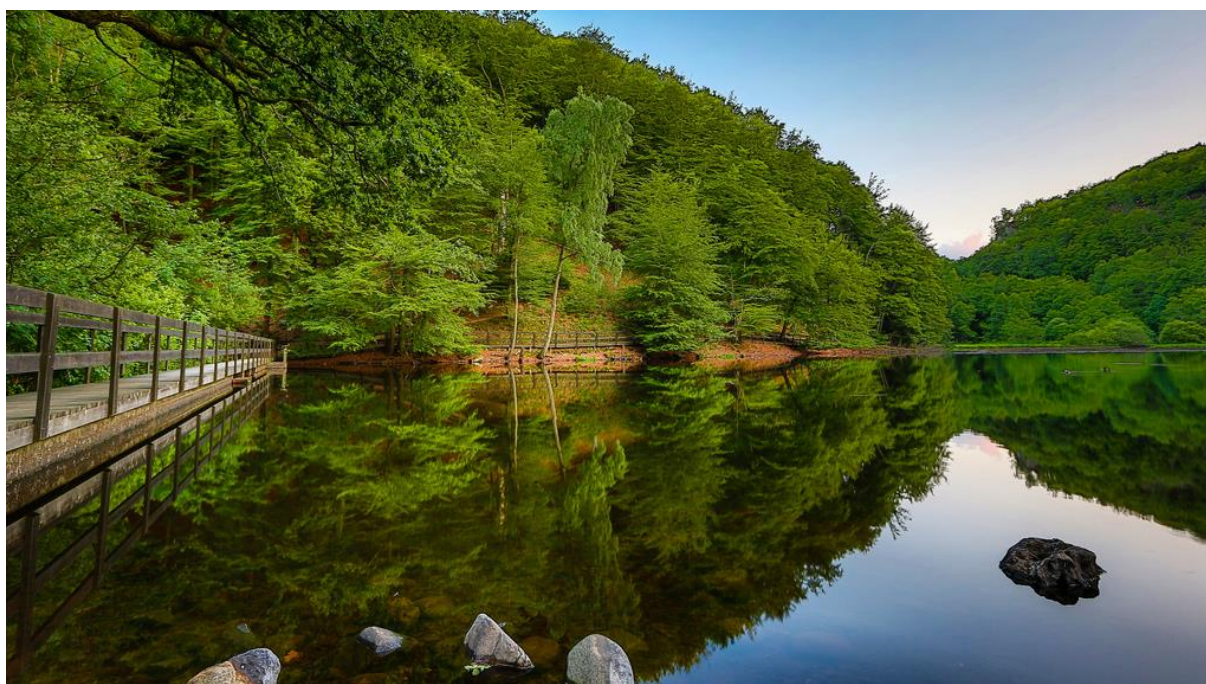


APPROVED STRATEGY

SÖDERÅSEN NATIONAL PARK

SKÅNE, SWEDEN



NOVEMBER 2019



The strategy is connected to Söderåsen National Park's action plan for sustainable tourism. "Söderåsen National Park – A Sustainable Tourism Destination Action Plan 2020-2024".

The actions in bold are mentioned in the action plan either as "General Objective(s)" or "Specific Objective(s)". The actions in normal type are mentioned in the action plan as "Related actions".

Author: Emma Sandler Berlin, project leader. Söderåsen National Park. 2019.

STRATEGY

General Objectives	Specific Objectives
1. Preserve the natural environment	1.1. Promote and develop scientific research
	1.2. Manage in a sustainable way
	1.3. Improve the resource management
	1.4. Raise awareness among visitors and local tourism businesses
2. Improve community interaction	2.1. Cooperate with local businesses, as ambassadors for Söderåsen National Park (SNP)
	2.2. Participate actively in “Destination Söderåsen”
	2.3. Invite local stakeholders to participate in focus groups
3. Manage visitor flow and impact. Ensure both a high-quality visitor experience and the well-being of the local communities	3.1. Develop a sustainable mobility plan
	3.2. Provide information and guidance to visitors
	3.3. Collect and act upon feedback from visitors and local population
	3.4. Include nearby nature reserves in visitor management planning
4. Improve visitor safety and accessibility	4.1. Develop a response plan for emergency situations
	4.2. Improve accessibility in physical planning and guide products
	4.3. Develop a communication strategy
	4.4. Train staff in emergency response actions
5. Promote cultural and natural heritage of the region	5.1. Include heritage interpretation in new and existing touristic products
	5.2. Invite the public to volunteering events
	5.3. Expand the school program
6. Implement the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST)	6.1. Promote sustainable tourism and the ECST among the local community and visitors
	6.2. Engage local businesses in the development and management of sustainable tourism
	6.3. Monitor the commitment for the action plan and conduct regular evaluation

1. Preserve the natural environment.

1.1 Promote and develop scientific research. **(Action 9)**

The scientific work carried out, by staff, trainees or students should be made accessible and used in the management work in order to favour the natural environment. More collaboration with universities and research groups should be made. It is also beneficial to increase collaborations with other organizations.

1.2 Manage in a sustainable way. **(Action 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)**

The management should be sustainable in a long-term perspective, both concerning nature conservation and when choosing where and what visitor facilities should be built and the management of these. Based on the studies carried out, a well-thought through implementation with the lowest possible impact can contribute to sustainable actions or products. Impact and carrying capacity studies, both social and environmental, should be conducted.

1.3 Improve the resource and waste management. **(Action 5, 10)**

Guidelines for resource use, national and County Administrative Board of Skåne's, are followed. More can be done in several areas. The management should use durable and environmentally friendly-materials. SNP should be a forerunner and influence others to work in the same direction. It is also important to include resource use and recycling in naturum's school program. "Reduce, reuse and recycle" should be the lead concept of any work.

1.4 Raise awareness among visitors and local tourism businesses. **(Action 2, 4, 10)**

This is done by offering specific training regarding sustainable tourism, design information and activities which contribute with environmental awareness. It is also important to promote the importance to comply with regulations. Communicate with stakeholders to avoid the planning of activities with negative impact on the environment. The forum members have asked for an education program about regulations and the Right of Public Access directed to local stakeholders.

2. Improve the community interaction.

2.1 Cooperate with local businesses; as ambassadors for SNP. **(Action 2, 4, 7)**

A positive attitude towards sustainable tourism is necessary from the management staff and the stakeholders. This is done by taking an active part in the local community, encourage stakeholders to be diploma guides and NP partners, participate in work groups and meetings. Regular dialogue creates a better understanding of the different needs and develop joint actions. The naturum guide diploma should be developed further, as well as the SNP partnership course with follow-up network meetings. Knowledgeable stakeholders contribute to a good visitor experience and visitors gain new insights. Cooperate with stakeholders to avoid the planning of activities with negative impact on the environment or other drawbacks. Through collaboration SNP reach more stakeholders and can contribute with knowledge about nature and sustainability. The local community asked for more networking and trainings, i.e. about SNP and hospitality.

2.2 Participate actively in “Destination Söderåsen”. **(Action 2)**

The municipalities of Söderåsen and SNP cooperate within the frames of Destination Söderåsen, to develop tourism sustainably. By being an active part SNP has the chance to reach more stakeholders, as well as to contribute with expertise on nature and sustainability issues to the project. Destination Söderåsen functions as such a meeting place and continued engagement is desirable.

2.3 Invite local stakeholders to participate in focus groups. **(Action 2, 5)**

Focus groups are a good way to reach those who want to have their voices heard. They can be used in the planning stage of new activities and facilities or when the need to hear the local community’s thoughts regarding a specific topic occurs. Involvement of stakeholders in work groups provides good settings for exchanging ideas and gives synergy effects.

3. Manage visitor flow and impact. Ensure both a high-quality visitor experience and the well-being of the local population.

3.1 Develop a sustainable mobility plan. **(Action 3, 5, 6, 7)**

The high number of visitors in Skärålid is one of SNP’s biggest challenges and a mobility plan can help regulate the massive arrival of visitors during high-season, which areas they visit and how they travel. It also serves as a tool to achieve a more even distribution of visitors in SNP and the nearby nature reserves. The community emphasized the need to do something about the high number of visitors and traffic-related problems.

3.2 Provide information and guidance to visitors. **(Action 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)**

Good nature interpretation should be offered to all visitors. All SNP personnel should therefore have naturum’s guide diploma. Diversify the recommendation trails to visitors according to their interests and circumstances, in order to distribute visitors better within the area. There are problems with visitors not following the regulations. Good information before and during a visit as well as appropriate signage should be prioritized.

3.3 Collect and act upon feedback from visitors and local population. **(Action 1, 2, 3, 7, 9)**

By gathering information through conversations, feedback and surveys, visitors contribute to improve the work in SNP and in naturum.

3.4 Include nearby nature reserves in visitor management planning. **(Action 1, 5, 6, 7, 10)**

Nearby nature reserves will be promoted more to distribute visitors better and provide more entrances to the Söderåsen area. Improved visitor facilities are necessary in the nature reserves in order to function as a complement to the national park. A visitor map showing both SNP and the nearby reserves is under development. Local businesses will also have access to the information about the nature reserves. A better distribution of visitors favours more businesses and should be encouraged.

4. Improve visitor safety and accessibility.

4.1 Develop a Response Plan for emergency situations. **(Action 3, 8)**

A response plan, to create an overview which helps at emergencies, has been initiated and a first draft is distributed to local rescue teams. An improved version is in the pipeline on a regional level. The local rescue teams' joint trainings with the SNP will continue and other collaborations will develop further. The local emergency and rescue teams have access to equipment belonging to the management. All trail signs will be numbered for easier description of accident location. Safety has been mentioned as something the forum members wants SNP to prioritize.

4.2 Improve accessibility in physical planning and guide products. **(Action 1, 3, 5)**

Accessibility in SNP is highly prioritized by the local community, especially by Lake Oden which is visited by many elderly persons. According to their wishes more benches have been placed in that area. The management looks over the possibilities to make more places accessible, in accordance with local conditions. There is a need to continually improve the physical accessibility, as well as the one in written material and online. Any new facilities or trails should be considered from a physical accessibility point of view. New national guidelines for readability will result in better accessibility on the website and in other written material. The website will also be updated to enhance what is already accessible and the general look of things, to make it easier to plan ahead of a visit. Working with local users is beneficial and will be used much more in future.

4.3 Develop a communication strategy. **(Action 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8)**

A joint strategy from the management and naturum staff on how to communicate on the web, social media and with signage will improve the information flow to the visitors and make the area safer and more accessible.

4.4 Train staff in emergency response actions. **(Action 3)**

The full-time employees are offered a yearly training day in first aid, CPR and fire extinguishing. All other staff and trainees are also introduced to the SNP safety procedure in the beginning of their employment. Everyone knows where emergency materiel is located and how to use it, i.e. first aid kits, fire extinguishers and RAKEL (a radio system for communications linked to first response teams).

5. Promote the cultural and natural heritage of the region.

5.1 Develop the knowledge about heritage interpretation; include in new and existing products. **(Action 4, 8)**

Events and activities by naturum should include local heritage interpretation. It is recommended to develop guided tours that include cultural interpretation and also to take those aspects into consideration when compiling information to the visitors. Encourage tourism stakeholders to include heritage interpretation in their products and offer training in this. Tourism products which include heritage interpretation and activities stress the value of the natural heritage and will create a sense of belonging for the visitors. The coming ranger handbook should include local heritage interpretation and guidelines on how to be a good SNP ambassador.

5.2 Invite the public to volunteering events. **(Action 2, 4, 9)**

Promote the organizing of cultural activities and advertise them with the cooperation of different stakeholders. The budding Junior Ranger program has proven to be valuable and should be continued. More events during the season should invite visitors to join in, i.e. building traditional fences and hay-making.

5.3 Expand the school program. **(Action 4)**

The collaboration with a local school in Röstånga is growing, in time other schools should be invited in order to let more pupils experience what SNP and naturum has to offer. Improve the overview of school activities and material on the website. Extend the activities to target more age groups.

6. Implement the ECST.

6.1 Promote sustainable tourism and the ECST among the local communities and visitors. **(Formation of the Forum, Action 2, 6, 7, 9)**

Organize training programs on sustainable tourism for stakeholders, provide information about the ECST certification for visitors and organize related events.

6.2 Engage local businesses in the development and management of sustainable tourism. **(Action 2, 4, 8)**

All stakeholders and especially the management staff must do their best to include the local businesses in the process of the Charter. They should also encourage and support them to improve the involvement in sustainability.

6.3 Monitor the commitment for the Action Plan and conduct regular evaluation. **(Action 2, monitoring sections of all Actions)**

Create a supervisory committee for the action plan. A regular follow-up and evaluation of the action plan will be done, as well as a continued pursuit of improvement. The stakeholders have agreed that the ECST is a good course of action and they are willing to use the certification as a long-term tool. However, it is important not to overestimate the financial and human resources available and let things take its time.