

# *The Royal National City Park*

*Kungliga nationalstadsparken*

# *Facts*

Area of the Park: 27 km<sup>2</sup>

3 municipalities affected: Lidingö, Solna, Stockholm

Over 15 million yearly visitors

Over 20 museums

Coordinator: Länsstyrelsen Stockholm  
(County Administrative Board of Stockholm, CAB)

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# *The Royal National City Park*

## *A concise presentation*

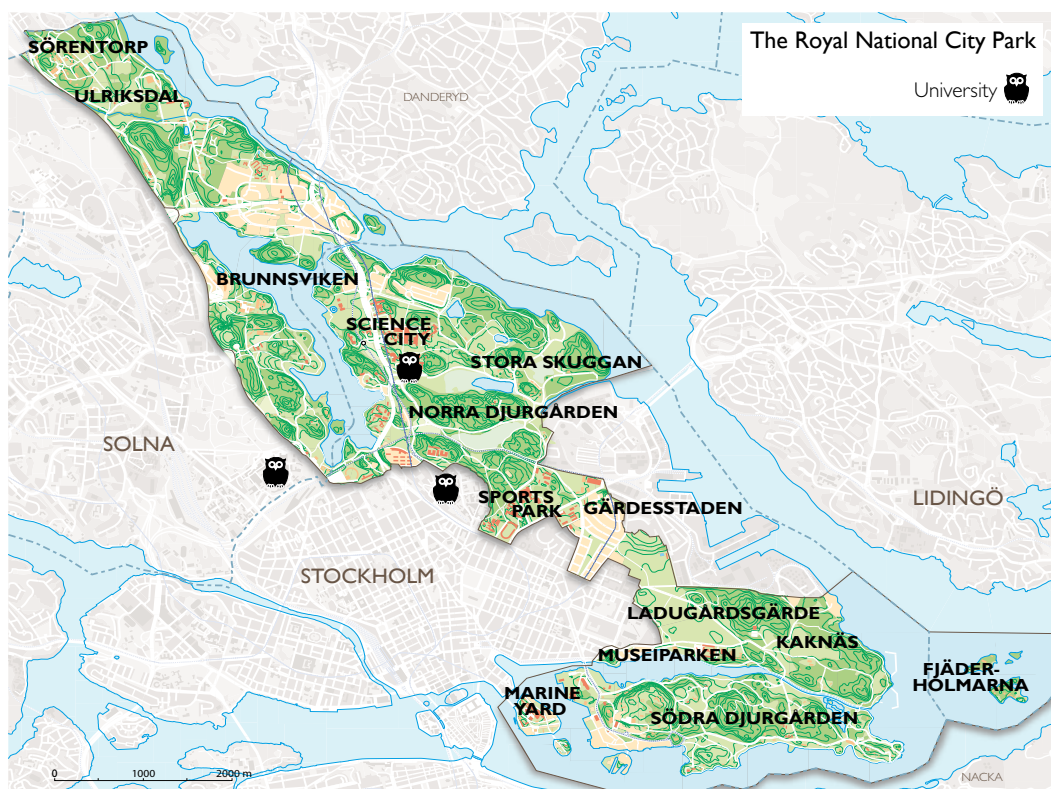
### KUNGLIGA NATIONALSTADSPARKEN

The Royal National City Park, the world's first national city park, was created in 1994 by decision of the Swedish Parliament. The Park was established to safeguard and enhance the unique qualities of this area, containing outstanding natural qualities and heritage sites, ecologically important for the metropolitan area, and situated near and easily accessible from the central parts of Stockholm.

Within the Park are four royal palaces, more than twenty museums and numerous sports and leisure facilities, in a rich and varied natural setting. A main feature is the great number of ancient oaks, one

of the largest stands in northern Europe, hosting a particularly rich biodiversity.

The Royal National City Park represents a major asset for the attractiveness and the quality living in Stockholm. Besides generally maintaining the qualities of the Park, work focusses on enhancing locations of specific interest, notably historic gardens, sustaining biodiversity and improving accessibility for all kinds of visitors. The Park provides important ecosystem services for the sustainable development of the metropolitan area.







A walk along Djurgårdsbrunnskanalen



## Formal Base

Formally, the Park was created by means of a paragraph in the Swedish Environmental Act, regulating that within in the Park no development or other change can take place causing negative effects on the historic landscape or consuming park or nature areas. The law allows for continued activities for existing institutions within the Park. The legislation and thus the Park came into effect in 1995. It was envisaged that more national city parks would be installed in the country, but so far this is the only one.

The legal base for a national city park is unique and different from those of national parks and nature reserves. It is a planning restriction functioning in combination with other laws, such as the Planning and Building Act (PBL) and other acts regulating technical infrastructure. The planning restrictions act solely towards municipalities and other public authorities and do not affect other bodies or private persons. Historical landscapes can be seen as an equivalent of the Unesco definition of Cultural landscapes.

Despite the denomination national city park it contains not only green areas but also residential areas, institutions and large roads. The park covers an area of 27 km<sup>2</sup> within the three municipalities Lidingö, Solna and Stockholm. The territory is divided between a large number of land owners, the most important ones being the Royal Court, the National Property Board (Statens Fastighetsverk), Akademiska hus and the municipalities of Solna and Stockholm.

*The Royal National City Park is a historic park landscape and an oasis of relaxation and activity. At the heart of your city.*

### **The Ulriksdal-Haga-Brunnsviken-Djurgården area is a national city park**

In a national city park developments, new buildings and other measures shall be permissible only if they can be undertaken without encroaching on park landscapes or the natural environment and without detriment to any other natural or cultural assets of the historical landscape.

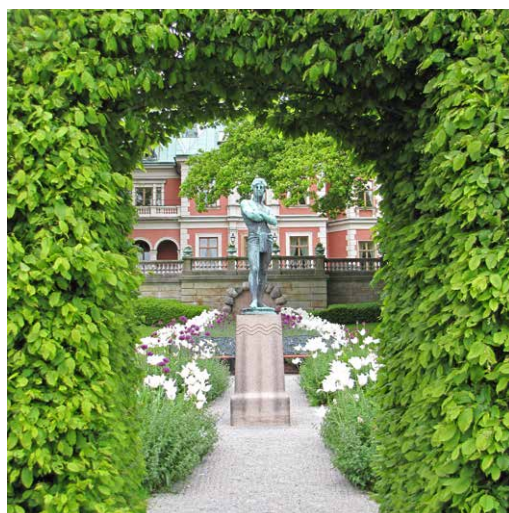
Despite the provision in the second paragraph, a measure that involves a temporary encroachment or a temporary damage in a national city park may be taken, if:

1. the measure raises the natural and cultural assets of the park or meets another important public interest; and
2. the park is restored to the extent that no more than an insignificant encroachment or an insignificant damage remains.

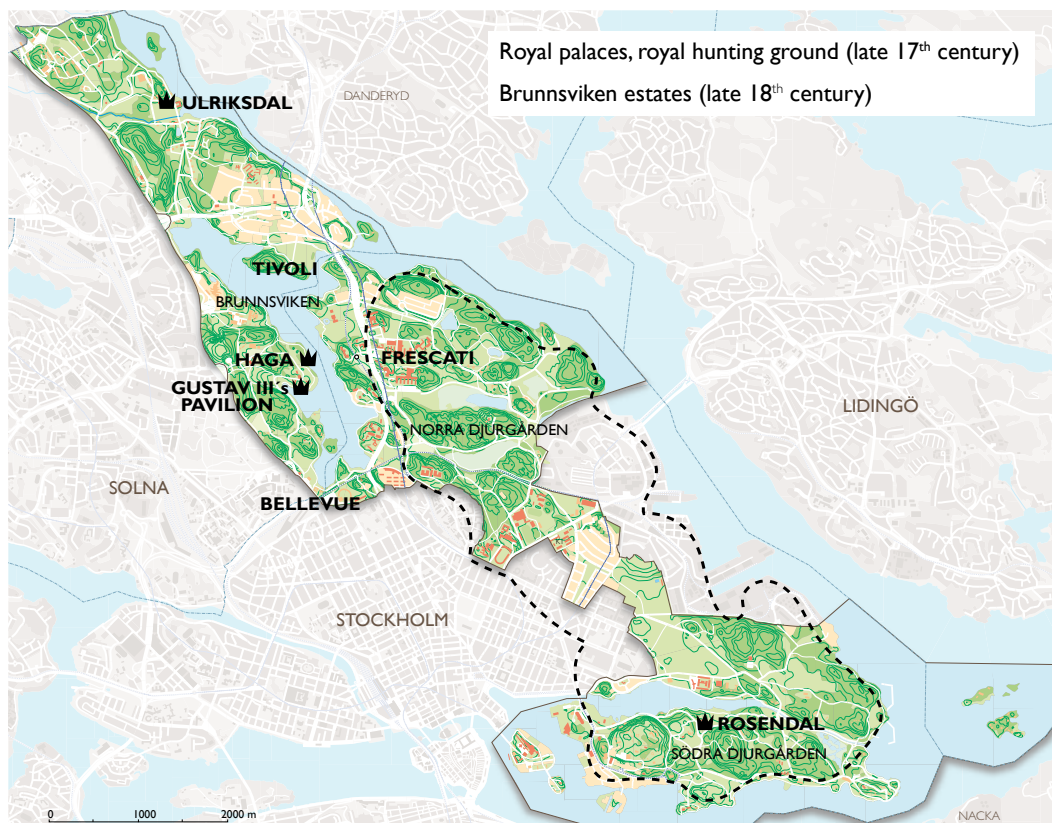
(Swedish Environmental Code, chapter 4, §7, unauthorised translation)

### **Cultural landscapes**

Cultural landscapes are combined works of nature and man. They are an illustration of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal. (Unesco)



Södra Djurgården



## History

The Royal National City Park stretches along the north eastern parts of central Stockholm from Sörentorp and Ulriksdal in north-west, through Brunnsviken, Norra Djurgården, Ladugårdsgårde, Kaknäs, Södra Djurgården to the islets of Fjäderholmarna in the south-east. An important reason why such unique cultural heritage sites and rich natural areas near the urban centre have been preserved from development is that large parts of the Park have been royal grounds.

**King Gustav Vasa**, instrumental in establishing the state of Sweden (and in many ways an equivalent to Henry VIII of England), came into possession of much of the area during early 16<sup>th</sup> century. This was done by confiscating land from the church and monasteries when introducing Protestantism in the country. Parts of the area were given to royal farms producing horses and food for the royal household, but also pioneering improved agricultural methods.

**A royal hunting ground** was fenced in by the king in the southern parts of the Park already in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. The fenced area was greatly extended by King Karl XI at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast to many other royal hunting grounds, the Park was largely accessible to the public. In mid-18<sup>th</sup> century King Adolf Fredrik, less keen on hunting, opened the entire grounds for public access for a small fee, to be paid at the gates. The fee remained in force until the 1860<sup>es</sup>. The herds of deer, numbering up to 1500, were subsequently moved to a smaller fence adjacent the the present Park and later to Gripsholm castle.

**Recreation** in the park has a long tradition among residents of the capital. Södra Djurgården has been used for excursions ever since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. From early 19<sup>th</sup> century the royal parks of Haga and Rosendal became fashionable strolling grounds. Idyllic places like Haga, Fiskartorpet and Djurgården feature in the songs of the renowned 18<sup>th</sup> century poet Carl Michael Bellman.





Ladugårdsgärde





Kaknäs

**Troop training** has taken place since long in the open fields of Ladugårdsgårde. In mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the military operations were frequently supervised by King Karl XIV Johan, former Marshall of France, and attracted large crowds of spectators. Later the field became the scene for other public events such as early aircraft ascents and assembly place for labour manifestations on 1<sup>st</sup> of May.

**Sports grounds** were laid out in the southern part of Norra Djurgården during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, to be followed by many more facilities for various sports.

**Scientific institutions** were established from early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the southern part of Norra Djurgården. More have followed, such as Stockholm University. In the vicinity west of the Park, lies the Medical University of Karolinska Institutet and eastward, the Royal Institute of Technology, KTH. An in-

creasing interest to collaborate between these universities will require easy communications through the Park, essentially for bikes and public transport.



Science city – University Assembly Hall



## Today's park

**Sörentorp** at the north-westerly end of the Park, was laid out during the 1950<sup>s</sup> for the Svea Livgarde infantry regiment. The outspread brick buildings in a park environment was subsequently taken over by the National Police Academy, itself to be moved in the near future to another location. Residential use has been envisaged for the area, possible additional development to be confined to non-green areas.

**Ulriksdal**, south of Sörentorp, was originally laid out by the important de la Gardie family as a magnificent palace ground in mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, but was soon taken over by the royal family. The palace and grounds have lived through various states of repair and use. In mid-19<sup>th</sup> century King Karl XV redecorated the interiors in exuberant historic styles and gave away land to friends to build residences. Many of these spectacular buildings still stand. The palace is now open to the public. The original ornate baroque gardens have been transformed into a simplified design and are used for various outdoor events. Confidensen, originally a riding-house from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, was soon turned into a theatre still in use, with its unique 18<sup>th</sup> century interior preserved. The area contains an ancient burial ground (500–1000 AC). The former palace green-houses are nowadays used as a garden centre with a well-frequented restaurant.

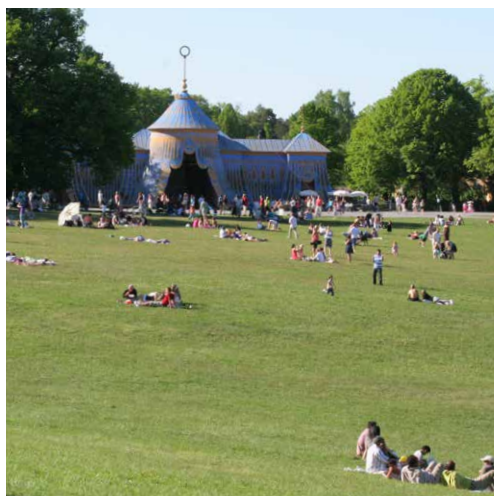
The **Lake Brunnsviken** scenery, among the most precious parts of the Royal National City Park, was conceived during late 18<sup>th</sup> century in the English landscape style by initiative of King Gustav III. In Haga on the western shore the King laid out the Haga park embellished by a number of pavilions in exotic styles, some still remaining. The basement of a magnificent palace remains unfinished after the King's dramatic death, after he was shot at a masquerade at the Royal Opera. Around Brunnsviken other parks and buildings were created on land given to favourites of the king, such as Tivoli in the north, Frescati in the east and Bellevue in the south. The names were inspired by the King's Italian journey 1783-84. Restoration measures for the Brunnsviken area envisage to emphasize the original over-all concept of this northern Arcadia.



Sörentorp



Ulriksdals Palace



Brunnsviken – Haga copper tents



Science city – Bergius Bothanic Garden



Norra Djurgården – King Karl XI's fishing lodge



Gärdesstaden

The area of **Science City** (Vetenskapsstaden) east of Lake Brunnsviken, has a long tradition of Natural Science. The Stockholm University was established on the grounds of Experimentalfältet, the centre for developing Swedish agricultural and horticultural techniques in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Further east at **Stora Skuggan** stood the cradle of Swedish forestry science. Other scientific institutions in the area are Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Swedish Museum of Natural History and Bergius Bothanic Garden, all of them containing research institutions.

**Norra Djurgården**, stretching eastwards, contains rich and varied nature. The pond Lappkärret and the wetland Ugglevikskärret host particularly rich bird-life. Open spaces with ancient oaks recall the royal hunting ground. The coniferous forest at Stora Vargjakten offers a wilderness character free from noise. In the southern part at Fiskartorpet, the tiny fishing-lodge of King Karl XI crouches under a huge oak.

The **Sports Park** and the residential area of **Gärdesstaden** form a weak ecological link between two parts of the Park. The green areas surrounding the Olympic Stadium (built for the 1912 Games) with a tennis hall, an equestrian center and other sports facilities, provide a connection to Gärdesstaden across a busy thoroughfare. Gärdesstaden is a residential area in the modernist style of the 1930s, composed of free-standing building blocks in a parklike setting.

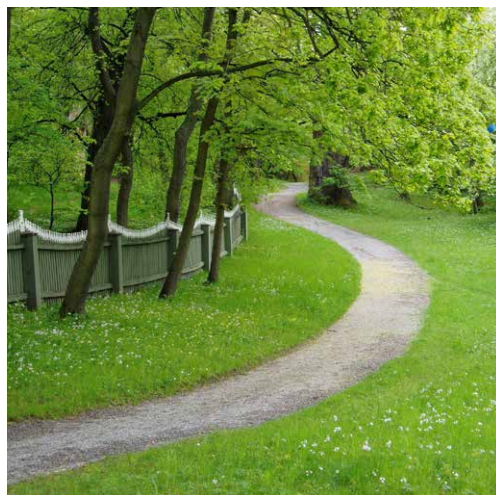
**Ladugårdsgårde** is a well visited, large open field often used for public events. Along its southern side the **Museum park** with the Maritime, the Technological and the Ethnographical museums stretches along the northern shore of Djurgårdsbrunnsviken.

*At the heart  
of your city.*





Museum Park – Maritime museum



Södra Djurgården – Waldemarsudde museum

**Kaknäs**, east of Ladugårdsgärde, is a beautiful park landscape with a few private houses and a former bridge-head towards Lidingö along its eastern shore. The most important ancient human settlement (500–1000 AC) in the Park is located here.

The **Marine Yard**, the water body surrounded by the islands of Skeppsholmen, Kastellholmen and Beckholmen, and Galärvarvet and Djurgårdsvarvet on the western fringe of Djurgården, forms a historic landscape with a genuine marine character highlighting the harbour and defence of the royal capital. Major cultural institutions such as the Vasa Museum, the East Asian Museum and the Museum of Modern Art are located in the area.

**Södra Djurgården**, an island separated along the north by the narrow water of Djurgårdsbrunnskanalen, is one of the most prominent parts of the park. In the west numerous major public attractions such as the Vasa museum, Skansen open-air museum and Gröna Lund fun fair reflect its long tradition as a leisure area of Stockholm. The eastern part opens up into a pleasant strolling landscape with numerous imposing, ancient oaks. The royal palace of Rosendal and a number of private residences embellish the area. The wetland of Isbladskärret contains rich bird-life.

The islets of **Fjäderholmarna** are the easternmost part of the park. A military ground until recently, this area has been turned into an attractive excursion spot with restaurant and recreation features, accessible by regular boat service.



Marine yard – Skeppsholmen



Fjäderholmarna

## Strategy and governance

The Royal National City Park was created to safeguard and improve the great environmental and cultural assets of the area. The County Administrative Board (CAB) of Stockholm, the representative of national government on the regional level, was commissioned to coordinate actions to that purpose.

After a few years there was a concern that the focus tended to turn towards the Park as a possible obstacle for building development. This led government in 2004 to ask the CAB to formulate an action plan on how to enhance the qualities of the park. This commission for an action plan strengthened the formal base for the Park beyond the initial, protective mechanisms in the Environmental Act. The mission to initiate measures to improve the qualities of the Park were included in the formal base.

The **Action Plan** (Framtidens nationalstadspark, CAB report no 2006:11), was presented as a response in 2006 by the CAB. The plan contained two parts. The first part analysed the qualities of the area and set five key-words to characterize the Park:

- Royal influence and Swedish history
- Popular amusement
- Knowledge
- Biodiversity
- Health and exercise

The second part was a substantial action plan, by now largely implemented.

A **National City Park Regulation** was decided by the Swedish government in 2009.

- The CAB shall administer a National City Park Council with high representatives of the affected main actors and stakeholders, chaired by the Governor of CAB
- the CAB shall monitor changes over time of the qualities of the Park
- the CAB shall elaborate a Management- and Development Plan for the Park, based on existing planning documents.

The regulation in fact added a formal order to measures partly already taken.

A **Management and Development Plan / M&D Plan** (CAB report 2012:33) was presented by the CAB in 2012. The M&D Plan gives a broad introduction to the landscape of the Park, followed by a detailed presentation of qualities and goals for the Park subdivided into 15 parts. The plan also contains an analysis of three general aspects: accessibility to and within the Park, the ancient oaks as main feature of the landscape, and attractive sceneries within and outwards from the Park. The M&D Plan has no formal role but thanks to an ambitious consultation process involving a large number of actors and stakeholders, and a unanimous approval by the National City Park Council, the plan has gained a solid respect as the basic document outlining goals for the development of the Park.



Action Plan



Management and Development Plan





Norra Djurgården – Rural city life. Fiskartorpets/jumping slope in background

# Challenges

## Identity and commitment

The work to improve the Park is delicate and requires collaboration by a number of actors. These encompass three main categories, namely land owners and land managers, municipalities and NGO:s. Municipalities have double roles as planning authorities and land owners (Solna and Stockholm). The third municipality, Lidingö, is represented by the islets of Fjäderholmarna, which are owned by the state.

The **power and resources** to execute concrete operations remains largely with land owners. The CAB is set to coordinate and enhance actions but has little power to implement concrete measures. Consequently actions to improve qualities of the Park will normally require readiness and commitment of partners affected. When it comes to information and communication the CAB in its role as coordinator has more freedom to implement actions.

To **make the Park better known** is a basic challenge in order to raise commitment and improve qualities of the area. The large size and complicated shape of the Park, its manifold contents and also its intricate name complicates work.

A number of **well-known locations and attractions** rightly relying on their own names and reputations are located in the Park. There is no reason to compete with these. Instead actions must be taken to make such actors find it an asset to communicate to their customers that they are located in the Park. This goes for permanent actors such as museums as well as temporary events such as Marathon races. To make land-owners and those active relate to the Park is a potentially strong and indispensable means for making the Park better known and valued.



Logo "We are part of the Royal National City Park"



Yellow

- Pantone 3965
- CMYK 70.98.0
- RGB 233.227.0

Blue

- Pantone 636
- CMYK 45.0.5.0
- RGB 175.220.240

Brown

- Pantone 411
- CMYK 0.20.35.80
- RGB 84.71.65

Profile colours

## Accessibility

**The extent of the Park** can be difficult to recognise on location. In order to make the Park visible, a number of entry points have been marked with information screens. Furthermore, printed bilingual maps (Swedish/English) can be obtained in numerous places and on the web. A visitors' centre at a well frequented location (Djurgården Bridge where 15 million pass annually) highlights the Park and a number of attractions nearby. More visitors' centres are under discussion, always in combination with other attractions.

A **34 km signposted bicycle track** runs through the Park. Maps available in Swedish or English point out a number of interesting sites along the track. The track design makes it possible to follow the entire circuit or make short-cuts. The extent of the Park makes it difficult to cover by foot but it is quite manageable by bike. Consequently biking is a good method to make the Park's rich contents available to visitors. The English version of the bike track map in particular is distributed in great numbers, not least to bike hire companies.





Entrance sign

**Signs and road indicators** are put up by the major land owners, mostly to features within their own area. Consequently there is a lack of indicators to more remote locations in the Park. A project is under way to introduce such signs in addition to the more local ones.

**Pedestrians, bikes and public transport** are in focus for actions to improve accessibility to the Park and between parts of the Park. The ambition is to address all kinds of visitors, with priority to children, elderly and the handicapped.

## The expanding city

**The location near central Stockholm** makes the Park easily accessible but the proximity also implies a threat. Stockholm is a rapidly expanding city and new densely developed residential areas are growing close to the Park. The legal requirement to safeguard and possibly strengthen the qualities of the historical landscape reaches even outside the Park borders. Attractive sceneries within and seen

from the Park should be protected from disturbing elements, which is not always easy with the growing city nearby. This is a point of specific importance in gardens of the English landscape style, notably the internationally renowned Haga park.



Boat trip on Djurgårdsbrunnskanalen



**Buildings may be erected in the Park** without obstacle from the law, as long as they are built on non-green areas and do not cause negative effect on the historic landscape. The laws concerned do not, however, prevent a land-owner from replacing a lawn with gravel or asphalt, thus creating a non-green area subsequently possible to build on. Therefore a new regulation is under way to bridge this legal lapse. It will require the approval from the CAB to cover green areas larger than 200 sqm.

**Traffic noise** is a major source of disturbance in parts of the park. A number of large roads pass near and even through the Park. A study has been executed to identify locations particularly urgent to protect from noise. In the study existing noise levels are related with areas sensitive to noise, such as nature or locations for open air theatre. The report

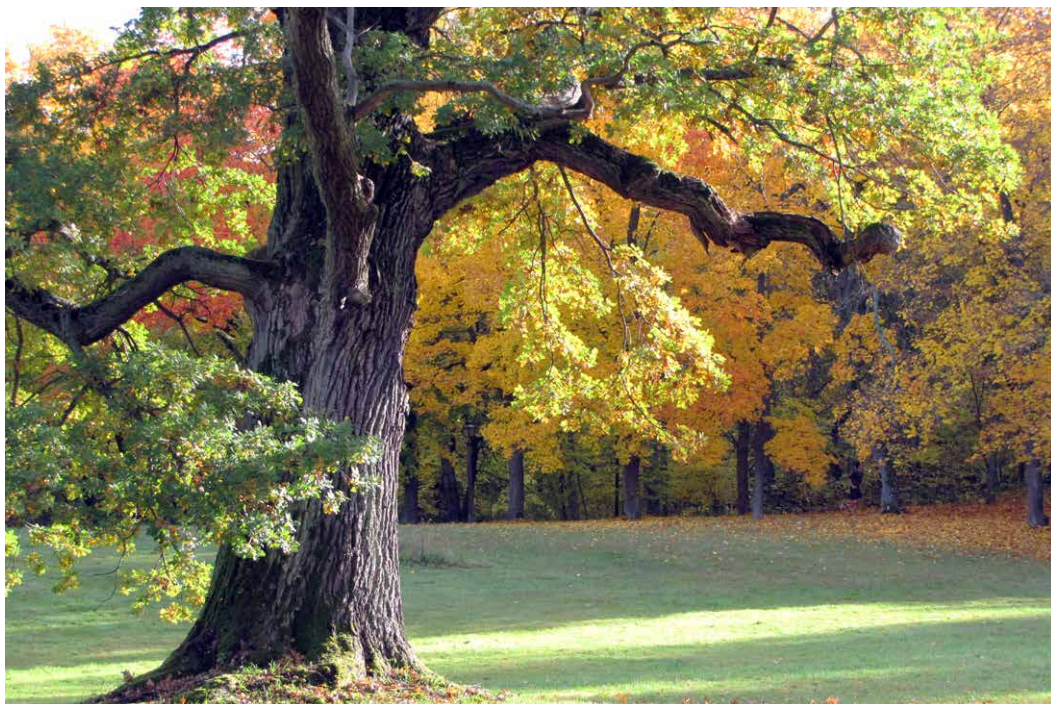


Brunnsviken – new development nearby



E4 – Norra Haga Junction





Ancient oak

will be used in discussions with road authorities to urge noise reducing measures, preferably of a design harmonising with the historical landscape.

## 100 Million

In 2014 the national budget contained the specific sum of SEK 100 million (approximately €11 million) for improving the qualities of the Park. This was a recompensation for the construction of a motorway tunnel temporarily affecting the park environment. This operation could only take place following an amendment of the law for protecting the Park. The amendment allows for temporary intrusions in the park environment, provided they are of major public interest and will cause little or no remaining harm to the Park. This possibility for temporary intrusion saved a considerable sum for the tunnel project. However, the arrangement was accepted by the NGOs working to safeguard the Park only after it was agreed that 10% (SEK 100 Million) of the costs saved should be allocated to improving the Park.

Plans for projects to be financed by the sum are being developed in dialogue with affected actors and are approved by the National City Park Council. Current plans include projects to sustain and im-

prove biodiversity, to improve pedestrian accessibility at entry points or by new pathways, to reduce noise, highlight ancient heritage sites and not least to restore a few important historical gardens. Projects to be financed from the sum should normally be co-financed by the partner affected, thus increasing the actual resource for improvements.

## Protection of valuable trees

Some years ago a number of valuable, large trees were cut down in the Park without prior warning, and particularly so in the ecologically sensitive zone running through the Gärdesstaden. This raised the awareness among the partners of the need to protect valuable trees. As a short-term measure the municipalities installed provisional nature reserves covering the entire Park. The reserves contained solely one regulation, to prohibit felling of trees exceeding a certain trunk diameter prior to acceptance of a formal application. These provisional nature reserves have now been replaced by long-term regulations. In areas covered by development plans this is accomplished by the municipalities by adding regulations into existing plans. The regulations are identical in both municipalities affected.



Science city – Grazing cows at University

In areas not covered by detailed plans the CAB will install a requirement of compulsory application before taking down valuable trees.

A major challenge in protecting valuable trees is to communicate the tree protection measures to the numerous small land owners affected, such as resident cooperatives where members of the board tend to shift frequently. So far the restrictions have been supported by good coverage in local newspapers. However, the need to repeatedly communicate the protection regulations to sustain awareness will remain.

## Monitoring

Following the regulation of National City Parks, the CAB shall monitor how the qualities and use of the Park develop over time. To this purpose a monitoring program has been formulated, defining qualities to be analysed. Environmental aspects will focus on changes over time for the amount of green areas (by satellite analysis), of meadow, grazed areas and wet-land, of the number of valuable trees cared for or lost (fallen or cut down), and in defined, particularly attractive sceneries (photos). Public use will be

measured by number of visitors, and the number and size of events. The functionality of formal regulations will be analysed regarding effects of Park related legislation on development plans and building permits – within the Park but also in areas outside affecting the qualities of the Park.



Södra Djurgården







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