

# Supporting community governance in boreal forests by introducing participatory GIS through Action Research\*

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We use the case of Vilhelmina Upper Forest Common (VUFC) in northern Sweden to test whether the introduction of a Participatory Geographic Information System (PGIS) can increase shareholder engagement. We take an *Action Research* approach to introduce a PGIS as a tool to help with forest management plans, and as a tool for communication between management and the shareholders. We found that the board and shareholders were initially resistant to adopting PGIS. However, continued collaboration and engagement seem to have encouraged the board to be more pro-active in their communication with the shareholders, and also more transparent regarding the management/governance of VUFC. We also find increasing interest among previously passive shareholders to engage in their forest common's management.

**Key words:** community forestry, Sweden, technology adoption, forest governance, participatory GIS

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