

## REPAIR Good Practice Example: Rostock, Rostock Heath



***On the doorstep of the German Baltic Coast at Rostock is one of the largest complete woodlands known as Rostock Heath covering 6000 hectares. Since 1252 the woodland area has belonged to the City of Rostock.***

*During and especially after the Second World War the military started to use the woodland and built many Barrack blocks, artillery and firing ranges, bunkers, dumps and protective devices.*

In 1989 more than 50% of the wood was a military area and the rightful owners only had restricted access. After the German reunification the woodland under military use was given back to the City of Rostock in 1992.

Normally, 45 years is a short space of time for woodland – anyhow, this period was enough to change the area in a sustainable way, especially the part of the woodland that was previously under military occupation. To the same degree the building of barracks and firing ranges was pressed ahead, the woodland and its cultivation reduced. To develop the firing ranges many trees were cut down with a dramatic effect on the landscape. Rail tracks were built and old military hardware, such as Tanks were deployed. Protective barriers were not erected so the wood provided a backstop or buffer zone. Approximately 20% of the woodland was contaminated with ammunition cases, metal splinters and shrapnel.

With the reassignment of the wood the *City of Rostock* was confronted with the task of disposing of buildings and walls, removal of ditches and paths and to scrap military equipment and the manpower, resources and the financial means required exceeded the possibilities of the municipality.

By the EU support programmes *KONVER I and II*, 108 hectares of the former military area

could have been returned to nature. The focus of the activities was a former firing range with buildings for living and repair shops, tank equipment and shooting stands as well as walls, electrical fences and barbed wires. 30 permanently unemployed people undertook the main part of the work. A very large area, 54 hectares, had to be decontaminated resulting in the removal of an enormous amount of waste material 8,300 tons, in addition to 30,000 tons of concrete and the disposal of 5,800m<sup>3</sup> of asbestos. After clearance a mixture of trees were planted including Pine, Oak, Beech and Spruce on almost 50 hectares.



*The Military heritage trail is marked with various information panels*

The main focus of the project was the protection, preservation and expansion of rare biotopes. These special habitats often vanish because of human cultivation and generally only develop or survive in restricted areas. The support of the existing ecological variety was achieved through many different methods.

***Re-establishing the old road system and the connection with the newly completed road and pathways of the Rostock Heath completed the project. One very important point in realizing the project was an active dialogue with the governmental and voluntary nature protection organisations.***

## ***From the autumn of 1996 the area occupied by the former missile regiment was returned to its natural state.***

*The main characteristic of this area was a high degree of intensive building development with barrack blocks, huge shelters and many bunkers – today these are covered with broadleaf tree plantings and conifers.*

New wetland areas and the subsequent use of the bunkers as wintering grounds for bats widen the important living spaces for endangered species.



*Viewing platform on top of bunker.  
The bunker now serves as wintering ground for bats.*

Besides the established and traditional uses: forestry and hunting - Rostock Heath has a high value as a recreational area and is considered to be an invaluable habitat for flora and fauna. For that matter, protection of nature and species do have a dominant value.

The use of timber as a renewable resource is without alternative from the ecological point of view and it provides people with jobs in the woodland, in transport and trade as well as in the woodworking industry, generating earnings for the City of Rostock.

Thousands of people use the Rostock Heath every year to find recreation, silence and solitude. A well-developed system of roads and tracks is available for visitors. Dedicated bridle paths offer the possibility to experience the landscape on horseback.

Tourism in the region of Rostock is focussed on the attractiveness of Rostock Heath with its unique combination of beach and woodland.

*The neighbouring seaside resorts at Graal-Müritz and Markgrafenheide profit from the healthy climate, fresh air and open spaces and the heath also offers, besides the good hiking and running tracks, climate therapy tracks for active recreation and health protection.*

Contact: Thomas Werner, Rostock  
Tel. 00 49 38 13 81 11 07  
Email. [thomas.werner@rostock.de](mailto:thomas.werner@rostock.de)

URBACT II

**URBACT** is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

[www.urbact.eu/repair](http://www.urbact.eu/repair)



EUROPEAN  
PROGRAMME  
FOR  
SUSTAINABLE  
URBAN  
DEVELOPMENT

