

The horses and cattle live in the area, all year round. This is possible because their numbers are kept in balance with the capacity of the area, making supplementary feeding unnecessary (under normal circumstances) (see also box: “Forest or grass”). The result is an optimal explosion of life, such as described in section 3.2.

To make the area suited for year-round grazing, it will be necessary to integrate a high-water refuge for the grazers in the plan for the construction of the houses on the former industrial sites.

The grazers live in socially complete herds, with equal numbers of male and female animals. The result is maximum social dynamics through free partner choice and annual births of calves and foals as a result.

Bulls and stallions raised in social herds pose virtually no threat to the public (van den Herik & Verkaart 2017).

**The Sonsbeek-method**

Increasing support by involving people in nature management is the ‘Sonsbeek-method’. This involvement of people starts with the establishment of making clear entrances on the northeast side (city side) and the southwest side. Another way to increase public support is to give people the opportunity to take their leashed dog(s) along during their walk, to allow fishermen, and so on. If large grazers have to be slaughtered, people can buy the meat in a store or find it on the menu of restaurants in Arnhem.



**Art and culture as a magnet**

In Meinerswijk, art and culture are used to enhance peoples’ experience of nature, stimulating spirituality and imagination. By developing a nature reserve up close to the city this source of inspiration becomes available for all citizens. The city of Arnhem is unique in this. Art projects are being developed step by step with city dwellers and visual artists. As a result, the inhabitants of Arnhem are tempted to discover nature and are indulged into the dynamics of people and nature.

**WHERE DOES THE NAME HEERLIJKHEID MEINERSWIJK COME FROM?** Meinerswijk was originally called Meginhardeswich and is a derivation of the Roman villa Vicus Meginhardi mentioned in 814. Meinerswijk is thus counted among the oldest places mentioned in Dutch history reports. In 1991, the remains of this castellum Meinerswijk were excavated. It consisted of a main building (principia) and a back gate (porta decumana). In 847 this settlement was destroyed by the Normans and since then nothing was built there.

Until 1853 the house of the Heerlijkheid Meinerswijk was located on the Meginhardweg. It consisted of a walled castle including a tower with a slate spire. De Huis Meinerswijk has had many famous owners. One of the last owners was the Dutch king Willem II. In 1845 he bought the Heerlijkheid for almost 160,000 guilders. The king is reported to have visited the house at least once. The Arnheemsche Courant reports in May 1845 that “the King, together with the princes of Orange, Alexander and Hendrik and Prince Frederik first made a trip to the new Heerlijkheid Meinerswijk before returning to their residence.”

The name Heerlijkheid Meinerswijk refers linguistically to a pleasant place for people, plants and animals. A wonderful garden or park to spend time in. Prosaically meaning a pleasure ground or paradise; an area where colorful, fragrant flowers and enchanting birdsongs fill up the senses.

Historically, Meinerswijk is an area where the citizens of Arnhem sought entertainment. For example, it used to be a fairground for many years. The ship bridge situated at the Preats from 1603 till 1935 ensured a good connection between the city center of Arnhem and Meinerswijk.

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*“We are gathered here today to get through this thing called LIFE. Electric word LIFE it means forever and that’s a mighty long time. But I’m here to tell you there’s something else: The after world. A world of never ending happiness you can always see the sun, day or night....*

*....but in this life things are much harder than in the after world. In this life you’re on your own.”*

Prince - Let’s Go Crazy

**INTRODUCTION**

This vision outlines the opportunities for the establishment of a new nature reserve, comprising of almost 300 hectares, very close to the city center of Arnhem. The possibility to develop this nature reserve comes into the picture after signing the land use plan for Stadsblokken-Meinerswijk and transferring KWP’s properties to the municipality of Arnhem. The plan for building houses on Stadsblokken-Meinerseiland is excluded from this vision.

The aim of this vision is to develop an inspiring and special nature reserve, comparable to area’s as the Millingerwaard, the Naardermeer and the Weerribben. This area will be developed for the inhabitants of Arnhem, with the aim of (re)connecting the urban quarters of Elderveld, Malburgen-west and the city center on the other side of the river.

This vision on the management of the Heerlijkheid Meinerswijk provides answers to the following questions:

- 1. What is the area going to look like?
- 2. What are we going to do and what not?

**MORE NATURE FOR MORE ENJOYMENT OF PEOPLE IN HEERLIJKHEID MEINERSWIJK!**





## NATURE AS ENERGY

### Counterforce to daily life

The Heerlijkheid Meinerswijk is to become a sanctuary for a great many citizens of Arnhem. Here they can give space to their feelings, emotions, intuition and imagination. Here people can meet each other and get reacquainted with their own natural selves. A place where one can slow down and recharge; a place to get the new day off to a fresh start with a morning stroll or, for example, escape the rat-race of work during their lunchtime break. Where people can replenish their energy and get inspired; a place where synergy arises. The area can function as a counterforce to the rationality of daily life with its ever urgent deadlines. In this way Meinerswijk fulfills the role of nature as medicine and becomes a place with a social and economic added value for the whole of Arnhem.

### Hard to grasp rationally

Nature can hardly be described in rational terms. Everyone relates to nature in his own unique way. Nature has no knowledge of itself in rational terms, either. It's we who describe her as 'nature', as it's we who decide how we see ourselves in relation to nature. Speaking about nature is therefore always speaking about our relationship to nature and never about nature itself. Nature provides us with important meaningful experiences, mentioned in literature and described as transcendental experiences. These are experiences that take people beyond what can be rationally contained, experiences whereby they feel drawn to the 'unknown part of life', whatever that may be. Many consider such experiences as sacred (Jansen 2017).

## WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

### Give space to natural processes

The future management of the Heerlijkheid Meinerswijk focuses on giving space to natural processes such as: flooding, succession, grazing, survival of the fittest and so on. The introduction of Konik horses and Galloway cattle for natural grazing is an important starting point. Next on the wishlist is linking the Heerlijkheid Meinerswijk via the Groene Rivier to the floodplains of the Bakenhof, resulting in an area of 400 hectare. Once that has been achieved, people on the dike at Malburgen can see the large grazers pass by when they roam between the Sakharov bridge in the east and the railway bridge in the west.

### NATURETYPE N01 LARGE-SCALE DYNAMIC NATURE

"Large-scale, dynamic nature is a nature type where natural processes have a decisive influence on the landscape. As a result, young succession stages such as open ground, open water or grassland are present, as well as old succession stages such as forests or peat bogs. Therefore, a wide variation in living communities and species is present.

River landscapes include areas along rivers where the water dynamics of the rivers and succession in combination with integral grazing by large grazers determine the landscape. Together these areas form a unit. In this large-scale management nature type, top predators such as White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) are characteristic and the beaver can also influence the landscape."

The objective "Giving space to natural processes" corresponds with the nature type "N01 Large-scale Dynamic nature and N01.03 River and Marshland landscape" as described in the Index Nature and Landscape of the Dutch provinces (see box above).

### More life by letting go

In managing the Heerlijkheid Meinerswijk, many of the traditional ideas about nature conservation are being abandoned. The fear of losing special plants and animals is exchanged for confidence in the power of nature. The consequence of choosing for natural processes is that the area becomes alive. An area that grows, flowers, always fascinates and constantly changes.

Due to the absence of mowing machines, plants can blossom, set seed and spread naturally. Blossoming flowers provide nectar for endemic insects. These insects in turn feed songbirds and bats. In winter grazers can feed on the remaining long grasses and seeds are available for birds and mice. These songbirds and small mammals will feed birds of prey and predators, ensuring the uninterrupted and unbroken, original circle of life.

This type of management creates a varied landscape with a mosaic pattern and many gradients. The result is a sustainable landscape that can withstand future changes and ensure the existence of many plant and animal species.

## NATURE MANAGEMENT IS THE WORK OF MAN

### Growth within limits

The tolerance for natural processes is limited. This means that at some points intervention is necessary. Determining in advance when interventions are needed (and when not) helps people to give natural processes as much space as possible within these limits. It means keeping a close watch, having a vision and acting in time. It will be the primary responsibility of the future nature manager to make the animals regain their trust in natural processes.

This entails the timely removal of vegetation obstructing the flow of the river. Reminding people of harmful behavior. And so on.

### FOREST OR GRASS

When people stop intervening in nature's ways in the present-day Netherlands, forestation will ultimately occur. In the seventies and eighties of the last century it was suggested that large grazers such as cattle, horses, deer, and wisent could prevent this from happening. (de Bruin et al. 1987). Such animals were supposed to be able to counteract forest development and even reduce existing forest. Since then, large grazers have been introduced in various nature reserves in the Netherlands. In many of these areas, however, forestation is nevertheless occurring and increasing; sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly.

The extent to which forest development is inhibited or even set back by large grazers depends strongly on the number of animals that live in an area (= density). The rule of thumb that applies to this is that forest development is inhibited or reset when the holding capacity of the area is exceeded. The holding capacity is defined as the amount of food present to keep all the animals alive, year-round. If the holding capacity is exceeded, the additional consequence is that animals present in that area all year round will starve.

Exceeding the holding capacity, resulting in mortality of large grazers is undesirable for Meinerswijk. This means that the size of the herd in Meinerswijk depends on the amount of available food in the winter, so that permanent damage to the animals as a result of malnutrition is avoided.

### Natural grazing

The Heerlijkheid Meinerswijk will be grazed as a whole. The residential enclaves are screened off, following the example of the New Forest area in southern England. There the houses are fenced off and the cattle and horses roam free within the area. The reasons for creating the largest possible grazing unit are:

- A greater diversity of plant and animal species. On the one hand due to the larger size and on the other hand due to the larger variation.
- Large herds are genetic more sustainable.
- More efficient management, fewer fences, roundups
- Greater appeal on public and press.

