

***Information about the project:  
“Permanent commemoration of the  
German place of crime in the Szpęgawski  
Forest”***

The cemetery in the Szpęgawski Forest is a place where the Germans committed war crimes at the beginning of the Second World War. It is estimated that as part of the German campaign to exterminate the population in Pomerelia, 4,000 to 7,000 people died in the Szpęgawski Forest alone. Among those killed were representatives of the Polish intelligentsia, creators of Polish national life, Pomeranian patriots and representatives of the elite - teachers, entrepreneurs, officials, officers of many services, doctors, lawyers, priests. Austrians, Germans and people belonging to social and national groups that were not well-suited in the light of Nazi ideology, such as Jews, Roms, or people suffering from mental illness, were also killed there.

In the memorial site, there are 32 mass graves and a modest monument. These graves are anonymous and information about the names of the murdered is nowhere to be found. In view of the approaching 80th anniversary of the murder and, first of all, in response to the many-year requests of the families of the victims, an initiative was conceived to build a monument with the names of the murdered and to develop its surroundings. In cooperation with the rural municipality and the city of Starogard Gdański, in 2017 a competition was announced for the architectural and landscape concept of the development of the cemetery area in the Szpęgawski Forest. From among the submitted works, the commission chose Katarzyna Ephraim's project from The Hague.

The estimated cost of the investment is approximately 1.7 million.

#### **Monument to the memory of the victims:**

It will consist of 150 elements, including 117 "trees" and 33 "trunks" arranged in the form of a forest. The "trees" and the "trunks" will overlap, symbolizing one entity - Polish society that has changed its shape as a result of tragic events. The "trees" will be made of white architectural concrete. The "trunks" will be made of concrete and black granite on which the names of over 2.4 thousand people murdered will be engraved with white letters in the form of circles - tree rings. Some of the trunks will remain unwritten, symbolizing people whose names are not known. The monument will be illuminated with artificial lighting, integrated into the floor of the area. To facilitate access to the monument for the elderly and the disabled, a driveway has been designed (visualization attached).

#### **Land development:**

At the entrance to the cemetery, there will be a board with the inscription "Cemetery in the Szpęgawski Forest 1939-45." In addition, 12 boards with information about the history of this place and people murdered will be set up. The construction of a shed, a toilet, a garbage dump and deep well is planned as well as the refurbishment of 32 monuments, tidying up the area and the creation of the lighting system and the monitoring system.

#### **Celebration of the 80th anniversary of the crime in the Szpęgawski Forest:**

As every year, the ceremony will take place on the third Sunday of September, September 22, 2019. During the celebrations, the monument will be unveiled with honors. The celebration has been awarded with the patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda.

#### **List of victims:**

*For over 2 years, the Association - Regional Group for Microhistoric Popularization has been collecting the names and surnames of the murdered. So far, 2393 names have been found and confirmed. The list is not closed, everyone who has knowledge about anyone who could have died in the Szpęgawski Forest can contact the Rural Municipality Office by phone 58 56 250 67, ext. 322.*

### **Cooperation with other entities**

*Many people, institutions and organizations are involved in this extremely important initiative, among others: M.P. Kazimierz Smoliński, the Institute of National Remembrance, the Regional Government Office, local governments of Tczew and Starogard districts, the Association - Regional Group for Microhistoric Popularization, representatives of the church, the social committee for the construction of the monument and the residents.*

*Local governments from the districts of Tczew and Starogard have joined in the financing of the task. In addition, the Starogard Gdański Municipality submitted applications for co-financing to the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the LOTOS Foundation and the ORLEN Foundation. So far, we have received financial support in the amount of 135 thousand PLN from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.*

*A social committee has also been established, which carries out public collection of funds for the construction of the monument. Donations can be thrown into money boxes and cans which can be found in offices, churches, cultural institutions and schools in the Tczew and Starogard districts.*

*Deadline for the public collection: 19/08/2019.*

*Name of the collection: the construction of the monument commemorating the murdered in the Szpęgawski Forest.*

*Collection number: 2019/687 / KS.*

*Collection information is available on the website [www.zbiorki.gov.pl](http://www.zbiorki.gov.pl).*

*Payments to the committee's bank account:*

*Account number: 71834000012002000118390001*

*Recipient: Social Committee for the construction of the monument commemorating the murdered in the Szpęgawski Forest*

*Title of the transfer: contribution for the construction of the monument - (name of the municipality)*