

EVENTS in Chronological Order

1775 First attempt were made to close off Söderfjärden from the sea.

1776 first dam (to regulate the water level) was constructed.

1776 everybody agreed to the dam until 1793

1821 Sundom suggested the Riddardiket, the main ditch, and then the cooperation ended

Länsisulva and Munsala suffered less floods, their properties were higher

Riddardiket was low and narrow and not very effective to prevent floods

This problem was twice in trial.

1891 governor decided, that all landowners around Söderfjärden are responsible to solve problem.

1907 Karl Schogster (from Lindman) presented the idea of planning the pump station.

1909 Mauritz von Essen had visited in Netherlands and seen a big draining system in use.

He knew Söderfjärden already and hunted seabirds there.

Von Essen was politically Finnish minded although he was swedish speaking and a nobleman.

1912 von Essen presented plans and caused disagreement.

three plans were ready. Länsisulva was against to pump station and and wanted a natural draining. (Probably reason was costs).

Several years Riddardiket was cleaned and demanded a lot of work.

In a meeting earlier 1919 there was a proposal to build a dam use windmill pumps, but 1919's meeting ended in chaos and the committee ended its work.

1.6.1919 August Holmström, a young farmer from Sundom was driving a pastor from Solf, Alfred Theodor Appelberg, to church. He asked if the pastor would be kind and write a call to meeting concerning draining. Pastor was very interested and helpful and promised to take part in the next meeting.

16.6.1919 In the meeting pastor led the speech and made the protocol. There were 27 farmers from Sundom, 2 from Munsala but not any from Sulva. The decision to make a pump station and drain and hire a man to lead the work was made with 10% minority of Söderfjärden farmers. The meeting also decided to ask for financing from the state. In the "committee" to lead the process was chosen August Holmström, the pastor and 4 farmers.

Pastor Appelberg's son, Theodor Sigfrid Applberg, was a land surveying engineer and knew a lot of draining. (and very dedicated man for the draining project, according to Ingmar Holmström the son of August Holmström)

Most farmers in Sundom and Munsala were voluntary to take part in the work.

Länsisulva was active in opposition. The work leader was marking area with landpoles and they were disappearing. 1923 dam was broken and water filled the 500 hectare area and grain sowed in autumn was spoiled. Police was not active, nobody was found guilty and newspapers didn't write much of this.

In the trial later one person was charged.

1924 opposition (all Länsisulva, but one farmer) demanded in a trial to stop the draining work and put the area in the state it was in 1919. The decision was put off twice, but later the situation was changed.

1925 the dam was broken again. The committee was under high pressure, many farmers had taken private loans.

To get rid of the opposition forced to make a new law. Von Essen was then working in the Agricultural Government. He was discussing with the agricultural ministry. The new law was ready – 19.5.1925, "if more than 2 participants wants to develop farming area, 2/3 majority is demanded in decision. *Lex Söderfjärden*

1926 a group of noisy opposition farmers came to August Holmström and demanded to give all the documents concerning draining. August Holmström succeeded in leading the rebellers away. Threatening continued.

1926 Court settled the complain and lawsuit (from 1924)

1926 Pumping station started work and enlarged land dry.

Malax farmers were still in opposition, but it was solved in the trial 1927.

The agricultural government was now leading the project. The opposition's attitude was fading away little by little. The work was starting again. The state funded 0,3mmk Sundom, 0,45mmk Yttersundom, 0,25mmk Länsisulva.

The draining increased the farming area from 1430 hectares to 2300 hectares.

1927 Söderfjärden became dry.

In 1930'ies August Holmström was exited, when he was waiting local farmers to pay their share of the costs. First there were nobody. At the end of the day farmers wives come one by one. Then later also farmer were coming to pay.

Later the strongest opposition man from Länsisulva came and asked August Holmström for forgiveness. He invited Holmström to his home. At his home, the man was sitting and wearing a suit. Sign of reconciliation and recognition of Holmström's hard work.

The biggest advantage for local people was that strong inflation in 30'ties payed their private loans for draining work.

1938 Söderfjärden produced 60% exported Finnish Timothy seed.

1978 geological research paper mentioned the possibility that Söderfjärden can be the site of a meteorite impact.
On the Geology of Circular Depression at Söderfjärden, Western Finland
Geology Survey of Finland
Bulletin 297

1984 geologist Jyrki J. Lehtovaara could finally state that Söderfjärden was an impact meteorite crater

Local people became aware of the crater through media and popular lectures by Matts Andersén from Sundom.

Söderfjärden is where the greatest number of cranes gathers in the whole of Finland, with numbers totaling over 7000 in autumn. In addition to cranes, the fields also attract the graylag goose, bean goose, whooper swan, waterfowl, raptors, waders, pigeons and sparrows.

References:

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