

Marked nature trails

The map in this leaflet shows all trails as yellow dotted lines. Colours as mentioned below refer to signposts on the ground for the trails themselves.

Trail 1. White 2.5 km. This trail starts at the picnic area on Vangsåvej/Kystvej. A section of the trail follows the old coastal cliff with a view over Klitmøller and Hanstholm in the north.

Trail 2. Red 5.0 km. This trail starts at the picnic area on Gl. Vangsåvej. Pottery remains, probably vestiges of a stone age settlement, have been found in the area where the trail skirts the corner of Vangså heath. It is thought that this was the location of Nystrup manor around the year 1400.

Trail 3. Green 4.5 km. You can join this trail from the car park on Søvej or the car park at the west end of Ministervej. The trail passes the most luxuriant and productive part of the plantation. Nystrup manor was from 1600 to 1910 situated at the point where the trail crosses Ministervej, but was later moved eastwards.

Trail 4. Yellow 2 km. Starting at the southernmost car park on Nystrupvej, the path climbs the partially planted Graves Bakker hills, in places 40 metres high and affording a broad panorama to the south.

Trail 5. Blue 4.5 km. Leaving the car park on the north side of Trapsandevvej, the path runs close to Hovekær wetlands, a rich natural habitat. Large areas have undergone deforestation so this environment might be replicated.

Trail 6. White 4 km. This trail starts at the picnic area at the southern end of Thygesonsvej. It covers the entire spectrum from rich, mainly deciduous forest at the start of the trail to poorer, windblown mountain pine plantation near Ndr. Glarbjerg.

Trail 7. Yellow 2 km. Starting at the car park on Ministervej, trail 7 follows the gorge along Rindbæk to the lake of the same name, which was created by damming the stream. Note the many self-sown fir trees. This area is a good example of natural forest management.

Trail 8. Yellow 1 km. Leaving the picnic area west of Vandetvej, the trail crosses hilly and varied terrain.

Trail 9. Yellow 1.5 km. This trail starts at the picnic area east of Vandetvej. There is a view from the path through the beech woods northwards to the river valley. The area is elevated and features several burial mounds.

Trail 10. Yellow 4.5 km. The trail starts from the car park on Hjørdalvej and passes stands of noble fir. Paths and tracks are lined with beech. From Skårup Høje in the north the vista extends to the valley of Øster Vandet.

Trail 11. Red 8 km. This is a continuation to the west of trail no. 10.

Trail 12. Green 1 km. After leaving the picnic area on Klitmøllervej near the nature playground, the path follows a lovely old sunken road and comes to a breathtaking outlook from the Årbjerg high above the old coast line, where there are many tumuli.

Trail 13. Yellow 2 km. This is a continuation to the north of trail no. 12.

Trail 14. Red 7 km. This trail can be taken up from the car park on Klitmøllervej or the bonfire site near Nors lake. The scenery is varied, incorporating diverse woodland and the Nebel stone which marks the location of the manor up to the 1600s.

Trail 15. Yellow 2 km. The trail sets out from the bonfire site or the car park east of the Nebel stone and cuts through a stand of trees, the result of a species trial which took place shortly after the establishment of the plantation. Tall noble firs and many oaks and beech are more than 100 years old. The forest floor is alive with young saplings.

Trail 16. Blue 5 km. The trail starts at the bonfire site and follows the banks of lake Nors to the east before crossing some private land. On the way back it follows forest tracks with frequent views over the lake and Hanstholm Nature Reserve.

Welcome to the dune plantations by lake Vandet

The dune plantations are surrounded by sea, sand, and large, pure water lakes and to the east by agricultural land. This varied landscape affords plenty of opportunities for enjoying outdoor life.

Nature trails: This folder briefly describes 16 marked trails in the plantations and features a map which can also be used to design your own outings. Hiking is allowed on all state-owned land, even beyond roads and paths, at all times. Please note that some limitations on access are in place in Hanstholm Nature Reserve with respect to wildlife.

Bonfire and camp sites: Bonfire sites are provided at Nystrup plantation near Vandet lake, at Vilsbøl plantation near Nors lake and at the nature playground near Årbjerg. There are also containers of firewood for free use. Simple camping areas are situated at Vandet plantation near Rindbæk and at Vilsbøl plantation south of Degnbjerg. You can sleep in the shelters or pitch your tent for a night or two. The camping areas have bonfire sites, toilets and drinking water: Here however, you are required to gather your own firewood from the forest.

Golf: There is an international standard 18-hole golf course at Nystrup plantation. The course has been built over cleared forest and follows the natural contours of the land. A visitor card can be purchased at the clubhouse.

Fishing: Day passes can be purchased for bank fishing at parts of the lakes of Vandet and Nors, either from the Forest District or tourist information office.

Nature playgrounds: Nature playgrounds have been built near Årbjerg in Vilsbøl plantation.

Mountain bike trails: A 6.2 km long mountain bike trail starts from the car park at the 12 km sign on Klitmøllervej.

Woods suitable for dogs: Near Tørvekær north of lake Vandet there is a wood in which dogs are allowed to run off the leash. It is however a requirement that dogs are kept under control.

Facilities for the disabled: There are short wheelchair-friendly stretches in the vicinity of most marked car parks and on many of the forest roads.

Nature tours: The personnel at Forest and Nature Agency, Regional Office, Thy, organise nature tours as open events and larger groups may book tours by applying to the regional office.

Further information: The contact number for the Forest and Nature Agency, Regional Office, Thy, is +45 97 97 70 88, e-mail:thy@sns.dk. More information at www.skovognatur.dk

• The dune plantations of lake Vandet



The "Nature Trails" series of leaflets covers selected nature areas. They are available at libraries, tourist information offices and at the entrances to many of the areas. See also www.skovognatur.dk

Danish Ministry of the Environment
The Forest and Nature Agency

- administration of state-owned forests and other nature areas in Denmark
- management with a view to recreation, timber production and the protection of natural and cultural assets

**The Forest and Nature Agency manages
190,000 ha of forest and other nature areas**

The dune plantations by lake Vandet

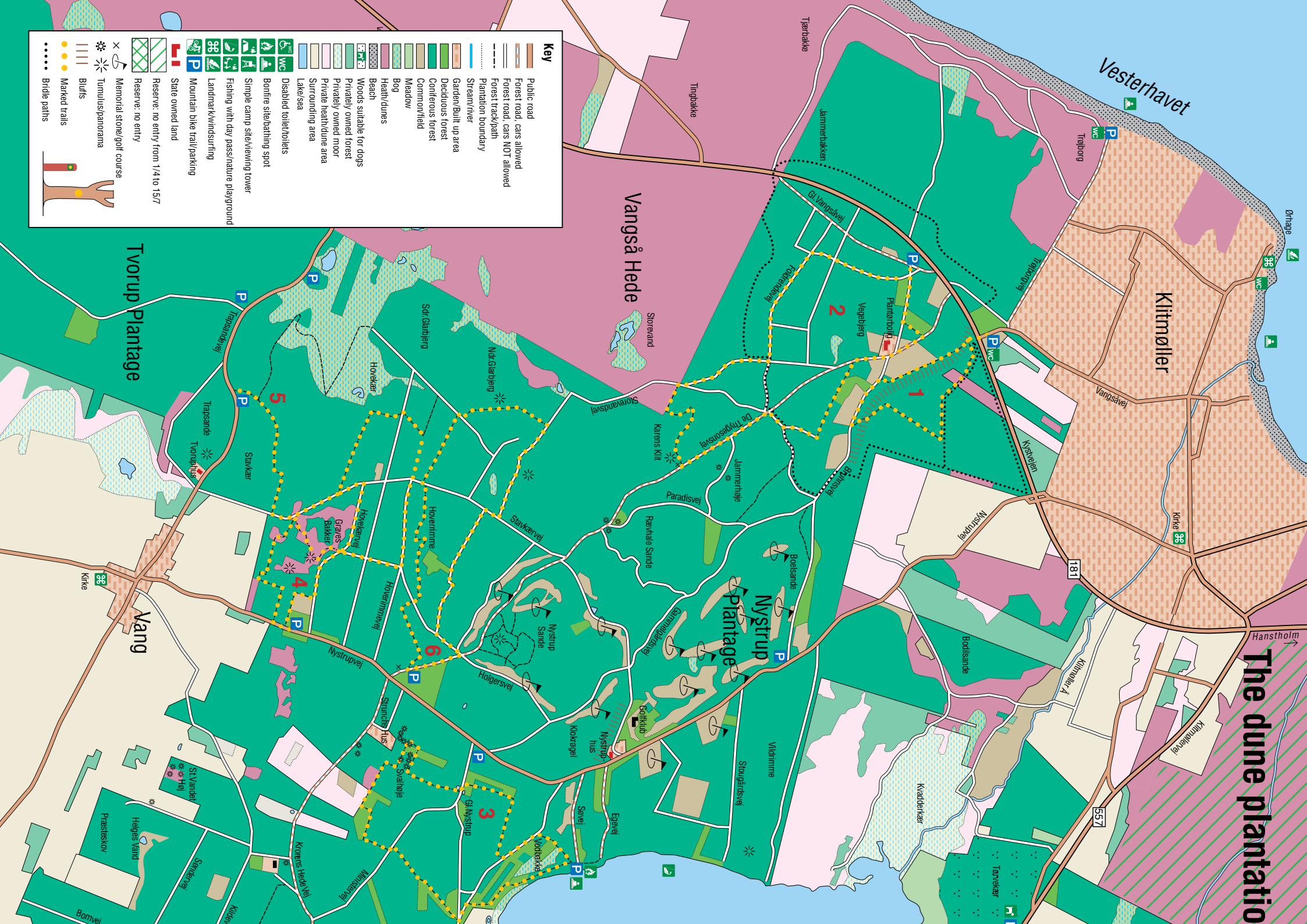
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The Forest and Nature Agency
Nature trails series no. 34E



The dune plantatio



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Hanstholm Reservatet

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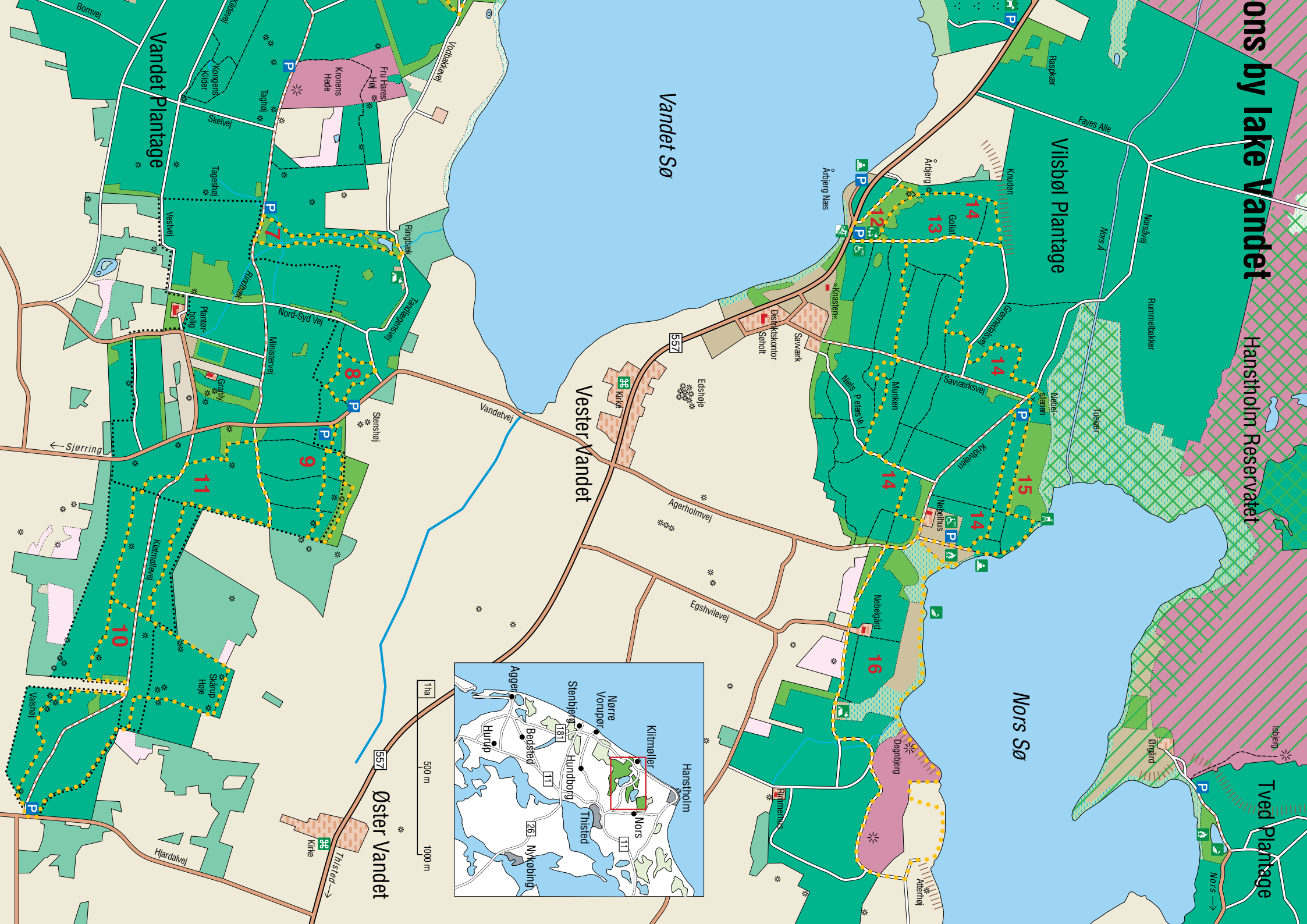
Vandet Sø

Vester Vandet

Øster Vandet



500 m 1000 m



The sea, the wind and the sand

4,000 years ago, when the stone age sea was at its most extensive, the northern part of Thy was an archipelago. Later isostatic uplift created the extensive flat-lands to the west which is referred to as seafloor uplift. Old seafloor ridges are now visible in this landscape, sometimes as far as 3 to 4 km inland.

Vast amounts of sand, exposed during the uplift, blew into bluffs and was carried still further inland by the wind. Stories exist, especially from the 1400s and onwards, of sand drift settling as a blanket on once fertile soil. The plantations around lake Vandet, 14 km from the sea, are examples of this phenomenon.

Despite an edict from the King in 1539 asking that the devastation be remedied, 250 years passed before an effective solution was found. Firstly, this was the sowing or planting of marram grass, the roots of which bind the sand. Its leaves catch and fixate drifts.

In only 20 years, sand encroachment was almost completely halted. The next step was to introduce forest to the areas brought under control. First attempts were made around 1820 but it took a further 30 years before suitable species were identified that could survive under the harsh conditions of these coastal stretches.

The dune plantations by lake Vandet

Work on dune plantations began in 1883 and continued the turn of the century. Subsequent land purchases allowed development between 1930-50.

Nystrup and Vilsbøl both have western edges planted over former stone age seafloor uplift. Here growth is minimal, whilst elsewhere, plantations benefit from ice age deposits of greasy, calcareous moraine. This provides excellent growing conditions as long as the sand layer is not so thick as to prevent tree roots from growing through it.

In Nystrup plantation there are large areas of inland bluffs where the original mountain pines still stand. In most other places, the mountain pine has been replaced by more productive species such as sitka spruce, silver fir, Scotch pine, and noble fir. Beech, oak, and other deciduous trees are present in all plantations in significant numbers.



Traces of the past

Thy has more bronze age burial mounds than any other location in Denmark. It is moreover thought that three quarters of the former total of barrows have been removed or ploughed over. North of Vester Vandet lies the Edshøj group of tumuli. The location boasts a sweeping view of Vandet lake and the North Sea. Many barrows are conserved within the plantations themselves, with over 60 in Vandet and Nystrup plantations alone. Walking trails 3 and 10 pass several of these mounds.

The plantations also grow around sunken roads, once ancient thoroughfares. In Vilsbøl plantation near Årbjerg there are three parallel roads leading to Klitmøller. Between the wide asphalt road and the former country road which runs alongside the nature playground there is an old sunken road, its origins lost in the mists of time.



Nystrup and Nebel manor houses

Large sections of today's plantations once belonged to the Nystrup and Nebel estates. First mentioned in sources dating from 1360 and 1443 respectively, they were both large, wealthy manors to the west of the country which shared a common fate at the hands of migrating sand seas. At intervals over the centuries they were thus moved further and further east, until around the year 1900, when the majority of their land was sold to the state and planting began.

For approximately 300 years, Nystrup was at the west end of Ministervej. The remains of the manor are clearly visible. Around the year 1700, the crown property and riding estate that was Nystrup gave rise to place names such as Kronens Hede (Crown heath) and Kongens Kilder (the King's spring).

The Nebel stone in Vilsbøl plantation marks the spot where Nebel manor stood up to the 1600s. In 1632 it was torn down and rebuilt further east where today's manor still stands, having replaced the house which burnt down in 1892 before being moved one more time. The Nebel estate belonged to the nobility for many years.

Mills and shipping

Klitmøller is pronounced with the emphasis on the second syllable and it is the mølle (mills) which gave the place its name. The river leading from lake Vandet to the North Sea was once dotted with windmills. Now the locality is known as one of Europe's best windsurfing areas.

For centuries Klitmøller enjoyed the wealth resulting from its trade with Norway. From here, grain and food was shipped to Norway and lumber, iron and horses imported on the return voyage. Klitmøller's heyday lasted until 1825 when the passage from the North Sea to the Limfjord became navigable. From that moment, Thisted grew in importance.

The following 150 years saw fishing as the mainstay of the Klitmøller's activity. Several fisherman's huts are still in evidence. The epoch came to an end in 1967 with the move of the fishing fleet to the newly inaugurated harbour at Hanstholm.



The lakes of Vandet and Nors

These two large lakes are amongst the cleanest in Denmark. Both are karst lakes - nutritionally poor water on carbonate rock which originates from springs in the ground. The lakes are approximately 20 metres deep and were originally gulfs which were cut off from the sea with the uplift of land that began in the stone age. The lakes have, as it were, caught the sand drift. Their western edges now have good beaches from which to swim, the sand extending to the limit of the wind's capacity to carry it.

The lakes have good populations of pike, perch, eel, and common whitefish. A fishing license for both lakes can be bought from the Forst and Nature Agency, Regional Office, Thy, or tourist information offices.

Vangså dune heath

Vangså heath is a nature reserve which has been designated an EU habitat and bird protection area.

The aim of the reserve is the protection and enhancement of its natural history and landscape including its cliffs, sandy heaths, inland bluffs and moors. Active measures to this end include the removal of superfluous tree growth, sporadic burning, mowing, and grazing.

The unique birdlife here includes breeding common crane, wood sandpiper, whimbrel, and golden plover. In the autumn, the heath is also a resting place for large flocks of migrating geese.

