

# Dialogue on future water resource management

- a communication and  
idea generating project





# Project premises

- New water resource management under development, great need for new forms of knowledge.
- Lack of discussion around overarching issues.
- Lack of constructive criticism of the new water policies.
- At least 5 MISTRA programmes focused on water issues will soon come to an end (all initiated by natural scientists). What have we learned?
- Bring the water issue and the forms of research and knowledge transfer to the fore in Sweden.



“The research shall be of importance for finding solutions to important environmental problems and for a sustainable development of the society.”

Part of MISTRA's  
statutes



# Project key objectives

1. Exchange of knowledge and experience between researchers and society's actors around selected water-related problems.
2. Identification of obstacles and success factors in order to solve water-related environmental problems.
3. Test and develop the Dialogue method's potential for working with sustainable management of natural resources.



# Main activities

- Interviews - the history
- Compilation of water projects
- Process-driven dialogue sessions
- Dialogue forum on the Internet
- Conference on future water resource management (target: policymakers and politicians)
- Summary of the results



# The dialogue workshop's objectives

- Creation of capacity at individual level, co-learning, and (hopefully) develop a common will to act.
- Try to bring up new ways of framing the problem.



# Three dialogue workshops - three themes

**D1:** Detailed picture of current situation, common problem definition, linkages to causes

**D2:** Obstacles to and possibilities for sustainable water resource management

**D3:** Research and measures





# Eutrophication as an example

- Concerns many actors and authorities at different levels in society.
- The handling of the problem conflicts with other environmental and societal goals.
- Highly researched area, at least in a natural science perspective – but have we accumulated the right knowledge?
- Still no solution in sight for the Baltic Sea...Is it due to a lack of knowledge, lack of action or a lack of political determination?





VÄRFÖR FORTSKRIDER  
ÖVERGÄNGENEN DAG TROTS  
STORA INSATSER INOM  
MÅNGA ÅR?

MÅLÄTANDE

TRÄFFAR

BOENDE

MKT POSITION  
IN I SYSTEMET  
VIA ANDRESMÅL

JORDBRUK  
(POSTER)

KÄRLEK LUTNING  
ID, ENKELT  
I SÖCKELAS  
REGIONEN

Omnya 20  
betala priset

Varför har  
vi inte  
fått tillräckligt  
med pengar?

Vi vill  
att...

Att göra  
en bra  
jobb...

Att göra  
en bra  
jobb...

TYCKER  
INFORMATION

BILISM  
TÄRTOR

UTSLÄTTA  
POSTER

FÖR LITE  
KUNSKAP OM  
FOTOKÄLLOR

Att göra  
en bra  
jobb...

SÖKS  
SÖC

Siffrorna  
sitt lästa  
i kartan

För att  
göra en  
bra jobb...

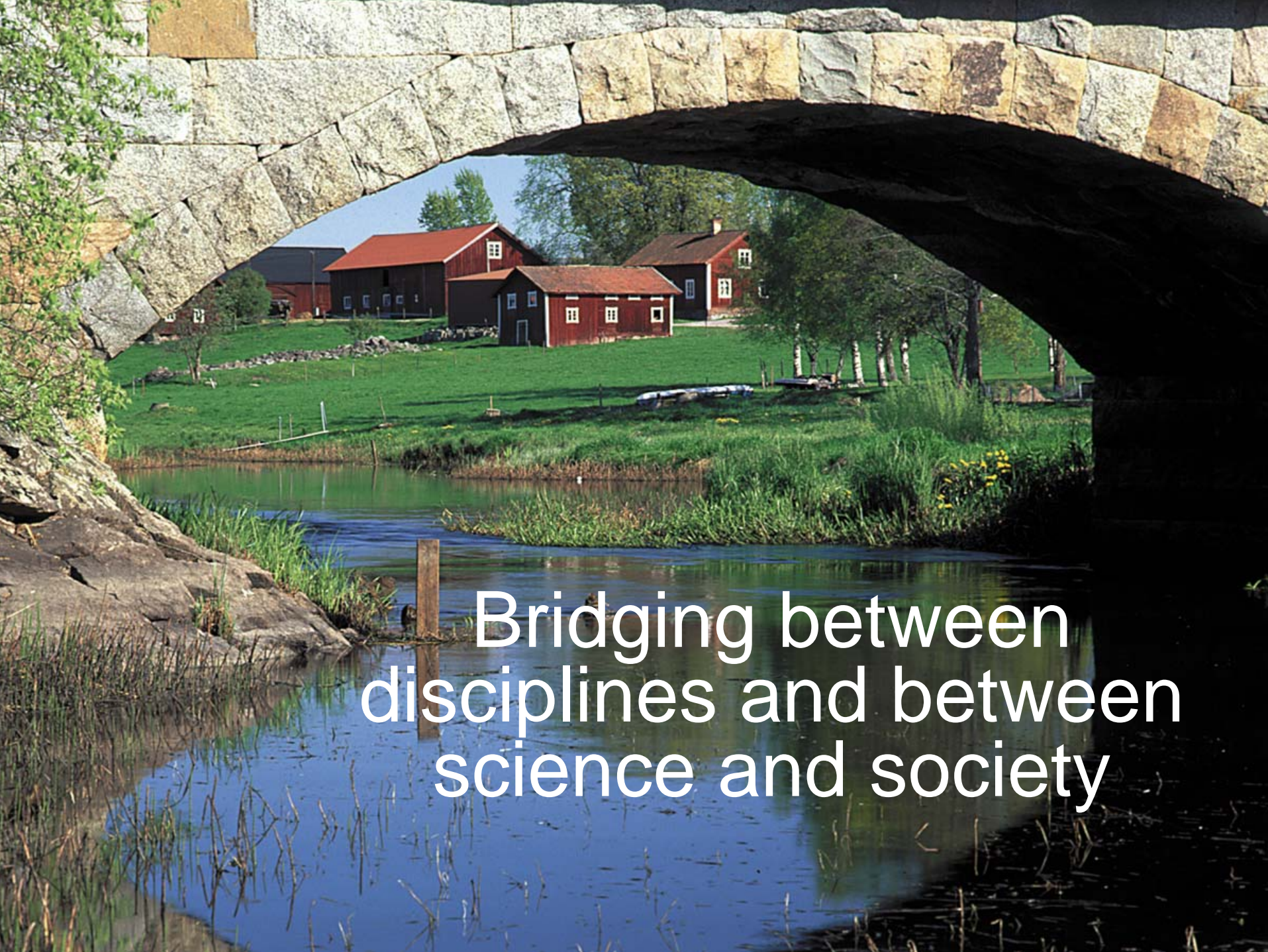
Kunde  
se till att...

En bra  
jobb...

Målsättningar  
Dokumentation  
Med Anders  
Barn  
Forskning  
Historisk pers  
Institutionell samarb

DPS: R



A stone arch bridge spans a river, framing a view of a farm with red buildings and green fields. The text "Bridging between disciplines and between science and society" is overlaid on the water in the foreground.

Bridging between  
disciplines and between  
science and society

# Building bridges

## Objectives

### We created a “valley of death”:

- Swedish water resource management undergoing major changes
- The eutrophication problem – complex, difficult to solve
- Very diverse groups of participants

### We tested tools for bridge-building:

- Dialogue methods; facilitators
- Committed, competent participants
- Good examples to be inspired by
- Pleasant settings for the sessions





# Reflections on project results



**What is needed to handle  
these complex  
environmental problems?**

**Is ecosystem-based adaptive  
management *Utopia* or a  
possibility?**





# *Obstacles to and Possibilities for Sustainable Water Resource Management in Sweden*

- Institutional premises
- Politics, economy och uncertainty
- Communication and knowledge transfer



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- Institutional premises
- Politics, economy och uncertainty
- **Communication and knowledge transfer**



# Communication and knowledge transfer

## Obstacles

- Difficult to communicate around more overarching, complex water issues
- Few possibilities for common learning
- Few incentives for researchers to engage in knowledge transfer
- Policy makers and stakeholders have no interest and no time to scrutinise peer review publications
- Experts and researchers disagree on problems and solutions - lack of trust
- The value of good quality water is difficult to define and establish - democratic process?



# Communication and knowledge transfer

## Suggested measures

- Develop new ways for knowledge transfer - multi level, cross sectors.
- Establish regional think tanks with a project-oriented function.
- Disseminate positive examples.
- Provide condensed knowledge for stakeholders, a few clear messages.
- Make use of different types of knowledge in the research process as well as in policy making.
- Bring research closer to the practitioners.



Visions for the  
future...



# Communication a key element

- We have a gigantic task ahead of us – managing our natural resources and handling complex environmental problems – communicating between different players at different levels in society.
- We must become better at our forms of communication and how we handle different below-the-surface values, the hopelessness of not being sure of what we are doing.
- Adaptive management is a possibility, but it means in part that we have to constantly re-assess, and sometimes turn back, which can be extremely painful.



# Research that will make a difference

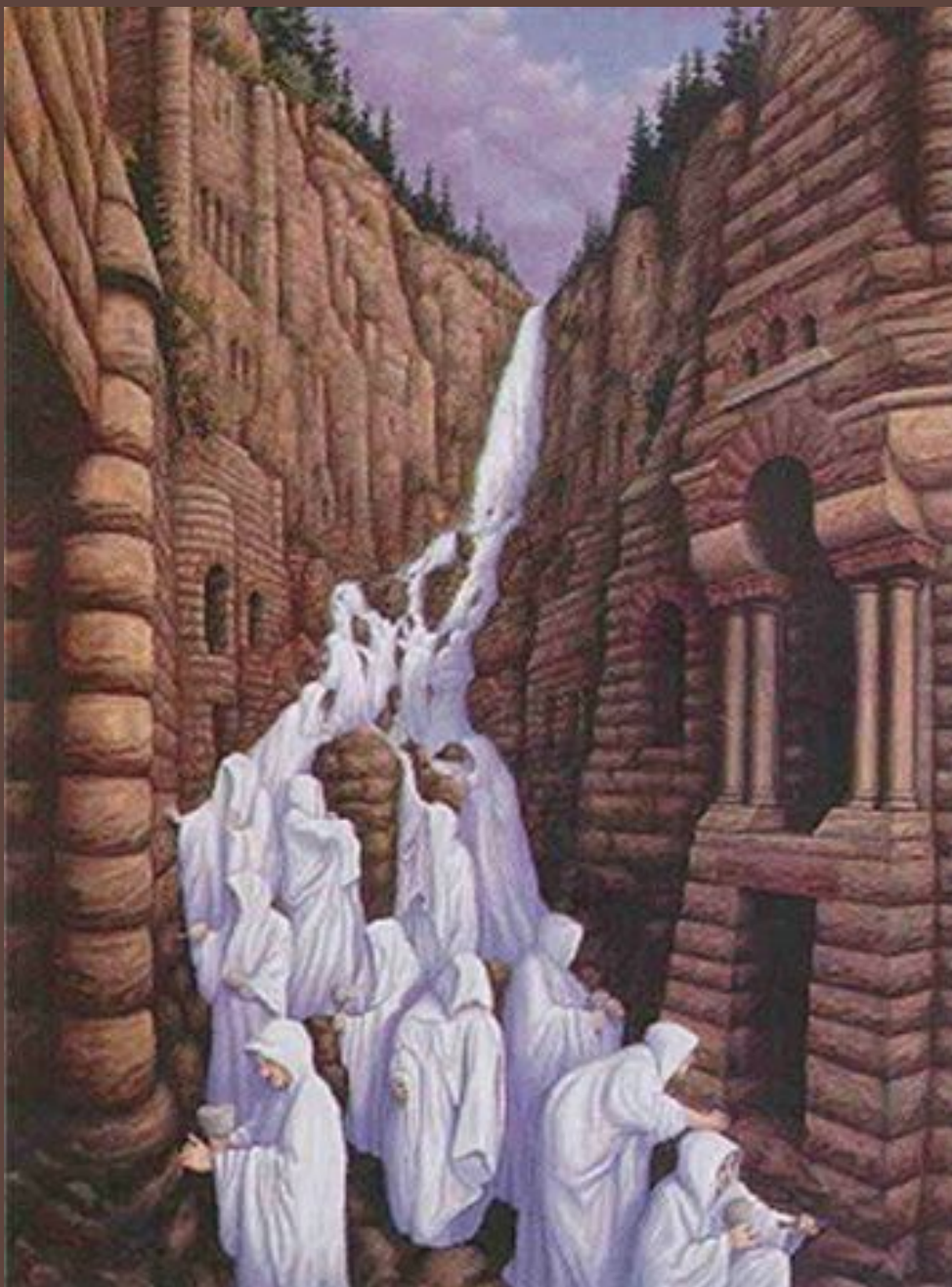
- Researchers must be rewarded for turning their results into something useful to society.
- Better co-ordination between research and practice when the research questions are drawn up and during the whole research process.
- Practitioners must understand better what research can deliver and what it cannot.
- Researchers must become better at communicating their results but there must also be interested recipients who have the time and ability to understand the results.
- Forums are needed where researchers and those concerned can meet and communicate on a long term basis.



“The processes of generating knowledge must be better connected, offering links between research, practice and politics. A new knowledge culture is emerging and it is urgently needed in order to solve the complex environmental problems ahead of us!”







## Visions





