

Sustainable Tourism Management In Protected Areas

Stenshuvud National Park - Sweden

Case Study

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From Lund, “the city of ideas”

Natalia Piñeros Arenas

Lund, Sweden September of 2006

Abstract

This thesis covers sustainable tourism management in protected areas in Sweden taking the case of Stenshuvud National Park. Through a literature review and empirical studies, the current situation in regard to tourism management in Sweden and in the park is investigated, needs are identified and the usefulness of a formalised management system is discussed. The research indicates that the lack of clear guidelines on a national level, as well as the lack of a management system for tourism in the park, could constitute a threat to conservation values and natural assets. In order to manage tourism and access benefits while containing damage, there is a need to anticipate future problems and to plan and monitor current and future tourism flows and impacts in protected areas. While this may be possible even without formalised management systems, the study shows that such systems can provide significant guidance and support. The opportunities provided by the European Charter are further investigated and discussed in relation to the needs of the park. On the basis of the research, this thesis provides recommendations for the park.

Executive Summary

While considered as fragile locales that conserve the most valuable treasures of nature, protected areas are increasingly seen as natural important environments for developing tourism activities. It is, therefore, very important that tourism flows in protected areas are being monitored, controlled and planned, in order to prevent and diminish the negative impacts that this activity can cause to the area, as well as increasing the positive impacts that also can be generated if it is managed in a suitable manner.

The overall purpose of this thesis is to investigate the need and options of implementing a management system for planning and developing tourism, taking as a case study Stenshuvud National Park in Skåne, Sweden. For developing the research, the following research questions were asked:

- In general, how does the Swedish Protected Areas system work?
- In the Swedish context, how is tourism managed in Protected Areas?
- What is the current situation in Sweden, in terms of the implementation of management systems for developing sustainable tourism in protected areas?
- What is the current situation in terms of tourism management in Stenshuvud National Park?

Protected Areas in Sweden are mainly created for conservation of biological diversity and preserving valuable natural environments, but most of them are also accessible for tourism and outdoor recreation. National Parks and Nature Reserves are the most common and known way of environmental protection in the country. Tourism in these areas is based on the *right of public access* principle where individuals can freely enjoy nature without damaging and disturbing the natural environment.

However, tourism has not been seen as a strategic development tool from the national and local level, possibly because it is not the primary objective of protected areas, and because of the traditional principle of free enjoyment of nature. Furthermore, up to date, from the national level, guidelines for developing ecologically sustainable tourism are still under construction; these guidelines could be seen as a first step to start thinking about the significance of tourism as a driver for promoting conservation and regional development. Nevertheless, information on what exactly these guidelines will include and what the specific outcomes the Swedish EPA expects to get from their application has yet not been made public.

Stenshuvud National Park is one of the most visited and attractive National Parks in Sweden, it is, therefore, highly relevant to understand how tourism is managed, how it is planned and controlled and what are the perspectives to the future development of this activity in the park. Tourism is considered an important issue, and currently this activity is not seen as a critical problem for conservation purposes.

However, the current situation shows that tourism in the park is managed without a strategic plan where tourism flows can be monitored and controlled with consideration to the significant threats to the environment that this activity represents to the area in the short, the medium and long term. The current management plan of the park does not set guidelines for

managing tourism and it is possible to say that the park is not prepared for the future development of tourism.

Recommendations

A management system can give Stenshuvud National Park the guidelines for establishing a tourism management strategy that can provide the opportunity to plan the future development of this activity in the area, as well as different specific tools for working in partnership with local inhabitants for achieving nature conservation objectives. Furthermore, it can also contribute to the local and regional development of the area. Adopting a management system does not signify going against preservation issues; it is the opportunity for the park to plan to the future and working in an organized way.

Currently, several tools have been developed by different recognized organizations in the world that provide assistance to protected areas and promote the strategic management of tourism. In Europe, management systems are being adopted by several protected areas. The two main systems are the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas developed by the EUROPARC Federation, the organization in charge of administering all protected areas in Europe; and the Pan Parks initiative, created by the World Wildlife Foundation and the Dutch company Molecaten group. Both frameworks were developed with the aim of providing a supportive tool to protected areas for managing tourism in a sustainable way.

An investigation of the application of sustainable tourism management schemes in the two Nordic parks, together with an analysis of the requisites of these frameworks, indicates that the most suitable scheme for Stenshuvud National Park is the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

By adopting the Charter, the park accesses the opportunity of having guidance in the development of a structured planning system for tourism, that will also provide the park with the tools to prevent damage to nature and environment, which can be derived as a result of tourism development.

The decision on whether to adopt the charter or not, is dependent upon the future plans of the area, main motivations, objectives, the level of commitment and significance that tourism represents to the area, as well as on the new guidelines that are being developed. However, these future guidelines should not be seen as a reason not to address the issue of tourism management already now, by working proactively, the park will most probably be better prepared to follow the coming guidelines. Furthermore, the Charter is a tool that should not in any way come in opposition with the new guidelines and thus could potentially be seen as an instrument for compliance with future norms.

An investigation of the park shows that there are several ways of improving the management of tourism in the area. As mentioned, the adoption of a sustainable tourism management scheme would provide guidance and tools. Specific options for improvements were also identified for example visitor's centre could be upgraded and the transportation flows could be optimised. However, it should be emphasised that merely addressing individual issues may not be sufficient, instead a strategy should be developed and measures and improvements should be part of this development strategy.

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1 Introduction

*“As long as people are aware that we are guests in nature,
then we can be more responsible for our behaviour”.*

1.1 Background

A new approach towards the management of protected areas in the world has evolved. Protected areas are now being considered as strategic places for the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, but at the same time, they are increasingly seen as natural valuable environments for developing tourism activities.

Managed in an appropriate way, tourism can be an important driver for local and regional development, as well as a significant tool for nature conservation and for increasing the awareness of the need to preserve those valuable areas.

Tourism can generate positive impacts for protected areas. On one hand, it is a development opportunity for local communities to raise their income and create more jobs for instance; on the other hand, tourism can be an important source for generating funds for conservation programs, as well as for improving life quality of local communities.

Costa Rica in Central America is an example of how tourism based on nature can be a very good driver for conservation and regional development. Almost 25% of their territory is protected and nowadays is considered one of the best ecotourism destinations around the world. Ecotourism represents the major income generator in the country and therefore all the stakeholders involved in the chain are getting benefit from it.

On the other hand, if tourism is not appropriately planned, managed and developed, it can be seen as a significant threat for the environment and biodiversity, as well as for local identity and traditional cultures, by putting in risk the future existence of the protected areas.

Tourism is considered one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world and therefore one of the activities that generate more negative impacts to cultural, social, economic and environmental values.

In protected areas, negative tourism impacts to the environment can be associated with the need of expanding tourism facilities (paths, buildings, roads, others), excess of people and overuse of natural resources mentioning some of the main factors; that causes direct impact to natural resources, vegetation, ecosystems, animal environment, biodiversity and cultural heritage and economic impact.

It is for instance the case of protected areas in Bahia, Brazil. Protected areas in this region of the country are considered significant attractive places for tourism, but they have been suffering high levels of environmental damage due mainly for the increasingly number of visitors. By 1990, the number of animal species decreased in 12% mostly because of the great demand of tourists for skins of rare species, being this activity a source of income for local communities¹.

¹ Ceballos-Lascurain H. (1996). *Tourism, ecotourism and protected areas: The state of nature based tourism around the world and guidelines for its development*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland, and Cambridge, UK.

Tourism management in protected areas represents a challenge for protected area managers, as well as for governments, institutions, tourism entrepreneurs and important stakeholders that in some way are getting benefits and can influence the development of these areas.

In order to reach the goal of making optimal use of environmental resources, respecting the cultural values of local communities, as well as generating an economic benefit for the region and for the protected area, significant efforts, planning, control and monitoring strategies are needed.

To address these issues, several conventions, frameworks and guidelines have been developed by recognized organizations around the world, which can provide significant assistance to protected areas and the planning of tourism management².

1.2 Problem definition

Protected areas are becoming very attractive places for the development of tourism due to their natural richness, special potential for outdoor activities and valuable assets.

The introduction and development of tourism in protected areas represents an enormous challenge for protected area managers, since they have to ensure the opportunity for visitors to use the natural spaces for recreation and enjoyment, while also having the responsibility to maintain the environmental values of those areas.³

In Sweden, protected areas are covered by the “right of public access”, which is the opportunity that all citizens and foreigners have to enjoy nature but with ‘responsibility, consideration and good judgment’.⁴ However, despite fragility of the ecosystems and the immense opportunities for tourism development, no guidelines or schemes have been developed for tourism management in protected areas on the national level.

A framework or set of guidelines for the planning, control and management of the development of tourism in protected areas may be necessary to decrease the negative impacts that tourism has in the short, medium and long term. Furthermore, these tools can increase the positive impacts and possibilities that this activity can supply to the protection of the natural asset and the local communities that are benefiting from the protected area.

1.3 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the need and options for implementing management systems for developing sustainable tourism in protected areas, and how it can be implemented in the Swedish context, taking as a case study Stenshuvud National Park in South East Skåne.

² The World Conservation Union (IUCN) - World Parks Congress (WCP) 2003). *Tourism as a tool for conservation and support of protected areas*. Available: www.iucn.org/wcpa/wpc2003/pdfs/outputs/recommendations/r12.pdf .

³ Eagles, Paul F.J., Mc. Cool Stephen F. and Haynes, Christopher D.A (2002). *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management*. IUCN Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.

⁴ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (2003). Available: <http://www.allemansratten.se/templates/firstPage.asp?id=2058> [2006, July 15]

Thus the main research question is:

What is the need and options for the implementation of management systems for developing Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in Sweden taking Stenshuvud National Park as a case study?

Support questions:

- How does the Swedish Protected Areas system work?
- In the Swedish context, how is tourism managed in Protected Areas?
- What is the current situation in Sweden, in terms of the implementation of management systems for developing sustainable tourism in protected areas?
- What is the current situation in terms of tourism management in Stenshuvud National Park?

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Literature review

General background information regarding to protected areas management, protected areas and sustainable tourism development, different frameworks used in Europe for managing tourism in protected areas, as well as the operation, legal framework and management of the protected areas system in Sweden, was reviewed.

1.4.2 Selection of Case Study

The selection of the case study started investigating the different National Parks in Skåne region.

For selecting the case study different aspects were taken into consideration:

- Stenshuvud National Park is one of the most visited parks in Sweden and therefore with high level of visitors per year compare with the rest of parks in the country.
- It is one of the main attractions in Skåne region, and especially in Österlen region.
- Knowing the current visitors flow, and the expectations to grow in the next years it was an interesting issue to investigate of how tourism has been managed, how is currently managed, how their impacts are controlled and monitored.
- Interest showed by the park management perspective in investigating the different tools available for managing tourism in protected areas.

1.4.3 Data Collection

Primary and secondary sources were used for developing this thesis research. The primary sources were mainly interviews conducted to different actors from the national, local and

regional level involved in the legislation, promotion and management of protected areas in Sweden, as well as representatives of two main organizations in Europe that are promoting guidelines for developing sustainable tourism in European protected areas. In addition, two experts in the protected areas and tourism field were contacted.

For conducting the interviews, several questionnaires were developed for each one of the actors and adapted according to the information needed in different stages of the research. Initially, people were contacted by email in order to give them background information of the thesis research study, and then interviews were made by telephone, e-mail or personally. Some of the persons were contacted on more than one occasion.

In addition to this, several visits to the National Park were conducted. A survey was applied to small sample of tourists selected randomly in Stenshuvud National Park during the summer period.

As secondary sources, articles, internet web pages of national and international organizations as for instance *The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency*, *County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen)*, *EUROPARC Federation*, *Pan Parks Organization*; books of sustainable tourism and protected areas management and other resources were used.

1.4.4 Analysis

The information collected through primary and secondary sources was compared; unclear issues were followed up and investigated. The findings were synthesised and organised in accordance with the research questions. In order to facilitate the understanding of these issues, figures were developed on the basis of findings. In regard to the park, focus was placed on needs and opportunities and how the park is working with tourism management, as well as on how the national system affects tourism management. Findings from the reference case studies were compared and conclusions on the benefits and applicability of various management systems were made.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This thesis is mainly a case study of Stenshuvud National Park located in southeast Skåne, Sweden. With the aim of investigating if the protected area needs a formalized management framework for developing a sustainable tourism management strategy, two national parks, Syöte National Park in Finland and Fulufjället National Park in Sweden, were used as examples.

This study intends to give recommendations to the protected area on what options there are for the improvement of the management of the tourism flows in the park according to the needs, motivations, future plans, and current conditions of the park. The aim was not to develop a plan for how to apply these proposals, as this decision has to be taken by the main authority.

This thesis is based on the current situation and does not take into consideration the new National guidelines for ecologically sustainable tourism in protected areas that the Swedish EPA is developing. These guidelines, once they are developed and in force, will probably significantly affect the management of tourism in protected areas in Sweden.

For the description of the Swedish protected areas system, just national parks and nature reserves were described, as they represent the most common protection category in the

country. The concept of “tourists” in this thesis also involves the “visitors”, which are defined as people that mainly visit the area but not stay overnight.

1.6 Report Outline

Chapter 1 describes the background information, problem definition, scope and limitations, and general description of the project. **Chapter 2** gives a general conceptual background of Protected Areas and Sustainable Tourism. **Chapter 3** describes in a general way the two management systems that are being applied in Europe for managing tourism in protected areas. In **Chapter 4**, the Swedish protected areas system is described. **Chapter 5** presents the case study, Stenshuvud National Park, Sweden. Findings and analysis are presented in **Chapter 6**. **Chapter 7** presents recommendations for the park and **Chapter 8** conclusions and recommendations for further research.

2 Protected Areas and Tourism

This chapter gives a general conceptual framework related to protected areas and sustainable tourism.

2.1 A brief history

Several historians claim that a number of areas were created in India over two millennia ago with the purpose of protection of natural resources⁵. In Europe, at the early Renaissance some of the areas were protected by kings and other national authorities as hunting reserves. With the time those places were started to be opened for public use, providing a starting point for community involvement and tourism⁶.

In 1872, Yellowstone National Park in USA was created, being the first national park in the world, and established as a public park for the “benefit and enjoyment of people”⁷.

The idea then of creating protected spaces for the enjoyment of people started to be multiplied in other countries⁸. In 1879, the Royal National Park Australia was settled with the purpose of nature recreation and in 1885 Banff National Park in Canada was as well established with this purpose. Some other forest reserves were settled in South Africa and by the same period in New Zealand, Tongariro National Park, being the first national park in the country.

They were then common characteristics on the creation of national parks in different parts of the world. By one side, all of them were established as a governmental initiative. By the other side, mostly were large and natural areas as well as that were available for all the people. Then, from the beginning, ‘park visitation and tourism were central pillars on the national parks movement’⁹.

Thus and due to these increasingly growing in the creation of national parks in the world, it became necessary to establish a coordinated management structure. Canada was the first country in creating the first park organization, the Dominion Parks Bureau in 1911. Later on, in 1916, the US National Park Service was established for promoting and regulating the use of federal areas recognized as national parks, reservations, monuments, areas established with conservation purposes¹⁰.

A notable expansion then in the number and types of protected areas took place over the nineteenth century, and by now, every country has adopted a national protected areas system with different purposes being tourism and important factor in their development.

⁵ Phillips, A. (2002). *The history of the international system of protected areas management categories*. J PAM, 14 p.4

⁶ Eagles et al (2002)

⁷ Eagles et al (2002)

⁸ Phillips, A.(2002)

⁹ Eagles et al (2002)

¹⁰ Eagles et al (2002)

2.2 What is a Protected Area?

According to the United Nations, worldwide, protected areas have increased during the last three decades. By the year 2003, there were in total 102,102 protected areas covering an area of 18.8 million km², equivalent to the 12.65 % of the total earth surface¹¹. Of this, 17 million km² is terrestrial¹². This total includes biosphere reserves, world heritage sites, natural reserves, national parks and other classification of sanctuaries.

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) established a global definition for protected areas as follows:

“An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means”¹³

Protected areas are created for various purposes, and their establishment is considered a strategy for conservation of nature and protection of cultural heritage. In most of them, tourism and recreation is allowed, as considering it as a primary activity that supports the development of the region and the local communities.

According to IUCN, there are six different categories in which protected areas can be classified, as is shown in Table 2-1:

Table 2-1 IUCN Management Categories of Protected Areas

Category	Description
I	Strict Nature Reserve/Wilderness Area: Protected area managed mainly for science or wilderness protection.
Ia	Strict Nature Reserve: Protected area managed mainly for science.
Ib	Wilderness area: Protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection.
II	National Park: Protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation
III	Natural Monument: Protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features.
IV	Habitat/Species Management Area: Protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention.
V	Protected Landscape/Seascape: Protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation.
VI	Managed Resource Protected Area: Protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems.

Source: IUCN (1994)

The National Park category is one of the most common and well known classifications of protected areas. Those areas are frequently used for the developing of nature-based tourism, recreation and outdoor activities¹⁴. The name national park is very close related ‘with nature-based tourism, being a symbol of a high quality natural environment with a well designed

¹¹ Chape, S., S. Blyth, L. Fish, P. Fox and M. Spalding (compilers) (2003). *2003 United Nations List of Protected Areas*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK and UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK. p. 1

¹² Jaques J.C. (2004). Protected Areas and Tourism: A Mutual Benefit Beyond their Borders. In Forum Barcelona 2004.

¹³ Eagles et al (2002)

¹⁴ Ceballos-Lascurain, H. (1996)

tourist infrastructure¹⁵. The management categories showed in table 2-1 of the protected areas are based on the primordial objective or purpose of what the area is made for.

The following table shows the main purposes of management in which protected areas can be classified according to IUCN. For instance, a protected area which primary management objective is mainly protection of wilderness and scientific research can't have for example tourism and recreation as their priority mainly because in those kinds of protected areas this activity is not allowed.

Table 2-2 Matrix of management objectives and IUCN protected area management categories

Management objective	Ia	Ib	II	III	IV	V	VI
Scientific research	1	3	2	2	2	2	3
Wilderness protection	2	1	2	3	3	-	2
Preservation of species and genetic diversity (biodiversity)	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Maintenance of environmental services	2	1	1	-	1	2	1
Protection of specific natural/cultural features	-	-	2	1	3	1	3
Tourism and recreation	-	2	1	1	3	1	3
Education	-	-	2	2	2	2	3
Sustainable use of resources from natural ecosystems	-	3	3	-	2	2	1
Maintenance of cultural/traditional attributes	-	-	-	-	-	1	2

Key: 1=Primary objective; 2=Secondary objective; 3=potentially applicable objective; -=not applicable

Source: IUCN (1994)

According to Table 2-2, tourism and recreation is one of the activities that can be widely developed in most of the protected areas categories with the exception of the strict nature reserve. In National Parks (category II), this activity represents a primary management objective (1), considering that those areas promotes conservation and allowed tourism development and recreation.

When tourism becomes one of the activities that can be allowed in the protected area, management systems are established to control and anticipate possible negative impacts that this activity can cause to the natural, biological and cultural environment of the protected area, and to maximize the positive impacts that tourism can have in the protected area.

In fact, protected area managers have a significant responsibility to ensure that there is an effective balance between the protection of natural, social and cultural values of the protected areas, but also, ensure that tourism facilities are the most adequate and appropriate for the development of this activity.¹⁶

¹⁵ Eagles, P. (2002) Trends in Park Tourism: economics, finance and management. *J ST*, 10 p.133

¹⁶ Eagles et al (2002)

2.3 What is Sustainable Tourism?

In order to understand the concept of sustainable tourism is important first to know what is meant by sustainable development.

2.3.1 Some facts about Sustainable Development

The permanent changes in consumption patterns, the constantly demand of land and natural resources, as a result of the expansion of cities and communities due to the increasingly growth of society, can led to increased degradation of natural ecosystems and natural resources and diminished the life supporting systems that maintain human living in the earth¹⁷.

The Brundtland report most known as “*Our common future*” report developed in 1987 by the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development, was the first attempt to alert society in the considerable and potential risks that the permanent growth and development could cause to the future availability of resources, environment and human existence.

The report introduced the most broadly and accepted definition of sustainable development defined as “*meeting the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”¹⁸, highlighting then that it is possible to have a balance between the society, economy and environment.

The sustainable development concept was formalized later on in 1992 in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) celebrated in Rio de Janeiro Brazil, commonly known as the “Earth Summit”, and it led the message to the world that change is just possible if everyone transformed their attitudes and behaviour towards a common benefit.

The Rio Declaration states that to ensure the long term development it has to be a strong link between the environmental protection and economic progress, and to achieving this goal all nations have to develop a new global partnership that involves governments, organizations, people and other important key actors¹⁹.

Development and natural resources

Nature plays a very important role in human development, as being the principal source for supporting their lifestyle. Water, air, forests, biodiversity resources are constantly threaten by the consumption patterns and everyday life of humans, that as a consequence are occasioning potential and in many cases irremediable environmental degradation. The significant consequence of environmental degradation is that in the long term there will be places that are not going to be able to ‘sustain human populations’²⁰.

The unsustainable development of human led to the issue that is consuming more resources than nature is able to recover. The ideal situation then is that those resources continue being

¹⁷ Wikipedia (2006). Available: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_development [2006, July 28]

¹⁸ World Commission of Environment and Development (WCDE) (1987). *Our Common Future*. <http://www.open2.net/reith2000/social1a.htm> [2006, July 28]

¹⁹ Encyclopaedia of Sustainable Development (n.d). Available: <http://www.ace.mmu.ac.uk/esd/menu.html> [2006, July 28]

²⁰ Wikipedia (2006)

used but in a sustainable way, it means used in a rate that they can be recovered by nature in a naturally process.

This mainly need an important change in behaviours and attitudes for taking care of natural resources and promoting with actions the sustainable use of them, requiring important efforts of nations and societies to guarantee the subsistence of the people currently living in the earth and the incoming generations.

2.3.2 Sustainable Tourism

Tourism is considered one of the fastest growing and largest industries in the world and has been defined as an important sector that can contributes positively to sustainable development²¹.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines Sustainable Tourism as:

'Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems'²².

In other words, sustainable tourism is tourism that is developed and managed in a way that can continue indefinitely²³.Is an umbrella concept that covers all types of tourism activities (projects, operations, conventional and alternative forms of tourism including ecotourism, agro-tourism, sun and beach tourism, cultural tourism and others) that maintains the environmental, social and economical integrity. It can be seen as the ideal state, vision or goal of all ways of tourism development.

All tourism activities might attempt to generate the lowest impact on the environment and local culture, while at the same time help in the generation of income for local residents, generating more employment and promoting the conservation of nature and biodiversity.

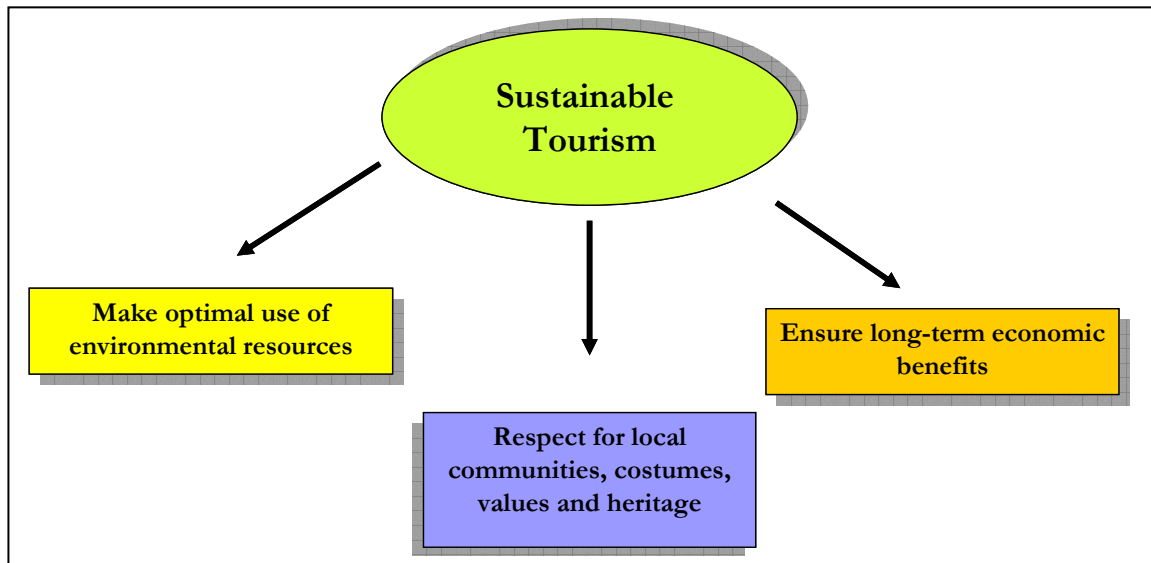
The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), propose some principles that have to be followed in order to make tourism a sustainable activity. Sustainable tourism should:

²¹ World Tourism Organization – WTO (1999). *Tourism and Sustainable Development*. Available: <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/ecotour/wttc.pdf> [2006, September 14]

²² Available: <http://www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/concepts.htm> [2006, July 20]

²³ Ceballos- Lascuráin, H. (1996)

Figure 2-1 UNEP Sustainable Tourism Principles



Source: Developed by the author based on information from UNEP (2002)

Making optimal use of the environment requires a very high commitment from all the stakeholders involved in the tourism chain. Natural resources represent the main element to develop a tourism activity, as being the major source of attraction and enjoyment; then is a responsibility to guarantee that those resources are used in a sustainable way, not damaging and not overusing them and respecting as well their natural ecological processes preserving and conserving all forms of nature and biodiversity.

Moreover, local communities have an invaluable role in the whole tourism activity. They represent the authentically way of living in a determined region or place. Foreign visitors may have the opportunity to learn from their costumes and value their cultural heritage.

Furthermore, tourism is an important motor for economic and social development, then should beneficiate all stakeholders involved in the tourism chain, beneficiating local communities, providing employment and more opportunities and contributing to ‘poverty alleviation’²⁴.

As said by the secretary general of the World Tourism Organization “meeting this growth in a responsible, sustainable way, that preserves and enhances the beauty of the attraction, is the challenge we face”.

The challenge is from all the actors involved in the tourism chain including governments, non governmental organizations, tourism entrepreneurs, local people and others. As pointed out by the WTO, achieving the goals of developing tourism in a sustainable way requires planning, continuous monitoring of impacts and formulation of the necessary measures whenever is necessary.

²⁴ UNEP (2002)

2.4 Protected Areas and Tourism

2.4.1 Tourism trends

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world, and one of the major sources of employment generation. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2002) more than 255 million jobs or 10.7% of the global labour force is generated by this sector. It is estimated that by year 2012 the tourism industry will contribute with almost a 10.6% of the global GDP²⁵.

Over the past half century global tourism has been growing exponentially, around 25 million of international visitors grew to an approximately 650 million of visitors by the year 2000²⁶ and 'it is increasingly focusing in natural environments'²⁷.

According to the European Travel Commission, the level of environmental consciousness will continue increasing, and for tourism this represents more demand of places in which nature and local population play an important role²⁸.

Tourists are becoming more specialized and their interests on travelling more to natural settings and less disturbed areas is growing mainly because worldwide interests in environmental issues and nature has increased. Developing countries are important spots and tourist destinations as they offer a wide variety of landscapes, virgin nature and wilderness. Visits to national parks are becoming more popular and increasing around the world. Therefore, protected area managers then have to be prepared to receive and manage the increasing numbers of visitors²⁹.

2.4.2 Impacts

Protected areas are considered valuable places established principally with the aim of preserving some important kind of biodiversity represented by flora, fauna, landscape, as well as to preserve community's local traditions. Interest is increasingly growing as they are attractive places for people interested in experienced those environments.

Big challenges are connected to the development of tourism in sensitive and fragile spaces as protected areas. Positive and negative impacts can be generated, and is the responsibility of the park manager to 'maximizing benefits while minimizing costs'³⁰.

²⁵ Available: <http://www.wttc.org> [2006, July 20]

²⁶ Roe et al (1997) in Sustainable Tourism Towards Earth Summit (2002). Available: <http://www.unedforum.org/policy/economic/tourism.pdf#search=%22sustainable%20tourism%20towards%20earth%20summit%20briefing%20paper%22> [2006, September 10]

²⁷ Convention on Biological Diversity (2005). Available: <http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/socio-eco/tourism/default.asp> [2006, September 10]

²⁸ The European Travel Commission (n.d). Available: www.sacr.sk/download.php?FNAME=1137672027.upl&ANAME=ETC_TourismTrendsforEurope.pdf [2006, September 8]

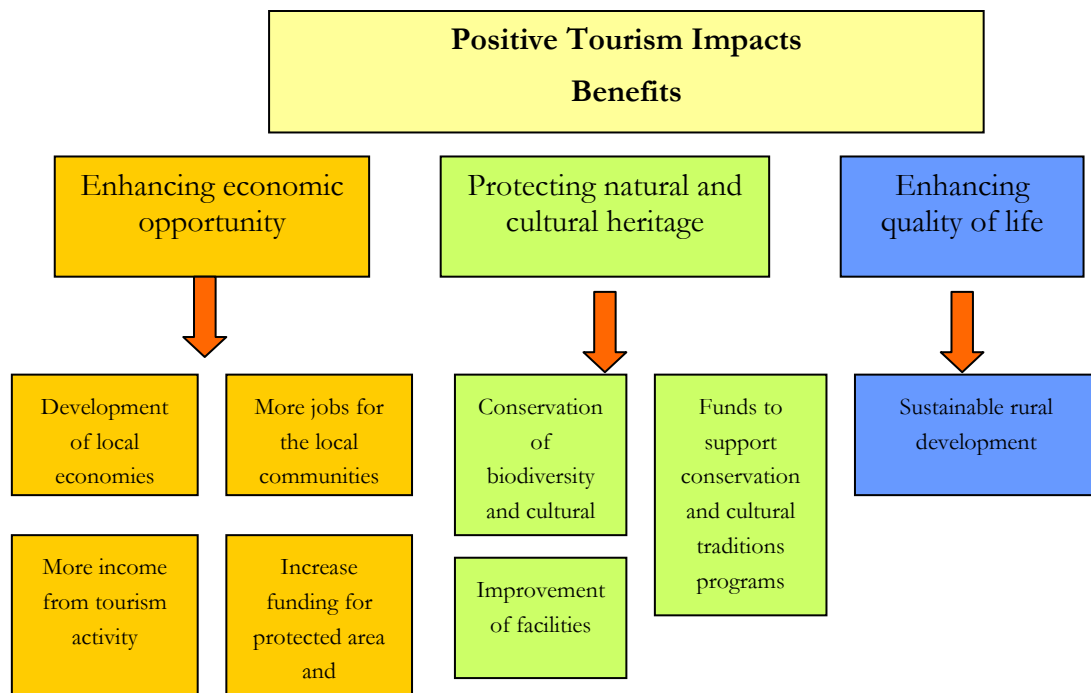
²⁹ Ceballos-Lascuráin, H. (1996)

³⁰ Eagles et al (2002)

Hence, protected areas need a plan that describes how tourism will be managed. The plan represents the desired future, condition or situation of the protected area and the ‘most efficient and equitable path to that future’³¹.

Tourism can be an important driver for generating benefits in protected areas. As said by Eagles *et al* (2002), it is an opportunity for *enhancing economic benefits*, because can increase the possibility of creating more jobs and income in the local area or region as well as for instance supporting other protected areas that need economic help for financing their activities; *protecting natural and cultural heritage*, in which the economic benefits can be used for conservation programs and for preservation or restoration of cultural heritage in the area; and *improving the life quality of local communities*, mainly because their living conditions will be improved as tourism development requires an adequate infrastructure that implies better conditions in roads and telecommunications for instance, as well as training for locals in the tourism issues mainly. Tourism as well increases the awareness of people and visitors about conservation issues. For instance, visitors interested in a special kind of natural values, visit the areas with the purpose of getting a personal benefit from their experience³². This opportunity in general, contributes to convert them into active supporters of the protection of the protected area³³. Figure 2-2 summarizes these benefits.

Figure 2-2 Benefits from tourism in protected areas³⁴



Source: Developed by the author based on information from Eagles *et al* (2002)

One of the main challenges is to minimize the negative impacts of tourism development, and maximize the positive impacts of this activity. When tourism is introduced in fragile and sensitive places as protected areas, several consequences can be faced by the environment.

³¹ Eagles *et al* (2002)

³² Eagles *et al* (2002)

³³ Ceballos-Lascuráin, H. (1996)

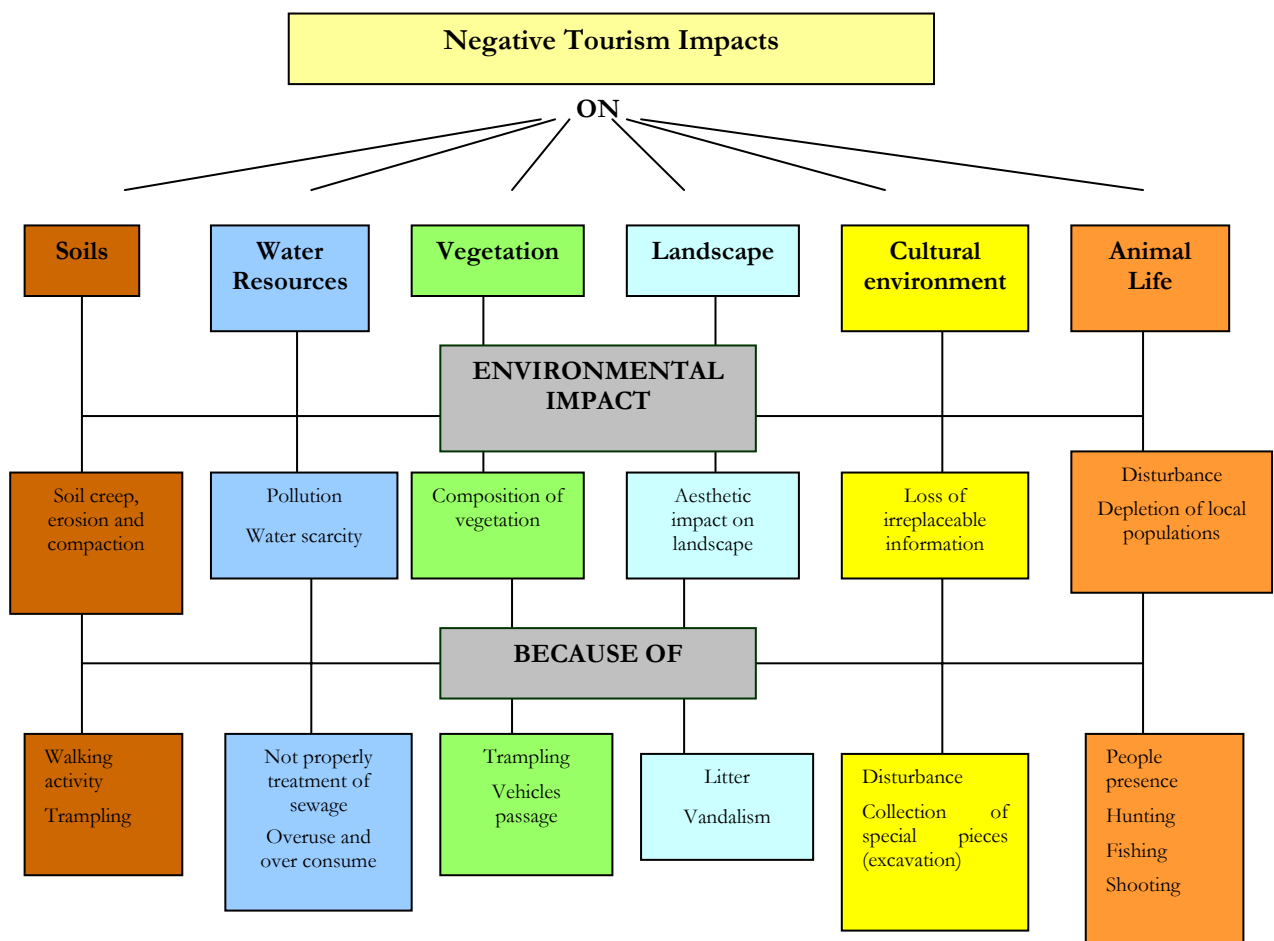
³⁴ Eagles *et al* (2002)

Those impacts can be seen from different perspectives. On one hand for instance, impacts can vary according to the number of visitors introduced on the area, the fragility of the protected area, and the nature or profile of tourists³⁵.

On the other hand, environmental degradation of protected areas can also be derived from the need that local communities have to exploit natural resources for their own subsistence. In this situation, the priority is to ensure that the local population around the protected areas is also getting benefits from tourism operations, while at the same time ensuring the conservation of natural and cultural heritage of the area³⁶.

According to Ceballos-Lascuráin, there are several direct tourism environmental impacts to protected areas. Following, some of them are mentioned in figure 2-3:

Figure 2-3 Negative Tourism Impacts³⁷



Source: Developed by the author based on information from Ceballos-Lascuráin, H. (1996)

³⁵ Ceballos-Lascuráin, H. (1996)

³⁶ Ceballos-Lascuráin, H. (1996)

³⁷ Ceballos-Lascuráin, H. (1996)

3 Management Systems for developing Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in Europe

In this chapter, two main management systems that are used in Europe for developing tourism in protected areas are described.

3.1 Introduction

The sustainability principle for tourism management in protected areas, represents a permanent challenge for protected area managers, who have the responsibility to guarantee that the development of tourism activities inside those fragile spaces are contributing to the social and economic growth of the local communities, ensuring in the long term the conservation of the valuable natural, cultural and social assets in and around the natural protected area. The increasing awareness for maintaining the equilibrium between these three variables is one of the main goals that have to be taken into consideration when tourism represents an important activity for the region and especially for the protected area.

Tourism has been a key movement of the European way of life³⁸. The development of this activity in protected areas in Europe embody an important protection objective for the governments and environmental authorities in each one of the countries, due to the valuable richness of all the nature reserves, national parks, wilderness areas and landscapes presented in the whole territory.

In recent times, sustainable tourism has been put forward and supported through numerous European schemes like studies, workshops, frameworks, publications, and funding programmes. Those initiatives cover coastal and rural areas, as well as protected areas in general³⁹. All of them were designed with the aim of promoting sustainable tourism in “a sensitive environment”⁴⁰.

At present in Europe there are two main management systems that establish the structure for protected areas to develop tourism activities in a sustainable way, the European Charter and the PAN Parks initiative. Both frameworks provide effective guidelines for developing a tourism strategy for protected areas as well as an action plan that supports it. Considering them complementary initiatives, developed by different organizations, they present differences and similarities in their perspectives, objectives, aims, conceptual framework, support provided, projection to the future and applicability, that give to European protected areas the possibility to choose which one is more suitable according to their needs, future plans, priorities, budget, resources, challenges, barriers and motivations.

For the aim of this research, worldwide initiatives were not taken into consideration. The focus was established in Europe, and mainly on these two initiatives considered the most relevant schemes for developing sustainable tourism in protected areas in the continent. Following both management systems are described, and a general comparison between the two schemes is provided in [Appendix 1](#).

³⁸ Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe (FNNPE) (1993). *Loving them to death? Sustainable Tourism in Europe's Nature and National Parks*.

³⁹ European Communities (2001). *Sustainable Tourism and Natura 2000: Guidelines, initiatives and good practices in Europe*.

⁴⁰ European Communities (2001)

3.2 The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

3.2.1 Background

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is an input to Agenda 21⁴¹, the sustainable development program of the United Nations, approved in the UN Conference on Environment and Development known also as The Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992⁴².

The importance of Agenda 21 relies in the fact that it is the first time in the whole human history that “the link between conservation and development was placed on the agenda”⁴³.

The EUROPARC Federation⁴⁴ an independent, non governmental organization in charge of administering the whole protected areas⁴⁵ in Europe, took the initiative in year 1995 on creating the *European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas*, an initiative funded by the European Union (EU) LIFE⁴⁶ program, and coordinated and led by the Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux de France in behalf of the EUROPARC Federation⁴⁷.

Currently the EUROPARC Federation has approximately 370 member organizations in charge of the management and administration of more than 400 protected areas across the whole European territory. Members include protected areas, government ministries, academic institutions and independent organizations, that in conjunction form the Federation⁴⁸.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas was designed and built under the principles and recommendations of the study “*Loving them to Death? Sustainable Tourism in Europe’s Natural and National Parks*” developed by the EUROPARC Federation in 1993⁴⁹. In the creation process, ten (10) European pilot parks in conjunction with tourism industry representatives and independent environmental organizations under the ‘umbrella’ of EUROPARC, gave birth to the Charter. The final version of the document was published in year 2000 with already 21 charter parks of seven different countries as Austria, Italy, Germany, the UK, France and Spain.

⁴¹ Wikipedia (2006). **Agenda 21** “is a program of the United Nations to promote sustainable development. It is a comprehensive blueprint of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the UN, governments, and major groups in every area in which human’s impact on the environment. The number 21 refers to the 21st century.” Available: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agenda_21 [2006, August 12]

⁴² Blackman, Richard (n.d). Tourism and Protected Areas The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (Summary).p.1

⁴³ Blackman, R. (n.d).

⁴⁴EUROPARC Federation (n.d) Available: <http://www.europarc.org/international/europarc.html> [August 12].

EUROPARC was founded in 1973 under the official title "Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe".

⁴⁵ Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe (FNNPE) (1993) and EUROPARC Federation (n.d). Protected Areas in Europe include national parks, nature parks, nature reserves, protected landscapes and biosphere reserves.

⁴⁶ European Commission (2006). Available: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/home.htm> [2006, August 12] **LIFE**: The “**Financial Instrument for the Environment**, introduced in 1992, is one of the spearheads of the European Union’s environmental policy. It co-finances projects in three areas: LIFE Nature, LIFE Environment and LIFE Third Countries”.

⁴⁷ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d). Available: <http://www.europarc.org/european-charter.org/background.htm> [2006, August 12]

⁴⁸ EUROPARC Federation (n.d)

⁴⁹ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d)

3.2.2 Structure of the European Charter

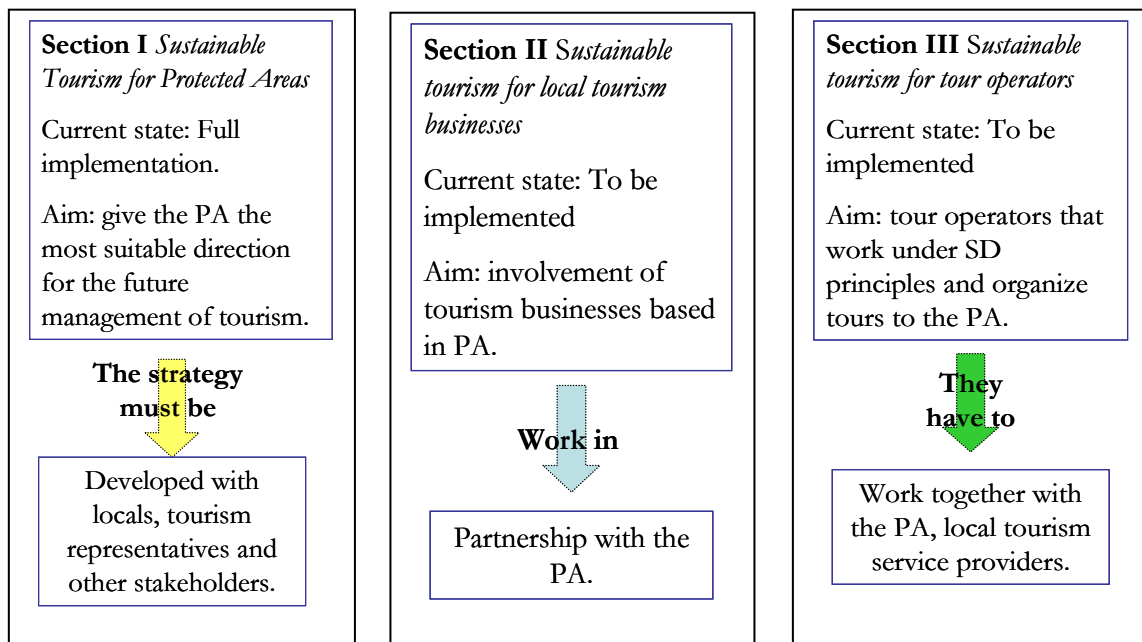
Definition

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (The Charter), is a practical tool that was designed with the objective of ensuring that the tourism that is developed in European protected areas is sustainable⁵⁰, it means that can contribute to the preservation of the cultural, social and environmental resources and support in a positive way to the economic development of the local populations in and around the protected area⁵¹.

Main structure

The Charter has been envisioned in three main Sections as is summarized in Figure 3-1:

Figure 3-1 European Charter Sections - The strategic approach



Key: PA: Protected Area; SD: Sustainable Development

Source: Developed by the author based on information from European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (2002)

For the aim of this research, the description of the European Charter will be focused mainly on Section 1, *Sustainable tourism for the Protected Area*.

Main objectives

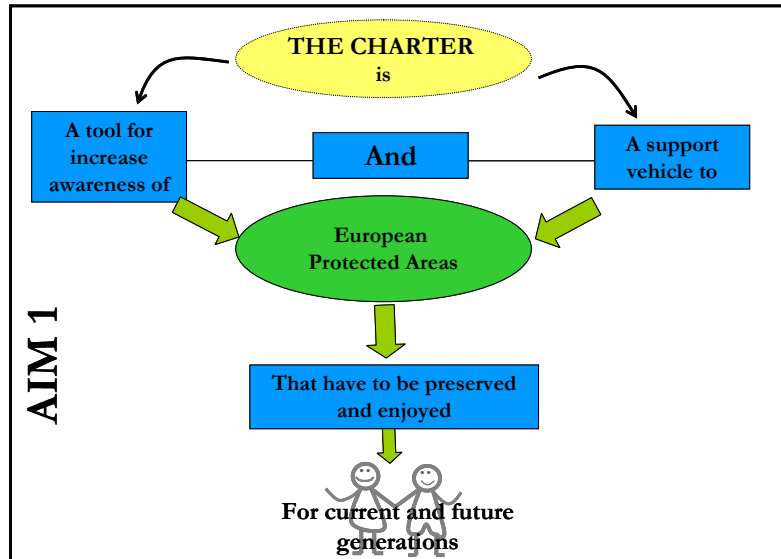
The Charter is a voluntary management system that aims to promote the development of sustainable tourism especially in national and nature parks around Europe. Tourism activities

⁵⁰ EUROPARC Federation (n.d). *Brochure Protected Areas and Tourism – The European Charter*. Available: <http://www.europarc.org/european-charter.org/downloads.htm> [2006, August 12]

⁵¹ EUROPARC Federation (2002). *The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas – Full Text*. Available: http://www.europarc.org/european-charter.org/about_the_charter.htm [2006, August 12]

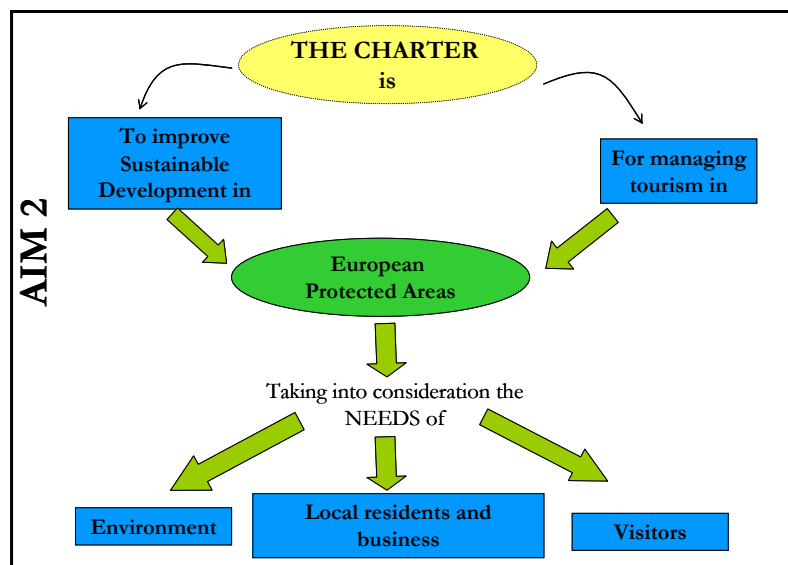
in those areas must meet the needs of local communities and visitors, contribute to the economic development of the area and region, and being environmentally friendly⁵². The two main objectives⁵³ of the Charter can be summarized in figures 3-2 and 3-3:

Figure 3-2 Aims of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas



Source: Developed by the author based on information from EUROPARC (2002)

Figure 3-3 Aims of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas



Source: Developed by the author based on information from EUROPARC (2002)

Who can apply to the European Charter?

Any kind of protected area in Europe can apply to join the Charter. They have to fulfil the requirements established by the European Charter. For more information see [Appendix 2](#).

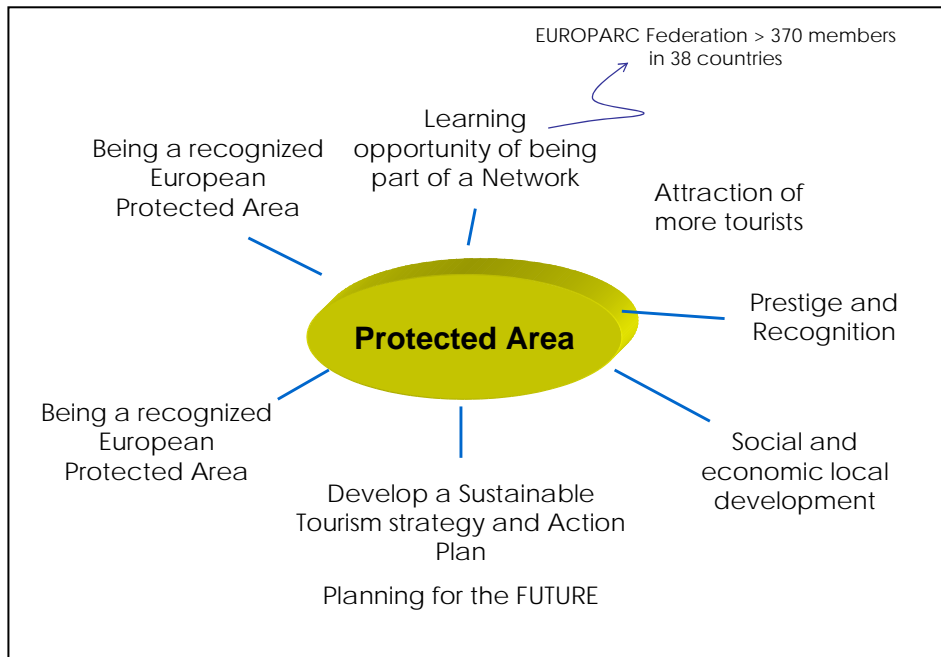
⁵² Blackman. R (n.d)

⁵³ EUROPARC Federation (2002). The text of the main objectives (underlying aims of the charter) of the charter can be found in the Charter full text and/or brochure.

What are the benefits of joining the European Charter?

There are several benefits that the protected area can get on joining the European Charter. Figure 3-4 shows the fundamental ones:

Figure 3-4 Benefits to Protected Areas



Source: Developed by the author based on information from European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (2002)

Working with the European Charter gives to protected areas stronger basis for working in partnership with key stakeholders in and around the area, as for instance the local community, villagers, park management, tourism enterprises, NGO's, Government representatives, hospitality industry, educational institutions and others. As well as the opportunity to receive internal and external assessments for improving processes and apply new ideas inside the area as well as exchanging knowledge and experiences with other parks through the park network. In addition the protected area will have more credibility amongst potential funding opportunities for different projects.

The European Charter is the first high quality scheme of this nature that has been used for almost 30 protected areas around Europe, and that are getting benefit from the economic, social and environmental advantages of being managed tourism in a sustainable way.

3.2.3 Reference Case Syöte National Park Experience - Finland

The information that is provided in the following section was taken from the results of an interview made with Teija Turunen, Senior Planning Officer of the Natural Heritage Services (Metsähallitus) in Finland, and the person in charge of all the issues connected with the European Charter in Syöte National Park.

Some facts about Syöte National Park

Syöte National Park was created in year 2000 by Metsähallitus⁵⁴, the main authority in charge of the management of Protected Areas in Finland. Located on the territories of the municipalities of Pudasjärvi, Taivalkoski and Posio, the park covers an area of 29,700 hectares. It is the first park in Finland and in Northern Europe that has adopted the European Charter as the strategic tool for management of tourism in the protected area.

Before the park was created, a National Hiking Area part of the Finnish protected areas system, the *Iso-Syöte Hiking Area*, was already established in 1985. Part of Syöte National Park used to belong to the Hiking Area before the National Park was established.

After the National Park was created in year 2000, many service facilities, information materials, guidance programs were developed, and the Visitors Centre was built.

Working with the Charter - The Charter application process

Since October of 2004, Syöte National Park joined the European Charter and it has been a Charter Park for almost two years.

Before adopting the Charter, the park already was working on the development of a *Nature Tourism Plan* since this is one of the requirements demanded by Metsähallitus, the (Finnish Forest and Park Service authority) for protected areas with significant tourism potential.

The *Nature Tourism Plan* was elaborated in cooperation among the park, local people and other important stakeholders. The plan includes a definition of service facilities, area zoning, guidance, activities that are allowed to be developed, as well a principles and goals regarding sustainable nature tourism.

Syöte National Park is characterized as being a protected area with potential for the development of tourism activities. Since the park was created, the number of visitors has increased. This is mainly because the National Park status attracts more people and brings more visitors to the area. The park has been improving the old facilities and building new ones in order to attend the new demands and the expected increase of visits in the future.

To be able to apply to the Charter, one of the main requirements is to have a sustainable tourism strategy and an action plan that shows how those objectives will be attained, as well as to demonstrate that there is a partnership with local communities and important stakeholders. So, since the scheme was adopted by Syöte National Park, the protected area already had a very good starting point with the *Nature Tourism Plan* as a basis for the sustainable tourism strategy requirement, furthermore, this has been developed in cooperation of local actors and important stakeholders representatives from the tourism sector, municipalities, Syöte villagers, and the Regional Environment Centre.

⁵⁴ Metsähallitus (2006). Metsähallitus is a state enterprise whose main tasks are to supply wood to the forest industry and manage most of Finland's protected areas. Metsähallitus administers more than 12 million hectares of state land and water areas

The whole process of applying the Charter for the park took about 1.5 years. After the park was established in year 2000, the park has been actively working with developing the sustainable nature tourism strategy in the area.

Principal reasons for adopting the Charter

The initial motivation of Syöte National Park for joining the European Charter instead of the Pan Parks initiative was mainly affected by a decision made by Metsähallitus⁵⁵ (Finnish Forest and Park Service authority) who wanted to get the experience from two different perspectives; Oulanka National Park, was already working with the Pan Parks initiative since year 2002. So it was a very good opportunity to evaluate and gain experience from the process of working with the other European scheme for managing tourism in protected areas.

Main results and benefits until today

- The park has got more publicity in the media which is a positive aspect for tourism development in the area.
- The action plan needed for the implementation of the tourism strategy, is also working as a good supportive tool for the daily management of the park.
- New contacts with other European “Charter Parks” have been provided through the network enabling the possibility to exchange ideas and experiences.
- The scheme has given added value for the tourism management in the park.
- It has been a good tool for the park to monitor management effectiveness.
- With the creation of the park, the number of visitors has increased, so tourism enterprises are benefiting.

Benefits that can be received by the application of the Charter

The main benefits, up to date, that are connected to joining the Charter as highlighted by Syöte National Park are as follows:

- Provides an international evaluation system for the park’s own management system
- Gives the park the possibility to get more national and international advertisement for its efforts in sustainable tourism.
- The external evaluation gives the park more enthusiasm and strengthens efforts to reach the set management goals.
- Gives more credibility when the park needs to apply for external project financing

⁵⁵ Metsähallitus (2006). Metsähallitus is a state enterprise whose main tasks are to supply wood to the forest industry and manage most of Finland’s protected areas. Metsähallitus administers more than 12 million hectares of state land and water areas.

- The park has received more publicity in the media
- Networking with other Charter Parks in Europe, working together and having meetings exchanging experiences, ideas, problems regarding sustainable tourism management and other issues.

Benefits for the local community

- Working together with the community and core stakeholders, is benefits both sides.
- The park and its service facilities also offer possibilities to develop nature tourism products.
- The park is mainly a “winter resort” in which skiing and slalom are the main sports activities. However, now the summer period is becoming a more popular season, and local communities are pleased with this trend.
- High-quality nature tourism products developed in conjunction with the local communities and tourism entrepreneurs.
- A significant part of the promotion of the National Park is done by the local tourism entrepreneurs, who get the economical benefit if people come and visit the park.

Future plans for the park

- Continue working on the accomplishment of the tourism strategic objectives set in the Nature Tourism Plan as well as in the Sustainable Tourism strategy.
- Work towards the vision established until year 2010.
- Get more promotion and international recognition as a sustainable tourism destination
- Strengthen relations with local tourism enterprises in the development nature tourism products to the area.
- Expand the contact with other Charter Parks, and exchange new ideas.
- Have a clear concept for the Second Part of the Charter that is mainly focused on the certification of tourism entrepreneurs. This phase is still under development.

3.3 The Protected Area Network - PAN Parks Initiative

3.3.1 Background

The PAN Parks initiative was created by the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) and the Dutch company Molecaten group in year 2002.

Between 1997 and 2002, the foundation dedicated efforts and time to build the strategic plan and to enforce the institutional structure.

This independent initiative, seeks to create networks between the different authorities, the protected areas, local communities, the tourism industry and the nature conservation organizations⁵⁶.

The PAN Parks initiative was created with the objective of developing a partnership network between the *wildernesses protected areas* in Europe in order to improve the protection of nature through the development of sustainable tourism activities⁵⁷.

Currently, 8 European parks have the Certification provided by PAN Parks organization.

3.3.2 Structure of the Pan Parks Initiative

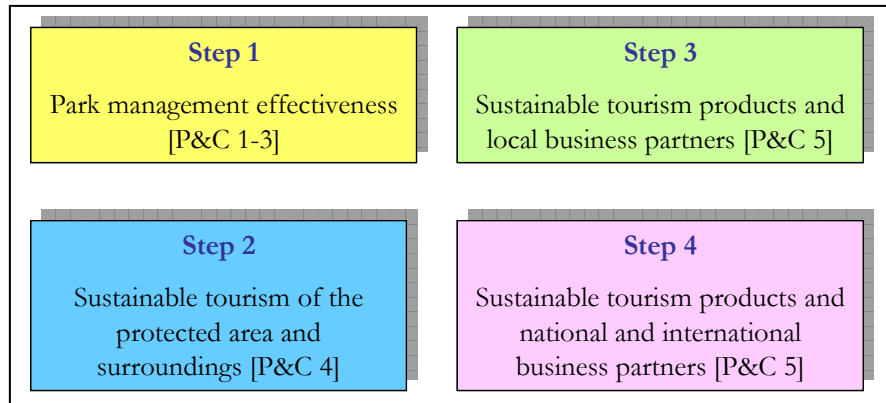
Definition

The PAN Parks initiative aims to provide and promote wilderness and visitor management in protected areas, as well as to monitor management effectiveness, increasing the public and political support and to develop and market high quality nature based products.

Main structure

The PAN Parks initiative has been structured in four verification steps according to a set of principles, criteria and indicators:

Figure 3-5 PAN Parks structure



Source: Developed by the author, based on information on PAN Parks (n.d)

A detailed description and content related to the principles and criteria is available at the PAN Parks web page⁵⁸.

Who can apply to Pan Parks

Any European protected area can apply for verification with PAN Parks. The main requirements are:

⁵⁶ WWF (2006)

⁵⁷ Central Balkan National Park (2006). Available: <http://centralbalkannationalpark.org/en/aboutpp.php> [2006, July 10]

⁵⁸ Pan Parks Foundation web page: www.panparks.org

- The area has to have a minimum size of 20,000 ha, and have a wilderness factor⁵⁹.
- The most important condition is that the area has to fulfil the requirements in Size and Core Zone (size- core wilderness area).⁶⁰

If the protected area complies with the main requirements, then it can continue with the verification process and become a PAN Park.

Benefits⁶¹

Benefits can be perceived in three different dimensions:

For the protected area:

- International recognition
- Independent audit
- Easier access to sponsorship of conservation and tourism projects
- Expertise exchange through a dynamic network
- Tools to improve nature management standards
- Tools to control and monitor tourism

For local communities:

- Increased collaboration in park management
- Small business promotion
- Improved tourism facilities
- Stronger government support
- International recognition
- New jobs and increased employment

For local business partners:

- Contact with European tourism companies
- More nature based tourism
- Effective international marketing
- Proof of responsible business
- Access to experience of other businesses

3.3.3 Reference Case - Fulufjället National Park in Sweden

The following information was taken from the results of the interviews made to different actors that were involved in the Pan Parks certification process of Fulufjället. Information was provided by Janet Jänder from Dalarna County Administration in Sweden, Zoltán Khun director of Pan Parks Organization, Peter Fredman from ETOUR Sweden and Lotta Samuelson from WWF Sweden.

⁵⁹ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (2002)

⁶⁰ Vancura, V. (2006)

⁶¹ PAN Parks Foundation (n.d)

Some facts about Fulufjället

Fulufjället National park is located in the Municipality of Älvdalen in north-western Dalarna County, on the border to Norway.

It was established in year 2002, and comprises an area of 38 414 ha. It is the first National Park in Sweden that has adopted a formal tourism management system, and was created with the Pan Parks concept.

Principal reasons for adopting the PAN Parks initiative

When the park was in the creation process, the PAN Parks Foundation contacted the representatives of the park (County) directly due to prior knowledge about about the potentials of the protected area to become a Pan Park. They presented the proposal that was mainly based on the idea of creating a park network in which high quality tourism, wilderness protection and community development would work together. Their ambition and the Fulufjället management matched and the County Administrative Board of Dalarna, took the decision of adopting the PAN Parks scheme.

Main results and benefits until today

As explained by the main authority on this case, since the park was created, the level of national and international recognition has increased, as well as the number of visitors, especially foreign visitors. According to statistics provided by ETOUR, the number of visitors increased by 40% since the park was designated.

From their perspective, the PAN Park concept has been achieved and interested groups are visiting the park with different aims.

Main obstacles and difficulties

From the PAN Parks organization perspective, the main difficulties that the park has been facing since the implementation of the scheme are two: the park has a general lack of staff on the field, and has a lack of experience working with local partners.

Future plans for the Park

From the PAN Parks organization perspective, the major challenge for the park is the implementation of the sustainable tourism development strategy, guaranteeing that the local people interests and expectations are involved in the whole execution process. In the biodiversity conservation side, no big challenge is foreseen.

While more information was provided in the case of the park in Finland, the reference studies show that both in the case of the European Charter and PAN Parks, significant benefits have been experienced. Some of the main benefits are: international recognition, management support, working together with local communities, control and monitoring of visitors flows, increases in number of visitors that is benefiting local development.

4 The Swedish Protected Areas System

This chapter gives a general overview of the Swedish protected areas system. Focus is placed on issues connected to the establishment and management of these areas. The issue of tourism and its management in protected areas is introduced in a Swedish context and discussed.

4.1 General description

Sweden is one of the largest countries in the European continent⁶², and the third largest in Western Europe⁶³. It has a variety of landscapes, natural treasures and diversity of areas that offer to people the possibility to enjoy and experience different adventures. The Swedish right of people to enjoy nature and the countryside without disturbing, damaging and causing harm to nature, is a principle that also is applied in natural protected areas.

Swedish protected areas were created with the aim of ‘preserving valuable natural environments’⁶⁴. Currently, almost 10% of the 450,000 km² of territory is protected by 28 National Parks and 2552 nature reserves⁶⁵, 13 world heritage areas, wherein three of them are classified as having high natural values⁶⁶; around 150 Nature Management Areas and more than 1000 Wildlife Sanctuaries⁶⁷ are dispersed across the whole country.

According to the Swedish governmental document *A Comprehensive Nature Conservation Policy*, regarding to the use and management of protected areas, the term “protected areas” refers mainly ‘to national parks, nature reserves, natural monuments, plant and animal sanctuaries and Natura 2000 sites’⁶⁸.

In the Swedish environmental legislation, protected areas are divided in different categories, the most used and known are shown in table 4-1:

⁶² Scandinavica.com (2001). Available: <http://www.scandinavica.com/culture/nature/sweden.htm> [2006, August 16]

⁶³ Visit Sweden.com (2006). Available: http://www.visitsweden.com/VSTemplates/Page____9552.aspx [2006, August 16]

⁶⁴ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d.). Brochure Swedish National Parks

⁶⁵ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) [Naturvårdsverket Plan 2005-2015] (2005). *Protect – Preserve- Present. A Programme for better use and management of protected areas, 2005-2015.*

⁶⁶ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d.). <http://www.internat.environ.se/index.html> [2006, August 18]

⁶⁷ Scandinavica.com (2001)

⁶⁸ SEPA [Naturvårdsverket Plan 2005-2015] (2005)

Figure 4-1 Main Swedish Protected Areas

	Definition	Purpose	Conditions
National Parks	Areas of land or water that belongs to the state. Declared by the parliament.	Preserving a large close area of a certain landscape type in its natural state, essentially unchanged. Shall be accessible for outdoor recreation activities.	Implemented only on land owned by the state
Nature Reserves	land or water area declared by a county administrative board or a municipality	Preserving biological diversity, protecting and preserving valuable natural environments or satisfying the need of areas for outdoor recreation	Private or public land

The purposes of both protected areas were taken textually from the Swedish Environmental Code⁶⁹ and supported with information from the Swedish National Parks brochure. The conditions for National Parks were taken from the document “Attitudes towards protection of biodiversity in forests⁷⁰”, and for Nature Reserves from Swedish National Parks brochure⁷¹

Source: Developed by the author based on information from The Swedish Environmental Code (2004) and sources mentioned above.

National Parks are the form of protection that people are most familiar with⁷², being the most common category worldwide as well. According to the Swedish EPA’s plan “Protect-Preserve-Present”, National Park category is the ‘strongest form of legal protection of nature’⁷³ in the country, comprising a vast resource for all citizens and created by decision of the highest level of authority in the nation, the Parliament (Riksdag)⁷⁴ ⁷⁵ and the national government⁷⁶.

⁶⁹ Swedish Environmental Code (2004). Available: <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/108/a/1348> [2006, July 20]

⁷⁰ Hedwall, P.O (2004). *Attitudes towards protection of biodiversity in forests – A case study of forest owners in Skåne, Sweden*.p.13

⁷¹ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d). Brochure Swedish National Parks

⁷² Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d). Brochure Swedish National Parks

⁷³ SEPA [Naturvårdsverket Plan 2005-2015] (2005)

⁷⁴ Hansson, T. (2006)

⁷⁵ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency - SEPA (2005a). Available: <http://www.internat.naturvardsverket.se/> [2006, August 20]

⁷⁶ SEPA [Naturvårdsverket Plan 2005-2015] (2005)

The Swedish National Parks System has the purpose “to preserve large areas in their natural states, complete with flora, fauna and other valuable features. They are able to be accessible to general public, on the condition that their original character is preserved intact.”⁷⁷

National Parks are distributed along the country covering the 1.5% of the territory⁷⁸. Nine of the parks were created in year 1909 (Abisko, Stora Sjöfallet, Pieljekaise, Sarek in the far north, Sånfjället, Hamra and Garphyttan in the centre, Ängsö and Gotska Sandön in the south east) becoming the first European country to protect their nature valuable assets by legislation through the creation of national parks⁷⁹ and the National Parks System.

Padlejanta and Sarek are the largest national parks in the country with an area of almost 200,000 hectares each. Dalby Söderskog is one of the smallest National Parks with an area of only 0.36 km².⁸⁰

National Parks in Sweden are according to the definition by law, protected areas that have to be ‘representative biotopes’ conserved and preserved in their natural state, as well as being wonderful attractive places to visitors, plus giving them alternatives and the opportunity of enjoying the countryside and the forest⁸¹. Figure 4-2 shows the National Parks system in Sweden.

Figure 4-2 Swedish National Parks System



Source: Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d)

⁷⁷ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. Stenshuvud - National Park in Skåne County. Brochure (n.d)

⁷⁸ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d). Brochure Swedish National Parks

⁷⁹ Scandinavica.com (2001)

⁸⁰ SEPA (2005a)

⁸¹ SEPA (2005a)

Nature Reserves are greater in number compared to National Parks, and considered the most common way of nature protection in Sweden and are expected to increase in the next years mainly depending on the resources allocation defined by the Parliament for the investment in nature conservation at the local level. They represent ‘a more flexible way of protection’, and many of them are established with the aim of providing outdoor recreation opportunities but also there are others that have the purpose of scientific research⁸².

Those areas can vary significantly in size and properties, it is possible to find from ‘small sites of geological or botanical interests up to large areas with great variation’⁸³. By the current standards for establishing a nature reserve, some of the oldest and smallest national parks in the country would have been given the status of nature reserves, but for historical reasons, they conserve their high position as national parks⁸⁴.

Protected areas in Sweden are identified with a six-pointed star used mainly to mark protected areas boundaries. The symbol is frequently utilized in brochures, maps, tourism disclosure material and protected areas information displays as is shown on the pictures below.



Source: Swedish Environmental Protection Agency – *Allemansrätten* (2003)

Svabelshölm Nature Reserve

Stenshuvud National Park



Pictures: Natalia Piñeros Arenas

⁸² Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d). Brochure Swedish National Parks

⁸³ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d). Brochure Swedish National Parks

⁸⁴ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d). Brochure Swedish National Parks

4.2 Legal Framework for Protected Areas in Sweden

The fundamental Swedish environmental legislation is mainly compiled in the *Environmental Code (Miljöbalken)*⁸⁵, adopted in 1998 and entered into force in 1999. It replaces previous laws, including the main legislative provision for protection of nature in Sweden, the *Act on the Management of Natural Resources*⁸⁶, and comprises an updated, wider and stricter environmental legislation with the main objective of promoting sustainable development in all activities for the benefit of current and future generations⁸⁷.

The Code is divided in 7 parts and 33 chapters that include approximately 500 sections. Part 2 comprises all related with Protection of Nature, describing in the very first paragraph the *right of public access*⁸⁸ principle, followed by a detailed description of the different protected areas categories, their definition and rules that can be applied in each one of the classifications.

The legal protection of natural areas is a very important tool for the preservation of biological diversity and protection of species that have special conservation values. It is also a measure to conserve natural environments, and secure land for the development of outdoor activities⁸⁹.

Different key actors intervene in the implementation and monitoring on the application of the legislation of protected areas in Sweden.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), an administrative governmental authority established in 1967 with the main purpose of implementing the environmental policy, develops environmental assessment and promotion of environmental work in the national and international level.⁹⁰ The Swedish EPA is the intermediary authority among the goals set by the Ministry of the Environment and the 'practical management of protected areas'⁹¹, this means that is their responsibility to set the guidelines of how protected areas have to managed, both for National Parks and Nature Reserves.

The County Administrative Boards (Länsstyrelsen) has the principal function of being representatives of the State in each one of the 21 Counties of the country, as well as being a bridge between the citizens, the central Government, the municipal authorities, the Swedish Parliament and the Central State authorities⁹². As stated previously, the County Administrative Board executes the management guidelines established by the Swedish EPA and as well supervises that the regulations for protected areas are complied with⁹³, understanding by

⁸⁵ Swedish Environmental Code (2004)

⁸⁶ Statistics Sweden (2004). Available: http://www.scb.se/templates/Publikation____156642.asp [2006, September 9]

⁸⁷ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (2006). Available: <http://www.internat.environ.se/index.html> [2006, August 20]

⁸⁸ It is not a law, it is the right that all individuals have to enjoy nature and the country side.. The main principle is to enjoy without disturbing.

⁸⁹ Sustainable Development Indicators for Sweden (2001). Available: <http://www.scb.se/statistik/MI/MI1103/2003M00/Preface1to52.pdf#search=%22Nature%20Conservation%20Act%20national%20parks%20regulations%22> [2006, September 9]

⁹⁰ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d). Welcome brochure. Available: http://www.internat.environ.se/documents/swepa/welcome_swepa.pdf [2006, August 20]

⁹¹ Grivické, R. (2004). Management and state of nature protected areas in Sweden and Lithuania under changing environmental conditions. *AZL*, #14.p.54 [2006, August 20]

⁹² Sweden's County Administrations (n.d). <http://www.lst.se/english/index.htm> [2006, August 20]. Sweden is divided in 21 county administrations

⁹³ SEPA [Naturvårdsverket Plan 2005-2015] (2005)

regulations the general restrictions of what is permitted or not in a protected area, as well as what is totally forbidden.

For National Parks, there are general regulations that apply for all of them, as for instance not destroying or damaging the nature; but also each park has their specific set of regulations that differ from the others in some way, for example in some parks camping is not permitted in any part of the protected area territory, while in other parks setting up tents and lighting fires is allowed but just in zones designated for these activities⁹⁴.

4.3 Management of Protected Areas in Sweden

4.3.1 Creation of protected areas in Sweden

On the establishment of **National Parks**, two main authorities intervene in the process; the Swedish EPA, who proposes the creation of new parks to the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) and the Swedish Riksdag, the authority that makes the final decision on the creation of National Parks⁹⁵.

The Swedish EPA is also in charge of buying the land for establishing the National Parks, taking into account that for parks, land has to be owned by the state; this converts the Swedish EPA as one of the largest land owners in the country, mainly because almost eight percent of the territory is protected, including through the National Park status⁹⁶.

For **Nature Reserves**, different actors participate in the process. The Swedish EPA, the County Administrative Boards, the Municipalities or the common people are able to suggest the creation of a new area. The most usual way is that the County Administrative Board (CAB) suggests and selects the areas to be a Nature Reserve. For their final creation, the CAB has to make a proposal to the Swedish EPA that shall include a brief description of the biological, natural and conservation values of the area and the main reasons of why it is important to be created. After an evaluation of the proposal, the Swedish EPA will decide if the protected area should be or not be created. If it is approved, then the County Administrative Board creates the Nature Reserve, and the protected area will get financial support from EPA.⁹⁷

Municipalities can also suggest and create this protected area category, but before their establishment process can start, it is compulsory that it is discussed with the respective County Administrative Board⁹⁸.

When the land for establishing the Nature Reserve is already chosen, then other important actors that can have an interest in the terrain that is selected to be a Nature Reserve are involved, like people, companies, organizations, others. It could be the case in which the Swedish EPA does not have possession of the terrain that has been appointed to be a Nature Reserve and is interested on buying the land, in that case the landowner plays a significant

⁹⁴ SEPA (2005a)

⁹⁵ SEPA (2005a)

⁹⁶ The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) – Booklet (2000). Available: http://www.internat.naturvardsverket.se/documents/swepa/welcome_swepa.pdf [2006, August 21]

⁹⁷ Bruun, M.(2006)

⁹⁸ Buurn, M.(2006)

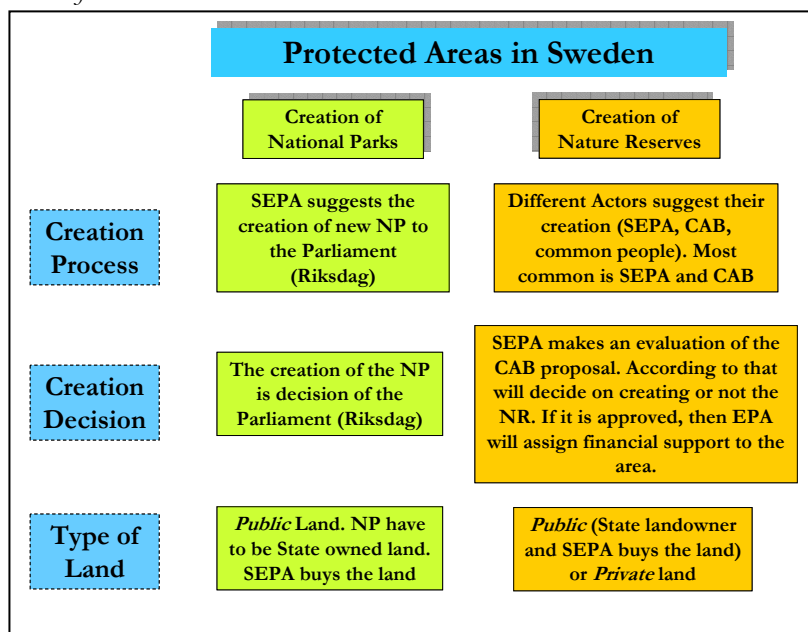
role, and their compensation for the land has to be negotiated. For this process, the County Administrative Board can use external people to evaluate the market price of the area they are interested in, and also hire external negotiators to buy the territory⁹⁹.

It can be also the case in which the land selected to be a Nature Reserve is private; it means that the territory is not property of the State. In that case, the landowner has to be compensated for not being able to utilize the land for instance for getting economical benefits from its use¹⁰⁰.

This scheme is used mainly when the landowner for some reason is not willing to sell his or her land. The compensation is almost equal to what the landowner would get if the land is bought by the State through the EPA's budget, and this compensation is decided by the Swedish EPA¹⁰¹.

Land for nature reserves can be *public*, when the State is the owner or *private* when a third person is the proprietor. The Swedish EPA is responsible to buy the land or to compensate the landowner when this procedure is necessary¹⁰². Figure 4-3 shows a summarized creation process of Protected Areas in Sweden.

Figure 4-3 Creation of Protected Areas in Sweden



Key: SEPA: Swedish Environmental Protection Agency; NP: National Park; NR: Nature Reserve; CAB: County Administrative Board.

Source: Developed by the author based on information from Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (2005a), Hansson, T. (2006) and Bruun, M.(2006).

⁹⁹ Bruun, M.(2006)

¹⁰⁰ Bruun, M.(2006)

¹⁰¹ Bruun, M.(2006)

¹⁰² Swedish Environmental Protection Agency welcome booklet (n.d). Available: http://www.internat.naturvardsverket.se/documents/swepa/welcome_swepa.pdf [2006, August 20]

4.3.2 Management of Protected Areas in Sweden

Different actors intervene in the management process of protected areas in Sweden. National Parks and Nature Reserves are described considering them the main categories in Sweden.

The actors involved in **National Parks** management are mainly the Swedish EPA, County Administrative Boards (*Länsstyrelsen*), and Park Managers.

On one side, the Swedish EPA, being the authority in charge of setting the guidelines (specific instructions for the administration of the national park¹⁰³) with a *Park Management Plan* (*Skötselplan*) on how National Parks have to be administered¹⁰⁴.

On the other side, the County Administrative Boards (CAB) whose main responsibility is the daily administration of National Parks executing the guidelines settled by the Swedish EPA in the *Park Management Plan*, as well as the supervision that the rules and regulations¹⁰⁵ for the use of the park by visitors are being accomplished.

The park managers also play an important role, as they are the persons delegated by the CAB in the parks to execute the guidelines settled in the *Park Management Plan* for their park, as well as coordinating the operational work (maintenance of hiking trails and cabins, make inventory of flora and fauna, put signs, etc¹⁰⁶.), and the financial and administrative tasks in the park. It is the “representative” of the County Administrative Board in the park.

There is an Advisory Board composed by representatives of the Swedish EPA, the County Administrative Board, Conservation NGO’s and the park manager¹⁰⁷. Their main function is to facilitate consultation, give advice and input to conservation management issues in the park.¹⁰⁸

For **Nature Reserve** management, the Swedish EPA, County Administrative Boards, Municipality and Landowners are the main actors.

On one side, the Swedish EPA is the authority in charge of setting the guidelines of how Nature Reserves have to be managed.

On the other side, the County Administrative Board has the main responsibilities of writing and developing the *management plan* for each Nature Reserve following the format of the Swedish EPA handbook¹⁰⁹ and the guidelines established by the Swedish EPA.

After the management plan for a Nature Reserve is ready, the County Administrative Board has to send the plan to each one of the stakeholders interested on the area for suggestions and

¹⁰³ SEPA (2005a)

¹⁰⁴ Hansson, T.(2006)

¹⁰⁵ Regulations are referred mainly on what it is allowed to do or not do to in the Park.

¹⁰⁶ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d). Brochure Swedish National Parks

¹⁰⁷ It is also known as the conservation manager in the Stenshuvud National Park regulations.

¹⁰⁸ Hansson, T.(2006), SEPA (2005a)

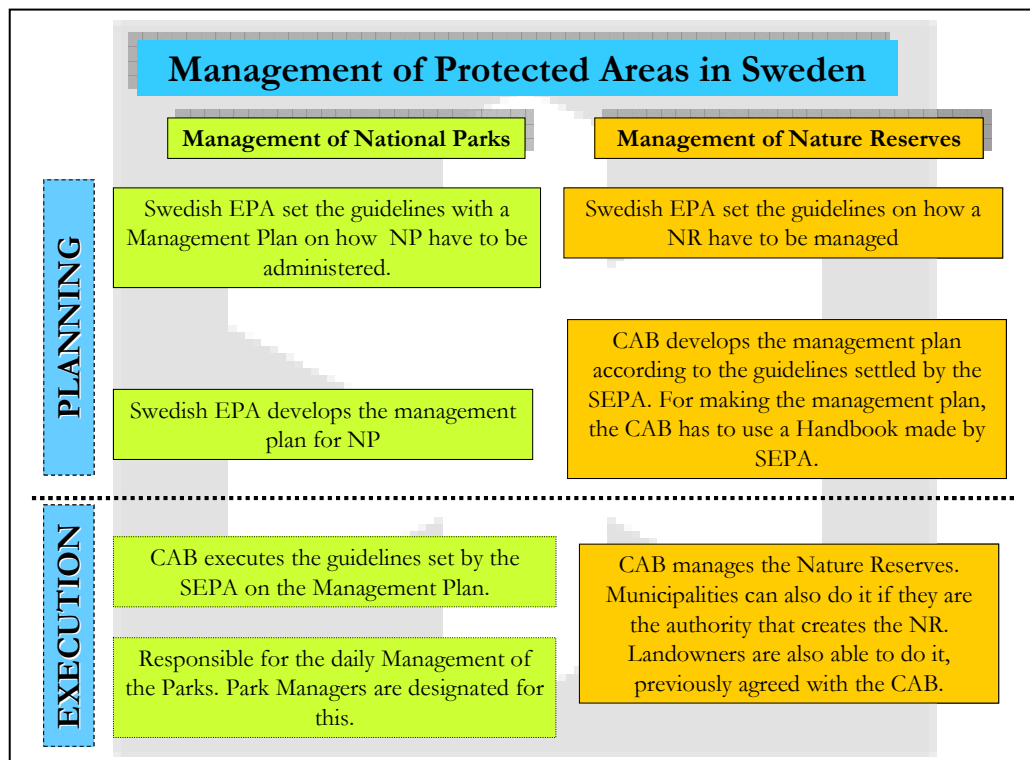
¹⁰⁹ SEPA [Naturvårdsverket Plan 2005-2015] (2005).The Swedish EPA handbook is mainly used to give help and guidance to the County Administrative Board on how to use the guidelines set by the Swedish EPA for writing the Management Plan for Nature Reserves.

comments. This is done mainly with the objective of taking all interests into account, and to decide the necessary measures and restrictions in the area, which can vary from one nature reserve to another; and they have to be established in line with the purpose of the nature reserve mainly¹¹⁰, which may vary, many are established for recreation purposes but there are others that are just for scientific research, for instance¹¹¹.

In the management plan, the characteristics of the nature reserve have to be described as precise as possible. Those characteristics may include all biological, geological and natural values of the area, as well as the identified threats for the nature reserve.

Nature reserves are mainly managed and supervised by the County Administrative Board, but there is also the case in which Municipalities when they have created the nature reserve, can do it; in that case, the Swedish EPA or the CAB are not involved in the management or supervision of the protected area. Landowners as well can manage a nature reserve but it has to be in agreement with the County Administrative Board, that sets the requirements and conditions to do it¹¹². Figure 4-4 summarizes the management processes for both National Parks and Nature reserves.

Figure 4-4 Management of Protected Areas in Sweden



Key: NP: National Parks; NR: Nature Reserves; CAB: County Administrative Board.

Source: Developed by the author based on information from Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (2005a), Hansson, T. (2006) and Bruun, M. (2006). Background image: Swedish Protected Areas symbol SEPA (2003)

¹¹⁰ Bruun, M.(2006)

¹¹¹ SEPA (2005a)

¹¹² Bruun, M.(2006)

Management and conservation plans for protected areas

Every national park, nature reserve and *Natura* 2000 site in Sweden needs to have a management plan that shall include conservation objectives, management measures and clear ways in which progress can be followed up.¹¹³

Mainly, the *management plan* is a tool that has the objective of guiding the protected area in the development, use and management¹¹⁴ of biodiversity and outdoor recreation activities, following the measures established by the Swedish EPA. Besides is a tool for describing the practical measures in the planning and documentation procedures of the protected area, plus the procedures for following up objectives for the area.¹¹⁵

As explained previously, the Swedish EPA is responsible on preparing the *management plans* for National Parks, while the *plans* for Nature Reserves and *Natura* 2000 sites are made mainly by the County Administrative Boards, pursuing the guidelines and rules established by the Swedish EPA¹¹⁶.

One of the main goals established by the Swedish EPA in their *Plan for better use and management of protected areas “protect, preserve, present”*, is that for year 2010, all protected areas including the *Natura* 2000 sites, ‘shall have management or conservation plans’ ready, following the specifications and outlines of the Swedish EPA. ‘By the end of 2010, all national parks must have updated their management plans’¹¹⁷. The updating of plans for *old* protected areas is made every ten years¹¹⁸, but the areas that for a special reason need to make changes, they are allowed to do it before if it is necessary¹¹⁹. For instance in Nature Reserves, management plans for nature reserves are written in a way that no upgrade is needed, mainly because the plan is made based on how they want nature to be, and nature does not change very often.

A general structure of a management plan (*Skötselplan*) of a **National Park** is divided in two parts. A descriptive part in which the objective, the environmental assets in the protected area, the historical and cultural use and the buildings and infrastructure of the park are described; and the plan part, where the guidelines for recreation and outdoor activities are briefly described, park operation, research and documentation, follow up and evaluation, financing, economic plan, restoration plan, revision of management plan and explanation of some other items, are described. For a **Nature Reserve**, it is divided in two parts: the descriptive part that should contain land use, *Natura* 2000 habitats, and special conservation values; historical and present use of land, conservation issues, biological values, geological values, cultural values, recreation. In addition to this, there is also the Plan Part, that includes the purpose of the nature reserve, how the management should be followed up, financial management issues, summarized and prioritized measures and maps.

¹¹³ SEPA [Naturvårdsverket Plan 2005-2015] (2005).p.12

¹¹⁴ Eagles et al (2002)

¹¹⁵ SEPA [Naturvårdsverket Plan 2005-2015] (2005).p.12

¹¹⁶ Hansson, T.(2006)

¹¹⁷ SEPA [Naturvårdsverket Plan 2005-2015] (2005).p.12

¹¹⁸ Hansson, T.(2006)

¹¹⁹ Hansson, T.(2006)

4.3.3 Tourism management in Protected Areas in Sweden – Current situation

Enjoying nature and the countryside is a right that every person (Swedish citizen or foreign visitor) has, as is established by the *right of public access principle*.¹²⁰

In Sweden, tourism in protected areas represents an important activity, taking into consideration that the country is blessed with having extensive and wide natural areas attractive and appropriate for developing tourism and outdoor activities in any season of the year. Protected areas, and especially national parks, are considered the most known and visited places.

Abisko National Park Lapland Sweden

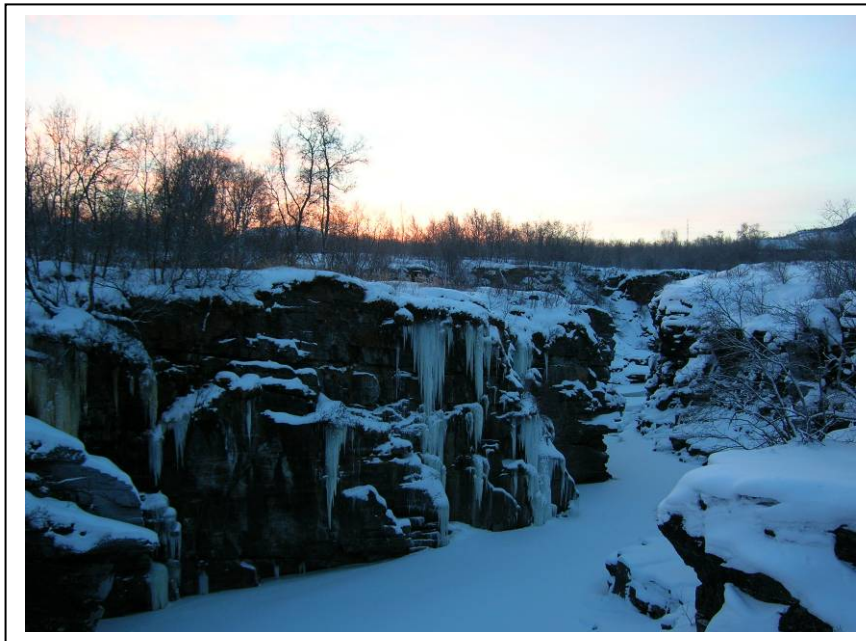


Photo: Natalia Piñeros Arenas 2005

Around 30 years ago, the position of the Government was totally closed to the development of tourism with commercial objectives in national parks, arguing that nature belongs to everybody and no one has the right to earn money from it¹²¹.

There was an attempt around the 1990's, when the Swedish EPA had a project for creating a new national park in Kiruna, in the far north of Sweden. The new park was intended to combine landscape and nature protection with the *development of tourism*, a very new concept in Sweden. Mainly, the idea was to divide the park in six different zones, based on the capacity of the protected area in terms of tourism development activities and nature's sensitivity. The tourism facilities were planned (accommodation, trails), as well as the possibility of employing rangers for supporting the operations and tourism activities of the park. The idea of combining tourism and conservation was accepted after a discussion process between different authorities. However, finally, the project failed, and the main reason was the opposition of the people living around the planned area, mainly because the project could not

¹²⁰ SEPA (2003)

¹²¹ Jiborn, P. (2006)

‘sell the benefits of the park to the locals’¹²². The team working on the project development mainly underestimated the power of the local community, and locals primarily maintained that they could not believe that the authorities would keep their promise on let them continue hunting once the park would be created. Around three quarters of the 35,000 inhabitants of the area signed a petition to not continuing with the project, something that the politicians couldn’t ignore. The main message that this experience leaves is that it is very important to involve people in the whole process and that their strengths as important stakeholders around a protected area should not be underestimated¹²³.

Nowadays, the possibility is still quite restricted especially in the “old” national parks; mainly because they are regulated with the conventional rules were tourism with commercial purposes in protected areas is not seen as a common activity in the Swedish context.

National parks, as for instance Fulufjället, operate with a different approach; since the recently creation in year 2002, the park was established with the Pan Parks¹²⁴ concept in which tourism is seen as a driver for strengthening protection and conservation of the protected area, as well as an activity that can promotes regional development. Before the park was created, almost five years of negotiations especially with local communities were taken, as they were afraid to receive from the new park just restrictions and no benefits from its creation, so the objective of involving the locals as important stakeholders for the development of the new national park was an important starting point¹²⁵.

Important facts about Fulufjället

- It is the first park in Sweden that is adopting a management system for tourism in the protected area.
- It is a good example of how tourism can be good nature conservation allied and regional development driver.
- The decision for adopting PAN Parks scheme was mainly taken by Dalarna County Administrative Board.
- The Swedish Legislation allowed the adoption of the scheme.

The companies and organizations interested in developing tourism activities with profit objectives in the “old” National Parks, for instance -dog sledding, horse riding, other-, inside the area, have to ask in advance for a permission that is given for one year, to the County Administrative Boards (Länsstyrelsen) of their locality^{126 127}. However, this is not a common

¹²² Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe (FNNPE) (1993). *Loving them to death? Sustainable Tourism in Europe’s Nature and National Parks*.

¹²³ FNNPE (1993)

¹²⁴ PAN Parks initiative is one of the schemes for developing sustainable tourism in protected areas in Europe. Explained in more detailed on Chapter number 3.

¹²⁵ Jiborn, P. (2006)

¹²⁶ Jiborn, P. (2006)

activity, since tourism development in protected areas in Sweden is more related with the right of individuals to enjoy freely the nature.

Just recently, the Swedish EPA is realizing that the development of tourism in protected areas can't be separately from conservation issues, as protected areas are becoming more important for 'human well being'¹²⁸.

On their *Plan for better use and management of protected areas "protect, preserve, present"*, some guidelines for developing ecologically sustainable tourism in protected areas are planned to be available at the end of this year. In general, the main idea is to know the people that visit the protected areas, and determine 'how to maintain the natural values and biodiversity while tourism activities are developed in the area'.¹²⁹

Sweden is characterized for being a country that has an effective legislation regarding protected areas¹³⁰. However, as stated by the Federation of Nature National Parks of Europe¹³¹ in their report *"Loving them to death: sustainable tourism in European Protected areas (1993)"* 'a strong national legislation, together with national policies in protected areas and the development of tourism are crucial for the survival of such areas'¹³².

For the Swedish EPA, tourism is a priority due to the important contribution that it can give for the developing of regions¹³³ to finance conservation work¹³⁴. However, the present time there are no national **strategic guidelines** or *frameworks* for developing and managing tourism in a sustainable way in protected areas in Sweden¹³⁵. Though tourism development in those fragile spaces does not represent a big problem nowadays, in the future it can be a very significant threat for the environment if it is not planned and managed properly now¹³⁶.

In Sweden, there are also voluntary and NGO that lead activities connected to the promotion of sustainable tourism. One such initiative is Natures Best (Naturens Bästa). It is a recognized quality label for certifying Swedish tour operators that work in Sweden. It is supported by three main organizations: the Swedish Ecotourism Society, Visit Sweden and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation. They work under six basic principles that every tour operator has to fulfil. To become certified, companies have to follow a strict qualifying procedure that will give them the right of use Natures Best quality label. The label guarantees that the activities offered by tour operators promote responsible tourism and support local development.

¹²⁷ Hansson, T.(2006)

¹²⁸ SEPA [Naturvårdsverket Plan 2005-2015] (2005).p.15

¹²⁹ Hansson, T. (2006)

¹³⁰ FNNPE (1993) p.9

¹³¹ Now is the EUROPARC Federation

¹³² FNNPE (1993) p.9

¹³³ Hansson, T. (2006)

¹³⁴ SEPA (2005b)

¹³⁵ Hansson, T. (2006)

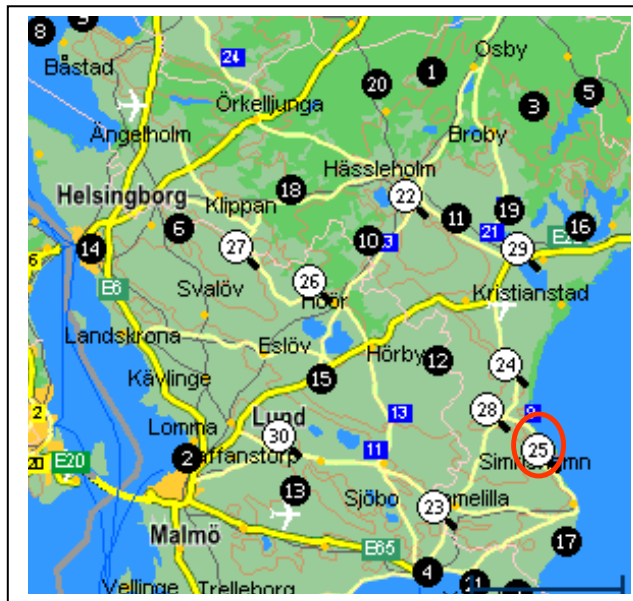
¹³⁶ Hansson, T. (2006)

5 Stenshuvud National Park – the study case

5.1 General description

Stenshuvud National Park is located in the south coast of Skåne the southernmost region in Sweden, to the south of Kivik village, in Simrishamn Municipality. Figure 5-1, shows the location of Stenshuvud National Park in Skåne region:

Figure 5-1 Location of Stenshuvud National Park



Source: Skåne (n.d)

The park was established in 1986 by the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag). It has an area of 386 ha, and was created for preserving a natural area with important biological and geological values, which also offer very attractive settings for outdoor recreation.

Stenshuvud National Park



Pictures: Natalia Piñeros

As main features, the mountain, that gives the name to the park, is 97 meters above the sea level, and is considered a very attractive visiting place from which a magnificent view of the sea and the forest can be experienced.

The beach, one of the best beaches in Skåne region, is also a very important tourism spot mainly during the summer period, in which the number of visitors is around 3 000 to 4 000 persons per day¹³⁷.

Most of the area of the park is covered by broadleaf forest, and also is possible to find meadows, heaths and swamps. Different animal species considered unusual in Sweden can be encountered as for instance the hazel dormouse (the symbol of the park), the agile frog and the European frog, as well as a variety of plants and orchids.

Stenshuvud has a well-developed system of trails and recreation facilities. In the midpoint of the park, and close to the main entrance, there is the nature centre “Naturum”, where permanent exhibitions are offered. Restrooms and waste disposal places are available in central points of the park. The park has clear system of signs along the paths, and a parking lot. Guided tours are provided, and an activity programs are offered regularly.

The park is very well known in the region, and significant efforts to popularise the park have been made by the main tourist promoter in Simrishamn municipality. The park is promoted through different media such as brochures, internet websites, booklets, books, and is considered a strategic tourism place for the region and for the country. The tourism information office organizes, in cooperation with the park, activities every month of the year. This program is spread out in hotels, hostels, and bed and breakfasts¹³⁸.

5.2 Management in Stenshuvud National Park

Management guidelines for Stenshuvud National Park are mainly established in the Management Plan (Skötselplan), developed by the Swedish EPA, and executed by County Administrative Board of Skåne Region (Länsstyrelsen i Skåne Län) through the park manager designated in the protected area.

Currently, the management staff is composed by the park manager, who is mainly responsible for coordinating the operational work (maintenance of walking trails, make inventory of flora and fauna, put signs, etc¹³⁹ as well as guided tours), and the financial and administrative tasks that the park demands¹⁴⁰; it is the “representative” of the Skåne County Administrative Board in the park.

There is also a deputy manager, who is mainly in charge for the visitors centre, to provide information to visitors, some administrative work and gives support as well in the guided tours task. And a third person, identified as ranger, not employed yet, and responsible for mostly of the operational work in the park¹⁴¹.

¹³⁷ Ståhlberg, F. (2006). Approximate statistic for summer 2006.

¹³⁸ Hemne, M. (2006)

¹³⁹ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (n.d). Brochure Swedish National Parks

¹⁴⁰ Ståhlberg, F. (2006)

¹⁴¹ Ståhlberg, F. (2006)

During the summer, seven to eight people work in the park as guides, and also help in the visitor centre with the visitors and operational work.

The National Park has an Advisory Board composed by the park manager, a representative of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) in Skåne (Naturskyddsföreningen i Skåne), and a representative of the Swedish EPA. They have meetings every year, and their main function is to give input on how the conservation management is to be developed.

The management plan is the main document used by the park manager for administering the area. It is the support tool that describes how the park have to be managed, protected and used. The first part contains the purpose of the park which is mainly 'to preserve a magnificent natural area with special geological and biological conservation values, and with great importance for active forms of outdoor recreation'¹⁴². The environmental assets in the protected area, the historical and cultural use and the buildings and infrastructure of the park are described; and the plan part, where the guidelines for recreation and outdoor activities are briefly described, park operation, research and documentation, follow up and evaluation, financing, economic plan, restoration plan, revision of management plan and explanation of some other items, are described.

Regulations for Stenshuvud National Park¹⁴³

The regulations for Stenshuvud National Park are mainly based on the second paragraph of § 5 and the second paragraph of § 6 of the Nature Conservation Act. Some of the prohibited activities and general public regulations are following mentioned.

Prohibited activities in the park include the construction of buildings or other facilities, construction of roads, introduction of plant or animal species, hunting, application of herbicides/pesticides, plant nutrients or lime.

For general public restrictions include the conducting of commercial activities without the permission of the Swedish EPA, conducting of scientific studies without the permission of the Swedish EPA, breaking off branches, cutting down or in any other way damaging living or dead trees and shrubs, horse riding¹⁴⁴; and the picking of flowers. Camping is not permitted in the park and camper vehicles may not remain on the park overnight; bicycling is not allowed within park boundaries, fishing is only permitted in the waters of the Baltic, dogs must leashed all the time¹⁴⁵.

Tourism Management in Stenshuvud National Park

Stenshuvud National Park is one of the most visited parks in Sweden. Per year, approximately 400,000¹⁴⁶ visitors per year come, and the major number is concentrated on the summer period. There is a clear perception that the numbers of visitors are increasing and is expected

¹⁴² SEPA (2005a)

¹⁴³ SEPA (2005a). Extracted textually from the Regulations for Stenshuvud National Park.

¹⁴⁴ SEPA (2005a)

¹⁴⁵ Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. Stenshuvud - National Park in Skåne County. Brochure (n.d)

¹⁴⁶ Stenshuvud Management Plan (Skötselplan) (2004)

to continue growing in the future. The park is frequently visited by schools mainly from Lund and Malmö during the whole year.

Tourism from the park management perspective is considered an important activity, and currently this activity is not seen as a critical problem for conservation purposes. Furthermore, there is an interest on making efforts towards tourism development in the park, but as said by the park manager, managed in a ‘right way’¹⁴⁷. Moreover, knowing the different tools available for planning tourism in protected areas, is also of the interest of the park manager.

Currently, tourism in the park is managed without a strategic plan where tourism flows can be monitored and controlled with consideration to the significant threats to the environment that this activity represents to the area in the short, the medium and long term.

The current management plan briefly mentions tourism issues making emphasis on the available facilities in the park (infrastructure, paths), the importance of Naturum as a gateway strategy with visitors, as well as a briefly description of how to get to the area, the interesting points to visit and some visitors statistics, but the management plan of the park does not set guidelines for managing tourism.

A survey of tourists shows that the general perception of visitors respect to tourism in the park is that is an important activity but has to be managed and carefully controlled to prevent damage to the nature. In addition to this, tourism is also seen as a good way to educate people of how to behave with nature. It was also emphasised that tourism can be very negative to environment if people are not responsible at all. Rules and restrictions are seen as good tools for controlling and ways in which people can acquire the knowledge of how to behave properly in nature.

The results also show that Stenshuvud National Park in general reached their expectations, is considered a very beautiful place, perfect for resting and for having contact with nature. Before Stenshuvud was officially declared a National Park, it was first a nature reserve. In the opinion of one tourist, it was better because not too many people knew the place, now that is National Park, is more visited.

Stenshuvud National Park – summer 2006



Pictures: Natalia Piñeros Arenas

¹⁴⁷ Ståhlberg, F. (2006)

6 Findings and analysis

This chapter describes the main findings and analysis related to tourism management in Sweden and in Stenshuvud National Park. Focus is placed on needs and opportunities, as well as on opportunities provided by management systems.

6.1 Background

Protected Areas in Sweden are mainly created for conservation of biological diversity and preserving valuable natural environments, but most of them are also accessible for tourism and outdoor recreation. Tourism development in Swedish protected areas is based on the *right of public access* principle where individuals can freely enjoy nature without damaging and disturbing the natural environment.

However, tourism has not been seen as a strategic development tool from the national and local level, possibly because it is not the primary objective of protected areas, and because of the traditional principle of free enjoyment of nature. Furthermore, up to date, from the national level, guidelines for developing ecologically sustainable tourism are still under construction; these guidelines could be seen as a first step to start thinking about the significance of tourism as a driver for promoting conservation and regional development. Nevertheless, information on what exactly these guidelines will include and what the specific outcomes the Swedish EPA expects to get from their application has yet not been made public.

It seems like the guidelines are more focused on knowing more about the people that visit the protected areas, identify their attitudes, experiences and principal visiting motivations, but also gives the impression that they are not being developed also with the purpose of opening the opportunity to external operators and/or ecotourism enterprises interested in promoting and developing tourism activities inside the protected areas that shall contribute to local development, as well as a strategic planning tool that permit visualizing the future development of the protected area in the tourism issues.

For the Swedish EPA, tourism in protected areas can be seen as a tool that helps the development of different regions ecologically, socially and economically. However, it is not completely clear what type of tourism is intended to be promoted in those spaces, if it is ecotourism, outdoor recreation, or tourism, what is meant by each one of them in the Swedish context, and how they can be conducted in order to achieve the goal of being an activity 'ecologically sustainable'. Following definitions are provided in order to show their distinction:

- Sustainable Tourism is an umbrella concept that covers all types of tourism activities (projects, operations, conventional and alternative forms of tourism including ecotourism, agro-tourism, sun and beach tourism, cultural tourism and others) that contributes to sustainable development, it means maintains the environmental, social and economical integrity. It can be seen as the ideal state, vision or goal of all ways of tourism development.
- Ecotourism is a category of sustainable tourism that has been expanding rapidly, and is developed in relatively undisturbed natural areas to enjoy and appreciate nature and

cultural values and promotes conservation and development for the local communities. This term is used for many different purposes in different localities¹⁴⁸.

- Outdoor recreation can be interpreted as all types of recreation and leisure activities that people can develop in a place or area where nature plays an important role.

However, it is possible that these three concepts are implicit in the tourism activity as one, but is not explicitly defined. Then it is important to make a clear distinction on what type of tourism is intended to be promoted in protected areas in Sweden, in order not to generate confusion to the visitors as well as to the different actors involved in the management, protection and conservation of protected areas

It seems that in Sweden, there is no tourism development mentality in protected areas and lack of a clear vision of how it will be managed in the future. Currently, the country is privileged on having enough money resources for conservation issues, but this depends 100% on the type of Government that is in power, thus their decisions will directly affect protected areas in the future.

Nowadays, management plans of protected areas in Sweden do not include a tourism strategy that prepares them to the future expansion of this activity in and around it. Possibly today tourism is not a problem due to the large natural areas that Sweden have and the low number of inhabitants compared to the size of the territory, but in the future if it is not planned and organized correctly from now, the consequences can be very negative for nature, environment and local communities.

6.2 Needs and Opportunities

6.2.1 Need of a management system

As previous explained in Section 2, tourism is increasingly growing, and progressively more on natural environments, including protected areas.

In protected areas tourism can be viewed in two different perspectives. By one side, tourism can be an important driver for generating positive impacts as economical benefits by increasing the job and income opportunities for the local communities, enhancing their life quality level and as a way of protecting natural and cultural environment in which the economic benefits can be used for instance for conservation programs.

On the other side, the uncontrolled growing of tourism can be a negative driver, causing significant direct negative impacts to nature, biodiversity, environment, cultural heritage, contributing as well to pollution generation, affecting directly the natural resources availability.

Stenshuvud National Park is considered to be one of the most visited parks in Sweden, and therefore, one of the protected areas where tourism activity is growing every year. However, the current situation shows that tourism in the park is managed without a strategic plan where tourism flows can be monitored and controlled with consideration to the significant threats to the environment that this activity represents to the area in the short, the medium and long term. The current management plan of the park does not set guidelines for managing tourism and it is possible to say that the park is not prepared for the future development of tourism.

The lack of direction and guidance for developing tourism in the ‘right way’ in the protected area adds to the problems faced by park management when formulating opinions and standpoints dealing with the issue of sustainable tourism. It also leaves the impression that the park needs to put more efforts to control tourism expansion and/or to implement new rules for their management.

In addition, while tourism is not considered to be a critical problem today, this could be accredited to the fact that the environmental impacts from tourism are not evident yet. This could potentially constitute a serious threat to the conservation work of the park, especially in light of the trend towards increased tourism pressure.

Currently, the park has no active need to advertise in order to stimulate tourism. This is probably due to the park relying on good marketing channels (tourist information offices, brochures, internet, hotels, hostels, municipality, County Administrative Board offices, others) as well as good system of signs distributed along the region and around the protected area. Thus it is considered that more no additional commercial efforts are needed. An alternative explanation could be that the park does not want more visitors in the area. If, as previously explained, tourism is an important tool in promoting an understanding for the need for the conservation and the protection of nature, then a limiting of visitors by not actively spreading information, is perhaps not necessarily a positive tendency. An unwillingness to attract additional tourists could stem from the lack of a plan for how to handle increased tourism pressures.

On the basis of a series of interviews, the opinions of tourists visiting the park was elicited. One main finding is that the tourists consider it to be important that the park is well-managed. It was also emphasised that there is a need to regulate the flows of tourists and that it is important to impose clear guidelines and restrictions on the behaviour of the tourists. Rules are also important for promoting awareness about environmental protection. Furthermore, it was explained that the park could potentially be an important bridge between visitors and conservation work, and that education opportunities could be further used to increase the public understanding for the importance of conservation. This shows that also visitors feel a need for the management of tourism and that there is a perception of opportunities connected to integrating education into the visiting experience.

This shows that there is a need for a system for how to manage existing and future tourism in a sustainable way. In order to do this, the park needs to formulate a strategy and on the basis of this develop an action plan. Furthermore, mechanisms to control and evaluate the implementation of the plan need to be developed.

6.2.2 Possible opportunities – tools

There are several opportunities for the park to develop a system for managing tourism. One option is to on its own develop this system, strategy, plan and control mechanisms. This might be a difficult undertaking since, as previously mentioned, there are no national guidelines for the management of tourism in protected areas that could provide guidance to the park. Furthermore, the development of a system is time-consuming, takes resources and requires special competences and skills, a special team may have to be established. As explained previously, there are not a lot of employees working at the park; furthermore they already have many responsibilities and daily tasks. This indicates that it would be difficult for the park to develop a system on its own.

Another option is to use recognizable voluntary worldwide tools available in the market for developing the system for managing tourism. Some of them are for instance the recently publication of the World Commission on Protected Areas, “Guidelines for planning and managing tourism in protected areas” published in year 2002. They provide to protected area managers a theoretical framework as well as practical issues. There is also a set of international guidelines developed under the Convention of Biological Diversity that can be applied for all forms of tourism and were created basically for providing guidelines on how to develop sustainable tourism in vulnerable places. They are designed for all forms of tourism activities including tourism based on nature. Those are voluntary initiatives that can be used by protected area managers as a basis for developing their tourism management plans. The decision then to adopting one or another requires from the park a high level of commitment and work.

A third option that the park can take is to adopt one of the schemes available in Europe for developing tourism in protected areas in a sustainable way. The two main systems are the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas developed by the EUROPARC Federation, the organization in charge of administering all protected areas in Europe; and the Pan Parks initiative, created by the World Wildlife Foundation and the Dutch company Molecaten group. Both frameworks were developed with the aim of providing a supportive tool to protected areas for managing tourism in a sustainable way. Both are as well voluntary initiatives.

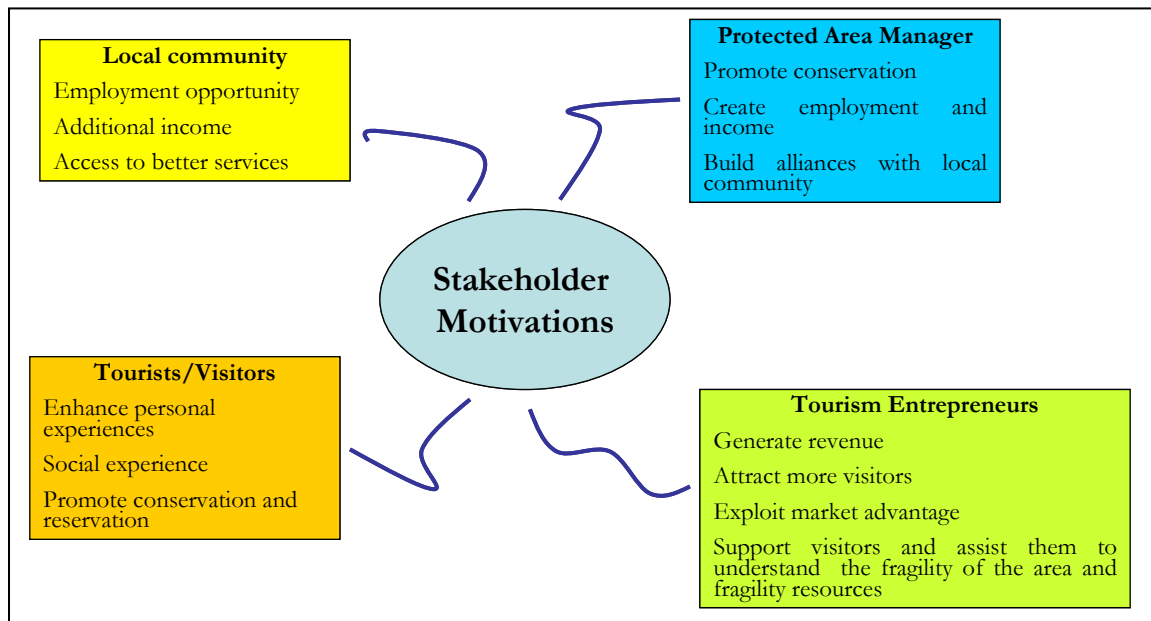
Benefits of having a management system

- To prevent the future impact of tourism in nature, biodiversity and cultural heritage.
- To increase the positive impacts that tourism developed in a sustainable way can generate.
- To have an important and organized tool for monitoring and control tourism development.
- To have an action plan that supports the strategy formulated by the protected area authority.
- To work towards conservation through tourism development as a good allied.
- To improve stakeholder involvement.

The importance of stakeholder involvement

In the whole planning process is a very important issue for aligned expectations, future benefits as well as that they can contribute constructively to the successful development of the strategy and the plan. Stakeholders can be of different nature and mainly are the organizations, tourism entrepreneurs, park managers, NGO's, Educational Institutions, Governmental authorities, Landowners, Local community and others. All these actors play a very important role in the planning process of tourism development. All of them as well have different motivations around the protected area. The main goal is to try to balance the motivations of the most important stakeholders and involve them in the different stages of the planning process. Figure 6-1 shows some of the motivations of the main stakeholders.

Figure 6-1 Stakeholders motivations



Source: Developed by the author based on Eagles et al (2002)

Challenges for adopting a management system

- All new processes requires effort, time, human resources, important skills are needed when the management system has to be built.
- Change of mentality.
- High level of commitment.
- Support from the main authorities.

Main Challenge for the Park

Any of the initiatives that the park decides to take requires high level of commitment and support. The park is now in a position that can decide to take action to anticipate the possible negative impacts of tourism in the future, or continue working as is doing today. Is then very important that the park evaluates that taking action today does not means open the park to any kind of tourism development, is more thinking about the opportunities, focused on being prepared for the future changes and take into account the tourism growing trends, the new market conditions and visitors expectations looking for new environments and enjoyment of nature.

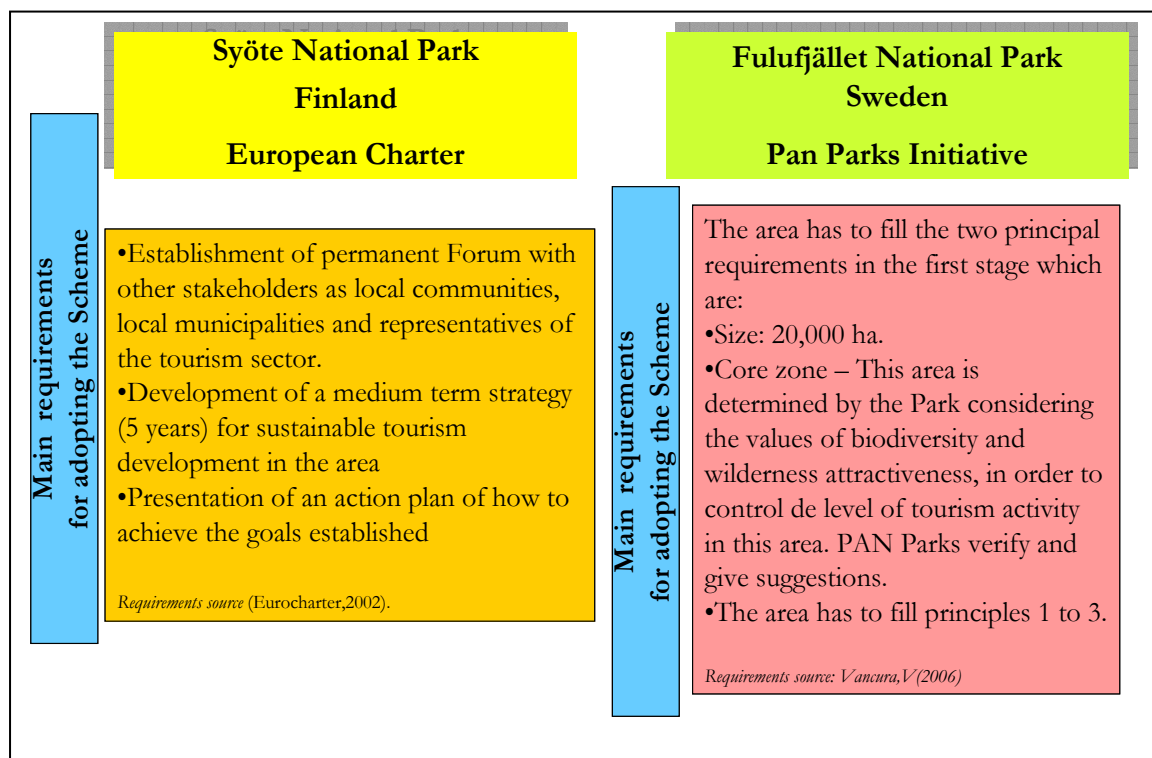
Any of the voluntary approach options that the park decides to adopt, requires high level of commitment, permanent work and cooperation with stakeholders.

6.2.3 Selection of management system

Considering the current situation of the park in terms of tourism management, the adoption of a formalized management system is suggested to the protected area. Chapter 3 shows two main management systems that are currently applied by several protected areas in Europe, with the aim of providing a supportive tool to protected areas for managing tourism in a sustainable way. It is also shown, the experiences of two different National Parks that are using both schemes. By one side Syöte National park in Finland who is applying the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, and on the other side Fulufjället National Park in Sweden that is using the Pan Parks Initiative.

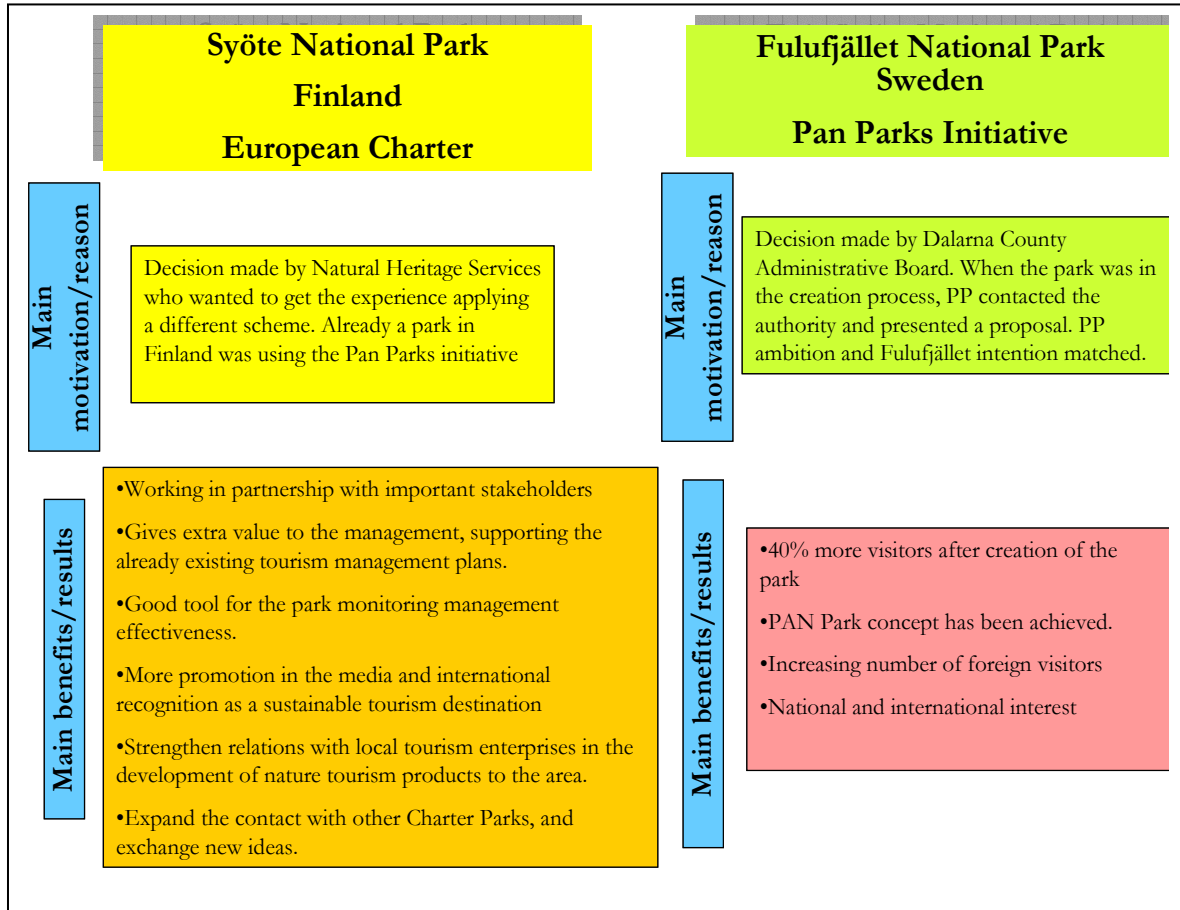
Taking as reference cases Syöte National Park in Finland and Fulufjället National Park in Sweden, figure 6-2 and 6-3 briefly shows the main requirements needed to be fulfilled by the protected areas to apply to the schemes, the benefits achieved until today by the parks, as well as the main motivations to join the schemes.

Figure 6-2 Reference cases experience



Source: Developed by the author based on information from interviews to representatives of National Parks of Syöte and Fulufjället (2006)

Figure 6-3 Reference cases experience



Source: Developed by the author based on information from interviews to representatives of National Parks of Syöte and Fulufjället (2006)

Based on the information presented in figure 6-2 and 6-3, it can be concluded that:

- The experience and results achieved until the moment by Syöte National Park and Fulufjället National Park are mainly dependent on the level of commitment from the different stakeholders on working towards sustainable tourism development in the protected area.
- Both are relatively new parks. The results achieved until today can be seen as important achievements that can be multiplied in the future.
- Both parks had different motivations for adopting the strategic framework for planning and management of tourism in the park.

The European Charter and the Pan Parks initiative are considered similar and complementary schemes. Both initiatives¹⁴⁹:

- Promote the development of tourism that can provide an economic opportunity for the local community, that protects the cultural and natural environment, as well as enhance the quality of life of the local communities.
- Working in partnership with important stakeholders that have interest in the protected area
- An strategy for conservation and sustainable tourism management is needed

While, both schemes provide effective guidelines for the development of a protected area tourism strategy, as well as for an action plan, the European Charter seems to be the management framework that is better suited for Stenshuvud National Park. One of the main reasons for this is the issue of park size. The European Charter can be awarded to any protected area independent of its size¹⁵⁰. As explained by the director of the Pan Parks organisation¹⁵¹, the scheme has a size criteria of 20 000 ha. Despite this restriction, any protected area can adopt parts of the PAN parks process and use the knowledge and experience of PAN parks. However, considering the size of Stenshuvud (386 ha), the park would not be able to join the network as a certified PAN park and would not get the benefit of being able to use the organisation's logo.

This indicates that the European Charter is the most suitable tool for the park to use, since the park corresponds to set criteria and would be able to access the most benefits.

¹⁴⁹ PAN Parks Foundation (n.d)

¹⁵⁰ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d.)

¹⁵¹ Khun, Z. (2006)

7 Recommendations for Stenshuvud National Park

7.1 A starting point

An investigation of the application of sustainable tourism management schemes in the two Nordic parks, together with an analysis of the requisites of these frameworks, indicates that the most suitable scheme for Stenshuvud National Park is the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

The decision on whether to adopt the charter or not, is dependent upon the future plans of the area, main motivations, objectives, the level of commitment and significance that tourism represents to the area, as well as on the new guidelines that are being developed. However, these future guidelines should not be seen as a reason not to address the issue of tourism management already now, by working proactively, the park will most probably be better prepared to follow the coming guidelines. Furthermore, the Charter is a tool that should not in any way come in opposition with the new guidelines and thus could potentially be seen as an instrument for compliance with future norms.

7.2 Adoption of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

These suggestions have been developed without consideration of the guidelines that the Swedish EPA is preparing for ecologically sustainable tourism in protected areas. This means that it is possible that these recommendations will have to be modified by the main authority, in this case the County Administrative Board of Skåne (Länsstyrelsen) in order to accommodate the demands set in the coming Swedish EPA guidelines. However, it is possible that proactively working with the issue of sustainable tourism, the park will be in a better position to implement the new guidelines.

Furthermore, it is probable that the guidelines will be of a more general nature thus requiring that the park develops its own management plan taking into consideration the specific conditions in the park. For this, the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas can be utilized as the tool and help provides a structure for this work.

The European Charter is a tool that has been applied for almost 30 national parks in all Europe since it was created. The Charter is a complete framework that provides to protected areas de guidelines for developing a sustainable tourism strategy supported by an action plan, which further will give the protected area managers an organized set of steps for planning, controlling and monitoring the development of tourism in the area. Several are the reasons to adopting the scheme, following they are explained according to the structure of the European Charter and in the specific case of Stenshuvud National Park as well as the decision process and legal issues to take into consideration.

In Sweden, every national park has their own set of regulations that mainly describe what it is permitted and what is forbidden. However, there do not seem to be any legal barriers for the implementation of the Charter.

While the initial decision may lie with the park manager to suggest the use of the Charter to improve the management of tourism in the park, the final decision lies with the County Administrative Board.

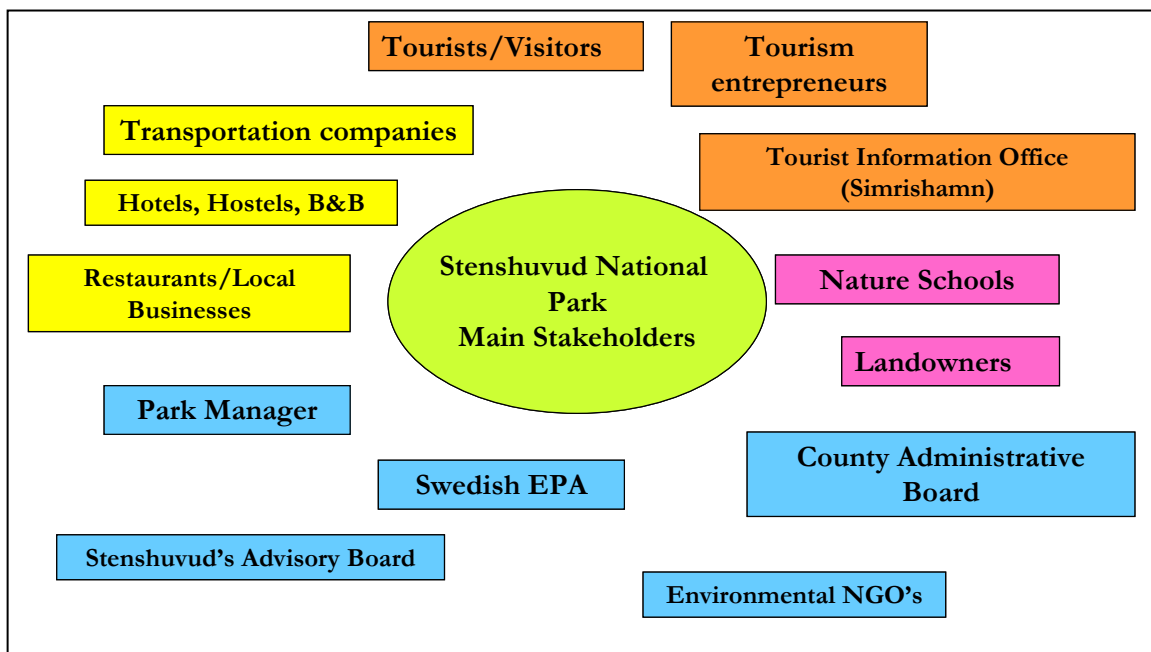
7.2.1 Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan

The following section briefly illustrates how the use of the Charter could be beneficial in the development of a sustainable tourism strategy and action plan for Stenshuvud National park. The section uses a selection of guidelines and principles from the Charter and shows how these could be used by the park.

The sustainable tourism strategy aims to improving the quality of the tourism product that is intended to be developed while taking into consideration the conservation values and objectives of the protected area. The strategy is a guarantee that the tourism that will be developed in the area is not against the conservation measures, and seeks to integrate tourism as an important driver for cultural, environmental, economical and social aspects.

The sustainable tourism strategy has to be developed with important stakeholders interested in the protected area. Different stakeholders for Stenshuvud are proposed in Figure 7-1.

Figure 7-1 Stenshuvud National Park Stakeholders



Source: Developed by the author based on interviews information

The action plan is the tool used to describe how the tourism strategy will be developed, and the different measures that have to be taken into consideration in order to achieve the strategy objectives. The action plan has to be developed taking into account the following **key issues** established by the Charter:

Protection and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage

This key issue intends to address all the important factors related to nature conservation in the area. For the case of Stenshuvud National Park, this point is a very good advantage, considering that already the park has been working towards preservation and conservation goals since the protected area was created as is the most important purpose of national parks in Sweden.

The difference factor will be then the introduction of tourism as an important activity that seeks to protect and enhance the natural and cultural values of the area, and to protect it mainly from the excessive tourism development as it is established in the Charter. Mainly, it involves:

- *Monitoring impact on flora and fauna and controlling tourism in sensitive locations.* This aspect has to be made taking into consideration the carrying capacity of the area. Some areas should not be opened for tourism activities due to their fragility. As is happening in Stenshuvud, the paths established around the park, are not totally shown in the map guide that visitors use for walking in the park. This, with the aim of protecting certain areas that are more fragile than the ones available for more visitors. It is a good point. But, the park in the moment has no control of visitors, and most likely no carrying capacity measures for the areas where tourism can be developed.
- Measures for preserving natural resources, mainly to take control and reduce negative activities.
- *Encouraging visitors and the tourism industry to contribute to conservation.* The park can develop environmental education programs with visitors and tourism entrepreneurs. Taking advantage of the guided tours program that Stenshuvud has currently, it can be a good space for improving and involving more visitors and tourism operators.

Improving the quality of the tourism experience

The goal is to provide all visitors a very good experience. To improve the quality of it, some aspects have to be taken into consideration:

- *Research the expectation and satisfaction of existing and potential visitors.* As there is an interest from the park management perspective to ‘make visitors happy’, it is a good starting point to know what are the expectations and requirements of current and potential visitors. Stenshuvud can apply satisfaction surveys for measuring the expectations before and after the visit, and as suggested by the Charter, a marketing approach should be taken, to focus in the appropriate issues. Stenshuvud as mentioned in previous chapters, has good marketing channels, and is a very well known National Park, mostly in the south of Sweden, and visited as well by people from neighbour countries as Denmark, Germany as well as Italy, France and other countries.
- *Supporting initiatives to check and improve the quality of facilities and services.* This is mainly focused on improving all aspects that are important in the tourism experience. In the case of Stenshuvud, the park counts with different trails and recreation facilities as well as a nature information centre (Naturrum) considered a very important contact point of visitors with the park. Some recommendations are given further.

Raising public awareness

The protected area will seek to communicate in an effective way to visitors about the special qualities of the area, as for instance ensuring that the information provided has a good quality and authenticity level, as well as providing educational facilities for learning experiences of the visitors and local people. The Naturum in Stenshuvud is a strategic space in which visitors can get a good contact with the park’s natural values through different slide shows, and printed

information. The nature centre plays an important role in the visitor's experience, as is the first contact that the people have with the park.

Control of tourism numbers

Visitor flows have to be monitored and controlled in order to reduce the negative tourism impacts on the environment and heritage of the area. This is mainly made by:

- *Keeping record of visitor numbers.* Stenshuvud currently does not have an organized system for monitoring and controlling visitors flows in the park. A system is needed to keeping a record of visitors that go to the park.
- *Creating and implementing visitor management plan.* For the park this implies having measures to channel visitor flows and regulate the activities of people in the area.
- *Promoting use of public transport, cycling and walking as an alternative to private cars.* Today, most of the people that visit Stenshuvud use car to go to the park. One of the recommendations that are given to the park and explained in detail later, is the use of bikes for transportation.

Other issues

The Charter also provides guidance for the development of tourism that is specific to the area. Further central issues are training both of park staff, but also of other involved organisations, the protection and support of the quality of life for local residents, which could be seen as an aspect of the social and economic development values which are to be promoted.

Benefits that can be get by Stenshuvud National Park joining the European Charter

The experience from Syöte National Park in Finland shows that the Charter is a very good supportive tool for managing tourism and conservation issues. Before joining the Charter, the park already was working with a tourism strategy and action plan that was a very helpful tool for applying to the Charter. Syöte opened more opportunities to the local development, as being an important bridge between visitors and local tourism entrepreneurs. It is expected then to expand the cooperation network, and open more opportunities for visitors to know the park and their efforts for developing tourism in a sustainable way. Syöte is clear example of how the Charter can be a strategic supportive tool for developing sustainable tourism in the park.

There are numerous benefits that Stenshuvud could get from joining the Charter. It is the **first** European initiative to certificate that the tourism developed in protected areas is sustainable. It is a tool designed to guarantee that the tourism that is developed in the protected areas in Europe, fulfil the criteria and principles of sustainable development. It is a strategic tool that has been adopted by more than 25 protected areas in Europe and the number of certified parks is expected to increase during the next years. The European Charter will give the opportunity to the Park to join a network of more than 25 parks around Europe, exchange experiences and knowledge. It is a recognized quality label for sustainable tourism in Europe. This will give to Stenshuvud a high profile, recognition and prestige in the continent for being an area devoted to the development of sustainable tourism in their territory.

Stenshuvud National Park would be the first National Park in Sweden that adopts the European Charter. By being first, the park could be a contributing force to the development of the system for management of sustainable tourism in Sweden by showing the possibilities

provided by the use of this specific formalized management system. Thus the park could not only be a case for studying the usefulness of this scheme in a Swedish context, but could also enable comparative studies in the Nordic countries, as the scheme has been used in a park in Finland.

As mentioned in previous sections, in Sweden Fulufjället National Park is the only park that is using an external tool for tourism management. It could be a good opportunity then, to have two different parks applying the main European schemes for getting the broad picture and evaluating the results gotten from each experience, as it is happening today in Finland.

The charter provides a support tool for planning for the future development of the protected area. By using an already elaborated organised method time and resources can be saved. The scheme offers a systematic approach and a step-by-step guide to sustainable tourism development. The scheme can be used to develop a sustainable tourism strategy in accordance with the specific needs, resources, objectives and visions that the park has.

One of the requirements of the European Charter is to create a forum to involve the main stakeholders in and around the protected area for developing the tourism strategy and the action plan. Considering the interest of the park management to create a council that will involve people from the local community, schools and politicians for promoting the Visitors Centre, this could be seen as part of the process. Furthermore, the Charter provides further guidance on the strengthening of the relations with the local community, which could lie at the basis for the development of joint efforts for the preservation and improvement of the life quality of the local community. The Charter links the issues of the development and support of the local community, the conservation of the environment and cultural heritage, and the generation of new employment, thus provides a firm basis for working with sustainable development in the park and even in the extended area or region around the park.

By using the Charter, tourism can more clearly be linked to conservation issues and could even become a driver for conservation work. Furthermore, it is possible that by proactively working with the issue of sustainable tourism, the park will be in a better position to implement the new guidelines.

Main challenge for Stenshuvud to adopting the Charter

One of the most important challenges on adopting the Charter as the tourism management system in the park, is that needs the support of the main authority and the commitment of different actors involved in the protected area management. Since it is a new alternative it will require time to be planned and applied, as well as a high level of commitment. The park then has to be very active to get the benefits for joining the Charter.

It is then an opportunity for the park to change the traditional way of doing things, to be proactive and be prepared for the future. It can be an example in Sweden as a park that through the development of tourism controlled, and managed is possible to reinforce conservation issues as well as supporting local development.

Procedure that Stenshuvud National Park has to follow to join the European Charter

The Charter has a specific process and requirements that protected areas interested on applying, have to pursue. Following, the procedure is briefly described by steps, using the information available in the EUROPARC Federation website¹⁵², and summarized in table 7-1:

Table 7-1 Procedure by steps to become a “Charter Park” in the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Steps	Processes
Step 1 <i>Interest</i>	Stenshuvud National Park is motivated for adopting the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas management system – Express interest to be a “Candidate Charter Park”.
	Before subscribing as a “Charter Park” the protected area has to be member of the EUROPARC Federation. Stenshuvud National Park is already part of the Federation (Europarc Nordic Baltic Section).
Step 2 <i>Registration – Enter in the Data Base</i>	Registration of Stenshuvud National Park as a “Candidate Charter Park” with the EUROPARC Federation. (See Appendix 3 – Registration Form) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park will enter in the European Charter database of participating parks. • The registration form has to be sent to the Federation at least one year before the Protected Area will send all the documentation needed for the full application.
Step 3 <i>Charter requirements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once Stenshuvud National Park is registered in the Data Base, documentation needed for the full application is sent by the Federation to the Protected Area. • A list of requirements has to be fulfilled by the protected area in order to apply for the full membership of the Charter. (See Appendix 2 - European Charter Requirements). The Park should be very active to develop de Sustainable Tourism strategy and the Federation will give support during the process.
Step 4 <i>Application and Verification</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Stenshuvud National Park has met the requirements (FORUM, Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Action Plan) it may apply for the full membership of the Charter. • Submission of documentation by Stenshuvud National Park for applying to the full membership of the Charter to the EUROPARC Federation.
Step 5 <i>Documentation Checking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An expert verifier is selected by the EUROPARC Federation for evaluating the documentation submitted by the manager of Stenshuvud National Park. • Desk evaluation and verification of the documentation is made. • If the documentation sent by the protected area is ok (fulfil all the requirements), then an on site verification to Stenshuvud National Park (2 days) is made by the independent verifier selected by EUROPARC for the park. • If the documentation is not complete, the protected area is notified and it has to verify again the requirements, complete the documentation and sent it again to the Federation.

¹⁵² European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d).

<p>Step 6 <i>Final decision</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EUROPARC Evaluation Committee makes the final decision on Stenshuvud National Park application according to the report presented by the verifier, and if everything is ok, award is given to the protected area in a special ceremony.
<p>Step 7 <i>Implementation Strategy/action plan</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stenshuvud National Park has to implement the 5 year strategy proposed and agreed and the action plan to accomplish that strategy. • Evaluation and reporting stage
<p>Step 8 <i>Renewal of the Certification</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new Strategy and Action Plan for the next 5 years. • Application to EUROPARC Federation for renewal of Charter membership

Source: Developed by the author based on information from European Charter (n.d)

How much does cost to adopt the European Charter by Stenshuvud National Park?

The protected area interested in joining the European Charter, has to assume the following costs¹⁵³:

For candidate Charter Parks¹⁵⁴

- Registration Fee: EUR 500
- Verification Fee: EUR 4000 + VAT¹⁵⁵. Additionally the protected area has to cover travel costs and accommodation for the visiting verifier.

For full Charter Parks¹⁵⁶ (following a successful verification)

- Mid-term monitoring/evaluation¹⁵⁷ (after 2.5 years): Fees subject to extent according to work required¹⁵⁸
- Evaluation for renewal of Charter membership (after 5 years): EUR 4000 + VAT¹⁵⁹. Additionally the protected area has to cover travel costs and accommodation for the visiting verifier.

¹⁵³ European Charter For Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d)

¹⁵⁴ **Candidate Charter Parks:** are the protected areas that want to join the Charter.

¹⁵⁵ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d). As textually said in the document, the 'Process administered by EUROPARC Consulting GmbH, VAT subject to clarification on where this is due in each individual case'.

¹⁵⁶ **Full Charter Parks:** Protected areas that already fulfilled all the requirements and can start applying the Charter.

¹⁵⁷ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d). The decision of a mid term evaluation is optional.

¹⁵⁸ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d)

¹⁵⁹ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d). As textually said in the document, the 'Process administered by EUROPARC Consulting GmbH, VAT subject to clarification on where this is due in each individual case'

The Charter Parks

The numbers of protected areas that are adopting the Charter since it was implemented has been increasing in the past years. Since year 2001, approximately 30 protected areas have joined the scheme, and is expected from year 2006 to year 2007, to receive 13 more full applications of different protected around Europe, that already are registered in EUROPARC Federation data base¹⁶⁰. Figure 7-2 shows the protected areas that currently are members of the Charter.

Figure 7-2 European Charter Parks



Key:  Charter Member

Source: *European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d)*

The role of Natures Best

As mentioned in section 4, there are different initiatives that are promoting sustainable tourism in Sweden. One of the most important initiatives is Natures Best. This initiative certifies tour operators and other actors in the tourism industry. In order to develop tourism, it is reasonable to assume that the park will have to enter into closer cooperation with tour operators and other service providers. By requiring that these partners are certified by Natures Best, the park would be able to ensure that the tourism chain connected to the park corresponds to high sustainability standards.

¹⁶⁰ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (n.d)

Additional recommendations

While the adoption of the Charter would provide the park with a useful management system that could function as guidance and a tool for working with sustainable tourism, the following section presents a number of smaller improvements that could be implemented irrespective of whether the park chooses to use the Charter or not.

Adoption of the Blue Flag Eco Label

The Blue Flag, is an environmental award given to beaches and marinas around the world that fulfil a set of strict criteria regarding environmental management, water quality, safety, services facilities and environmental education. It is given to those communities that are making a special effort to manage the coastal and inland water environment and beaches respecting nature and environment.

As mentioned on previous chapters, one of the main attractions of Stenshuvud National Park is the beach. Introducing the blue flag concept in the park's beach, could be an important step forward for tourism development ensuring the environmental quality of the place as well as an important effort for preserving the natural environment of the area.

Naturum – The Nature Centre

The Naturum is the initial contact of visitors with the park. As being a strategic point for learning some recommendations are given:

- Display information regarding the Swedish Protected Areas system, in order to show to visitors how the system works, how many nature reserves and national parks are available, where they can go, importance of the system for nature conservation. Currently, a brochure of National Parks is available, but could be a good idea to have permanent information displayed in the centre.
- Taking advantage of being a place designed for environmental education purposes, it is a good opportunity to involve visitors in a complete learning experience. Environmental problems are a reality, and protected areas are one of the main affected places by these problems. Displaying information regarding the main issues we are facing today, for instance how climate change is affecting nature, what are the main consequences that are present today, what is the future of protected areas, and how we can to cooperate and decrease the damage, can be a good channel for generating curiosity on visitors and increasing their level of awareness and knowledge.
- The current displayed information available in the Naturum is in Swedish. As a recommendation, it can be updated and translated to other languages, for instance English.

Transportation to the park – bikes for rent

Most of the people come to park by car, but there are as well persons that use the public transport to go to Stenshuvud. From the main road until the principal entrance of the park, there is no public transport available, and there is approximately 3 km of distance. One alternative is to offer visitors bikes for rent.

The renting place can be managed by people of the community, and it can be located in Södra Melby one of the main entrances to reach the park. People that are coming by bus, stop in the main entrance and rent the bike for 20 SEK per day, use the bike until the main entrance of the park and returned it at the end of the day. This is an alternative transportation, faster than walking, environmentally friendly, healthy, and helps the people of the community.

Creation of Mobile Education Platform – “Nature for you”

In order to reach a wider audience, the park could develop a new concept based on a mobile education out-reach platform. Such a platform, e.g. in the form of a specially designed mini-bus, could provide access to information and learning opportunities on conservation issues and sustainable tourism. The mini-bus could travel around Skåne region, stopping in schools, towns, main cities, and inviting people to know more about the park and the value of nature protection. The concept could also allow people who are unable to travel to the park to take part in the learning experience that the park provides. To make the concept more appealing and popular, a mascot could be developed and used for promotional purposes. The mascot could be developed as part of a contest, where the public can participate and offer their mascot-design proposals. Further competitions could be continued on a regular basis to provide a constant level of interest through new types of activities. This idea could be multiplied in other parks in the region and in the country.

8 Conclusions

Protected areas are strategic places for conservation of the most valuable biological and cultural assets as well as attractive settings for tourism development activities. Managed in a sustainable way, tourism can be a significant driver that can contribute to enforcement of conservation programs as well as promoting local and regional development.

In order to minimize the negative impacts that can be produced by tourism, and enhance the positive impacts and possibilities that this activity can supply to the protection of the natural asset and the local communities that are benefiting from the protected area, several tools are available with the aim of giving to protected areas assistance in the tourism management planning.

The overall purpose of this thesis was to investigate the need and options for implementing a management system for planning and developing tourism, taking as a case study Stenshuvud National Park in Skåne, Sweden. To support this research, questions related to the operation of the Swedish protected areas system, the management of tourism in protected areas in Sweden, the situation regarding the use of management systems for developing sustainable tourism in Swedish protected areas and the current situation of tourism management in Stenshuvud National Park, were investigated.

The results show that in Sweden, protected areas are mainly created for conservation and preservation of valuable environments, and most of them are open for tourism and outdoor recreation. Tourism in protected areas is based on the *right of public access* principle, in which every citizen and foreign visitor can enjoy nature and the countryside responsibly.

Furthermore, the development of tourism in Swedish protected areas has not been seen as a strategic development tool from the national and local level. Up to date, on the national level, guidelines for developing tourism in protected areas are under construction and it is still not clear what is the outcome expected from their application.

For Stenshuvud National park, tourism is an important issue, and currently this activity is not seen as a critical problem for conservation purposes. However, tourism has not been managed with a strategic plan where tourism flows are monitored and controlled considering the possible threats that this activity represents to the area in the short, medium and long term. Therefore, the need for a management system was identified as an important issue to be addressed by the park, and the adoption of a formalized management system for developing tourism in a sustainable way was suggested.

The adoption of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected areas was recommended as the most suitable management system that can be followed by Stenshuvud National park. It is an already elaborated organised method that would give guidance and support to protected area management for planning the future development of tourism, controlling and monitoring tourism flows to prevent future impacts to the environment and cultural heritage. The scheme offers a systematic approach and a step-by-step guide to sustainable tourism development. It can be used to develop a sustainable tourism strategy in accordance with the specific needs, resources, objectives and visions that the park has.

Recommendations for further research

The use and application of international tourism management systems in Swedish protected areas is not common practice yet. This study could be complemented by the development of similar research in other national parks in Sweden.

A general evaluation of the effectiveness in the application of tourism management systems in other European countries could provide valuable insights for the future development of such schemes, as well as potentially contribute to the increased utilisation of the systems.

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Pictures

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Appendix 1: Comparative between European Charter and Pan Parks Initiative

Using different sources as internet web pages, interviews with representatives of the two organizations, a comparison already made by representatives of EUROPARC and PAN Parks available on PAN Parks web page and printed material, information about the schemes is provided. The next table was taken from (Piñeros, 2006).

Aspect	European Charter	PAN Parks Initiative
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a tool designed to guarantee that the tourism that is developed in the protected areas in Europe, accomplish the criteria and principles of sustainable development. • Created by the EUROPARC Federation in 1995. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is an initiative that seeks for integrating tourism with conservation of nature and wilderness areas • ‘Change tourism from a potential threat into an opportunity’¹⁶¹ • Created by the WWF and the Dutch Leisure Company Molecaten Group
Aim/Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing tourism in protected areas according to the principles of sustainable development ¹⁶² • Conservation is part of the initiative, but is not explicitly stated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a European network of wilderness protected areas and improve nature protection through sustainable tourism development ¹⁶³ • Conservation is the most important issue and is explicitly stated. • Conservation + Tourism: Protection of natural areas through tourism. • ‘Put the economic value generated through tourism into the protection of Europe’s nature’ ¹⁶⁴
Principles	<p>12 Principles (Mentioned only 10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the limits of carrying capacity 	<p>5 Principles¹⁶⁵</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature value

¹⁶¹ World Wildlife Foundation (n.d). Available: <http://www.panda.org.za/article.php?id=126>

¹⁶² European Charter (2002)

¹⁶³ Central Balkan National Park (2006). Available: Available: <http://centralbalkannationalpark.org/en/aboutpp.php> [2006, August 28]

¹⁶⁴ Eagles et al (2002)

¹⁶⁵ Central Balkan National Park (2006)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to heritage conservation and enhancement • Preserve natural resources • Support the local economy • Promote the involvement of local residents • Develop appropriate high quality tourism • Make protected areas accessible to everyone • Develop new forms of employment • Encourage behaviour that respects the environment • Serve as a model of other economic sectors and influence their practices. <p><i>Principles information source</i> (Sustainable Tourism and Natura 2000, 2001)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat management • Visitor management • Sustainable tourism development strategy • Partnerships
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The charter has been conceived in three sections¹⁶⁶ : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the protected area • For tourism businesses in the protected area • For tour operators bringing visitors to the protected area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park management effectiveness: this is a core variable in the PAN Parks initiative. It refers to the management effectiveness, sustainable tourism and quality of the product (principles 1 to 5) • Sustainable tourism strategy • Sustainable tourism products and local business partners • Sustainable tourism products and national and international business partners <p><i>Source</i> ¹⁶⁷</p>
Procedure – Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protected area has to be a member of the EUROPARC Federation before joining the Charter • Candidates must draw up a sustainable tourism strategy and commit themselves to an action plan for the area. <p>Steps ¹⁶⁸</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Show interest in becoming part of the charter 2. Registration as a candidate charter park 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the PAN Parks Self-assessment Questionnaire 2. Compile a working report on the results of self-assessment 3. Carry on an evaluation of the site by an independent certification body 4. Submit the evaluation report to the PAN Parks Principles and Criteria Standard Committee 5. The PAN Parks European Management Organization will review the result of the self assessment and check whether the PAN Parks label can be awarded

¹⁶⁶ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (2002)

¹⁶⁷ Vancura, V. (2006)

¹⁶⁸ EUROPARC Federation (n.d)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Enter in European Charter database of participating parks 4. Application forms provided 5. Completion of charter requirements by protected area (forum, strategy, action plan) 6. Completion of full application documents, submission to EUROPARC with strategy and Action Plan. 7. Checking of application by EUROPARC- selection of expert verifier 8. Evaluation – Approved or not 9. If yes, notification to the Protected Area, if not, begins the process again. 10. Award of charter certificate to new “charter park” 11. Charter park implements agreed 5-year Strategy & Action Plan 12. 5-year reporting and evaluation of results 13. Development of new strategic and action plan 14. Application to EUROPARC Federation for renewal Charter membership. <p><i>For more information and Documentation required:</i> http://www.europarc.org/european-charter.org/info.htm</p>	<p><i>Procedure Information source</i>¹⁶⁹</p> <p>All the documentation required to fill can be downloaded from the web site: www.panparks.org</p>
<p>Audiences – Who is the scheme for?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For individual protected areas of all kinds. • The Certification can be awarded to any protected area independent of its size and conservation status¹⁷⁰. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Parks that are considered Wilderness Areas¹⁷¹ • The area has to have a minimum size of 20,000 ha, and have a wilderness factor ¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Sustainable Tourism and Natura 2000. (2001) [Online] Available: http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature/nature_conservation/useful_info/documents_publications/pdf/sust_tourism.pdf [2006, April 1]

¹⁷⁰ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (2002)

¹⁷¹ PAN Parks (n.d). Wilderness Area defined by PAN Parks as: “large area of land, (at least 10,000 hectares) which, together with its native plant and animal communities and the ecosystems of which they are a part, is in an essentially natural state”.

¹⁷² European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (2002)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important condition is that the area has to fulfil the requirements in Size and Core Zone (size- core wilderness area)¹⁷³ • From January of 2003, any park can approach PAN Parks to share their interest.. If the area accomplish the most important requisites (Core zone and size), can continue the process.
Requirements for applying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a forum permanently with other stakeholders as local communities, local municipalities and representatives of the tourism sector. • development of a medium term strategy (5 years) for sustainable tourism development in the area • Presentation of an action plan of how to achieve the goals established <p><i>Requirements source¹⁷⁴ .</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area has to fill the two principal requirements in the first stage which are ¹⁷⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size – 20,000 ha. • Core zone – This area is determined by the Park considering the values of biodiversity and wilderness attractiveness, in order to control the level of tourism activity in this area. PAN Parks verify and give suggestions. • The area has to fill principles 1 to 3.
Duration of the Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years according to the action plan and strategy established. After this period, the protected has to apply for a renewal Charter membership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 years
Duration of the certification process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years ¹⁷⁶ • First year: The protected area is verified – Following the principles 1 to 3. • Second year: A local PAN Park group is developed • Third year: Certification of the local business partners
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement of relations between tourism stakeholders • Good will – good reputation and high profile for being an area working with sustainable tourism • Opportunity to work with a network of parks in Europe • Public relationships opportunities 	<p>For the protected Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Recognition • Independent audit • Easier access to sponsorship of projects • Tools to improve nature management standards

¹⁷³ Vancura,V.(2006)

¹⁷⁴ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (2002)

¹⁷⁵ Vancura,V.(2006)

¹⁷⁶ Vancura,V.(2006)

	<p>with visitors and local and national media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credibility from funding organizations • Benefits form the social, environmental and economic perspective. <p><i>Benefits source</i> (Protected Areas and Tourism Brochure, 2002)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income and jobs to rural communities • Tools to control and monitoring tourism <p>For the local communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in conservation projects • Promotion of small businesses • Improvement in tourism facilities • New jobs • International recognition • Support from the Government <p><i>Benefits source</i>¹⁷⁷</p>
Practical application	Each Park has own experiences and practicability using the information provided.	Each Park has own experiences and practicability using the information provided.
Number of Protected Areas Certified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data year 2005 ¹⁷⁸: 30 Parks • For evaluation 2006-2008: 13 Parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data year 2006: 8 parks
Information Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the charter is available in the web page: http://www.europarc.org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the PAN Parks initiative is available in the web page: www.panparks.org
Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the first European initiative to certificate that the tourism developed in protected areas is sustainable. • Was built as a priority established in the Parks for Life action plan in Europe. • It is a strategic tool that has been adapted by more than 25 protected areas in Europe and is plan to grow in the next years. • Supported by the European Commission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PAN Parks initiative, has been getting more credibility in the last 4 years, in which 8 parks have been certified. • The certification process takes 3 years, in which first the protected area is evaluated, and it has to fill all the requirements. After the third year, the area can be certified. • Hard work in the last years to develop recognition in Europe and world wide.

¹⁷⁷ PAN Parks (n.d)

¹⁷⁸ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (2002)

Appendix 2: European Charter Requirements

The principal requirements¹⁷⁹ that the protected area has to fulfil are:

1. Establishment of a permanent structure for working in partnership with others implicated by tourism in and around the protected area (a forum or equivalent arrangement)

- Organization of public consultation and meetings
- Establishment of a FORUM with the main stakeholders, which number and type will vary according to the protected area. For instance:

Stakeholders	
Protected Area Manager	Representatives of the local tourist offices
Local municipalities	Authorities of other villages
Representatives of the tourism industry	Transportation companies
Representatives of the local communities in and around the protected area	Tour operators – tourism entrepreneurs
Conservation organizations– NGO's	

2. Development of a medium term strategy (5 years) for sustainable tourism development in the area ¹⁸⁰

What does this document should address¹⁸¹:

¹⁷⁹ The three main requirements mentioned in this section were extracted from EUROPARC web page section “Becoming a Charter Park”. The requirements are explained in a deeper way in the Full Text of the European Charter under the Section I. See European Charter full text available: http://www.europarc.org/european-charter.org/photos/charter_full_text.pdf

¹⁸⁰ EUROPARC Federation counts with a set of implementation guidelines for the development and evaluation of the sustainable tourism strategy and the action plan. It is available at : http://www.europarc.org/european-charter.org/photos/impl_guide.pdf

¹⁸¹ EUROPARC Federation (n.d). *Brochure Protected Areas and Tourism – The European Charter*. Available: <http://www.europarc.org/european-charter.org/downloads.htm> [2006, August 12]

- A definition of the area to be influenced by the strategy, which may extend outside the protected area.
- An assessment of the areas natural, historic and cultural heritage, tourism infrastructure, and economic and social circumstances; considering issues of capacity, need and potential opportunity.
- An assessment of current visitors and potential future markets.
- A set of strategic objectives for the development and management of tourism, covering:
 - Conservation and enhancement of the environment and heritage
 - Economic and social development
 - Preservation and improvement of the quality of life of local residents
 - Visitor management and enhancement of the quality of tourism offered

3. Presentation of an action plan to achieve the strategy's objectives. Although strategic priorities and action plans should be determined locally, the Charter specifies key issues which must be addressed

Key Issues that the Parks has to address in the Sustainable Tourism Strategy:¹⁸²

As a requisite, the park has to follow a set of key issues to be included in the strategy and action plan. For the aim of recommending to the park the adoption of the Charter, in the recommendations section, the main one were explained with the case of Stenshuvud National Park. Following are mentioned:

1. To protect and enhance the areas natural and cultural heritage, for and through tourism, and to protect it from excessive tourism development, by:
 - Monitoring impact on flora and fauna and controlling tourism in sensitive locations
 - Encouraging activities, including tourism uses, which support the maintenance of historic heritage, culture and traditions
 - Controlling and reducing activities, including tourism impacts, which: adversely affect the quality of landscapes, air and water; use non-renewable energy; and create unnecessary waste and noise
 - Encouraging visitors and the tourism industry to contribute to conservation
2. To provide all visitors with a high quality experience in all aspects of their visit, by:
 - Researching the expectations and satisfaction of existing and potential visitors
 - Meeting the special needs of disadvantaged visitors
 - Supporting initiatives to check and improve the quality of facilities and services
3. To communicate effectively to visitors about the special qualities of the area, by:
 - Ensuring that the promotion of the area is based on authentic images, and is sensitive to needs and capacity at different times and in different locations

¹⁸² The Key issues were taken textually from the Brochure Protected Areas and Tourism - The European Charter. EUROPARC Federation (n.d). *Brochure Protected Areas and Tourism – The European Charter*. Available: <http://www.europarc.org/european-charter.org/downloads.htm> [2006, August 12]

- Providing readily available and good quality visitor information in and around the area, and assisting tourism enterprises to do so
- Providing educational facilities and services that interpret the areas environment and heritage to visitors and local people, including groups and schools

Appendix 3: Documentation to become a “Charter Park” in the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Registration Form – European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas “Candidate Charter Park”¹⁸³.

This form has to:

- Be filled by the Protected Area authority (Manager) as early as possible during the process of implementing the charter in order to register the area as a “Candidate Charter Park”.

Name of Protected Area	
Country	
Address	
Telephone	
Fax	
E-mail	
Web address	
Name of Director	

Name of main contact person	
Official position	
Telephone	
E-mail	

Year of establishment of Protected Area	
Size of protected area (ha.)	
IUCN Management Category	
National Management Category (if different)	
EUROPARC member since:	

With reference to the Charter requirements, please explain briefly whether your Protected Area has started to work on the following and if so, the stage of development:

¹⁸³ European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (2002). This format is available in the European Charter web page. Available: http://www.europarc.org/european-charter.org/photos/reg_form.pdf

- ◆ Engaging in a process of wide consultation with all those implicated by tourism in and around the protected area, in its development and management. Establishment of a permanent forum or equivalent arrangement between all those directly concerned.

- ◆ Defining a medium term Strategy (5 years) for sustainable tourism development in the area; presenting this in the form of an Action Plan

Signed by the President or Director of the Protected Area (as appropriate):

(Please sign and print your name)

.....

Date:

For EUROPARC use only: Registration received on:

Entered onto database:

EUROPARC Federation Nov. 2002

Appendix 4: Tourists in Stenshuvud National Park – Survey results

With the aim of getting a broader perception from the park visitors, a short survey containing questions regarding the park and tourism motivations was performed.

The results from the survey are described as follows:

- 87% of the people were from Sweden.
- 37.5% of the people were in an age range of 51 to 65 years following by a 25% that were in the range of 31 to 50 and 66+ respectively; and a 12.5% in the age range between 21 and 30 years.
- 50% of the people visited the park more than four times in their life; while a 37.5% three times and 12.5% of the tourist's just one and two times respectively.
- The principal reasons for visiting the park were mainly Nature and Beach with the 75% of the people; following by trekking, ecotourism and other activity with the remained 25%.
- 62.5% of the people visit the park in summertime mostly and 37.5% of the people come to the park one time per week.
- With regards to the transportation, 100% of the people come to the park by Car.
- Regarding to the preferable season to visit the park, most of the people answered more than one option. 75% prefer to come to Stenshuvud during summer season; while 50% during the spring, 25% in the autumn mainly because not too many people is there and 12.5% during the whole year.
- 37.5% of the people know the park by different reasons, mainly because they live close to the park and have their summerhouses in the region; 25% through newspaper and 12.5% from fiends and relatives respectively.

In general, most of the people know about the existence of other National Parks and Nature Reserves in Sweden, and at least they have visited more than one park in other parts of the country, Lapland parks for instance was a common answer.

Their opinion respect to tourism and conservation can be summarized in following results:

- Conservation is very important in protected areas mainly for future generations.
- Rules are important to establish in national parks, thus people can behave better
- History of Stenshuvud is needed, people want to know more about the park
- Tourism in the park has to be controlled and managed better, tourism is good but not too much.

- Tourism can be a very good driver for educate people and teach them how to behave in nature and take responsibility.
- Rules sometimes work, but they are needed. The best situation is to aware themselves, but that is not always the case.
- It is a difficult relation, because tourism development requires infrastructure and services and this interferes in nature.
- If tourism is managed and controlled carefully, then people can get the knowledge.
- If no restrictions are available, then people will not behave properly.
- Tourism can be negative if people are not responsible at all.