

# Mörrum River Water Council – safeguarding our water

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*(this interview is made in Swedish and translated)*

***The Mörrum River Water Council area starts in Korsberga and ends down in Karlshamn and the basin has a width of 3369km<sup>2</sup>. The water system is a home to plenty of living creatures like fish, crayfish, mussels and birds. The stream is over 183 km long and over 90% of the watercourses are in Kronoberg County. The overall goal is to increase the water status from 2015-2027 and to achieve good water status***

Next up is an interview with Nils Posse, who is Chairman of the organization.



*One of many beautiful water courses in mörrum river*

## **I was wondering what it is exactly a water council does?**

”A water council is an organization of interest for those who have interest in a specific water area or basin. This is also a support for water authorities to increase engagement and commitment to that specific water. Then it's up to us to create an engagement and to collect the knowledge and interest among the water. In a water council are all the included counties members. They have the interest in water, everything from recreation for their citizens to emissions and everyone who is risking to contaminate the water is in something called a recipient control.

You take samples continuously and look at if and how they are changing and how often. Then there are industries, campings, farmers, foresters. Everything living is affecting the water somehow, even those who live in the city, the second they flush the toilet. We have many members, municipalities, companies, private persons and other of interest. But generally water

is our most important supply and without water there wouldn't be any life. And then there is so much roundabout. You are close to a lake here and the water in there continues to the River Mörrum. There is also a lot of growth, animals and bugs and everything, so yeah there is a lot that revolves around water."

### **How many members does the Mörrum River water council have?**

"That was a really good question, I should know that. Maybe around 40-50?"

### **Which counties are members?**

There are three counties that are in, Jönköping, with Vetlanda municipality, then there is Kronoberg with Uppvidinge, Växjö, Alvesta and Tingsryd municipalities, and then Blekinge with Olofström and Karlshamn municipalities.

### **How do you finance everything?**

Partly with contribution from water authorities that stimulates and invokes interest around water subjects, but we also have a part time work that administrate and take care of the technical administration. But we do also split some work up considering the size of the subject.

### **What is the most important thing you do?**

We take advantage of the interests, arrange expeditions and water hikes. We have annual meetings and place them in different ways in different places.

As said, we're an unpolitical organization and a referral instance, if there's any questions that concerns the water in our area, we have to answer.

### **There's a lot about the global warming and climate change right now, have you noticed any difference on the water in the last few years?**

There have been very radical weather conditions and faster fluctuations. For example, it has been very, very dry for two summers, and very wet for a short time. If you would spread out the fluctuations it wouldn't be so much.

There was both flood and drought risk in almost the same year. That is what we see when it concerns the water.

### **How have the fishes in River Mörrum managed this?**

The fishes are pretty good at coping. The biggest risk of death for the fishes is mainly if there is lack of oxygen. It can be after winters, when there is no circulation in the water. Also, if there are very dry summers when the water stands still. That leads to a rich algal bloom which causes fish death, but generally we have healthy water. Our goal is to have a good control of our water and good status on the water in our area.

What shines red around our area are the small lakes around Växjö.

Partly because there is a very small flow and very bad circulation. A hot summer it evaporates more up in the air than it comes streaming, so there is no mix. The heavily contaminated bottoms emit phosphorus, that is why Växjö municipality makes big actions trying to improve

the quality of the water and the balance of fishes so there is enough of predator fishes and whitefish which is the predator's food. If there's too much of one, it will be wrong. You lock the phosphorus on the bottom so it won't leak out in the water. That has been a significant difference. When I was younger you couldn't even see through the surface at all, and now we are talking about one meter transparency, so it have improved!

**In Sweden, we are spoiled with healthy water for unlimited amounts, how do you look at the future and our access to healthy freshwater?**

"Water, as I said earlier, is our absolute most important victual. We *are* spoiled and have much water, but we waste a lot of it, so all water we use is healthy, fresh drinking water. We do a lot of things and use water when we actually don't even need it - as when we wash our car and flush for example, so we are spoiled. The most important source for our drinking water is the groundwater. It doesn't come from River Mörrum, but from deeper down in the ground where it's naturally filtered, stored and purified.

In the past Växjö took its water from Helgasjön, but it's very exposed and partly they need much chemicals to clean it and then the algae obstruct the pipes. Since a couple of years back we have the groundwater which comes from Bergaåsen, located outside Ljungby municipality.

It is of course not inexhaustible, but it is much needed before it's empty."

**If there would be any problem with the groundwater, would it be possible to take water from the watercourses next to it?**

"Yes, of course it would be possible. If it wouldn't be possible to get hold of groundwater, which it always is, it would require pretty much chemicals."

"We are very lucky here in the North and we maybe need to start thinking over our behaviour and economize with the water.

I think that we will have good access to water, anyway."