



Links between geodiversity and cultural elements on three scale levels, a neglected part of geoconservation

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The best-known landscape map of The Netherlands is a simplified version of the first geological map of The Netherlands and was made between 1856 and 1867 by Winand Staring. It still is the basis of our vegetation districts. The main landscape units of this map are the sand landscape, the peat landscape, the river landscape, the marine landscape, the coastal dunes and the hills. On this scale level there is general awareness of the relationships between the geo aspects (geomorphology, geology, geohydrology and soil science) of the landscape and historical land use, e.g. in field patterns and other cultural elements (archaeology and historical geography).

From three of these units, examples of interactions between geo-aspects and cultural elements are given for two different scale levels: first on a more regional scale level, then on site level. Especially the last level requires field study. The relationships between the geo and cultural aspects appear to be most intact and are most variable at the site level.

Earth scientists as yet hardly involve themselves in geoconservation studies re these relationships, for which reason the geo-aspects of the cultural elements, especially those at the site level, often are not noticed and disappear during land development projects or gardening efforts. It also is a missed opportunity as these sites offer a chance to raise interest of a broader public for geomorphology and soils, which are in general more difficult to communicate.

The development and management of cultural landscapes and sites, by Dutch law is the domain of land owners and landscape architects, who in the course of a project consult other experts. Our plea for future planning projects is to work with a team of experts including archaeologists, historical geographers, flora and fauna experts, geologists, geomorphologists and soil specialists. Although the costs of preparing a plan will be slightly higher, our experience is that it will improve the quality of land planning and the quality of our historical and future landscapes.