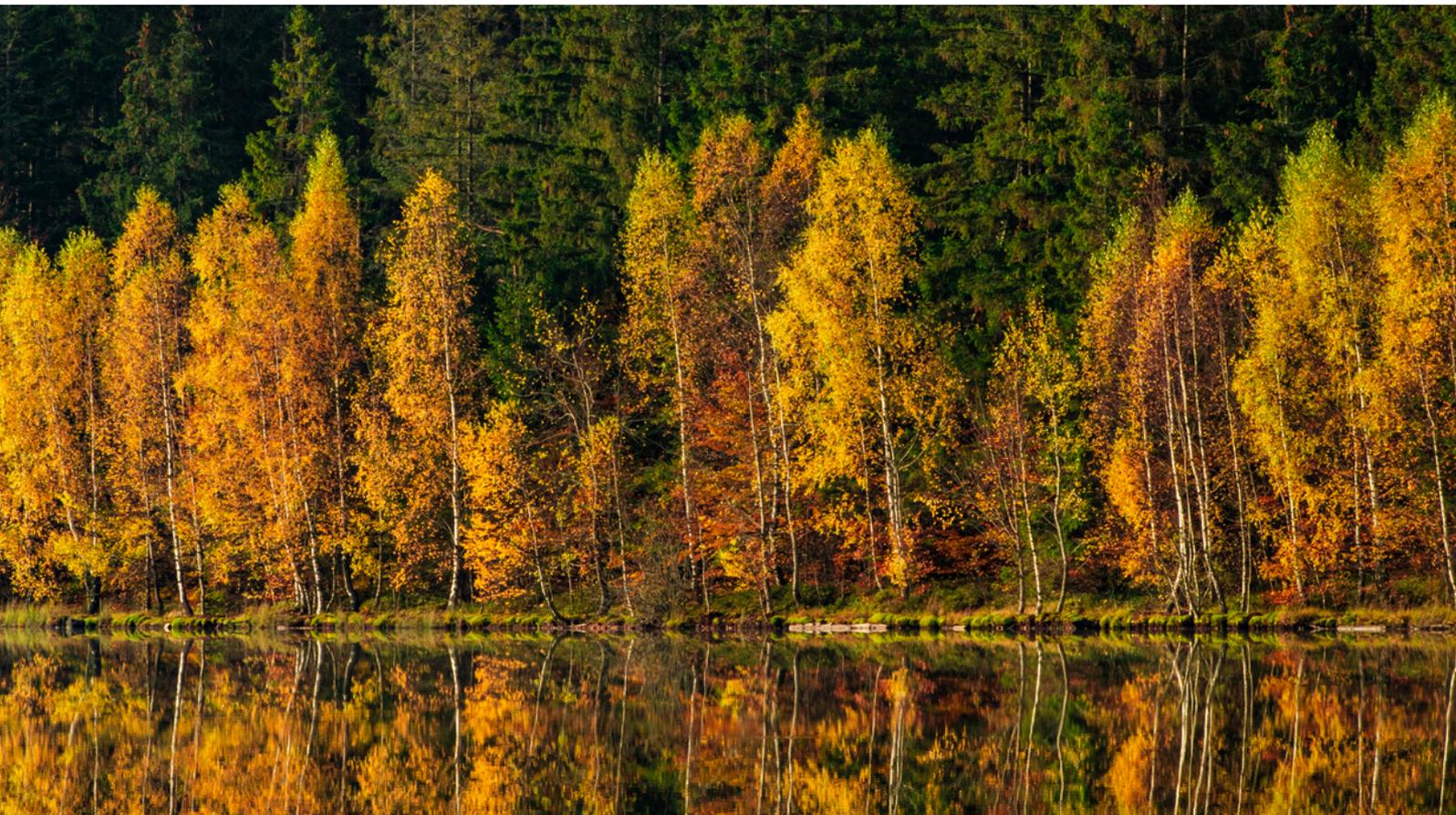


SÖDERÅSEN NATIONAL PARK

EXPLORING PEOPLE'S VIEWS OF THE NATIONAL
PARK AND POLICY TOOLS TO AVOID
OVERCROWDING

2022



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Department of Land Economy



FULL REPORT

Report prepared by

Nikoleta Jones

Alfie Begley

Chrsivaladis Malesios

Victoria Maguire-Rajpaul

University of Warwick

Institute for Global Sustainable

Development

October 2022

To cite this report: Jones N., Begley A., Malesios C., Maguire-Rajpaul V. 2022. Söderåsen national park, Exploring people's views and social outcomes of the national park. University of Warwick, Coventry, UK.

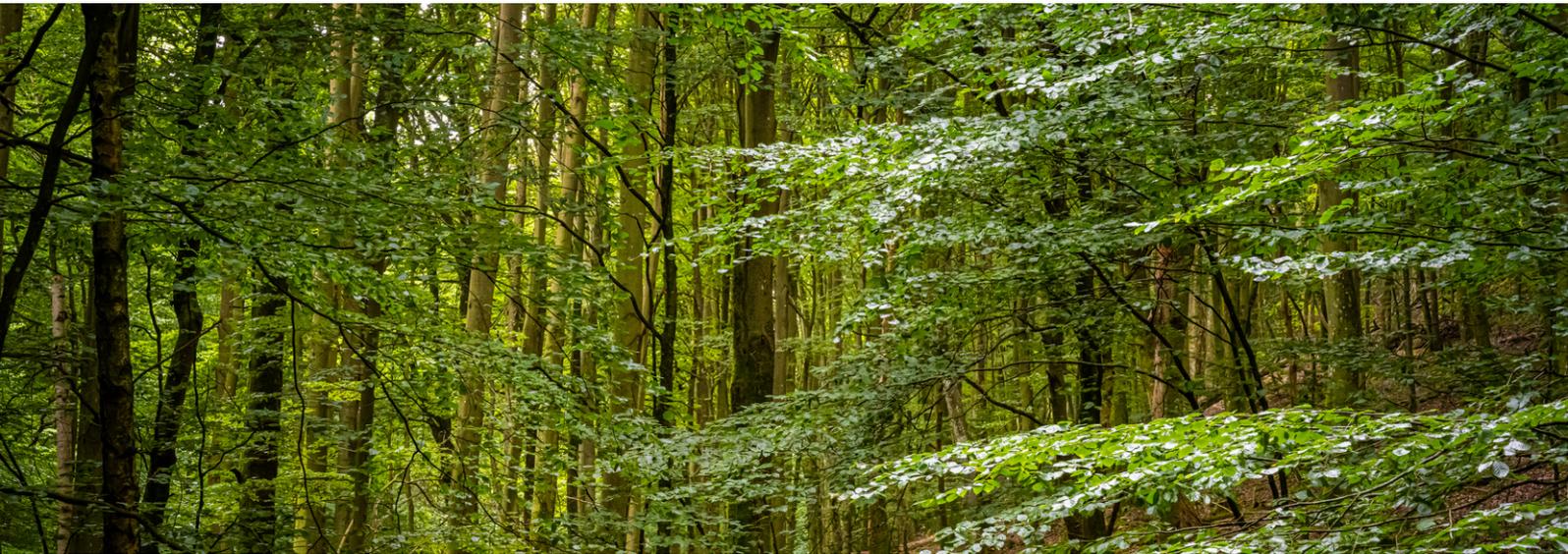


This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 802605)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01** Introduction
- 02** Methods
- 03** Social outcomes of Söderåsen national park
- 04** Governance and trust in institutions
- 05** Options to manage overcrowding
- 06** Environmental behaviour
- 07** Social, environmental and place values
- 08** Public support of Söderåsen national park
- 09** Recommendations

INTRODUCTION



Söderåsen National Park was established in 2001 and covers 1,625 hectares. The nature is varied, featuring lush deciduous forests, impressive talus slopes with high cliffs, flowing streams and panoramic views. Common species such as fallow deer and badgers are present, but polecats, ermines, wild boars and bats also are well represented among the park's mammals. Birds that breed in the area include the stock dove, hawfinch, long-tailed tit, grey wagtail, lesser spotted woodpecker, honey buzzard and goshawk. An exciting current project is the establishment of new living quarters for eagles in the national park. The area has also a great abundance of mushrooms, mosses, lichens, land snails, insects, marine animals, birds, vascular plants and bats.

Guidelines on the management and governance of Söderåsen national park are described in detail in the park's management plan. The plan includes the buildings, parking areas and rest areas as well as hiking paths and forest areas. A key principle is that Nature should be as accessible as possible; but for the purpose of minimizing traffic, noise, and emissions many roads have been closed

Since December 2020 Söderåsen National Park is a member of the EUROPARC's European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. This is a certification for protected areas in Europe that guarantees commitment to and co-operation with authorities, local businesses, representatives from tourism industries and other stakeholders to promote environmental protection and sustainable tourism.

METHODS



In order to explore people's views on Söderåsen national park, we used an adapted version of the Social Impact Assessment Tool for Protected Areas (SOCIAT) which has been developed by researchers at the University of Warwick and the University of Cambridge in collaboration with several park authorities across Europe. This consists of a structured questionnaire including 19 questions covering a variety of topics. Further information on SOCIAT can be found here: www.warwick.ac.uk/sociat.

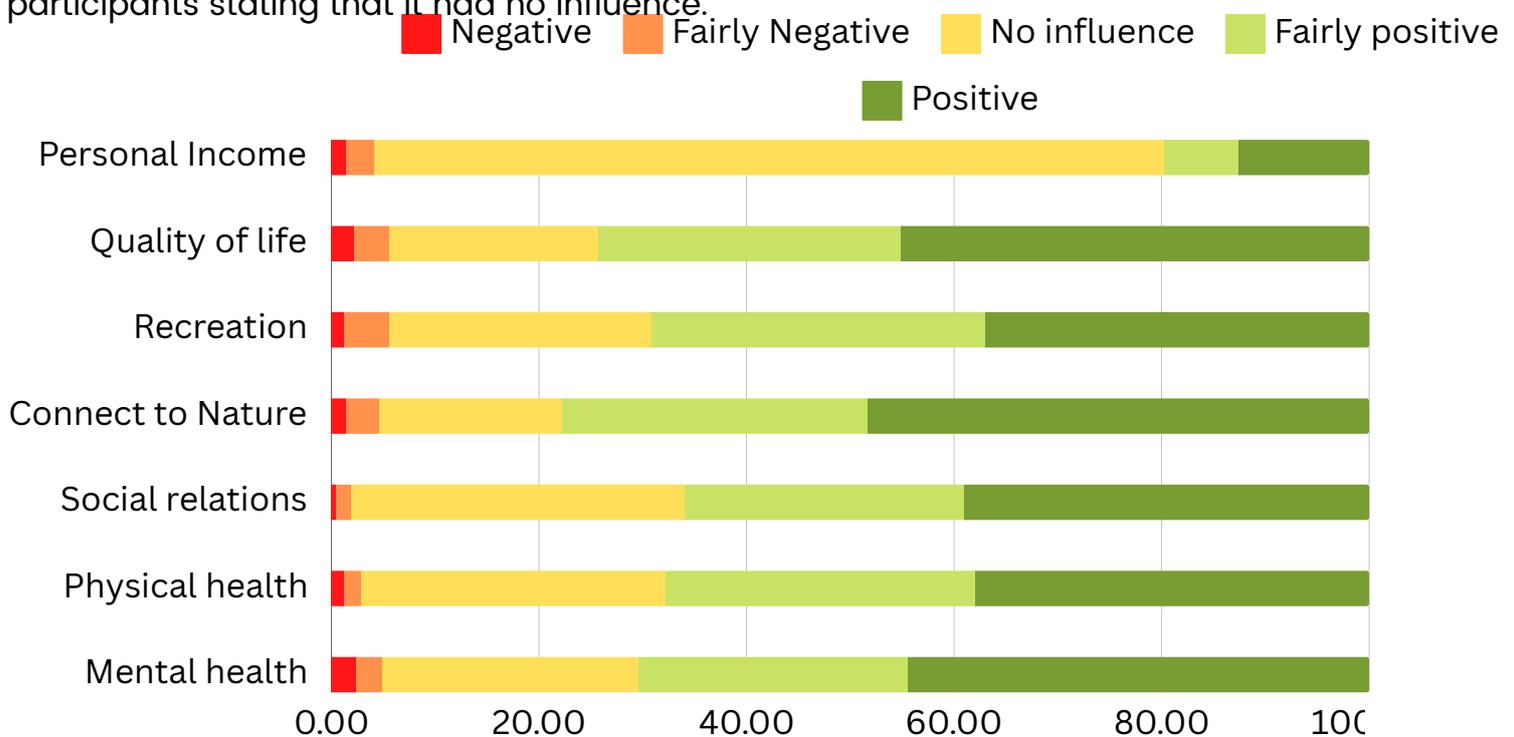
The questionnaire was distributed during Autumn 2022 to local communities living near the national park. A postcard was sent to all households included in the mailing list of Post Nord which live in the wider areas surrounding the park. This includes parts of Klippan, Svalöv, Åstorp, Bjuv, Höör and Eslöv. The postcard explained the main aims of the survey and invited people to access the survey via a link which directed them to a Qualtrics page.

In total, 450 responses were received. 96.5% of respondents were permanent residents and 3% owned a second home or rented a property in the area and visited regularly. 76% of respondents live in the area for more than 10 years. 42% of respondents were female and 54% male. 6% had completed primary education, 38% had finished secondary school and 55% had finished college or higher education. The age breakdown is: 10% (18 - 35), 13% (36 - 45), 22% (46 - 55), 27% (56 - 65), 28% (66+). The income breakdown is as follows: 5% have low income, 70% have medium and 25% have a high income.

RESULTS

SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Connectedness to nature and impact on quality of life were the most beneficial outcomes from the existence of Söderåsen National Park with over 70% of participants stating that the nature reserve had a positive or fairly positive outcome for them. The positive outcomes of the national park were also evident in a number of other aspects such as recreation, mental and physical health and local social relations. The impact of the national park on the personal income of respondents was more neutral with 76% of participants stating that it had no influence.

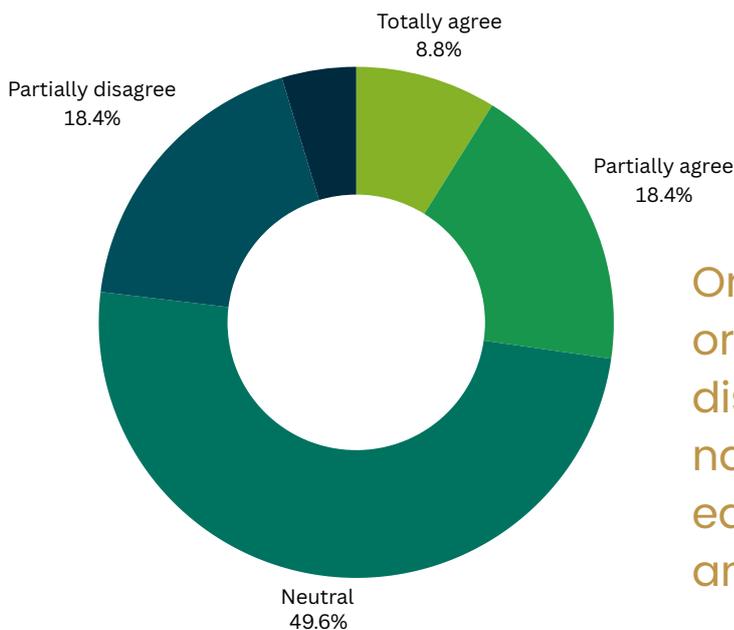
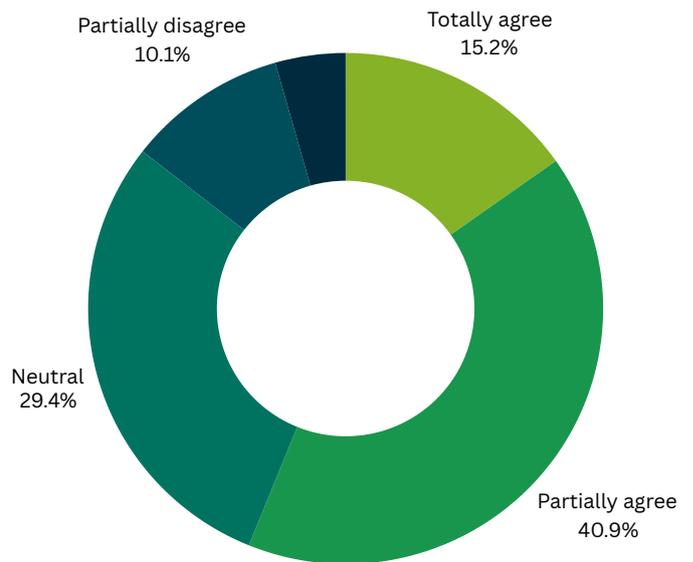


Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on potential negative impacts of the park. The main issue raised referred to the high number of visitors certain times of the year leading to traffic, parking issues and littering. These affect more those living closer to the park. Strict construction regulations were also noted by respondents. Another issue noted by respondents was that the park is not easily accessible via public transport and this was considered a disadvantage. Several participants also referred to a recent closure of a restaurant in the park which was often visited by locals.

DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL OUTCOMES

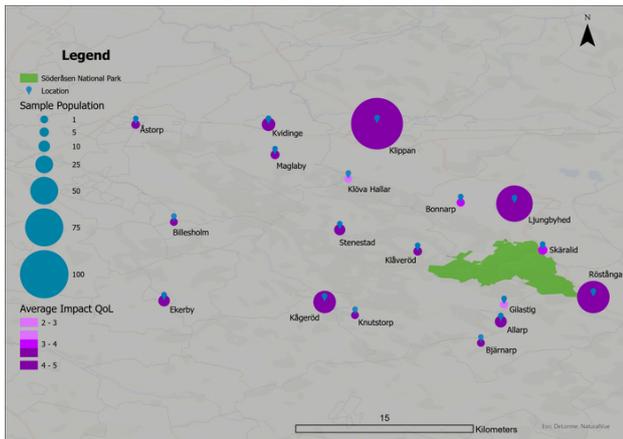
84% of the respondents consider that the benefits of the national park are equally distributed among locals and 77% feel that the disadvantages of the national park are distributed equally among locals

56% of respondents agree or totally agree that benefits of Söderåsen national park are distributed equally between local people and visitors

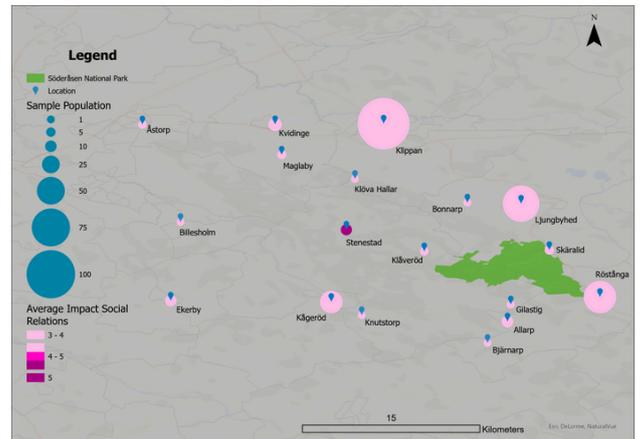


Only 27% of respondents agree or totally agree that disadvantages of Söderåsen national park are distributed equally between local people and visitors

DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL OUTCOMES



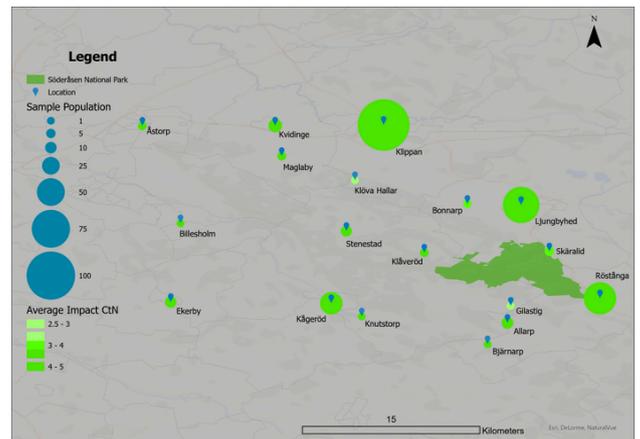
Spatial distribution of outcome on quality of life



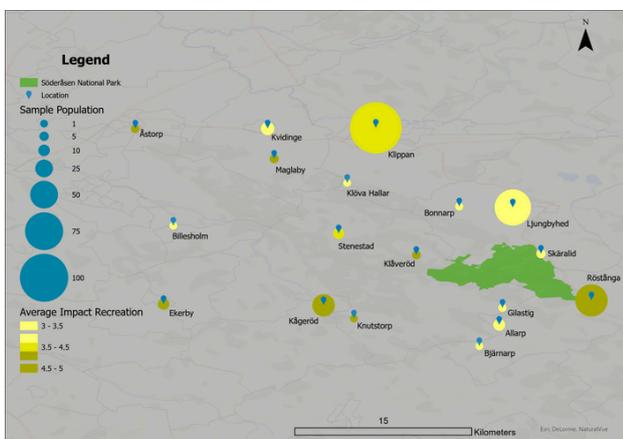
Spatial distribution of outcome on social relations

Most social impacts are distributed evenly in the different areas near the national park

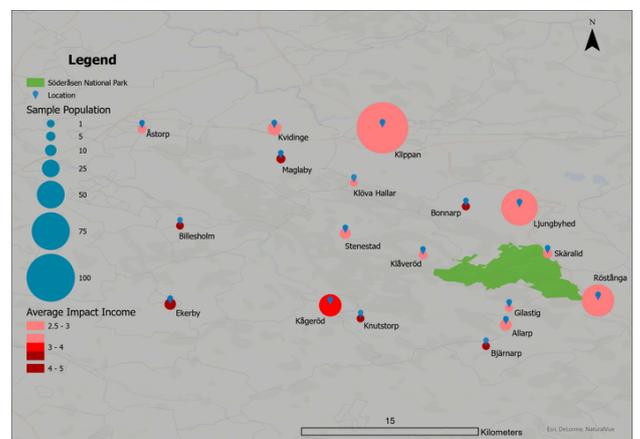
Different colours represent different average score per area of perceived social impacts measured on a 5 point scale



Spatial distribution of outcome on CtN



Spatial distribution of outcome on recreation

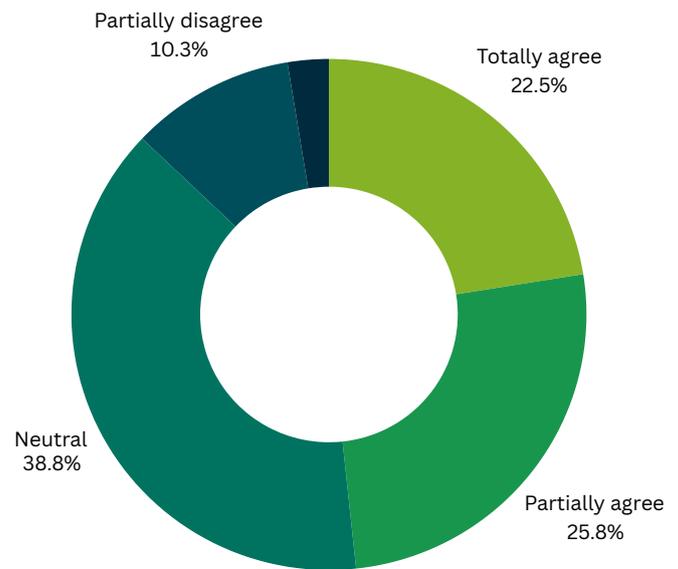


Spatial distribution of outcome on income

GOVERNANCE AND TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

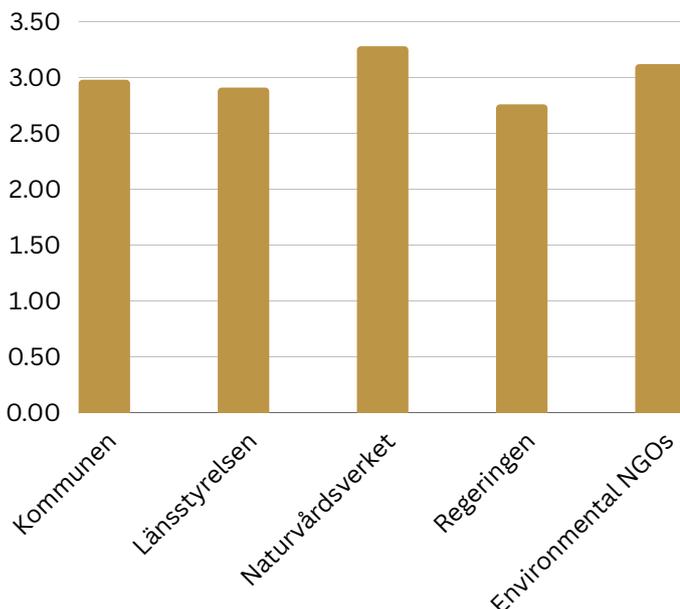
Respondents were asked whether they feel they have enough time, money and opportunities to engage with activities supporting the park. 43.% agreed or partially agreed with this statement. 32% of respondents would be interested to volunteer in Söderåsen national park in the future.

13% of respondents felt that they don't have enough time, money and opportunities to support the park.



Level of agreement. I have enough time, money and opportunities to support the nature reserve

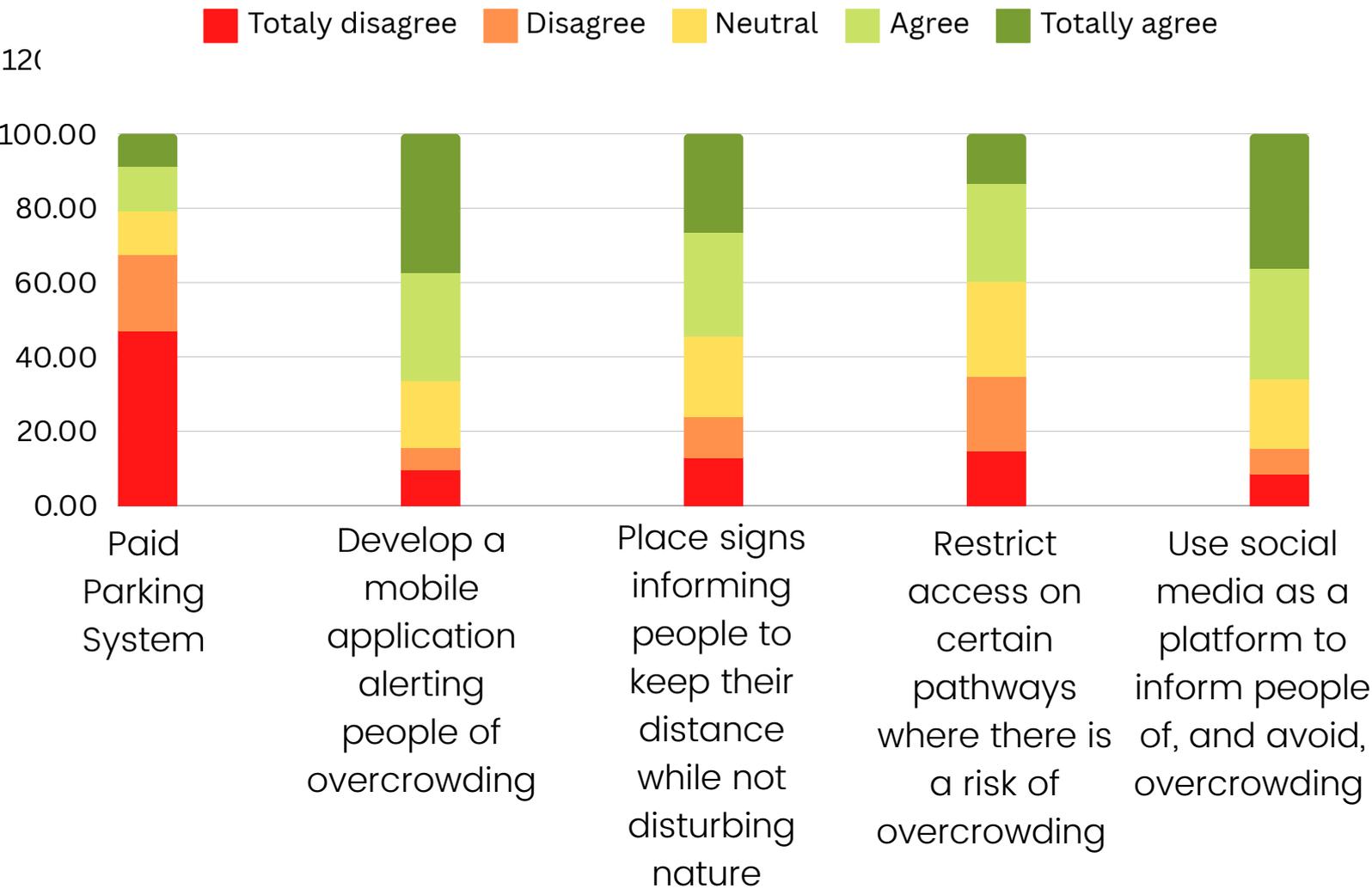
70.48% of participants believe that that Skane County Board does a good job protecting the nature reserve (agree or partially agree) - double check



Respondents were also asked how much they trust five institutions involved directly or indirectly in the management of the national park. This was measured on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing the lowest and 5 the highest level of trust. Overall a moderate trust to institutions was noted. Most trusted institutions were environmental NGOs and the national environment agency. The least trusted institution was the government.

POSSIBLE MEASURES TO MANAGE OVERCROWDING

Respondents were presented with a number of possible policy tools in order to manage overcrowding in the park. Most accepted solutions were linked with the use of technology such as the development of a mobile application that alerts people to high visitor numbers in different locations of the park and the use of social media to inform people about large crowds. For both of these solutions just over 65% of the sample expressed agreement.

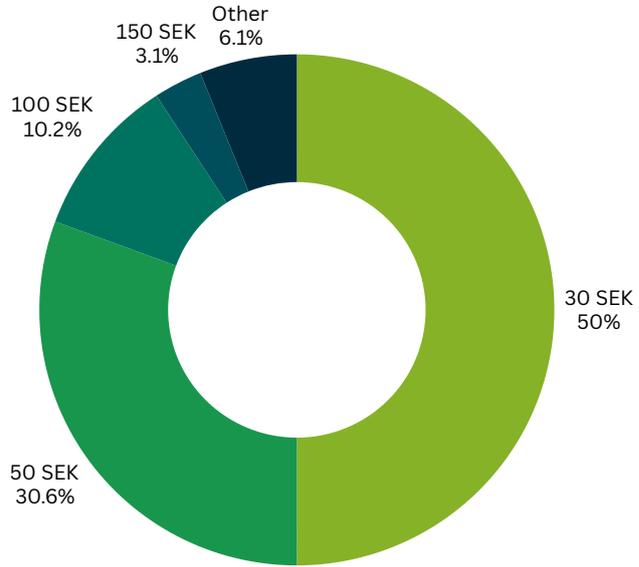


POSSIBLE MEASURES TO MANAGE OVERCROWDING



People were more reluctant to accept harder policy tools such as the introduction of a parking fee. This was favoured only by 20% of participants while only 25% stated that they would be willing to pay a fee every time they visit the park.

98 respondents out of the 440 participants stated they are willing to pay for a parking fee



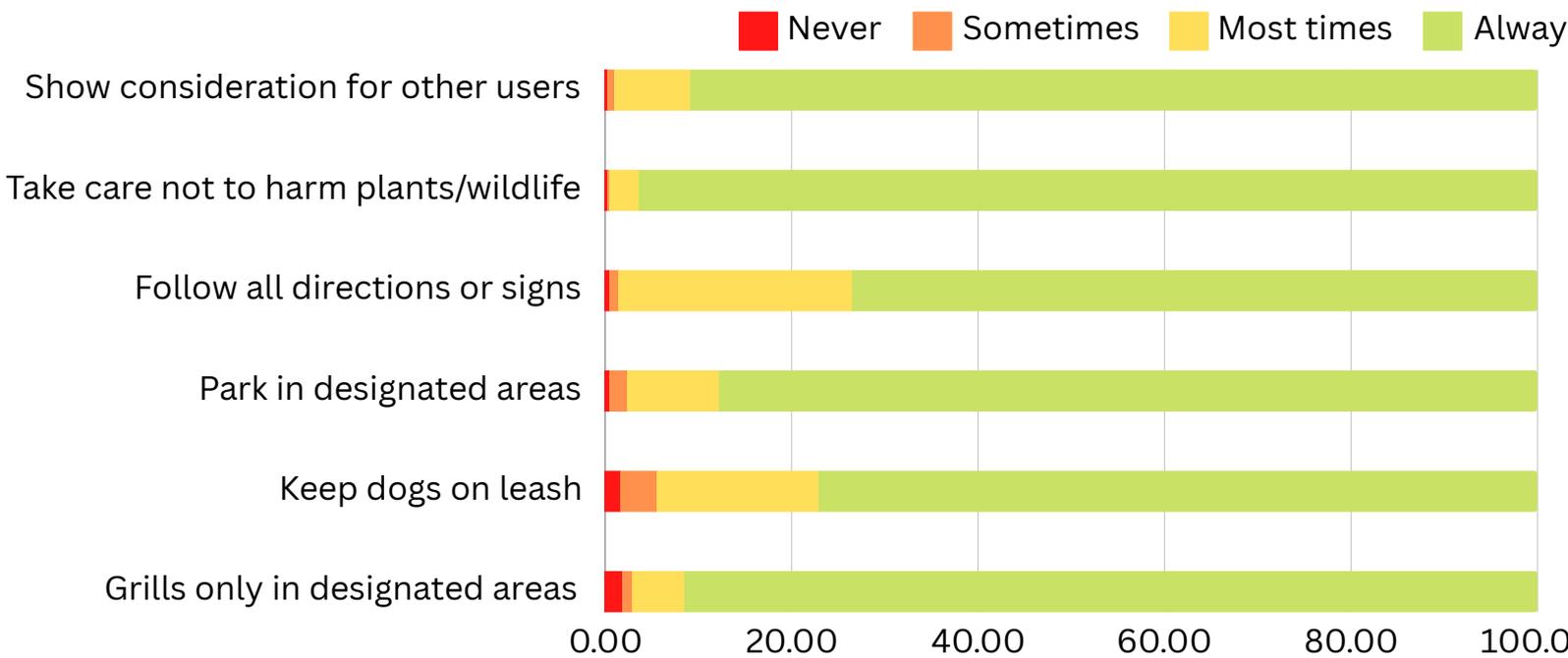
A large number of comments were received justifying the main reasons that people felt they should not pay a fee to visit the park. The most commonly mentioned reasons was that nature should be accessible for everyone so that people can enjoy being outdoors irrespective of their income. Several respondents also mentioned that they already pay high taxes. The fact that the park is not easily accessible via public transport was also of a concern if a parking fee was introduced.

The introduction of a fee was of a particular concern for people who live in close proximity to the park as they regularly visit the area. Another concern mentioned was that if a parking fee was introduced people would park in surrounding villages and towns thus transferring the problem to nearby areas. It was suggested that new car parks could be created in order to tackle overcrowding rather than introduce a parking fee or possibly a permit is issued for people in close proximity to the park. Several respondents also mentioned that they would choose a different place to enjoy nature if a fee was introduced.

ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR

Respondents were asked whether they find it easy to use the park in a responsible way. 79% totally agreed with this statement. Also, 89% stated that they expect other users of the national park to behave in a responsible way.

Overall participants stated a very responsible behaviour when they use the National Park. Over 90% of the sample mentioned that they always consider other users, take care not to harm plants and wildlife and have BBQs only in areas where it is permitted.



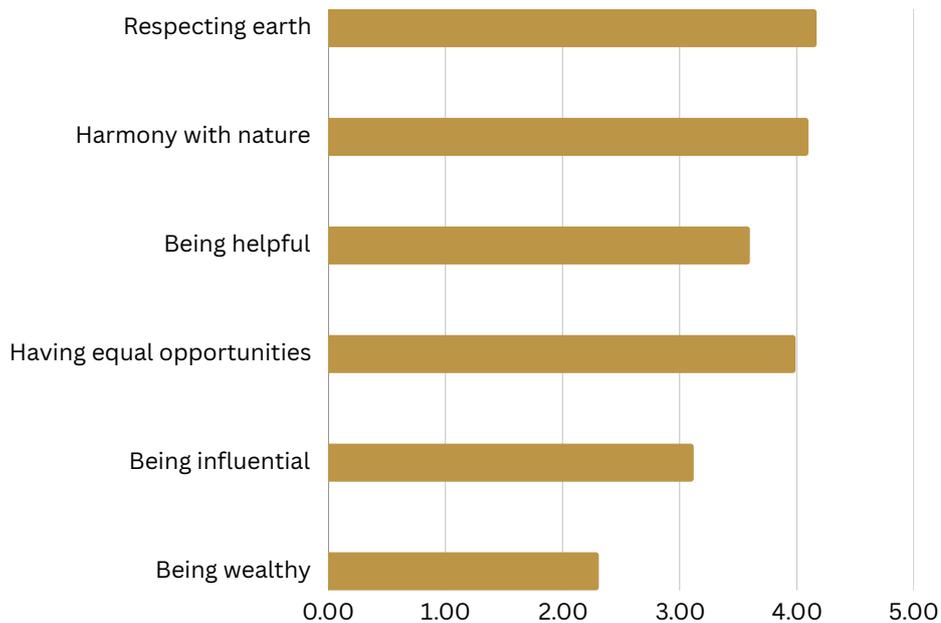
Visits in the national park were increased for approximately 20% of respondents during the pandemic and 16% of the sample stated that living near the national park was extremely or very important on how they coped with the pandemic.

Regarding behaviour of other users (visitors and locals) 85% of respondents stated that most people use the park responsibly. However, only 2% thought that everyone uses the park responsibly.

SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL & PLACE VALUES

94% of respondents stated that the area of Söderåsen National Park means a lot to them revealing a strong place attachment

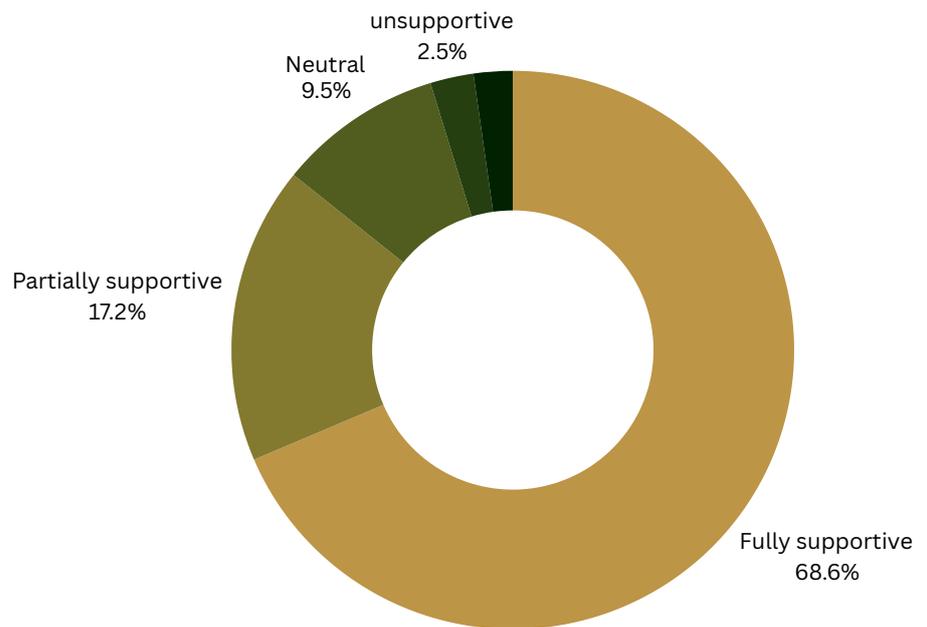
A set of questions explored social, environmental and place values of local communities in Söderåsen National Park. These questions were measured on a 5 point Likert Scale with 5 representing highest agreement. Strong environmental values were recorded with the mean score for the importance of respecting earth and living in harmony with nature being over 4. Egoistic values, such as being influential and being wealthy were considered as less important by respondents.



PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL PARK

Respondents were asked how much they agree with the existence of the Söderåsen national park. A relatively high percentage (68.8%) totally agreed with the existence the national park with 17.2% stating that they partly agree. 4.49% of respondents stated that they disagree or partially disagree with the existence of the National park. Furthermore, approximately 93% of the sample stated they fully or partially agree that the National park should be cared for and protected.

**approximately 85.8%
of participants
support the existence
of the national park**



Which groups are more supportive of the national park?

- Those who consider that the park has a positive impact on their quality of life
- Those who said that it is easy for them to responsibly use the park
- Those who have a higher trust in institutions
- Those with a high degree of importance on social equality

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

01

Increase the level of trust in management institutions

Overall a high level of support was recorded for the national park and this was strongly correlated with the level of trust in institutions. Trust in institutions was relatively moderate in our sample. Future actions could focus on increasing the level of trust towards certain institutions. Examples of doing that include information campaigns and public engagement events where different stakeholders participate in common activities .

02

Increase volunteering opportunities

Volunteerism activities that support directly the management of the park could be increased in the future. It is very positive that a large proportion of locals would be keen to support the national park through such activities. Management authorities could increase opportunities for the public to engage in a number of activities and also explore ways to include locals in decision-making processes following good governance principles.

03

Explore further options to manage overcrowding

From the results of the survey it is clear that locals are concerned about the number of visitors in the park but they are also unsure about the introduction of a parking fee. We would recommend that further consultations take place on this matter to explore solutions that would minimise the negative impacts on local communities of any future policies. Solutions such as parking permits for locals could be a viable option which would allow locals to continue enjoying the park while avoiding visitors parking in residential areas around the park in order to avoid a parking fee.

04

Increase accessibility via public transport

Several comments were received regarding accessibility issues. In particular, locals noted in the open comments that with the current public transport system it is difficult to access the park using public transport. Improvements in the public transport system could contribute also to resolving other issues noted by respondents such as traffic, noise and limited parking.

SÖDERÅSEN NATIONAL PARK

EXPLORING PEOPLE'S VIEWS OF THE NATIONAL PARK AND POLICY TOOLS TO AVOID OVERCROWDING



Contact

Institute for Global Sustainable Development,
Raphael Building, School for Cross-faculty
Studies
University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL,
United Kingdom

www.warwick.ac.uk/fidelio
fidelio@warwick.ac.uk
[@IGSD_UoW](https://twitter.com/IGSD_UoW)

This research was funded by the University of
Warwick Policy Support Fund.

The authors would like to thank the park authority of
Söderåsen national park for their feedback on draft
versions of the questionnaire and for assisting in the
distribution of the questionnaires to local residents.

