

Ulriksdal 18 maj 2013

First call and invitation to a conference In Stockholm, September 2-4, 2015

Large Parks in Large Cities

Visions and Governance in the context of green infrastructure, ecosystem services and landscape analysis

Background

Urbanization continues all over the world, pressing on and transforming ecosystems. In 40 years the urban population will double. We need to take stock of the consequences and seriously judge the value of green cities and, in this conference, focus on large parks.

There are large parks in many large cities in many parts of the world, even larger than well-known parks such as Central Park in New York and Hyde Park in London. Sometimes they are not recognized as parks, but are left-over-land that one day may be exploited. Or they may be national parks right on the border of the city, as in Nairobi and in Cape Town. Or they may be planned green wedges or belts around a city. Nevertheless, they serve as lungs of the city, recreational areas for its population and nature's reminder of the foundations of city life and the history of the city.

In central Stockholm an area of 27 km² in 1995 was designated a *national city park* by the Swedish parliament, the first national park in a city in Sweden (www.ekoparken.org and www.nationalstadsparken.se). The park, named "The Royal National City Park", since it to a large extent has a history as a royal leisure and hunting ground, is one of the few urban areas investigated in the United Nations Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Twenty years after its inception, in 2015, we will stage a conference in Stockholm to assess the importance of large parks in large cities.

Aim and theme of the conference

The aim of the conference is to highlight *large parks in metropolitan areas* and to discuss their importance and role in the future, taking into account the enormous development of townscapes that is foreseen. We will also discuss status, protection and maintenance – in short the governance of large parks in large cities. This will be done within the context of overall green infrastructure, ecosystem services and sustainable cities. Large parks at the same time constitute a basis for understanding the landscape in which the city is set. Another goal is to create a network of people working with large parks around the world.

Themes we like to address are:

- visions of large parks in large cities
- the specific aspects of large parks and nature reserves in townscapes in contrast to urban greening in general
- the role of large parks in urban ecology
- the role of large parks as a source of biodiversity in cities
- ecosystem services from urban green areas and specifically from large parks in large cities
- the role of large parks when building the sustainable city and mitigating climate change
- the role of large parks when integrating – functionally and architecturally – the city in the landscape
- large parks in understanding the history of the landscape
- the establishment and legal status of large parks
- urban planning for large parks – threats and conflicts
- governance of large parks in large cities

These themes can be addressed through case studies, research and practical applications of planning and nature conservation. *We strongly encourage presentations of large parks in metropolitan areas and large cities at this conference.* We ask for contributions from both practitioners and researchers. There are bound to be conflicts concerning large parks in metropolitan areas and town planning perspectives differ widely regarding ecological values. We therefore encourage contributions setting out such conflicts, either in the particular case or in general.

Invitation

With this first call we invite you to a conference on large parks in metropolitan areas and large cities. We ask you, therefore, to state your interest in participating in such a conference and whether you might contribute with a paper or a poster on a specific large park or one dealing in a general way with any of the themes mentioned above.

In case you would like to propose a workshop or symposium on a specific subject – one of the above mentioned or a related subject – please let us know.

The conference is to be held in Stockholm, in the first week of September, a very beautiful time of the year in the Royal National City Park, between the 2nd and the 4th of September 2015. The program will include keynote presentations, invited and contributed conference papers and posters, panel discussions, workshops and excursions in and around Stockholm. There will be a welcoming reception and a banquet dinner.

We anticipate a registration fee of about €350.

Please state your interest to participate as soon as possible and preferably before the 30th of June 2013.

We would like you to indicate whether you would be interested in attending and whether you would want to contribute a paper or a poster (please state a tentative subject), or if you wish to organize a workshop or symposium (please state a tentative subject). We would like to hear from you *preferably before July 31st 2013*. (Please use the separate form for doing so at the conference website www.largeparks.se.)

Conference organization

The conference is organized by World Wide Fund for Nature, Sweden (Världsnaturfonden, WWF) and Association for Ekoparken (Förbundet för Ekoparken), in cooperation with Stockholm University (Stockholms universitet), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet), Stockholm Environment Institute, Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities (Kungliga Vitterhetsakademien), Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Art (Kungliga konstakademien), Royal Swedish Academy of Science (Kungliga Vetenskapsakademien), Royal Academy for Forestry and Agriculture (Kungliga Skogs- och Lantbruksakademien), Swedish Museum of Natural History (Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet), Swedish Association for Nature Conservation in Stockholm (Naturskyddsföreningen i Stockholms län), Royal Djurgården Administration (Kungliga Djurgårdens Förvaltning), Samfundet S:t Erik, Stockholms läns hembygdsförbund and Kommittén för Gustavianska Parken.

For further questions please contact:

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Conference website: www.largeparks.se

Organizing committee

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- Mårten Wallberg, Swedish Association for Nature Conservation in Stockholm (Naturskyddsföreningen i Stockholm)
- Jan-Olof Westerberg, Swedish Museum of Natural History (Naturhistoriska riksmuseet)

Yours very sincerely.

Håkan Wirtén, Secretary General

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