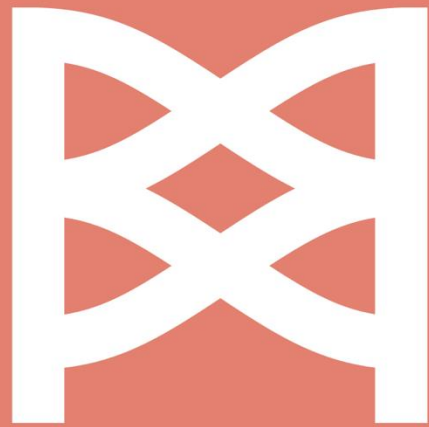




Maasheggen

Unique man-made landscape
in the Netherlands

A close-up photograph of several pink flowers with bright yellow centers. The flowers are in sharp focus, while the background is a soft, out-of-focus green and yellow. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunny day.

The Netherlands' oldest cultural landscape

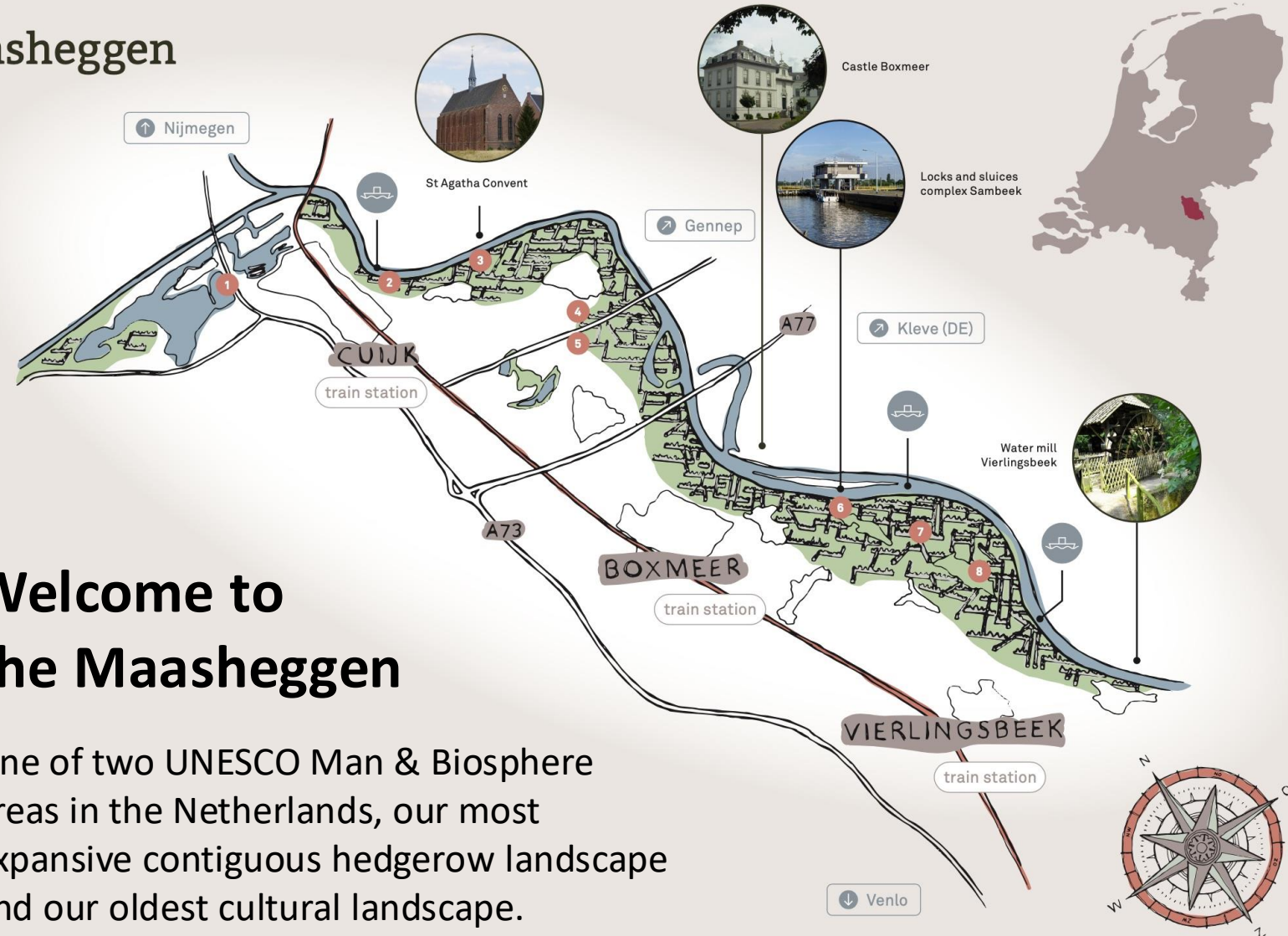
Josan Meijers,
Chair of the Maasheggen UNESCO Steering Committee

INTRODUCTION

Maasheggen

Welcome to the Maasheggen

One of two UNESCO Man & Biosphere areas in the Netherlands, our most expansive contiguous hedgerow landscape and our oldest cultural landscape.



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UNESCO
Man &
Biosphere

THE MAASHEGGEN NOW



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THE MAASHEGGEN NOW

Maasheggen UNESCO: essential facts

- 6700 hectares and a total of 275 kilometres of woven hedges;
- a UNESCO Man & Biosphere since 2018, one of 700 worldwide;
- the Maasheggen UNESCO biosphere reserve stretches along the river Meuse in the municipality of Land van Cuijk;
- in the Maasheggen area there are 11 villages (about 60,000 inhabitants), connected like a string of pearls



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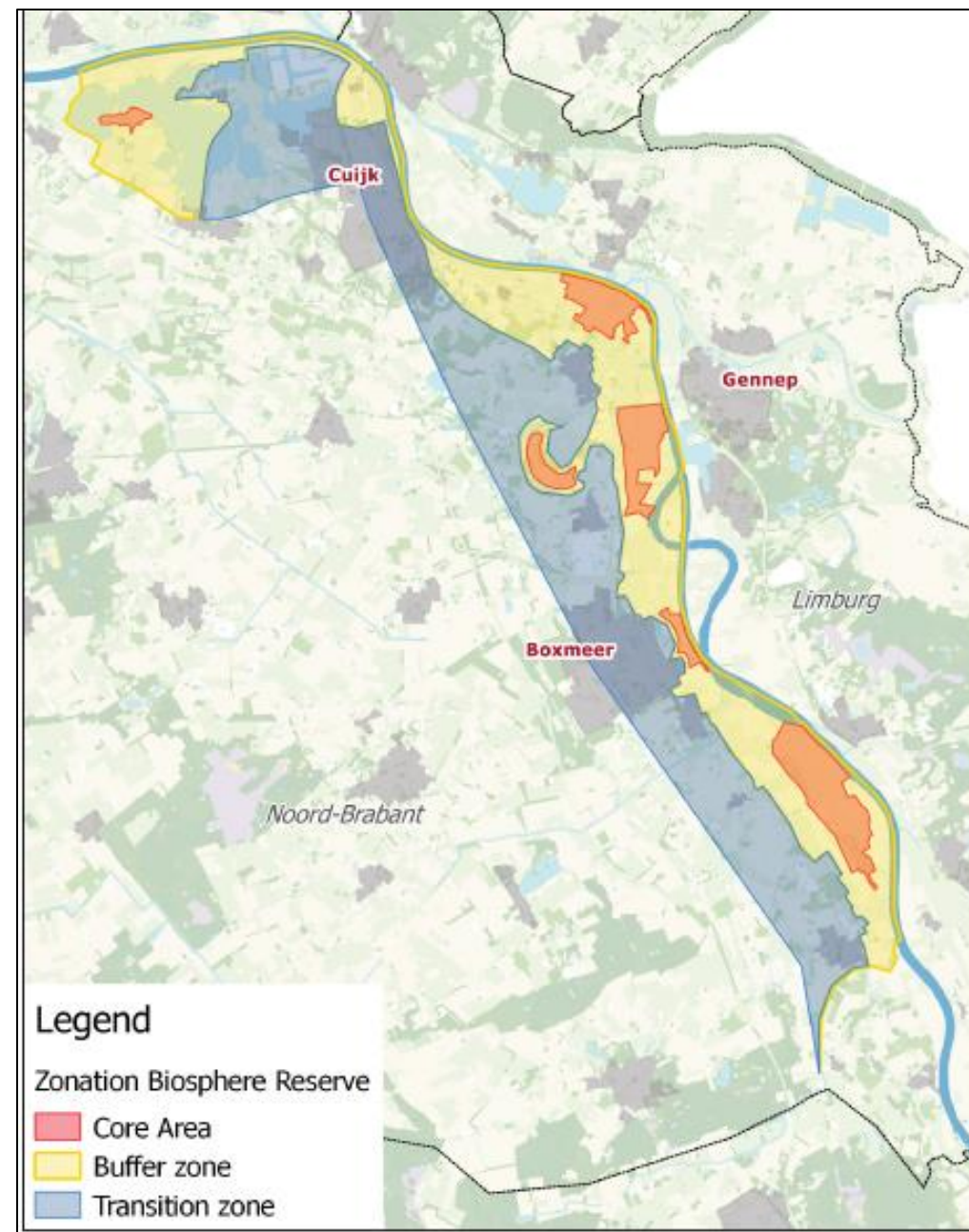


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THE MAASHEGGEN NOW

Three zones

The Maasheggen UNESCO MAB
reserve consists of three zones

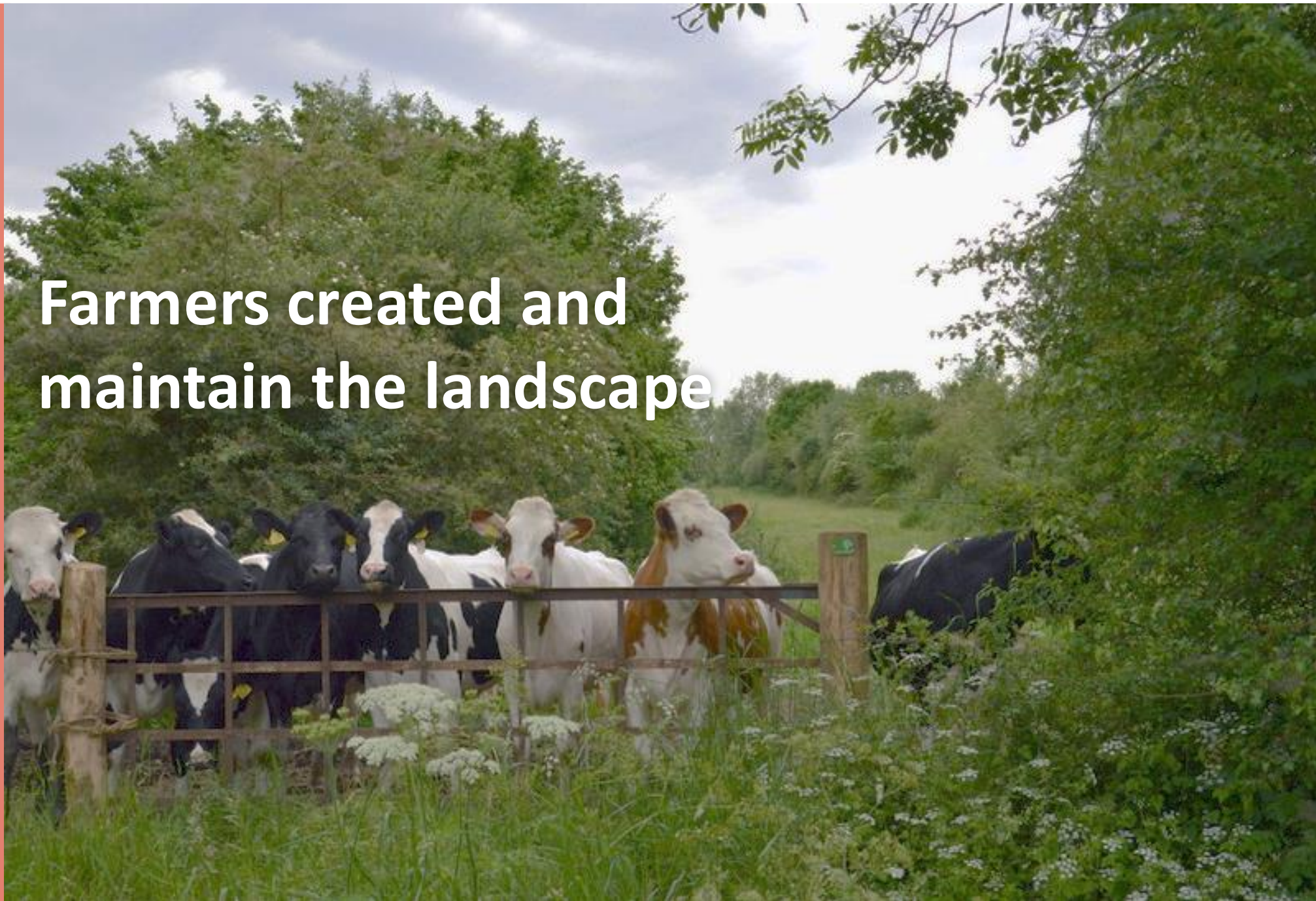


Farmers created and maintain the landscape



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From fear and distrust to engaged collaboration



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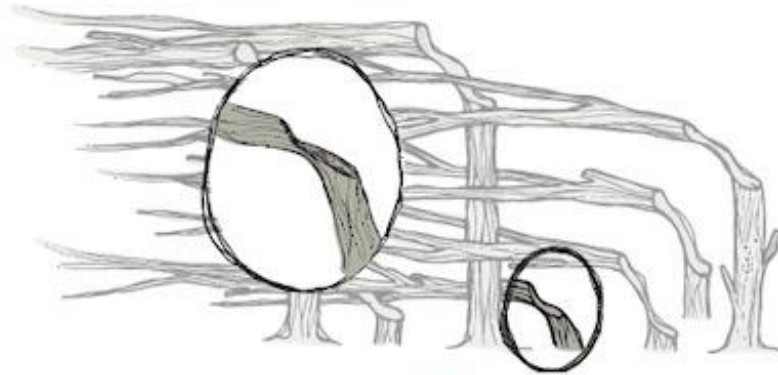
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Hedges,
not barbed wire:
that's what Maasheggen
is famous for

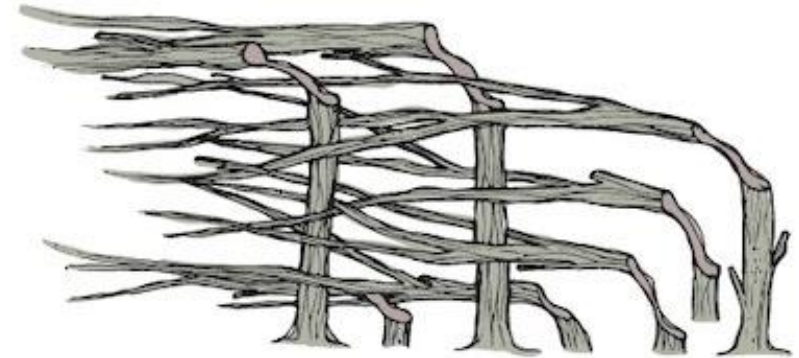


WEAVING HEDGES

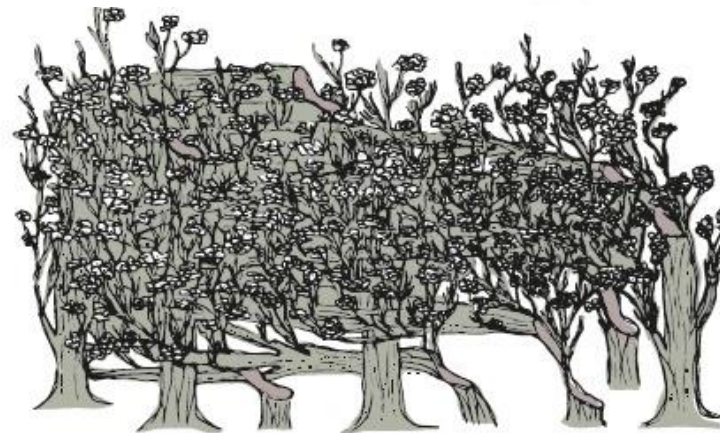
A thousand-year-old technique



1



2



3



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WEAVING HEDGES

The benefits of woven hedges

- a rock solid boundary for livestock;
- protection against predators;
- able to withstand flooding in the river plane;
- retain fertile clay;
- offer shelter from the elements;
- allowing grass to grow harder and cattle to stay outside for a month longer;
- flora and fauna all benefit.



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Every 2nd Sunday in March
Dutch championship
Maasheggenvlechten

DUTCH CHAMPIONSHIP MAASHEGGENVLECHTEN

The 19th edition!

- 4,000 visitors;
- more families with children;
- 43 teams, 150 hedgelayers;
- showcasing and tasting local products, etc

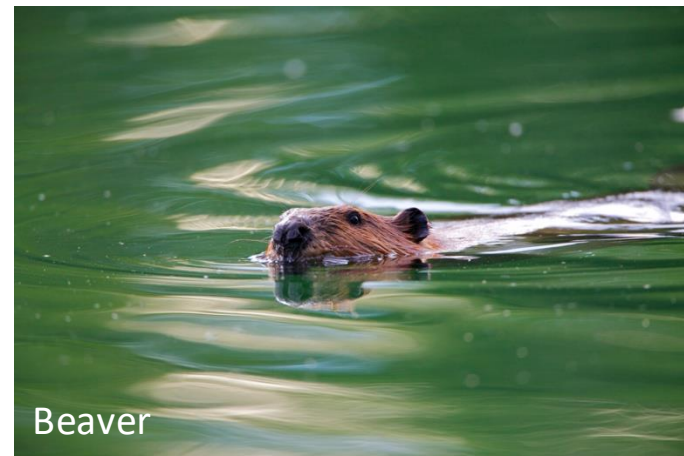
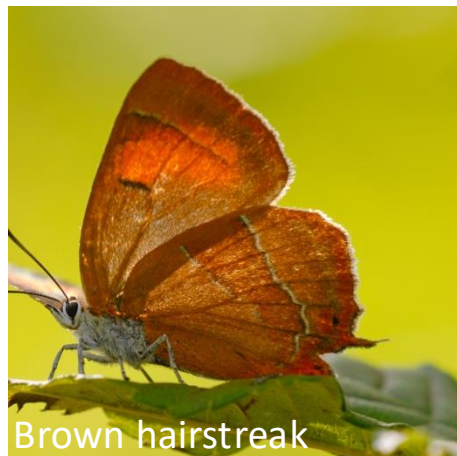


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LIFE IN THE MAASHEGGEN

Flora & fauna: rare, important species



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LIFE IN THE MAASHEGGEN

Unique trees and plants

We find 52 out of approximately 100 native tree and shrub species in the Maasheggen area.

Their seeds are stored in the international seed bank located on Spitsbergen (Svalbard).



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ORGANISATION

Our current organisation

- **steering committee**
 - administrative representatives of the stakeholders and regional partners;
 - independent chairperson;
 - the province of North Brabant, three municipalities in the north of Limburg and Rijkswaterstaat are also involved
- **programme team**
 - three members, with limited hours and specific expertise



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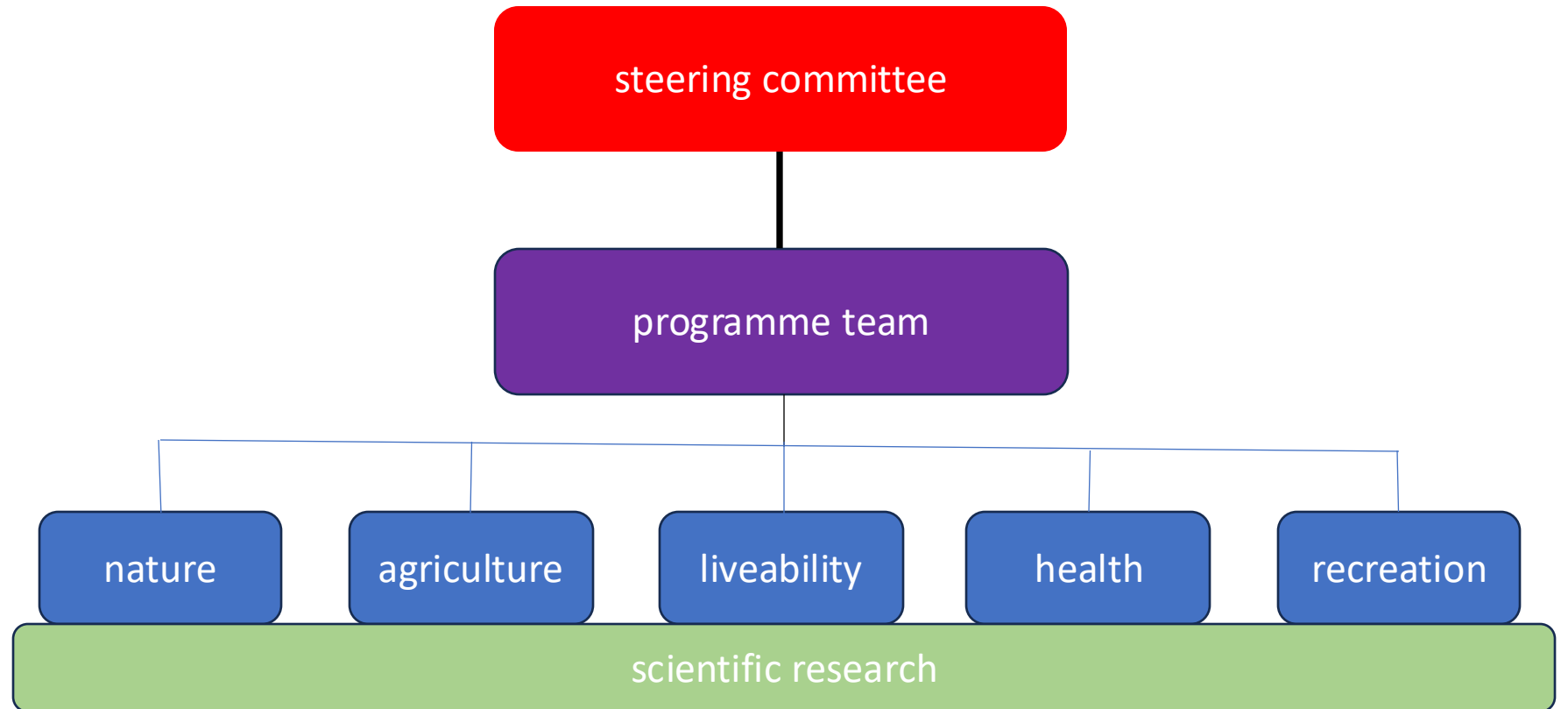
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ORGANISATION



PROGRAMME LINE 1

Nature & Agriculture

- cooperative landscape management;
- nature-inclusive farming;
- monitoring and enhancing biodiversity;
- planting hedgerows;
- restoration of the river basin and flood protection
- creating green village edges
- local/regional products



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EXAMPLE PROGRAMME LINE NATURE & AGRICULTURE

Taste the Maasheggen



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PROGRAMME LINE 2

Quality of Life

- engaging local people;
- Positive Health programme;
- sparking children's interest in their environment (school projects and MaasheggenKids)



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EXAMPLE PROGRAMME LINE QUALITY OF LIFE

MaasheggenKids: activities for children and schools



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PROGRAMME LINE 3

Recreation

- thematic routes for cycling, hiking and horse trekking;
- water sports at Kraaijenbergse Plassen and the river Meuse;
- observation tower (first half of 2026);
- podwalks;
- historic field gates



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EXAMPLE PROGRAMME LINE RECREATION

Historic field gates



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OVERALL

And there's more!

- collaborations with scientists and research institutions;
- active communication;
- Friends of the Maasheggen: 325+ ambassadors



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OUR AMBITIONS

On the way to 2028...

1. creating and maintaining even more hedges;
2. further enhancing biodiversity;
3. stimulating nature-inclusive farming;
4. greening the villages in the area;
5. involving the local population in the development of Maasheggen;
6. promoting Positive Health programme;
7. highlighting tourist attractions, without aiming for large crowds
8. deepening collaboration with scientific institutions
9. possible expansion of the UNESCO area the Maasheggen
10. preparation for the mid-term review in 2028



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maasheggenunesco.com



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Maasheggen
• Biosphere Reserve since 2018
• Man and the Biosphere Programme