

# DE HONDSRUG GGN/EGN - Geopark Annual Report 2020

## 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

**Geopark name,** De Hondsrug UNESCO Global Geopark, (Netherlands, European Geoparks Network)

**Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:** 2013 / 2017

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 2,8 staff including 1 geoscientist(s)

**Number of visitors:** Approximately 1.5 million people visited the Hondsrug region, an increase thanks to the covid10 epidemic

**Number of Geopark events:** 5

**Number of school classes realized** 12

**Geopark educational programs:** 20

**Number of Geopark press releases:** 15



*Official opening of the new Nabershof Museum.*

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES 2020

### Major achievements in 2020

1. The **new museum** around the theme 'Farmers on the Hondsrug', including an update of the original museum and a new exhibition hall, was completed and opened July 2020 (picture)
2. **Hunenweg-Hondsrugpad** long-distance trail – the objective is to make the route a "Leading Quality Trail" of Europe. The final route has been selected and the signposting will be started at the beginning of 2021.
3. **Starting the VR film project.** In the adjacent Hunebedcentre a 180° degrees screen will be installed on which a 3D movie of the Hondsrug will be projected. 3D goggles will be available for a full VR experience.
4. Under the name **Hondsrug Academy for entrepreneurs**, we have developed various packages which will train local entrepreneurs to tell the story of their company, to present it (online) and to optimally match the opportunities and stories of the area. Participants can choose from different workshops, lectures, courses and excursions. Due to the corona crisis, the courses is given online in 2020.
5. **New publication** In cooperation with *Het Drentsche Landschap* and the *Hunebedcenter* we have issued a new "coffee-table book" called "**De Hondsrug- Landschap van eeuwen**" (*Hondsrug, landscape of many centuries*). It tells the story of the Hondsrug area in great detail and with many beautiful illustrations. Due to the covid19 crisis there could be no

physical presentation of the book, but local officials received the “first” copies; this event generated much publicity.

6. **Cycle route “Touring along the farmer”** Two aldermen opened the bicycle route "Touring along the farmer" by starting a video on social media. It takes you along traces of prehistoric agriculture, old and new farms, through the es-villages, along brook valleys, heaths and land consolidation areas. The tour starts at the new expedition gate “Farming on the Hondsrug” at the Nabershof in Emmen.
7. A **Kick-off meeting on education and sustainable goals** was attended by representatives of several organisations active in nature, conservation and landscape. A common agenda was agreed to produce an educational programme for schools and institutions.
8. A **new research project** was kicked off in which 2 students will study the possibility to enhance the experience of some important but less visible hotspots
9. **Craftsmen project:** This initiative aims to strengthen the business operations of local craftsmen. In 2020 the “Craft shop” was opened where local craftspeople can sell their products.
10. Again 26 entrepreneurs of De Hondsrug UNESCO Global Geopark have participated in a course to become an **ambassador** of the Geopark.
11. **Hamerlanden trail** Together with a local group of enthusiasts a new hiking trail is being developed along some cultural, historic and geological sites near the town of Gasselte.

### **Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation**

Due to the covid pandemic we could not attend the network meetings, but we did participate in the online meetings:

- EGN on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September
- GGN on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November

### **Management and Financial Status**

- No important changes.

### **Geo-conservation**

- The system for monitoring the sites has been put in practice; all sites have been monitored and necessary actions are being taken.

### **Sustainable tourism (Geo-tourism)**

- Hiking and biking are the main, sustainable touristic activities in the region.
- A meeting with other conservation organizations was set up to discuss and jointly plan future activities in the field of sustainable development, mainly on education
- **New education programmes on geo-conservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction** The new program for lessons and workshops on primary schools is

ready. Every week we visited a local school to give a workshop on the history of the ice ages.

- A presentation for students of the University in Amsterdam was given online
- We initiated a **Working Group on Landscape and Nature Education**, which will begin in 2021. The aim of the working group is to exchange knowledge between organizations and improve the quality of the education on offer. We want to take stock and take initiatives, among other things, to spread knowledge about the landscape, nature and culture in the Hondsrug area
- An upgrade has been made to the educational part of our website so that it is more organized and effectively searchable for teachers/students.

### **Strategic partnerships**

- We evaluated the functioning of the Network organization and the following recommendations were made:
  - Make the role of the Geopark more clear and update the master plan
  - Organise annual consultations with all municipalities, provinces and TBOs in which the activity plan can be discussed
  - Investigate whether a central information point (Visitors centre) of the Hondsrug UNESCO Geopark is a possibility.

### **Promotional activities**

- The new 30 minute film about the region was nearly complete by the end of the year
- An animated movie was made for the new Forum cultural centre in Groningen
- A new Geopark de Hondsrug brochure was issued
- A **bilingual magazine** was published in close cooperation with *Natur UNESCO Geopark TERRA.vita*, just across the border in Germany. The objective is to jointly promote tourist interest and visits in the adjacent geoparks. The magazine will appear three times yearly and will list the highlights of both geoparks.
- A new double-sided A3 sized (placemat) map of the geoparks *De Hondsrug en TERRA.vita* has been distributed to tourist entrepreneurs and Tourist Info Points; there is a lot of demand for this map.
- The **Oertour**, a tool to plan and organize your visit to the region, is further developed and promoted through postings in social media, ads in local papers and a short movie.
- Most of the presentations for groups on the geology and cultural history of the region had to be cancelled due to covid19
- Promotion of De Hondsrug UNESCO Global Geopark by the Geopark Promotion Team was

limited by the covid19 pandemic

#### **4. CONTACTS**

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