



Regional Chief Forester
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To whom it may concern

Sustainable forestry in the county of Västerbotten, north Sweden

Sustainable forestry

In the Swedish forest policy (see government bill no 1992/93:226) it is stated that forest resources and forest lands should be sustainably managed to meet the economic, ecological and social needs. These needs are for example wood and wood products, biological diversity, water, carbon sink, recreation and employment.

Legislation

Swedish forestry is regulated primarily by the Forestry Act (SFS 1979:429), with its regulations (SFS 1993:1096 and SKSFS 1993:2). Also the Environmental Code (SFS 1998:808) regulates forestry.

The Regional Forestry Boards are supervising the legislation

The National Board of Forestry and the Regional Forestry Boards (there are in total ten in Sweden) are commissioned by the government to implement the forest policy. Supervision of the Forestry Act, with regulations, and relevant parts of the Environmental Code is an important part of this work. In the county of Västerbotten, the Regional Forestry Board of Västerbotten, through its district officers, is carrying out this supervision. The Regional Chief Forester is responsible for due handling of occurring offences against the law.

Forest felling, notification on regeneration felling

According to the Forestry Act, which is a national law, regeneration felling (all felling with the exception of thinning and cleaning) cannot be done until the forest has reached a certain minimum age (Forestry Act, 10 §, with regulations). On each particular site, this age is defined in relation to potential dominant tree height at a stand age of 100 years, expressed in site index classes. On 2% of the forest land in the county of Västerbotten, forests have to be at least 100 years before they are cut. On 24% of the forest land the minimum age is 90-99 years. On 43% it is 80-89 years, and on 29% it is 70-79 years. Only on 2 percent of the forest land, it is allowed

to cut forests younger than 70 years. The punishment for violating (unless slight) 10 § in the Forestry Act is fines or prison maximum 6 months (Forestry Act, 38 §).

In thinnings, however, stands less than 80 years are frequently treated and individual trees less than 80 years are, consequently, felled. Thinning is an important measure to attain high quality timber and the trees mostly used for production of pulp and paper.

Regeneration felling on sites larger than a half hectare must be notified to the Regional Forestry Board in advance (Forestry Act, 14 §, with regulations). If the intended felling is in accordance with the legislation, felling operations can start after six weeks. In certain areas on high altitudes a felling permission is required. The area to be felled and the regeneration methods to be used must be specified. A description of the intended conservation measures to be used, and measures to protect the cultural heritage within the area, must also be stated. The punishment for violating (unless slight) 14 § in the Forestry Act is fines or prison maximum 6 months (Forestry Act, 38 §).

Forest regeneration

In Swedish forestry, the forest owner is responsible for new forest being planted, sown or naturally generated after felling when the land's capacity to produce timber is not fully exploited (Forestry Act, 5 §, with regulations). Planting or measures for natural regeneration must have been completed by the end of the third year after felling. Reliable methods and suitable species of trees must be used in the reforestation work (Forestry Act, 6 §, with regulations). Natural regeneration can be a good method on certain site. Otherwise, the land must be sown or planted. If there are insufficient numbers of seedlings, supplementary planting must take place before it is too late (Forestry Act, 6 §, with regulations). Also weeding and thinning must be done if necessary (Forestry Act, 6 §). The Regional Board of Forestry may prescribe the forest owner under penalty of a fine to carry out regeneration measures (Forestry Act, § 35). If the prescription is not fulfilled a means-related unit fine may be imposed.

Nature conservation and cultural heritage

Biological diversity in the forests must be maintained in forest management (Forestry Act, 1 §). At the same time, the cultural heritage must be safeguarded and social aspects must also be taken into consideration (Forestry Act, 1 §, 30 §, with regulations). It is therefore important that due care and attention are paid to all forestry measures. The punishment for violating (unless slight) a ban according to 30 § in the Forestry Act is fines or prison maximum 6 months (Forestry Act, 38 §).

Reindeer husbandry

Almost all forest land in the county of Västerbotten is potentially used in winter by the Sami, an indigenous people, for reindeer husbandry. According to the Forestry Act (31 §), the size and locations of felling areas

must be decided with due regard to the needs of the reindeers. Further consideration can be shown by leaving groups of trees standing on felling sites and on non-productive land, such as migration routes. The punishment for violating (unless slight) a ban according to 31 § in the Forestry Act is fines or prison maximum 6 months (Forestry Act, 38 §).

I hereby assure that the text above is in accordance with the Swedish Forest Legislation.



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