

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2018)4
on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas to the National Park of
Store Mosse (Sweden)**

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2025

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: Sweden

Name of the area: Store Mosse National Park

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas: 2018, 7 years ago

Central authority concerned:

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1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

N/A

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. reduce the dependency upon volunteers for monitoring and regular maintenance work;

The governmental budget for management of protected areas in Sweden has, as stated in last reports, been significantly reduced since the general election 2022. This is still primarily affecting the maintenance and development of outdoor facilities negatively, as the conservation and management of protected nature is prioritized. Currently, the upkeep of e.g. our wooden boardwalks is carried out predominantly by a few volunteers, since the staff do not have time to focus on this or the resources to hire contractors. This means we must accept a lower standard on our facilities. Regular upkeep work more often becomes emergency repairs, and long term the maintenance requirement will grow continuously together with the upholding costs. Also, the accessibility for various groups of visitors declines and less people get access to protected and pristine nature areas. This too is concerning, as it is important both for public health but also for increasing the understanding of the importance in preserving healthy ecosystems.

2. continue encouraging more scientific research in the park, and ensure that all results are centralized in a database maintained by the park or, as appropriate, a relevant scientific institution;

In the new exhibition at naturum visitor center, there is a specific space where researchers and their work connected to the National Park are displayed. Now the information and published scientific articles are analogously presented on a bulletin board, but there is a PC where projects and articles will be available digitally for visitors who want a deeper knowledge. Furthermore, there has been multiple collaborations with various scientific projects during the year.

During 2023 Store Mosse national park organized a 3-day meeting with scientists connected to the National Park. One of the outcomes from this meeting was a Scientific Hiking Map of Store Mosse, produced by Stockholm University in collaboration with the Store Mosse National Park. This publication contains information and results from several different groups of scientists doing work in at Store Mosse. The target audience for this publication is the general public interested in science and the National Park.

The project Tea @ the Park, a citizen science project about decomposition, soil properties and climatic conditions, was promoted at the celebration event of National Parks Day at Store Mosse in 2024. The results are currently being analyzed and will hopefully be published in a scientific journal. Plymouth University engage with our visitors in a citizen science phenology project where they ask people to send a photo of the bog from a certain spot with a mobile photo frame.

Peat Pals for LIFE is a collaborative EU project (LIFE22-NAT-NL-Peat-Pals) focused on restoring degraded peatlands in the Netherlands and Flanders, involving partners like Eurosite, Natuurpunt, and Wageningen University. The Store Mosse National Park has an twinning agreement with this project where the management of the Park shared best practices, talked about hydrology and greenhouse gas monitoring (using flux towers), and implementing large-scale restoration, aiming to turn peatlands back into carbon sinks. In this context three people from the National Park and the Conty board held a presentation at the symposium Peatland Perspectives in Zwolle Netherland.

Store Mosse has a long-term collaboration with Radboud University that studies gas fluxes. This collaboration has grown and now also includes University of Copenhagen.

3. secure the long-term management and restoration of the Kävsjön and Häradsösjön Lakes for increased birdlife;

The severe reduction of the appropriated budget for nature conservation management has fortunately not affected the restoration project of Lake Kävsjön and Lake Häradsösjön, since this is financed by special restoration funding from previous financial decisions. Hence, the remaining practical work in the project has been finished autumn 2024 according with the court decision. The dam in the canal between the lakes was constructed, and as of today both lakes are regulated; Lake Häradsösjön with a permanently raised water level and Lake Kävsjön with a dam where the water level can be adjusted periodically. Both dams of course allow fish to pass by via fish passages. During 2025 a trial period has started, where various regulation regimes for Lake Kävsjön will be tested. This, to find a regime both complying with the water operation permit by the Land and Environment Court and fulfilling the purpose of impeding vegetation growth. The goal is to enhance and increase birdlife by keeping the shore meadows and quagmire open through periodically flooding. Furthermore, puddles have been dug in the quagmire bordering Lake Kävsjön to improve the bird watching possibilities from the visitor center and nearby bird tower, and a floating artificial bird island (uniquely star-shaped like the sign för protected areas) has been built to compensate for lost nesting grounds during temporary flooding of the shore meadows at Lake Kävsjön. Additionally, the shore meadows have been milled this autumn to provide good starting conditions for the water regulation to inhibit new vegetative growth.

Still, there is a concern that financing necessary management such as mowing or milling can be difficult long term. This since the generous governmental funding for wetlands supports restoration and not regular nature conservation management. Though, there is an ongoing investigation looking at this particular issue, and hopefully there will be a change in the near future. On a more positive note, there is now a possibility to get funding for grazing, to help keep the lake shore pastures open. During 2025 a new fence was erected surrounding about 40 ha of grazing including rich fen meadows and quagmire. In this pasture 10 domesticated water buffaloes have been grazing from June till September. The evaluation after this first year is positive and the plan is to continue in 2026. This action will be monitored regarding vegetation and the effects on the bird life. A local farmer to the site who have daily watch over the animals is positive to continue this work. The grant application for this has been sent and as we wait for a decision, we currently work on an agreement for the upcoming grazing season.

4. set up a comprehensive but simple monitoring system for the park, to be attached to the management plan; monitor carefully the effectiveness and impact of the lake management and restoration, as well as of the LIFE mire restoration project;

The work on implementing a monitoring plan for the National Park is still suspended because political decisions that deprioritize monitoring of protected nature. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has in their action plan, that is in circulation for comments, suggested that monitoring should be prioritized. However, monitoring during the restoration project of Lake Kävsjön and Lake Häradsösjön and its trial period will be accomplished since it is financed by the special funding for wetland restoration. Also, effects from nature conservation burnings in the National Park, that are carried out in the EU-funded project Life2Taiga, are monitored and financed by project funding.

Furthermore, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency's national monitoring program runs according to plan.

5. implement the new national system for information materials, signs and trail marking and give appropriate visibility to and communicate more actively on the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

The project of implementing the new national system ended in the year of 2020. As a part of the National Park regular maintenance, the National Park management maintain and improve information continuously according with the new identity guidelines. Since the budget reduction after the election 2022, it could be a problem financing maintenance of all new information signs and trail markings that has been put up according with the new national system. There is a serious risk of deterioration of this important work that has been done for an improved visitor experience. This, when staff either do not have time to prioritize information material (digital or analog) when nature conservation management comes first, or the budget cannot afford new signs when one might need to be changed when damaged.

The framed European Diploma is put up for display at the visitor center for additional visibility that invites visitors to discuss protected areas on an European level. Also, there is information about the European Diploma on our website, but the content is to be developed to become more informative. The National Park website is at the moment undergoing reconstruction to be modernized and is planned to go live in the beginning of 2026.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

As previously mentioned, after the change of government in the general election 2022, the budget for nature conservation management has been significantly reduced. Thus, 2023 required an instant constraint workwise, hitting the breaks economically to adapt, prioritize and learn how to navigate this new financial situation. For example, contractors are hired less frequently for work in the National Park, and as nature conservation management is prioritized and our own staff puts more workhours on e. g. mowing, the "acceptable condition" of visitor facilities such as trails must be set to a lower level as previously

mentioned. Regular reparation work simply cannot be done at the same pace with decreased workforce. It is worrying that the effort that has been put into improving trails and facilities for visitors during years of beneficial funding, now risk deteriorating. It is very important to keep the facilities accessible, not least safe, to be able to give our visitors a positive experience in the National Park. This, we believe, leaves people with an interest of visiting and learning about nature conservation. Because of having to terminate contracts with local residents supervising nature reserves in Jönköping County to save money, the National Park staff have had additional work supervising nearby nature reserves.

The government is still prioritizing wetland restorations, and the funding looks to be long term and increasing even more over the years to come. This, since it enhances important ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, increased biodiversity, and reduced risk of flooding. Except from finishing the big wetland project restoring Lake Kävsjön and Lake Häradsösjön for improved birdlife, there was an application made last year for funding of additional restoration projects in the National Park. For example, there are still areas that holds old draining ditches that are planned to be restored. These projects have unfortunately not yet started, but the projects are included in the application for next year's wetland funding. In total about 340 hectares, over 8 areas, are included in the application. One problem that we can see when the government focus on one specific ecosystem is the lack of contractors able to do the very specific work as restoring wetlands. Not that many companies have the specific machinery and know-how. This also includes knowledgeable entrepreneurs that know how to produce hydrological surveys and have experience in wetland restorations.

Restoration of ring fens is prioritized. As mentioned above we have had water buffaloes to graze the shore meadows during 2025, but also the recently classified rich fen by Lake Kävsjön that was restored by cutting shrubs. It was challenging to get a contract with an animal keeper since it is a remote area in the National Park, and it needs to be financially beneficial to them. As mentioned, we aim to get finances via the governmental wetland fundings, and hopefully this means that we can offer grazing years to come and compensation that is appealing to cattle keepers.

The project to clear the overgrown previously mowed rich fen at "Växudde" in the most southern part of the National Park has continued. The challenge there is to get rid of the cuttings, brash and logs. It is obviously a very wet area that requires a light and small machine. We had a contractor with a suitable machine but unfortunately, he could not make it. We are now planning for another solution, possibly burning the cuttings or manually extract the cuttings.

Next north to Växudde is Björnakullen West located. It is a rich fen in need of restoration where sedges, pine and birch are overtaking the area. The plan is to cut the vegetation with a purpose build floating reed cutter on rubber tracks. The main plan, and long term goal, is to mow this area in a more traditional way as it is done in an adjacent area next to Björnakullen West.

Even though there is funding for certain management such as wetland restoration and nature conservation burning and we can focus staff and resources there, the appropriated budget that is given for regular maintenance is still clearly too low. This situation makes planning hard and also worrying as we might not be able to keep areas in a good status over time. It is nearly at the point of deciding not to restore more e. g. rich fen areas, as we cannot guarantee a favorable conservation status over time due to current lack of funding. Preferably, there should be a guaranteed financial minimum yearly for National Park

management, or European Diploma areas at least, but also other protected areas would of course benefit from the same to be able to plan for a sustainable long-term management.

Due to budget restrictions and changes in personal in the management of the National Park, responsibilities of different tasks have changed. This creates a void of knowledge during a phase/period. We are currently in this change, alongside a new way of working in teams. This produces a less efficient way of working at first, but later probably will make management of protected areas in the county more efficient and created significant synergies.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes have been made. We are continuously working on maintaining the boundaries surrounding the National Park.

All land within the park boundaries is state owned, as it should be according to Swedish law.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

There is no other information to pass on to the Council of Europe at this point. If any further questions occur, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

- 6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes
- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

- 7.1. Cultural heritage
 - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage
- 7.2. Socio-economic context
 - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

8. Education and scientific interest

8.1. Visitors – Information policy

- 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
- 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)
- 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

8.2. Scientific research

- 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)
- 8.2.2. Scientific publications

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations
- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

- 10.1. Improvements made
 - 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna
 - 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)
 - 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)
 - 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)
 - 10.1.5. Waste management
 - 10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems
- 10.2. Management
 - 10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made
 - 10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made
 - 10.2.3. Internal policing measures
 - 10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

