

Photo: Gunnar Hamrin



NEW METHOD

BETTER MANAGEMENT OF FOREST WATERS

IN PILOT AREA OF SNÄRJE STREAM GUNNAR HAMRIN (SWEDISH FOREST AGENCY) HAS APPLIED A NEW METHOD FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF WATER RESOURCES. ONCE THE CLASSIFICATION HAS BEEN DONE, APPROPRIATE ACTIONS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED AT TARGETED LOCATIONS. THE GOAL OF THIS INVENTORY IS BETTER MANAGEMENT OF FOREST WATERS TO DECREASE NUTRIENTS LOADS AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES THAT EVENTUALLY WILL REACH THE BALTIC SEA.

Most of Sweden's rivers, more than 100 000 km, are located in forest areas. All water bodies, e.g. lakes, streams, rivers etc., are of great importance to the surrounding forest. And on the other hand, hydrology, water quality and aquatic species are influenced by the surrounding woodland. What happens to the water upstream has an impact on the water downstream and eventually the sea, in this case the Baltic Sea. Both forest and water bodies within the forest are therefore of great importance for the ecological status of the entire Baltic Sea.

Method developed by WWF

Nowadays, forest companies and owners work with different types of plans that are adapted to different kinds of ecosystems found in these areas. However, no type of planning or classification is done for aquatic habitats in this ecosystem. But this might come to a change as the WWF has developed a method that can be used for management of water

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FORMING A WUP IN BRÄKNE RIVER

On 1 March the interim board of the Water Users' Partnership (WUP) of Bräkne River held a public information meeting in the village hall of Belganet, county of Blekinge. This was the third public meeting to be held in the process of forming a WUP for Bräkne River, and the last one before the forthcoming assembly on 13 April, where the WUP is to be formally established.

At the first meeting, held on 23 March 2010, a working group was chosen to investigate the options available for the establishment of a WUP. Then, at the second meeting on 25 October 2010, it was decided that the prospective WUP should take the form of a Water Council. An interim board and an election committee were appointed and tasked with all preparations required to establish the Water Council/WUP.

Cultural heritage values

The recent meeting at Belganet, attended by 36 persons, was held mainly in order to increase knowledge of the WUP among stakeholders and hopefully to attract more future members. Words of welcome were given by Ann-Mari Lilja Samuelsson, chair of the interim board. WUP coordinator Anders Börjeson informed about water management, Project MOMENT and the process of establishing the Water Council/WUP for Bräkne River, after which there was opportunity for questions and discussion.

The "main attraction" of the evening was a lecture by Anette Johansson from the County Administrative Board about sites of cultural historic value along the river. An inventory of such sites has recently been performed, in order to ensure that they will be duly considered when planning and implementing environmental measures. The subject was of high interest, and much appreciated by the audience. /Anders Börjeson



> resources. First, river basins are classified with regard to nature value, impact and sensitivity. And secondly, by studying the water's appearance it is also possible to assess the stream status and quality of the water. It has been observed that water velocity, bottom conditions and the presence of dead wood, protection zones, the risk of siltation, connecting ditches etc., are strongly related to the status of the water.

The method that WWF has developed is called "NPK +", where N stands for nature value (naturvärde), P stands for impact (påverkan), K is the sensitivity (känslighet) and + stands for additional values. Once this inventory is done, a classification of the different sections of the watercourse can be made with various actions in connection to the different sections. This way of planning has, to some extent, been used by some forest companies but not very often by private forest owners.

First time applied on private landowners

During the inventory of Snärje stream, the WWF's approach has been used in combination with the Swedish Forest Agency's Water Policy. Among else, this policy underlines (a) the importance of functional protected zones and (b) the assessment of forest operations on a river basin perspective. Overall, about 60 km of the Snärje stream was inventoried and classified in this way. This has resulted in the definition, classification and action plan for 17 different river sections in the whole basin. Moreover, research was done in the Swedish Forest Agency's maps database on all objects and areas located in the vicinity Snärje stream Information considering connecting ditches, harvesting, swamps, dams, wetlands, cultural and heritage sites, objects with high nature values, etc was hereby also taken into account.

Future plans

The main work after the inventory in the Snärje stream is the individual consultancy to forest owners about the measures that are necessary and the instruments that are available to improve the water body's status. An important issue during this consultancy stage is to pay attention to those measures that already have been taken by the landowner.

In the future, we plan to arrange a so called "river walks" in the upstream and in the downstream part of the river catchment area. We invite everybody who might be interested on these events and we show them the positive development on the one hand and the problems on the other, for example the damage done during forest harvesting, migration barriers like dams, road culverts or well created protection zones etc.

Another possibility is to create demonstration objects that could be used as good example under consultancy assignments or river walk events.
/Gunnar Hamrin



OFFICIAL WUP OPENING

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WATER USERS PARTNERSHIP IN MINIJA RIVER

THE FOURTH OPENING OF A WATER USERS PARTNERSHIPS (WUP) IN THE MOMENT PROJECT PARTNERSHIP WAS CONCLUDED IN GARDSAI THE 3RD OF FEBRUARY 2010. BAD WEATHER AND HEAVY SNOW FALL DID NOT STOP THE APPROXIMATELY 40 PARTICIPANTS TO GATHER AND TAKE PART IN MINIJA RIVERS' OFFICIAL WUP KICK-OFF.

The Minija river basin is the largest and most extensive of all the pilot areas within the project. The river basin that is more than 2200 km² incorporates 7 municipalities and a very diverse group of different actors or water users. With its natural meandering and stunning sceneries, it is also one of Lithuania's most beautiful rivers, making it very popular for tourist excursion and all kinds of fishing. Therefore, the biggest challenge of the WUP will be to create a forum for a heterogeneous group of water users that deals with the problems and opportunities for improving the river's quality and popularity.

Problems that need to be addressed

The first WUP meeting already addressed several issues and problems within the river's catchment area. Professor Arturas Razinkovas-Baziukas from the University of Klaipeda explained how the environmental conditions in the Minija River highly depend on the weather conditions during the winter season. Intense rainfall or rapid melting of snow leads to high flows and significant discharges of both nutrients and hazardous substances from the surrounding area like farmland.

Dalia Zukiene, representing the already established WUP in the Akmena-Dane river basin, emphasized the need to point out all water users within the catchment area and stress the need for them participate in the WUP. Collaboration,

discussion and participation are the keystones of the idea behind this partnership as it is based on mutual respect between different stakeholders and a true bottom up approach.

The need to address problems, discuss solutions and to raise public awareness is essential for the status of the river in order to remain one of Lithuania's most popular water sites. This river basin wide collaboration is a unique way of giving a voice to the small and large actors, private or official water users and even non professional stakeholders. It is a forum of all different kind of people with one thing in common: overall improvement of the quality of the river. The WUP will therefore play a key role if these challenges are to be tackled in the nearest future.

COMING EVENTS

Fifth Working Group meeting

18th & 19th of April in pilot area Bräkne River.

Stormwater study tour

20th and 21st of April in Southern Sweden

Steering Committee web meeting

11th of May through Adobe Connect

Third ERB Water Group meeting

16th and 17th of May in Poland.

CONTACT US

The Regional Council in Kalmar County (lead partner)
Projectleader: Tobias Facchini, tel +46 (0)480 44 83 83, tobias.facchini@rfkl.se
Financial Manager: Johan Lundbäck +46 (0)480 44 83 42, johan.lundback@rfkl.se

THE NEWSLETTER

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Photos: Gunnar Hamrin

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