Woodland Key Habitats for functional forest landscape green infrastructure

The woodland key habitat (WKH) inventory has been going on in Sweden since early 1990s and provide important data as well as represent a key instrument in nature conservation and forest policy. Currently, a debate is ongoing on its continuation and application in northwest (NW) Sweden where large areas of intact natural and semi-natural forests still occur. It is understood that WKHs are directed polygon samples that basically represent themselves, i.e. without representation in the landscape context. Therefore, this study aims for approaching the landscape context by analyzing spatial coherence of a selected set of WKH-types and corresponding forest habitat types. The WKH-types ‘Coniferous forest’ (‘Barrskog’), ‘Natural coniferous forest’ (‘Barrnaturskog’), ‘Broadleaf-rich natural coniferous forest’ (‘Lövrik barrnaturskog’) and ‘Wetland-forest mosaic’ (‘Myr- och skogsmosaik’) have been found to be the most significant types in terms of area cover and representativeness in NW Sweden. Connectivity will be analyzed for delineated WKHs of these types, possibly complemented with a few more types, and for WKHs combined with forest areas with similar habitat characteristics, extracted by combining a set of available public datasets (national land cover data, proxy continuity forest data, data on high conservation value forests). The study will cover NW Sweden as defined by the 15 mountain municipalities, with the main study area divisions following its defined 4 parts south to north, and below and above the mountain foothills border east to west.

The project is suitable for a 60 credit thesis. GIS-skills are required.

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