



Community Living in the Wild Lands

- A circular and simple way of living in tune with nature

Commissioner

Lidewej Bosman

Course information

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Introduction

The project's aim is to rewild an area of approximately 25 ha surrounding the Hoge Veluwe. At the moment, most of the land surrounding the national park is agricultural land. The goal of the project is to purchase some of the agricultural land and convert it to wildlands; hence the name 'De Wilde Landen'. To achieve this, the commissioner of this project has decided to build leisure housing to some parts of rewilding lands to provide funding for the project and a community to work on the rewilding.

Our mission is to create a concept of recreational homes that promotes community-based conservation, with a special attention to sustainability, community, and longevity both in the building process and in the finished product. In practice our vision is that we provide a basic structure of the cabins to the cabin owners and then they can do the finishing touches. The finishing touches can for example involve trying to find recycled windows or doors. This should promote community and sustainability. Also, through the layout of the cabins on the land, we believe we can promote community. The cabins are centered around a common area that is meant to be used by the whole community.

We also want to incorporate a unique culture into this project. By this, we decided to base the project on the concept we have at home, hygge. This is a concept that is based around making a cozy atmosphere around you. Furthermore, we think by creating cabins that are focused on simplicity we can promote a sense of being part of nature.

Our goal is also to make a fluent transition from outside to inside the cabins, by this we want to incorporate nature as much as possible. With windows centered with the nature around and natural building materials, we believe this goal can be achieved.

We aim for as much as possible of the building material to be recycled. There are stables on the site where we hope that we can use some of the wood for the primary construction of the cabins. Also, we hope to use the waste of a local papermill either as isolation or part of the wrapping of the cabins.

When making constructions on the wildlands we aim for minimal trail formation. We have centered the cabins in a way to promote minimal trail formation. Also, by creating heightened paths of wood to enforce a walking trail, we also hope to promote less trail formations.

On the next page you will find a Mission Model Canvas that summarizes these goals and means of achieving them. In the following chapters we will elaborate on three important aspects of the project:

- 1) Housing
- 2) Community
- 3) Conservation efforts

With this project we aim to contribute to achieving several of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Happy reading!

Mission Model Canvas

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Key Partners  Hoge Veluwe NP Local government Local papermill Local farmers Wageningen University & Research Local community | Key Activities  Active group leader in community Knowledge on local rewilding Knowledge on sustainable houses Knowledge on sustainable facilities Key Resources  Expert on sustainability Expert on local rewilding Expert on using waste materials from local papermills Expert on using waste materials from local farms/stables | Value Propositions  Rewilding about 25 ha of former farmland into nature around De Hoge Veluwe Recreational houses for 2-4 people that blend into nature Houses that are sustainable, self-sufficient and customizable to buyers needs Facilities and community-spaces that are sustainable and self-sufficient Multidisciplinary workspaces A like-minded community (new form of Hygge that 'breathes' nature, longevity and sustainability) to work with and share ideas on rewilding nature and sustainable living | Buy-in & Support  Owner paper factory Farmers looking to sell land Architects specialized in sustainable design WUR study boards Deployment  Mouth-to-mouth Contacts from similar projects Crowdfunding campaign Social media campaign | Beneficiaries  Recreational homeowners Local industries (papermills) Local farmers People that care about rewilding People that like community Tourists visiting De Hoge Veluwe Low-income households Wildlife in region WUR Students |
| Mission Budget/Cost  We need investors for about 18 houses to fund the accumulation of the area and the realisation of the project. We could also look at crowdfunding or local subsidies | | Mission Achievement/Impact Factors  Creating recreational, sustainable, self-sufficient housing that support a community of people on a mission of rewilding an area in or around De Hoge Veluwe. | | |

INSPIRATION AND SOURCES

landvanons.nl
dssmith.com
thegreenmanproject.nl
superuse-studios.com
Oogst-en-kenniskaart-full
elmovermijs.com/projecten
wikkelhouse.com/
noysomarkitekter.no/
ppauw.nl/
 Projectplan De Wilde Landen
veluweop1.nl/Masterplan-IJsselvallei.pdf



KEY CONCEPTS FOR CABINS

Self-sustained, blend into nature

Prevent trail formation, wooden boardwalk

Local, natural, reused, recycled, waste materials

Basic cabins for recreation

Standard, but flexible modules

Custom finishing touches (doors, windows)

Workspaces for artists, workshops or other purposes

Community centre in the middle

Windows facing outwards to nature

Our own community spirit, like Hygge, that breathes 'nature, sustainability and longevity'

1 Housing

The requirements for the housing were broad, essentially the houses should be as self-sustaining as possible, minimalistic, and lightweight to prevent the sinking as the soil is soft. Other requirements from the commissioner were that the housing to be build should be livable around the year and should be suitable for two to four persons, for example parents and two kids or be suitable to be used as a home office. Focus points of this project are also circularity and reuse of the materials that are already available in the region, for example wood from the stables that are located on the land.

1.1 Target market

Even though there might not be specific term for houses exactly like this, we felt that the “tiny houses” as a term is the closest, as Shearer & Burton (2019) argue that tiny houses are generally speaking at least under 70m² depending on the definition and have strong focus on sustainability, community and sharing of resources (pp. 307, 315). The above-mentioned topics are also strongly present in this project, thus adopting the term for clarity, but also for marketability of the housing seemed conventional, as there is existing market research on the topic and the tiny house -trend seems to be on the rise and there are no sign of the trend slowing down (I Property Management, N.D). Although the commissioner did not specifically ask us to plan the project or the presented concept around tiny houses, the typology of tiny houses seems to match the goals and intentions of the project well and is thus used as the basis for our project.

What it comes to traditional tiny houses there are also cons, according to Overstreet (2020), the downsides of tiny houses might be a cause for regret to some US tiny homeowners, where one third stated that they wish they would have built a bigger house. However, there is a difference between the tiny houses that our concept suggests to the ones purchased by US nationals in North America, our proposal especially focuses on leisure

housing, thus it is expected that the potential buyers are using the tiny houses in Hoge Veluwe region for leisure purposes and as a home office and they do own / rent a “normal” house or apartment in nearby regions.

The market for tiny houses is global, but Dutch nationals are on board of the trend, there are around 27 thousand members in Facebook group of “Tiny Houses Nederland” and over 500 dwellings already that could be classified as a tiny houses (Boukhari et al., 2020). Concerning the above and the fact that the project is geared towards leisure housing as well as people interested in tiny houses, we can say, that the demand for this project exists and it should be feasible to direct the marketing to right markets.

1.2 Materials and land use

The main goal of the Wilde Landen is to transform former agricultural land into land for nature conservation, and establish recreational homes in the area for people who wants to enjoy time in nature and as a part of a community. We therefore want to utilize as much of the land for conservation as possible, and minimize the ecological footprint of the recreational cabins. The location of the cabins is therefore crucial. We



Figure 1: Elevated wooden paths are very common in Nordic countries, and consists of a very simple construction.

recommend locating the cabins in one part of the land, preferably in a corner or on one side. This is to leave most of the land “untouched” by the community, and to avoid unnecessary trail-formation across the land between the cabins. We also suggest using recycled wood planks to build elevated paths (as shown in figure 1). This is also to avoid

unnecessary trail-formation, as we believe people are less likely to walk off an elevated path, but also to increase accessibility for all humans. By building elevated paths the land underneath is also less damaged.

In terms of the cabins themselves and sustainability, size does really matter! By utilizing tiny houses, we aim to minimize energy use, resource use, and ecological footprint. The smaller the house, the less materials are needed. We suggest that the cabins consist of 1-2 small bedroom maximum, where the second bedroom also can potentially be used as a workplace. The second bedroom can also be located in an open loft. Because the cabins will be on “sponge”-like land, they must be light in weight. It is therefore practical to build small.

We suggest building the houses in primarily wood for the same reason, to lower the weight. We also want to use wood because this is a material that can be easily reused, which is another important aspect of the cabins. When developing the cabins, reusing of materials should be prioritized, as well as circularity. This can be done by involving the local community in the area to collect “waste” materials which can be used in the construction of the cabins or other aspects of De Wilde Landen. Perhaps someone has some leftover planks from construction which can be utilized, or someone is switching out their windows and donates their old ones.

Websites such as insert.nl is also great for sourcing materials suitable for reuse. If there are old stables on the land, they can either be redone and used for common areas, or materials from it can be used in the construction of the cabins.

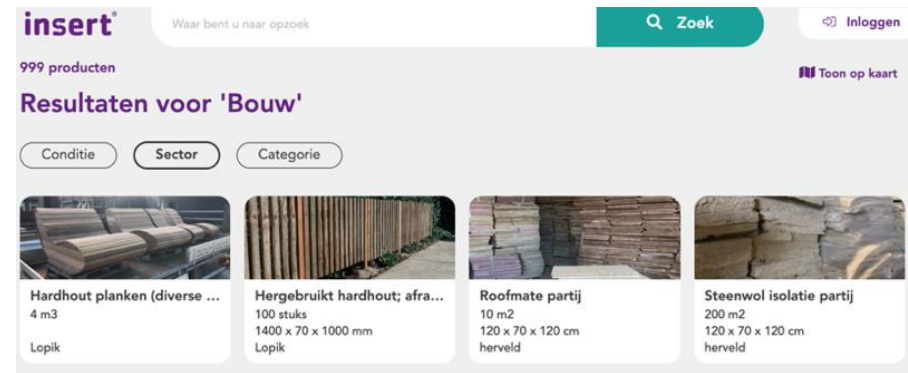


Figure 1: A quick search on insert marketplace shows a thousand results on construction materials.

We have also developed a simple design of the potential cabins to visualize the concept we have in mind for De Wilde Landen. It includes a porch at the entrance of the cabin, facing the social “square” in the middle, and big window in the back facing the nature. The big windows will bring in lots of natural light in the cabin, and also give people the opportunity to enjoy the view of nature from inside. As earlier mentioned, our concept is based on wooded cabins. We suggest having grass on the roof to make the cabins blend in with nature better. The grass roof is also a good opportunity for increasing biodiversity and carbon storage in soil. Because we want the cabins to be self-sufficient, we have included solar panels on the roof as well to collect energy. We want to empathize that this design is just a suggestion, and mainly exist to visualize our concept.

The measurements for our cabins include:

Inside floor area: 22 m²

Open loft: 15 m²

Front porch: 7 m²

Total size of each cabin: **44 m²**

Volume:

Height roof ridge: 4,55 m

Height main floor: 2,4 m

Height open loft: 1,9 m

Width: 3,3 m

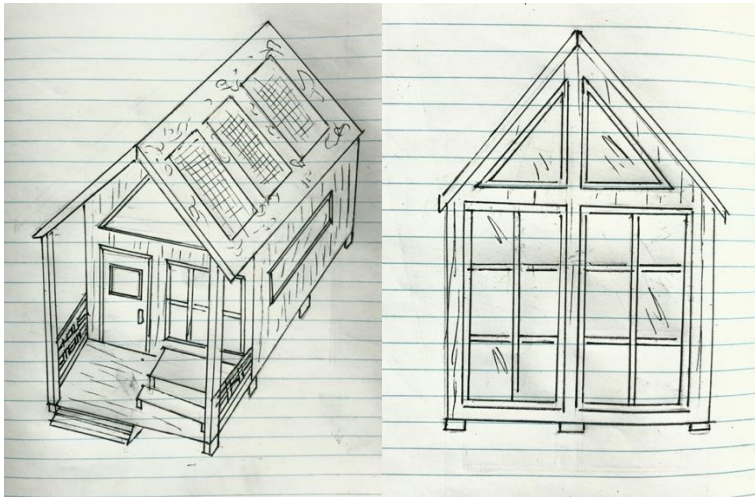


Figure 2 and 4: The initial sketches of the cabins.



Figure 5: The cabin drawn digitally.

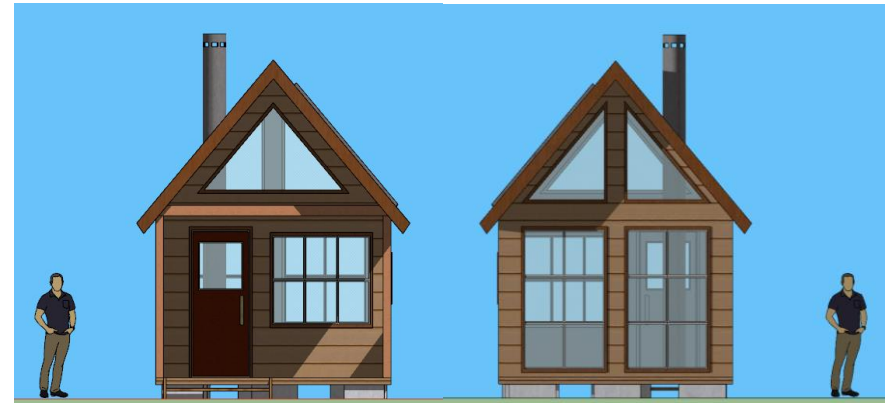


Figure 6 and 7: The front entrance with a porch, and the back of the cabin facing nature.

This design is promoting the concept of conviviality with nature. Under convivial conservation, the goal is not to protect nature from people, but to promote nature for, to, and by the people (Büscher and Fletcher, 2019). In line with that, the main idea of this project is to integrate nature into human livelihood. It will be started with the rewilding and restoration of nature in the site, and then the people are encouraged to practice sustainable living where they would be supported by nature and supporting nature itself. The people will be able to live while enjoying the beauty of nature, and they will also contribute to the maintaining of the forest by doing the least damaging method for development and have a sustainable and eco-friendly way of living as a community.

To strengthen this human-nature relationship, we choose tiny cabins in our project and design it as minimalist as possible to encourage people to spend more time outside in nature than staying inside. This experience of being in nature is important for humans to develop environmental identity which in turn can increase environmental concern and pro-environmental behavior (Clayton, 2012). This way we will be able to not only provide the need for connection with nature for the people who needs it, but also supporting conservation by having more people with conservation awareness.



Figure 8, 9 and 10: The formation of the cabin in a half-circle.



2 Community

The goal of our project is to create a community within the structures and the people living on the land. We want this to be a place where one can experience support, peace and hygge. Hygge is the Danish and Norwegian word for cozy, but it is also more than that. It is the feeling of wellbeing and contentment.

In order to make these goals a reality we have some ideas that can contribute to both community and hygge. First, the placement of the cabins. We want the cabins placement to encourage hygge. We do not want the cabins spread far apart and be in sporadic positions. We have a vision that if we can circle the cabins around one focal point, in this case for example a community house, the making of community will be encouraged. As shown in the illustration below they are centered around a communal structure, as already mentioned the goal is to also have less train formation. The idea can be altered by how many cabins ends up in the final product, but the idea is still the same. The idea is based around the number 6, 6 cabins centered around a community facility. This can either be a outside kitchen, a little community house or just something that community feels they have the need for. If the project consists of 18 cabins this is then the same just divided in three different zones, but still centered around one focal point, like this:



Elaborating further on the idea of a common area the idea is for people to work together for a common goal, thereby creating the sense of community and hygge. By having a common house, the people in the community could use it together to for example learn from each other through workshops and such. Because the houses are going to be quite minimalistic it might be an idea to have common office areas in the common house. By this people get out of their houses and meet other people in the community, but still being able to work. A common house is also something that can be added later on in the process. It could also be a project in of itself with the local people helping to build it with for example rest materials form building their own houses. With this, one would ensure a more sustainable building process, by reusing rest materials, and create the sense of community with people working for a shared good.



Figure 11: Example of a common office space

Going back to the main idea of hygge, there are many ways this project reflects this concept. Firstly, the intention is to make the cabins as minimalistic as possible. With the cabins acting as a clean slate the idea is that the owner can make it functional and cozy as they self like. Also, with the cabins being minimalistic and clean this can for many make it seem like a stressful and cluttered space. With less stress and the feeling of comfort the concept of “hygge” is easier achieved.

3 Conservation efforts

Conservation efforts come from people's internal motivation to improve the world around them. Conservation often sounds simple and clear, but also comes with its own challenges. This chapter aims to show how this project contributes to the world sustainable development goals and through which approach these goals can be achieved, while considering the framework that's used to view this conservation effort.

3.1 Sustainable development goals

De Wilde Landen can be regarded as being part of the Sustainable development goals (SDG). There are four goals that can directly be linked to the project.

1) Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11)

By setting a small sized example of how a community can work in a sustainable manner, this project contributes to the worldwide network and knowledges of 'real world' proof that sustainable cities and communities are possible.

2) Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12)

By creating houses that are smaller than usual and are created from re-used or waste materials, this project contributes to knowledges on responsible and sustainable living through its materials used. The self-sustainable aspects of the houses also help to encourage other people to find ways of self-sustaining their own living spaces.

3) Life on land (SDG 15)

By rewilding former agricultural landscapes, this project directly contributes to conserving and preserving biodiversity on land. It creates extra space for

flora and fauna to live and to be admired by people, who then might feel inspired to take better care of our planet.

4) Partnerships for the goals (SDG 17)

The interdisciplinary approach between De Wilde Landen, local producers, government and Wageningen University and Research sets a precedent for local cooperation between different stakeholders in order to create partnerships around sustainable development goals.

The combination of these four goals, shows how the project contributes on several levels within the so called 'SDGs Wedding cake' in figure 12, namely on economic (SDG12), societal (SDG 11) and biosphere (SDG15) levels, and the overarching partnership (SDG17).



Figure 12: SDGs Wedding Cake (by Jerker Lokrantz/Azote)

3.2 Commodification of nature

When tourism comes to a place, it sets up a very particular mode of interaction through commodification. It becomes valued (Huijbens, 2021). Commodification of nature is a known method for nature conversation. By adding value to nature, we can create incentives for people to invest and pay for services in or around nature in order to protect it. De Wilde Landen is closely connected to this framework because the project focuses on creating houses and experiences in De Hoge Veluwe. By creating a small community, it can offer people a place to stay for leisure and organize activities and workshops, while also protecting nature and transforming farmlands into wild lands through the funding these homes and activities provide.

The value, however, requires surplus value in order to sustain itself, like new experiences, more houses or wider land accumulation. Endless growth and expansion are simply not possible in this area. That's why the project seeks to move beyond this capitalist view on conservation through 'Convivial conservation'.

3.3 Convivial conservation

Convivial conservation can attribute to place based development, because this concept looks for ways to integrate the human and non-human world (Büscher & Fletcher, 2019). They try to learn how local communities view the area around them and how this relates to how they deal with local difficulties in relation to nature, which is an important part of meanings of place (Masterson, Tengö, & Spierenburg, 2017). These local experiences can differ between communities and people within a community and therefore help to find a balanced, durable solution of living in and with nature. As Davenport & Anderson (2005) state, it's possible for a meaning of place to change (increase or decrease) due to changes in the landscape. Therefore, bringing multiple perspectives to the table and considering the views and ways of different local communities can help attribute to helping new ecosystems evolve in a way that is good for all parties involved.

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