

# General Policy Plan 2015 – 2020

## ‘Investing in the Future’

Outline of policy and enabling conditions

Drawn up on 19 March 2015



stichting het nationale park  
DE HOGE VELUWE

## 1. Introduction

Stichting Het Nationale Park De Hoge Veluwe (*Foundation for the Hoge Veluwe National Park* – ‘the Foundation’) was founded in 1935 to protect the heritage of the married couple Kröller-Müller. The General Policy Plan 2015-2020 outlines the policy, strategy, and enabling conditions.

In 2013 the Mission Statement and Positioning ‘Tot nut en genot der gemeenschap bijeengebracht’ (*Created for the Use and Enjoyment of the Community*) was drawn up. The mission statement commits the Park as follows:

- I. To the sustainable management of, and open access to, the Park and the provision and organisation of a wide range of up-to-date activities and facilities.
- II. To work passionately to inspire as many Park visitors as possible and enable them to enjoy in a relaxed way the simplicity and authenticity of the unique three pillars of:
  - nature & landscape,
  - art & architecture,
  - tales from history.
- III. To invest in the long-term maintenance, strengthening and renewal of the three pillars.

These three pillars uniquely distinguish the Park from other day-trip attractions, national parks, and areas of natural beauty (positioning).

The goal set by the Park is:

To maintain and strengthen the independence of the three pillars of nature & landscape, art & architecture, and tales from history and to enable as many visitors as possible to enjoy what is on offer.

Having respect for the values of nature and culture and their interrelationship, all persons involved with the Park strive constantly to provide the highest quality.

The following section looks at the methods by which we aim to achieve this goal. The policy is divided into five themes (sections): ecology, heritage, economy, research and education. The plan ends with a description of the enabling conditions, risks, and opportunities. To make the organisational goals SMART, an appendix to this document sets out the Critical Performance Indicators 2015-2020.

## 2. Working methods

Running a national park is best served when there is a consistent policy.

The Park has acquired over one hundred years of knowledge and experience in the management of thanks to a continuity of management of the Veluwe landscapes from the start of the 20th century (when the Kröller-Müllers bought their first piece of land). The

strategy has focused on a good balance between practical and scientific knowledge acquired over time on the Park itself as the basis for future management and policy.

A characteristic of the Park – as an estate business – is an integrated, long-term approach to work. The Park policy focuses on five themes and their interrelationship:

- ecology: strengthening the ecosystem through the active management and renewal at landscape level;
- heritage: maintaining and developing the cultural heritage of the Kröller-Müllers, following in their tradition;
- economy: the continuance of the estate (operating) is dependent on economic drivers;
- research: to measure is to know. The scientific research we carry out at the Park contributes to the effectiveness of policy and management;
- education: increasing the involvement of visitors (and consumers) through the inspiration from and awareness of the values of the Park.

Listed according to importance of goal (ecology, heritage) and means (economy, research and education). Ecology & heritage are closely related in the landscape.

The strategy focuses on preserving a good balance between ecology and economy. A high level of ecology requires a balance between a careful and consistent management on the one hand, and a detailed visitor policy on the other. Zoning is the key to both the protection of vulnerable flora and fauna and to providing visitors with an optimum experience of the Park. The ecological level that has been achieved over recent decades would not have been possible without a balanced economic policy focused on self-reliance. The Park largely covers its operating costs from income generated from visitors.

In this regard the Park sets an example, as is evident from the interest shown from the Dutch and EU governments in The Hague and Brussels, other national parks, and private estates in the Netherlands and abroad. The Park wants to promote its knowledge and experience in the fields of finance and income models (see the book 'Waardevol Groen'<sup>1</sup> ('*value-added nature*').

Our ambition to be an international pioneer will be given form and content through our active membership of Friends of the Countryside ([www.friendsofthecountryside.org](http://www.friendsofthecountryside.org)), Europarc Federation ([www.europarc.org](http://www.europarc.org)), the International Union for Conservation of Nature ([www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)), the Wildlife Estates label ([www.wildlife-estates.eu](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu)), and by playing host to various international delegations each year.

### **3. Ecology**

Underlying our philosophy is the maintenance of the value of ecology and landscape. The Park contributes to focus policy on preserving and strengthening of ecosystems that have

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<sup>1</sup> Published by Innovatie Netwerk, Utrecht (2012) ISBN: 978-90-5059-474-5 Rapportnummer 12.2.289

formed part of the image of the landscapes of the Veluwe (semi-natural) since the beginning of the 1990s through the active management of the vegetation characteristic of these landscapes. The Park profiles itself as an active manager of nature. Such a policy, which we have pursued over the years, is creating a high level of biodiversity<sup>2</sup> and we can be proud of many special species. The Park has been awarded the *certificaat particulier natuurbeheer* (certificate of private management of nature).

Alongside its standard management work, for the duration of the next policy plan the Park will work on system recovery: the recovery of the natural system at landscape level, focusing on geographic values and natural processes. The Park is not afraid to introduce innovative methods, such as the use of finely-ground stone, to help the natural system recover at landscape level.

The influence of climate change, environmental factors and natural processes, and the capacity of nature with regard to public use, requires us to be constantly alert. This approach translates into the taking of additional supervision measures and the drawing up and implementation of recovery projects.

Research projects constantly monitor the quality of flora and fauna.

Projects to be carried out within the duration of this policy plan will focus on:

- maintaining and increasing the area of drift sand landscapes;
- recovering heath land through active management;
- specific management of specific species. Where needed, the Park will reintroduce species (black grouse, rabbit, and partridge);
- quality improvements and recovery of the water quality of marshes;
- contribution to ecological connectivity;
- recovery of biodiversity through recovery of soil mineralogy by addition of finely-ground stone.

#### **4. Heritage**

Our policy aims at preserving the cultural heritage<sup>3</sup> consisting of a series of Veluwe cultural landscapes carved out of a rich cultural history, and enriched by an expansive 20<sup>th</sup> century estate that brings together nature and culture. The Park wishes to honour the vision of the Kröller-Müllers, to the extent that this is known and interpretable, without this being the sole consideration for future policy choices.

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<sup>2</sup> By 'biodiversity' we mean as great a variety of plants and animals as possible.

<sup>3</sup> By 'cultural heritage' we mean the combined value of geographical, archaeological and historical landscapes and architectural history. Our non-physical heritage (historical names for tracts of land, and the stories and customs of previous centuries) is also relevant here.

The combination of three museums (the Jachthuis Sint Hubertus, Museonder, and the Kröller-Müller Museum) located within a rich natural landscape makes the Park a significant tourist attraction. The Park and museums are the joint product of a shared heritage and work together on their common interests. Their joint objective is to connect visitors to the three unique pillars. This collaboration will be continued and, where possible, intensified.

To preserve this cultural heritage it is necessary for its management to focus not just on conservation, but also development. The Cultural-Historical Vision adopts an area-focused approach and provides a framework for balancing interests for the purposes of drawing up policy and future developments. The timetable for implementation is dependent on external financing.

The focus on architecture in the Park from a historical perspective is expressed in a vision for architecture. Future developments will need to be of top quality and in harmony with the existing architecture in the Park. This vision helps determine, for example, the quality of new visitor centre (see Visitor Management Plan).

The Park adopts a professional approach to the preservation and quality of protected monuments. It ensures that the structural and plan-based maintenance is carried out by specialists in line with current standards governing work to protected monuments, on the basis of the Long-Term Maintenance Plan ('MJOP'). Restoration work is carried out on the basis of cultural-history research. The Park is applying for POM status (Professional organisation for the preservation of monuments).

During World War Two, the Deelen airfield was built on former property of the Park. If the opportunity arises, the right to re-purchase this land will be exercised. Building 20 (located on Deelenseweg) operates as a museum and will be continued under a long lease.

The most significant repair projects to benefit during the plan period are:

- the renovation/restoration of buildings (MJOP);
- new layout for the surroundings of the Jachthuis Sint Hubertus (benefiting from the original designs of Berlage).

## **5. Economy**

Underlying this policy is the preservation of administrative and financial independence. In terms of its operation, the Park is largely independent of grants. The not-for-profit Foundation functions on the basis of a balanced budget. Healthy operations depend on a sufficient flow of paying visitors each year and a sensible investment policy.

Over the coming years the Park will continue to work to strengthen its economic basis. Through cooperation, for example, with the Kröller-Müller Museum, the Park will strive to achieve a consistent growth in the number of paying visitors to 600,000 per year. Attention will be continuously focused on increasing the attractiveness of, and experiences provided by, the Park in order to retain its competitive position over other day-trip attractions.

Marketing activities will further contribute to brand awareness and brand value. All marketing activities are geared to generating the level of income required to implement the

policy without damaging or threatening the landscapes and their respective flora and fauna. It is important to promote the Park in the region because here, within an hour's drive of the Park, is where the intention to visit is greatest. Iconic features of the Park are: landscapes, Corsican sheep, black grouse, Jachthuis Sint Hubertus, and white bicycles. The Park aims to attract fans of these three pillars eager to relax, enjoy and gain something from the experience. One can divide those intending visit the Park into two identifiable groups: those Dutch residents who are older than, and those younger than, 45 years. The Park focuses on visitors who wish to enjoy these three pillars, who wish to relax, de-stress, and gain something from the experience. The Park's target group are aged 45+ with children, grandchildren, family and friends from the Netherlands as well as nearby regions of Germany such as Noordrijn-Westfalen (see Marketing Strategy 2015-2020).

Continuity in management makes it easier to guarantee that at any one time operations are less sensitive to fluctuations in visitor numbers. By developing, for example, innovative products and branding, the Park aims to increase the amount spent per visitor. Visitor-related income will be increased, for example, by the Park taking over management of its own catering facilities, within a separate foundation. Over the next few months, the Park will investigate the opportunities for a new form of residential recreation as a source of income.

The Park follows – and where possible anticipates - the changing trends and demands of visitors by, for example, conducting regular market research and visitor questionnaires. The Park aims for top quality and excellent levels of hospitality by striving for optimum accessibility to and within the Park, and a high-quality experience of the Hoge Veluwe.

For the purposes of the investment programme (Total Plan 2010-2020) the Park will seek to generate funds and take advantage of opportunities to obtain project grants. The Park is working towards a long-term agreement for grants from the EU, Dutch state and provincial government. For sources of finance for investment in the heart of the Hoge Veluwe, the emphasis is on funds, sponsors and bequests (see Fund Acquisition Plan 2015-2020).

Over the coming years the Park will make significant investment in the quality of its recreational facilities:

- the building of a new visitor centre, complete with restaurant, reception rooms, information desk, Park shop, and toilet facilities;
- renovation of Museonder and renewal of exhibition.

The preparatory work for such investments is already at an advanced stage. Implementation is conditional upon the finances being in place.

## **6. Research**

The Park believes that a well considered and carefully implemented research policy is very important. High-quality scientific research increases knowledge, stimulates new ideas, and helps in measuring the effectiveness of management and policy. Research offers new opportunities to profile the Park externally, and therefore the Park wants to publish research results more often and where possible use them for educating its visitors.

In this policy plan period, the Park will be developing and implementing a science policy within which future scientific research can be conducted within a pre-determined research programme and clear enabling conditions. This will enable the Park to focus better on obtaining relevant and useful research results. The Park will guarantee the research results so that they are accessible and useable for the purposes of implementing the Park's policy and management.

For its research projects the Park is actively collaborating with universities, technical universities, and research institutions in the Netherlands and abroad. The Park wishes to set a lead in the exchange of knowledge and collaboration in the field of scientific research in Europe. In the years ahead, the Park will up-scale and further internationalise its research programme.

## **7. Education**

Education will feature more prominently in the Park policy. Education policy focuses on increasing visitor involvement by inspiring visitors and raising their awareness of the values of the Park.

Over recent years the education policy was mostly aimed at schools. Now, however, it also aims at other visitors by means, for example, of visitor information, Museonder, and the various organised activities. Over the coming years the Park will roll out an education policy that covers the full scope of all three pillars.

The Park wishes to focus even more on youth education on the principle that those who are young are those who have the future ahead of them. The Park aims to involve young people at an early in the Park and its values, and make optimum use of innovative techniques for communicating with them.

The Park will work to achieve a significant increase in the number of primary-school visits by offering, for example, educational programmes/classes. The Park will shortly work to ensure that the educational programmes offered to schools are better geared to teaching goals and educational trends. Facilities for, and supervision of, schools (especially further education groups) requires extra attention. It is important that other visitors are not disturbed by such visits and that there is careful use of facilities and materials.

Education (acquiring knowledge / learning) should contribute to the overall experience of the visit (combined with amusement, relaxation and aesthetics) and should be aimed at all visitors.

The following projects will be developed further during the period of this Policy Plan:

- Renewal of the exhibition of soil and sub-soil in Museonder;
- Drawing up a framework for gathering, organising and utilising the wealth of tales from history;
- Setting up an action plan with regard to tales from history: gathering stories and determining how to get the best use and benefit of these per target group.

## **8. Enabling conditions**

Society is changing rapidly and this means that any organisation needs to constantly focus on the demands made on it by such changes. Professional, motivated staff are indispensable for implementing policy. In striving for the highest quality, the Park will look even more closely at the professionalism of its paid and voluntary staff over the coming years, especially as regards management, hospitality, safety, and utilisation of knowledge. Park employees are its ambassadors.

The principles of social responsibility and sustainability (People, Planet, and Profit) are naturally what the Park is about and are evident from its day-to-day operations. Examples include its collaboration with WSW Presikhaaf, 's Heerenloo, and the Hoenderloo Group. The Park will invest in quality and in developing its land whilst reducing operating costs, the use of materials, energy and water consumption, non-recyclable waste, and environmental footprint. At the core of this aim is sustainable building.

The Park subscribes and adheres to the cultural governance code.

The preservation and further development of the Park requires the involvement of effective strategic partnerships. Mention has been made above of the close ties with the Kröller-Müller Museum. Collaboration with the *Vereniging van Vrienden van De Hoge Veluwe* (Friends of the Hoge Veluwe) has increased the level of awareness of opportunities the Park offers and the professionalism of voluntary work. The relationship between the Jachthuis Sint Hubertus and, for example, the Central Government Real Estate Agency and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands is very important. There is further strategic collaboration in the field of nature conservation; marketing & promotion; representation of interests; and education and science.

The Park can thereby remain self-supporting, but it continues to be dependent on visitor numbers and public support (at local, regional and national level). There is an extensive and varied list of partners, which will we maintain and – where appropriate – renew and expand.

## **9. Risks and opportunities**

The future of the Park depends heavily on its surroundings. Significant external influences are economic outlook, health, trends, and laws and regulations.

### **a. economic outlook**

The current difficult economic situation has consequences for visitor numbers and their spending power. During a recession it is more difficult to obtain funds than when the economic outlook is bright. The policy on nature is also sensitive to economic conditions. Through the decentralisation of grants and cuts in spending, other organisations involved in nature are required to trawl the market. This creates a different kind of playing field – one where there is a different kind of competition.

### **b. health**



Health risks to humans and the animal world also influence the work of the Park. Many people were badly affected by the FMD crisis. The closure of the Park was a clear sign of the huge impact of such a threat. The Park must be prepared at all times to respond to a disaster of this nature. The safety of staff and visitors is paramount. Health (quality of life) plays an increasing role in how we spend our free time and offers opportunities for attracting new and returning visitors.

### **c. market developments and trends**

In attracting visitors, the Park is dependent on market developments and trends. The growth in the number of senior citizens, by virtue of 'new senior citizens' post WWII, offers the opportunity for extending the visiting season. Technological innovation and far-reaching digital technologies also offer opportunities. The Park aims for a good balance of digital communication and personal contact. In particular, the changing demands in terms of lifestyle and use of free time, such as the need to spend time together, and the demand for first-rate hospitality and quality, offer opportunities to attract visitors. The movement away from experience to significance and from consumerism to engagement, will encourage visitors to connect with the Park. The Park will initiate marketing activities in response to these factors.

### **d. migration of wild animals**

The migration of wild animals into and out of the Park challenges the certainty of continuity of management. As a consequence thereof, the expected changes in numbers of big game in spring time may have consequences for, inter alia, the species, habitats and their management.

### **e. laws and regulations**

To achieve the ambitions set out in this Plan, the Park depends in part on the laws and regulations in place at any one time. Such current laws and regulations include:

- Natura 2000 management plan for the Veluwe and Project-based Approach to Nitrogen;
- new legislation (new Nature Act and Environment Act (*Natuurwet* and *Omgevingswet*);
- government policy on special investigating officers ('BOAs');
- new validation system for charitable causes (ANBI status);
- availability of grants.

## **10. Conclusion**

The policy outline will be further developed in the plans that form part hereof:

- Personnel Policy Plan 2015-2020;
- Volunteer Policy Plan 2015-2020;
- Policy Plan on Nature, Landscape, Infrastructure and Buildings 2015-2020;
- Visitor Management Plan 2015-2020;
- Marketing Strategy 2015-2020;
- Funding Acquisition Plan 2015-2020.

## **Appendix 1      Critical performance indicators**

1. Maintaining ecological quality: over 80% of all management types to score 'good' in 2020 for structural characteristics and type of objective (based on the method described in the Management Plan for Nature, Landscape, and Cultural History);
2. Consistent growth in the number of visitors to 600,000 per year in 2020;
3. At least 75% of Park operating costs covered by income generated from visitors;
4. Increase in the sale of products and activities per visitor by 10%;
5. Further increase in brand awareness and brand value (see Marketing Strategy);
6. A cohesive Research Programme as the basis for research. Research results are relevant and of use to the Park and should provide at least two scientific publications per year;
7. In 2020 the following projects to have been implemented:
  - new visitor centre with restaurant, meeting rooms, visitor information desk, Park shop, and toilet facilities;
  - rebuilding of Museonder and renewal of exhibition;
  - new layout of area surrounding Jachthuis Sint Hubertus.