

EAST SUFFOLK CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

MAY 2018

In the last 12 months of the Catchment Partnership, many projects have been completed and new ones planned across the East Suffolk Partnership involving many of its partners. This newsletter aims to cover the great work being done by all involved.



In the last 12 months **Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust** have been working on their Topsoil Project in the Sandlings area, details of which are shown below. Other projects that have their involvement are river restoration work on the Gipping in Stowmarket, marshland improvements along the Alde in Blaxhall, NFM projects in Debenham and working with Groundwork on their Yellow Fish Project.

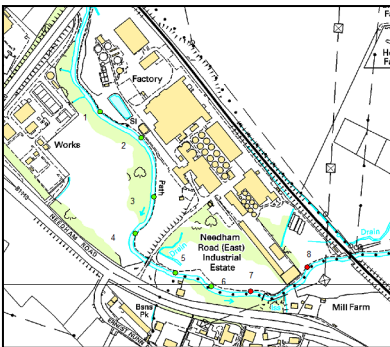
Topsoil – Sandlings—The Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) part of the project is a trial using surface water to recharge the aquifer (groundwater) during wetter winter months and monitoring water levels throughout the winter and summer to determine how long the recharged water remains in the aquifer and if this is long enough to be useful for irrigation purposes. If we can show that water could be stored as groundwater in sufficient quantities this could reduce pressure on surface water sources during drier periods when water is needed for irrigating crops.

The project has been delayed by a year due to the low levels of rainfall Suffolk experienced during 2017 but is now due to take place between January-March 2019 but this depends on us securing an abstraction licence for this period. As Suffolk have experience good levels of rainfall over winter and spring we are confident that the trial will take place as planned.

Another element to this project is looking at water quality issues and developing ways to reduce the levels of pollutants that are entering local water courses. In order to determine which areas are most affected by diffuse pollution, 7 local volunteers visit 9 sites monthly and collect water samples from various water courses. These samples are then tested for nitrate levels. Sampling has been taking place since September 2017 and will continue until August 2018 allowing us to collect 12 months of data. The results so far are highlighting 4 areas where nitrate levels are high so the next step will be to work in these areas to address any diffuse pollution problems. Special thanks go to the volunteers and landowners involved in this project. More information is available on ESRT website: www.essexsuffolkriverstrust.org



River Gipping In-channel Habitat Creation—Stowmarket— ESRT are working closely with the **Environment Agency** to carry out a project in Stowmarket to introduce much needed in-channel habitat to a 1 kilometer stretch of the River Gipping. We have support from **Muntons** and **PPG** who own the land along this stretch of river. In late summer/early Autumn the work will take place to install 6 woody debris mattresses and 2 flow deflectors constructed from brash bundles. These features will create refuges for fish and invertebrates in a relatively featureless channel. Also, reducing the width of the channel in some locations will improve flows, which will help to increase oxygen levels and create an improve habitat for many species. Muntons' staff have offered their help to construct the features and Suffolk Wildlife Trust will be carrying out Water Voles surveys to ensure this species habitats are not affected by the work. Special thanks to Muntons and the local Environment Agency for their support with this project.



Restoring Marsh Habitat—Grove Farm, Blaxhall—This project is a partnership project between ESRT, **Langmead Farms** and **Suffolk Wildlife Trust**. Suffolk Wildlife Trust put together an improvement plan for Grove Farm that involved scrapes and gutter creation as well as ditch and backchannel restoration. This project will create better connectivity between the River Alde and its flood plain and will allow the site to retain water for longer periods, creating improved habitat for marsh species to thrive. Due to the wet conditions in late winter and early spring the works were delay and shave only just been completed. Langmead Farms are carrying out the physical works, the Environment Agency is providing the funding and ESRT in giving an in-kind contribution by helping to develop the project.

Specials thanks to Suffolk Wildlife Trust for developing this project and for Langmead Farms for providing the site and the equipment to construct the features.





The **East Suffolk IDB** aims to make this drainage district a safer place to live, work, learn and grow and have fun, as a model of sustainable living in a high risk flood area. They also aim to incorporate, within their flood management operations, methods to improve the local natural environment and to enhance/restore habitats.

Shottisham Creek – working together to improve a local watercourse - From the 19th to 23rd February 2018, East Suffolk IDB undertook a maintenance scheme with the core aim of environmental enhancement in conjunction with the Broxstead Estate.

The work was undertaken on Shottisham Creek near Woodbridge. This scheme reconnected an oxbow lake within a wooded area, general removal of blockages and de-silted and enhanced a further 195m section of channel downstream.



The oxbow lake was previously shallow and stagnant; so this was desilted and reconnected to the river, reinstating a small water flow through the oxbow lake and creating fish/fry refuges.

There was some thinning out of the trees around the oxbow lake to facilitate machine access and to allow some more dappled light to reach the watercourse and encourage some plant growth.



The river channel downstream was heavily poached by cattle, resulting in a wide, shallow channel that was overgrown with vegetation, holding the water back in this area. To improve conveyance, a narrow channel was de-silted following the natural meandering pattern of the existing water flow that had developed. Three new wooden deflectors were installed from felled/collected local timber. The silt removed was used to repair cattle poaching on the banks, consolidate vegetated berms on the edge of the improved channel and reinforce the meandering flow pattern.



Some fallen trees that were causing blockages in the river channel were removed and the timber used to create habitat piles nearby.

It is planned that the landowner will undertake low density tree planting scattered along the river bank together with associated fencing.

The scheme was managed by Pete Roberts Operations Engineer East Suffolk IDB, with environmental supervision from Jamie Manners ESIDB. We also had partnership support and great cooperation from the landowner, Penny Hemphill at **Suffolk Wildlife Trust** and **Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust**.

If you have an interest in undertaking a similar project locally please get in touch with Pete Roberts, Operations Engineer for East Suffolk IDB, pete@wlma.org.uk as we may be able to help and advise you accordingly.



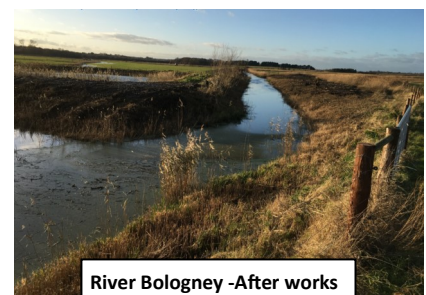
Integrated Main River Maintenance Programme - The Water Management Alliance is working with the Environment Agency on a 3 year Integrated Main River Maintenance Programme, which is reinvesting up to £350K a year of Internal Drainage Board precept, made available by the EA to allow them to carry out maintenance activities on Main River where they will see some tangible benefit to their drainage districts. The programme is able to deliver not only traditional maintenance activities, such as blockage removal and vegetation management but is also looking for opportunities where longer term benefits can be gained through employing restoration techniques.

So far in Suffolk, East Suffolk IDB have completed a 2.4km desilt on the River Bologney at Iken. This watercourse suffered from significant siltation and in channel weed growth, which was directly impacting land drainage in this pumped catchment. The work removed up to 1m of silt in places resulting in a 30cm drop in water levels and restoring the function of land drains.

They have also delivered a 2km restoration scheme on the River Wang at Henham, Suffolk, which combined the removal of in channel blockages with the installation of 20 flow deflectors supported by Water Framework Directive funding. This project combined traditional maintenance practices alongside sustainable maintenance techniques using the plant and skilled labour



already on site. In addition to this, the East Suffolk IDB are working in partnership with the EA's Catchment Co-ordinators in Suffolk, who have provided extra funding to deliver habitat enhancements in the form of woody deflectors, as part of a programmed scheme on the River Wang. This has received great feedback from the EA and Suffolk Wildlife Trust.





Groundwork is a community charity with a green heart. They want places to look better, be safer and outside areas to be green and beautiful. They aim to engage with people of all ages to make the best of where they live as well as offering training to improve job prospects. They also offer advice on how to make homes and businesses more energy/water efficient and sustainable.

Yellow Fish Project-Saxmundham, Halesworth & Framlingham-Groundwork is developing the Yellow Fish campaign in partnership with the **Environment Agency** and **Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust**.

This project is centred on the towns of Saxmundham, Framlingham and Halesworth, and covers the stretches of the Fromus, Blythe and Ore that run through these towns.

The Environment Agency and Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust will be engaged with us on this campaign to improve the quality of the river environment by delivering the key message of **Only Rain Down The Drain**. Yellow Fish will be stencilled around surface water drains throughout the town to emphasise and consolidate this message.

Water pollution from towns has resulted in high phosphate levels in the Rivers, which impacts generally on water quality and the diversity of wildlife. Plastic pollution has a further impact on the birds, animals and invertebrates all along the river.

Pupils at the local schools are being invited to become River Detectives, to monitor and record what they see along their local river. A River Detective Handbook will be available for distribution at the schools and at community engagement events.

Business engagement will be a priority, and local businesses, with support, will be encouraged to closely monitor what they put down the drain and to make small changes to improve the quality of their water discharge down surface drains.



Public engagement event at Framlingham



Town Councils have expressed their support for the campaign, and will provide valuable assistance in delivering the message to the local business communities.

Community events will be a key method of getting the message out to the wider community and will consist of stands at local events. There are also a range of exciting Yellow Fish events being planned for the summer months, including wildlife walks, electro-fishing demonstrations and community awareness campaigns.

A range of marketing materials have been produced from window stickers to advice sheets and presentations aimed at specific audiences.

We are eager to make contact with any organisation who would like to be involved.

Other Projects

Slow the Flow/NFM—Debenham - this project was featured in the last newsletter and this is an update on the completion of these NFM features in September 2017. These projects were carried out by the **Holistic Water Management Project** and helped in their development by **Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust**.



Three NFM features were created with support from local landowners and these will allow water to be held on the land when water levels in local water courses are high and will slowly filter back to these water courses when what levels have dropped. This will reduce the levels of water entering Debenham, reducing the chances of flooding. The work was carried out by East Suffolk IDB.



Havergate Island Improvements; RSPB –The **RSPB** applied for and were successful in securing Defra funding to carry out a Natural Flood Management project. This project will involve lowering the seawall along one to two areas of the Island, which will allow increased storage of sea water during high tides. This will help to reduce flood risk for up to 30 homes and 10 businesses in Orford Quay.

Not only will the island act as a flood storage area it will also help to preserve the islands highly sensitive saline lagoons, which supports a variety of species. By lowering the walls on the island and reprofiling a selection of lagoon nesting islands; designated features will be secured and increase protect of the wildlife that depends on this unique habitat for at least 20 years. In addition to this the saline lagoon diversity will be enhanced by reprofiling and recreating lost breeding bird islands on the main lagoon. The work will begin this autumn.

