

Lifescape – your landscape helps you explore new ways to profit from the rural landscape while preserving its beauty and cultural and historical values. **Fourteen partners in five European countries work together and share experiences to come to new approaches for long-term preservation of their landscapes.**

ADDED VALUE OF LIFESCAPE FOR PARTNERS

“Lifescape – your landscape illustrated in a convincing and down-to-earth way that enhancing landscape qualities and giving space to creativity of local people and sustainable regional development can go hand in hand.”

Rob Wolters, Director of ECNC,
the Netherlands



“Lifescape was beneficial not only for the people in the region but also for biodiversity.”

Wolfgang Fremuth, Orchard Centre
MainÄppelHaus Lohrberg and Zoological
Society, Germany



“For Alterra lifescape is the bridge to rural development in Europe.”

Prof. Henk Siepel, Executive director
Centre for Ecosystem Studies Alterra and
Wageningen University, the Netherlands



“Lifescape has enabled us to add value to existing work programmes in the South Downs, not only by allowing us to access ERDF Funding, but also by working through the problems we face with our European partners.”

Neil Hill, South Downs Joint Committee,
England

“Lifescape - your landscape allows to benefit from European neighbours on similar issues in order to work to perpetuate the Audomarois marsh landscape, on both an emotional and economical way.”

Bertrand Petit, Président du groupe de travail Marais Audomarois, du Parc Naturel Régional des Caps et Marais d'Opale, France

“With the help of lifescape it has become possible to use the rare breed of the Kempisch Heideschaap (the Campine long-tail sheep) for the maintenance and enhancement of the traditional heathland in an economically feasible way by branding and marketing its lamb's meat.”

Mr Loek Hilgers, Secretary of the Kempisch Heideschaap Society

ADDED VALUE OF LIFESCAPE FOR PARTNERS

“The lifescape project has motivated us to think in a wider European context about landscape and land management issues, providing us with new insights and solutions.”

Sally Marsh, High Weald Director, England



“By the mutual exchange of experiences by the project partners we had excellent support for our practical work in the region.”

Gerhard Weinrich, Chair Orchard Centre
MainÄppelHaus Lohrberg, Germany



“It is a fantastic opportunity that Het Groene Woud together with six other European landscapes is part of one transnational project. The formula of the Regional Account is an innovative way to finance nature development and engage citizens at the same time.”

Maurits van Bouwdijk, member Steering Committee Regional Account, the Netherlands

“In the Merode project we meet a lot of farmers, conservationists and local entrepreneurs for whom the combination of landscape and livelihood is a natural way of looking to their environment and their way of living. But they didn't know the concept of lifescape to express this way of living and working. Many of them are very enthusiastic and driven. We did not know there was so much passion in the region and probably they weren't aware of it themselves. When we succeed to bundle this passion into networks, the enthusiasm will become so bright, we can export our regional pride, 'infect' potential visitors and convince potential clients to buy our superb local products which reflect our own lifescape.

...A wonderful way to sustain our regional identity and landscape.”

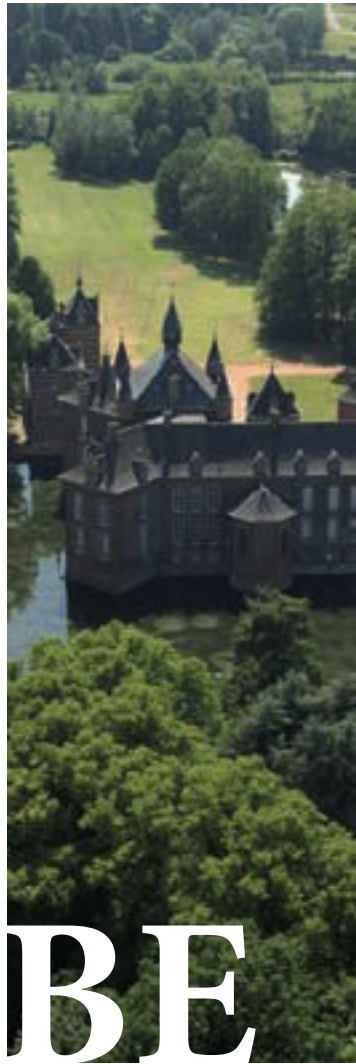
Ria Gielis, Flemish Land Agency, Belgium

www.lifescapeyourlandscape.org



“Lifescape - your Landscape gives our local projects an interesting and rewarding openness to Europe. The generated exchanges allowed to transfer new ideas and successful experiences between partners.”

Mme Rembotte, Vice-présidente du Parc
Naturel Régional des Caps et Marais
d'Opale, France



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PREFACE

Within the INTERREG IIB project lifescape – your landscape we, 14 partners from five countries, have worked together for four years. We have explored new ways to profit from the rural landscape, while preserving its beauty and cultural and historical values. As this project reaches its conclusion, I am very pleased to introduce you to this European journey of our experiences: a book covering some remarkable project outputs - with emphasis on the word 'some', because our project has delivered many more interesting experiences than could be covered in one book.

I know I speak on behalf of all partners when I say that it has been a great pleasure to work together internationally within lifescape; not least because of the inspiration and energy that was generated every time we met and shared our ongoing developments. Working together internationally has provided us with opportunities to take a fresh look at our own region. And we have also found out that it proved to be beneficial to bridge institutional borders in our own context. Travelling, visiting and learning abroad happens to be a strong motivation for cooperation with stakeholders back home! And that in turn is very important for innovative, regional development.

Four years of lifescape are reflected in our toolkit, which contains three instruments for further development.

First there is this book. I urge you to read about our philosophy and find out where the lifescape concept originated. And read about some of our Flemish, English, French, Dutch and German experiences. Hopefully these will inspire you and make you more curious about our project.

This curiosity can then be satisfied on our website, the second part of our toolkit. Here you can find more interesting lifescape stories, meet with us virtually, see for yourselves how attractive the regions involved are and get inspired by even more outputs.

Thirdly, there are our essential products: a systematic inventory of the outputs of the project. To investigate these products you can either use the CD-ROM that is in the back of this book or visit our website.

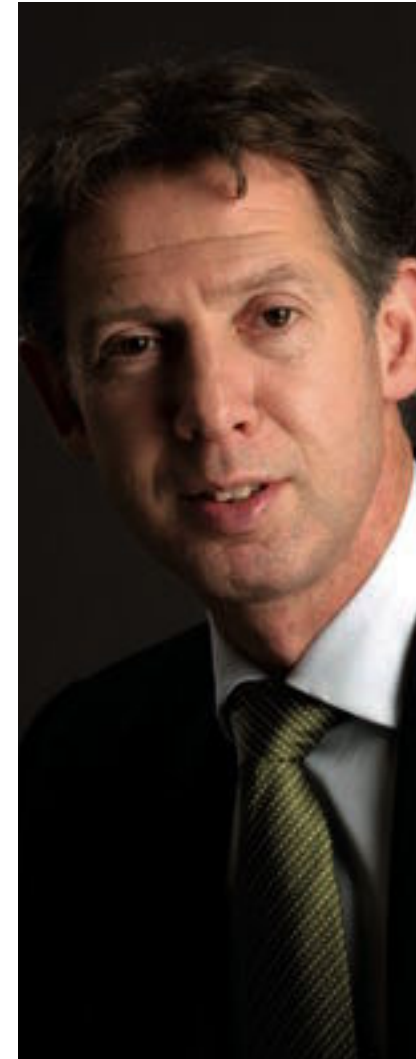
We think that these very concrete examples are of great value and worthy of showing to a wider audience – and can be of use especially for those of you who are working in the field of nature conservation, sustainable regional development, spatial planning and landscape management. It offers you the opportunity to access and have a closer look at all kinds of products that have been developed during the lifescape project.

I very much hope that our stories illustrate our enthusiasm and will inspire you the way that the project has inspired us. Enjoy reading!



*Onno Hoes
Chair steering committee
lifescape – your landscape
Regional Minister for Ecology,
Province of Noord-Brabant,
the Netherlands, lead partner*

www.lifescapeyourlandscape.org



OUR LIFESCAPE PHILOSOPHY



Change requires a response. Our landscapes, the people and nature within them and the economies they support are changing rapidly. Lifescape – your landscape is a response to that change. It seeks to meet this challenge by bringing people together across national boundaries to generate innovation, establish best practice, and demonstrate a successful approach. Lifescape at one level, therefore, involves human nature and is about exploring the connection that people have, or could have, with each other and with the landscapes around them. At another level it is about making use of these connections and applying them to real life examples of managing the rural landscape in a sustainable way.

Lifescape is learning by doing but also learning from each other

OUR LIFESCAPE PHILOSOPHY



The lifescape challenge

Our landscape is changing. The distribution of wildlife and the texture of the landscape are the product of complex interactions. The basic physical qualities of rock, soil, and climate have set the scene, but the detail has been shaped through millennia of human activity, past and present land use and management, and its associated impacts; not least by the age-old practice of farming. So when you next look out over the countryside and marvel at its natural beauty you have to remember – it is far from natural. To a large extent it is cultured and man-made.

Our farming practices have changed over time but, since the mid 20th century, there has been a sharp acceleration of this trend

across Europe. Under suitable circumstances the patchwork landscape of small-scale, traditional farming has been replaced by intensive farming and monocultures. Food production has been required – and very successfully – to industrialize and become far more efficient in order to feed a growing urban population. Concentration and vertical integration are major trends in farming practices today, mirrored by the concentration within the processing, shipping, and retail sectors. As the costs of land and production have gone up, the number of farms and farmers, and the area devoted to agriculture have decreased. Farmers working under less favourable circumstances are giving up and are drawn towards new opportunities for jobs provided by towns and cities. Within the time span of one or two generations we have become footloose and have moved on in the world of business, service providers, and entertainment. And while the ever accelerating dynamics of urban life is focussed on vibrant metropolitan areas in North Western Europe, driving the costs of land further upwards, our European continent

is also confronted with land abandonment and depopulation in marginal and isolated parts. The consequences may be quite substantial for our landscapes, the face of Europe. For who will manage the European countryside in ten year's time when most farmers have gone out of business? With an estimated 60 or 70 percent of birds and plant species depending on traditional farming activities for their continued survival, Europe has more to lose than just a pretty face. And what will be the economic and social effects of this development? Will we be able to strike a sustainable balance in the near future?

Presently, there is a gap, both physical and metaphysical, between ecology and economy, between urban life and rural entrepreneurs. And it is getting bigger, rather than smaller. There is no turning back to the 'pastoral idyll' of the 18th century poets and romantics. Whilst the rural landscapes of those times were certainly attractive and more diverse, they were also the source of poverty and deprivation. We need to step forward. Urbanization

– the increase in the urban share of the total population – is inevitable and is now a familiar image of the greater proportion of North Western Europe. The United Nations expect that the world will reach an invisible milestone in 2008. For the first time in history, more than half the human population will be living in urban areas, with an unprecedented scale of growth in the developing world. The current concentration of poverty, slums, and social disruption in cities around the world and the environmental damage done by modern civilization does paint a threatening picture of urban life. But this urban life also represents our best hope of escape. Experts and policymakers increasingly recognize the potential value of cities and their surroundings to long-term sustainability and managing ecosystem services.

Our challenge in North West Europe, therefore, is about recreating attractive landscapes that are rich in wildlife, that host 'living' communities, which are based on vibrant local economies and that reconnect our rural and urban society.



The lifescape logic

In order to bridge the gap between ecology and economy, lifescape combines 'livelihood' and 'landscape', the individual benefit and the common good, in one concept. Our life and our landscape are two sides of the same coin.

Human activity through the ages, driven by economic, social and environmental forces and constraints has shaped our regional landscapes. In doing so, we have also transformed ourselves. The unique expression of nature and cultural heritage within each of those landscapes provides a backdrop against which people structure their own identity – mostly

unwittingly. We develop together with our environment. Cultural landscapes give us a sense of place and reveal our relationship with the land over time. They are special to us and contain aspects of our origin through their forms, features, and history of use. This sense of place is thus an important constituent of our sense of identity. And because of that, the loss of our landscape may touch us at a deep and disturbing emotional level, preparing us for action. Moreover, as we form our communities and civil societies, it is our landscape that we have in common and share. It is readily available as a medium for communication.

Consequently, the core idea or logic of lifescape is that we may be able to use our sense of regional identity and mobilize its emotional power by referring to the visible qualities of our common landscape. Our regional landscape is ready to be used to help us re-create a bond between people and the environment: the people from rural areas and city dwellers, the people who produce services and products and the people who need these

services and products to enrich their urban lives. In doing so we develop our social capital, especially by building bridges between groups of people with different interests and goals. Regional identity becomes intertwined with living social networks that reach beyond the regular everyday social circles or professional sectors. Lifescape encourages people to be inquisitive and daring, to broaden their personal horizon and look across boundaries.

There has always been an important network of social, cultural and practical links between cities and their surrounding landscapes across North West Europe. Market places have been more than just places to exchange goods. This is where people from different sectors of society meet, gossip, and exchange information. As we develop closer links with the global economy, the relationship between urban living and rural hinterlands is being eroded. And today, the contrast between rural and urban life seems bigger than ever.

To repair this divide, lifescape – your

landscape was designed to make the link between daily life and our natural environment more tangible. Lifescape is a wake up call: we are calling upon you to join in to protect and enhance the beauty of your landscape. The historical, cultural and natural qualities of landscapes are a meeting ground for new contacts and cooperation. Regional identity is an instrument to revive the relationship between people and the landscape and between rural and urban society. School children should know the farmer who produces the milk they drink and the fruit they eat, and vice versa. We need to celebrate and reinforce the places where we – the urban consumers – encounter the regional producers of our food and the custodians of our environment and culture. Our decisions regarding work, food, health, inspiration, and happiness are reflected in the natural world that borders our towns and cities and we had better realize it. We need to explore, once again, the interface where urban living meets the countryside. Our landscape, once more, will become the product of the lives we choose to lead.

OUR LIFESCAPE PHILOSOPHY



The lifescape approach

Lifescape is a work in progress. It is a work which is never complete, a never ending story, because the landscape, its people, and their relationships are continuously changing.

Regional development can be brought to a higher level through

European cooperation, because international contacts provide opportunities to appreciate different ways of doing things when examining the issues in one's own region. Lifescape is thus about broadening the horizon of people. There is no blueprint, only learning by doing. Lifescape – your landscape was conceived to demonstrate the synergy between landscapes, people working together, and economic development. It promotes innovation in regional cooperation and economic development, and facilitates transnational exchange and learning. Fourteen partners in five countries work together through twenty transnational subprojects, sharing experiences to find new approaches. The partners take regional identity and social networks – rather than borders – as their point of departure. They mobilize regional pride, responsibility and solidarity as driving forces, bridging the gap between ecology and economy by strengthening the region's social fabric. The regional projects of Lifescape – your landscape can be seen as a collection of experiments

for implementing the lifescape logic in real life situations. They offer different ways to deal with worldwide ecological challenges in a regional context. The various activities touch upon many facets of society; from education to practical landscape management, and from spatial planning to farming. Tens of thousands of people have been affected by the project. Lifescape involves children, businesses and local communities by developing educational, communicative, financial and social activities. In order to communicate our endeavours we developed four themes to make our efforts accessible to policy makers and local communities. These themes are:

- Enjoyment and learning in landscapes
- Involving local people and communities
- Financing rural areas
- Exploring business opportunities

In all cases we believe that lifescape has been a success. An inspiration to us and, we hope, an inspiration to you.

There is more
to landscape
than meets
the eye



www.lifescapeyourlandscape.org

Enjoyment and learning in landscapes



Children provide a route to engage with the wider community through their families, schools and social groups

Providing the children with a sense of place strengthens their connection to and understanding of the landscape



The landscape has an influence on people
People have an influence on the landscape
In the Theatre Walks this interaction is made visible
The experience of the Theatre Walks brings awareness



Involving local people and communities



...from being interested to actively involved.

Landscape is about community and you are part of it

Local volunteers doing practical conservation work strongly connects people to their countryside. With this experience, supported by training, they become committed ambassadors for important landscapes.



Volunteering encourages people to value their landscape and change their actions



Financing rural landscapes



www.lifescapeyourlandscape.org

Inspire people to recognize the value in order to encourage them to invest

In landscape you can read possibilities

Exploring business opportunities



The landscape has never tasted so good.

Involving businesses is helped by tangibly demonstrating the business benefits of promoting and supporting the landscape



Stimulating regional production is creating new sustainable markets



THE LANGSTRAAT IN NOORD-BRABANT IS A GREEN AREA WEST OF THE TOWN OF WAALWIJK WITH SLIM AND NARROW PARCELS OF MEADOW BORDERED BY ROWS OF ALDERS. IT IS REFERRED TO AS 'BRABANT'S SEAM'.



COMBINING NATURE MANAGEMENT WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Within the Lifescape project we seek new and innovative ways to combine ecology and economics. International cooperation has proven to be beneficial in creating a process that can give new impulses, because international cooperation can broaden the perspective.

An example to illustrate the added value of working together internationally is the visit of French farmers and nature managers from the Audomarais region to the Dutch Langstraat area, seeking new ways to revive the rural landscape economically, ecologically and socially. The visit resulted in a unanimous recognition that farmers are requisite for nature management and that Alterra's concept of Farming for Nature may indicate how to provide the necessary finance, even in France. The visit was attended by Dutch and French farmers and officials of water boards, local and provincial authorities and nature organizations.

"It is just like France", joked the French referring to the sunny and warm weather in the beginning of June 2007, when this visit took place. The Audomarais is part of the Parc Naturel Régional (PNR) des Caps et Marais d'Opale, not a real

nature reserve but a living cultural landscape with nature, agriculture and settlements that is managed in an integrated manner.

The Langstraat is a green area west of the town of Waalwijk with slim and narrow parcels of meadow bordered by rows of alders. The Langstraat is referred to as 'Brabant's seam', because it is an area where two types of soil converge: the peat that originated from the river the Oude Maas in the north and the higher lying sandy soil in the south. Where these two types of soil meet a special kind of seepage occurs, and as a result the nature is unique. The very rare yellow sedge grows in the area and the protected fish the weather loach is found in the water of the Afwateringskanaal.

To keep the special seepage water in this area, Brabantse Delta water board has started a project. "The

area is dried out at the moment", explains Maartje Thijssen of the water board. "The Afwateringskanaal draws the water out of the area and that is why that canal has to be made waterproof so the seepage stays in the area and the unique nature in the area can be redeveloped." The big question though is not *whether* it is possible to develop nature but rather *how* this nature will be managed in the future.

The French came to see how the Dutch are going about combining economically viable agriculture with nature management. Albert Zijlmans has a medium sized goat farm on the outskirts of the village of Waspik. His farm land is part of the national ecological network and will become part of the European nature network Natura 2000, under the protection of the European Bird and Habitat Directives. And when it comes to nature, the rules are very strict. Combining nature with today's conventional agriculture seems difficult. "Part of my farmland will become a nature area", Zijlmans says. "It will be assigned the function of swamp and that of course doesn't agree with goat keeping."

"There are more farmers like Zijlmans in the Langstraat", says Frans de Bont, chairman of the Agricultural Nature Association Slagenland. "Now we still earn our money through conventional agriculture but the nature goals are becoming so strict that this will become impossible. And we as farmers can only manage that new nature if it is feasible and affordable. That's why we asked Alterra to investigate if there is potential for combining nature with agriculture in the area."

For the farmers in the Langstraat combining farming with nature management is quite a switch, as the trend in the past decades was to intensify farming. De Bont: "We are still paying for the land consolidation that took place in the seventies and the eighties." Lots of farmers in the Langstraat have now turned to nature management and lease parcels of meadowland from the nature organization Staatsbosbeheer, where they manage nature in return for subsidies and harvest the high-quality hay the Langstraat was famous for in the old days. >

ENJOYMENT
& LEARNING

INVOLVING
PEOPLE

FINANCING
LANDSCAPES

BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITIES

IN THE AUDOMAROIS THE SITUATION IS AS PRESSING AS IN THE LANGSTRAAT. THE AUDOMAROIS COVERS 3,700 HECTARES AND IS RICH IN WATER WITH SMALL AND NARROW POLDERS AND 760 KILOMETRES OF WATERCOURSES. THERE ARE AS MANY AS 500 LAND OWNERS AND THE 1,200 HECTARES OF MEADOWLAND ARE MANAGED BY 100 OR 150 CATTLE BREEDERS.



COMBINING NATURE MANAGEMENT WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

► But according to Alterra researcher Herbert Diemont the situation has now reached a stalemate. “It is an area where different interests coincide. Staatsbosbeheer cannot operate without the farmers, but the ecological demands of Natura 2000 are very strict, and the farmers cannot survive here without realizing long-term income prospects.”

The French visitors recognize the issue. Luc Barbier of the PNR des Caps et Marais d’Opale: “Lots of farmers in the Netherlands and in France still earn a lot of money with production oriented and subsidized agriculture, but these are often not the farmers that manage the landscape. Those that do tend to be small scale farmers. But their numbers are declining rapidly. **If we do not take care, soon there will be no farmers left to maintain the landscape.**”

In the Audomarois the situation is every bit as pressing as in the Langstraat. The region of Audomarois covers 3,700 hectares and is rich in water with Dutch-built small and narrow polders, contains about 500 land owners and about 760 kilometres of watercourses. The area still has 1,200 hectares of

meadowland which is managed by between 100 and 150 cattle breeders. About 150 people still live on small islands where the post is delivered by boat. Barbier: “In general those islands are very small and inaccessible parcels. We need a swift solution if we are to maintain the landscape. In fact it may already be too late: farmers are disappearing at an alarming rate.”

The Dutch were surprised about the size of the region and about the complexity of the issue there. Barbier in turn was surprised at how important the landscape is in the Netherlands, because a relatively small nature area like the Langstraat would not be that important in France.

According to Diemont the integrated way the PNR des Caps et Marais d’Opale works on landscape maintenance can provide an example for the Netherlands. “The PNR combines all the functions of the landscape”, agrees Barbier. “In the Langstraat only the nature function is enforced.” And that is also the problem, says Diemont. “Natura 2000 is sectoral nature, but 75 percent of the nature in Europe is found on farmed landscapes.”

The big question for both the Dutch and the French is how the nature management will be financed. It may be partly financed through nature subsidies, Diemont says, but people need to find alternative sources of finance. Part of the solutions may lie in creating services for the region, like care farming or recreation facilities.

This is incorporated in the concept of Farming for Nature, on which Diemont is working. In exchange for the ecological and regional services the farmers provide, Farming for Nature organizes a financial fund from the surrounding region, which in turn provides an income for the farmer. In the Netherlands pilot projects of the concept are realized in the Biesland polder near Delft and the Twickel estate near Delden. The European Commission recently gave the green light for income compensation via the fund. Now it is time to study whether this concept can work for the Langstraat and for the Audomarois the participants of the exchange visit agreed.

www.lifescapeyourlandscape.org
www.boerenvoornatuur.nl



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THE CHALK GRASSLANDS OF THE SOUTH DOWNS HAVE BEEN HERE FOR ABOUT 5,000 YEARS AND THEY HAVE BEEN CONTINUOUSLY SHEEP GRAZED. THE SOUTH DOWNS ARE ALSO RICH IN ARCHAEOLOGY. IT WAS PRETTY MUCH THE FIRST PLACE TO BE COLONIZED AFTER THE ICE AGE AND WAS ALWAYS A PLACE OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE.



SHEEP ARE NATURE CONSERVATIONISTS, MARKETING TOOLS AND PROFIT MAKERS

In the South Downs the South Downs Lamb Company organized a local network of farmers and butchers to sell the lamb and mutton of sheep that graze the chalk grasslands in the area. Farmers get more money for the meat while preserving the species rich and very diverse grasslands.

Neil Hill:

“The chalk grasslands of the South Downs have been here for about 5,000 years and they have been continuously sheep grazed. Because of that an extra species rich flora was able to develop. On some places in a square metre you can find up to fifty species of plants with lots of rare species, like orchids. In addition many different species of butterfly live here. This rich diversity makes it very special.

The grasslands are also rich in archaeology. The South Downs was pretty much the first place that was colonized after the ice age and because of the high ridge it was always a place of strategic importance. On the ridge you will find an abundance of Stone Age, Bronze Age, Roman and Medieval fortifications. As with the nature it is this diversity of archaeology that makes it special.

After the Second World War sheep grazing became increasingly uneconomical, because of changing

markets and the import of cheap lamb from New Zealand. As a result the number of farmers and the number of sheep declined and the maintenance of the grassland became a problem. **At a certain point we realized that in twenty years there might not be any sheep left.**

That is why we in the Joint Committee set up the South Downs Lamb Company for the marketing of the South Downs lamb to add value for the farmers. It is a private company, which acts as a middleman. They negotiate the price with the farmers, they cut and deliver the meat, and they also regularly organize taste panels. Taste is of course an important aspect in the marketing of the lamb and the South Downs lamb consistently comes out on top in the taste tests.

Lifescape helped to fund the development of the brand, the production of environmental material and also travelling costs for the

director, Chris Clark, who often went to the mainland to talk to the lifescape partners. We learned a lot from the international exchange, from the experiences of sheep farmers in Brabant and the branding projects in Germany and France. Ultimately we have all learned from each other. Our experiences were instrumental for supporting the work on establishing a production chain in Noord-Brabant for the Kempisch Heideschaap.

The South Downs Lamb Company has become quite successful and we are now working on an expansion. We want to market beef and dairy products of the cattle that also graze the chalk grasslands. They graze in a different manner than sheep and you really want a combination of both to get the maximum result, that very diverse and rich flora and fauna from which the farmers can earn a decent living.”

Added value of lifescape:

The partnerships that have been created through lifescape will continue to add value to our work for many years to come.

FACTS

Neil Hill is Landscape Enhancement Initiative Manager at the South Downs Joint Committee and one of the initiators of the South Downs Lamb project.

- 7,000 sheep;
- 20 farmers;
- 15 butcher shops;
- Farmers receive about 10 euros per lamb extra;
- Market share of 10 per cent and growing.



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HET GROENE WOOD IS A CHARACTERISTICALLY SMALL-SCALE, GREEN AND OPEN AREA OF 35,000 HECTARES BETWEEN THE CITIES OF TILBURG, EINDHOVEN, AND DEN BOSCH. IT WAS DESIGNATED A DUTCH NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BY THE GOVERNMENT IN 2005. THE CORE IS COVERED BY 7,500 HECTARES OF NATURE AREAS WITH WOODS, MARSHES, BROOKS, SCRUBS AND HEATHLAND.



HOW SAVINGS HELP INVESTING IN THE LANDSCAPE

The Regional Account is an ingenious financial concept to acquire funds for investments in the sustainable development of the landscape near Boxtel.

Ger van den Oetelaar:

“The objective of the Regional Account is to generate financial means for the sustainable management of Het Groene Woud, a green area between the cities of Tilburg, Eindhoven and Den Bosch which was designated a National Landscape by the Dutch government in 2005.

The concept of the Regional Account is simple and ingenious. It allows people to contribute money towards the sustainable development of Het Groene Woud without actually parting from it: **people save and receive interest and at the same time their savings mean income for Het Groene Woud.**

By opening a special savings account at the bank, an Isis Account, and depositing a certain amount of money the scheme is set in motion. The customer receives the market rate of interest and the usual facilities for withdrawal of the deposit.

A good reason for Het Goede Woud to chase after clients!

The initiators of the Innovationplatform Duurzame Meierij act as a local stakeholder group. They not only attract private people, but have great potential too for persuading local governments, agencies and companies to open an Isis Account.

On the other hand: getting all these new customers is an attractive business proposal for a bank. That is why ASN Bank joined in and agreed to contribute a percentage of 0.15 per cent over the total amount of all the Isis Accounts. Incidentally, another bank was also interested but acted too late and is now disappointed to have missed the opportunity. So it is an appealing concept!

The bank’s contribution then feeds into a regional fund, the Horus Fund, which in turn will be invested in projects to improve Het Groene Woud. And of course we also encourage account holders to make a personal donation to the Horus Fund for instance by donating part of the interest they receive.

The target was to acquire an amount of € 200,000 for spending on an annual basis. With the pledged savings accounts and donated interest we have now already realized this ambition for the present year. Which does not mean we can lean back and relax, because the more money deposits we collect the more we can invest in the quality of Het Groene Woud. And it is of course not obvious that all savings will stay in the Regional Account for years on end. It is the money of the account holders and at their free disposal.

Not only do we create an additional and independent source of income to work on strengthening the key qualities of this area, its green character, the small scale open landscape and the relationship between heath, woods, brooks, and fields. It is also a way of linking people to the regional landscape. By inviting them to ‘give’ their money, people get involved. The National Landscape Het Groene Woud must eventually develop into a laboratory for sustainability where the underlying principle is that the regional economy can be boosted with investments for enhancing the

landscape. The Regional Account is a good way of promoting and developing this laboratory.”

www.streekrekeninghetgroenewoud.nl
www.hetgroenewoud.com



FACTS

Ger van den Oetelaar is alderman of spatial development, public housing and sustainability of the Municipality of Boxtel and also chairman of Innovationplatform Duurzame Meierij.

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ECNC – Food for thought

In the modern world of work we are all driven by the need to produce results – even when we are at school. There is never sufficient time to devote to thinking about and developing ideas and creativity. The pressure to ‘deliver’ restricts our desire or ability to talk about these things with colleagues and friends at work in a relaxed way, with no end in mind but simply to test and develop ideas and concepts. Nowadays nobody will come to a meeting without an agenda or an objective. The shame of this, and the net result, is that we often do things in the same way, repeating our mistakes or only ever achieving the mundane or the ‘barely acceptable’. We lose out on opportunities for creativity and innovation. Einstein’s definition of madness was (sic.): “...doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.” Lifescape breaks this paradigm. It brings people (children and adults) together in different places, across country boundaries, and allows them to reflect and share experience. They talk around issues against the backdrop of inspirational landscapes; when they do this in other places and with people from different cultures, they really are inspired. They are also working, and the results of the ‘lifescape effect’, a different way of addressing problems and solutions is evident from the results of the project: innovative best practice and a set of projects that could influence the way we deal with special landscapes across Europe. They have also made friendships and created working relationships that will last for a lifetime.

Lawrence Jones-Walters



Noord-Brabant – International learning

For the Province of Noord-Brabant lifescape was an international learning experience. It helped the Dutch to see the added value of nature and cultural history in regional branding. Lifescape helped us to pinpoint a strategy on creating a viable and marketable product from the management of nature and landscape. From the South Downs we learned to develop economic revenues from a regional product – the South Downs lamb – which is used for nature management. Orchard centre MainÄppelHaus Lohrberg showed us how to market a cultural historic product – the orchards near Frankfurt am Main.

In the Netherlands the challenge is to market the landscape by involving the users of the landscape. I think other lifescape partners could learn from the way farmers and landowners organized themselves over here in Agricultural Nature Associations to tackle the new services of managing nature and landscape and at the same time look at ways to get economic revenues from it.

Harrie Vissers

ADDED VALUE OF LIFESCAPE FOR PARTNERS



Natural England – Innovative regional partnerships

Natural England, as a new, young, national organisation, shares many core values and objectives with the lifescape approach. Natural England was formed in October 2006, by bringing together English Nature and parts of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 sets Natural England a new purpose: “to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.”

Natural England has defined four strategic outcomes that will be used to focus our activities and resources:

- A healthy natural environment
- Enjoyment of the natural environment
- Sustainable use of the natural environment
- A secure environmental future

These are ‘echoed’ in the four lifescape themes. There is therefore great potential for Natural England to continue to forge innovative regional partnerships through the lifescape approach.

Malcolm Emery



MainÄppelHaus Lohrberg – Fruitful discussions

The mutual exchange of experiences and ideas by the project partners proved highly valuable for the orchard centre MainÄppelHaus Lohrberg. Our practical work in the region benefited greatly from the fruitful discussions that we have had.

Learning from international projects, about their challenges and their routes to success has helped us to improve our own strategy and objectives. “To have a look at ones project from another point of view and with another background, can give you new thought-provoking impulses”, says Barbara Fiselius, Chair and member of the orchard centre.

Another very successful story from the perspective of MainÄppelHaus Lohrberg, has been the development of new projects that were developed during lifescape like the ‘European Travelling Notebooks’. Anika Hensel, the centre’s educationalist, thinks, that: “They were a great success. Not only were the pupils enthusiastic, but also the teachers, who have all said that they would really appreciate seeing this project repeated in the future.”

Furthermore, there was a successful and pleasing visit of English volunteers from the partner project South Downs. This built the basis for a new approach to the recruiting of unsalaried employees (volunteers) for the MainÄppelHaus Lohrberg.

Nicola Koczy

ADDED VALUE OF LIFESCAPE FOR PARTNERS

“Lifescape has been a great forum for sharing experiences and developing new ideas about community participation in conservation. We hope to continue working with our partners to create a European network of countryside volunteers.”

Ian Hartle, South Downs Joint Committee, England



“The contact and the collaboration with the partners in the lifescape network improved our local conceptual work. A lot of ideas for new initiatives and for the improvement of existing projects were generated.”

Barbare Fiselius, Orchard Centre
MainÄppelHaus Lohrberg, Germany



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“Livelihood and landscape are two sides of the same coin, and this powerful idea is mirrored in the name of this project: Lifescape. People immediately grasp what is meant by the concept of lifescape. It creates a sense of recognition – something comfortable and challenging at the same time.”

Rob Maessen, Project Lead, Province of Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands

“Lifescape – your landscape has provided a great opportunity to step back from day-to-day activity and think creatively about new approaches to common issues. The interest and enthusiasm shown by lifescape colleagues in each other’s areas has been a motivating force for taking work forward in our own area.”

Gerry Sherwin, High Weald Business
Manager, England

ADDED VALUE OF LIFESCAPE FOR PARTNERS

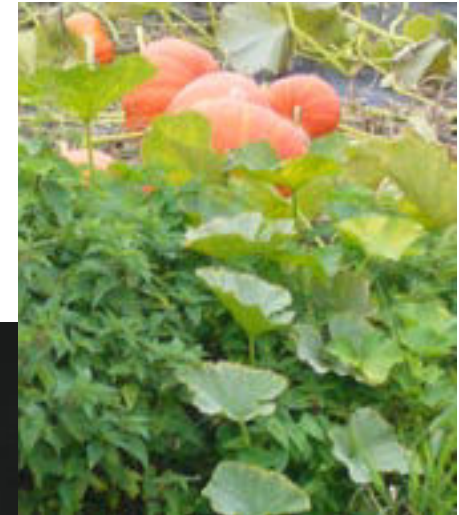
“People do have the right to be responsible for the development of their landscape. We are giving back what is theirs already.”

Peter van Oers, Municipality of Boxtel, the Netherlands



“Lifescape gave rural development a new scope. It gave the VLM opportunities to broaden and innovate its action field and ways of working.”

Erik Verhaert, Flemish Land Agency, Belgium



“Participating farmers in the lifescape project have demonstrated that new markets can be opened up by entrepreneurs who care for traditional landscape qualities and are ready to work together on a professional basis.”

Mr Harrie Vissers, coordinator for professionalizing Agricultural Nature Conservation Societies and Regional Branding



“Through the lifescape – your Landscape project and the joint actions like the European Travelling Notebooks and the schools exchange, children experienced Europe. The projects have been an important source of enthusiasm and allow them to open up to neighbouring cultures.”

Tiphaine Baron, European Cooperation Officer of the Parc Naturel Régional des Caps et Marais d’Opale, France

“Through the lifescape project we have learned how to appreciate the wealth of history and beauty on our doorstep. Children care and connect with their immediate environment and know how our land has influenced our lives.”

Paul Reilly, Headteacher Dallington Church of England Primary School, England

THE WOODY AREA BETWEEN THE RIVERS THE GROTE NETE AND THE DEMER IN FLANDERS FORMS A TRANSITION BETWEEN THE KEMPEN AND THE HAGELAND. UNTIL 2004 THESE FORESTS WERE LARGELY IN THE HANDS OF THE NOBLE FAMILY DE MERODE. NOW THEY ARE ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERYONE.



INVESTING IN THE LANDSCAPE PAYS OFF

Through international exchange the Vlaamse LandMaatschappij (Flemish Land Agency, VLM) has developed an array of instruments to guide the social, economic and ecological development in the region around the De Merode forests. The experience shows that investing in the landscape can strengthen the regional economy.

Erik Verhaert:

“It was a lucky coincidence: in the year lifescape began, in 2004, the Flemish government bought the forests of the Princes of De Merode in the region around the villages of Westerlo and Averbode. The government’s intention was to open up these privately owned and fenced off forests, and the VLM was asked to work out a master plan. The international cooperation within lifescape helped to tackle this for us unfamiliar assignment.

For us the De Merode forests represent the goose with the golden eggs, because they provide the basis for social, economic and ecological development of the wider region. The central question the VLM had to address is how these forests can contribute to the regional identity so that they yield an added value for the tourist industry or for farmers that sell regional products.

Lifescape introduced us to several instruments that other Lifescape partners were developing for similar issues. Inspired by the international cooperation, Leen van den Bergh of the VLM charted the network of key interested parties around the forests, Piet Struyf developed a Geographical Information System for surveying the ecological and cultural values in the area and Mieke Vervaeet worked on an economic assessment instrument for landscape investments with the Dutch Bureau Buiten.

The first results of the economic assessment are promising. The researchers calculated that for example redeveloping the Averbode forest and heath could yield an extra turnover of between 7 and 11 million euros and generate between 59 and 117 jobs.

The primary objective of the redesign of the Averbode forest and heath was to restore the nature. It is a

really positive spin-off that we are now able to calculate that it also pays to invest in nature.

We now have tools to evaluate our investments, to keep an eye on the key parties involved, and to monitor ecological and cultural values in the area. It’s the first time that someone has looked into the socio-economic effects and we can conclude that the De Merode forests are indeed the goose with the golden eggs. With the other instruments we can now work on developing the regional identity that is needed to harvest the golden eggs.” >

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www.demerodeonline.be



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"IT'S SO QUIET THAT YOU COULD ALMOST HEAR THE TREES BREATH. AND STILL A MAN IS NEVER COMPLETELY ALONE. BECAUSE IT IS IN THE KEMPEN, BECAUSE THE PEOPLE AND THE ANIMALS, THE TREES AND THE PLANTS, THE SUN AND THE SAND, THEY ALL KNOW AND UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, THEY ALL HAVE ONE AND THE SAME SOLE." (ERNEST CLAES IN 'KOBEBE', 1933)



INVESTING IN THE LANDSCAPE PAYS OFF

> FACTS

Erik Verhaert is VLM project leader for the De Merode forests. These forests cover about 1,500 hectares in the area between the villages of Tongerlo and Averbode which are both renowned for their medieval abbeys. In the small city of Westerlo, the presence of two De Merode family castles is a symbol of the age-long presence of this noble family in the region. About 125,000 people live and work in this region and thousands of people visit the area every year to enjoy the De Merode forests and their heritage.

DO'S & DON'TS

- Do provide a well-balanced variety of public involvement.
- Do go out into the field and talk with people.
- Do ask the right questions if you are going to consult stakeholders.
- Do remember that relationships are central, not the stakeholders.
- Don't try to put too many topics in one study.

[1] Leen van den Bergh started her network analysis by sending a questionnaire to 60 political, administrative, private and social stakeholders. Then she charted the social links between those stakeholders and thus mapped the network of key persons and organizations for the De Merode forests. The social network analysis will be used by the VLM, in their function as the coordinator of the rural development project De Merode.

[2] Piet Struyf developed a Geographical Information System (GIS) combining models on habitat suitability, population dynamics, changes in vegetation and the landscape value in relation to recreational perception. These models result in GIS maps visualizing changes in the ecological values due to planned actions. The GIS maps can be used to communicate with for instance governments, nature conservation groups, farmers, recreational visitors, and so on. Within this communication the GIS result will feed the decision making process.

[3] Mieke Vervaet developed with Bureau Buiten a user-friendly method to estimate the economic impact of plans for rural development in the De Merode forests. The overall result is a manual and a model in Excel where certain cells need to be filled in, depending on the type of project. The model is not only applicable for the area of the De Merode forest, but can be used for other projects in Flanders if basic data are adapted to the local situation. It has been tested on two cases.



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THE WORD 'WEALD' MEANS WILDERNESS OR FOREST, BUT A CLOSER LOOK AT THE LANDSCAPE REVEALS THAT IT IS MORE THAN JUST WOODLAND. THERE ARE 5 KEY FEATURES THAT TOGETHER MAKE UP THIS LANDSCAPE. ROLLING HILLS, SMALL IRREGULAR-SHAPED FIELDS AND PATCHES OF HEATHLAND, ABUNDANT WOODLANDS, SCATTERED FARMSTEADS AND SUNKEN LANES AND PATHS.



ANCIENT WOODLAND CONNECTS LANDOWNERS

The High Weald can boast almost eight per cent of England's ancient woodland area. Three districts in the area have charted their ancient woodlands and others are following suit. The result: increased statutory protection for woodland and new connections between landowners and a precious landscape.

Mike Chapman:

"In medieval times the High Weald was a vast untamed forest with patches of wild grassland and heath. It was documented in the Domesday Book from 1086, the first land survey done under William the Conqueror. The remnants of that forest remain, and now form England's largest concentration of ancient woodland. These woods are part of the reason the landscape is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The districts of the High Weald are once again doing a survey of the landscape, this time focusing on the ancient woodland. The new maps of the survey are more accurate than the Provisional Ancient Woodland Inventory maps of the 1980's (which were created by the then Nature Conservancy Council, now known as Natural England). For the survey we now use Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to compare historical maps with aerial photographs, and together with field surveys we can

produce a highly accurate digital dataset. The maps have better defined boundaries and also contain small plots of ancient woodland. Because of this accuracy in the Wealden District alone, the new maps contain 1374 new woodland parcels. That means that the proportion of recorded ancient woodland cover in the district has increased from twelve to fourteen percent of the land area.

The survey enhances woodland protection, because the ancient woodlands on the maps are instantly protected under the Forestry and Woodlands Framework for South East England. Authorities have instant access to the maps and can base their decisions on the survey results. However, the value of these maps increased enormously by coupling with the GIS with standard social data. Now, the information in the GIS also provides a means to engage with specific groups of owners of ancient woodlands. We can raise their curiosity and interest, because they learn about the

ecological and archaeological richness of their woodlands, from the remnants of Roman and Medieval iron works to the bluebells and wood anemones that thrive in these ancient woods.

The surveys connect landowners. With the results I can advise them on woodland management. The survey for instance identifies areas of ancient woodland which are being replanted with conifers. The maps produced by the survey also help to get owners of adjacent parcels to work together, because the survey maps clearly show what ecological and cultural riches their properties contain. **Through the survey they can see that there is a connection to our shared heritage. And that connection gives some landowners the incentive to preserve their part of the landscape."**

DO'S

- Do create links both with and between landowners through demonstration events.
- Do maintain a database of contacts and properties.
- Do try to understand landowners' expectations and objectives.

FACTS

Mike Chapman is Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites Officer for the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). AONBs are designated by Government under the English National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, now superseded by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, solely on account of their natural beauty and with the aim of conserving and enhancing them.

The High Weald AONB works on conserving and enhancing the medieval landscape of the High Wealds, with its rolling hills, small, irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes. In his everyday work Chapman visits owners of parcels of ancient woodlands to advise them and help them with management plans. He also organizes workshops and meetings to consider the issues and discuss the management of the ancient woodland.

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CHILDREN WILL TAKE THEIR ENVIRONMENT FOR GRANTED. WHY SHOULDN'T THEY? AFTER ALL, IT IS WHAT THEY'RE USED TO. WHEN YOU TAKE THEM TO A DIFFERENT COUNTRY, THEY WILL SEE SIMILARITIES, BUT ALSO THE DIFFERENCES. SMALL THINGS, INDICATORS OF ANOTHER WORLD: A FARM, OR A CHURCH YARD MAY LOOK QUITE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY ARE USED TO.



6

SCHOOL EXCHANGE MAKES CHILDREN PROUD OF THEIR LANDSCAPE

The school exchange organized through lifescape proved to be a source of motivation for school children from Dallington in England and Dohem in France to tell each other about the landscape they live in and the heritage and nature they enjoy. The children experienced the foreign culture fully and got involved in the local community on the other side of the Channel. Organizers Tiphaine Baron and Gemma Swallow report.

Tiphaine Baron:

“It started during the lifescape Partner Forum in December of 2005. People from the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty visited projects of the Eco Citizen Schools, where children learn about the local landscape and heritage. Gemma told me after this meeting that they had similar school projects and proposed to arrange a meeting between the teachers. First the headmaster from Dallington met a teacher from Dohem, and it went on from there.”

Gemma Swallow:

“At the next meeting the schools had more ownership of the project and so became more involved in the preparation and content of the exchange. The meeting also became more of a knowledge exchange where teachers talked about their own experiences and the differences in the educational systems and the curriculum delivery.”

Tiphaine Baron:

“Nature, landscape and heritage proved very similar, even if the country is not the same. In the first exchange in Dallington we started with a game to break the ice. Children were shown pictures of the landscape of the High Weald and the Caps et Marais d’Opale. About half of them did not know which country they were looking at or guessed they were looking at a French hedgerow landscape when it was actually from the High Weald or said it was an English farm when it was French.”

Gemma Swallow:

“When the children were in the wider landscape they could see and talk about the different landscape features such as field boundaries. When they were in a habitat such as a wood they said things like: This could be England, or: It feels the same now.”

FACTS
Tiphaine Baron is European Cooperation Officer of the Parc Naturel Régional des Caps et Marais d’Opale, an organization for heritage and landscape preservation that combines social and economic development in the rural area between Calais, Saint Omer and Boulogne sur Mer. Gemma Swallow is Project Officer for Interreg and Education for the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
In 2006 about twenty children from the Ecole de Dohem in the French department Pas-de-Calais visited the Dallington Church of England Primary School in the High Weald. The return visit to France was in June 2007.
AONBs are designated by Government under the English National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, now superseded by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.



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SCHOOL EXCHANGE MAKES CHILDREN PROUD OF THEIR LANDSCAPE

> Tiphaine Baron:

“The exchange motivated children. **The French children were proud to speak about the garden they started to cultivate at the back of the school, and it made them feel more ownership for and connection to their own project.** Their enthusiasm at home motivated parents to come to the Dohem school to see the garden and meet other parents and the teachers. So in a small way, the exchange also had a positive effect on local community life.”

Gemma Swallow:

“It gave the children an opportunity to meet children from another culture. It was different from a holiday, because they actually got involved in the community. For instance they were quite impressed when the mayor visited the school in Dohem. And working in a French classroom they really experienced another culture.”

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Added value of lifescape:

Lifescape puts the children’s landscape education into a wider European context as the children were able to experience the same values of working transnationally as the rest of the lifescape project partners.

A school exchange project through Lifescape is a source of motivation for the children. Really and truly being part of a European project is a way of discovering another country and culture, and a direct value to such an experience is that the concept of Europe becomes more meaningful to children.

DO’S & DON’TS

- Do talk to schools first and find out what their needs are.
- Do plan ahead for teachers to include the project into the year programme.
- Don’t lose contact with the schools, the management and the teachers.



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www.boerenvoornatuur.nl
www.ruraleuropeanplatform.org
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This lifescape journey of our experiences – and much more – is also available on our website www.lifescapeyourlandscape.org