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Reconstructing the original World Heritage

Mining activity represents one of the most severe human impacts that have been undertaken in history. The environment around the Falun World Heritage is a good example of this and bares much witness of the heavy impact from all parts involved in mining activity. These remnants are though important in what today built up the World Heritage environment and the heritage is today primarily presented through historical periods, especially the 16th and 17th century environment.

But the activities around what become the Falun Copper mine and its surroundings have a history going back at least 1300 years. In the interdisciplinary project “Falun above from Falun under”, one main goal is to understand and reconstruct the environment and human-nature interaction in the area during the earliest time, i.e. prehistorically time and how the environmental surroundings was before any major human impact on the environment. One part is to reconstruct the landscape in its original setting.

The Falun World Heritage is mainly presented as a cultural heritage, but is as preserved mining area definitely a cultural-natural world heritage. The natural resources and environment are the basics of the cultural development and the physical environment of the area today and is much a result of unsustainable use of natural resources during more than 1000 years. Understanding the more or less undisturbed landscape of the area also gives clues to understand the human behavior in natural landscapes and how the human-nature interaction develops to its present status. The result is what today is protected as world heritage and new understanding of the landscape presents many other stories about the world heritage.

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