



Bargerveen - From degraded to active raised bogs pSCI Bargerveen

LIFE04 NAT/NL/000206



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Project description:

Background

Bargerveen is located in the south-eastern part of the Province of Drenthe and is the most important remnant of the former large bog site, Boertangerveen, which formed the natural border between the Netherlands and Germany. Although the bog still harbours important areas of active raised bog (type 7110) and species-rich *Nardus* grasslands (type 6230), most of the area nowadays consists of degraded bogs, but which can still be restored. The area is home to more than 15 species of *Sphagnum*, including the very rare *Sphagnum pulchrum*, and habitats such as *Rhynchosporion* (type 7150), wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* (type 4010) and European dry heaths (type 4030). Additionally, the area is of great importance for birds, including 15 species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. Large areas of the Boertangerveen were drained in the past, so that the residual bog now lies like an island above the surrounding land, thereby constantly losing water. Moreover, it is used as a retention body to absorb excess water in the event of heavy precipitation. The consequential fluctuations in water level (both dehydration and inundation) have resulted in hydrological dynamics that are too great for the bog and wet heathland habitat types. The fluctuations also pose a threat to the amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates living in the Bargerveen. By indirectly having an impact on the structure of the area, they also affect the composition of the avifauna and use of the site by wintering birds.

Objectives

The main project objective was to stimulate the natural formation of the raised bog, for which wet and nutrient-deficient conditions are necessary. For this reason rainwater retention formed the crux of the LIFE restoration work right from the start. As the preliminary studies were already completed, the implementation of the actual restoration works foreseen by the project could start immediately. The project foresaw the construction of dykes and water storage reservoirs on the northern edge of the Bargerveen. This would have a direct positive effect on the hydrology of 1,309 hectares within the entire 2,089 ha Bargerveen site. The construction of dykes and water storage reservoirs would also provide protection against dehydration and internal eutrophication in the project area. The expected increase in water levels would re-humidify the peat and allow peat formation to take place, even during periods of low rainfall. By the end of the project, the beneficiary expected an increase of over 20% in the area of active raised bog, an increase of over 47% in the *Nardus* grassland, and an increase of 67% in wet heathlands. Bargerveen is situated in the middle of the former peat colonies, an economically deprived district in the Netherlands. As eco-tourism is one of the most important sectors in the region (more than 100,000 people per year visit the bog), the beneficiary also planned to deploy the necessary dissemination actions to inform the visitors of the uniqueness of this area.

## Results

Normally a raised bog area is naturally water-retentive, but in this project basins to collect extra water were created in the north-west of Bargerveen. A high-water basin within the boundaries of the nature reserve collects the water from the Meerstalblok, an elevated area of the reserve, and on the northern side a low-water basin is used to collect water from the low-lying Amsterdamsche Veld area. The high-water basin drains into the low-water basin. Creating these basins has extended Bargerveen by more than 40 ha and at the same time has increased the number of water birds found there. Bird-watching hides have been erected and an extra walking route has been laid out. New stronger embankments have been constructed on and along the edge of the Bargerveen to enable high water levels to be maintained in the area without the risk of the embankments slipping. The aim is that these small areas of living raised bog will encourage the larger-scale growth of *Sphagnum* moss, given a high and stable water level and a nutrition-deficient environment. This was the main focus of the nature management measures of the project and has thus proved very successful. Looking ahead, the process of nature restoration is slow and that is particularly the case for the restoration of raised bog systems. For this reason, longer term objectives of an increase of the target species have been set by the beneficiary for the year 2023. At this point, the beneficiary is confident the project will be able to a significant increase in the biodiversity of this Natura 2000 site. Finally, project members have participated in several national and international symposia and have been networking with other bog restoration projects. This project has also served as a bog restoration model for a LIFE-NAT Coop project on Bogs and Dunes (LIFE03 NAT/CP/NL000006).

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Environmental issues addressed:

Themes

Habitats - Bogs and Mires

Keywords

rural development, touristic zone, land restoration, restoration measure, water resources management, flood protection, drainage system, ecological assessment, ecotourism, environmental education, landscape conservation policy, renaturation, wetlands ecosystem, site rehabilitation, public awareness campaign, integrated management, tourist facility, water monitoring, sustainable development

Target EU Legislation

- Nature protection and Biodiversity
- Directive 79/409 - Conservation of wild birds (02.04.1979)
- Directive 92/43 - Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora- Habitats Directiv ...
- Decision 93/626 - Conclusion of the Convention on Biological Diversity (25.10.1993)
- COM(95) 189 - "Communication on the judicious use and conservation of wetlands" (12.12.1995)
- COM(98)42 -"Communication on a European Community Biodiversity Strategy" (05.02.1998)
- COM(2001)162 -"Biodiversity Action Plan for the conservation of natural resources (vol. I & II)" ...

Target Habitat types

- 4010 - Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- 4030 - European dry heaths
- 6230 - "Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on silicious substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe)"
- 7110 - Active raised bogs
- 7120 - Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration
- 7150 - Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion*

Natura 2000 sites

Not applicable

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Beneficiaries:

Coordinator	Staatsbosbeheer Regio Groningen - Drenthe
Type of organisation	National authority
Description	Staatsbosbeheer, the Dutch state forestry service, has been in existence for well over a century. In recent decades its tasks have expanded beyond forestry work to also include nature restoration and management.
Partners	Water board Velt and Vecht, Netherlands Deelgebiedscommissie Emmen, Netherlands

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Administrative data:

Project reference	LIFE04 NAT/NL/000206
Duration	01-NOV-2003 to 01-NOV -2006
Total budget	3,222,510.00 €
EU contribution	1,933,506.00 €
Project location	Drenthe(Nederland)

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Read more:

Publication: After-LIFE Conservation Plan	Title: After-LIFE Conservation Plan (DE) Year: 2006 No of pages: 5
Publication: After-LIFE Conservation Plan	Title: After-LIFE Conservation Plan (EN) Year: 2006 No of pages: 5
Publication: After-LIFE Conservation Plan	Title: After-LIFE Conservation Plan (NL) Year: 2006 No of pages: 4
Publication: Layman report	Title: Layman report (EN) Year: 2006 No of pages: 2

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