

RESTORATION CAMP IN THE NETHERLANDS

AMSTERDAM & FRIESLAND

MAY 8-11, 2025

INFO PACK



Photographer : Martin Sopinec



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Photographer : Aino Huotari



CAMP PURPOSE

The Restoration Academy is an EU-supported project with the aim of spreading ecosystem restoration camps across Europe. This camp is being organised and will be coordinated by RE-PEAT, a youth-led collective advocating for peatlands. The camp itself is an opportunity for young people to engage in hands-on restoration, nature-based learning, and youth networking.

Through the camp participants will uncover connections between agriculture, cultural systems, and ecological restoration, which challenge conventional views on modern farming, urban landscapes, and wildlife. With a focus on peatlands, paludiculture, and climate resilience, the camp welcomes all, especially those new to environmentalism, creating an inclusive space where new perspectives on environmental stewardship can emerge, encouraging learning, questioning, and reimagining our role in the natural world.

Are you interested in learning about the challenges and opportunities for nature restoration in the Netherlands? Keen to connect with a group of curious young people from across Europe?

JOIN THE RESTORATION ACADEMY CAMP 2025!



Observation drawings by participants during the Finland Restoration camp.



WHAT'S IN STORE?

The camp will be a unique introduction to the complex and multi-layered world of peatland restoration in the Netherlands.

We will take a boat trip through a natura 2000 nature reserve in Amsterdam, bird watch along the waters of a restored peat meadow in Friesland, get our hands dirty on a paludiculture (wet) farm, and visit a pioneer dairy farm that is in the early stages of transitioning between a dry and wet agricultural system. It will be a time and space to bond with like-minded people and creatively engage with and for nature.



WHY PEATLANDS?

Peatlands are a type of wetland ecosystem formed when there is a pool of stagnant anoxic water and a build-up of semi-decomposed organic matter. You might have heard of bogs, mires, marshes, or fens. These are all different types of peatlands. In the Netherlands, almost 10% of the landscape is classified as peat soil. Yet, about 80% of these areas are currently drained and used for dairy farming.

Unfortunately, drainage of these ecosystems causes a range of issues including land subsidence (sinking), increased flood risk, water pollution, habitat loss, and greenhouse gas emissions. The re-oxidation of the soil causes the organic matter stored in the anoxic water to decompose and releasing CO₂ into the atmosphere.

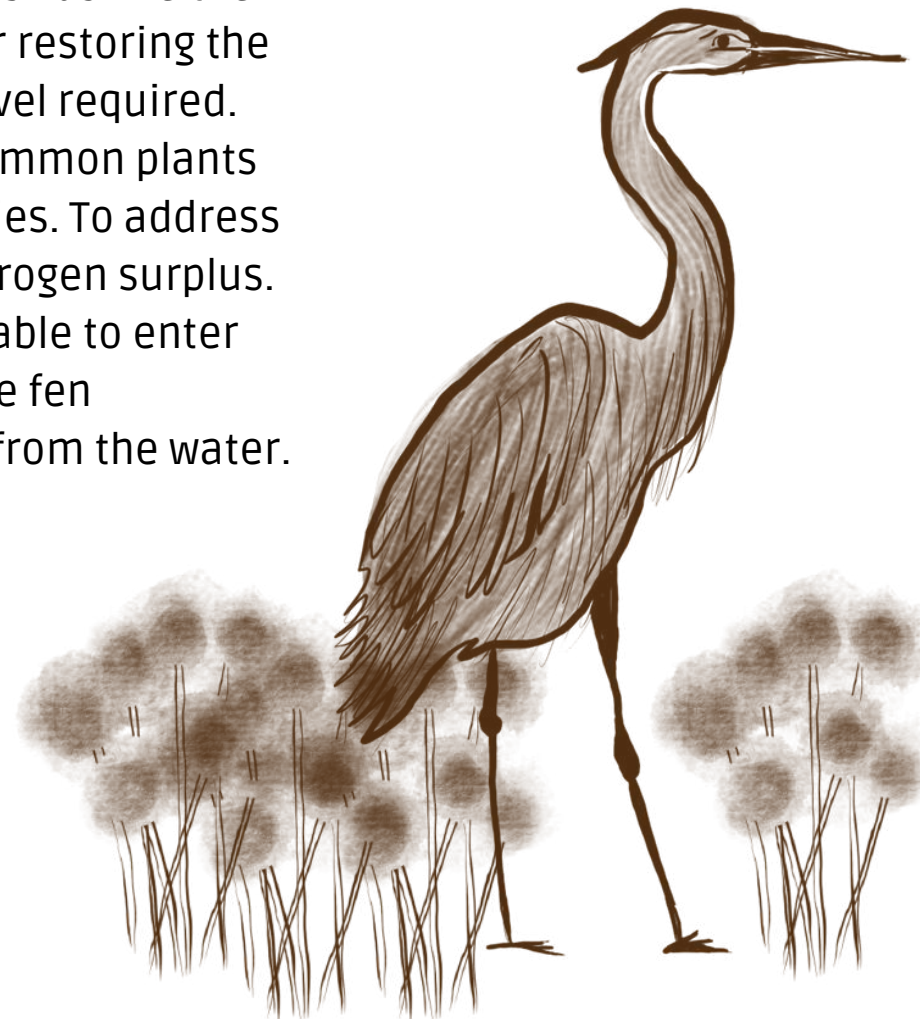
According to some estimates, rewetting just 15% of this agricultural land could reduce Dutch agricultural greenhouse emissions by up to 34%. That is why various initiatives across the country are working to restore peatlands for both biodiversity and sustainable agricultural production.



CONTEXT OF THE NATURE RESTORATION SITES

AMSTERDAM: WESTZAAN POLDER

We will be introduced to the restoration site by a representative of Staatsbosbeheer. The peat meadow area of Westzaan polder is home to rare and threatened plants and animals, such as the carnivorous round-leaved sundew, the northern vole, and meadow birds like the black-tailed godwit. Staatsbosbeheer is responsible for restoring the hydrology of this Natura 2000 area to the high water level required. Furthermore, excessive nitrogen deposition causes common plants to grow faster outcompeting specialised wetland species. To address this, Staatsbosbeheer is also working to reduce the nitrogen surplus. As May is the breeding season for birds, we will not be able to enter the site on foot. Instead, we will take a boat through the fen landscape and learn about hydrological management from the water.



FRIESLAND: PALUDICULTURE SITE

The next site is a paludiculture site, where Jasper van Belle is setting up a test farm developing wetland crop cultivation on behalf of the regional authority (Province of Fryslân). Paludiculture is the productive land use of wet and rewetted peatlands, preserving the peat soil and minimising CO₂ emissions and land subsidence. Since 2016, Jasper has been involved in developing paludiculture in the Netherlands. The current test farm, started in 2023, aims to scale up the farming from research level to full-scale. The challenge that he faces involves both how to grow crops effectively in this fen landscape, and how to increase the ecosystem services provided by the land (such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving water quality, increasing water storage, and creating habitats for various species).

We will spend the day planting and seeding Typha, and Jasper will explain what is involved for farmers looking to combine nature restoration with productive land use.





FRIESLAND: NATURE RESERVE ALDE FEANEN

The next stop is De Alde Feanen National Park, where you will experience vast reed fields, swamp forests, narrow peat holes and a cormorant colony. During the boat trip, you will learn more about the many water birds and birds of prey. Maybe you will even spot a sea eagle? In addition, this low moor marsh has an interesting nature management and rich history. De Alde Feanen can largely only be reached by water. The tour boat 'De Blaustirns' of It Fryske Gea (the nature organisation who will show us around) runs on solar energy, so you can enjoy nature in complete silence. Downstairs there are large maps of the area and photos of plants and animals that you encounter along the way.

FRIESLAND: TRANSITION FARM

As mentioned in the introduction, 80% of peatlands in the Netherlands are currently drained for dairy farming. To demonstrate the commitment involved in changing land-use from dry to wet, we will be visiting one of the pioneer farms in the area that is going through the planning process. This stop will be led by Henriëtte Waal, an internationally renowned designer and art director, co-founder of Atelier Luma in the south of France, and artistic lead of the Veenweide Atelier, supported by cultural foundation Arcadia. More info on [Veenweide Atelier](#)

Friesland seen from above!

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CAMP PROGRAMME

Thursday, May 8

- Arrival in Amsterdam
- Optional early arrival
- Free time in Amsterdam
- Welcoming and orientation
- Group dinner and overnight stay in hostel

Friday, May 9

Latest arrival time in Amsterdam at 9am

- Introducing the camp's mission, schedule and safety briefing
- Brunch
- Boat excursion in Westzaan polder, a restored peatland, with a representative of Staatsbosbeheer

Friesland

- Coach to Friesland (approx. 2-3hours)
- Settle at the camp-site (shared holiday homes)
- Dinner and group activities

Saturday, May 10

- Breakfast and preparation for a day outdoors
- Introduction to peatland restoration models
- Hands-on paludiculture: planting and seeding typha
- Creative activities and screenings with ARCADIA, cultural center
- Dinner and group reflections
- Pack bags for departure

Sunday, May 11

- Breakfast and check-out of camp-site
- Morning activities:
 - 1) Bird watching on a guided boat tour in Alde Feanen Nature Reserve
 - 2) Visiting a transition dairy farm
- Closing ceremony
- Coach back to Amsterdam



GENERAL PRACTICAL NOTES

- Please ensure you have valid travel insurance.
- It is recommended to bring a credit/debit card for any personal expenses.
- All participants must complete the registration form before attending the camp.
- A WhatsApp group will be created for internal communication before and during the camp.
- Gardening gloves and rubber boots will be provided for international participants. Dutch participants are expected to bring their own pair of rubber boots.

WHAT TO BRING : PACKLIST

Springtime in the Netherlands can be chilly, with average daytime temperatures between 14°C and 18°C. Rain is common, so be prepared for wet conditions and sunny, dry weather.

- Bowl, cup, a big water bottle, cutlery
- Backpack for daytime
- Water and windproof jacket, suitable shoes and long, waterproof trousers for fieldwork, suitable outdoor clothing (thermals). Extra clothes (be prepared for rain). Shirts, thick socks and underwear
- A towel, personal hygiene items (except toilet paper)
- Swimming suit, sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
- Personal medication
- Powerbank (if needed)
- Insect repellent, (the biggest challenges may be ticks and biting insects: horseflies, mosquitoes).



FIRST AID

- The camp takes place in natural landscapes where tick bites are a risk. We highly recommend getting vaccinated against tick-borne encephalitis (TBE). More information on ticks and how to protect yourself is provided below.
 - Wear long sleeves, long trousers, and tuck your trousers into your socks to reduce exposure.
 - Perform regular tick checks on your body and clothing.
 - If you find a tick please inform the designated first aid person, in order to remove it carefully.
 - Shower and change clothes after being outdoors.
- We will be working with tools and soil so it could be worth checking your tetanus status.
- In case of any injuries whether your own or those you witness please contact the designated first aid responsible person, who will be introduced at the camp.
- A WhatsApp emergency chat and phone number will be available to call in case of an emergency.
- There will be an extra room available for anyone who falls ill.

HOW TO GET THERE

All travels within the program will be on public transport, a private coach, tour boats and bikes. We will also have a rental car to ensure bags and people get to where they need to be. We encourage everyone to travel over land if possible.

COSTS

The camp covers accommodation, food and travel within the programme. However, any extra costs for travel, food or something else outside the program are not covered. For Dutch participants, travel to and from Amsterdam is not included. On Sunday evening you might need to pay for accommodation, depending on where you are travelling from.

FOOD

During the camp we will provide you with meals during the day (suitable for vegans)

On the Thursday we will have a shared dinner in Amsterdam. On Friday and Saturday our chefs will cook dinner for everyone in one of the bungalows. Sunday you are expected to buy your own dinner in Amsterdam.

We will provide breakfast and lunch from Friday until Sunday.

ACCOMMODATION

In Amsterdam, we will stay at the Hans Brinker hostel in 6-person dorm rooms.

In Friesland, we will be staying in 8-person bungalows on camping It Wiid, consisting of 4 bedrooms with in each room two beds. Sheets are included, but you should bring your own towel. The bathroom, toilet and front- and backdoor of the bungalows can be locked. The bungalows each have their own kitchen and living room.

In case you prefer to sleep outdoors, there is the possibility of camping in a tent.



HOW TO JOIN THE CAMP

This camp is open to residents from the countries of partner organisations: Tree of Life (Slovakia), RE-PEAT (Netherlands), KMOP (Greece), the Youth Academy (Finland) and the Finnish Nature Association (Finland, hosts). On top, there will be 7 Youth Advisory Board members from project countries. The participants will be representing both youth and youth workers (people who organise activities for youth).

Note, that all the participants are expected to use the knowledge and experience from the camp afterwards by communicating about the experience to friends, family members and/or colleagues.

REGISTRATION FORM

[Sign up here](#)



[Find out more about Restoration Academy here.](#)
[Contact us at info@re-peat.earth](mailto:info@re-peat.earth)



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