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Climate Change Communication and Adaptation in Arctic Protected Areas

Oulanka National Park, Finland. Photo: Mostphotos

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METSÄHALLITUS
FORSTSTYRELSEN
MEAHCIRÁÐÐEHUS

Reisa National Park

Visitor Centre Reisa National Park

Halti

Statsforvalteren i Troms og Finnmark

County Governor of Troms and Finnmark

Project duration: March 2024-December 2026

THE GLOBAL GOALS

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Climate Changes in Arctic Protected Areas

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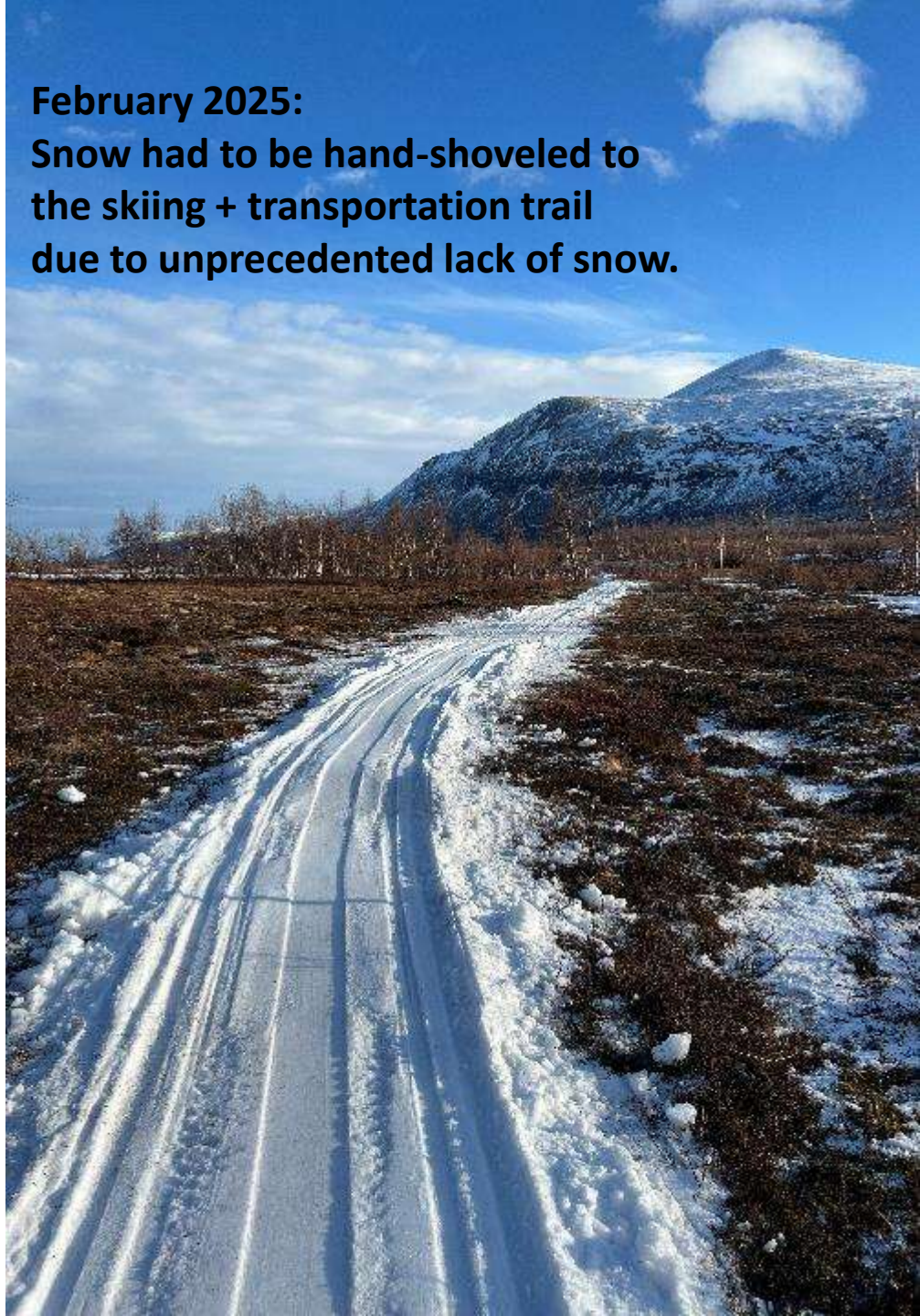
Warmer winters

Ice from melting snow on the main hiking trail in Abisko National Park, Sweden.



February 2025:
Snow had to be hand-shoveled to the skiing + transportation trail due to unprecedented lack of snow.

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Effects on ecosystems and species

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Other effects of Climate Changes in Arctic Protected Areas

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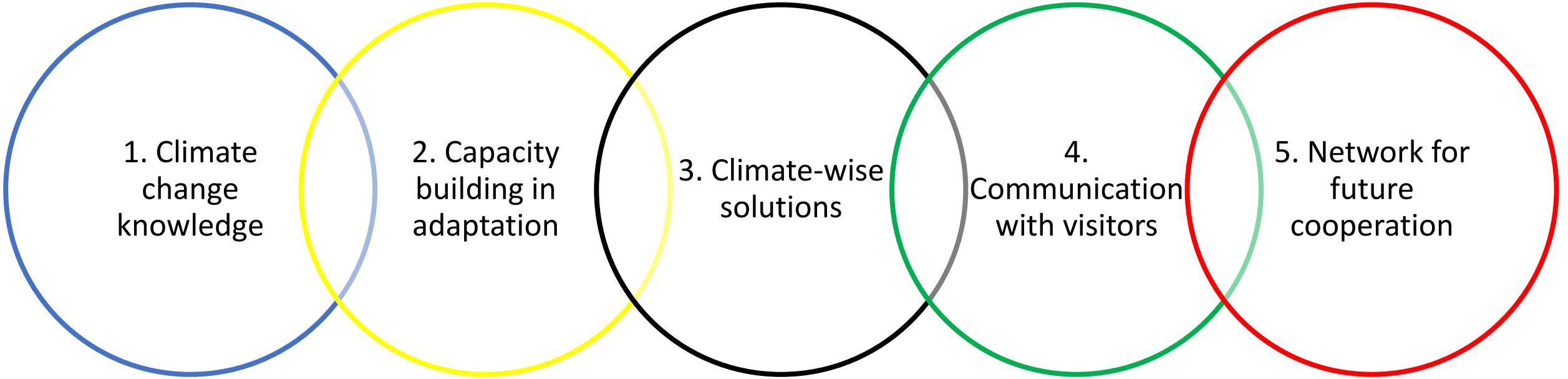

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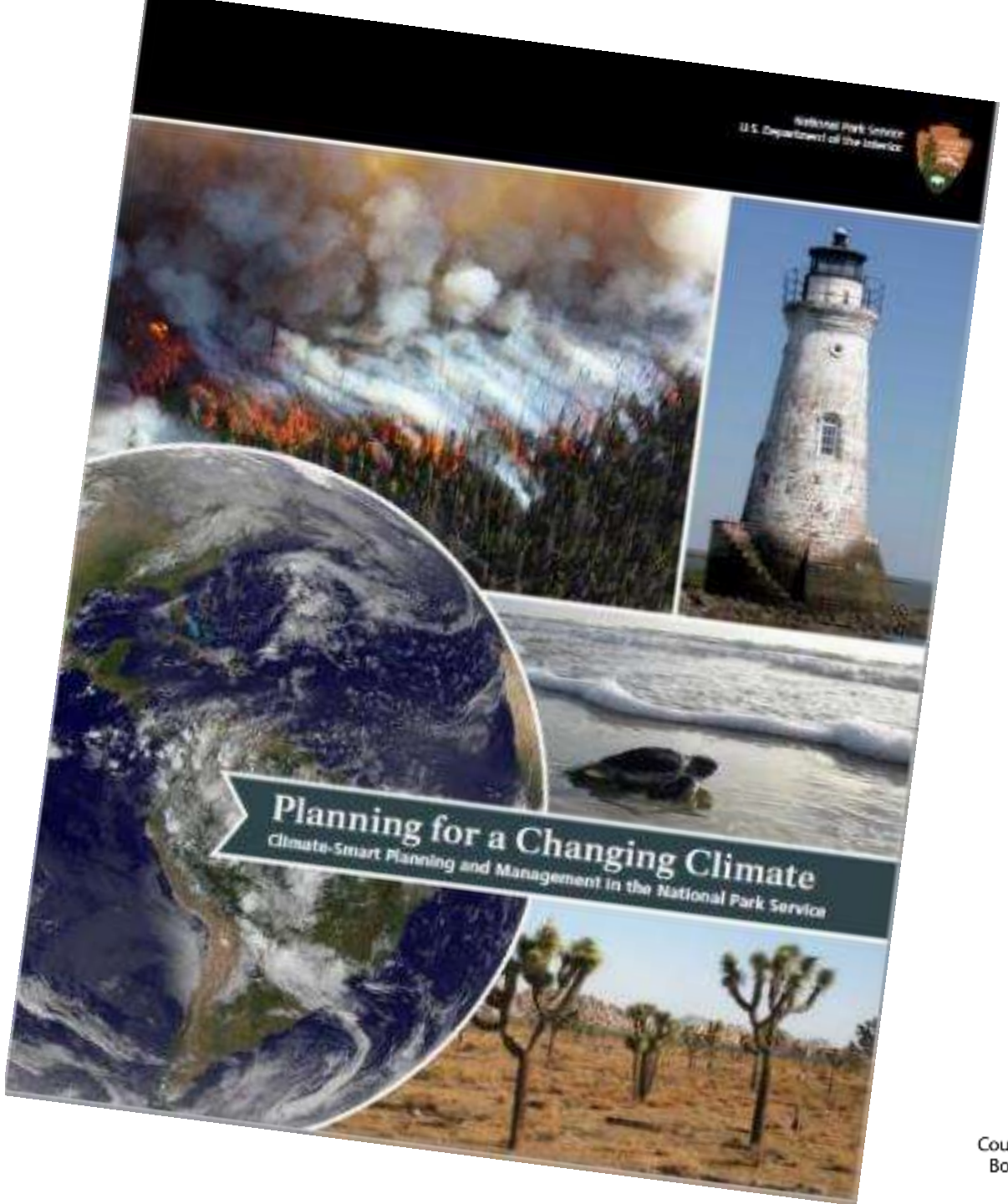
Planning for a Changing Climate



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Four cornerstones

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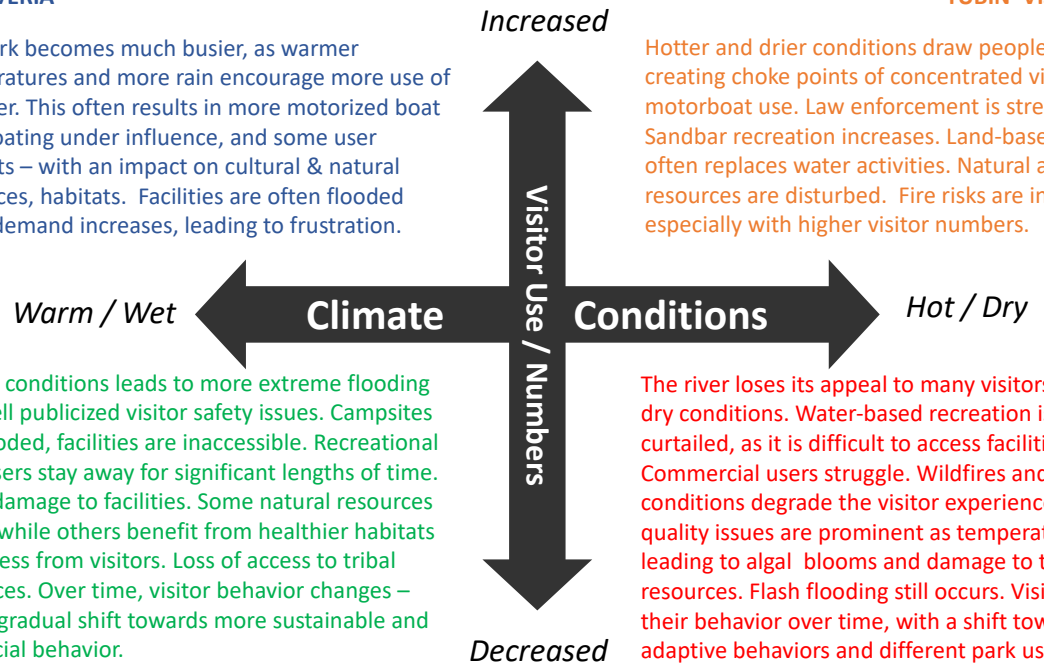
How do we plan for an uncertain future?

WILD RIVERIA

The park becomes much busier, as warmer temperatures and more rain encourage more use of the river. This often results in more motorized boat use, boating under influence, and some user conflicts – with an impact on cultural & natural resources, habitats. Facilities are often flooded while demand increases, leading to frustration.

TUBIN' VISITOR CRISIS

Hotter and drier conditions draw people to the river, creating choke points of concentrated visitor and motorboat use. Law enforcement is stressed. Sandbar recreation increases. Land-based recreation often replaces water activities. Natural and cultural resources are disturbed. Fire risks are increased, especially with higher visitor numbers.



SWEPT AWAY

Wetter conditions leads to more extreme flooding and well publicized visitor safety issues. Campsites are flooded, facilities are inaccessible. Recreational park users stay away for significant lengths of time. Some damage to facilities. Some natural resources suffer, while others benefit from healthier habitats and stress from visitors. Loss of access to tribal resources. Over time, visitor behavior changes – with a gradual shift towards more sustainable and beneficial behavior.

TRICKLE DOWN ECONOMICS

The river loses its appeal to many visitors under hot, dry conditions. Water-based recreation is severely curtailed, as it is difficult to access facilities. Commercial users struggle. Wildfires and smoky conditions degrade the visitor experience. Water quality issues are prominent as temperatures rise, leading to algal blooms and damage to treaty resources. Flash flooding still occurs. Visitors change their behavior over time, with a shift toward adaptive behaviors and different park uses.

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Planning for Climate Change - Abisko National Park

- Workshops with stakeholders
- Information about the park and about the future climate.
- Building out scenarios
- Reviewing management goals
- Brainstorming and evaluating adaptation strategies
- Deeper analyses of chosen resources.
- Result -> Climate-informed management plan.

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Some final words

- Adaptation is urgent at all levels – EU – National – Local
- Monitoring and Research – more important than ever
- We don´t know everything but we can still prepare
- Collaboration and Communication are key
- Different “Drivers of Change” often interact
- Scenario planning can help us prepare
- Worst case scenarios happen. Prepare sooner than later.

”You can´t predict the future, but you can prepare for it”

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