



Life to the Taiga

- We will conduct 215 prescribed burnings on 3,400 hectares in total.
- We will perform fire-mimicking techniques on another 2,800 hectares.
- The forests are located in 165 Natura-2000 sites in Sweden and Finland.
- The restoration measures will create habitats for at least 40 fire-dependent species.
- The restoration measures will also benefit a wide range of species that need more lying and standing dead wood.
- The forests will become more open, diverse, and full of life!
- Life2Taiga is co-financed by the EU LIFE Nature programme.
- The project is coordinated by the County Administrative Board in Västmanland, Sweden.
- Life2Taiga started in the autumn of 2022, and ends in December 2028.



The responsibility for the content lies with the County Administration Boards and does not reflect the official position of the European Union.

Photo: Kjell Store and Ulrika Mogren

The project partners are:

The County Administrative Boards in Dalarna, Gotland, Gävleborg, Jämtland, Jönköping, Kalmar, Kronoberg, Norrbotten, Södermanland, Uppsala, Värmland, Västerbotten, Västernorrland, Västmanland, Västra Götaland, Örebro and Östergötland, Swedish Environmental protection Agency and Metsähallitus Parks and Wildlife Finland.



We Create Biodiversity!

There are many species in the Finnish and Swedish forests that are highly dependent on recurring forest fires. However, the undesirable and severe wildfires create more harm than good.

To help the fire-dependent species to survive, we use prescribed fires as a restoration method to create suitable habitats. We carefully select a forest area in a nature reserve where the fire will have the greatest impact and contribution to biodiversity. The prescribed burn is conducted with high safety standards.

Prescribed fires and fire-mimicking techniques are the main nature restoration methods in the EU-funded project Life2Taiga.



Join us on our journey!



Life2Taiga



life2taiga

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Life2Taiga



**We conserve and restore
unique pine forests in
Sweden and Finland**



Prescribed Burning

For thousands of years, the taiga forests have burned at regular intervals. Many species are adapted to this, to such an extent that they risk becoming extinct if there are no fires and their habitat disappears.

A prescribed fire, which is what we call the fires started for nature conservation, creates similar positive effects, just like after a natural fire.

There are several differences between a wildfire and a prescribed one, however. The prescribed fire is conducted by trained staff within a limited area. The intensity is controlled from the start until the last flame is extinguished. A wildfire can start at any time or place, and burn intensely before it goes out or is extinguished by the fire brigade.

Mimicking a Fire

In some cases, it is not possible to undertake prescribed burning safely, due to limited access for the transport of water or challenging topography.

This is when we try to mimic the effects of the fire using other techniques. We create bare soil to encourage regeneration, thin out spruce trees to achieve more open forests, or ringbark the trees to create dead wood. The techniques to mimic fire are expensive, and it often takes repeated measures to achieve the same effects as from a prescribed fire. Some species also need the heat and smoke from the fire to germinate or mate. Therefore, a fire is preferable, but the second-best option can be to create forest structures with these alternative techniques.

Creating Life in the Taiga

The preparation for a prescribed fire is started several months before the fire is ignited. The site is carefully selected and studied to ensure the best possible impact on the landscape. The objectives are specified, such as what proportion of the conifer trees we want to affect.

A prescribed burning is performed on a day when the wind, ground and air humidity are favourable. It cannot be too moist, nor too dry. Optimal weather conditions are difficult to predict, so we need to be ready and prepared to act when the conditions are favourable.

The borders of the site to be burned are clearly defined. Water reservoirs, pumps and hoses are in place during the whole burning process. Around ten people are spread out to ensure that the fire does not spread to beyond the borders.

The fire is ignited along narrow lines within the defined area. The fire burns slowly against the wind direction. One flame line is allowed to burn out before the next one is ignited. In this way, we can steer the range, speed, and intensity of the fire.

When the last flame has burned out, we guard the site both day and night to make sure that the fire does not start up again. We remain in the area until no smoke has been sighted for three days and only then do we remove the hoses.

The site is black and sooty after the fire. Spruce and smaller pine trees usually die, whilst the larger pines survive. The ground becomes green again the following year.

Western Taiga

The coniferous forest belt around the northern hemisphere is called taiga. In Sweden and Finland this habitat type is called Western Taiga.

The taiga forest is dominated by spruce and pine, with some deciduous trees such as birch and aspen. A natural old coniferous forest, that is not impacted by forestry, has living trees in several age classes and dead trees in various stages of decay.

Untouched natural forests have decreased in Sweden and Finland over the past 150 – 200 years, due to commercial forestry and the fact that wildfires are both discovered and extinguished quickly.