



Senate Chancellery

Section for European Politics

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Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Senate Chancellery
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Minutes

Study visit Island Neuwerk, City of Hamburg
September 18, 2018

Participants: see list as of Sep 17, meeting City Hall Hamburg

The visit was organized in order to demonstrate a “best practice” of coastal zone management, stormwater protection and soft tourism in the shore of the North Sea basin, located in the muzzle of the Elbe river, belonging to the City of Hamburg and part of the National Park Hamburg Wadden Sea.



Neuwerk has 36 inhabitants (1 primary school), 170 beds for tourists and is visited per year by approximately 90.000 tourists (most of them day-trips).

Hamburg deploys on a permanent base 8-10 employees, 1 ranger for the Nature Part Island Neuwerk and max 8 workers for maintenance of the dykes, installations, roads etc., an 1 teacher. The low accessibility of the island forced the City of Hamburg to deployments of staff, as Neuwerk



can be reached only at low tide with horse coaches, at high tide there is a small time window for a small ferry. So for emergency cases a permanent staffed team has to be on the island.

Additionally 1-2 ornithologists are permanently deployed to Neuwerk for nature surveillance reasons,



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supporting the Island Ranger (employed by an NGO).

Neuwerk is a car free island, just a very few working machines are engine by diesel (step by step substituted by e-vehicles) aggregates. All inbound transport is made environmentally friendly which is not an issue due to the short distances and the low amount of inhabitants. Transportation from and to the island is done in summer time mostly by horse coaches, according to the requirements of the National Park.

Energy and fresh water are supplied by tubes, installed approx. 2 m below the lw water surface of the Wadden Sea.

The Ranger guided LandSea around the island (walking, of course) and demonstrated the dykes, reported about history and the general situation on the island.

Especially in winter times (storm water season) the work is harder as the permanent North Sea swell damages parts of the wooden and soil fortifications and fast reaction is necessary in order to avoid later and major damages.



After very informative discussions with the ranger about administration issues, technical aspects and ecological as well as economical points an ornithological guide showed the birds life, the sensibility of populations and the most urgent dangers: free running dogs from tourists disrupting the breeding season for protected species.

No wonder that here the most administrative efforts are: information of visitors, following transgressions and penalties, cleaning and maintenance.

Administration:

As storm water management is allocated in Hamburg to the “Hamburg Port Authority” this unit is responsible for the workforce, as well for the necessary finance budget.

Due to the importance of Neuwerk in the National Park the head of unit (head of the Neuwerk team) in disciplinary issues is the ranger.

Experience wise a deployment for 3 weeks, followed by 1 week free time allows an appropriate staff planning and management.



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Finally the LandSea-team had intensive discussions with one of the restaurant owners on the island: accessibility, transport of goods and guests, conflicts with nature preservation zones (nearly none), seasonal business (extremely).

All participants agreed that Neuwerk can be regarded as a masterpiece of soft tourism, directly nearby located to the Northern German coast with intensive tourism facilities, in sight distance representing another way of harmonization of nature, coastal zone management and National Park recreation facilities.

(Thomas Jacob)