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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION  
OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Committee of Experts - Protected Areas

Application from

STORE MOSS

NATIONAL PARK (SWEDEN)

On-the-spot appraisal

by

Mr Broggi

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Application for the European Diploma to be awarded to the STORE MOSS NATIONAL PARK

1. Introduction

On 13 March 1986, the Swedish Government decided to apply for the European Diploma for the Store Moss National Park, and called on its nature conservation bodies to take the necessary steps. The application presented on 1 April 1986 is for the category A diploma. The relevant Council of Europe bodies having decided to investigate the question in accordance with the regulations (Resolution (73) 4 of the Committee of Ministers), the on-the-spot inspection took place on 3 and 4 September 1986, in the presence of Mr Jean-Pierre Ribaut, head of the Environment and Natural Resources Division.

The other participants were MM Eric Haglund, of the County Administration Nils Herlitz, Director of the local forest service, Börje Börjesson, in charge of the National Park and Stefan Malmberg, of the National Environment Protection Board.

The Swedish hosts had prepared the following programme:

3 September 1986

General briefing on the National Park at the Värnamo national forestry centre. Visit to Andersberg, affording a view to the south of the Park - on foot to the flat marshes along the Herrestakdtssjön Lake as far as Kvarnaberg. Visit to Lövö (hill composed of moraine soil) in the Park, expedition to the surrounding area and overnight stay.

4 September 1986

Six kilometre walk across dunes and peatlands as far as Kittlakull. Inspection of the bird observation tower near the Kävsjön Lake and the north of the Park, near Svanö. Inspection of upkeep work being carried out (clearing undergrowth, ploughing) in the shifting grassy areas near the lake. Visit to the surrounding area and return to Värnamo.

2. Brief description of the natural heritage of the Park

With its 7,750 hectares, including 6,592 hectares of marshland, Store Moss is the biggest marshy region in Sweden south of Lapland. A vast post-glacial lake covering the region was drained 8,000 years ago, exposing its sandy bottom. The wind-whipped sand produced immense internal dunes which are still partially visible today. The climate having become humid again, extensive tracts became marshy, and some 5,000 years ago a layer of peat formed with a thickness of between 3 and 7 metres. Despite some damage, resulting notably from peat extraction or the fall in the level of certain lakes, the major part of Store Moss has remained intact.

A nordic type of flora colonises the region of flat marshes and transition marshes alternating with extensive peatlands. In the centre, two hills of morainic soil have been made over to agriculture, and several pine-covered dunes have formed around them. The former lake bottom used to be mowed to obtain fodder for stock. During the spring high waters,

huge temporary lakes form, providing stopping places for migratory birds. The Kävsjön lake in particular is well-known to ornithologists, providing opportunities to observe migratory species and numerous birds which nest in aquatic habitats (ducks, cranes, Limicolae, whooper swans).

### 3. Legal status

Situated north west of the town of Värnamo, the National Park was set up by decree of 6 May 1982, the aim being the conservation of the region in its natural state and protection of the assets offered by the natural and cultivated landscapes respectively. It belongs entirely to the state, and is administered by the Swedish National Forestry Service (Domänverket). The rules and regulations concerning nature conservation are strictly applied; only a few former owners have retained the privilege of being able to ice-fish from 1 October to 28 February in the Kävsjön lake. Its natural constitution is such as to make the region all but inaccessible, and it is impossible to enter the areas around the Kävsjön and Herrestadtsjön lakes, which are of importance ornithologically, other than by following the marked trails between 1 March and 30 September and 1 April and 15 July respectively. Camping is not permitted, and no one is allowed to use snowmobiles off the roadways. Cross-country skiing is practised on an insignificant scale. It is possible to make overnight stays, or slightly longer stays, in the old farms on the moraine hills.

### 4. Problems facing the National Park

The extension, upkeep and exploitation of grasslands in the National Park are within clearly defined limits. The cultivated landscapes at Lövä and Svanö are to be kept in their original state, and used for grazing by cattle of native breeds. Between the autumn of 1971 and 1985/86 investment in the Park totalled 3,865,000 Swedish kroner, and in 1986/86 1,031 working days were effected.

#### 4.1 Tourism

Between 50,000 and 60,000 visitors come to the Park every year. They visit mainly a few places where there are good facilities for ensuring that the public is well directed, such as car parks, distribution of general information in the form of literature in Swedish, English and German, observation visits, open-air exhibitions along the Värnamo-Hillerstorp road, picnic sites with drinking water, network of marked trails, mostly planked (at present 40 km). The different amenities are maintained by one full-time official (Forestry service) and eight or nine persons engaged in community work, having refused to do military service; the Park accordingly is suitable for work of this kind, and there is a building for the use of the personnel, without which maintenance would be a very real problem. No surveillance is effected at weekends. There is a plan to set up an information centre near the Kävsjön bird observation tower.

#### 4.2 Upkeep of the region

The greater part of the park does not need any upkeep. To date timber has been exploited in a part of the 777 hectares of forests, but in future this is not to be done. The region of the old drained lake is grazed. In the overgrown areas around the Kävsjön lake pilot projects are being carried out under scientific supervision in mechanised mowing, ploughing and rolling,

in the course of which comparisons are made of the way in which the treated and untreated surfaces develop. In the region of the old moraine hill cultivated landscape, the land is being restored to its traditional condition where this has been threatened by the arrival of casual vegetation. In the neighbourhood of the Store Moss peatbogs, land is being purchased so as to extend the reserve, notably in the north eastern sector.

#### 5. Conclusions and recommendations

On the basis of the local inspection, talks with those in charge and after examination of the literature provided, the expert wholly and unreservedly supports the application from the Swedish authorities for the award of the European Diploma, category A, to the Store Moss National Park. It will be a very valuable and judicious addition to the present network of reserves having been awarded the Diploma. Its importance has already been emphasised by its inclusion in the Swedish Ramsar Convention list and in the Council of Europe's system of biogenetic reserves.

In accordance with the terms of Resolution (73) 4 of the Committee of Ministers, we propose that the European Diploma, category A, be awarded to the Store Moss National Park. In the light of the on-the-spot appraisal, the expert submits the following recommendations:

#### Erection of a conservation information centre

It is impossible not to support enthusiastically the scheme that has been cherished for a long time for the establishment of a conservation information centre along the much frequented Värnamo-Hillerstorp road. It would have a very favourable effect on the Park in particular, and environmental education in general.

#### Protection, upkeep and development measures

We suggest for the purpose of further application of the management plan that a co-ordinated programme of scientific research should be included on the evolution of numbers of certain significant animal species, such as the crane, whooper swan, capercaillie. It is necessary to monitor the long-term effect of pilot projects in clearing undergrowth and attempts to mow the former lake bottom, and to make comparison with untreated similar control surfaces. Timber exploitation is to be terminated, because dead wood is of considerable biological importance for the ecosystem.

Attempts will 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.

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Vaduz, 11 March 1987

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