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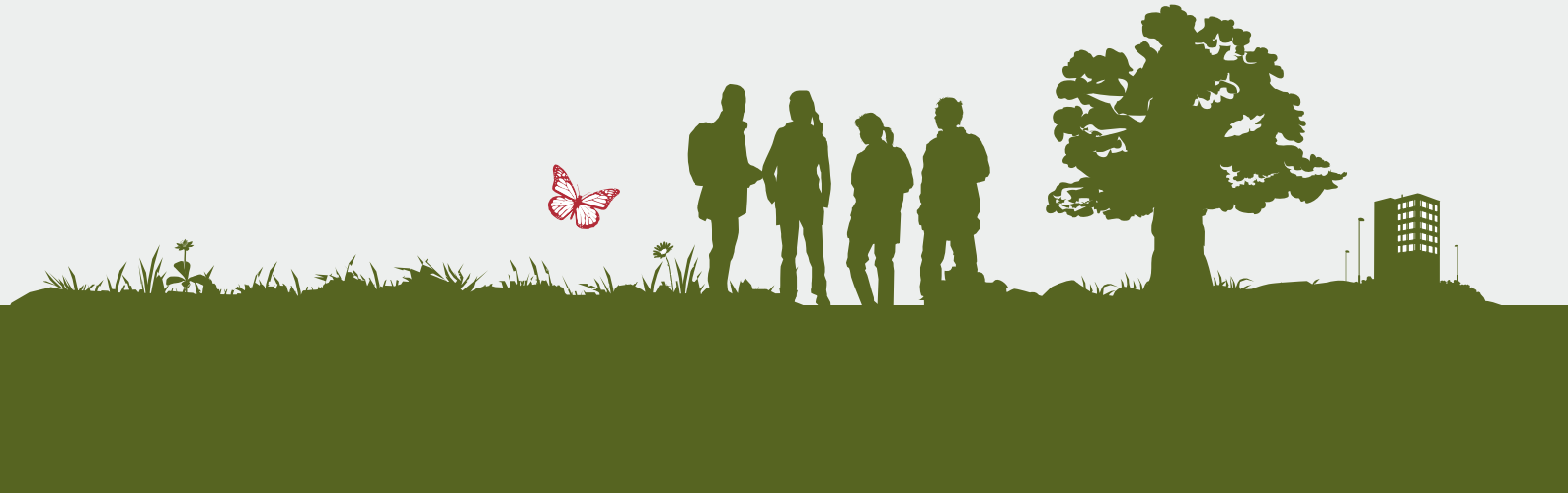
Swedish Centre for Nature Interpretation, SCNI

Landscape Dialogues

—a guide

SWEDISH CENTRE FOR NATURE INTERPRETATION, SCNI



Landscape Dialogues—a guide

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Landscape Dialogues—a guide

SWEDISH CENTRE FOR NATURE INTERPRETATION

Innehåll

Introduction

This guide intends to inspire nature interpreters who, in the spirit of the European Landscape Convention, wish to work locally with a comprehensive perspective on landscape issues.

The landscape is a common platform where different perspectives can meet. Nature interpreters can contribute to the inclusion of local knowledge in processes; to increase or establish local participation and community influence, as well as preventing or managing conflicts that arise.

This document was created by the Swedish Centre for Nature Interpretation, SCNI, and was commissioned by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. It is based upon Sweden's implementation of the European Landscape Convention. The landscape convention highlights the following measures and targets:

Measures

- to increase awareness about the value of the landscape and its significance for the community, private organisations and government agencies;
- to educate about landscapes and their values, preservation, planning;
- to map and evaluate landscapes in order to increase knowledge;
- to develop targets for landscape quality;
- to implement policy that aims to protect, preserve and plan landscapes.

Comprehensive Targets

To move from an object-based approach to planning from a comprehensive perspective on landscape. Some of the power of decision-making will be transferred to local authorities and individual citizens.

Nature interpreters can play an important role in these processes through the communication arenas they offer.

Ultuna, November 2015
Eva Sandberg, Director, Swedish Centre for Nature Interpretation, SCNI

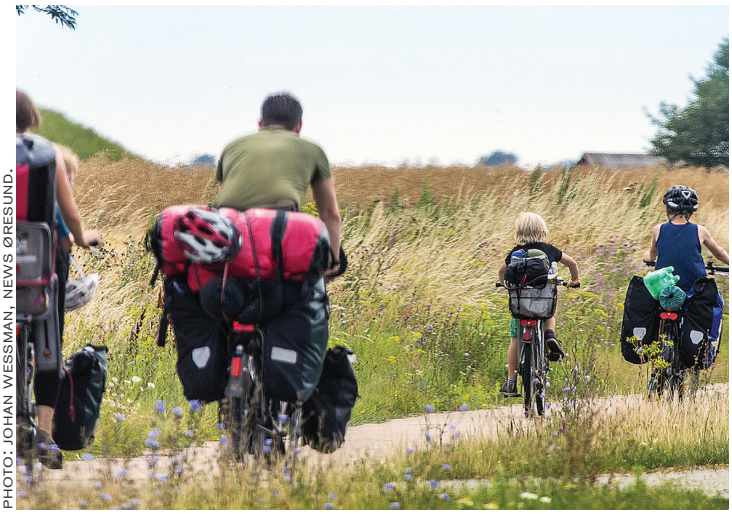

PHOTO: JOHAN WESSMAN, NEWS ØRESUND.

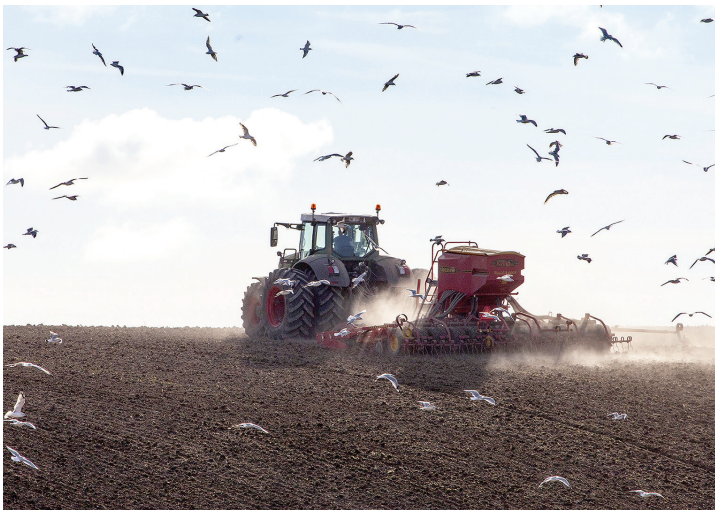

PHOTO: JOHAN WESSMAN, NEWS ØRESUND.

1 What is a landscape?

The landscape surrounds us, it is our living environment. A landscape can be defined as "a geographical area with visible geological, biological or cultural characteristics" (Wikipedia, translated from Swedish).[1]

The Swedish National Heritage Board defines landscape in three simple ways:[2]

- an ecological environment that surrounds and controls a person by providing access to food, accommodation and other "economic" factors. As it surrounds—rather than interacts with—a person, landscape often forms a type of background or receptacle.
- a view, a way to see the world where the observer determines the content. To observe the landscape in this way, an external perspective is necessary.
- a whole, that unites the person and their environment. A person is a part of the landscape, and the landscape is part of the person. They cannot be separated from each other.

The third approach corresponds with the European Landscape Convention, which describes landscape as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" and highlights the landscape as an interaction between humans and nature, where the human is the interpreter.

1 In Sweden, landscapes can also be geographical areas that usually stem from older political divisions, such as Gotland. This guide does not address these landscapes.

2 Swedish National Heritage Board (2012). *Landscape for all.*

PHOTO: JOHAN WESSMAN, NEWS ØRESUND.

PHOTO: PER SONNVIK, SCNI.

THE LANDSCAPE IS MORE THAN JUST A VIEW, WE EXPERIENCE IT WITH ALL OUR SENSES. LANDSCAPES APPEAR DIFFERENT AND REPRESENT DIFFERENT VALUES TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE.

We live in an age where landscapes and ecosystems are experiencing great changes, both globally and locally. New research from Stockholm Resilience Centre shows that, of the nine environmental problems identified, four planetary boundaries have been exceeded, which can result in immense environmental effects[3]. These four are: climate change, loss of biological diversity, changed land use, and the flow of nitrogen and phosphorous. These large-scale changes are reflected locally. To create sustainable development, we need to establish new ways to relate to each other and to the landscapes.

1.1 How we perceive landscape

People often have strong connections to their places; their landscapes. Landscapes go beyond being just views, we experience them with all our senses. We interpret landscapes through different eyes; their appearance shifts and represents different values to different people. Perhaps a geologist sees landforms and sorts of soils. A forester sees habitats and climates, moisture conditions etc. An urban planner sees how people move through the landscape. A child sees trees to be climbed. Our views differ, and we notice contrasting elements depending upon our individual experiences, our origins and the time we live in. There are shifts in what is perceived as beautiful or ugly, desirable or undesirable. For us to relate to landscapes as a community in a democratic and inclusive way, these shifting perspectives must be made visible and meet.

3 Steffen *et al.* (2015). Planetary boundaries: Guiding human development on a changing planet, *Science* Vol. 347 no. 6223.

Perceptions of landscapes are individual, but are shaped by common values and norms that determine what we believe to be desirable. This changes over time, as do the landscapes. We are schooled to view the world in fixed ways, through cultural manifestations, school, politics, the media and so on. We shape the way we perceive the landscape around us from our collective interests. For example, the way land use such as agriculture and forestry is organised depends upon the assumptions and consensus on what is valuable and desirable. It is a mutual process, where the landscapes and our access to them influence values and norms.

Our experience of landscapes changes with how we use and value them. A frequent example addresses the landscape surrounding Kristianstad, in Southern Sweden, which has long been viewed as a waterlogged and unusable problem area outside the city. Now, thanks to long-term, focused efforts from several organisations who have restored the area and made it accessible, it has become a prized attraction and biosphere reserve. Conscious efforts to change attitudes have also played a part—which is reflected in its Swedish name, *Kristianstads vattenrike*, the "water kingdom".

THE WAY WE EXPERIENCE LANDSCAPES CHANGES WITH HOW WE USE AND VALUE THEM. THIS CHANGES OVER TIME, JUST AS THE LANDSCAPES. REFSHALEØEN IN COPENHAGEN HARBOUR WAS LONG HOME TO A SHIPYARD THAT WAS DENMARK'S BIGGEST EMPLOYER. SINCE ITS BANKRUPTCY IN THE 90S, THE ABANDONED PREMISES HAVE ATTRACTED CREATIVE BUSINESSES, ARTISTS AND RESTAURANTS. THERE ARE NOW PLANS TO CREATE A NEW DISTRICT ADAPTED TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

PHOTO: JOHAN WESSMAN, NEWS ØRESUND.

2 Society's support for dialogue and participation processes

New landscape management tools involve the powerful notion that engaging as many voices as possible is vital for making better, more sustainable decisions.

The European Landscape Convention[4] came into force in 2004. Sweden ratified the convention in 2011. It highlights the social significance of landscapes and underlines the importance of people actively participating in the valuation and protection of the landscape. Countries which have signed the convention agree to:

- increase awareness among the civil society, private organisations, and public authorities of the value of landscapes;
- encourage participation in decisions and processes related to the landscape - locally and regionally;
- develop a comprehensive view of the landscape's values, and its sustainable development;
- exchange knowledge and participate in the European co-operation on matters relating to the landscape.

As part of the framework for the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the "**Ecosystem Approach**" was established as a management method. It recognises people as part of the ecosystem and emphasises that all stakeholders should be involved when formulating administrative targets. Management is described as a social process. Several groups are affected, and they must be able to participate by developing effective decision-making and management structures. The method assumes adaptive management that takes into consideration the fact that there are gaps in people's knowledge of how ecosystems function. Adaptive management refers to capturing, trying to understand and changing using a constant conscientious, learning process. The Ecosystem Approach indicates that the measures are

4 European Landscape Convention http://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/home.

to be implemented in the most decentralised way possible to create motivation and participation. This also means using a landscape perspective for approaching the protection and use of biological diversity.

The Ecosystem Approach contains twelve principles—the **Malawi Principles**—of which three pertain to participation (as described by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency):

2. Management should be decentralized to the lowest appropriate level and involve all stakeholders and balance general and local interests;
11. The Ecosystem Approach should pay attention to all forms of relevant information; scientific and traditional and local knowledge, innovations and methods;
12. The Ecosystem Approach should involve all relevant sectors in the community and academic disciplines.

Based on the Ecosystem Approach, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has supported work with collaboration plans for valuable areas with complex management conditions.[5]

5 The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (2011). Collaboration Plans for Valuable Coastal and Marine Areas. *Report* 6471.

3 Global pressure on local landscapes

The current global economy connects landscapes around the world. The events in one part of the world affect those in another. Swedish food preferences impact the rainforests in South America. Conditions in the Baltic Sea determine fish populations in other areas. The global economic need for metals affects reindeer herding in the Sami region. Increased urbanisation and the fact that we often have no connection to the ecosystems that feed us make it difficult to comprehend how our choices influence various landscapes. The growing global economy also requires increased extraction of raw materials, with consequences for landscapes around the world.

Globally, local populations are affected by this development. People living in areas where developments are being planned or implemented often find themselves in a defensive position where they risk being deemed "nay-sayers" or reactionaries.[6] The needs created by demands from far away often clash with the place-related needs of local communities leading to conflict. For example, many communities in England and the USA are fighting against the extraction of shale gas (fracking), and have initiated dialogues to formulate what they believe to be valuable parts of the landscape. By joining together and exploring the values of landscape, they can sustain the initiative and receive a stronger authority providing the possibility of influencing decisions pertaining to their own landscape. Read more in chapter 9. *Three examples and a toolkit*.

6 The initiative What local people? in Norrbotten, has highlighted this on the website http://www.whatlocalpeople.se/.

PHOTO: JOHAN WESSMAN, NEWS ØRESUND.

4 Involving people in their landscapes—when, how and for whom?

Through dialogues on landscapes, it is possible to understand and manage change, to point out the important benefits and resources in the landscape and create individual visions for how to develop it. Dialogue processes are a powerful tool to become familiar with landscape as something that changes over time and be involved in and influence the change. The scope can vary from a single occasion to long processes over several years with repeated meetings and activities.

Strong involvement in a landscape and the need for dialogue often arise in the event of some kind of change or development. A road, a mine or a shopping centre polarises people—for or against. Resistance to something unwanted can unite people, causing strong feelings of respect and belonging to the landscape. The perceived threat shows the importance of something and how it is worth protecting. Naturally, engagement in landscapes is not necessarily preceded by a threat. The creation of connections between people and their places is becoming increasingly important in a world where we have lost touch with our basic supply. However, engaging people in dialogues about landscapes is far from easy. One way is to use concrete activities as a starting point—building nesting boxes,

making hay, clearing areas etc.[7] If you want people to participate in dialogues about their landscapes, you need to reflect on what their driving forces might be and meet existing needs. Some suggestions for successfully engaging the public come from Paul Mahony from Countryscape, a British company that works with landscapes and creating spaces (as retold by the author):[8]

- Make it relevant—use everyday examples of how landscape is significant and how people can make a difference.
- Think about the use of language—avoid difficult words.
- Stay focused—avoid doing everything at once; take it one step at a time.
- Create a shared vision—enable the participants to set their own targets and to own the process.
- Involve people in the decision-making process—ensure that participants have access to information so they can make their own decisions to the best possible extent.
- Be innovative—encourage creativity by sharing ideas in inspirational ways.
- Be inclusive—make sure that all opinions are welcome and are heard.
- Keep people informed—provide feedback and demonstrate how people's opinions are utilised.
- Think positively—map resources rather than problems that need to be solved.
- Make it fun—the secret ingredient for success! Use the participants' interests as a starting point; celebrate local success; use art and creativity.

Paul Mahony, Countryscape

4.1 The nature interpreter as facilitator

The traditional role of a nature interpreter is that of the expert; an interpreter of the landscape; a purveyor of knowledge. This is a very important role that helps people to discover and connect with their places. This expert role is beginning

7 For example, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) organises the annual "nature friendly" week that often includes activity days to participate in. http://www.naturskyddsforeningen.se/nyheter/naturvanliga-veckan-aktiviteter-naturen.

8 Mahoney, Paul (2013). Well connected? Involving communities in an ecosystems approach. *Ecosystems News*, Issue 5, 2013. Ecosystem Knowledge Network.

to increasingly dissolve, perhaps since so much factual knowledge is available to more and more people?

One development to a nature interpreter's work could be as the person who enables, facilitates dialogue about landscape in the landscape. Possibly also with landscape. The nature interpreter can create safe conditions for a group of people to jointly explore their different perspectives on the landscape, and provide room for investigation of common questions. Using such landscape-based dialogues, people can:

- get to know their landscape better (and consequently themselves),
- create shared visions for how they want their landscape to develop,
- participate in planning processes and influence decisions,
- identify the factors that influence or can influence the landscape.

As a nature interpreter, you often want to motivate and create a passion for nature. As a facilitator, your role is different; you ask questions rather than provide answers and you convey important perspectives that are not held within the group. Reflect on your role when you facilitate dialogues. What is the main purpose of the dialogue? Getting to know each other? Learning from other people's perspectives? Creating a shared understanding? Agreeing about something? It is particularly important to have considered this when the group holds a wide range of opinions.

5 Dialogue and participation

We are living in an increasingly complex and turbulent world, with rapid, unexpected changes and unforeseen consequences—particularly in the landscape. Rigid structures and the division of functions are struggling to manage the development. Confidence in the representative democracy is declining, and people do not accept hierarchical structures to the same extent as before. This results in a paradigm shift, believes Inger Olausson, author of *Dialog!*[9] She sees an increased need for new participation and cooperation forms that provide space for creative rejuvenation and taking social responsibility. The concept of sustainable development is becoming more of a process than a state and system thinking is needed to manage the complexity.

The dialogue is an important tool for managing complex situations with many actors. Compared to discussions or debates, a dialogue aims to create the conditions for agreement in the sense of collective understanding for each other, and about the issues being addressed. This does not mean we will always agree. Otto Scharmer, researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MIT has described dialogue as the potential for a group to observe themselves, or the capacity of a system to see itself.[10] This is the essence of system thinking, and could work as a lever for healthier relationships between people and between people and ecosystems. Through dialogue, we include ourselves and our experiences in what we process—we are not outsiders.

9 Olausson, Inger (1996). *Dialog! Handbok för ökad mötekompetens, effektiv planering och verklig demokrati*, Svenska förlaget.

10 Scharmer, C. Otto & Katrin Kaufer (2013). *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economics*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, CA.

5.1 The trinity of participation

The American researcher Suzan L. Senecah believes that three criteria need to be met in order for participants to feel genuinely involved. These are **ADMISSION, RESPECT AND INFLUENCE.**[11] They form the basis of mutual trust between the parties—a requirement for constructive communication and mutual learning.

- **ADMISSION:** feeling invited and understanding the purpose and mandate of the process.
- **RESPECT**: providing people with equal and suitable opportunities to share their perspectives, wishes and experiences.
- **INFLUENCE**: the opportunity to influence within the framework held by the mandate. How the decision-making process works; who does what; how things are prioritised; what issues will be raised. People need to feel they make a significant contribution to make participation worthwhile.

Issues of landscape management are subject to a great deal of legislation and urban planning. These decisions and regulations can seldom be overturned with what can be achieved in a dialogue process. However, the decisions can be influenced by the outcomes of the dialogue process—both in the short and long-term. It is important to be clear about what can be changed as a result of a dialogue process; the mandate we have. It is also good to bear in mind that we seldom have the same participation opportunities. For example, there is a difference between participating either as a salaried employee, as self-employed or as a volunteer.

SOME STARTING POINTS FOR FACILITATORS:

- neutrality and loyalty to the process,
- create conditions that enable participants to communicate constructively,
- highlight that we may have different goals and interests,
- value all contributions and knowledge,
- be sensitive to the participants' different situations and perspectives.

11 Referred to by Lönngren, Setterwall & Westberg. (2012). Kommunikation och samverkan inom landskapsstrategin Människor, mygg och natur vid nedre Dalälven - utvärdering av det inledande arbetet. *Rapport* 2013:15, Länsstyrelsen Gävleborg.

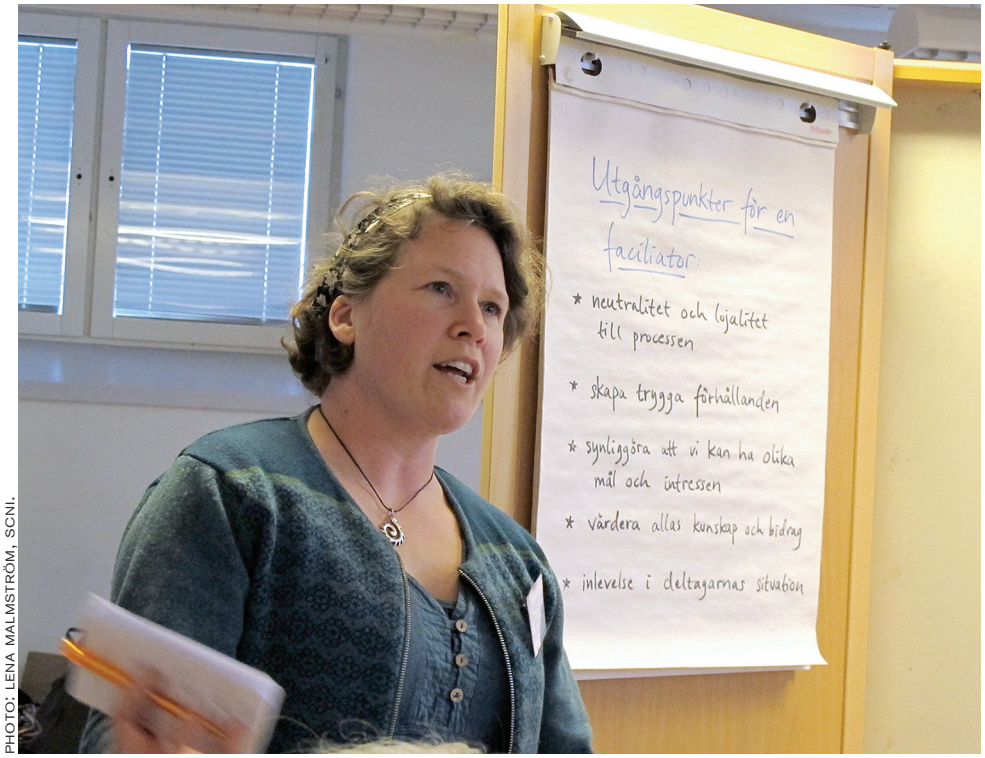

PHOTO: LENA MALMSTRÖM, SCNI.

THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR IS TO CREATE CONDITIONS THAT ENABLE PARTICIPANTS TO COMMUNICATE CONSTRUCTIVELY. PROVIDING PARTICIPANTS WITH ACCESS TO THE DISCUSSIONS, RESPECT AND INFLUENCE ARE IMPORTANT STARTING POINTS FOR A FACILITATOR. PELLA LARSDOTTER THIEL, LEADER OF SCNI "LANDSCAPE DIALOGUES" COURSE, APRIL 2015.

5.2 Listening

A genuine interest in listening to others, understanding and making yourself clear are the prerequisites for successful dialogues. There must be confidence knowing that the dialogue can make a positive contribution. As a facilitator, you are vital for creating confidence and to make listening possible. The difficulty varies from situation to situation, depending for example on the different opinions held by the participants and how important the matter is to them.

Listening is perhaps the most important aspect of the dialogue. Listening and hearing are two different things. Listening does not merely involve hearing what is being said, it also involves interpreting the significance, importance and intention. In true dialogue, you need to understand what the others are saying—and the person you are listening to must also know that you have understood. To achieve this, AFFIRMATION is important—how we hum and haw, nod and present our body language. With attentive and appreciative listening we can help the speaker develop their thoughts and maybe even to express something that may come as surprise to themselves.[12]

Creating conditions that enable participants to feel at ease promotes reflection and communication. On the contrary, if we feel questioned, threatened, pushed

12 Kline, Nancy (1999). *Time to Think: Listening to Ignite the Human Mind*, Cassell Orion.

or insecure, our willingness to contribute to the dialogue may well decline. Most people care about more than their personal interests—they want to act in a manner that benefits all, should they be given the opportunity to do this. As a facilitator, you can help people to grasp their best thoughts and ability to participate, by creating situations where people are given attention, feel looked after and listened to, and treated in an equal manner. This might mean creating a framework for the dialogue, for example by stating a set "time to talk" available to everyone.

5.3 Conflicts

Many interests are involved in managing, enjoying, interacting with and using landscapes, as well as several perspectives on what is correct and important. Several of these conflict—they cannot be met at the same time. Conflicts of interest arise. In, *Landskap åt alla* (Landscape for all), the Swedish National Heritage Board writes:

> The conflicts show how important landscape is. Even though they occasionally lead to conflicting opinions, the real value lies in that we all think differently. It is our differences that can lead further, help us to see things from different angles and ensure we do not stagnate. Together, the diversity of perspectives help us to create a richer, better and sustainable world.[13]

Escalating conflicts result in the parties losing confidence that their interests can be met by continuing communication with each other.[14] Managing disagreements or conflicts of interests and preventing conflicts often involves working with trust. Disagreements are not the same as conflicts and the way we choose to manage them is significant for how successfully we can facilitate dialogue. It is possible to view disagreements as a gift; something that contains important information, meaning that we can learn from each other and discover new solutions. If we primarily see disagreements as interference that should be avoided, then we might try to avoid expressing them, for example by manipulating the agenda, excluding certain people or organisations from the dialogue process, or simply trying to pretend there is no disagreement. As a rule, this reduces confidence in the communication.

There are some basic rules for enabling constructive communication and managing potential conflicts.[15]

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13 Swedish National Heritage Board (2012). *Landscape for all*.

14 Almstedt, de Jong, Ebenhard & Hallgren (2006). Do conflicting targets lead to ineffective nature preservation? *Report by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency* 5639, 2006.

15 Thomas Jordan, researcher and teacher at the Department of Sociology and Work Science at the University of Gothenburg has written many easily accessible texts about conflicts. http://socav.gu.se/Samverkan/arbetsplatskonflikt.

Ground rules for constructive communication:

1. Ask yourself what it is you do not know. Each one of us has their own view of the situation. Ask open questions about how others experience it so you can better understand what is happening, and then find joint solutions.
2. Differentiate between problem and person. Formulate conflict questions as common problems for which you must all find solutions. Distance yourself from reproaches and negative opinions of other people. Instead, talk about what you feel and want and invite the opponent to help find solutions.
3. Be clear in your communication. Talk about what you experience. Talk about what is important for you, why you think it is important, your feelings and wishes. Care and ask about the opponent's feelings and needs.
4. Maintain contact with the opponent. Do what you can to maintain communication and improve the relationships. Actively seek to be obliging to create trust and confidence.
5. Analyse what needs and interests are behind each of the stances. Examine what needs and interests could be met by concrete demands, and see if there are alternative and mutually acceptable ways to meet those. Show consideration for the opponent's feelings without taking any reproaches or accusations you may receive to heart. Find out what is important to you deep inside, and keep in contact with this.
6. Make it easier for the opponent to be constructive. Do not rouse defence reactions by using accusations, criticism or negative judgements. Give the opponent recognition and respect their points whenever you genuinely can. Show the opponent that you care about what they find important.
7. Practise examining the conflict from an external perspective. Consider the situation as a whole. Be aware of the actions that influence tensions in the conflict, both negatively and positively. Learn how to see how you can influence the course of the conflict in a constructive direction.

As a facilitator, your task is to create the circumstances where the parties can communicate constructively so trust can increase. This might mean you need to meta-communicate—i.e. communicate about how you communicate. Perhaps you will agree about the rules of play concerning how you will speak to each other, for example respecting the opinions of others and listen to others, even if you think different things.

Where there is a risk of conflict, it is important to provide a clear picture of what the dialogue can achieve. Do this before and during the introduction. In this case, the purpose and framework for the dialogues need to be presented very carefully.

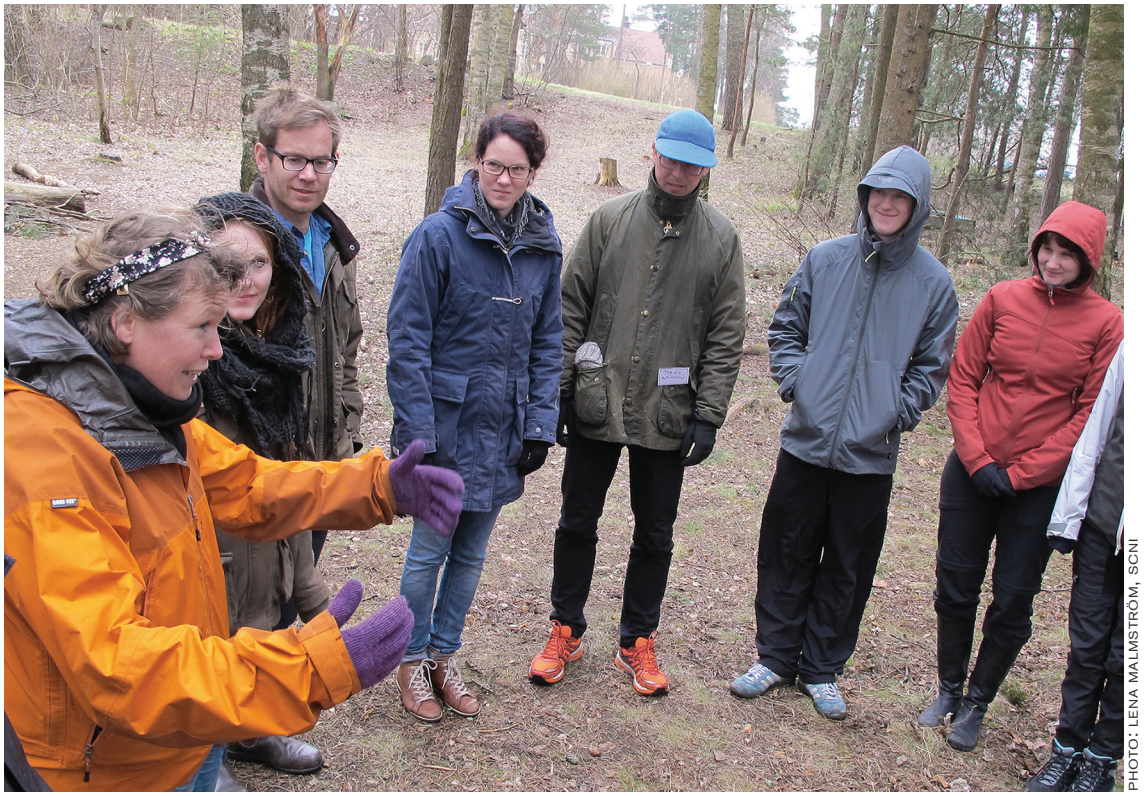

PHOTO: LENA MALMSTRÖM, SCNI

THE PURPOSE AND FRAMEWORK FOR THE DIALOGUES NEED TO BE PRESENTED VERY CAREFULLY.

6 Dialogue methods and exercises

This chapter presents some methods and exercises for use in landscape dialogue processes when out in the field. Of course, your chosen method will depend on the group you are working with—not all exercises work in all situations. It is important for the participants to feel comfortable enough to contribute. What do you want to achieve with the dialogue? Do the participants know each other and the land-scape? What relationship do they have with the particular landscape? Are there any conflicts of interest in the group? You choose which exercises are suitable based on the answers to these—and other—questions.

6.1 The Circle

By gathering in a circle, all members of the group can see each other. The circle also offers advantages in outdoor environments, where a room is not available to keep the group together, and where there are challenges such as cold weather,

noise and wind that may make it difficult to hear what is being said. The circle helps the group focus and ignore wind and noise.

6.2 An introduction exercise

At the start of your time together—regardless of whether it is long or short, whether you will only meet once or on several occasions—it is important that everybody can say something. One way to do this, whilst also directly integrating the landscape into the discussion, is to ask everyone to collect something in their surroundings that, for example, says something about themselves or the landscape. It is possible to dedicate a large amount of time to this activity—ask the participants to take their time, to forget whatever is on their mind and simply take in the landscape for a while. Upon your signal, all gather again and everybody says something about themselves and what they have collected. If you are a large group, you might need to limit the time available to participants. If you are a considerable number, perhaps only two words per person. You can also divide the participants into groups of 4-5 who introduce themselves to each other.

PHOTO: LENA MALMSTRÖM, SCNI.

IN AN INTRODUCTION EXERCISE, THE PARTICIPANTS TALK ABOUT THEMSELVES USING AN OBJECT THEY HAVE COLLECTED IN THE LANDSCAPE. SCNI COURSE "LANDSCAPE DIALOGUES", 2015.

6.3 The talking stick and rounds

The "talking stick" is a familiar tool in North America—Native Americans use it during meetings. The person holding the talking stick may talk while the others listen. Typical talking sticks are often beautiful and intricately decorated, but any type of stick will do. The talking stick is often used in rounds, where everyone can say something about an issue. By using the talking stick, the speaker is clear; it helps the group listen in a focused way, and the speaker to speak with focus. The talking stick and rounds quickly create a positive meeting culture with respectful listening. The person speaking knows they will not be interrupted. It can also make things easier for people who may have difficulty speaking in groups. It is also fine if a person does not wish to speak. At the outset, say how much time each participant has. This helps the participants divide the time fairly. For example, a round with 15 people who speak for approximately one minute each will take 15 minutes.

The talking stick can also help to distribute discussions by placing the stick in the middle of the circle. The person wishing to speak can collect the stick and return it once they have finished saying what they want to say. This helps the group, and you as a facilitator, to

FOTO: LENA MALMSTRÖM, CNV.

A QUIET WALK PROVIDES PARTICIPANTS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF-REFLECTION. EVERYBODY SEES SOMETHING DIFFERENT IN THE LANDSCAPE. SHARING OUR IMPRESSIONS LATER ON CAN HIGHLIGHT DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES.

ascertain the energy behind an issue by how many people want to hold the stick. It also helps distribute the discussion democratically, as it becomes clear if somebody is holding on to the stick for a long period, or picks it up repeatedly. You can draw attention to this and encourage more people to contribute.

6.4 Quiet walk

Ask the group to move around the landscape in silence for a short while. What sensory impressions do you get? How does moving around this landscape make you feel? People in groups will often want to talk to each other, so you need to be explicit about the importance of silence. You can also encourage participants to allow their "inner monologue" to quieten down for a while, so they can simply take in the landscape. Sharing the experiences later, in a circle with or without the talking stick, strengthens the impressions.

6.5 Discussions in pairs

To explore something in more depth, the group can be divided into pairs. The pairs will engage in discussion—ideally during a walk. One method to create quality listening is to give the instruction that only one person may speak at one time, perhaps for 3 minutes, while the other must listen attentively. Once the time has run out, the roles are swapped. It is also possible to change partners to explore the same questions in more depth. Open questions with subjective answers provide an anchor to inner values, thus facilitating further conversations,

see chapter 7. *Dialogue in the landscape*. Of course, it is also possible to discuss questions specific to one place or situation.

Suggested questions:

- What is your relationship to this place?
- What is important to you here?
- What does this place mean to you?

6.6 What do you see?

This exercise is one way to map the landscape and our different interpretations of it. It is introduced in a circle and can be used as an introduction round if it includes saying something about yourself. Stand in a circle and say something about landscape in general, and how we all experience landscapes differently. Then ask the group to face outwards with their backs to the circle, and take in the landscape. What do you see here? What is your first/strongest impression? Then turn and face inwards and take in the landscape in your circle with each person saying something about what they saw or experienced (including their name and something about themselves if this is an introduction round). Participants will gain an immediate connection to the landscape and learn something about the different perceptions of it held in the group.

6.7 Look and note

Ask the participants to observe the landscape for a short while. Then ask them to turn around. Give them a pen and paper and ask them to draw what they saw out of their memory. Then ask them to turn around once more, and give them more time to draw the landscape as they see it. Compare the pictures. What differs? What is the first impression of the landscape?

Drawing can cause performance anxiety for many people. One variation may therefore be to look and draw simultaneously. Whilst looking at the landscape, you draw it without looking at the paper. You can then show your picture to your partner—what did you see? What stands out the most, makes the biggest impression?

6.8 Fishbowl

The "Fishbowl" is a pleasant, often effective way to approach many different perspectives on one issue. This takes place by gathering the group in a circle with places marked out in the centre—usually five. When indoors, these are marked with chairs. If outdoors, this can be done using something else to sit on. One of these places must always be empty. Four people sit in the remaining places and start discussing a topic provided by the facilitator. At any point (allowing some initial time for the four to get their conversation going), somebody from the external ring comes and sits in the empty space and participates in the conversation. Then one of the people already sitting in the centre must leave their place and return to the ring, making their old place available to someone new. A well-defined subject is important, so the facilitator can get the discussion back on track if it starts to trail off.

6.9 Quick mapping of moods and opinions in the group

There are several methods to quickly assess the status of a group. The question may be anything from "are you tired?" to "do you think it would be best to focus on a nature reserve, shopping centre or something else on this site?" The fastest way for the group to respond is by showing a thumbs up, down, or to the side if something is positive, negative or somewhere in-between respectively. You can also ask the group to stand in a line with different options at the ends. If there are several options, you can use a four-corner exercise. As, in general, there are no corners in a landscape, various landscape elements such as stones or trees can be used. It is also a good idea to include one open option ("other"). By giving the thumbs up or standing in a specific spot, the status becomes clear to the entire group and consequently ready for discussion. For this to be meaningful, this quick-form of mapping needs a follow up (unless it addressed a simple decision, such as whether to take a break or not)—discuss, either in smaller groups or all together!

6.10 A walk through time

With help from e.g. local heritage foundations, it is possible to explore the landscape through time and the many traces of each era. The tales of the landscape—layer upon layer, in historical time and/or geological time. This helps the participants generate their own experience in a greater context, perhaps finding fellowship with those who lived there before—and those who will follow. Extending the perception of time in this way is a good basis for creating a common vision. Can we reach a common understanding of how we wish to see this landscape in the future? A shared vision helps to develop common targets and responses to external plans.

PHOTO: SWEDISH CENTRE FOR NATURE INTERPRETATION.

PHOTO: SWEDISH CENTRE FOR NATURE INTERPRETATION

7 Dialogue in the landscape

Conducting dialogues out in the landscape often poses specific challenges. Getting out there can be difficult and time-consuming; the weather is unpredictable and resources such as toilet facilities and food may be tricky. Nevertheless, there are many reasons to why going to the trouble to hold landscape dialogues in the field is worthwhile.

7.1 The significance of the place

One holistic way of describing the landscape is as relationships between the constituent parts that also include those of us who define the landscape. Such a perspective makes the landscape both a sensory and cognitive experience that loses dimensions when it is described from a distance. Being part of the landscape enables direct experience and access to an intuitive feeling for the context created by these relationships in time and space, and that cannot be surpassed.

7.2 Outdoors, the sky's the limit and nothing lies in the walls

Our roles are often rather fixed, both as social actors and in our organisations. To interpret the world, we have several—more or less subconscious—conceptions of each other that hinder listening and communication. We are used to certain people and groups being in favour of different things, and happily label each other

in ways that are difficult to overlook. By transferring the dialogue out into the landscape, these roles and conceptions can be shaken.

7.3 The landscape supports inner values

What we prioritise and value in a landscape and how we relate to it are strongly determined by our values—what we think is important, desirable and normal. Socio-psychological research has mapped human values, and shows how they are dynamically organised in relation to each other.[16] Two groups of values are of interest to landscape and sustainable development: the inner and outer values respectively. The outer values apply to aspects such as material welfare, performance and status. The inner values for example address fairness, self-determination and relationships with nature. It is the internal values that enable us to care about the context that goes beyond ourselves. Strong inner values are closely associated with behaviour and attitudes towards a sustainable society.

Our values are influenced by our surroundings. Feelings of security, being listened to and having the space to express ourselves strengthen inner values. The way we experience nature also strengthens inner values. Being present in landscapes subsequently provides a greater ability to take responsibility for them. Contact with nature can strengthen values connected to relationships with other people and community spirit.[17] One study shows that experiences that lead to wonder, such as musical or nature-based experiences, make us more patient, helpful and less materialistic.[18]

16 Crompton, Tom. (2010). *Common Cause—the case for working with our cultural values*. WWF-UK.

17 Weinstein, N., Przybylski, A. K. & Ryan, R. M. (2009). Can nature make us more caring? Effects of immersion in nature on intrinsic aspirations and generosity. *Personality & social psychology bulletin*, 35(10): 1315–29.

18 Rudd, M., Vohs, K. D. & Aaker, J. (2012). Awe expands people's perception of time, alters decision making, and enhances well-being. *Psychological Science*, 23(10): 1130-1136.

8 Extended dialogue

Human society tends to treat nature as a pantry and a refuse tip. This worked for as long as there were fewer people in relation to the size and capacity of the ecosystems. Today, we constantly see new signs that we need to re-evaluate this relationship between human society and nature, in order to sustainably manage our landscapes across the scale from local to global. This is reflected in the **Ecosystem Approach** (see chapter 2. *Society's support for dialogue and participation processes*) that acknowledges humans as part of the ecosystem. The ability to understand landscape as a dynamic whole that includes the person also requires an expansion to the dialogue. Not only people have interests in the landscape—birches, brooks and bees are also involved. In addition to conveying dialogue about the landscape with other people, we also need to use our senses and feelings to include the needs of other living creatures in the dialogue. Many of the exercises that are described in chapter 6. *Dialogue methods and exercises* can be used in this way.

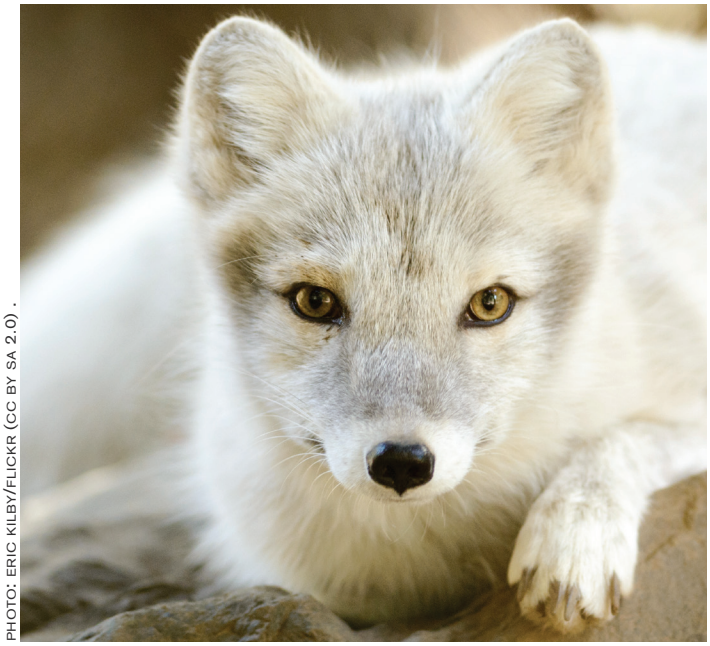

PHOTO: ERIC KILBY/FLICKR (CC BY SA 2.0) .

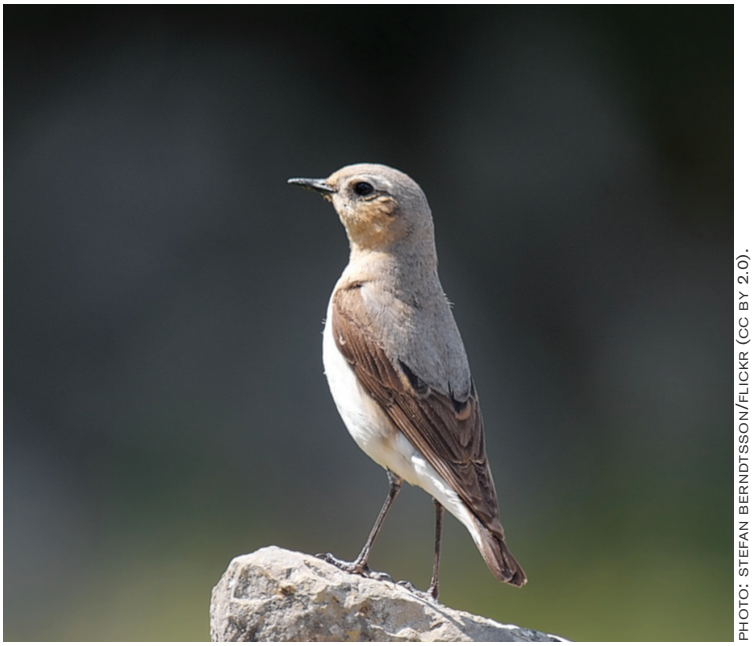

PHOTO: STEFAN BERNDTSSON/FLICKR (CC BY 2.0).

9 Three examples and a toolkit

Three examples of dialogue processes within and about landscape will now be presented. What they have in common is that they are initiated by others than government agencies, and they involve several different actors.

9.1 The Sigtuna Project—a landscape for all

In Sigtuna, the golf club, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and municipality have joined forces with the Scandinavian Turfgrass and Environment Research Foundation (STERF) and instigated a project to develop the area around Garnsviken. The goals are to create an overall view of the landscape, where separate interests are secondary to the comprehensive view; creating participation in lasting creation of values; increased accessibility; developing the business advantages of multifunctional activities, and becoming the first municipality in Sweden to implement the European Landscape Convention.

The area around Garnsviken is 6x3 km and comprises several different landscapes. The village of Viby, the Wenngarn Castle, Sigtuna Golf Club, Askare hage and the smallholdings of Humparboda and Konterbacka are the results of over 1,000 years of development to the cultural and natural landscapes. The area is directly connected to the north-west of expanding Sigtuna, which, with its centre from the Middle Ages, is Sweden's first and oldest city. The northern part of Garnsviken is part of Knivsta municipality. The golf club encompasses approximately 15 percent of the project area.

One source of inspiration for the project was a report by the Swedish Golf Association, about multifunctional golf courses and the belief that golf facilities are an undeveloped resource that could provide an array of important services in demand by society. The insight that it is possible to take the initiative for change, and that nobody else will do this for you, were the key findings. By illustrating that a person is a resource that can contribute, it is possible to participate and determine how the area will grow and develop. Some topics discussed in this dialogue process included building new housing, Sweden's first freshwater reserve to be established in Garnsviken between 2014 and 2016, walkways and

cycle paths adapted for accessibility, plus development of the area surrounding Wenngarn Castle. The project has focused a lot of energy on visibility and gathering the right actors for joint planning and development of visions.[19]

Success factors in the Sigtuna Project have included:

- Clear leadership and organisation.
- Contact with all actors that may be interested in a collaboration.
- Support amongst the respective management for ideas, financing and results.
- Finding projects we can all benefit from.
- Good personal relationships and trust take time – more haste, less speed!
- Openness and democratic participation.
- Good communication of efforts and results.
- Applying for external financing for collaboration projects – a source to be utilised.
- Have fun!

9.2 The Umeälven Project—Collaboration Group 3 Reservoirs

The overall target of the Umeälven Project that began in 2010 is to achieve the good ecological potential (GEP) environmental norm. One important driving force is the problem of erosion, significant to the residents close to the reservoirs, another is deteriorating fishing. To work with the project, a non-profit organisation was created, *Collaboration Group 3 Reservoirs*. The committee includes representatives from nine villages—often officials—along the Ume River from Ramsele to Lillsele. A reference group to provide further skills and experience was also established with the aim of working collaboratively and holistically. The reference group includes representatives from hydro power plants, government agencies and nature protection organisations.

The process has resulted in several proposals for measures to re-introduce spring floods and adapt other changes to water levels, different types of erosion protection, restoration of fish spawning sites, circulation around power plants, restoration of tributaries and reinforcing wetlands. The proposals have been

19 Read more about the Sigtuna Project http://www.sigtunagk.se/se/sigtunaprojektet.

evaluated by the group to determine their benefits and costs.

The collaboration has formed a condition for meeting the target for a finalised action plan that establishes costs and ecological benefits. The participants have said that thanks to this group, the process now has a concrete basis and suggestions for steps to improve the water environment in the area; that it has created the grounds for future collaborations and dialogues with several different actors; that the opportunity to discuss the possibilities of reducing or alleviating the ecological consequences has been positive; being able to learn from the knowledge and observations of residents has been enriching, as has the increased insight into the decisions energy companies and government agencies must make; that the work has become increasingly characterised by mutual trust, and that improvements and changes to the environment now seem fully possible.[20]

Recipe for the Umeälven Project "Cooperation Cocktail":

- 1 part mutual respect
- 1 part consensus decision
- 1 part neat and tidy
- 1 part holistic thought
- 1 part common goals
- 1 part problem solving drive

9.3 Community Charter in Falkirk, Scotland

In response to large-scale exploitation of fossil fuels such as fracking, several local communities in the USA have come together to establish formal Community Bills of Rights to increase local autonomy for their landscapes. The intrinsic value of nature has often formed the starting point, rather than just seeing nature as property. In Scotland, planned extraction of natural gasses near Falkirk led to major protests from the local community and they were inspired by the development in the USA. In 2013, the process of mapping valuable aspects of the local community began. This resulted in a list that provided the community with a sense of pride and independence; obvious values such as forest, water and buildings as well as more abstract concepts such as close ties to their native region, the history of the landscapes and childhood experiences. Consequently, they could

20 Read more about the Umeälven Project: http://umealven.se/.

find out what was important to them, and present a vision of how they wanted the community to develop. Focus on what they will agree to, not what they will say "no" to. This also created a close connection to inner values (see chapter 7.3 *The Landscape supports inner values*). The process resulted in the United Kingdom's first Community Charter that aimed to re-define how local communities participate in planning processes. Rather than reacting—and often fighting —against decisions, the process focuses on what the people feel is important.

This process strengthened the local community, and resulted in the residents of Falkirk being given a greater say in the planning work. It also resulted in awareness and respect for the area, as well as insights such as if the needs of people in other areas could affect them so significantly, how did their own needs affect the landscapes of others? On http://faug.org.uk, the residents of Falkirk can get behind the community charter by adding their names to the list.

Extract from the Charter:

We declare our Cultural Heritage to be the sum total of the local tangible and intangible assets we have collectively agreed to be fundamental to the health and well-being of our present and future generations. These constitute an inseparable ecological and socio-cultural fabric that sustains life, and which provides us with the solid foundations for building and celebrating our homes, families, community and legacy within a healthy, diverse, beautiful and safe natural environment. This is the basis of a true economy, one which returns to its root meaning (oikos-home, nomia-management).

Thus, this Charter pertains to any development within our territory which impacts on our Cultural Heritage and, as this Charter is a direct expression from the people. It must be a material consideration in planning processes and decision-making, is a factor for impact assessment under environmental legislation, and must be given equal weight to other factors in the evaluation of whether development is sustainable.[21]

9.4 Talking About Our Place

Talking about our place is a Scottish manual and toolkit for involving local communities in getting to know, map and improve their place: http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/communities/talking-about-our-place/.

21 More about the Community Chartering Network http://www.communitychartering.org.
Read more about the legal work in the USA from Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund http://www.celdf.org.

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Participants in the course Landscape Dialogues, 17-18 April 2015, Swedish Centre for Nature Interpretation, SLU Ultuna.

Landscape Dialogues has been created for people interested in communication of changes to landscape and the relationship between people and nature; in developing planning formats, consultation and highlighting all of the landscape's values. Regardless of whether they are from universities, non-profit organisations or municipalities, nature interpreters have traditionally assumed the role of experts who lecture about and present the natural values of an area to an audience. However, nature interpreters can also act as discussion leaders. They can help participants catch sight of the landscape and its values of all dimensions and, not least, to convey a dialogue of how the landscape can be managed in a sustainable way for the future. This guide explains why more nature interpreters need to do this, and what the procedures can involve.

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