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Early delta inhabitants: Reconstruction of Late Saalian landscape and habitation history of Flevoland and the Gelderse Vallei area (central Netherlands)

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Prior to the maximum southward extension of the Fennoscandian ice sheet (MIS 6, ∼150 ka) the central Netherlands was part of a large delta which was inhabited by hunter-gathers. The Middle Palaeolithic flint artefacts left by these early inhabitants of the central Netherlands occur in ice-pushed ridges surrounding the Gelderse Vallei area. These ridges contain pushed alluvial deposits from the rivers Rhine and Meuse.
Given the occurrence of the Middle Palaeolithic flint artefacts in the ice-pushed ridges surrounding the Gelderse Vallei area and the knowledge that the ice-pushed ridges continue into the subsurface of Flevoland, we hypothesize that the area of Middle Palaeolithic habitation has a northward extension, via the study area towards the mouth of the river Rhine into a proglacial lake in the current North Sea Basin. To test this hypothesis we have analysed high-quality coring data of pushed Rhine and Meuse alluvial deposits in the subsurface of Almere and correlated to the Middle Palaeolithic artefact-bearing layer exposed in quarries in the Gelderse Vallei area.