

Community involvement in forest and nature management in Curringherveld.

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Netherlands

Community Involvement in Forest and Nature Management

Location: Curringherveld nearby the village of Kornhorn (province of Groningen, northern part of the Netherlands)

Year established: 1998

Ownership: Staatsbosbeheer (National Forest Service)

Background

The management of the nature area “Curringherveld” is a good example of involvement of local people regarding the planning and management of the green surroundings of the community. The inhabitants of the rural village of Kornhorn have been invited to design and manage the Curringherveld area according to their own ideas. This resulted in an attractive area with hiking facilities, school gardens, open-air theater, etc. The planning process consisted of “dialogue rounds” with several groups of inhabitants. The implementation of design and management is partly financed by Staatsbosbeheer, partly by sponsoring and partly through the activities of volunteers. Involved parties are: Staatsbosbeheer (owner), local voluntary association (they do the daily management), local authorities and schools.



Current status: the area is being used for activities such as hiking, nature studies, nature education (schools), theatre performances, events, etc.

Description

The nature area “Curringherveld” is situated nearby the village of Kornhorn (province of Groningen, north-eastern part of the Netherlands). This area used to be an agricultural area. In 1997, Staatsbosbeheer became the owner of the area. As from this moment, Staatsbosbeheer together with inhabitants of Kornhorn have looked for a certain design and management model, in which multifunctional use was the main issue. As from 2001, Staatsbosbeheer offers a local voluntary association the “feudal tenureship” of the area. At present, this association manages the area. A part of the area has also been “adopted” by the local primary school. The result is a nature area, that is accessible for all kinds of visitors and activities (hiking, cycling, enjoying nature, etc.)



Some special facilities are: a gnome path, a place for campfires, and an open-air theatre. Other important results are: local people are highly involved and they appropriate the Curringherveld as they consider the area to be an essential part of their daily living environment.

What to avoid

The owner should not have a “closed” attitude towards the co-operation. Three conditions need to be fulfilled: (i) the owner (in this case Staatsbosbeheer) needs to open the area for public access, (ii) local people must be able to participate in all stages of the planning process, (iii) the ideas and wishes of local people should be respected. The only one non-negotiable condition, according to the owner, was that the result should be a multifunctional nature area.

Further contact

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