

## Summary user survey for water sports and recommendations

The steering committee of Nationaal Park De Biesbosch wishes to find out the possibilities for releasing recreational pressure caused by water sports from the core of nature of the Biesbosch. This is not an isolated wish and fits in with the policy developments concerning the Biesbosch, which include the construction of new nature areas for either recreational or non-recreational joint use. The questions focus on the adjustment of boating zones and the possible construction of alternative mooring areas. The Biesbosch wishes the survey to include users to test out the measures to be proposed. Will the measures be effective and will they fit water sports usage?

An online survey was conducted to find out about boating and mooring behaviour. Water sports enthusiasts were asked their opinions. These opinions were further explored during two sessions held with water sports enthusiasts and one session held with nature organisations, resulting in building blocks for the recommendations given.

The recommendation for boating zones includes seven principles:

1. Guarantee of sufficient resting areas for birds and other animals;
2. Continuation and where possible limited expansion of the open navigation network as an asset of the area (visitor attraction, a reason for people to visit...);
3. Harmonization of the type of boats with the scale of the navigation routes;
4. Construction and intensification of attractive facilities at suitable areas at the edges of the Biesbosch in order to release pressure from the core of the Biesbosch.
5. Creation or insertion of alternative areas, nearby, green and with sufficient facilities;
6. Variation in types of mooring places suited for different target groups, their behaviour and the area where they fit in best, and
7. Tightening up and specification of regulations (behaviour) and improvement in enforcement.

Part of the recommendations includes the construction of an alternative area, after the model Aakvlaai. Suitable areas are found around the Ottersluis or Spieringsluis and close to Werkendam. Laying out such an area as a full alternative requires a good quality, different types of mooring places and an attractive and sheltered landscape. Another option would be to spread a similar quantity of facilities over an existing area.

For round-trip boats, it is suggested that, at licensing, the routes will be determined together with the industry depending on the size of the boat and in order to extend the variation in round-trip offers. Natura 2000 is seen as an opportunity to anchor and guarantee the qualities of nature of the Biesbosch, meanwhile searching for a regional consideration of developments and measures.

This is how nature and water sports in the Biesbosch will have a joint future.

User survey water sports the Biesbosch, recommendations boating zones and mooring areas, 18-12-2009