

Interview with County Administrative Board official



A couple of conclusions...

Despite the outspoken ambition to integrate society and nature, development and conservation in a "model area for sustainable development", it is clear that this biosphere reserve uses established forms for nature conservation as a key component.

While nature and culture are here clearly seen as integrated and dependent on one another, the zonation principle still works to keep boundaries separating protected nature from cultural activities and development.



...and a final remark

"We should not forget about the history. When the MAB programme started it was a programme for protection of biological diversity..."

Interview with Biosphere Reserve Coordinator

A scenic landscape photograph taken from an elevated position. The foreground is filled with dense, green trees and foliage, some of which are slightly out of focus. In the middle ground, a vast, calm lake stretches across the horizon, its surface reflecting the light. The background shows a distant shoreline with more trees and a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Thank you!

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