

Nordic Women in Forestry hold their first conference



Eighty women from Sweden, Norway and Iceland discussed forestry and gender at the conference. Photo: Mats Hannerz.

Women own a significant proportion of forest properties, almost 40% in Sweden, but their representation in decision-making boards and as members of forestry staff is still low. Gender balance has a long way to go in the forest sector.

One effort to break the “glass ceiling” is the newly established network *Nordiske Skogskvinner* (Nordic Women in Forestry), which met in July for its first conference in Jönköping, Sweden. The conference assembled about 80 participants from Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Austria.

Transition to green economy

The three-day conference had a full programme with presentations from a broad range of speakers talking about the forest in the green transformation and the role of women in the forest sector. There were also excursions to meet entrepreneurs, forest owners and researchers in the field.

– The theme of this conference was “Forest as an income source”. It is important to emphasise that forest owners are also entrepreneurs. The forest has a unique role in the transition to a green bioeconomy, and this transition needs to engage both men and women, as well as senior and junior people, says Kerstin

Dafnäs, chair of the Swedish network Spillkråkan and part of the conference organising team.

Gender matters

One of the speakers was Gun Lidestav, Associate Professor at SLU with a research focus on gender and forestry. She highlighted the role that women can play in the transition.

– Gender matters, she said. The timber stack is a male symbol of industrial forestry, but now we see the evolution of new services besides the timber stack. Here, women can contribute with new ideas and perspectives.

Gun Lidestav also called for a new view on the forest owner in the creation of the bioeconomy.

– The forest owner is mostly

invisible in the process leading to a consumer product. Compare this with efforts made in the food industry, where the farmer is often visible in advertisements. We need to remind consumers that their toilet paper or wooden flooring has a primary producer, she said.

Kerstin Dafnäs agrees with Gun Lidestav.

– The forest owner produces so many benefits for society: carbon sequestration, biodiversity, recreation and energy, besides the traditional roundwood products. We need to invent new ways to get paid for our work, and we need to make people aware of the services and goods we deliver. I believe that we will see several new niche markets develop, she says.

Initiated in 2017

Nordiske Skogskvinner was an initiative presented to the Nordic



Gun Lidestav: “Women can contribute new ideas and perspectives.” Photo: Mats Hannerz.

About Spillkråkan

Spillkråka is the Swedish name for the Black woodpecker, the largest woodpecker in the Nordic forests, and also a symbol of environmental focus in the forest sector. Spillkråkorna is an organization assembling women forest owners in Sweden. It was founded in 1998 and has about 400 members. www.spillkrakan.se

About NIKK

NIKK started out as an acronym for the Oslo-based resource and information centre Nordisk Institutt for Kunnskap om Kjønn (Norwegian for ‘the Nordic institute for knowledge about gender’). In 2011, following reorganisation efforts by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Institute was closed. In 2012 its successor opened in Gothenburg, Sweden. The international name is Nordic Information on Gender. NIKK remains a Nordic co-operative body under the Nordic Council of Ministers. www.nikk.no

Nordiske skogskvinner, cont.

Council in 2017 by the Norwegian network *Kvinner i skogbruket*. Established Swedish networks were soon involved in preparations, and also a group of women from Iceland.

– We were able to get funding for a pilot study from NIKK, (Nordic Information on Gender), a body under the Nordic Council of Ministers. A subsequent step was to plan for a more formalised network and a schedule of joint conferences, says Kerstin Dafnäs.

The planning for the conference took place in 2018, and funding was provided by *Jämställdhetsmyndigheten* in Sweden (Swedish Gender Equality Agency) and the foundation Seydlitz MP Bolagen. The conference will be repeated biannually, with the next one in Norway in 2021 with the theme Diversity in the forest sector.

Nordiske Skogskvinner has now become a Nordic network with members from Norway (*Kvinner i*

skogbruket), Sweden (*Spillkråkan* and *Skogskvinnorna i Värmland*) and Iceland (*Konur i skógi*).

– So far, there are no formalised networks for women forest owners in Finland and Denmark, but we are working on also involving these countries, says Kerstin Dafnäs.

– We also need to put figures on the gender balance, this is largely lacking from the forest statistics. We therefore look forward to the report initiated by SNS, which hopefully will be launched later this year, she says.

Read more:

www.nordiskeskogskvinner.org

www.kvinneriskogbruket.no

www.spillkrakan.se

www.skogskvinnorna.se

Konur i skógi (Iceland), Facebook group



Kerstin Dafnäs: "It is important to emphasise that forest owners are also entrepreneurs." Photo: Mats Hannerz.

About "Gender balance in the Nordic Forest Sector"

A report initiated by SNS (Nordic Forest Research) is currently being compiled by a Nordic group of researchers led by Birger Vennesland, NIBIO in Norway. The aim is to report on the state of equality in the Nordic forest sector. News & Views will naturally report the results once the report is published.

Book now for the Matchmaking Day in Iceland!

The next Matchmaking Day takes place in Reykjavik, Iceland, on 19th September. The day is dedicated to creative ideas for new joint projects together with other Nordic partners. An expert on innovation and business development will be there to boost the creative process. In the afternoon, there will be a field excursion to the famous Geysir and Gullfoss. The Matchmaking Day is open to all who are interested in Nordic research cooperation within the green sector.

The Matchmaking Day is jointly organised by SNS (Nordic Forest Research), Forest Bioeconomy Network (former EFINORD), NKJ (Nordic Joint Committee for Agricultural and Food Research) and NordGen Forest.

Read more:

www.nordicforestresearch.org



The Great Geysir is one of the most famous of Iceland's geysers. Eruptions at Geysir can hurl boiling water up to 70 metres in the air. Photo: Wikipedia commons.

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www.nordicforestresearch.org

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