Rewilding as a social process

case study on public participation in planning of bison re-introduction in the Schiermonnikoog NP

FREE

Roeland Vermeulen , September2014

Rewilding as a social process

Sharing a dream

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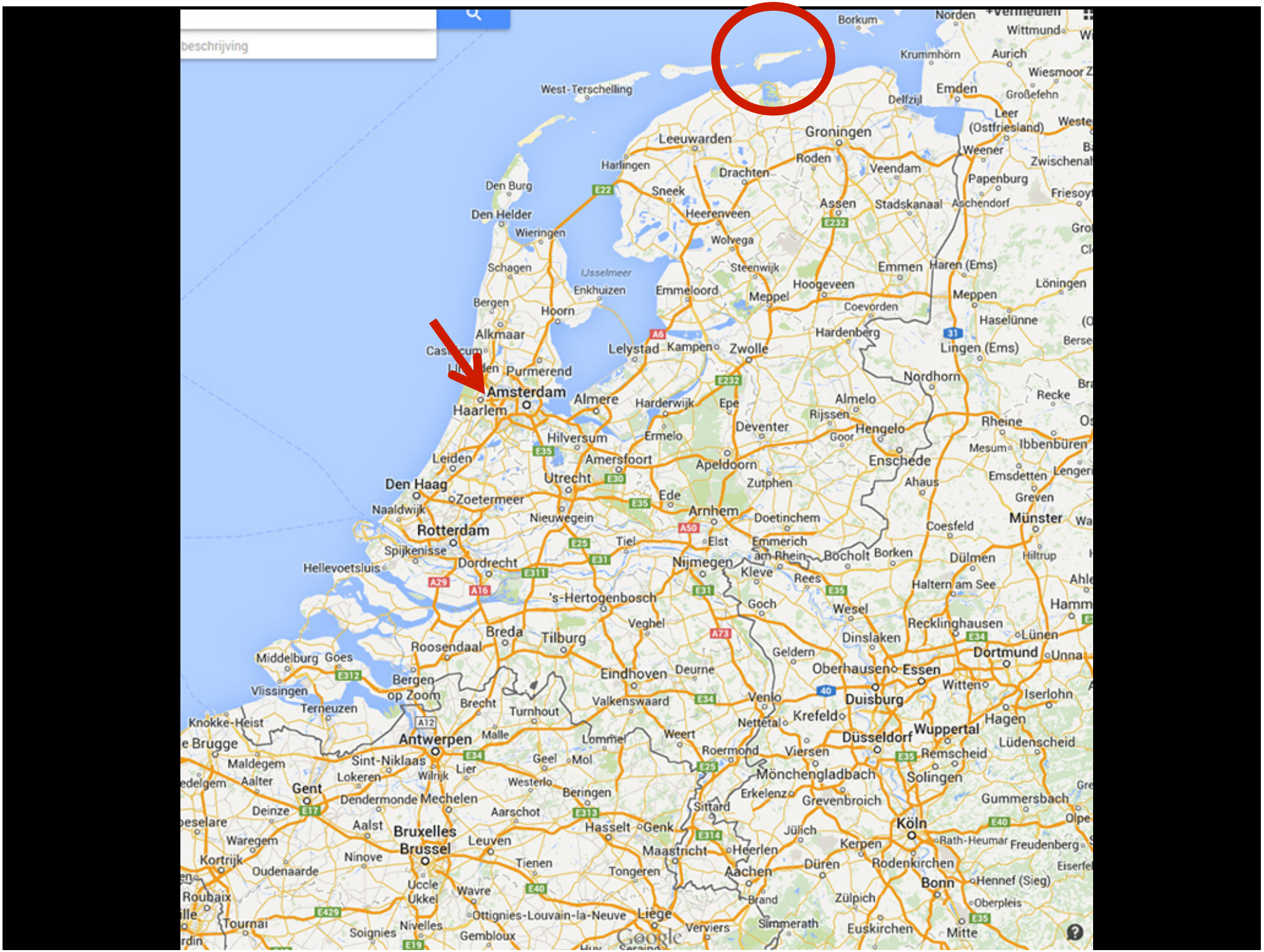
This story is ...

... not about wildlife, ...

... but about people ...

and their home landscape!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Wittmund
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Aurich
Emden
Großefehn
Delfzijl
Leer (Ostfriesland)
West-Terschelling
Leeuwarden
Groningen
Harlingen
Roden
Drachten
Veendam
Weener
Papenburg
Den Burg
Sneek
Assen
Stadskanaal
Aschendorf
Den Helder
Heerenveen
Wieringen
Wolvega
Schagen
IJsselmeer
Steenwijk
Emmen
Haren (Ems)
Enkhuizen
Emmeloord
Hoogeveen
Meppel
Meppen
Bergen
Hoorn
Coevorden
Alkmaar
Lelystad
Kampen
Zwolle
Hardenberg
Lingen (Ems)
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Amsterdam
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Harderwijk
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Tienen
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Tongeren
Bonn
Uccle
Ukkel
Wavre
Brand
Hennef (Sieg)
Roubaix
Zülpich
Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve
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Tournai
Nivelles
Verviers
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Rewilding as a social process

Sharing a dream

- Wadden Island
- ~ 5400 hectare
- 942 inhabitants
- Main income through tourism
  - ~ 6200 beds
  - ~300,000 annual visits

Rewilding as a social process

Sharing a dream

- Natuurmonumenten
- National Park
- Near Natural
- Strong public opinion

Rewilding as a social process

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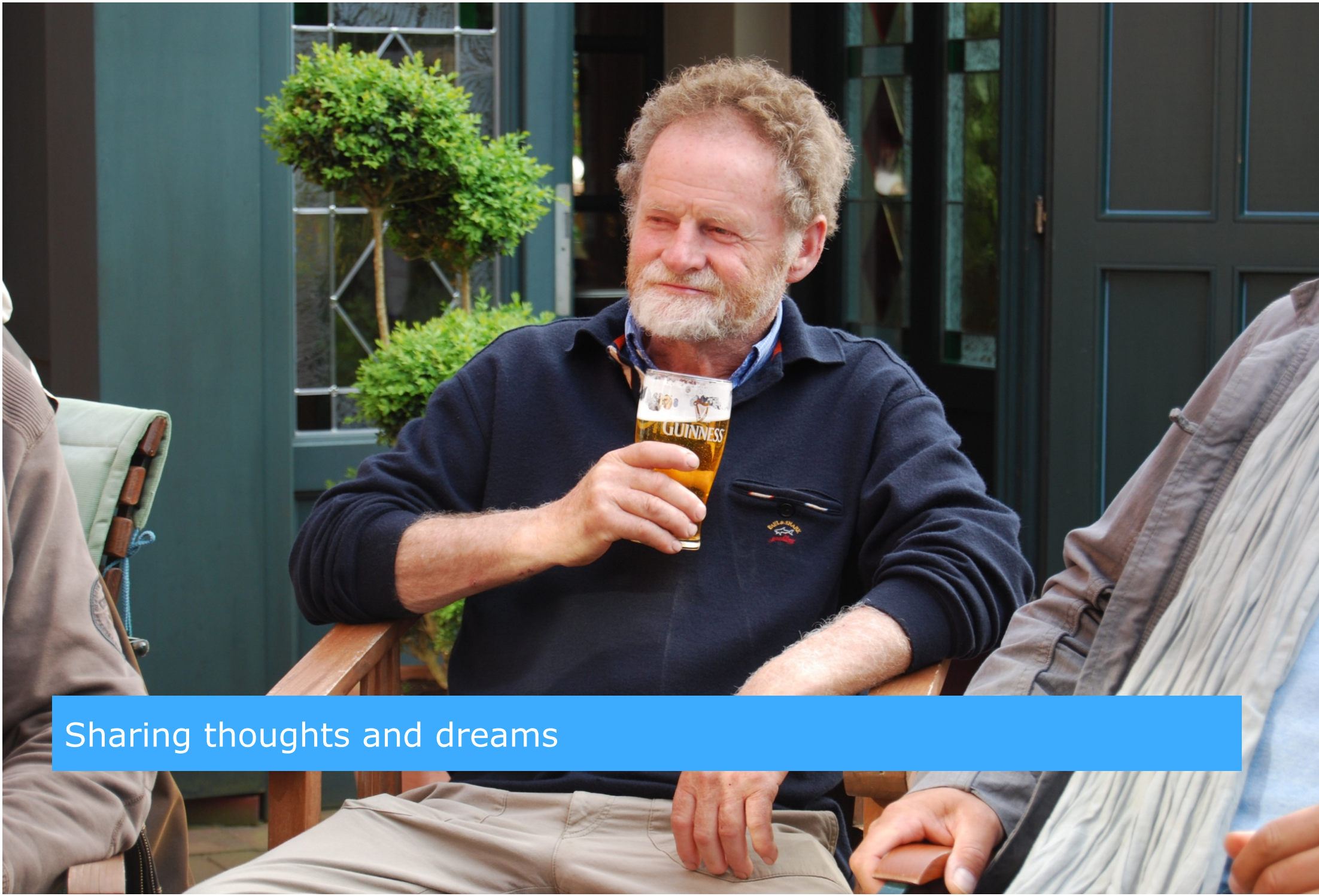
Natura 2000 management plan

- inhabitants
- farmers
- entrepreneurs
- visitor centre & information office
- horse riding parties
- rural projects association
- water and dike manager
- veterinarians
- bird watch


GUINNESS
Sharing thoughts and dreams

Whished & current state Floodplains

Whished state dunes

Current state dunes

Rewilding as a social process

Sharing a dream

- Open dynamic landscape
- No hindrance for touristic activities
  - open and accessible
  - little or no fences
  - Walking, horse riding, biking
- Management activities
  - Near natural
  - Only initiation activities
  - Introduction of Natural grazing

Rewilding as a social process

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What is natural grazing?

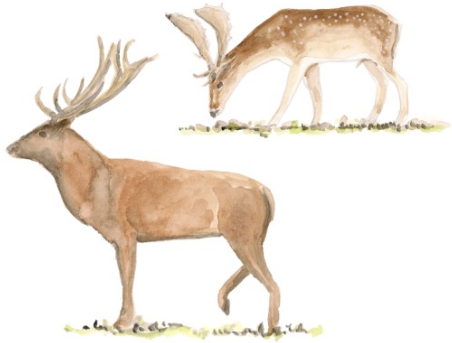
Natural grazing is grazing by large wild en semi wild herbivores living under as close as natural circumstances!

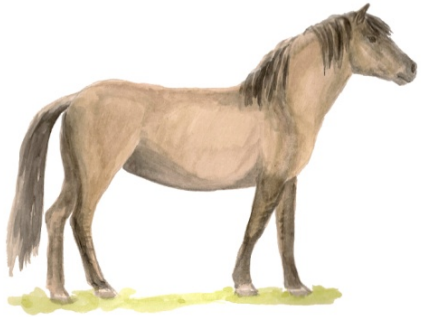
- Indigenous species
- Under natural densities
- In their own natural social structure
- Under natural habitat preference
- Animals are self sufficient

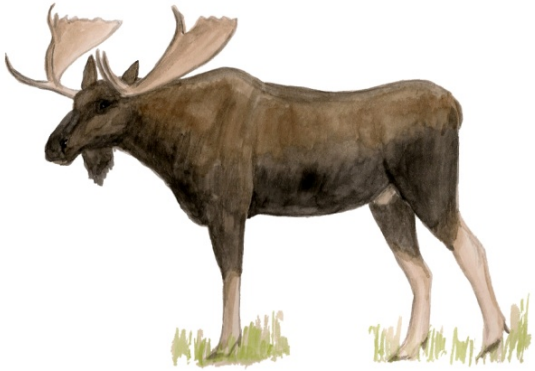
Browsers

Intermediate feeders

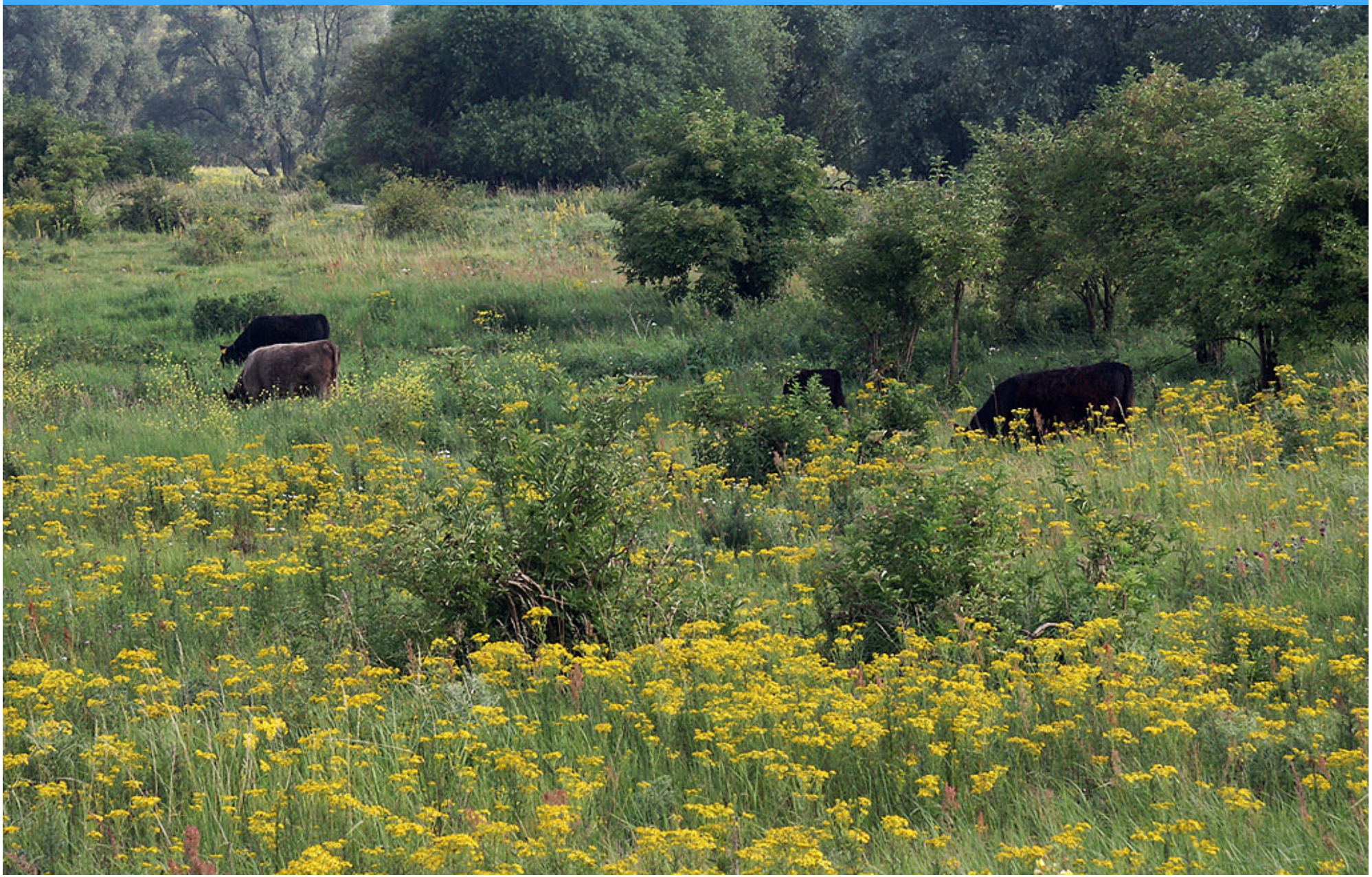
Grazers







Grazers creating rich mosaic landscapes



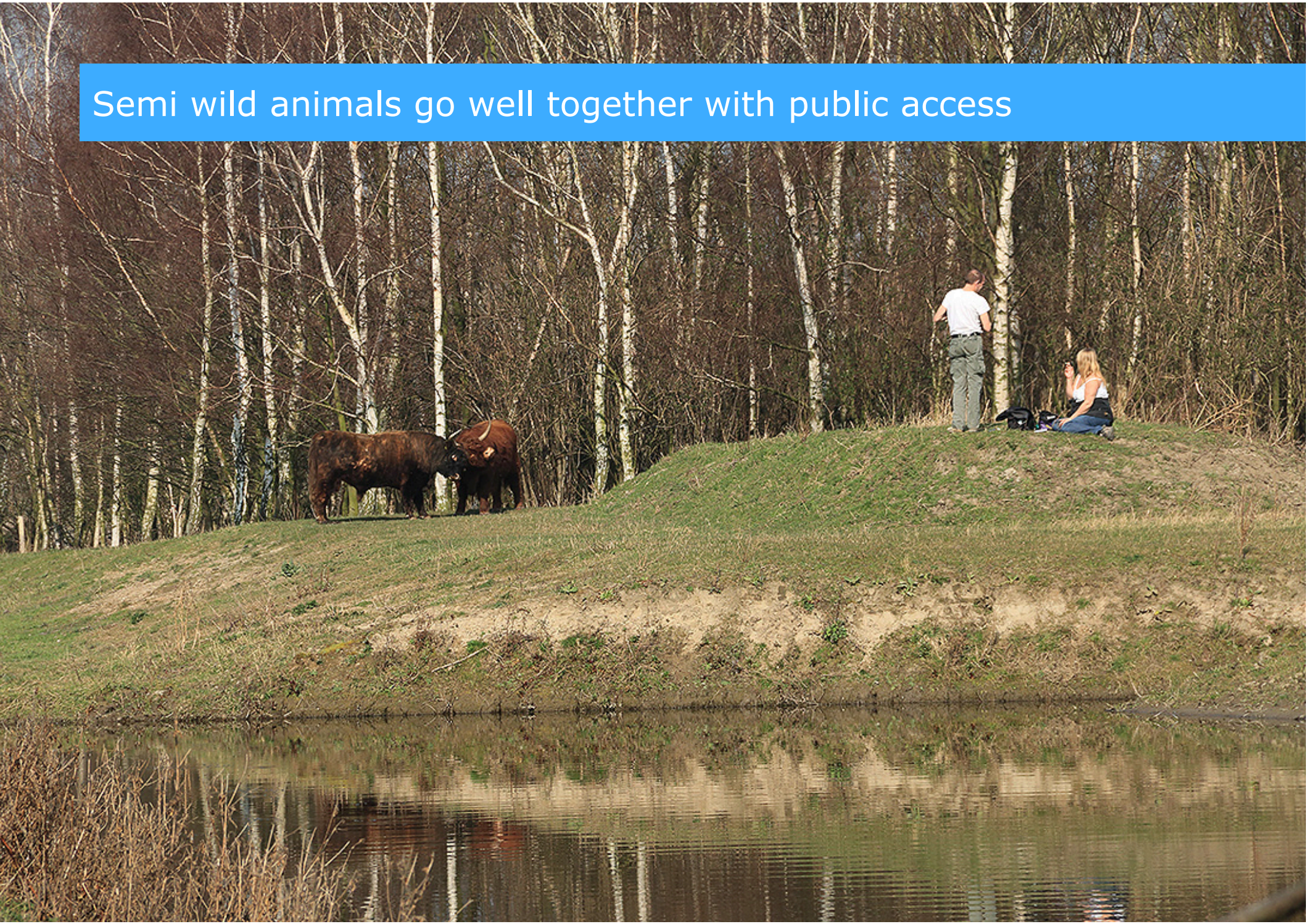
Semi wild cattle eating twigs and leaves

Bison debarking shrubs

Just like semi wild horses

Bison creating open sandy spots

Just like fighting bulls


Semi wild animals go well together with public access

Bison not being a dangerous animal

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Grazing plan

- European bison
  - unique selling point
  - intermediate feeder
  - sand bathing
- Semi wild cattle
  - Local produce
  - Grazer
- Semi wild horses
  - Grazer; different digestion
  - Only mares
- No deer

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Grazing plan

- Phased introduction
  - start 200 hectare
  - after 3 years ➔ 400 hectare
  - long term whole island
- Scientific guidance
- Introduction scheduled spring 2015

Rewilding as a social process

Lessons learned

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Key: Having a shared dream

Success was only possible by putting local interest first

Rewilding is as much a social process

as it is an ecological process!

Rewilding as a social process

Lessons learned

- Planning was natural process
- Base; common vision
- Introduction wildlife impossible without local support
- Presenting showcases elsewhere key
- Create time and space for people to develop their own opinion
- Do not put you own vision first but have trust in the process

Questions