



0504
92/4300

Strasbourg 23 November 1992
APESZP43.93
0504-24/11/92-6-E

PE-S-ZP (93) 43

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL HABITATS

Group of Specialists - "Protected Areas"

1-4 February 1993

**Store Mosse National Park
(Sweden)**

Renewal of the European Diploma

Expert report

by

Mr Pierre HUNKELER

1. A Secretariat representative accompanied the expert on his visit to the Store Mosse National Park. She fully endorses the remarks made in the following report. All important points concerning the Park and its management are clearly explained in it.

2. Appendix I contains Resolution (88) 11 adopted at the last renewal; Appendix II contains a draft resolution presented by the Secretariat concerning possible renewal in 1993.

Store Mosse National Park
(Sweden)

ON THE SPOT APPRAISAL

by

Pierre HUNKELER
(Switzerland)

1. Introduction

The Store Mosse National Park was awarded the European Diploma, Category A, in June 1988, so that the diploma is due for renewal in 1993. This visit, on 30 and 31 July 1992, was carried out with a view to a decision being taken on this matter.

Mr Hunkeler was accompanied by Ms Marie-Aude l'Hyver, of the Council of Europe Secretariat.

Mr Curt Matzon, of the Swedish Administration for Environment Protection, and Mr Lennart Fritz, foreman, were also present throughout the visit. MM Bengt Börjesson, local park manager, Ola Bordberg and Bernhard Jaldemark, biologists working for the Jönköping county authorities, joined us on the second day.

We toured the main peatland areas and the managed parts of Lake Kävsjön, saw the main tourist reception sites, spent a night in the Park and examined closely the most sensitive sections of the Park's outer limits and surrounding areas.

The visit ran like clockwork and we must warmly thank all those who helped to make it easy and pleasant by being available to help us and their wise choice of itineraries.

2. Situation and value of National Park

Situated in the southern central part of Sweden, approximately 70 km south of Jönköping, the Store Mosse National Park covers 7,740 hectares. It is made up of a patchwork of extensive peatland, large areas of low-lying marshland, lakes and pine forests. The presence of morainic islands and elongated sand dunes mean that the countryside and vegetation are varied.

The Kälvasjön and Kävsjön Lakes are permanent while Haradssjön and Hörsjön Lakes are temporary. The level of Lake Kävsjön was greatly lowered by artificial means in the 19th century in order to reclaim swath and pasture land, a change which made the site far more attractive for water fowl.

Vegetation is typically that of acid peat and sandy areas, with the exception of the Björnekulla region where water supplies with more nutrient and calcium content encourage a different type of vegetation with several rare species.

The Park includes the most important peatland complex in southern Sweden. The site has other assets besides its vegetation, being of great interest for fauna, especially birds. It is home to a remarkable combination of northern and southern species. At least 100 species reproduce in the Park, including the crane (Grus grus), the wild swan (Cygnus cygnus) and the jack-snipe (Lymnocyptes minimus). It is also a stopping place for migratory birds, attracting large numbers. The Store Mosse National Park is on the Swedish list of internationally important wetlands and also figures on the list of sites covered by the Ramsar Convention.

Evidence of man's presence includes a series of old farms surrounded by pasture land which is still partly in use, where it is not being wooded, together with peat pits which have already been well recolonised by sphagnum. Around Lake Kävsjön, mowing and grazing in the marshland areas, abandoned at the turn of the century, are now being resumed over a limited area.

A road and railway track, neither much used, cross the middle of the Park. They have existed for a long time and their impact, which is acceptable, has changed little since the Park was created.

3. Management

A management plan is being finalised, the main points of which are set out below, plus our comments, and with the addition of certain topics which have not yet been covered.

We must emphasise that this plan should be a true reflection of the general protection and management policy pursued in Swedish areas that have been awarded the diploma. The Jönköping county administration will be playing a more active role in the Park management and any difference between the options set by national policy and their local implementation is to be avoided.

3.1 General objectives

Generally speaking, the Park should be left to evolve naturally while allowing visitor access in those areas where their presence does not run counter to the objectives of conserving and protecting the environment. These principles correspond perfectly with the requirements of the European Diploma, Category A.

3.2 Peatland and marsh

These must be left to develop naturally without any interference. The Björnekulla marsh and the area surrounding the Lake Käsvejön observation tower, where some plots of land are mown, are exceptions to this rule.

We think this approach is justified. In our eyes, the only point which should be studied in more depth is the evolution of the former peat pits around Kittla kull. Re-establishment of the peatland seems to be slow. There is a case for examining the way in which the old drainage canals function, to see if it is possible and worthwhile to raise the water level (the pits near Lövö, with better water supplies, are apparently being recolonised more quickly by the original vegetation).

3.3 Forests

The principle of avoiding any action is in keeping with the objectives for the Park. The exceptions (retaining certain meadows, maintenance of edges of roads and canals) are perfectly justified.

We should note that most of forests were exploited before the Park was created; The long-term evolution should be followed.

3.4 Farming land

The land concerned includes the virtually abandoned fields and grazing land at Svänö and Lövö, lake edges and the Björnekulla marsh. The management plan regards the maintenance of these zones, being of secondary importance compared with the main objectives for the Park, but nevertheless specifically suggests certain management measures.

We felt that more emphasis should be placed, especially in the management plan, on the value of these areas, from both an historical point of view and that of the diversity of the landscape and natural environment. It is important to continue the planned maintenance measures (pasture and swath). Given the necessary investment, the objectives and upkeep programme must be very clearly established and the evolution of the land in question must be carefully observed.

The idea of replacing 'modern' varieties of cattle with local breeds, to graze the land, is worth putting into effect.

In all cases, it is important to explain to visitors why certain farming activities are maintained in a protected area.

3.5 Wetland areas and hydrology

We feel that the Park staff should pay more attention to this important point.

No management is planned apart from occasional cleansing operations on the Flåsebäcken (outlet from Lake Kävsjö).

In our opinion, this position should be re-examined after a study of the general hydrology of the Park, as it conditions the evolution of all the wetlands. The following aspects deserve particular attention here:

- • The canal crossing Lake Haradsösjön and emptying itself into Lake Kävsjön and Flåsebecken, the outlet from Lake Kävsjön, are artificial. To some extent they would make it relatively easy to manipulate the level of these lakes. However, manipulation of this kind must not be envisaged until the way the system functions hydrologically is properly understood and management objectives on this score have been set.
- The disused peat pits near Kittla kull (see para 3.2).
- The Park's dependence on external water supplies (several watercourses enter the Park on the eastern side). Although there is apparently no problem at present, it is worth planning ahead.
- The impact of peat digging on the outer edges of the Park.

3.6 Fauna management

There is a ban on hunting in the Park. Fishing rights still exist for Lake Kävsjön, but are to be phased out so as to conform with the requirements for the European Diploma, Category A.

No particular management measures are planned apart from monitoring water fowl populations and food for the ospreys and golden eagles, so as to reduce their consumption of pesticides.

These are good measures. The monitoring of birds should be concurrent with management measures around Lake Kävsjön. If the means can be found, an inventory of other fauna groups, such as insects, might offer useful indications of the value and evolution of certain habitats, such as meadows and forests.

3.7 Public access

The Park is very well equipped for this purpose. There are several excellent observation towers and a quite remarkable network of paths and planked trails in the peat

bogs, extending over some 40 km. This network is very well maintained.

The main tower, on the edge of Lake Kävsjön, is very well equipped with an exhibition, information centre and telescopes.

Most of the maintenance and information work is carried out by 10 young men having opted for such work as an alternative to national service; next year their services will no longer be available. Park officials are arranging for them to be replaced by members of local associations interested in the Park. This transition can be done but will require major efforts if it is to be carried out in the best possible conditions. It is essential to continue to use the Park - a magnificent and very well-equipped site - as well as possible for visitors' enjoyment and information.

The buildings within the Park boundaries - which are of some architectural and historical interest - are well maintained. They can be used to accommodate overnight visitors or rented for short stays.

Park surveillance is limited. Apart from the 10 persons working in the Park as an alternative to national service (until the end of 1992), the services of only the equivalent of 1.2 wardens are available for the whole Park. Fortunately, visitors to the Park are genuinely interested in it and well-behaved, thus avoiding virtually any serious problems. The advent of new sports, such as mountain biking, should however be closely monitored.

3.8 Park limits and buffer zone

There are plans to continue to purchase land around the limits when opportunities arise, to expand the Park and in particular to include the interesting peatland lying to the North-East. Although not urgent, this action should be carried out a little more actively.

There is no buffer zone proper. Around the Park the situation is as follows:

- A large part of the perimeter is surrounded by forest, mostly the public domain, which acts as an excellent buffer zone.
- In the Södratorp - Björnekullen region, the approaches to the Park are wooded or extensively farmed. Moreover, a watercourse flowing into Lake Herrestads acts as a boundary and prevents any fertiliser or pesticide from filtering into the peatbogs. A similar situation occurs to the North-East of the Park.
- In the North, large areas of peatland lie outside the Park but would make an excellent addition to it. There

are plans to purchase these peatlands, but transactions seem a long way off, given the problem of hunting rights. To some extent, these peatlands are already protected because they feature in an inventory of valuable sites where peat digging licenses are systematically refused.

- In the Adalen region, major peat digging work is under way on the basis of the rights which existed before the Park was set up. With peat pits stretching as far as the Park boundary, the buffer zone is effectively inside the outer limits. The scope for limiting the drainage effects on the peatlands in the Park should be studied.
- Near Törestorp, to the west of the Park, a sort of Cowboy - and - Indian lunapark is responsible for major sound pollution. The noise it makes can be heard inside the Park.

3.9 Scientific monitoring

The peatland areas and wetlands in general are relatively sensitive to local or general disturbances, such as an increase in nitrogen in the air. It would be worth extending rapidly the permanent surveillance programme planned for Swedish National Parks to take in the Store Mosse Park.

A vegetation map would be extremely useful so as to improve understanding of the present biotopes and to provide a reference base for following their evolution. This work is urgent because there is at present no vegetation map other than a rather old one covering the Lake Kävsjön and its immediate surroundings.

4. Follow-up to recommendations

Extension of surveillance: the 10 persons working in the Park as an alternative to national service have some training in ecology and are permanently on hand to guide and inform visitors; new arrangements will be made in 1993, calling on members of local associations.

Protection, maintenance and development measures: a bird watch programme, based mainly around Lake Kävsjön, has been launched; attempts to clear undergrowth and mow are being followed for the botanical interest; all working of timber, including dead wood, has been terminated, plans for new purchases of marshland have not been materialised.

5. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, we unreservedly recommend the renewal of the European Diploma, Category A, for the Store Mosse National Park. The value of the site and its size, its remarkable state of preservation and existing facilities for the public continue to testify broadly to its European

interest. The Park is managed simply and suffers from no serious pressures or other damage.

The renewal should be accompanied by a rider concerning the following recommendations, which are not to be seen as criticisms of the current situation but as suggestions for improving protection of the Park's natural and landscape values in the long term.

Recommendations:

1. take stock of the Park's general hydrology, especially management of the main canal, lake level management, opportunities for re-flooding disused peat pits near Kittla kull and the Park's dependence on external water supplies;
2. guarantee a constructive and efficient transition between the employment of the team of persons working in the Park as an alternative to national service, responsible for receiving visitors and carrying out most maintenance work, and the new arrangements for ensuring that these activities are continued;
3. pursue more actively projects for enlarging the Park as and when opportunities arise;
4. ensure that the Park management authorities can oppose any drastic changes in the conditions in which timber is worked and for farming on the Park limits or any other development projects which would be incompatible with their proximity to the Park;
5. try to find ways of limiting the influence of peat extraction which is still authorised on the Park limits;
6. set up more detailed scientific surveillance of the natural habitats in the Park, for instance by producing a vegetation map as a reference base.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RESOLUTION (88) 11

ON THE AWARD OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA TO STORE MOSSE NATIONAL PARK (SWEDEN)

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 June 1988
at the 418th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma;

Having regard to the proposals of the Steering Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Environment and Natural Habitats (CDPE);

Having noted the agreement of the Government of Sweden;

After having deliberated,

Solemnly awards the European Diploma, Category A, in accordance with the regulations for the European Diploma, to the Store Mosse National Park;

Places the aforesaid park under the patronage of the Council of Europe until 12 June 1993;

Attaches the following recommendations to the award:

1. Increased supervision

Staffing arrangements for the park should permit continuous warden presence, especially at busy times, weekends in particular. The administration must have the funds and personnel necessary for this purpose;

2. Protection, upkeep and development measures

For the purpose of further application of the management plan, there should be a co-ordinated programme of scientific research on the evolution of numbers of certain significant animal species, such as the crane, whooper swan and capercaillie. The long-term effects of pilot projects in undergrowth clearance and experimental mowing of the former lake bed must be monitored and comparisons made with untreated similar control surfaces. Timber exploitation must be terminated because dead wood is of great biological importance for the ecosystem and must be left where it is.

Attempts should be made to continue as energetically as possible purchases of similar marshlands so as to complete the contours of the park, notably in the north-eastern sector.

APPENDIX II

DRAFT RESOLUTION (93) ...

ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AWARDED TO
THE STORE MOSSE NATIONAL PARK (SWEDEN)

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of
Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the
European Diploma;

Having regard to Resolution (88) 11 on the award of the
European Diploma to Store Mosse National Park;

Having regard to the proposals of the Steering Committee
for the Conservation and Management of the Environment and
Natural Habitats (CDPE);

Renews the European Diploma, Category A, awarded to the
Store Mosse National Park until ... 1998;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. take stock of the Park's general hydrology, especially
management of the main canal, lake level management,
opportunities for re-flooding disused peat pits near Kittla
kull and the Park's dependence on external water supplies;
2. guarantee a constructive and efficient transition between
the employment of the team of persons (conscientious
objectors) currently responsible for receiving visitors and
carrying out most maintenance work and the new
team to be employed on these activities;
3. pursue more actively projects for enlarging the Park as
and when opportunities arise;
4. ensure that the Park management authorities can oppose
any drastic changes in the conditions in which timber is
worked and for farming on the Park limits or any other
development projects which would be incompatible with their
proximity to the Park;
5. try to find ways of limiting the influence of peat
extraction which is still authorised on the Park limits;
6. set up more detailed scientific surveillance of the
natural habitats in the Park, for instance by producing a
vegetation map as a reference base.