

UNITED FOR THE NEW EMSCHER VALLEY

**FASCINATION.
TRANSFORMATION.**

SHAPING THE REGION TOGETHER



SUCCESSFUL URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ALONG THE REVITALISED EMSCHER



© Ralph Lieger, EGLV



© Andreas Fritsche



© Helmut Kuhndts



© Martin Baier



Publishing details

PUBLISHER:

Ministry for Regional Identity, Communities and Local Government, Building and Gender Equality of North Rhine-Westphalia

Speeches and Publications Unit
Jürgensplatz 1, 40219 Düsseldorf, Germany
Telephone +49 (0)211 8618-50
E-mail: info@mhkgb.nrw.de
www.mhkgb.nrw

Contact

Unit 523
Christian Meyer
Telephone +49 (0)211 8618-5652
E-mail: christian.meyer@mhkgb.nrw.de

Emschergenossenschaft

Kronprinzenstrasse 24, 45128 Essen, Germany
Contact: Dr Stephan Treuke, telephone +49 (0)170/3366094

CONCEPT, COPY AND EDITORIAL WORK:

plan-lokal, Dortmund

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Ian Winick Translation & Copywriting, Cologne

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION:

Werbeagentur Schröter, Mülheim an der Ruhr

PRINTING:

LD Medienhaus, Dortmund

© 2022 / MHKBG S-387b

This publication is available for download at:

www.mhkgb.nrw/broschueren

The print version can be ordered online or by telephone:

• www.mhkgb.nrw/broschueren
• +49 (0)211 837-1001 North Rhine-Westphalia direct
Please specify publication number S-387b.

This publication is made available by the government of North Rhine-Westphalia as part of its public relations work. It may not be used by political parties, canvassers or election workers during an election campaign for the purpose of election canvassing. This applies to state, federal and local elections as well as to the election of members of the European Parliament.

Improper use includes in particular distributing this publication at election events or at the information stands of political parties or inserting, printing or affixing party political information or advertising materials. Passing the publication on to third parties for the purpose of election campaigning is also prohibited.

This does not preclude the use of this publication by political parties or their supporting organisations solely for the purpose of informing their own members. Irrespective of when, by what means or in what quantities this document was obtained by the recipient, it must not be used in any manner that could be construed as an expression of partiality on the part of the state government in favour of individual political groups, even if no election campaign is forthcoming or currently underway.



www.eglv.de/faszination-transformation

CONTENTS

WELCOME

INA SCHARRENBACH

MINISTER FOR REGIONAL IDENTITY, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, BUILDING AND GENDER EQUALITY OF NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA

PROF. ULI PAETZEL

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE EMSCHERGENOSSENSCHAFT AND LIPPEVERBAND

03



FASCINATION.TRANSFORMATION.

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SUCCESSFUL URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ALONG THE REVITALISED EMSCHER.

04

1	RIVER		
	55	LIGHTHOUSE PROJECTS	08
6	SAMPLE PROJECTS	OVERVIEW MAP	10
		PHOENIX FROM THE ASHES TRANSFORMATION OF AN OLD STEEL MILL INTO AN ATTRACTIVE LAKE DISTRICT	12
		WATER MANAGEMENT AND ECOLOGY GO TOGETHER THE EMSCHER-AUEN FLOOD RETENTION BASIN	14
		HOLIDAY FEELING ON THE RHINE-HERNE CANAL TRANSFORMING RECKLINGHAUSEN CITY HARBOUR	16
		REWARDING TEAMWORK TURNING KATERNBERG CREEK INTO A NATURAL RECREATION AREA	18
		AN OLD STEEL MILL BECOMES AN URBAN OASIS THE DUISBURG-NORD LANDSCAPE PARK	20
		A CREATIVE MAKEOVER FOR THE OLD LOHBERG MINE SITE	22



SIDE NOTE

ROAMING WITH THE RIVER POET IN THE NEW EMSCHER VALLEY

24

LOOKING AHEAD

A REGION TACKLES THE FUTURE TOGETHER

27

FUTURE THOUGHTS

28



Dear Readers,

The massive Emscher River redevelopment project is nearing completion and transforming an entire region. Since 1992, 328 kilometres of the Emscher and its tributaries have been reshaped to create a vibrant watercourse that closely reflects its original natural state. The Emscher has been free of all wastewater discharge since the end of 2021. United for the New Emscher Valley (Gemeinsam für das Neue Emschertal) – a joint project by the North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry of Regional Identity, Communities and Local Government, Building and Gender Equality, the *Emschergenossenschaft* and the communities of the Emscher region – has paved the way for refreshing urban designs along clean water bodies of water and helped to ensure a better quality of life.

This means that a bold vision has now become reality. With the new urban planning and ecological river restoration throughout the Emscher region, the “new Emscher Valley” can be experienced in full by the local population. Today, the Emscher River shapes the entire region as it flows from its source in Holzwickede until it joins the Rhine in Dinslaken and, in the near future, in Voerde. The now clean Emscher and its tributary streams pass through more than 40 urban areas that have benefited from state urban development grants. These renaturalised stream and river courses have been integrated into the urban design of the residential environment and have improved the quality of life for everyone who resides there.

The overriding goal of the Emscher River reclamation project is to separate two elements that do not belong together. Clean groundwater, spring water and rainwater now flow through the ecologically restored Emscher, while untreated sewage is channelled separately through underground ducts to wastewater treatment plants. At the same time, this massive water management project – built at a cost of over 5.5 billion euros – marks the transformation of an entire region that vastly improves the quality of life in the communities on both sides of the Emscher River and has a positive impact on urban and open space development.

This shows that urban development and the rehabilitation of the Emscher River go hand-in-hand. Within the scope of United for the New Emscher Valley, a joint initiative launched in 2006, we have succeeded in bringing together water management, water ecology and urban development projects, all with the active involvement of local residents. The highly impressive results include parks, outdoor learning experiences, educational riverside trails, paths, playgrounds and recreational areas along the waterways – not to mention measures for preserving the region’s architectural culture. Between 2006 and 2021, a total of 1.25 billion euros in urban development grants were approved for municipalities in the Emscher region. The many projects of all sizes, from Holzwickede to Dinslaken, illustrate the positive changes that have taken place in local neighbourhoods. Thanks to architectural redevelopment and activities like neighbourhood festivals, cultural events, adopt-a-stream groups and rainwater projects, the New Emscher Valley initiative is now very much a reality.

This brochure takes stock of all that we have achieved together and looks at how the Emscher renaturalisation and regional urban development projects have improved the quality of life for the people who live here. These accomplishments are reflected in the many personal stories and testimonials gathered from people in the region. At the same time, however, we also want to broaden our perspective and look at what lies ahead. The transformation of the region continues – and we aim to continue to work together for a brighter future.

INA SCHARRENBACH
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL IDENTITY,
COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
BUILDING AND GENDER EQUALITY OF
NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA

PROF. ULI PAETZEL
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF
THE EMSCHERGENOSSENSCHAFT
AND LIPPEVERBAND



FASCINATION. TRANSFORMATION.

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SUCCESSFUL URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ALONG THE REVITALISED EMSCHER.

The Emscher River reclamation and urban development projects have paved the way for a fascinating transformation of the Emscher Valley in a wide range of areas. Old neighbourhoods have been redeveloped and new ones have emerged. Former derelict industrial sites are now tourist attractions or contemporary workplaces. All of this is happening along both banks of the ecologically restored Emscher River, interconnected by a growing network of outstanding natural habitats and bicycle paths. Many of the completed projects allow us to experience first-hand the changes that are taking place in the region. With "FASCINATION. TRANSFORMATION." we look back on what has already been achieved – and look ahead to how the Emscher renaturalisation and urban development projects can transform the region as a whole. A region heads for the future together.



ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER – THE SUCCESS STORY OF 'UNITED FOR THE NEW EMSCHER VALLEY'

The vision of the New Emscher Valley is becoming a reality thanks to 15 years of joint efforts by the municipalities of the Emscher region, the *Emschergenossenschaft* and the Ministry of Regional Identity, Communities and Local Government, Building and Gender Equality of North Rhine-Westphalia. As strong and reliable partners, they aim to make a significant contribution to transforming the region and making lasting improvements to the quality of life for its residents.

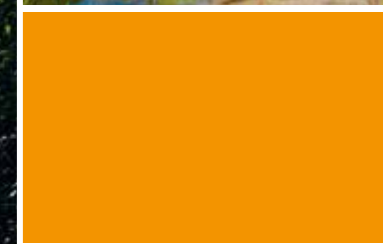
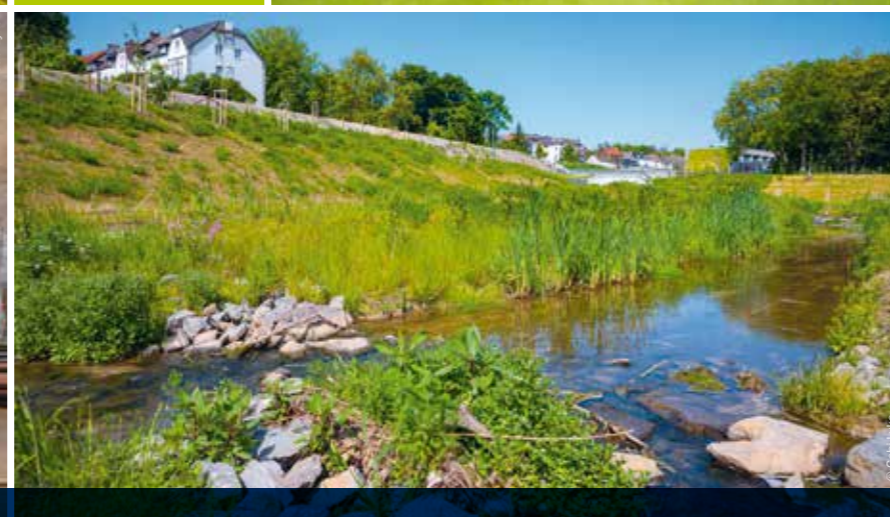
Working together, we can achieve so much more – and it was this recognition that led the *Emschergenossenschaft*, the Ministry and the Emscher municipalities to join forces back in 2006. Establishing the United for the New Emscher Valley initiative laid the groundwork for bringing ideas and projects to life together. The declared aim of the collaboration was to initiate and implement sustainable and water-oriented urban development in the communities of the Emscher River basin through a combination of water management and urban planning measures. The great many projects that were successfully completed between 2006 and 2021 demonstrate just how effective this pooling of ideas and resources has been in driving the transformation of the Emscher region. This is due in no small part to the joint efforts of many stakeholders.



But above and beyond maintaining a clean river, it will be important to continue transforming the Emscher region and enhancing the attractiveness of its communities. The *Emschergenossenschaft*, the Ministry for Regional Identity, Communities and Local Government, Building and Gender Equality of North Rhine-Westphalia and the participating municipalities will continue to work with local residents towards achieving this goal.

“Ever since the United for the New Emscher Valley initiative was established, we have implemented – in close consultation with the residents of the Emscher municipalities – a large number of urban development projects that make a direct contribution to improving the quality of life and recreational activities. In Bottrop, too, diverse lighthouse projects bear witness to the impressive transformation of the region through the Emscher River renewal project and urban development programmes.”

BERND TISCHLER | MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BOTTROP



30 YEARS OF EMSCHER RESTORATION – A RIVER RETURNS.

The Emscher has been free of all wastewater since late 2021. After 30 years of tireless dedication and hard work by the *Emschergenossenschaft*, and a total investment of over 5.5 billion euros, this megaproject has now been completed.

Much has happened since the decision to renaturalise the Emscher River system was taken in 1992. Every stream that used to course through our region essentially as an open sewer now has a separate underground canal that carries all effluent. The main artery of the new discharge system is the Emscher sewage canal between the Dortmund-Deusen and Emscher-Mündung wastewater treatment plants in the Dinslaken-Oberhausen-Duisburg conurbation. Extending over a length of 51 kilometres, the canal accommodates the wastewater of some 2.26 million inhabitants along with extensive quantities of industrial and commercial discharge and channels it to the Bottrop and the Emscher-Mündung treatment plants.

Today, 430 of the 439 kilometres of sewage canals have already been relocated underground. This means that the surface streams are virtually free of wastewater and, freed from their concrete beds, can be returned to their natural state. The changes that we can expect in the New Emscher Valley are reflected in the nearly 150 kilometres of waterways that have already been ecologically restored and are gradually being transformed into new vital arteries for people, fauna and flora.

Soon the murky waters of the once fetid canals will be relegated to the past as we walk, cycle and relax along the banks of the meandering green-blue ribbon of the New Emscher River.



KEY FACTS AND FIGURES.

- Emscher catchment area with tributaries:** 865 km²
- Length of the Emscher:** 83 km
- Length of the Emscher sewage canal:** 51 km
- Channel diameters:** between 1,600 and 2,800 mm
- Difference in elevation from the source to the mouth:** 120 m
- Cost of renaturalisation:** > 5,5 billion euros

EMSCHER RENATURALISATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ARE CHANGING THE REGION TOGETHER.

Aside from being a remarkable achievement in river restoration, the rewilding of the Emscher is a big win for the environment and has improved the quality of life significantly for many people in the Emscher region. The project has paved the way for new uses on either bank of the Emscher, the wider range of natural areas has made neighbourhoods more attractive for their residents, and new walkways and cycling paths have made it easier to experience the river and adjacent urban landscapes.

A large number of urban development projects are located in the immediate vicinity of the Emscher and its tributaries. This allows synergies to develop and makes it possible to integrate activities and link projects in a highly effective manner. The city districts redesigned within the scope of urban development programmes create an exceptional atmosphere for local residents owing to their proximity to the many attractive green spaces and bodies of water along the Emscher River system. Renaturalised waterways also provide an ideal setting for cultural and recreational activities and outdoor learning experiences like the Blue Classrooms (Blaue Klassenzimmer).

55 lighthouse projects illustrate to impressive effect what has been achieved in recent years with urban development grants (map pages 10_11). The rehabilitation and restoration of the Emscher River serves as a unifying element and a catalyst to transform the entire region across the full breadth of its appeal. **Emscher renaturalisation and urban development – a joint success story!**



1 RIVER

55 LIGHTHOUSE PROJECTS

36 SAMPLE PROJECTS

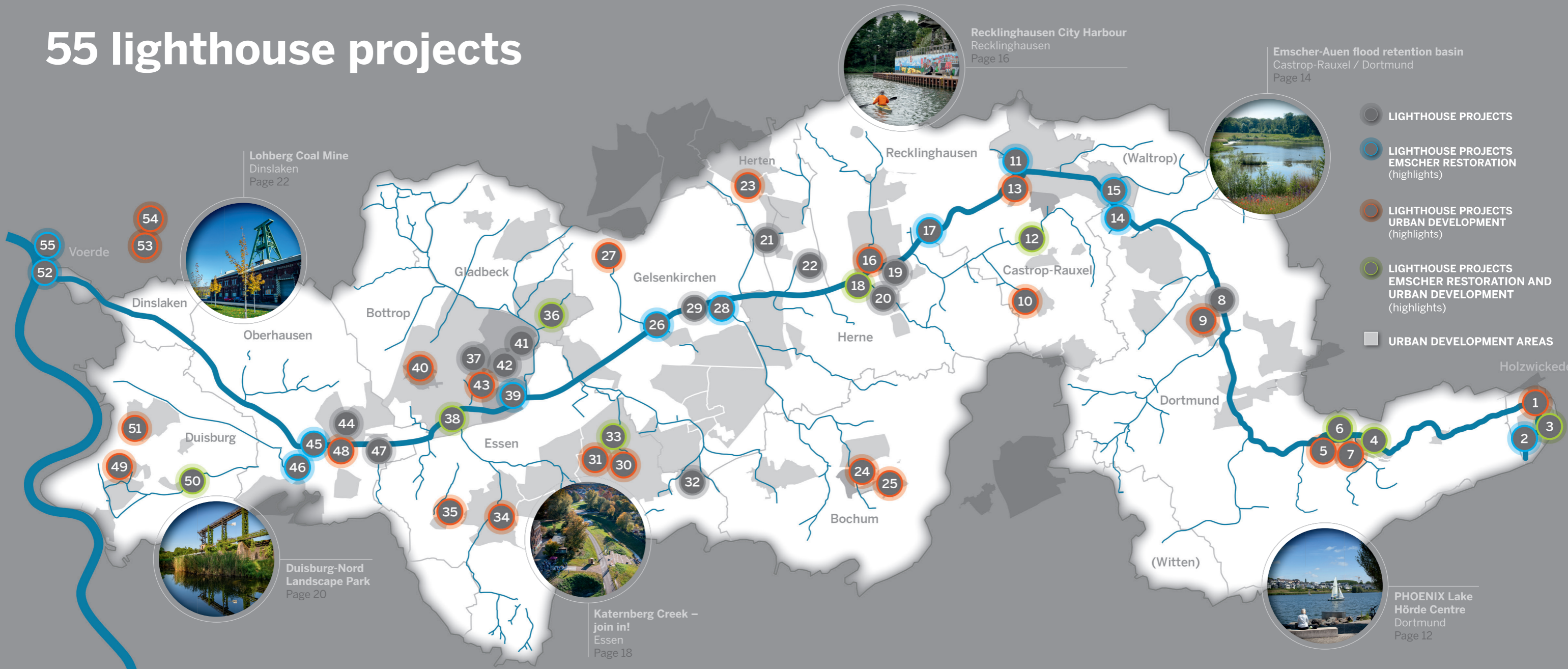
The projects shown here illustrate the wide range of issues touched upon by the development partners.

Improving the housing environment, mobilising residents and promoting social involvement, education, culture, recreation, ecology and climate protection will continue to be areas in which projects are initiated and implemented jointly with local communities.

The transformation of the New Emscher Valley continues!



55 lighthouse projects



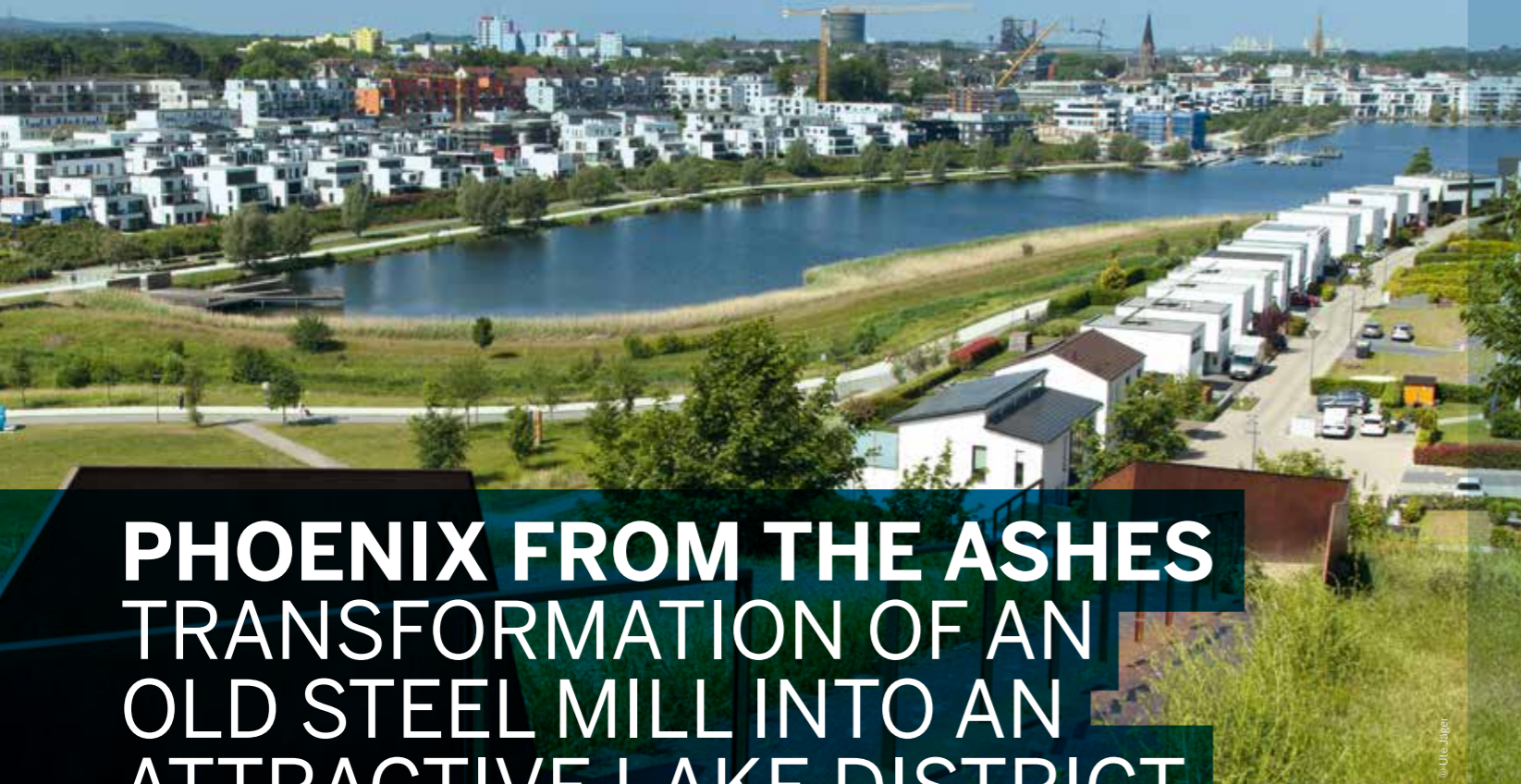
- LIGHTHOUSE PROJECTS
- LIGHTHOUSE PROJECTS EMSCHER RESTORATION (highlights)
- LIGHTHOUSE PROJECTS URBAN DEVELOPMENT (highlights)
- LIGHTHOUSE PROJECTS EMSCHER RESTORATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (highlights)
- URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREAS

1	Town Hall and Community Centre	Holzwickede
2	Emscherquellhof	Holzwickede
3	Emscher Park	Holzwickede
4	PHOENIX Lake	Dortmund
5	PHOENIX West	Dortmund
6	Emscher Water Network, Hoetger Park	Dortmund
7	Hörde Centre	Dortmund
8	Deusenberg	Dortmund
9	Hansa Nord Coke Plant and Huckarde Pumping Station	Dortmund
10	Erin Park	Castrop-Rauxel
11	Nature and Water Adventure Park	Castrop-Rauxel / Recklinghausen
12	Restoration Deininghauser Creek	Castrop-Rauxel
13	Sprung über die Emscher Bridge	Castrop-Rauxel
14	Emscher-Auen Flood Retention Basin	Castrop-Rauxel / Dortmund
15	Hof Emscher-Auen	Castrop-Rauxel

16	Recklinghausen City Harbour	Recklinghausen
17	Emscher Promenade	Recklinghausen, Castrop-Rauxel, Herne, Herten
18	Ostbach Ecological Improvement	Herne
19	Holper Heide Orchard Meadow Landscape Park	Herne
20	Strünkede Castle Green Corridor	Herne
21	Halde Hoheward	Herten
22	AktivLinearPark	Herten
23	Herten Castle Park	Herten
24	Jahrhunderthalle, Westpark and Mine Railway Track	Bochum
25	Anneliese-Brost-Musikforum Ruhr	Bochum

26	Gelsenkirchen Pumping Station	Gelsenkirchen
27	Schüngelberg Housing Estate	Gelsenkirchen
28	Zoom Flood Retention Basin	Gelsenkirchen
29	Zoom Canal Bridge	Gelsenkirchen
30	Zollverein Coal Mine	Essen
31	Zollverein Park	Essen
32	Mechtenberg Landscape Park	Essen
33	Katernberg Creek – join in!	Essen
34	Niederfeldsee Lake	Essen
35	Borbeck Castle Park	Essen
36	Unser Hahnenbach	Gladbeck
37	Tetraeder	Bottrop
38	BernePark	Bottrop
39	Bottrop Water Treatment Plant	Bottrop
40	Bottrop City Hall	Bottrop

41	Gartenstadt Welheim	Bottrop
42	Welheim Park	Bottrop
43	Malakoff Tower	Bottrop
44	OLGA Park	Oberhausen
45	Slinky Springs to Fame	Oberhausen
46	Kaisergarten Emscher Adventure	Oberhausen
47	Ripshorst Park Landscape	Oberhausen
48	Gasometer	Oberhausen
49	Duisburg-Nord Green Belt	Duisburg
50	Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park	Duisburg
51	Marxloh Campus	Duisburg
52	Hof Emschermündung	Dinslaken
53	Lohberg Coal Mine	Dinslaken
54	Gartenstadt Lohberg	Dinslaken
55	Emscher River Mouth	Voerde



PHOENIX FROM THE ASHES TRANSFORMATION OF AN OLD STEEL MILL INTO AN ATTRACTIVE LAKE DISTRICT

If you stand on the lake promenade in the Hörde district of Dortmund and gaze out over PHOENIX Lake and the surrounding residential areas, it is hard to believe that, just a few years ago, this area was dotted with smoke-belching chimneys and drab industrial buildings.

PHOENIX Lake is a prime example of the transformation in the New Emscher Valley. After more than 160 years of industrial steel production, work at the Hermannshütte Steelworks ceased in 2001 and the area surrounding PHOENIX Lake became a derelict industrial site. Just over a decade later, the project area and the lake itself were opened to the public as an outdoor recreation area. Since then, it has become an integral part of Dortmund's urban and park landscape. It is an ideal setting for water sports enthusiasts, people out for a stroll or visitors in search of a little rest and relaxation. The urban districts surrounding the lake have a contemporary architectural design and a lively mix of uses. In the harbour area, innovative services and restaurants have created new jobs in Dortmund's Hörde district, while some 2,000 residential units offer a wide range of housing options. But the people living there all have one thing in common: they benefit from the placid green surroundings on the waterfront – right in the heart of the city.

URBAN RENEWAL AT ITS BEST – THE HÖRDER DISTRICT CENTRE GETS A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

Freed from the constraints of its former industrial sites and with the help of urban development grants, the Hörder centre has been revitalised and put back on an even economic keel. With its established urban structures, the historic town centre is now a bustling hub with attractive housing, a wide range of shopping and recreational amenities and a packed calendar of events. This exemplary urban renewal process was only possible through the combined efforts of many key players. City administrators, the district authority and the state of North Rhine-Westphalia worked in close cooperation with local residents right from the outset. The joint efforts to enhance the district were acknowledged in 2017 with the national Soziale Stadt award for socially integrative cities. And the slogan 'Changing the Region Together' has now become a reality.



SHIP AHOY!

TEXT: CHRISTIAN SCHÄFER

Peter Meurer, Dieter Klee and Frithjof Anders meet up regularly at PHOENIX Lake to launch their model sailboats.

On a Sunday in October 2021, the promenade around the lake has attracted many people out for a stroll in the autumn sun. Peter Meurer takes part in regattas with his sailboats, which measure up to 1.30 metres in length. Today, he only has a small motorboat with him that plays music, drawing a crowd of curious onlookers. Children in particular are fascinated by the model speedboat. Encouraging young

people to take up this pastime is very important to all three men: "Otherwise, just a few old codgers will be left doing this." And it is a real thrill for kids to be allowed to operate the remote control.

All three know PHOENIX Lake best as it is today, although Frithjof Anders can still remember the excavation pit and how the lake was filled. But they have no memory of the Hermannshütte Steelworks that used to be here. A fascinating transformation, indeed!



Captains young and old alike having fun at PHOENIX Lake in Dortmund.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES.

Project partners: The City of Dortmund, PHOENIX See Entwicklungsgesellschaft (a subsidiary of the Dortmund municipal utilities) and the *Emschergenossenschaft*

Scope: PHOENIX Lake is at the heart of the 99 hectares that make up the eastern part of the PHOENIX site

Financing and funding:

- 230 million euros total cost, of which
- 10 million euros in urban development grants
- 4.5 million euros in funding from the Ecology Programme in the Emscher-Lippe Region (North Rhine-Westphalia, Objective 2 Programme)
- Approx. 50% refinancing from property sales and other sources

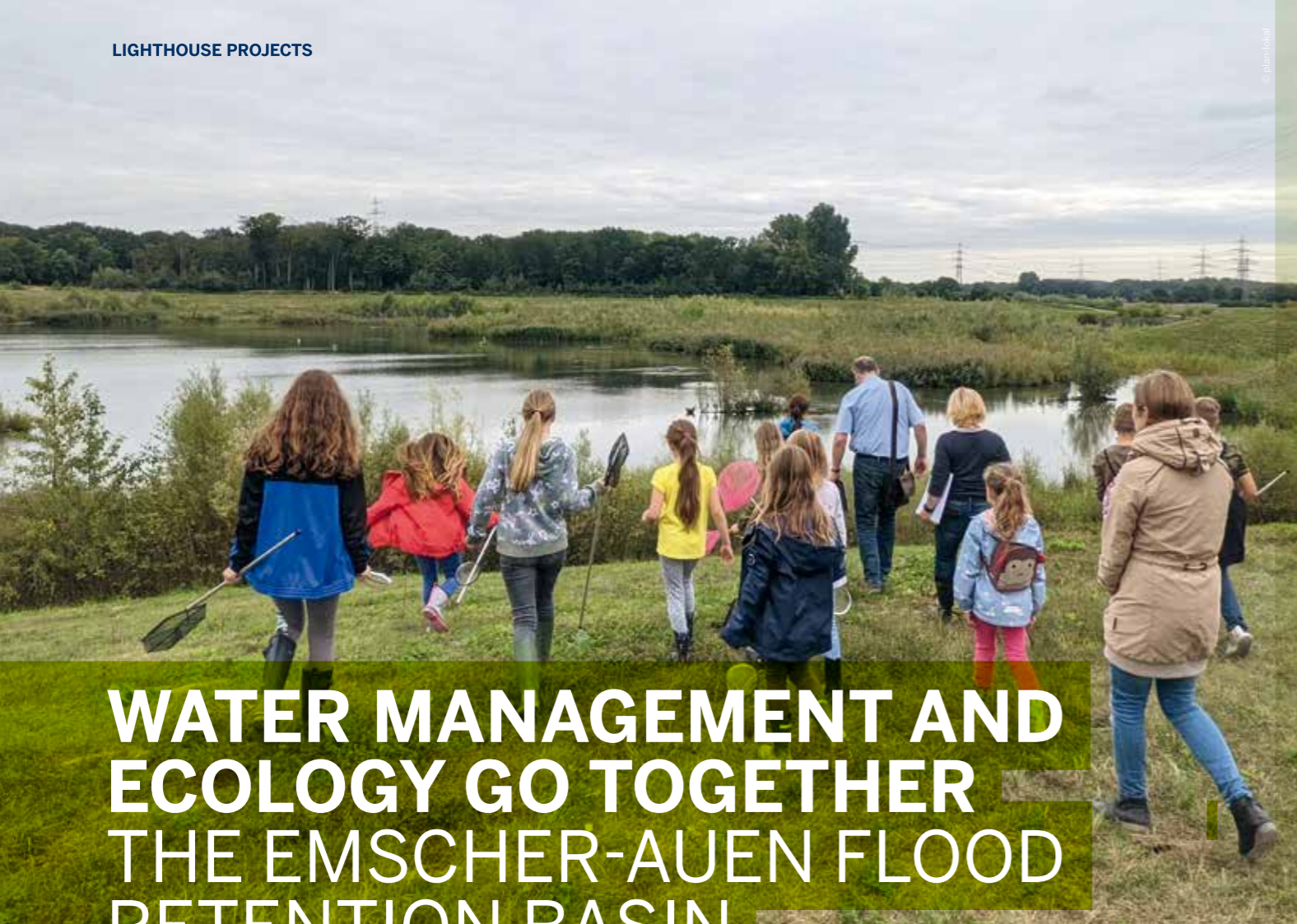
“Dortmund’s PHOENIX Lake is a perfect example of how the Emscher restoration, combined with active urban development, can produce a new future-oriented and sustainable urban landscape.”

LUDGER WILDE | DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND HOUSING OF THE CITY OF DORTMUND



The fledgling PHOENIX Lake district is connected with the well-established Hörder district centre and the fashionable high-tech PHOENIX West district by a number of attractive new green spaces and by various bridges and paths. The bridge symbolises the interplay between modern and traditional, young and old, long-time residents and newcomers, and between people from many different parts of the world who live here.

Now that the wastewater has been diverted elsewhere, the Emscher meanders through verdant meadows and woodlands in the newly designed **Hoetger Park**, which serves as a flood buffer zone during heavy rainfall and provides an ideal habitat for the grass snake, the kingfisher and the yellow-bellied toad.



WATER MANAGEMENT AND ECOLOGY GO TOGETHER THE EMSCHER-AUEN FLOOD RETENTION BASIN

With wide expanses of water, reeds and colourful birds as far as the eye can see, the Emscher-Auen flood retention basin looks perfectly natural at first glance. Extending over some 33 hectares of wetlands, it bears little trace of being a man-made structure. Situated along the Emscher bicycle path on the outskirts of Dortmund-Mengede and Castrop-Rauxel Ickern, visitors here can enjoy a wide view of the water, the historic buildings of Hof Emscher-Auen and the surrounding countryside. This is a popular destination for people looking to get some exercise, walk the dog, enjoy a little fresh air and clear their heads outside the confines of the city. But aside from offering residents a welcome opportunity for rest, relaxation and recreation, the area is an important flood protection measure, as becomes clear when the basin is filled to capacity after a torrential rainfall. The large dimensions of the site allow it to retain 1.1 million cubic metres of water in the event of a deluge. This significantly improves flood protection for the towns located downstream along the Emscher.

But it is not only people who benefit from these wetlands, which were created between 2011 and 2018 as part of the Emscher River restoration. Even during the construction phase, the basin became a haven for many bird species, including endangered ones. Common migratory fowl that stay for extended periods include little ringed plovers, northern lapwings, ruffs, great crested grebes and numerous species of geese, herons, ducks and gulls. The 'Emscher Auen' – the green alluvial zones along the Emscher River, appreciated by nature lovers, ecologists and outdoor enthusiasts alike – are a prime example of how much-needed water management measures can markedly improve the quality of life for people in the region. Additional activities and attractions, like a Blue Classroom and overnight accommodation at 'dasparkehotel', are set to further enhance the appeal of this unique location in future.



A DAY OUT WITH TWO AMATEUR ORNITHOLOGISTS

TEXT: HELMUT KUHFUSS

You may have never heard of a stonechat, wagtail or yellowhammer, but Dorothee Scharping-Hammad and Günter Hennemann can recognise them immediately by their calls. Each identified bird species is tallied and the result is later registered online. On this particular day, they identified some 40 species. In the evening, Günter entered the day's results on on ornitho.de, a German birdwatching portal. Information like this is used to determine the current bird population throughout Germany. Equipped with binoculars and spotting scopes, Dorothee and Günter perform this count every other day at the flood retention basin. They lent me a scope to show me a kingfisher, and I had my first sighting of a snipe. We stopped again and listened to a bird call: a common kestrel being pursued by a flock of carrion crows. The birders both pulled out their binoculars and counted, Günter noting the result afterwards.

Dorothee and Günter have been a trusted team for the German Society for Nature Conservation (NABU) since 2007, and have occasionally taken part in an event called the Bird Race, held every year in early May. Here, participants aim to count as many bird species as possible in their local area within the space of 24 hours. It is a point of honour among ornithologists for the count to be performed accurately and honestly. Dorothee and Günter would like the *Emschergenossenschaft* to keep part of the embankment with a steep wall as a breeding site for kingfishers and sand martins after the last planned development work in the basin is completed.

I returned home with a wealth of ornithological information, duly impressed by the sheer diversity of bird species that have made their home in the Emscher-Auen flood control basin.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES.

Project partners: City of Castrop-Rauxel, City of Dortmund, *Emschergenossenschaft*

Scope: Three separate basins, each with a depth of between 5 and 6 metres, are arranged on an area of 33 hectares.

Financing and funding:

- 0.7 million euros in state subsidies for a portion of the land purchase
- *Emschergenossenschaft*

“The Emscher-Auen flood retention basin is a magnificent example of helping nature to make a comeback. It illustrates the opportunities offered by multifunctional spaces in the heart of this old mining region: for flood protection and for a semi-natural, meandering Emscher. These new wetlands are a godsend for birds and amphibians and a place for people to relax and enjoy the natural surroundings – something that we must safeguard for future generations.”

DR MARIO SOMMERHÄUSER
EMSCHERGENOSSENSCHAFT



HOF EMSCHER-AUEN

Hof Emscher-Auen, located in the direct vicinity of the flood retention basin along Emscher-Weg, was renovated extensively in 2017 and is now a vibrant venue for recreation, entertainment, information, integration and cultural exchanges. A local educational and recreational association – Falken Bildungs- und Freizeitwerk Dortmund e.V. – offers a diverse weekend programme for children and young people. A special partner here is the Castrop-Rauxel Prison. As part of a resocialisation project, inmates in the open prison look after the grounds of Hof Emscher-Auen and showcase their products in the 'prison shop' on Sundays.



HOLIDAY FEELING ON THE RHINE-HERNE CANAL TRANSFORMING RECKLINGHAUSEN CITY HARBOUR

Recklinghausen City Harbour was opened more than a century ago. After the economic importance of the harbour had steadily declined since the middle of the last century, part of the site was converted from an industrial zone to a recreational area. Where there was once a bustling commercial harbour, there are now sandy beaches, cool beverages and a charming view of the water – all combining to create a holiday feeling on the Rhine-Herne Canal.

Inspired by the Emscher Landscape Park 2010 project master plan, a new utilisation concept was drawn up for the inland harbour. The combination of a freight terminal, space for local recreation and the preservation of historic structures – including the listed old harbour crane on the West Quay – has revitalised the area and turned it into a favourite destination for visitors. In the western harbour area, a beach bar lounge with recliners and wicker beach chairs is an ideal spot to relax and unwind with your feet in the sand and a view of the canal. In addition to the pier for pleasure craft, there is a landing stage for passengers on tourist boats and charter tours. Visitors will also find plenty of cultural activities. The Emscher Bridge to the electric power transformation station leads to the Electricity and Life Museum (Museum Strom und Leben), where visitors can journey back through time to learn about the history of electrification. The harbour area also offers local cycling enthusiasts a welcome stopover thanks to its close proximity to the 230-kilometre-long Emscher Park Cycle Route.

Recklinghausen City Harbour is an impressive example of how an industrial site can be transformed into one of the city's most popular destinations and a magnet for tourists from all over the Emscher region.



PADDLING, WALKING AND RELAXING – A SUNDAY MORNING AT THE SMALL HARBOUR

TEXT: HEINRICH STOCK

People are naturally drawn to water. So it should come as no surprise that local residents like Uschi and Dirk Kretschmann enjoy strolling from Herne to the city harbour in the district of Recklinghausen-Süd. “We have always loved heading down to the Rhine-Herne Canal. When we were young, we would often go to the canal in the summer and jump into the water”, recalls Dirk. The city harbour is part of a loop route that the Kretschmanns regularly take from Herne along the banks of the Emscher and the canal. They are very enthusiastic about how the city harbour in Recklinghausen-Süd has been redeveloped: “Yes, we love it.” But they still remember when the old harbour was quite an eyesore.

On Sunday mornings, the harbour is wonderfully placid. Herne resident Michael Recke – a member of local canoeing club Recklinghausen II e.V. – ties his kayak to the pier there. During the high season, the club members are out and about on the Rhine-Herne Canal every weekend. Today, they are going to paddle the 12 kilometres from the clubhouse in Recklinghausen to the old locks in Wanne-Eickel. He is delighted at the change that has been wrought in Recklinghausen’s inland port: “You can see the progress.” There is a dock with eight berths for pleasure boats, and the quay wall has been restored. “The pier is beautifully built and invites people to come down to the water at the city harbour.”



“On the waterfront along the Emscher and the canal, we have created a new district that combines key clusters of urban development with added value for business and tourism. This conversion project – which involves urban development, commerce and tourism – has engendered a new urban quality between the canal and the Emscher, all within a small area.”

NORBERT HÖVING | PUBLIC WORKS COUNCILLOR, CITY OF RECKLINGHAUSEN

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES.

- Project partner:** The City of Recklinghausen
- Scope:** Redevelopment of the historic Recklinghausen City Harbour
- Financing and funding:** 3.1 million euros total cost, of which
 - 1.8 million euros from the Regional Economic Development Programme of North Rhine-Westphalia
 - 0.9 million euros urban development grants
 - 0.2 million euros municipal share of costs and other sources

THE EMSCHER PROMENADE

In 2022, construction began on the Emscher Promenade, an 18-kilometre combined bicycle route and footpath along the Emscher, connecting the towns of Recklinghausen, Castrop-Rauxel, Herne and Herten. This is part of a new inter-municipal green infrastructure with improved paths that offer attractive features such as urban and rural lookout points for pedestrians and cyclists. With its bridges over the Emscher, the promenade will open up new recreational experiences, linking city districts and points of interest and significantly enhancing the quality of life for New Emscher Valley residents.





REWARDING TEAMWORK TURNING KATERNBERG CREEK INTO A NATURAL RECREATION AREA

Something extraordinary is happening in Essen's north-easternmost district, where a once polluted stream now flows through an open-air classroom.

Since the 1960s, Katernberg Creek has flowed through the Essen district of the same name primarily through subterranean pipes and largely unnoticed by its residents. By separating clean water from sewage, it has now been possible to transform this stream into a blue ribbon that weaves its way through the Katernberg green corridor. This has restored a valuable natural setting for people, flora and fauna alike and has significantly improved the quality of life for local residents. It has also allowed the waterside area to become an increasingly attractive part of the city and a popular recreational destination.

In the run-up to the planned construction project in 2015, a campaign was launched in the district called 'The Katern-

berg Creek Experience – Join in!'. The public response was tremendous. Local residents, associations, initiatives and educational institutions enthusiastically joined in the planning and came up with a multitude of ideas. These included open access points along the green corridor, places for young people to hang out and relax, playgrounds, mud banks, multi-generational activity spots and terraces along the creek with seating and sculptures created by children and young people – to name just a few examples.

Since the stream flows close by a number of schools, it was not long before someone hit upon the idea of a Blue Classroom. This educational venue consists of terraced natural stone blocks that resemble an amphitheatre and can now be used for outdoor classes. Part of the Blue Classroom was completed in October 2021, bringing the people of Katernberg one step closer to their goal of creating a blue-green recreation area for all residents.

“In the heart of Essen-Katernberg, the renaturalisation of Katernberg Creek provides a whole new perspective on urban development. A new housing estate called Am Katernberger Bach is being built by the ALLBAU municipal housing company in the immediate vicinity of the park and the water.”

MARTIN HARTER | HEAD OF THE PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF ESSEN

PUT ON YOUR RUBBER BOOTS AND HEAD DOWN TO THE WATER – OUTDOOR LEARNING IN THE BLUE CLASSROOM

TEXT: ANDREAS FRITSCHÉ

Katernberg is a district of Essen with a high proportion of immigrants. Roughly 90 percent of the children who attend the Free School after-school programme come from disadvantaged families with a low level of education. Many boys and girls come every day to study, eat, play, exercise and learn about rules and values in small groups. Fun trips and activities are organised during the holidays and are very popular with the children here. There are also diverse group activities every week, such as the girls' group.

“We set great store by working together and interacting with the neighbouring primary schools so that all the boys and girls can benefit”, says Martina Morzonek-Kolberg, who heads the institution. The newly built, directly adjacent Blue Classroom enriches educational activities at the Free School, especially since it fits well with many of the subjects covered here, including the natural environment and water ecology. Other areas of focus include waste sorting, raised bed gardens and a bee project that will be expanded in the near future. “We look forward to being able to use the Blue Classroom in 2022. As well as this, we sincerely hope that this centre of peace and learning will continue to exist for many years to come.”



Initially conceived as an alternative school, the Free School has always aimed to provide children and young people with a safe and secure environment where they can play and learn. This is an independently run after-school activity centre that is open to all children, regardless of background.



KEY FACTS AND FIGURES.

Project partners: The City of Essen, associations and residents, *EmscherGenossenschaft*

Scope: The restoration of Katernberg Creek from an underground channel to a more natural surface watercourse, the creation of a 1.5 km long green corridor in Katernberg and the construction of a Blue Classroom

Financing and funding:
1.56 million euros total cost, of which
• 1.24 million euros in urban development grants
• 0.24 million euros municipal share of costs
• 0.07 million euros in funding from the *EmscherGenossenschaft*

There are other Blue Classrooms, for instance on Hahnenbach Creek in Gladbeck Brauck, on Hellbach Creek in Recklinghausen-Süd, on Kirchschemmsbach Creek in Bottrop and, in the near future, another one near the Emscher flood retention basin at Hof Emscher Auen.

The planning principle behind the development of these learning venues has always been to ensure that local stakeholders and subsequent users – for example, children and young people from schools and daycare centres in the surrounding area – can play an active and creative role in the process.



AN OLD STEEL MILL BECOMES AN URBAN OASIS THE DUISBURG-NORD LANDSCAPE PARK

If you intend to explore the fascinating Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park, be sure to set aside enough time to fully immerse yourself in this natural and cultural site. Created around the monumental backdrop of the decommissioned steelworks in the Meiderich district of Duisburg, this 180-hectare landscape park is one of the anchor points of the European Route of Industrial Heritage as well as the Route of Industrial Heritage in the Ruhr area. According to an article in UK newspaper *The Guardian*, it even ranks among the ten best urban parks in the world.

Over the years, this urban oasis has established itself as more than just a landmark that is lit up colourfully on weekend nights. Since opening in 1994, the landscape park has provided a gigantic adventure playground for recreational enthusiasts to skateboard, mountain bike and enjoy other types of sporting activities. Climbing walls, built in an old ore bunker, attract visitors looking for adventure in a historic industrial setting – and Europe's largest artificial diving centre, housed in an old gasometer, is a great place to 'dive into' the park's activities. Visitors are treated to a stunning panorama of the New Emscher Valley from a height of 70 metres atop one of the disused blast furnaces, which has been converted into a viewing platform.

For those who prefer a more tranquil setting, the vast green spaces in the landscape park are ideal for walks and picnics. Large areas of the site have been reclaimed by nature in recent years. Today, the Alte Emscher – the former lower course of the Emscher that crosses the landscape park – flows with clear water and several small platforms that extend over the water provide an opportunity to paddle, relax and enjoy the scenery.

This exceptional transformation process in the New Emscher Valley benefits roughly one million visitors every year.

“A bold, innovative contribution to the IBA Emscher Park exhibition rather than starting anew with a clean slate. A park with history instead of industry and with culture and recreation instead of work. A world-class industrial landscape instead of a contaminated site. And a clean Old Emscher River instead of an open sewer. This is Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park.”

MARTIN LINNE | HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT, MOBILITY AND SPORTS
OF THE CITY OF DUISBURG



KEY FACTS AND FIGURES.

Project partners: The City of Duisburg, Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord GmbH, Landesentwicklungsgesellschaft Nordrhein-Westfalen GmbH

Scope: Transformation of a former industrial site (180 hectares)

Financing and funding:

27.8 million euros in urban development grants
• 1.2 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)/Objective 2 Programme and other sources

With the green belt in Bruckhausen (part of the **Duisburg-Nord Green Belt** project), a once densely built-up and industrially polluted urban area has now been transformed into a dynamic public park with the active involvement and participation of local residents.

After the largely vacant residential buildings were demolished, the 10.1-hectare park with green and open spaces was opened in 2016 as the 'green lung of Bruckhausen'. Now it offers residents and outdoor enthusiasts an opportunity to enjoy verdant surroundings and improve their quality of life in the midst of old heavy industry and historic residential buildings that date back to the years of rapid industrial expansion in Germany in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 2020, the project was one of 30 buildings to receive the coveted Award for Exemplary Buildings of North Rhine-Westphalia.





A CREATIVE MAKEOVER FOR THE OLD LOHBERG MINE SITE

What to do with a former coal mining site roughly the size of 370 football pitches, dotted with mining relics, colliery buildings and slag heaps? One answer to this question can be found in Dinslaken, where an ambitious development project – Kreativ.Quartier Lohberg – is going from strength to strength.

A century of mining history in Dinslaken came to an end in late 2005 with the closure of the Lohberg coal mine. In the years that followed, a project consortium – consisting of the City of Dinslaken and RAG Montan Immobilien GmbH – joined forces with local residents and a team of experts to redevelop the former colliery site, the adjacent slag heaps and the Lohberg estate, which once provided housing for miners and their families. Since then, a colourful mix of high-quality open spaces and residential and commercial clusters has emerged in an intriguing setting surrounded by relics from the area's mining past. Innovation, future-oriented economic activities and striking a healthy balance between 'old' and 'new' were all top priorities when it came to developing the area.

The cornerstone of the site development is Kreativ.Quartier Lohberg, featuring cultural and creative activities along with areas for production, crafts and services. With its artistic design, Bergpark is the green focal point of the entire site. And with its stretches of water, lakeside promenade, playgrounds and sports facilities, it offers a wealth of opportunities for activities and recreation for everyone who lives there and for visitors to the region. The jointly pursued goal of merging an industrial area – once concealed behind a colliery wall – with the district of Lohberg has been a resounding success in Dinslaken. This project received funding between 1999 and 2016 under the German government's Soziale Stadt programme for urban development.

FROM A MILK DISPENSARY TO AN ARTISTIC HOTSPOT – A VISIT TO KREATIV.QUARTIER LOHBERG

TEXT: MANFRED STOMMEL

Since Kreativ.Quartier Lohberg opened in 2009, artists from various disciplines have been pursuing their creative dreams in the historic colliery buildings. The spectrum ranges from fine arts and design to goldsmithing, singing and jazz. Walburga Schild-Griesbeck, co-founder of the 'Kreative im Quartier Lohberg' association, has an extraordinary passion for painting and design. She gives free rein to her enthusiasm for art in the 'Atelier Freiart' workshop, which is housed in the former milk dispensary of the Lohberg coal mine workers' service building. She is also a book author, gallery owner, curator and has acted in several films. Visitors can browse, buy, borrow or create their own art or simply talk shop with her in this artist-run gallery.

What is your preferred medium?

"I love working with paint, which is my main medium, but I have also been known to work with everyday items that have been discarded or are no longer needed. Hubcaps, plastic bags, paper scraps and charcoal briquettes are all given a new purpose in my artistic work."

How do you envisage the future of Kreativ.Quartier?

"It would be nice if the original enthusiasm of all those involved could return after the pandemic. There is indeed a great need to socialise and get together and this could be satisfied and revitalised for instance through a wide range of small-scale activities".



KEY FACTS AND FIGURES.

- Project partners:** City of Dinslaken, Ruhrkohle AG Montan Immobilien GmbH
- Scope:** Approx. 40 hectares of the former colliery site plus some 216 hectares of slag heaps
- Financing and funding:** 20.1 million euros total cost, of which
 - 6.2 million euros in urban development grants
 - 4.1 million euros in funding from the Ecology Programme in the Emscher-Lippe Region
 - 3.2 million euros in funds allocated under the municipal road construction directive
 - 0.8 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund
 - 4.9 million euros municipal share of costs and other sources

"The transformation of a former coal mine into a mixed-use area: the words 'What remains is the future' were inscribed on the roof of a building next to the old mine shaft. This illustrates the 'Change through culture, culture through change' maxim of the Ruhr district, which was once dominated by heavy industry."

SVENJA NOLTEMEYER | DIE URBANISTEN ASSOCIATION



The adjacent historic Gartenstadt housing estate was painstakingly refurbished in collaboration with local residents. This is connected to an emerging new urban district with a climate-neutral energy supply that has been under construction at Bergpark for a number of years. Solar energy, wind power, biomass, biomethane gas and geothermal energy will combine to provide enough power to meet the needs of the historic workers' district in a climate-friendly manner too.

ROAMING WITH THE RIVER POET IN THE NEW EMSCHER VALLEY

They say you can travel around the world in 80 days. But if you wanted to explore one of Germany's most captivating regions until you could claim to be intimately familiar with it, 80 days would not be enough. Believe me – I know what I'm talking about. In the following lines, I will take you on a whirlwind visit through the Emscher region. Stay close behind me, and off we go ...

An urban jungle – on a quiet, rainy Tuesday in November. In his poem November Day, German poet Christian Morgenstern claimed that “not a soul would venture outdoors” on such a day unless it were absolutely necessary. But I am on my way to the Sölde district of Dortmund, the starting point of my Emscher explorations today. Around noon, the clouds burst over Nathmerichstrasse. Waiting out the final drizzle in a bakery shop, I quickly strike up a conversation with a woman behind the counter who wants to know what brings a wandering soul like me out in this kind of weather. “Ah, yes, it’s because of our Emscher”, she remarks with delight. And then she tells me how she and her co-workers realised at one point or another that more and more cyclists were stopping by for a snack. “It took a while before it dawned on us that these were tourists riding along the Emscher bicycle route. These days I’m sometimes just gobsmacked when old people take a breather here and tell us where they come from. There was once even this elderly gent who rode his bike all the way from Essen-Karnap to here”, she says with a laugh – “although admittedly it was an e-bike”.

After taking my first few steps on the Emscher-Weg trail, I run into a pensioner with his dog, both of whom are getting on in years. “You never know when it’s going to rain again. So I nipped out to walk the dog while it was still dry.” They live in nearby residential housing, which is situated more or less directly on the river. “I can safely say now that I’m glad they’ve cleaned up the river. But, believe me, there were times when we were sick and tired of all the noise and heavy machinery. Sometimes it seemed like they would never be finished. But that’s all water under the bridge now.” The autumnal sounds along the banks of the Emscher are accompanied by a chorus of leaf blowers in the neighbouring housing estate and the symphony of planes taking off from the nearby airport. We say goodbye to each other with a friendly wave. Then, gazing at the overgrown riverbed, he calls out to me: “It’s a good thing you’re here in the autumn. That’s when you can sometimes actually catch a glimpse of the Emscher, which is totally overgrown by now.” In the area around Dortmund, you can see for yourself how the flora and fauna that are characteristic of these waterways have now returned to this once heavily polluted river. Even the grey wagtail has reclaimed some of its old stomping grounds here. And that is worth making a song and dance about!

HOMELAND POETRY

Gently curves
The bridge
Arch
Bathes morning
Sun in haze
Thick at dawn
Fog
Dyke with meadows
Gulls at shore
Promenade automobile
Railway industry
Backdrop
Here
Here it smells
Here it doesn't
Like the sea

FROM A MAN WHO SET OFF TO BECOME A RIVER POET

Has it really been more than two decades since I set off to become a river poet? Looking back, I recall how an obsession evolved into a deep affection for Madame Emscher and her lovely daughters – the many tributaries and side channels that weave their way throughout the entire Emscher region. My walks along our native rivers and streams invariably take me from their individual sources to where they flow together with other water-courses. I have walked the length and breadth of the Emscher region in all manner of weather, covering more than 20,000 kilometres on foot in the process.

During my walks, I experience day after day the enormous creative potential waiting to be discovered in the New Emscher Valley. Sources of inspiration for my literary projects include both the landscape and the many conversations with the people I meet along the way. Many Ruhr area writers try their luck in Berlin, Munich, Hamburg or elsewhere. But I’m not drawn there. I intend to remain in the Emscher region, where the dialect and rhythm of the local vernacular is music to my ears. Yes, I will remain where there is a constant stream of poems and stories that will never run dry.

And, as long as I am able, I will set out again and again to be a river poet.

Yours, THORSTEN TRELENBERG
Poet, children's author and river poet



For more than 20 years, Thorsten Trelenberg has been wandering throughout the Emscher region and finding inspiration for his many creative endeavours.

Literary and poetic projects by Thorsten Trelenberg in collaboration with the *Emschergenossenschaft*:

- _ Poesieoasen
- _ Mini-book series: On the Move with the River Pirates
- _ Wimmelbuch project: On the Move with the River Pirates in the Emscher Region



A REGION TACKLES THE FUTURE TOGETHER

URBAN RENEWAL AND REDEVELOPMENT HAVE CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION OF THE EMSCHER REGION AND IMPROVED HOUSING CONDITIONS AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE.

An awareness of the role of water in urban planning and an integrated water management system are crucial for climate protection and measures for adapting to the consequences of climate change, as well as efforts for enhancing the quality of life for local residents. With the United for the New Emscher Valley initiative, these issues will now figure even more prominently in the strategies of urban development programmes. This helps greatly towards making the Emscher region more resilient and more sustainable from an ecological, economic and social perspective.

Climate-resilient restoration projects and measures for strengthening our blue-green infrastructure are of growing importance in urban development. Creating new wastewater solutions in the Emscher region is an important milestone in the structural transformation of the central Ruhr region. Many streams and rivers in the Emscher ecosystem have now been renaturalised, allowing them to be enjoyed by local residents and visitors alike. In current and future urban development programme areas, this provides an opportunity to create a more healthy, ecological and appealing living environment. The municipalities of the Emscher region, the *Emschergenossenschaft* and the North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry of Urban Development will continue to work on this in future.



“The collaborative project United for the New Emscher Valley illustrates how achievements in water management and urban development have helped to initiate and implement sustainable urban and regional development with extensive input from the population in the Emscher region. The restoration of the Emscher is not the final chapter. Rather, this project serves as a catalyst for the ongoing development of a regional strategy that not only aims to keep the Emscher River clean but also to further enhance our communities and continue improving the quality of life for local residents.”

PROF. ULI PAETZEL | CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE EMSCHERGENOSSENSCHAFT AND LIPPEVERBAND

“Since the beginning of 2022, the Emscher has once again been flowing through the Ruhr region free of all wastewater and sewage. This is possible thanks to a state-of-the-art wastewater infrastructure that has been built over the past 30 years with a total investment of over 5.5 billion euros. Innovative planning tools, rigorous project management and comprehensive change processes in the infrastructure of the entire region have allowed the Emschergenossenschaft to meet the challenges of climate change while helping to prepare towns and cities for the challenges of the future.”

DR EMANUEL GRÜN
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER FOR WATER MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES EMSCHERGENOSSENSCHAFT AND LIPPEVERBAND



“By linking the restoration of the Emscher River and urban development programmes within the scope of the longstanding initiative United for the New Emscher Valley, we – together with local communities and residents – have succeeded in improving housing and living conditions in the districts along the river. A wide range of projects in more than 40 districts on the left and right banks of the Emscher have been implemented with urban development funds and, together with the restoration and reclamation of the river, have helped to transform the region. Urban development funding will continue to play its part in shaping the region.”

INA SCHARRENBACH | MINISTER FOR REGIONAL IDENTITY, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, BUILDING AND GENDER EQUALITY OF NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA









www.eglv.de/faszination-transformation




Ministry for Regional Identity, Communities and
Local Government, Building and Gender Equality of
North Rhine-Westphalia
Jürgensplatz 1, 40219 Düsseldorf, Germany

info@mhkgb.nrw.de
www.mhkgb.nrw

 MHKBG_NRW
 MHKBG.NRW
 mhkgb_nrw
 MHKBG_NRW

Emschergenossenschaft
Kronprinzenstrasse 24, 45128 Essen, Germany

info@eglv.de
www.eglv.de

 EGLVde
 EGLV.de
 emscherlippe