



NEWSLETTER SUMMER/AUTUMN 2015

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RIVER NENE REGIONAL PARK
INSPIRED SPACES

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RNRP Achievements

- ✓ **Northampton Marina**
- ✓ **Nene Valley Strategic Plan**
- ✓ **Environmental Character & Green Infrastructure Suite**
- ✓ **Tree Top canopy walk, Salcey Forest**
- ✓ **Stanwick Lakes**
- ✓ **Top Lodge, Fineshade Wood Nr Corby**
- ✓ **Connecting People & Places – Breathing Spaces**
- ✓ **Northampton Parks**

More information available at: www.riverneneregionalpark.org



Introduction

Welcome to the Summer / Autumn 2015 edition of the River Nene Regional Parks Newsletter.

We hope that you have all found time to enjoy the warmth and sunshine and to share space with your family and friends doing the things you love.

It's been a very busy few months for us at RNRP as you will gather from the articles contained in the following pages that provide a comprehensive update on current projects. In addition to this we undertook an office move in June leaving the County Council Office in Northampton for the Kettering Business Exchange. The County hosted RNRP from our inception and their generosity and support was very much appreciated. Uncertainty about future office space availability and costs prompted the decision to move but, despite all the usual trials around IT and telephone systems, it has proved to be a very beneficial move for the team.

In the late Spring we were lucky to secure the services of Georgina Wallis who joins us in a fulltime Catchment Sensitive Officer position looking after the Nene and Welland Catchments. You can see from Georgina's updates in this newsletter that she had been very busy getting up to speed with the new Country Side Stewardship Scheme and with farm visits and event preparations. We are very grateful to the CSF Catchment Partnership for the support and encouragement they are providing to Georgina, and also to Dr Robin Field (our recently departed CSFO) for providing mentoring and guidance to Georgina as she gets settled in her role.

In other Staff news Ruth Howden, our long term business manager retired this summer, we hope to a life of fun and adventure! Ruth will be much missed within RNRP but is very ably replaced by Caroline Arnold who has been our Administration Officer for many years. Ruth and Caroline have worked very hard over the last few months to make the transition as seamless as possible and I personally applaud their efforts and express my sincere gratitude for their seemingly endless effort and support.

On that note, I'd like to add a personal thank you to my whole team at RNRP, Ruth, Caroline, Viktor and Georgina consistently go above and beyond, in often trying circumstances, to ensure we continue to deliver our best, I'm very lucky to work with such a dedicated team.

Here's to a good Autumn, and to some positive news on funding fronts.



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Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership - Nenescape

Over the last few months we have been working hard on the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership bid for the Nene Valley. The Landscape Partnership will be called Nenescape. Together with a number of partners including the Nene Park Trust, East Northamptonshire Council, Natural England and the Wildlife Trust BCN the bid was worked up and the application submitted at the end of May.


The Nenescape Landscape Partnership's vision is to focus on the transition of the Nene Valley from a working landscape to a recreational space with significant historical and wildlife interest, which must coexist alongside a large, increasing human population; modern industry and agriculture.

Through a series of projects, grouped into three themes; Listen to the Past, Explore the Now and Secure the Future, the transition of development within the Nene Valley will be smoothed to achieve a well-managed, understood and appreciated landscape that tells tales of times gone by; inspires a sense of adventure; is easy to explore, rich in wildlife, and resilient to the pressures of ongoing population growth.



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The Nene Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme Area



The Listen to the Past theme will focus on historical research, including collecting memories. The wealth of information already gathered by local museums and historical societies will be brought together and supplemented through additional community engagement work. Information gathered will be made available in a range of different ways to build awareness and appreciation of the Valley's rich past.

The Explore the Now theme will take a two-pronged approach: auditing and improving access routes and signage, and providing augmented reality. This will enable managed access to the Valley to provide a better visitor experience, while protecting and enhancing heritage sites.

Secure the Future will reduce threats to and negative impacts on heritage by working with key local groups to secure a sustainable future for the rich heritage of the Valley. The value of nature (ecosystem services) will be embedded through all activities delivered.

There will also be some cross-cutting themes which will be embedded across all of the projects

- **Adaptation to climate change** – With climate projections suggesting likely changes, land uses in the Nene Valley need to be assessed for future resilience. We have produced a climate adaptation study for the Valley, and will aim to implement its recommendations.
- **Valuing Nature** – Helping the local communities, businesses, and decision makers to appreciate the value of the 'ecosystem services' that the Nene Valley provides. We will build on what was learnt during the NIA project about where these services are delivered, where there are gaps, and how much they are worth and link to Northampton University's proposed LIFE project on the same theme.
- **Developing skills** – Up-skilling existing staff and volunteers and providing new opportunities through unstructured learning; formal training courses; placements and apprenticeships.

There is a need for the Nenescape Landscape Partnership at this time because of the pressures on the heritage of the Nene Valley due to the high levels of urban growth in the area, the decreasing budgets within many organisations means funding is becoming harder to find for projects which are not considered high priorities and to try and build on the successes made by the Nene Valley NIA, not only in terms of environmental enhancement but also on partnership working.

On the 3rd August there was a visit from the HLF assessors to the Landscape Partnership to allow them to see some of the project sites, get a feel for some of the ideas and visions we have and also for a chance to have in-depth conversation with the partnership about the variety of projects and advise on how we can build our bid further.

Following on from this visit the partnership has again worked hard to strengthen our bid and now the preparations are being made for the final HLF visit on the 14th October. This visit is prior to the committee meeting where a decision will be made on whether or not we are granted the funding to commence the development stage of the project. As we need to add the 'WOW' factor to the visit the plan is to start the day with a presentation and talk at the Rushden Transport Society's venue before heading over to the Nene Valley Railway station at Wansford, taking in the scenery along the valley en-route. A short train journey with lunch to Peterborough will then lead us to a potential river restoration project and later on to the Peterborough Museum to close out the day. Hopefully all of our efforts will be enough to really impress our visitors and put us in with a good chance of securing the funding.

We will hear back from HLF regarding the final decision in early November and if granted the development stage will commence in the New Year.

For further information, please contact Kathryn Hardcastle: Tel: 01536 526451 Email: kathryn@nrnp.org

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Nene Catchment Partnership

The Nene Catchment Partnership has been meeting regularly throughout the spring and summer with meetings held in Northampton to discuss the Foot Meadow Island project and in Peterborough to have a look at various projects in the city centre.

The project on Foot Meadow Island is designed to remove some redundant sheet piling on the Northern corner and create a two-stage channel downstream of this in order to increase habitat for invertebrates, increase flood water storage and make the river bank safer for the local residents. There is also scope to install some coir rolls further downstream on the right hand bank where currently there is no habitat due to vertical sheet piling lining the bank.

Having secured funding for this project we are now at the stage of producing the flood modelling and applying for flood defence consent. We should hopefully see the flood defence consent granted by the end of autumn with some of the weed clearance and on the ground works starting during the winter months, whilst the plans for the in-channel works are projected to start in February subject to flow levels of the river.

Although not a project associated with the Nene Catchment Partnership, the coir rolls project has been an inspiration to the partnership. The coir rolls were installed intermittently along 640m of concrete towpath through the NIA River Restoration project. The works finished in early June and the plants have established themselves superbly over the summer months. The use of the extra habitat can be visibly seen when walking alongside the river with fry, moorhen chicks and larger fish utilising the cover provided by the coir rolls.



Coir Rolls in Peterborough in early June

The Nene Catchment Partnership will be hosting a series of three events this autumn in order to inspire and support local planners and developers, amongst others, to ensure they are including environmentally friendly options within their project works.

The first event (17th September) will be on sustainable urban drainage with a presentation around the local context and policies with the three remaining presentations giving examples of; a local SuDS success, retrofitting SuDS and a national example of SuDS.

The second event (6th October) is going to look at models for open space management with presentations being given by the Nene Park Trust and The Parks Trust Milton Keynes about how they have found successful models to run their open spaces, Groundwork Northamptonshire on community open space management and a presentation on the local context and challenges.

The final event being held on the 28th October will be run by the RNRP alongside the Environment Agency and focus on the water framework directive and the responsibilities planners and developers have under this European Directive. There will also be a guest speaker, Paul Chapman from Lewisham Council, who will describe how they managed to rejuvenate small rivers in Lewisham using planning authority and development funding.

The final update on the Nene Catchment Partnership will be that in our upcoming meeting (9th September) we will be discussing the opportunities to brand ourselves as a partnership and have our own identity. We will be discussing logo designs, website potential and other branding opportunities.

For further information, please contact Viktor Tzikas: Tel: 01536 526445 Email: viktor@rnnp.org

Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area Land Advisor and Catchment Sensitive Farming

New Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer for the Nene and Welland catchments, following on from Dr. Robin Fields' fantastic work within the catchment. Coming from an arable farm in Bedfordshire I have a practical understanding of how agri-environmental schemes fit into and benefit both farming and the environment. I am available to offer advice on Catchment Sensitive Farming, in particular Water Capital Grants and the changes that link to the new Countryside Stewardship scheme.

2015 Countryside Stewardship Scheme

Historically, Catchment Sensitive Farming has worked in partnership with the Environment Agency, however this year there are a number of changes to be noted including CSF's involvement with the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and with this the expansion of the partnership to include the Wildlife Trust, Anglian Water and Welland Rivers Trust enabling a stronger collaboration within the larger area.

Visits have been taking place for the new scheme which began on the 1st July 2015. Applications for the scheme will close on the 30th of September. One-to-one farm visits throughout the Nene and Welland catchments have provided farmers and land owners with a variety of options to suit individual businesses and the nature of the farm environment being implemented. The focus of my work is predominantly water quality however I have been providing farmers with assistance on the wider scheme in order to develop a well-rounded, successful application. Depending on the farm banding, CSFO endorsement is available to farmers which boosts their score in the now competitive based scheme, increasing their likelihood of being offered entrance to the scheme.



New Catchment

Along with a new scheme providing a refreshed suite of options and a new CSFO there is also a new catchment which is the Welland. This catchment extends upstream of Stamford with the focus being on the Stonton Brook area located at the top of the catchment. The Stonton Brook is currently classified as having bad ecological status and bad water body status however with support from Catchment Sensitive Farming along with a number of other organisations working in partnership with River Nene Regional Park we are striving to get this back into good status.

Upcoming events

Two events are currently being organised for the beginning of 2016. These include a Soil Management event in the Nene catchment which will be on 14th of January and a Soil Biology workshop in the Welland catchment on 28th of January. Further details on the events will be given in due course.

I look forward to working with you in the near future to help provide farmers and land owners with the tools and knowledge required to operate a profitable and environmentally friendly farming business.

For further information, please contact Georgina Wallis: Tel: 07921 941734 Email: georgina@rnnp.org



RIVER NENE REGIONAL PARK
INSPIRED SPACES

Protect **natural and cultural assets**
Improve **health and well being**
Promote **Northamptonshire**
Tackle **climate change**
Increase **leisure and recreation opportunities**
Improve **connectivity and support biodiversity**
Support the **local economy**

Working in partnership to

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