Welcome to the Netherlands

Henk-Jan Kooij
h.kooij@fm.ru.nl
Rhine
Meuse
North Sea
9000 BC

• North sea dry
500 BC

• Growth of peat bogs
100 AD

- Romans: impact on water system
- Deforestation -> higher discharge
50 AD

- Roman general Corbulo: canal Fossa Corbulonis
800 AD

• Lake Almere open
• Loss of peat area Zeeland
• Digging of peat: gradual process
• Fertilizing sandy soils with cattle
1255 first Water authority: Hoomheemraadschap van Rijnland
1500 AD

• Large peat lakes: ‘water wolf’
• Soil compaction in low areas: mills
• 1600 AD: Beemster polder: land reclamation: fertile soil and good investment
1850 AD

• River management: embankments
• Water authorities: 3500 (now 22)
Flood 1916

- Zuiderzee works 1918
- Afsluitdijk finished in 1932
- Polders in 1930; 1942; 1957 & 1967
Flood 1953

- Delta works committee (20 days later)
Engineering culture

• Believe in ‘makability’
• Agricultural engineering (woeste gronden)
• Nature engineering
• Social engineering (Joop den Uyl)