

INK 09-06-02
JNR 38



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2004-05-31

Review of the Kristianstads Vattenrike application to
Man and the Biosphere/UNESCO

We have read the application by the Ecomuseum Kristianstads Vattenrike and we strongly support it. Kristianstads Vattenrike is a well-known Swedish example of innovative collaboration for ecosystem conservation, involving actors representing various sectors and organizational levels. Stockholm University initiated contacts with the Ecomuseum in 2000 and since 2001 we have conducted research in Kristianstads Vattenrike. Our results suggest that the Ecomuseum has sufficient capacity to serve all three functions:

1. to preserve biological diversity
2. to promote sustainable development at the local level
3. to provide opportunities for research, environmental monitoring, education and information.

1. to preserve biological diversity

Behind the multitude of successful conservation projects there is a network of actors co-ordinated by the Ecomuseum. The Ecomuseum has invested extensive time and effort in trust-building with landowners, farmers and other local stewards. Shared management goals have been identified. This approach has been appreciated by the stewards, many of whom have had experiences of earlier top-down approaches to nature conservation. Local ecological knowledge, based on long-term management, monitoring and site-specific experience, has been blended with scientific knowledge. Hence, the legitimacy for preserving biodiversity has increased among local stewards, and there is great potential for continuous development of biodiversity conservation.

2. to promote sustainable development at the local level

Since the Ecomuseum was initiated in 1989, nature conservation has continuously been embedded in a broader social framework, identifying how it can generate values to agriculture, environmental protection, eco-tourism, education, and cultural history. Thus, activities conducted within the organisation consider all three perspectives of sustainable development, including ecological, economic and social aspects. The vision of Kristianstads Vattenrike has been broad enough to earn legitimacy among politicians from different parties. Today the Ecomuseum is being invited to new arenas, such as the rescue service working out strategies to buffer extreme floods. Hence the ecosystem approach endorsed by the Ecomuseum is permeating larger parts of the municipality.

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Ecosystem services generated within the area have not been quantified, but examples include food production (pollination of crops, water for irrigation, soil fertility), timber production, biodiversity, flood buffer, nutrient retention, recreational services, educational services, aesthetical services and cultural services.

3. to provide opportunities for research, environmental monitoring, education and information.

The Ecomuseum has greatly facilitated our research by opening their files to us, sharing their extensive network of local stewards, and exchanging ideas.

Kristianstads Vattenrike has been approved by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Board as one of 18 so-called "Sub-Global Assessments"

(<http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/subglobal.kristianstad.aspx>). Further, the Resilience Alliance, an international network of research institutes, has approved Kristianstads Vattenrike as a case study for comparative analysis (www.resalliance.org).

In September 2003, the Ecomuseum facilitated an international workshop with scientists from the Resilience Alliance. All participants were impressed by the efforts towards landscape management of the area, as well as the effective organization of the meeting, and the knowledgeable and professional reception by the Ecomuseum.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Folke'.

Carl Folke,
Coordinator of the Kristianstad Vattenrike case studies within The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and The Resilience Alliance
and associated researchers: Thomas Hahn, Per Olsson, Lisen Schultz, Jon Norberg

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