

KEMPENSE HEUVELRUG

BETWEEN THE VALLEYS OF THE
KLEINE NETE & AA

Where a biography of the
landscape brings together
past, future and people.

The *Kempense Heuvelrug* evolved from an open heathland with shifting dunes to a wooded dune ridge with remnants of heath and natural areas, surrounded by valleys with both nature and agricultural areas. The Kempense Heuvelrug remains a core natural area but is now closely interwoven with and surrounded by residential, agricultural and urban areas.

KEMPENSE
HEUVELRUG



FIRST (APPLICATION OF) A LANDSCAPE BIOGRAPHY AND VISION IN FLANDERS

De landscape biography seeks the soul of the place, unravels the layers of time and gives meaning to historical relics and land use. In book form, it is both a timeless tool and a dynamic methodology to work on climate, landscape, soil, heritage and meaningful tourism.

In a broad partnership with local, provincial and Flemish governments, scientific and local experts, and citizens, Regionaal Landschap Kleine en Grote Nete pioneered with the Kempense Heuvelrug in creating a landscape biography. In the meantime, two landscape biographies with vision and a tourism development plan have been realized and have been serving for several years as a catalyst for a long-term regional operation that brings together landscape, heritage, geology, ecology and experience.

Work is being done on:

- Local broadening of policy regarding landscape, natural heritage and archaeological heritage, and geological values
- Deepening of forest management with attention to soil heritage
- Inspiration for tourism, land art projects, education, and citizen participation
- Attracting project funding for landscape care and experience

EXPERIENCE AND PARTICIPATION AS THE FOUNDATION

- More than 70 local landscape guides were trained and contributed to the landscape vision, educational activities and product development
- More than 1,500 books were sold and distributed in local bookstores
- Heritage and landscape are more strongly connected with open space, forest and nature management and tourism
- The land art project "A Giant Sculpture" by Gijs Van Vaerenbergh strengthens the identity
- An innovative focus on geotourism strengthens the link between science and the public

CONNECTION ON EVERY LEVEL

- Intermunicipal collaboration
- Towards connected landscapes for people and nature: heathland restoration and dune landscapes connected, valley landscapes strengthened, cities and villages connected with the countryside, gradients between ridge and valley made visible
- Citizens, policymakers, nature managers and artists are brought together

FROM LOCAL INNOVATION TO A FLEMISH MODEL

The approach was later adopted in the Flemish call for Landscape Parks and National Parks. The Kempense Heuvelrug set a standard for area-specific collaboration with an integrated methodology that connects with the (temporal) layers of the place.

 [website](#)

 [video](#)

KEMPENSE
HEUVELRUG

 **KLEINE EN
GROTE NETE**
REGIONAAL
LANDSCHAP

 **KEMPENSE
HEUVELRUG**

 **Provincie
Antwerpen**

 **Vlaamse
overheid**

 **Kasterlee**
Goed voor elkaar.

 **Herentals**

 **lijle**

 **IJDE**
LAND VAN NETE EN AA
ONROEREND ERFGOED - DAT STAAT VAST!

The landscape biographies and visions were created in collaboration with a steering committee comprising representatives from a large number of parties in the area. Thanks to all contributors, local experts, stakeholders, Strootman Landscape Architects, Shera Van den Wittenboer, Wondering & Erfgoed Noorderkempen.