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Public participation and conflict management in Lapland

Dr. Kii Korhonen, Regional director, Metsähallitus Forestry Lapland

1. Public participation in Metsähallitus, Lapland

Managing state owned forests in Finnish Lapland is a task to combine traditional and modern land uses, several naturebased livelihoods, wide variety of ecosystem services in a sustainable and profitable way. State lands cover 60 % of the land area in Finnish Lapland. Half of the state lands are protected and managed by Parks and wildlife unit. This includes national parks, wilderness areas and other protected areas with no forestry. Forestry unit manages the other half, but commercial forestry is practiced in 28 % of the land area. This means 1,7 mill. hectares of northern boreal forests where we practice multiple-use forestry and deliver some 1,9 mill. m³ timber to sawmills and pulp and paper mills yearly.

Specialities of the state forests in Lapland include:

- 1) All forests have open access by anybody: local people as well as tourists or berrypickers from Thailand. Hunting, fishing berry and mushroom picking are traditional nature uses still very common by local people. Besides local use, hunting and fishing licenses are sold by Parks and wildlife unit, but only for areas managed by forestry.
- 2) Reindeer husbandry is practiced in all of the forests. Reindeer herders have free range and motorized herding. Statutory negotiations are needed with reindeer herders if state land use might cause substantial harm to reindeer husbandry.
- 3) Finland's main touristic centers are in Lapland and nature tourism as a livelihood increases. Nature tourism in forestry areas include snowmobile and dogsledge safaris, biking and hiking, cross-country skiing and many adventure sports as well as wellness and silence seeking. Slogans of pristine wilderness do not really fit in areas where 8000 years of human influence in nature is visible. But these seminatural forests are a living example of people earning all their living from forests in a sustainable way.



- 4) Northern Lapland is defined by law as Sámi Homeland region where negotiations with Sámi Parliament are needed in significant land use issues on state owned land. Sámi are the only people in the EU with a status of indigenous people.
- 5) Large areas are defined as the Army practice or firing range areas, but also these areas are in forestry and public access use outside the firing times.
- 6) Research Forest areas are managed by the objectives of the Natural Resource Center or other research institutes. Vocational forest school and technical universities have their students working in state forests regularly. The vocational school has a logging contract for Metsähallitus here.

Public participation is needed to combine all the simultaneous uses with sustainable and profitable forestry. A wide variety of participation methods are needed in different situations and with different stakeholders/interest groups.

All stakeholders/interest groups

- Natural resource planning
 - Public meetings
 - Co-operation group with all local/regional interest parties
 - Optional plans, objective measures and evaluation methods
 - Free and consent consensus seeking with possibility to express a dissenting opinion
 - Final decisions by Metsähallitus
- Landscape ecological analysis, including multiple use
 - Research seminars with ENGOs
 - Stakeholder meetings and public meetings
 - Internet based map questionnaire for data collecting

Local public

- Internet maps and map questionnaires
- Open meetings
- Feedback system as a part of the Environment management system (ISO 14001)

Tourism companies

- Permanent cooperation groups – tourism companies, village associations
- Logging plans introduced in beforehand, visualization tools
- Route contracts taken into account
- Special logging methods, lowered logging volumes



Reindeer husbandry

- Agreement of co-operation and forest management by Reindeer Herders' Association and Metsähallitus forms the basis of PEFC criterium.
- Reindeer herders have a possibility to influence on all loggings, soil preparation, road construction and routes.

Sámi indigenous rights

- PEFC – standard agreement with Sámi Parliament, including forest management model for the Sámi area
- Agreement of co-operation and forest management by Sámi Parliament, Scolt Sámi meeting, Sámi area reindeer herding co-operatives and Metsähallitus
- Akwé Ko:n principles in practice

2. Conflict management case: Old growth forests and Greenpeace

Metsähallitus logging plans caused local disputes in northern Lapland in 1990s. Sámi parliament refused to negotiate on any land use, including National park management plans.

Old Growth Forest Protection program was completed in 1996. Total of 300 000 ha of old forests were protected in northern Finland, but ENGOs were not satisfied in all of the decisions. Local disputes appeared in 1997-2002.

In 2003 Greenpeace decided to target their international campaign from British Columbia to northern Finland. The campaign was based on natural (semi-natural) forests, endangered species, reindeer and indigenous peoples. They claimed that 400 000 hectares of natural forests (not defined on maps) were in danger and needed to be protected.

Customer pressure grew and Metsähallitus started the s.c. dialogue process, negotiations with ENGOs during 2003-2006. As a result of this dialogue some 120 000 ha of forests and peatlands (56 000 ha of productive forests) were protected in 2006.

After this Greenpeace targeted the campaign to northern parts of Lapland where the proportion of forests protected was already 43%. They published maps with 110 000 hectares of delineations as important Sámi reindeer pastures, together with four Sámi reindeer herding co-operatives.

Local people in Inari organized a strong opposition against Greenpeace. Next to Greenpeace camp an anti-terror camp was set up.



As a part of Greenpeace campaign, three Paadar brothers made a complaint to the UN Human Rights Committee. Paadar brothers lost the case in the lowest stage of court. -> Metsähallitus and Paadar brothers negotiated an agreement in 2009, including certain set-aside areas for 20 and 10 yrs.

Negotiations of Metsähallitus, Greenpeace, reindeer herders' co-operative and other relevant stakeholders in 2009 resulted to an agreement to set aside permanently the most important parts of the Forest Lapland conflict areas, including Peurakaira in Lappi cooperative. Greenpeace agreed to leave Finland as a result.

After this it was possible to try to solve Inari case. The reindeer herders' co-operatives in Inari and Metsähallitus negotiations in 2010 resulted to agreements with decisions of certain forestry areas to be set aside as the most important reindeer pasture forests for 20 years.

During all of the processes some 50 000 ha of forests previously in forestry use were set aside permanently and 43 000 ha for 20 years in Lapland. The areas were chosen to fulfill the needs of other stakeholders with the minimum effect on forestry. Thus the estimated effect on planned logging volumes was 3 % of the volume of loggings of Metsähallitus in Lapland.

After this normal cooperation procedures have been working and no problems have occurred in the loggings. This also made it possible to make a new agreement on cooperation with the Sámi parliament in 2014.

What did we learn of the northern Lapland forest conflict

- Land use conflicts should be negotiated while local and between those who have real local interest.
- It is not possible to solve everything in wide range and heterogenic groups such as Natural Resource planning co-operation groups. In wide groups issues turn to become "political" and discussions stay at common level.
- Round table meetings with forestry companies, paper buyers, ENGOs and other stakeholders might have a role if no public participation and local cooperation exists. In Lapland it meant that people who were not involved and aware of situation discussed instead of real partners. Greenpeace as well as companies tend to act in public to show their good intentions. This makes things more difficult to solve.
- Researchers provide a lot of data and facts but solutions are not based on who has better facts, but only on human relations. Willingness and ability to listen and understand the key issues, even the small ones, is

the main clue to solutions. Professional facilitators can only be of help if they have enough knowledge of local culture and ability to see behind the obvious talks.

- The solutions need to be brought to a wide stakeholder group to be accepted. These can be temporary groups as in Forest Lapland case or the stakeholder group of the Natural resource plans as in Inari forest reindeer cooperatives' case.

Simple rules of the negotiation with stakeholders in conflict

- Good preparations in beforehand. Maps and data availability.
- Define the purpose of the meeting and set up procedures and rules acceptable for both. Written agenda accepted by all. But be adaptive during process to build trust.
- Start with listening the others. How is the reindeer herding organized in this cooperative? Which are important sites when gathering the reindeer? Which are the routes of this touristic company and is there some future plans? Ask even if you knew.
- Work with maps site by site. This takes time. Stick to concrete issues.
- Tell what are important sites for forestry and other relevant views. But do not start listing facts which show your views are more important!
- Agree common principles how we can meet their needs and list also what we cannot agree upon.
- Be creative – small things can resolve great problems – if they promote mutual trust.
- Written memo with all decisions and signed in the meeting by everyone present.
- Conflict resolution is made in small steps and it needs a lot of time. Don't give up in first dead ends!

Reputation?

These old disputes still effect our reputation internationally. Internet is full of old ENGO accusations, but very few information of the “peace time”. Loads of research has been published dealing with disputes, nobody is interested to study solutions and researchers only cite published studies. Especially in all EU legislation processes and in every certification discussion we need to convince people again and again that there are no unsolved disputes in state forests in Lapland.