

1. The Regional Association of Westphalia-Lippe

Westphalia-Lippe is the northern part of the German federal state of Northrhine-Westphalia.

The Westphalia-Lippe Regional Association (LWL) is a municipal association with 13,000 employees, who serve the 8.3 million inhabitants of this region. The LWL operates 35 special schools, 21 hospitals, and 17 museums and is one of the largest German providers of financial assistance to people with disabilities. It thus fulfils



various responsibilities in the social sphere, provides support for young people, people with disabilities and psychiatric patients, and plays a cultural role throughout the federal state of Northrhine-Westphalia. The LWL is also committed to creating an inclusive society in all spheres of life. The nine independent cities and 18 districts of Westphalia-Lippe are all members of the LWL. They sustain and finance the Regional Association, the duties of which include operating a parliament consisting of 101 members from the Westphalian municipalities.

2. Gardens and Parks in Westphalia-Lippe

Since 1998 the LWL-Department for Heritage Preservation, Landscape and Building Culture has worked intensively on the topic of gardens and parks. So far 600 gardens in the region have been recorded and documented. The results were published on an internet database. Packed with attractive pictures four books describe the diverse gardens in different parts of the region.



Criteria for the selection were the garden's historic significance for the region, its correlation with an historically or culturally important building, its representation of garden history, its present use for recreation and leisure, its merits for tourism, its botanical or dendrological value, its visual and aesthetic appeal, its suitability and use as a cultural venue, and last but not least its links to the surrounding countryside.

The gardens documented range from a baroque castle garden and historic landscape garden or spa garden of the 19th century to the large villa gardens of the early 20th century bourgeoisie. But even some modern gardens of recent decades have been described.



The recording of the gardens and parks will soon be finished. By that time approximately 700 sites will be shown and described in our database.

3. Regional initiatives and working groups in Westphalia-Lippe

Recording the gardens was the basis for the LWL's participation in several working groups in different parts of Westphalia. For example in the area surrounding the town of Bielefeld the LWL was part of the initiative "Garten_Landschaft_OWL" (Garden_Landscape_East Westphalia-Lippe), which has been arranging art exhibitions and lectures in its local gardens and parks since the year 2000. Based on the depth of knowledge about the history, the design and the condition of the gardens the LWL took on the role of advisor in this joint project on the

refurbishment and restoration of 14 gardens and parks over the last 12 years.



In particular, support was given in the preparation of financing concepts in order to assist the implementation of the plans with the help of public funding. In total around four million Euros were invested. Unfortunately the LWL-Department does not have its own funding programme. In fact, it tries to make state funding available for municipal and private owners to use for the preservation of gardens and parks. At present the LWL-Department for Heritage Preservation, Landscape and Building Culture is working on a management plan for the largest and most beautiful park in Westphalia, the garden of castle Nordkirchen. The aim is to obtain funding for the restoration of neglected areas within the park.



For historically significant gardens, where preservation is important for cultural, scientific or town planning reasons, the LWL-Department also draws up heritage assessments, so that these gardens can be protected by law. The owners of listed parks and gardens are entitled to professional advice on management and maintenance issues by the Department.

As most of the larger gardens and parks in Westphalia are open to the public, many owners, especially municipal authorities, are interested in marketing for tourism. In this respect the LWL-Department assist with its database of gardens and parks and with the setting up of networks and working groups. The regional initiatives are supported in order to strengthen co-operation and communication among the gardens' owners in the different parts of Westphalia. The LWL-Department offers seminars and workshops, in which various aspects of gardens and parks can be discussed with an interested audience.

4. The European Garden Heritage Network

The LWL has been a partner in the European Garden Heritage Network from the start and acts as the regional co-ordinator in Westphalia-Lippe. Initially it provided texts and images for the website www.eghn.eu. Later on it helped convince public and private owners of the aims and the usefulness of the website. Today all of the gardens pay a contribution towards the maintenance and development of the European Garden Heritage Network and in doing so, show confidence in the fact that Westphalia offers many gardens of European rank.



In eastern parts of Westphalia there is now an established working group, which regularly confers on common activities and initiatives. One aim is to start similar working groups of the European Garden Heritage Network in the other parts of Westphalia as well.

The LWL also co-operates with Schloss Dyck and the Regional Association of the Rhineland in developing EGHN-GardenHeritageTours. This project tries to harness the co-operation of gardens within the EGHN and aims at enticing more European visitors into the gardens and parks of Northrhine-Westphalia. It arose through the EGHN and is financed by the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

5. Current projects in Westphalia-Lippe

One of the current projects is the development of a new website, which will go online in May of this year under the domain www.garten-in-westfalen.de. The website will provide interested people with a quick and informative overview of the top 100 gardens in Westphalia-Lippe. Short texts and beautiful images aim at inspiring interest in the gardens and parks and invite guests to visit them in real. Special information and addresses enable garden tourists to create their own garden tour.



In addition the events on the „Tag der Gärten und Parks in Westfalen-Lippe“ (Garden and Park Day in Westphalia-Lippe),

which takes place on the second weekend in June, are referred to. The larger parks offer guided walks and garden parties and many smaller gardens are open to the public also. In 2012 more than 100 gardens and parks will participate and will announce their events on the website.

6. Hybrid Parks

The Regional Association of Westphalia-Lippe has been working on the subject of gardens and parks for over 10 years now. The project Hybrid Parks enables it to share its experience with its European partners and to learn from their experience in return. It gives the opportunity to gather new ideas, identify chances, and to think further ahead. The regional garden networks in Westphalia will get involved in the European exchange and will thus be consolidated. New aims and ideas will be developed and implemented together with the European partners. The European exchange will strengthen the focus on the special characteristics of each region and its gardens and will help to develop that further.



7. Useful links:

The Regional Association of Westphalia-Lippe (LWL):

www.lwl.org (German, English)

LWL-Department for Heritage Preservation, Landscape and Building Culture:

<http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/WALB/> (German)

Gardens and parks in Westphalia-Lippe:

www.gaerten-in-westfalen.de (German, English scheduled)

Gardens_Landscape_East-Westphalia-Lippe (GartenLandschaft OWL):

www.garten-landschaft-owl.de (German)

LWL on Wikipedia:

http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landschaftsverband_Westfalen-Lippe (German)

More information about Hybrid Parks and INTERREG IVC

www.hybridparks.eu

