

Abstract for the poster exhibition

7e Eo Wijers prijsvraag phase 2 De Beerze op waterbasis

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The current water management in the Kempen is leading to numerous problems. The heathland areas Landschotse Heide and Kuikeindsche Heide are drying out whilst further downstream in the valley of the Beerze, the rapid water discharge regularly leads to flooding.

With its plan "De Beerze op waterbasis", Grontmij won the seventh Eo Wijers prijsvraag 2007. In the words of the jury, "the plan enchanted us".

The plan completely redesigns the existing water system, at the same time creating a robust stream valley landscape. The starting point is to retain water rather than discharging it. This applies for the agricultural areas but also for the urban areas such as Vessum and for the nature areas. "Each area is responsible for its own water."

The entire design was inspired by the history of the area, for example the way in which farmers in the Middle Ages dealt with water. The original peaty bogland, the Molenbroek, will be re-established as a special nature area and will act as a huge sponge for retaining natural seepage flows and rainwater. As a result, water can be retained upstream. This will counteract the drying out of the nature areas and lead to a gradual upgrading of the groundwater level. Peak discharges, storage areas and weirs in the course of the Kleine Beerze will then no longer be necessary.

There will also be a special infiltration area for agricultural water, whilst rainwater that falls in the village of Vessum will infiltrate into the village along the edges of the built-up area.

In order to give "De Beerze op Waterbasis" emotional and recreational meaning, 'The ABC of Brabant: Adventurous, Burgundian and Cultural' has been developed. Adventurous refers to welcoming guests to the robust nature area. Burgundian reflects the characteristics of the identity of Brabant: welcoming, love of life and joviality. The village centres will become lively hubs with facilities of the highest level. The area is a true treasure-house of cultural history, folk stories and tumultuous history, told in a dense network of routes with special intersections. In this way, the quality of life of the villages and rural area will be promoted.