

Master's Thesis Project description

Title

Limitations and opportunities for increased forest management of Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) in Southern Sweden.

Background, study question(s)/Hypotheses (max 200 words)

Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) is one Sweden's "noble" broadleaf tree species, providing it a higher protection status than "trivial" species. Beech forests have a large latitudinal range, found from Northern Spain to Southern Sweden. In Sweden, beech occurs in the nemoral zone, forming forest stands in Scania, Blekinge and Halland counties. Despite the region being natural habitat of beech, interest, utilization and active management of beech is relatively low. The goals of increasing broadleaves in Swedish forests, the implications of a milder climate, and the high ecological and recreational values that beech forest provide, call for a better and updated understanding of what hinders the utilization and active management of beech forest in Southern Sweden.

Aim

This project aims to reveal the main factors limiting the utilization and active management of beech forest in Southern Sweden, from the stand point of important forest stakeholders (e.g. small-scale forest owners, forest companies, timber buyers, sawmill managers).

Topic available from/to

The project is expected to be conducted during 2023 (possibly with extension to 2024, depending on time plans of the master's student).

Supervisor(s)

Luis Andrés Guillén Alm, luis.andres.guillen.alm@slu.se

Vilis Brukas, vilis.brukas@slu.se

Special conditions/requirements

A driver's licence will be extremely beneficial (almost needed) to carry out the project and travel across Scania, Blekinge and Halland.

Knowledge of Swedish language is preferred as you will be talking with stakeholders that might not be so comfortable speaking in English.

We look for a pro-active, open minded and analytical student that enjoys talking with people.

Other information

We propose to lead a Master student to study forest owners' and other stakeholders' views on beech forest management through an interview study. Contacts and guidance with key partners (e.g. Sydved, Nymölla plant) will allow for better insights into the perspectives of different stakeholders.

This MSc thesis project is funded by the Seydlitz MP bolagen Foundation.

<https://www.wernerstiftelser.se/stiftelsen-seydlitz-mp-bolagen/>

Forest Policy and Planning Research Group at the Southern Swedish Forest Research Centre.

Led by Prof. Vilis Brukas, the research group in forest policy and planning conducts research across multiple disciplines, with forest policy and planning as the bearing subjects, ranging from forest planning at landscape level to comparative forest policy studies at national level, with focus on European countries. Members of our group also conduct people-centric studies of locally-managed natural resources in diverse socioeconomic contexts around the globe. Hence, we carry out research to understand how and why certain forest management decisions are made. We study the policies, the actors and the relations between them to understand the dynamics of the sector. Looking at the limiting factors for forest owners to actively manage Beech, an economically, ecological and recreational species very well matched competences and interests of our group.

Pictures:

