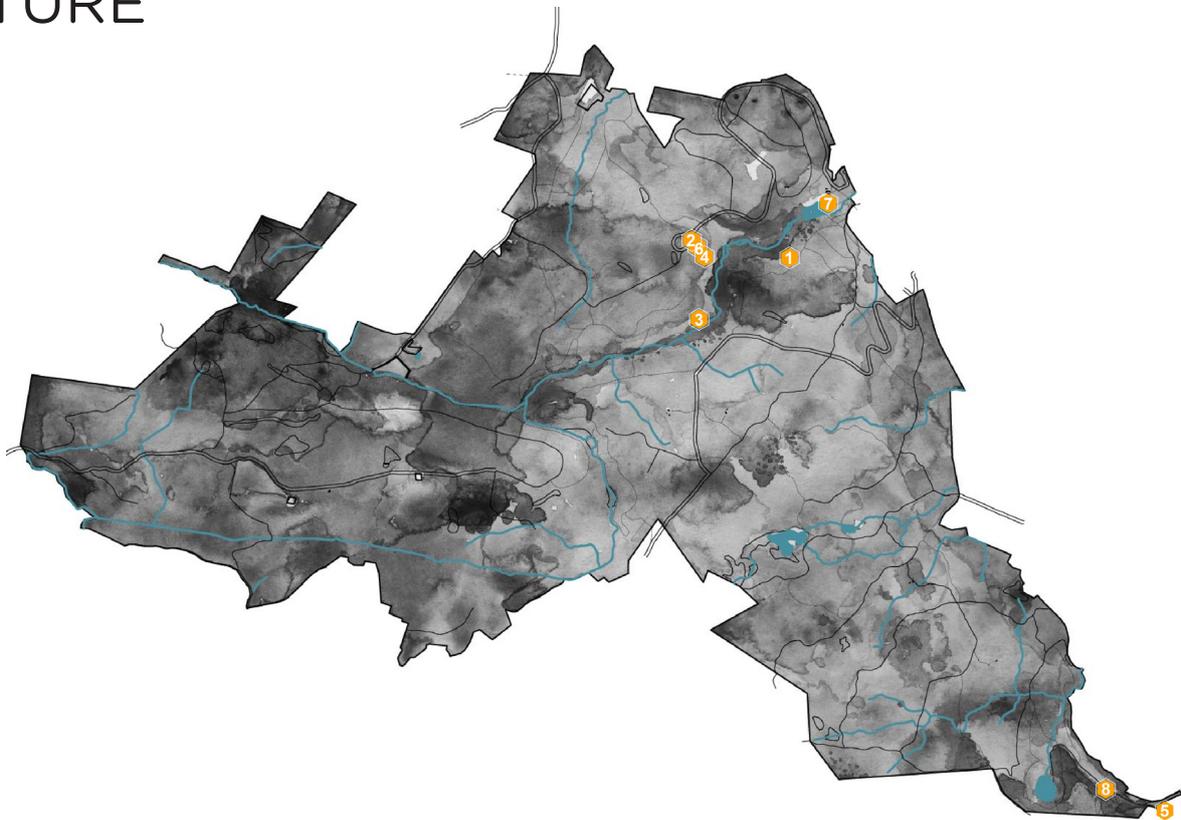


CULTURE



CULTURE HISTORY

Söderåsen has been important to humans since the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age. This is where people lived, worked, and relaxed. The population increased rapidly from the start of the 18th century until the turn of the century in 1900. And then came the tourists. They have all left their footprints on a landscape in continual change.

Today, the number inhabitants is significantly lower and nature has slowly but surely reclaimed or hidden things made by humans, but the traces remain for anyone wishing to look for them.

13 000 YEARS AGO

The edge of the ice mass runs from Kristianstad to Hallandsåsen. Söderåsen and the surrounding areas are ice-free. Flora with tundra and steppe plants such as dwarf birch and different types of osier. The people living on the coast make their way here along the Rönne River to hunt reindeer and giant deer.

11 500 YEARS AGO

(PALAEOLITHIC OR OLD STONE AGE)

A period with a stable, warm climate starts. Forests with birch and pine are spreading over Söderåsen, with moose, alpine hare, aurochs, bears and wolves. The reindeer move northwards.

9 000–6 000 YEARS AGO

Deciduous trees such as oak, elm, linden and ash come to Söderåsen. Forests start to thicken.

6 000–4 000 YEARS AGO

(NEOLITHIC OR NEW STONE AGE)

The first settlements at Söderåsen. Cattle-raising is the most important task for the settlers. They stay in one place for a few years and cultivate a small amount of grain on cut-and-burn woodland.

SEE OUTSIDE:

1. THE HJORTSPRÅNGET SETTLEMENT;
56,0347° N, 13,2475° Ö

Hjortsprånget or Hjortakniben: The name, which alludes to deer, comes from crude pre-historic hunting activities here, chasing deer over the cliff edge. The deer were simply tricked! Our ancestors were possibly hunting right here thousands of years ago. That could explain the settlement here by the cliff precipice. No trace is to be found of the settlement today.

2 000 YEARS AGO (IRON AGE)

Increasing grain cultivation provides food for the growing population. People stay longer in one place. They start clearing stones from the fields, making cairns and barrows. Around 5 000 of which can still be seen in the national park. The beech tree arrives to Söderåsen.

SEE OUTSIDE:

2. ODLINGSRÖSE - THE GROWING CAIRN;
56,0356° N, 13,2372° Ö

1 500 YEARS AGO (IRON AGE)

More efficient farming methods lead to permanent fields and settlements. Cattle-raising dominates. Söderåsen is a forest and grazing landscape. Pigs move through the sparse beech and oak woodlands. Sheep, goats, cattle and horses graze on open grassland. The ridge is used by all the farms on the plain.

1000 AD TO THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

The stone walls along the Skärån stream may be 1000 years old. They were put up to keep the grazing animals away from the meadows which previously were at the valley floor. The outlying land at the precipices and on the plateau was used for grazing and for wood and timber. This is where the lads and lasses of the village tended to their sheep, goats and cows. The transverse stone walls at the precipices of Skärålid are more recent; around 150 years old. They were set up to mark landowners' borders after a change of ownership, which meant the beginning of the end of the meadow farming and grazing age.

SEE OUTSIDE:

3. STONE WALLS; 56,030981° N, 13,238217° Ö

17TH CENTURY (SNAPPHANAR - MEN FIGHTING FOR THE DANES AFTER THE SWEDISH CONQUEST OF SCANIA)

A number of battles are thought to have been fought in the inhospitable terrain in the Skärålid valley during the wars between Denmark and Sweden during the 17th century, when Swedes fought against the Danish occupation of Scania and the guerilla forces. The Scanian people knew the terrain and were able to hide in the caves along the valley sides and could surprise the Swedes. Many sagas grew from these battles.

For example the story of one of the guerilla soldier's girls who managed to push a Swedish soldier who had tried to have his way with her, over the cliff, but his red copper helmet got caught on a branch halfway down. Now why is it called Copper Hat?

SEE OUTSIDE:

4. COPPER HAT; 56,0347° N, 13,2386° Ö

The 17th century wars led to Scania becoming part of Sweden in 1658.

18TH - 19TH CENTURY (AGRICULTURAL AGE)

The smallholder owns his house, but does a day's work for the landowner by way of rent for the land. The number of smallholdings increased from the 18th century to the end of the 19th century due to the increase in

population. The number peaked during the second half of the 19th century. Risberga's population including that of Skärålid doubled between 1800 and 1880! This was coincident with the mass emigration to the USA. Around this time many of the smallholdings and allotments were established in the barren and unattractive border areas of Söderåsen. The Occupier Act of 1918 gave the smallholder the right to buy land, but not Crown Property (the majority of the national park). This in combination with industrialisation - work in the towns, led to many smallholdings being abandoned at the beginning of the 20th century. You can see the ruins of the smallholdings.

The smallholdings that remain today are, for example, Liagåden and Dahlberg's, the rented cottages of Killahuset and Liden, as well as the museum smallholding leased by Skärålid.

THE 1890'S (START OF TOURISM)

Tourists started coming to Söderåsen from the middle of the 19th century. With the arrival of the railway in 1892, Skärålid's tourism increased significantly. The tourist hotels in Röstånga were built in 1904 (now a youth hostel), and in Skärålid two years later.

At about this time great differences were made between work and leisure. A middle class started to evolve in towns and cities, with the means to spend time and money on leisure pursuits. Nature romanticism was the height of fashion, attracting the well-heeled here to live and eat well, and to stroll around the grand natural scenery.

The arduous life on the smallholdings and difficulties in finding alternative employment led to many leaving Söderåsen for the towns and cities, and America. The sight of the townsfolk who had both the time and money to travel by train, stay at hotels and amuse themselves must have had an influence, too. Even the Danes came here. The world became smaller and more open, even for the countryfolk who had been living the same way for centuries, closely linked to nature, the animals and the seasons.

SEE OUTSIDE:

5. TOURIST HOTEL; 56,0028° N, 13,2881° Ö

1900-1950'S (ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION & LEISURE ACTIVITIES)

Now things really started to change! The railway came to Söderåsen, along with the telephone and electricity in places. The odd motor car could be seen on the roads and probably a flying machine in the skies. News-

papers with daily news and advertisements become accessible for the masses. Radio is introduced in the 1920's. We usually say that things change so quickly these days, but the decades around the turn of the 19th-20th centuries were an even greater period of revolution and explosive change for everyone. The rapid changes were a driving force behind both nature tourism and the start of research into how to best protect the cultural and natural treasures. Ethnologists such as Leonard Rääf started to compile descriptions of how people lived in the country. Kulturen, Lund's cultural and folklore museum was opened, and in Stockholm both Skansen and the Nordic Museum opened. The artist Anders Zorn and many others collected peasant objects and tried to preserve buildings and environments.

The natural and cultural values received stronger protection through a domain reservation, a forerunner to the national park, in 1937. Another means of protection through a private initiative was founded at the turn of the century by Theodor Jönsson in Tostarp, who owned the land at Kopparhatten and Forshall down to the Skärån river.. When his farm burned down in 1897 he was offered a new farmhouse in return for quarrying all the easily accessible stone in the collapsed precipices on his land. Jönsson refused, and lived with his family in the barn for two years, thereby contributing to the preservation of the collapsed precipices.

Entrepreneurs in tourism were active through the period. Skärdammen, the pond, was created by the tourist hotel owner Erik Grundström 1929-30 for beauty and fishing by damming the Alkärr marsh.

At the same time dance pavilions were to be found at Skärdammen in Skärålid, in the Nackarp valley, and also an open-air dance floor and restaurant up at Kopparhatten. They attracted many people, even ordinary folk, from far and wide. It wasn't unusual to cycle all the way from Simrishamn, Ystad and Trelleborg - over 100 km!! During the summers there was also a funfair with tombolas and firing ranges. Söderåsen is a place for both work and leisure.

SEE OUTSIDE:

6. DANCE PAVILION LOCATION; 56,0352° N, 13,2379° Ö

7. DANCE PAVILION LOCATION; 56,0380° N, 13,2514° Ö

8. DANCE PAVILION LOCATION; 56,0039° N, 13,2818° Ö

Kopparhatten got a road in 1943 and Domänverket, the National Forest Enterprise, bought the land the year after. The protective barrier was erected in 1955 following the fatal fall of a British tourist.

1960-1990'S

The post-war epoch and primarily the 1960's with private motoring, shorter working hours, TV and the welfare state meant huge negative changes in the number of tourists. The railway was closed down in 1961, the tourist hotel was demolished in 1969.

From the 1970's and onwards, cultural and nature-curious people as well as tourists started to find their way back, but in different forms. Visitors start coming as day-trippers. An open-air restaurant, the white flat-roofed Mexican brick building, was built in 1974. In 1996 the present building was erected to serve as the main entrance to the planned national park. Also during the 1990's, the majority of the land belonging to the national park was acquired.

THE 2000S.

Naturum opened in 2000 and the National Park was inaugurated in 2001.

THE FUTURE

A landscape is not forever. Nature is always changing. On its own or with the aid of humans. Imagine Söderåsen in a hundred years from now. Will it look the same as today? Or will there be few trees like in the 19th century?

Will the plants and animals that we know today still be around?

How active should we be in influencing the landscape? The flora and fauna?

Should we mow the meadows and look after the prehistoric monuments? Or let Mother Nature do her work?

FACTS SÖDERÅSEN'S NATIONAL PARK

Size: 1625 ha = around 3200 football pitches.

Nature: Hardwood deciduous forest with a predominance of beech and oak. One of northern Europe's largest areas of protected hardwood deciduous forest. Dramatic geology with, in international terms, exclusive species that are tied to hardwood deciduous forests and rift valleys. Söderåsen's national park is around 1/12 of the entire surface area of Söderåsen.

The 27th national park in the country, 28th Fulufjället 2002, 29th Kosterhavets NP 2009. One of 3 national parks in Scania, Stenshuvud 380 ha, created in 1986, Dalby Söderskog 36 ha, created in 1918.