



## SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL POLICY

Do the North organises self-guided and guided kayaking adventures in the Saint Anna & Gryt Archipelagoes of Sweden. It's a truly remarkable area with thousands of beautiful islands in a maze and wild camping permitted anywhere. We have been in business for fourteen years, and we love that we can make this amazing landscape accessible to our guests, hand in hand with boosting our rural economy.

We feel it is our duty as an operator to go above and beyond, ensuring that neither our operation nor our guests damage or disturb the area. Eco-friendly practices and protecting our precious nature have always been at the core of our philosophy. Moreover, it is our mission to support the local community in any way we can. We have a great collaboration with landowners, small businesses and other locals, and use a wide range of local services and products, both for our own operation and through recommendations to our guests.

### **Environmental**

The very nature of our trips means minimal impact on the environment. The only energy used for several days is physical strength, a couple of batteries for LED torches and gas for the cooker. Water usage is also minimal, only drinking and cooking water. We supply eco-friendly dish liquids, shampoo & soap, the sea is the only place to wash up until communal showers at the end.

We encourage our guests to use public transportation to our closest hub for communications Norrköping, either shuttles from the airport or train. We offer a collective transfer service from Norrköping to Saint Anna, but our guests also have the option to travel by public transportation (it is however a remote area and it's not very practical).

Our guests receive detailed information in regards to minimising their impact on the environment. We instruct, both verbally in a briefing and written in our Travellers Code of Conduct and Guide Book, to strictly follow the codes of "the Right of Public Access", that regulate wild camping in Sweden. In our area, that especially means fire protection, observance of bird sanctuaries and not disturbing wildlife, and being respectful to the lands of farmers and locals who own and utilise some of the islands. Although open fires are permitted in the area, in leu of the destruction fires cause every year, we choose to discourage our guests from fire. The exception is our culinary adventures, which take place outside the dangerous months for wild fires and under supervision of our experienced guides.

The County Administrative Board of Östergötland is the national government representative office in the region. They're responsible for guidelines and information concerning environmental and animal protection in Saint Anna. They provide info boards all over the area for a deeper understanding of ecosystems and geology. We encourage our guests to really take the time learn more about the fascinating natural processes that created the area and this unique brackish marine ecosystem.

Two of the areas our kayakers frequent, St. Anna–Missjö and Kvadöfjärden–Torrö are Marine Protected Areas in accordance with the Helsingfors Convention (HELCOM). As a step in the process of living up to HELCOM's requirements, a collaborative plan "Acta S:t Anna" was developed concerning protection of the ecological processes of the coast, archipelago and sea of Saint Anna.

The Administrative Council for HELCOM comprise landowners and representatives from the County Administrative Board of Östergötland. They work to follow and further develop the guidelines presented in "Acta S:t Anna", and invite all concerned parties in the area to discussions on sustainability and protection. As a kayaking tour operator we participate in these meetings, along with other kayak rental companies, camp sites, restaurants, the coast guard etc. We focus especially on sustainable tourism and fire protection, and Do the North supports a total fire ban in this very sensitive environment (fires allowed only at permitted permanent sites).

We have been a member of the Swedish Ecotourism Association since 2006 and our philosophy is very much in accordance with sustainable tourism and supporting local economies. We are a few operators in the area, who this year are coming together to start up a foundation for preserving the environment of Saint Anna and improving facilities and information in the area. This collaboration will make a contribution per kayaker to the foundation. We are also organising a rubbish picking/movie night in late August this year at one of the heavily visited points of interest in Saint Anna. It will be a great way to bring locals and kayakers together and clean one of the most beautiful spots in the archipelago.

We are virtually paperless. We market ourselves exclusively online and have an advanced backend system with digital invoices and payments that interface with our accounting software, consolidated

food orders sent directly to the supermarket etc. We recycle and compost all our waste, and instruct our guests to separate their rubbish and use available recycling stations. Over the years we have learnt to use only absolute top quality kayaking and camping equipment. It's costly, but the life cycle of these products surpasses lower quality gear manyfold. Also, quality outdoor brands often follow strict environmental policies and support wilderness preservation projects. We actively search out manufacturers with an ethos of sustainability and fair working conditions. We use many Swedish brands, for example tents from Hilleberg, cookers from Trangia, staff clothing from Houdini.

## **Economic**

Our mission is to support the local economy as much as we possibly can. There are only a few suppliers and establishments in the area and our guests make a substantial contribution to a number of local companies, most of them small seasonal family businesses. We encourage our guests to visit restaurants, kiosks, buy smoked fish etc. and provide useful details about opening hours and services. Instead of having our own boat, we utilise local boat taxi services for solving problems with broken equipment, health issues etc. Our culinary adventure use almost exclusively locally sourced food, for example lamb from one of the islands, fish from the local fisherman, vegetables from the mainland.

We also bring revenue and employment opportunities to a few businesses in the towns close to Saint Anna. The supermarket in Söderköping supplies food for hundreds of guests every year. Our food order includes many organic products. The majority of our guests stay the night before their trip in Norrköping, resulting in many bookings for our collaborating partners, a locally owned hostel and hotel.

Do the North has a small close-knit crew, we live and work together in Saint Anna for the season. We find that a blend of local staff and foreign outdoors enthusiasts makes for the best all-rounded team. Every season we go on several photo excursions together and collaborate on other outdoors projects.

We only employ local guides who've spent years exploring the area and feel a strong duty to protect it. We prefer local drivers who with enthusiasm can share their knowledge and love of the area. At the base our other staff members pack, maintain and clean equipment, in conjunction with utilising outdoor skills like photography, wild cooking and foraging for research and marketing purposes. We advertise locally for crew members on the main Swedish work agency "Arbetsförmedlingen".

## **Social**

Saint Anna is steeped in history and culture, and our Guide Book includes lots of interesting places to visit. There are two projects in the area for historical preservation, the Archipelago Museum at Tyrislöt

and the old school and seal processing factory on Harstena. We strongly encourage our guests to visit, learn more and donate.

As most of our trips are self-guided, we give our guests detailed information about the nature, history and culture of the area. We make sure that even without a guide, our guests will treat the environment and locals with the utmost respect.

We focus especially on instilling a sense of thankfulness in our guests for the exceptional privilege to roam free around these islands. We emphasise that all the islands are either privately owned or protected nature reserves, and being a guest here means extreme respectfulness towards land, animals and humans. We advise our guests of great ways to give back by supporting local businesses.

## Goals

Our most significant negative impact on the environment is transportation. By offering a wider range of products we're able to channel transport to certain days, thereby using our collective pick-up services more efficiently. By branching out more towards the northern European market, instead of mainly the UK, we reduce air transport in favour of trains or cars.

We're also actively meeting with local landowners, finding ways to improve our practices in accordance with their concerns, as well as communicating our philosophy and clarifying what information our guests receive before roaming free. As a step in this collaboration we're starting up the foundation mentioned above, and organising clean-up days on the islands.

## Questions, input or complaints

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