

* Trees and bushes

The villagers must have enjoyed to see the delicate greens of the leaves in spring – at the same time as they inspected trees and bushes for quite different reasons. What could be made into handles for spades, axes and leaf cutters? What trees were to be felled and sawn into planks for the new outbuilding? Would there be plenty of hazel nuts and acorns this year?

FIREWOOD FOR HEATING AND COOKING

Öland is sparse in forest and it was even worse in olden times. It was not easy to get hold of firewood to heat the stove and the house. From 1569 and up until 1801 all the forest on Öland belonged to the Crown (state). Whoever took firewood could be sentenced to death. The people of Öland were forced to get firewood and sawn wood from Småland. Even in the 19th century there was a serious shortage of firewood. When it was at its worst the people were forced to burn dried cow dung in their stoves.

PLANKS FOR HOUSES AND FURNITURE

The trees that grew in the village stood in the meadows. The trees were sparsely spread out and were mostly ash, oak, elm and hazel. The place you are standing in now was once also a meadow, but it became overgrown and has become a forest. Sadly, the elm is affected by Dutch elm disease, just like on the mainland.

In the past, the oak and ash were particularly useful types of wood. Hard ash wood was used for everything from furniture to different building components. Oak was used above all for homes, barns and windmills.

FOOD FOR ANIMALS AND PEOPLE

The farmers also utilised ash leaves. They pruned the ash tree, cropped it and harvested the leaves with special leaf cutters. The leaves then became winter fodder for the animals. To this day, trees are pruned in Karum – look out for trees that look like the one on the photo to the right.

Nearly everywhere in Karum you can see hazel bushes. In olden times children probably helped to pick hazel nuts. The nuts could be sold to bring in some extra cash for the household. People on Öland also picked acorns and sold them for fodder. And they let in pigs to graze in the oak forest. The farmers in Karum were known for taking in foraging pigs from surrounding villages for payment.



Photo: Kalmar County Museum photo library.



Photo: The County Administrative Board in Kalmar County.

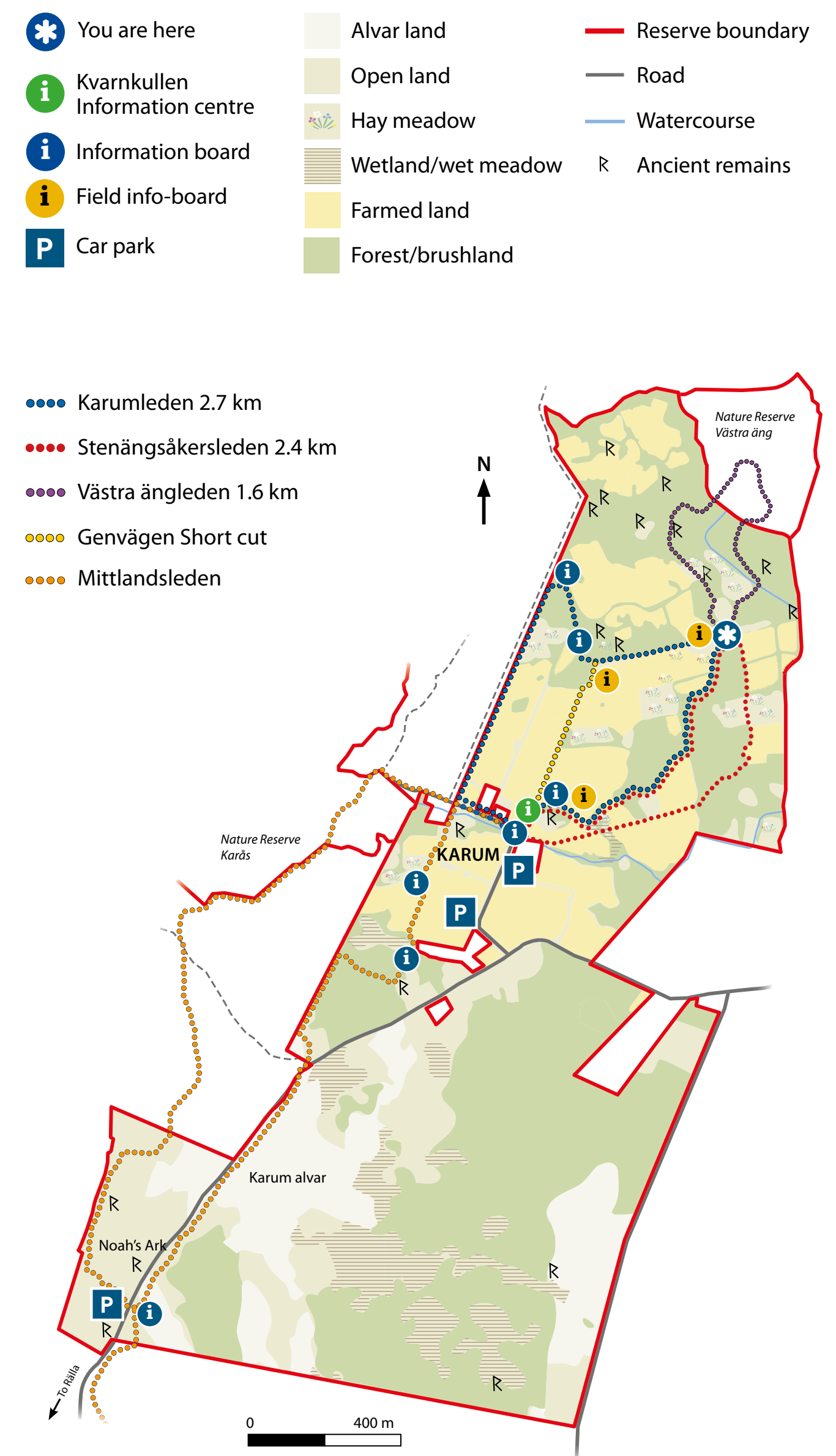


Photo: Länsstyrelsen i Kalmar län.

1) Pruning in Enerum, Öland in 1938. Branches with leaves have been cut off and collected in bunches to be dried for winter fodder.

2) Pruned ash tree in Karum today.

3) Implements with manually made wooden handles in Öland Museum in Himmelsberga.



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