# Surveying the Cultural Heritage of the Swedish Countryside

## Success and Failure during the Twentieth Century

Leif Gren

The surveys of the cultural heritage of the Swedish countryside have been carried out in accordance with different laws. This has led to a great specialisation of certain aspects of the cultural heritage, and the evaluation of them has always been a task for specialists. The same specialisation often has characterised the scientific research on ancient monuments, nature, etc. In general an enormous amount of knowledge has been gained, but the historic understanding of why the remains exist at all has never been given as much attention as their physical appearance. This has caused a major separation between the cultural heritage management and the nature conservation.

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### GENERAL PROBLEMS IN SURVEYS

Sweden has perhaps more knowledge about its own cultural heritage than any other country. During almost the entire 20th century the state has invested in surveys and registration of different aspects of the cultural heritage. In this article special attention is given to the cultural heritage with regard to the landscape apart from buildings and settlements, that is, ancient monuments, other cultural traces, biocultural heritage, etc.

The different surveys of the heritage of the Swedish landscape are a history of unique success but also great mistakes. The laws have prescribed what should be apprehended as worth preserving, and through specialised surveys comprehensive registers of ancient monuments and certain nature values have been obtained. The protection has thus been very strong for these aspects of the heritage. Generally the scientific research has been just as specialised and perhaps even reinforced a static and divided view of the cultural heritage. That the research naturally tends to be specialised, and that both cultural heritage management and nature conservation are apt to produce specialised surveys is a considerable problem. In consequence, the narrow interpretation of the legislation has paradoxically meant that important parts of the cultural heritage have been ignored, or even treated in a destructive – and incredibly expensive – way.

Already around the year 1900, surveys of ancient traces became synonymous with surveys of physical remains such as prehistoric graves, rune stones, rock carvings, etc. The documentation coincided very strictly with the paragraphs of the Ancient Monuments Act. Sweden acquired a very comprehensive and uniform register of ancient monuments, but at the same time the overall view of the

*Fig. 1. In the light of history, different kinds of cultural-environmental values are inseparable. Nevertheless do narrow specialists split up the environment when the state is making surveys. One board is responsible for surveying ancient monuments, another late historical traces in the forest, still another the biological values. Mound cemetery from the late Iron Age in Dimbo village, Dimbo parish, Västergötland. Photo: L. Gren 1985.*

cultural heritage and the meaning and value it has for the general public, was lost (cf. Burström 1999). In spite of a certain awareness among some scientists, the man-made landscape was separated from the rest of the cultural heritage, and both cultural and nature conservation became a task for narrow specialists in each field (fig. 1). It has been said (Liedman 1980:148f) that science lies somewhere in the field between a very narrow specialist view and pure dilettantism, and the surveys of ancient monuments and nature values definitely have been connected with the first view. The generalist perspective has been most common outside the established institutions.

A persuasive problem with the field surveys is not only that they inevitably lead to specialisation in performance, but also to the situation where a whole is divided into parts without any understanding of the dynamic processes. The documentation "freezes" an idealised state, which has consequences for the conservation and evaluation. As Sverker Sörlin has put forth, Sweden as well as many other countries has created a static view of what is typical for one's own country (fig. 2). A vast documentation and collecting of places or "national spaces of consciousness" has led to a "natural heritage of culture" and an "archive of chosen places" (Sörlin 1998).

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MODERN SURVEY OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS

Generalised surveys and descriptions of different kinds of ancient monuments were undertaken already during the end of the 17th century. But the principles for surveying ancient monuments in the modern sense were not developed until the second half of the 19th century. The most important pioneer work was the "Gothenburg survey" ca 1880-1923. Inspired partly by earlier Danish surveys, different kinds of monuments and remains were surveyed in large areas of Sweden, and the work also utilised written information from different

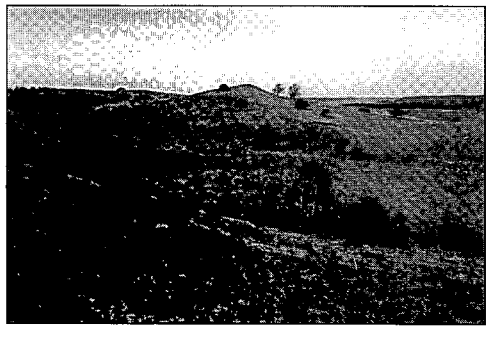

*Fig. 2. In every survey it is necessary to register a "frozen moment". Therefore a register promotes an image of how reality ought to be. Usually society has put a high value on the typical national places of awareness in an archive of chosen places. Places like Brösarps backar in the province of Scania are perceived as true and representative landscapes, although they are very rare today and often maintained with modern methods and great economical support. Photo: L. Gren 1997.*

sources. In a long-term perspective, the intention was to make surveys of the entire country. A register based on map markings and a standardised description was established. Some of the map markings were also printed on public maps, especially geological maps (Selinge 1988:7).

The modern ancient monuments survey was developed in connection with the introduction of the economic map in 1938. Through a decision in the Swedish parliament in 1937, it was decreed that the state would take responsibility for the marking out of all known ancient monuments on the economic map (fig. 3). General Director Sigurd Curman and Director Karl Alfred Gustawsson at the Central Board of National Antiquities took the initiative for the surveys. The surveys coincided with a political statement on the importance of heritage management in society, and the central antiquarian tasks were reorganised and divided into museum work and heritage management (Biörnstad 1988:6). Why the ancient monuments survey at that time attained great political support has not been studied, but it seems relevant to put forth that the political turbulence with offensive dictatorships throughout Europe caused a lot of fear in Sweden (Gren 1994). Although the cultural politics already at this time were directed towards cultural heritage in a broad sense, the ancient monuments survey tended to consider only a narrow field of history, in particular prehistoric graves (fig. 4).

*Fig. 3. During the very first field surveys for ancient monuments, the Central Board of National Antiquities registered monuments in biotopes that are very similar to the environment that created the traces in the Iron Age. Unfortunately the perspectives of the antiquarians were steered by the Ancient Monuments Act and the typical biocultural heritage was never registered. The meadow Hammars äng, Lärbro parish, Gotland. Photo: C.G. Rosenberg, ca. 1950, ATA.*

## THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS SURVEY AT THE CENTRAL BOARD OF NATIONAL ANTIQUITIES

The Gothenburg survey was utilised as a model for the ancient monuments survey at the Central Board of National Antiquities, and the mapping in the field became much more precise when aerial photography was introduced. Originally the intention was to perform "complete surveys" with photos and detailed maps of single monuments in the cemeteries, etc. (Hallström & Gustawsson 1930). But due to small economic resources and the difficulties in following the rapid map production at the Land Survey Unit, it was necessary to turn the surveys into "rapid surveys" with only map markings and a short description (fig. 5). The staff originally consisted of 7-8 archaeologists, but after the war it was obvious that it was necessary to hire a number of personnel during summer field work. During the most intensive years of the survey, in the 1980s, over 100 summer personnel participated. In later years the summer personnel consisted of university students, and thus the survey of ancient monuments had an unofficial function as an archaeological education institute.

Except for the northern highlands, the ancient monuments survey covered all of

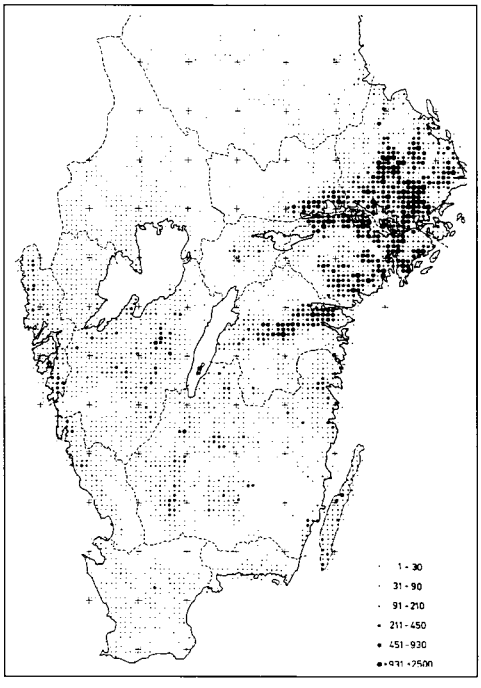


*Fig. 4. The distribution of prehistoric graves per economic map sheet in southern and middle Sweden after the first survey 1938-1977. In the revised survey the figures usually have increased by over 30 percent. After Hyenstrand 1984.*

Sweden 1938-1977 in a first round. A second "revised survey" was started in 1974, and at present time it has covered more than half of Sweden. The number of participating personnel has been reduced considerably, and now much smaller areas can be surveyed every year. During the whole time the surveys have been rather generalised and exclusively directed toward visible traces (fig. 6). Normally each person surveys 1-5 square kilometres per day (Selinge 1988:10). Consequently it must be emphasised that the survey can never be complete and finished.

Ever since the start, the survey has closely followed the Ancient Monuments Act (1942:350), where the remains must fulfil three prerequisites: they must be "from ancient times", be "abandoned", and be "remarkable". According to the latest revision of the law (1988:950), ancient monuments must fulfil slightly different prerequisites: be from "ancient times", originate through "ancient work methods", and be "perpetually abandoned". In both cases the law can apply to natural monuments connected with folklore, etc., but not nature that is formed by man. The law does not stipulate that ancient monuments must be of a certain age. Nevertheless the interpretation of the law has been much more narrow during the survey, and a great number of remains that in principle should be regarded as law-protected monuments, were never marked out as such, for example cottage foundations, furnace foundations, abandoned roads, etc. Until 1996 over 163 000 places with ancient monuments had been registered, and the total amount of monuments and other remains is about 642 000 (Jensen 1997:14).

## FROM THE SURVEY OF MONUMENTS TO THE DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT LANDSCAPES

Generally the documentation of ancient monuments has developed from a small scale

*Fig. 5. The surveys for ancient monuments by the Central Board of National Antiquities always gave high priority to prehistoric monuments, like this cemetery from the Late Iron Age (ca. 800-1050 AD). Nobody bothered about the fact that there is an obvious connection to the biocultural heritage of scattered broad-leafed species and humus-rich soil with hundreds of herbs. Mound cemetery at Norra Malm, Estuna parish, Uppland. Photo: C. G. Rosenberg, ca. 1950, ATA.*

to a large one. In the 19th century the archaeologists usually attained knowledge of prehistory through scattered finds from ploughed fields. It seemed very difficult to connect prehistory to a certain place in the landscape, and the spatial distribution of artefacts gave a random impression. It was not until large-scale surveys, such as the Gothenburg survey, that it became possible to discern a pattern as to where to find certain types of ancient monuments.

*Fig. 6. All physical traces are defined by the knowledge and perspectives connected with them. Expert historians seldom or never participated in the surveys of the cultural heritage. For instance, there are oral traditions saying that the Swedish king Charles XII buried military officers in this large Iron Age ship-formed monument in the beginning of the 18th century. The general public usually pays great attention to such information, although it is not systematically registered in any surveys. Blomsholm, Skee parish, Bohuslän. Photo: ca. 1900, ATA.*

When the ancient monuments survey started in 1938, primarily monuments like ancient graves, runestones and rock carvings were registered. Generally the monuments had a small spatial extension, and they appeared as points on the economic map. The Ancient Monuments Act from 1942 made it possible to protect an area larger than the monument itself, but on the economic map only the monuments were indicated. Gradually one realised that some ancient remains could be rather composite and appear as big complexes. Already in the 1940s some vast areas with ancient stone fences were registered, and in the 1950s a few areas with ancient fields were marked out. Large and complex areas with ancient remains were registered in the 1960s when attention was given to the abandoned medieval farmsteads in the province of Jämtland. In the 1980s it was evident that there were much greater areas with ancient remains than anyone had expected. Above all in the southern Swedish highlands a great number of areas with clearance cairns, house foundations, graves, rock carvings, heaps of fire-cracked stones, etc were discovered. Traditionally one never marked out ancient-monuments areas larger than a hectare, but since the field work in 1992 several hundred areas with prehistoric clearance cairns have been registered. A single area can be as big as 1x2 kilometres and contain more than 1000 clearance cairns (Jönsson *et al.* 1997:23).

Within the ancient monuments survey, the development thus has gone from small monuments to large complexes in the landscape, although the latter also can be considered as separate monuments. The tendency of the heritage management to often refer to single monuments has been criticised by the geographers as a fragmented, formalistic and non-historic perspective. The historic forms in the cultural landscape, it is said, are given too much attention in comparison to processes and meaning-content (Widgren 1997:12).

## FOREST AND HISTORY SURVEYS AND THEIR LINK TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

As noted earlier, it may seem a paradox that a lot of the monuments registered by the ancient monuments survey at the Central Board of National Antiquities never were

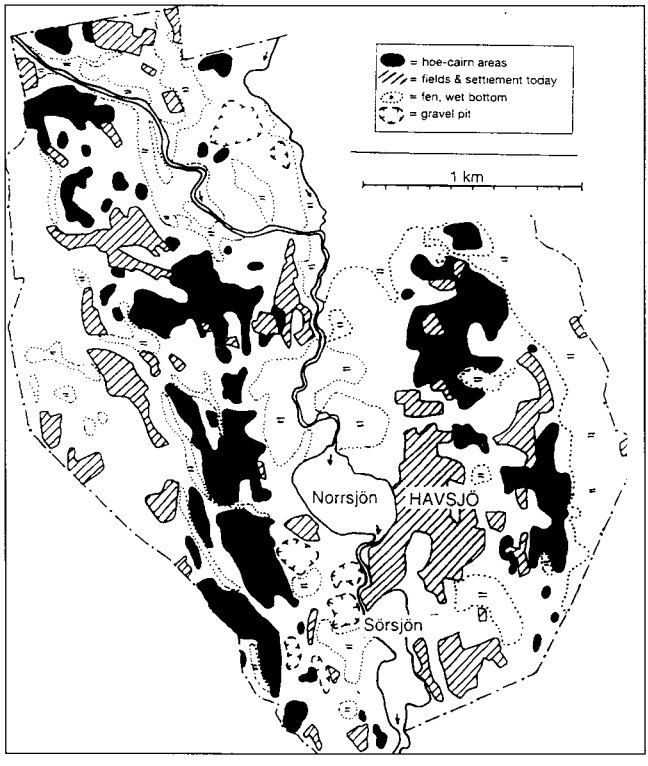


*Fig. 7. Area with prehistoric clearance cairns in the south of Sweden. The cairns, so-called hoe-cairns, date from the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (ca. 1000 BC-400 AD). A lot of contemporaneous graves and settlement traces can be found in the same areas. In this example the prehistoric fields cover an area ca. 25 times bigger than the fields that were used about 1800 AD. Havsjö, Bringetofta, Småland. Field work and map by L Gren 1986.*

marked out as law-protected monuments on the economic map. In practice much of the cultural heritage was never designated as objects for preservation. But when the Forestry Act was revised in 1993, a certain protection was decreed for all the historic remains that were excluded by the Ancient Monuments Act (fig. 8). In some respects the protection given by the Forestry Act was not very effective since it excluded protection if land use became much more difficult, but the political conservation intentions of the national parliament were nevertheless important.

In line with the revised Forestry Act, the forestry organisation started the so-called forest and history surveys in 1995, in order to register all historic traces in the woodlands, except for ancient monuments. It is of great interest that the personnel in the surveys were unemployed members of the general public, recruited at the unemployment offices. Furthermore the region financed the surveys, not the central government. The province of Värmland was the first to be surveyed, and during 1995-98 more than 105 000 days were spent on field work, and well over 20 000 places with historic traces were registered, including a lot of ancient monuments (Myrdal Runebjer *et al.* 1998:3). Compared with the ancient monuments survey, the forest and history surveys were linked more closely to the general public's opinion of what constituted valuable cultural remains. The close connection to the general public was underlined by the fact that the participating personnel lived in their own field-work area, and that they conveyed their experiences to the local population.

From the antiquarian viewpoint, the register from the forest and history surveys seemed not very precise, and in some cases the presumed cultural monuments were nothing but natural forms in the landscape. But from an ethnological point of view, the register gave a much more representative picture of what the general public found to be noteworthy and valuable. Although the forest and history surveys have exercised a great "freedom" in what to register, the formal legal protection for these cultural monuments has been weak compared with the protection for monuments

*Fig. 8. In the 19th century the population increased enormously and many had to find subsistence in what is today marginal woodland. The inhabitants of the countryside today are well aware of these settlement traces, although they are not classified as ancient monuments. The forestry boards in the forest and history project now survey such traces. Cottage foundation with a furnace cairn, Ladugården, Södra Åsarp parish, Västergötland. Photo: M. Sjöbeck 1950, ATA.*

in the ancient monuments survey. At present time there are advanced plans to find economic prerequisites to extend the forest and history surveys to all of Sweden, and to coordinate the surveys with the ancient monuments survey at the Central Board of National Antiquities.

## THE SPLITTING OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE INTO ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND BIOCULTURAL HERITAGE

Nature has often been associated with the forest, and among scholars the forest has been viewed as something wild and undisturbed outside civilisation (Ambjörnsson 1997:18f). When the idea of nature conservation was conceived at the end of the 19th century, it was thought that conservation was necessary for the last areas of untouched nature (Sörling & Öckerman 1998). The influential professor of botany Rutger Sernander wrote about "extremely small areas of cultivation" in the Late Iron Age and "hundred mile wide trackless untouched forests" (Sernander 1905:4, my transl.). Nature was viewed as consisting of, in principle, constant types of biotopes, which Man in different ways destroyed. Even meadows and pasture were considered to be remnants of untouched nature (fig. 9).

During the entire 20th century the surveys of the cultural heritage primarily focused on different kinds of man-made physical traces. But already at an early stage the surveys might have included also ancient man-formed nature, or the so-called biocultural heritage (fig. 10). Several scholars have put forth that the environment ought to be apprehended as a totality of settlement, man-made traces and biocultural heritage. The historian Sune Ambrosiani realised what is still the main problem with environmental conservation: "Due to the tendency of specialisation within the different sciences, a distinct boundary has been drawn between the scholars of natural science and those of the historical sciences, and each kind and every scholar eagerly

*Fig. 9. For 6000 years the Nordic farmers organised the cultural landscape within the same structure: settlement, fields, grassland/broad-leafed species, conifers. Due to the merciless older Forestry Act from 1948 unused meadows and pasture had to be converted into coniferous forests. The most interesting areas with the old structure were never surveyed, and the authorities have never been prepared to preserve more than scattered fragments. Kungslena parish, Västergötland. Photo: M. Sjöbeck 1932, ATA.*

*Fig. 10. Where grassland and broad-leafed species are shaping the landscape, one can be quite sure that ancient culture is predominant. This structure with a long narrow meadow reveals ancient traditions. Grass and trees were maintained to optimise the production of food for the cattle. Vilske-Kleva parish, Västergötland. Photo: M. Sjöbeck 1932, ATA.*

guards his interests" (Ambrosiani 1913:75, my transl.). Ambrosiani also made the statement that man had formed much of the traditional landscape. It is necessary, he meant, not only to preserve the nature values, but also to actively maintain species that are rare in our part of the world or are imported here from abroad.

The fact that many species near settlements and gardens need maintenance was realised by many other persons than Ambrosiani. But when the idea of nature conservation was put forth at the end of the 19th century, most scholars found it evident that all parts of nature outside the intensively exploited agrarian landscape were some kind of untouched nature. Thus most of the forests, meadows and pastures were seen as natural environments that were being exploited by the farmers. Some of the first national parks were established around 1910, and they consisted of meadows and pasture. The farmers were forbidden to maintain or utilise the land, because one wanted to preserve the nature values as best as possible. But already in the 1920s a few scholars realised what the farmers had been saying all along, namely that the nature was becoming overgrown and turning into something different from what one wanted to preserve.

The first scholar to discover the biocultural heritage was the autodidact civil servant at the state railways Mårten Sjöbeck, who promoted his perspectives in many papers from 1927 and onward. As a protest against the professional botanists, he claimed that the meadows, pastures and most of the northern forests with broad-leafed species were different kind of biocultural heritage. Nature, he said, is never in a state of balance, but always changing dynamically under the influence of Man. A great deal of what was presumed to be wild species could perhaps not survive without the intervention of Man. Since Man had formed almost all the land all the way up to the highlands since the introduction of agriculture and pastoralism 6000 years ago, it was hardly interesting to speculate on how nature might have been without Man. Although Sjöbeck pointed out that many nature values were dependent on maintenance, it did not affect the state's nature conservation. The national parks with the most typical biocultural heritage, such as Dalby, Garphyttan and Ängsö, were destroyed by the lack of maintenance after a couple of decades (fig. 11).

The influence of Man on nature was soon evident for other scholars besides Sjöbeck. For instance, the author Carl Fries put forth that nature is perpetually in a state of change where Man is a crucial factor, and that nature conservation and the conservation of cultural landscapes can not be separated (Fries 1954:9). The misconception among scholars that the cultural landscape and forests were

more or less opposites was made clear by the professor of forestry Lars-Gunnar Romell (1964). He treated nature as a laboratory (Söderkvist 1986:102) and explained in a scientific way how an extensive agriculture could utilise the woodlands through clearance-fertilisation in different kinds of slash and burn technology. The tradition of not separating Man from the development of nature is still primarily found outside the science of botany. For instance Mårten Aronsson recently has described the dynamic interaction of Man and nature, and how and why the landscape changes over time (e.g. Aronsson 1999).

It was absolutely evident to Mårten Sjöbeck that the cultural heritage comprised the old man-formed nature with its entire biocultural heritage, and he suggested that surveys of ancient cultural landscapes should take place. Within the traditional cultural heritage management there was a great interest in man-formed nature and the creator of ancient monument surveys Karl Alfred Gustawsson shared in principle the perspectives of Sjöbeck. For instance, when the island Björkö with the Viking Age settlement of Birka and it's cemetery was overgrown in the 1920s, the Central Board of National Antiquities started clearance of the new forests in spite of the protests from the nature conservation movement (Gustawsson 1965, 1977).

However, there were no surveys of the biocultural heritage initiated by the cultural heritage authorities. Instead the work focused on keeping pace with the accelerated issuing of economic maps. The splitting of the cultural heritage into ancient monuments and nature became definite when the Nature Conservation Act was passed in 1964. As a consequence a corresponding authority was established, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Sw. *Naturvårdsverket*), and for some reason the ideas of Sernander and the academic view from the turn of the century became predominant in the official nature conservation. The task of conserving the biocultural heritages became an unconscious experiment and a responsibility for biologists, who seldom or never had any historical knowledge. And the central cultural heritage authorities did not demand that the history of land use should be a natural part of the conservation work.

For the founder of the history of land use, Mårten Sjöbeck, the separation of the cultural heritage into the conservation of physical traces and biocultural heritage was a disaster of course. Sjöbeck's anxiety did prove right when a lot of nature preserves (Sw. *Naturreservat)* were established in meadows and pastures of the older cultural landscape. In generally the maintenance of the biocultural heritage became insufficient or was totally abandoned. Consequently many of the finest cultural landscapes of Sweden were

*Fig. 11. Nature conservation through "free development" is an expensive experiment that is increasingly used today. For instance, the national park Dalby hage is totally destroyed because no maintenance has been undertaken for decades in spite of early warnings by Mårten Sjöbeck in 1931: "The only way to save Dalby hage from complete destruction is to once more use traditional methods of clearing the vegetation". Dalby parish, Scania. Photo: L. Gren 1997.*

destroyed, and this to considerable cost (fig. 12).

As Sjöbeck put forth, the nature conservation authorities have often been more interested in the decay and the scattered remains of the older cultural heritage than in the culture itself. "Unfortunately our country today is filled with terrible examples that bear witness to a tragic inability to cope with even quite simple problems concerning the history of land use" (Sjöbeck 1949:34, my transl.). It can be added that the problems in the meadows and pastures of the cultural landscape were severe until the "meadow and pasture survey" (Sw. *Ängs- och hagmarksinventeringen*) was started in 1987 by the Environmental Protection Agency. In the forest, however, the problems with the inability to conserve the biocultural heritage have instead increased.

*Fig. 12. The awareness of how to conserve nature values has existed since the 1920s. When L.G. Romell visited Höjentorp manor in 1938 he said that it was wonderful that nature conservation and landscape maintenance were at last properly undertaken. It had been decided to prescribe the use of traditional methods to maintain the meadows. However, most of the famous royal landscape is overgrown and nearly wasted today due to "free development" in a nature preservation area. Höjentrop, Västergötland. Photo: L. Gren, 1997.*

When the Environmental Protection Agency for the first time evaluated the conservation work in the cultural landscapes in 1997 it became evident that documentation was missing for the nature values that one intended to preserve. General goals were also lacking, and it was not possible to evaluate specific aims and values in the conservation plans. Less than one fifth of the nature preserves were acceptable with regard to the clearance of shrubs and bushes (Skyddade odlingslandskap 1997:8). Another study investigated the number of nature preserves that had been established mainly to preserve cultural-historical sites, and how the sites had been taken care of. It was shown that only 2% of the 1600 nature preserves in Sweden were established with the purpose of preserving cultural sites. Generally it was evident that the cultural sites were not being maintained in an acceptable way (Winberg 1998:8f).

A constant repetition of the mistakes from the first national parks in the beginning of the 20th century has become a normal feature of the nature conservation. It has been put forth that the nature values of the agrarian cultural landscape usually have been much better conserved in the privately owned land than in the state's nature preserves (Gren 1997). Geographers have criticised the focus on forms instead of processes by the cultural heritage management (Widgren 1997:12). It should be noted, however, that such criticism is much more relevant with regard to nature conservation.

## SURVEYS OF THE BIOCULTURAL HERITAGE

It was not until the end of the 1980s that the biocultural heritage became an object for systematic surveys, the so-called meadow and pasture surveys (Sw. *Ängs- och hagmarksinventeringen*). Nevertheless the surveys usually were performed by biologists with no knowledge of the historical land use.

*Fig. 13. Both for the early hunter-gatherers and the farmers, game or livestock was the basis for subsistence. Life-giving water always was a necessary component in the cultural landscape. Settlement, pasture and meadows always lay close to smaller or bigger wetlands. Since the agrarian revolution most of the wetlands have vanished, and we have no surveys that inform us were the best and most representative cultural heritage of this kind is preserved. Klinte parish, Gotland. Photo: C.G. Rosenberg, ca. 1950, ATA.*

Not until later, during the regional work of maintaining in the nature preserves, have the nature values sometimes been set in relation to cultural history.

Within the woodlands the forestry boards have conducted different surveys of nature values. A specific wetland-forest survey was carried out 1991-98. After a combined total of 70 years of work, more than a hundred thousand wetland forests had been surveyed, mainly by remote analysis. No studies on the history of land use were made during the survey, although advice on maintenance was put forward. In general a "free development" was recommended, that is to leave the forests untouched in areas with higher nature values (Skogsstyrelsen 3-1999). Among historians it is well known that Man always utilised and converted wetlands into pasture and later on also meadows, both for wild game and cattle (fig. 13). The older settlements were to a great extent connected to the distribution of wetlands. During the last centuries the farmers considered the wetland meadows as extremely valuable. It is not possible to determine to what extent the wetland forest surveys have registered a biocultural heritage.

In the years 1993-98 the forestry boards conducted "key biotope surveys", that is surveys of forests with higher nature values, especially species that are in danger of extinction. The surveys, which still occur in the forests owned by large companies, are "unique in the world and also probably the largest nature surveys ever with respect to resources" (Skogsstyrelsen 1-1999, my transl.). Up to now more than 30 000 days of work have been spent, not to mention the equally great efforts by the forestry companies. One estimation says that about 80 000 key biotopes will be registered, covering about 200 000 hectares. But also these surveys have not relied on historical sources or knowledge. Nevertheless a couple of case studies have shown that the higher nature values consist of an overgrown biocultural heritage (Ekberg 1997; Antonsson 1997). This is supported by several general landscape investigations based on quaternary geology (e.g. Lagerås 1997; Göransson 1999). In spite of the huge investment in the key biotope surveys no connections have been made between the land use history and what kind of maintenance is necessary to preserve the nature (fig. 14).

To some extent the state has different strategies for the conservation of nature in different types of land. In the agrarian cultural landscape, the intention is to conserve by means of economic compensation, whereas the conservation of forests is based on land purchase. The reason for this is that the former have to be maintained, while the latter are thought to be conserved through free development. Since the mid-1990s the Swedish government has investigated how more forests can be conserved, that is, be excluded from active forestry. The dominating motive

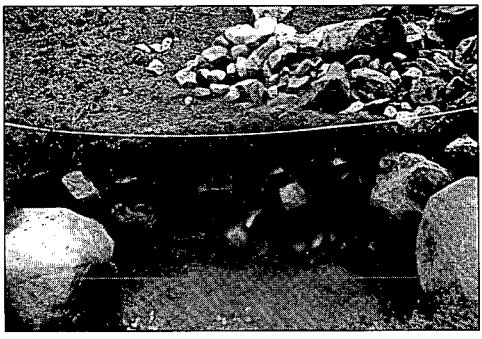

*Fig. 14. A very remarkable cultural heritage consists of humus-rich soil. During hundreds of years farmers have invested in the improvement of the meagre soils by letting broad-leafed species and grass cover areas that otherwise would be covered by spruce and pine and useless podzol. In this case, in a prehistoric area of clearance cairns, it is quite obvious that the humus-rich soil is unstable and affected by Man. Norra Sandsjö, Småland. Photo: L. Gren, 1993.*

is to conserve nature values, especially rare species (Naturvårdsverket 1997).

Up to now ca. 4% of the Swedish forests are protected, and it is estimated that ca. 9-16% ought to be protected, worth almost 18 000 million SEK. The investigations have suggested that at least 5% of the forest, worth ca. 5 000 million SEK, as soon as possible ought to be conserved and converted into nature preserves (SOU 1997:97). Although no studies of land-use history have been made, it has been suggested that most of the preserves should be left to free development; that is, if there is any biocultural heritage it will be gradually destroyed (cf. Kardell & Fiskesjö 1999; Thorén 1999). In the last investigation of forests with broad-leafed species in southern Sweden, free development was recommended as the main alternative or second alternative for two thirds of the 37 different types of forests (Naturvårdsverket 1999-06-30). In a similar way, the forestry boards in their "Green plans" recommend ca. 5% of the forest to be protected as preserves within free development.

## FUTURE SURVEYS

The surveys mentioned in this article have collected data from the whole country. For both economic and time-saving reasons, reference areas usually are used to get a representative picture instead of conducting total surveys. One example of comprehensive data-collecting from different cultural environments is the evaluation of the official food provision politics in the 1990s (LiM 1998). The government has announced that this kind of case study on the state of the cultural environment, etc. will be more frequently utilised in the rapidly changing society of today (Prop. 1997/98). Data collecting from certain reference areas, however, is intended more for decisions concerning official politics. It does not replace total surveys of the whole country for the purpose of preserving special sites in the landscape.

With regard to culture politics, the government has in several bills given a very broad definition of the cultural heritage (e.g. Prop. 1998/99:114). The bills state that the traditional definition of cultural heritage must be reconsidered to include not only ancient monuments but "also the nature utilised and affected by Man". Cultural heritage is defined as comprising both material and immaterial traces, what is perceived both by scholars and by the common public, what is unique as well as ordinary. The cultural heritage also consists of how we apprehend, interpret and promote the heritage. Consequently, from a political point of view there is support for a very broad definition of the cultural heritage.

Up to now surveys have been conducted for ancient monuments in the entire country. Surveys of other cultural physical traces are occurring in the woodlands. Very seldom have any studies been made concerning the general public's apprehension of the cultural heritage, and surveys of non-material cultural heritage (Burström 1994; Burström *et al.* 1997) such as place-names, traditions and folklore are still lacking (fig. 15).

The biocultural heritage has in an un-

*Fig. 15. The law and the survey of ancient monuments have always focused on measurable remains. Therefore places with an obvious history but no traces have never been registered as law-protected sites. For instance the ancient trackway Runamo is without protection, although it was known by the Danish historian Saxo in the 13th century and it is still possible to define and mark its location today. Runamo trackway, Bräkne-Hoby parish, Blekinge. Photo: L. Gren, 1991.*

planned way been included in the different surveys of nature sites that did not take account of the historical prerequisites. Regionally, at the county authorities, there has been a lot of co-operation between cultural heritage management and nature conservation. But at the central boards there is considerable divergence in the views on which nature values should be defined as a biocultural heritage, and how different nature values should be evaluated in relation to one another. On the whole, the most important task in conserving the cultural heritage seems to be to fundamentally reconsider nature on the basis of knowledge of the history of land use.

Naturally the surveying of the cultural heritage of the countryside is not unaffected by the scientific research. But in the same way as both the cultural heritage management and the nature conservation ought to be united into an overall view, the scientific research ought to be less narrow or more dilettantish so to speak. It is significant that the most ingenious research on the history of land use was done several decades ago (Sjöbeck 1973). Within the biological research a lot of effort is spent on which prerequisites are necessary for different species. Nevertheless there are few scientists who study why the species live in our part of the world at all. The University of Forestry and Agriculture is spending tremendous amounts of money on increasing the production, but relatively little on research for conserving the special environments, even if the government in the last years has declared that the goals for production and environment shall be of equal importance.

## CONCLUSION

For a long time the survey of the cultural heritage of the countryside has been synonymous with the survey of ancient monuments. As a consequence, Sweden has probably attained the best register of ancient monuments in the world, and in some sense become one of the leading countries in settlement archaeology. Through very strict and effective legislation, resources and attention have, in some kind of interaction, been focused on ancient monuments. It may seem paradoxical that the strict legal protection for the prehistoric part of the cultural heritage has implied that the remains from historic times and the biocultural heritage have often been overlooked. Furthermore the surveying has from the start been a task for experts, and consequently things that the general public may find interesting and valuable have usually not been registered.

It is first in recent years that more attention has been given to traces from historic time through the forest and history surveys although traces that are valuable in the eyes of the general public are still not registered.

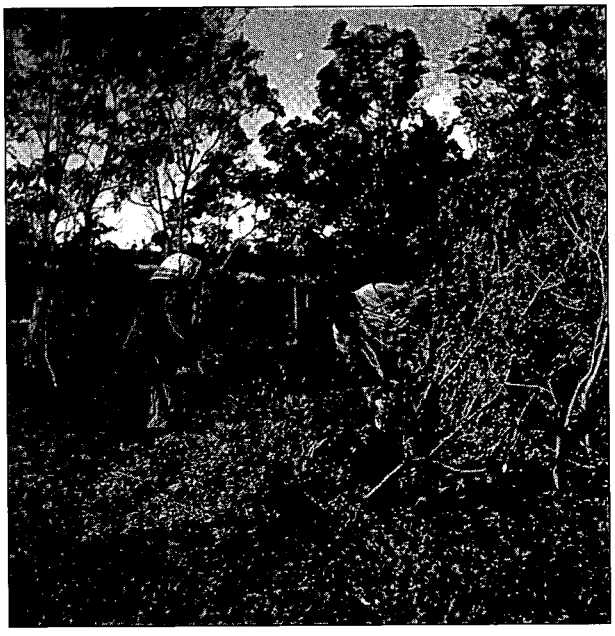

*Fig. 16. All surveys register the traces and forms that are seen in the landscape. It is therefore paradoxical that the registers, which should be used to preserve the cultural heritage, promote a static view without much understanding of historical processes. The efforts from both the cultural heritage and nature conservation boards thus have failed to a great extent to maintain traditional methods in the landscape. Farmer collecting leaves from broad-leafed species in Sundre parish. Photo: C.G. Rosenberg, ca. 1950, ATA.*

The split in the management of the cultural heritage is most serious concerning the biocultural heritage, because surveys of nature values almost never have included historical knowledge. Unfortunately this has led to a severe risk for an accelerating destruction of the biocultural heritage. In Sweden the extremely comprehensive nature conservation as a rule has become a task for biologists when in reality it should be a task for cultural historians and cultural heritage management.

Unfortunately it is easy to have a pessimistic view of the future management of the total cultural heritage. Nevertheless, from an official point of view enormous environment values and a huge amount of money could be saved by creating an overall perspective of the cultural heritage of the countryside and by giving sufficient attention to why the values are there instead of how they look (fig. 16). In this way new fields of scientific research for the purpose of connecting different values would be wide open. Through an extended dialogue with many groups in society the evaluation of the cultural heritage as defined within the wide framework of legislation would be a task for many other people than just the experts.

*English revised by Laura Wrang.*

ABBREVIATIONS

ATA Antikvarisk-Topografiska Arkivet, Stockholm. (The Antiquarian Topographical Archive, Stockholm.)

SEK Swedish crowns

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