

More attention to authentic landscape

The Oer-IJ Foundation draws attention to the quality and vulnerability of the currently green rural area in the Zaanstad, Velsen, Alkmaar triangle. The Oer-IJ, a branch of the Rhine that flowed into the sea near Castricum, flowed here until the beginning of our era. For those who know this many features can still be seen in today's landscape.

In this original wood drying shed you can see maps and archaeological finds that provide an insight into the development and settlement history of the Oer-IJ area. People have been living here for about 5,000 years. As soon as pieces of land fell dry, the first residents settled there. The presence of water has been decisive for the changes and appearance of the landscape here. Water has always been a threat. This danger was averted by digging ditches, building dikes and using windmills. Water was also used as an ally by means of inundation, the deliberate flooding of land, as part of a military defence method.

One of the important features of this area is the great variation of landscapes in a relatively small piece of the country. Unique nature. Sandy dunes and beach walls, beach plains with peat and clay in polders right next to each other, and in between the former basin

of the vanished river. With irregular watercourses and creek ridges, which are reminiscent of the time when this originally wild tidal landscape was still in open connection with the North Sea.

The process of change continues. Rising sea levels, salinization of groundwater and subsidence of peat meadow areas make new interventions necessary. The rural area is under pressure as a result of advancing urbanization. The need for safe living and working conditions requires a well-thought-out policy; with an eye to the future and with respect for the past.

This tangible history is vulnerable, but also has qualities that offer new opportunities. This not only concerns the preservation of cultural and historic heritage, but also sustainable tourism, the transition of agriculture and nature development as part of measures against climate change.

The Oer-IJ Foundation is a residents' initiative of citizens who are concerned about the loss of the landscape. The foundation sees itself primarily as a knowledge and network organization and would like to think constructively about the future design of our rural area. In addition, public activities are organized, such as guided excursions, educational projects for

students and lectures. Cycling route booklets have also been created and published, as well as knowledge documents and books. A lot of information can be found on the website www.oerij.eu.