

NENE VALLEY

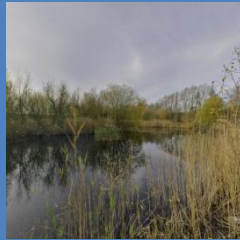
Nature • Improvement • Area
connecting people and nature

Update

April 2012 - January 2013

Welcome to our first partnership update!

The Nene Valley NIA has been running for 9 months and we thought it was about time we shared some of our news with you. As a partner in the NIA project we would like to keep you up to date with the project's progress. If you would prefer not to hear from us or would like more information please contact Heather Ball (heather.ball@wildlifebcn.org). News stories and updates will be regularly posted to our dedicated website www.nenevalleynia.org, so please do visit this as your first port of call for information on the NIA.



NIA team is complete

Thanks to the hard work of all the partners involved the Nene Valley was selected as one of the first 12 Nature Improvement Areas across England in March 2012. The project commenced on the 1st April 2012 and we quickly set about recruiting our NIA delivery team. The team consists of:

Natural Development Officer - Heather Webb (hwebb@northamptonshire.gov.uk)
River Restoration Advisor - Simon Whitton (swhitton@northamptonshire.gov.uk)
Land Advisor - Robin Field (rfield@northamptonshire.gov.uk)
Post-Doctoral Research Fellow - Jim Rouquette (jim.rouquette@northampton.ac.uk)
Research Assistant - Stella Watts (stella.watts@northampton.ac.uk)

The NIA team will be supported by Heather Ball at the Wildlife Trust and the finance and admin team at RNRP. Colin Wilkinson (RSPB) will coordinate the delivery of objective two, access and public awareness.

What does the Nene Valley mean to you?

An online survey was launched in January to find out how local people use the Nene Valley and what they think of it. The results of the survey will supplement the on-site surveys currently being run by Footprint Ecology, and will feed into the Visitor Engagement Strategy and Implementation Plan for the Nene Valley. The survey results will also supplement the information that is available to us through Natural England's Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) data regarding attitudes of local communities to biodiversity and the rural environment, which will be monitored throughout the life of the NIA project.

Please do promote the survey to your contacts; the link to the survey is on our website <http://www.nenevalleynia.org/>.

New website launched! See www.nenevalleynia.org. The website includes a virtual tour of the valley and an image gallery.

Birdwatchers, the NIA needs you!

We need skilled birdwatchers to step up for nature in the Nene Valley, and lend us a hand with a special survey of breeding wetland birds in spring 2013. If you or your volunteers might be interested please go to our [website](http://www.nenevalleynia.org) to find out more.



World Wetlands Day to celebrate wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites) was on the 2nd February. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits was designated as a Ramsar site in 2011 because it regularly supports over 1% of the national populations of mute swan and gadwall as well as more than 20,000 waterbirds including wigeon, shoveler, pochard, tufted duck and great crested grebe.

Developing Naturally?

Much of Heather Webb's work continues to focus on incorporating the NIA as a major consideration in emerging local policy. Meetings have been held and submissions have been made regarding: Huntingdonshire Core Strategy strategic options and development management policies, East Northamptonshire Four Towns Plan and joint trees and landscape strategy with Wellingborough Council, Daventry settlements and countryside issues paper, Northampton Nene Meadows masterplan and the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and strategic site allocations. Input was also made to the partial review of the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework.

Heather is also working with the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit on working up GI projects for their Rural Development Plan and Green Infrastructure Delivery documents which will govern how S106 and CIL contributions are spent in relation to GI within the NIA.

Enhancing the River

Pilot studies for the enhancement of the River Nene in the urban areas of Northampton and Peterborough are nearing completion. The output of the Urban Studies will include maps that can be easily interpreted and show locations with issues and opportunities which can be addressed through urban regeneration, new development, and river restoration projects.

The Duston Mill Stream habitat enhancement project is nearing the final stages of project design, and has ambitions to deliver work on the ground this summer. The scheme will see improved in-channel and marginal habitats created for plants, invertebrates and fish. This will be based on the same type of approach as was taken recently on the Castor Backchannel at Peterborough – see case study on our [website](#).



1,448 hectares of farmland to come into stewardship

Robin Field has been busy visiting landowners in the Nene Valley, assessing their land and preparing applications for Higher Level agri-environment Schemes (HLS). The EU Common Agricultural Policy is undergoing reform, and we anticipate a period where no funding for HLS will be available. Consequently there has been a big push to get as many farms in the Nene Valley as possible into a scheme before the final deadline later this year. Since the start of the NIA 3 farms have signed agreements, 2 have been submitted, 2 are in progress, 4 more are due to be started soon, and 1 is awaiting the go ahead from Natural England.

River Restoration Centre 2013 conference comes to the Nene Valley. To see the conference programme and to book your place please visit RRC's website http://www.therrc.co.uk/rrc_conferences.php.



Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) is an online system for reporting the delivery of actions for the benefit of biodiversity. The NIA will be required to use BARS to report on some of the indicators in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. If you have delivered habitat creation projects please report them on BARS (<http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk/>). Support is available from Heather heather.ball@wildlifebcn.org.

The first Northamptonshire Local Nature Partnership conference will take place in June 2013. Watch this space for confirmation of a date and programme.