



NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2013

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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 latest Newsletter from RNRP. As you can see from the individual project updates in this newsletter the summer has been very busy for us with lots of exciting accomplishments;

Our Integrated Catchment management plan for the Nene is nearing completion in draft and will go out to wide consultation over the Autumn. We look set to undertake significant planting in the Rockingham Forest area this season working closely with the Woodland Trust and Groundwork as well as other partners. The NIA work is continuing with good energy and the implementation of projects on the ground.

On top of all this we've been working hard to find new opportunities for RNRP, with some success and the near future will see us engaging more widely with commercial partners and the development sector as our direction shifts slightly to include a focus on enabling sustainable development in our region.

To this end we're building new partnerships as well as strengthening existing ones through actively seeking opportunities to deliver projects collaboratively, building on the work of others to bring added value. We're also looking to extend the value and relevance of our existing projects with some exciting discussions around forest foods and woodland crafts as well as local food networks and more opportunities for community engagement and involvement.

The new team at RNRP are providing an infusion of energy and enthusiasm which I'm sure our stakeholders and partners are enjoying and we look forward to building on this and working closely with you all over the coming months.

Thank you to all of your for your support and encouragement and if you have any suggestions or questions for us please do get in touch.

Kathryn Hardcastle

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Nene Integrated Catchment Management Plan

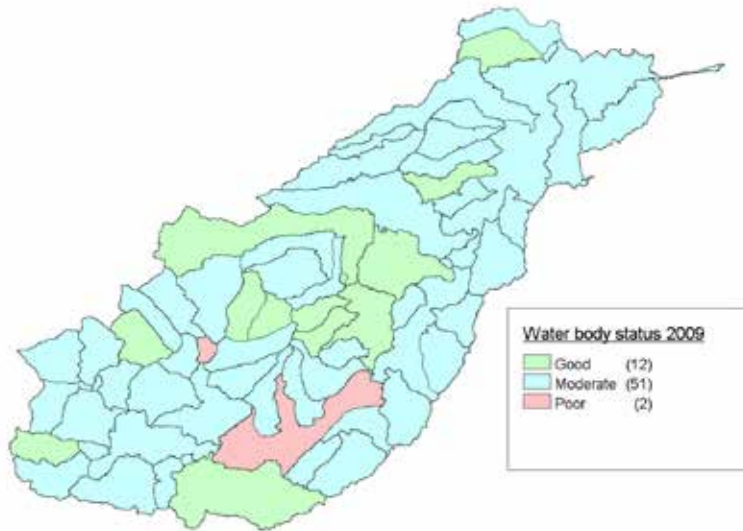
Integrated catchment management is seen as a key approach towards achieving the aims of the Water Framework Directive and achieving economic growth without further environmental degradation. The WFD requires that all the water bodies in a catchment achieve “good” or higher status by 2027, within the Nene catchment, currently, the majority are “moderate” and maintaining and improving these in a major growth area combined with meeting needs of abstraction for people, biodiversity enhancement and increased recreation will be a significant challenge.

The Nene Catchment Plan includes background information, over-arching policy recommendations and a list of projects which contribute effectively towards the aims. Developing and implementing the plan requires a partnership approach with effective communication and genuine involvement by all stakeholders. A draft plan was circulated in late August to a small working group, with plans to consult more widely on the draft document through the autumn. This process will be integrated with an Environment Agency consultation taking place at a regional scale (Challenges and Choices).

RNRP will be leading on consultation within the Nene catchment, integrating responses into a final draft of the Catchment Plan and promoting the Choices and Challenges consultation on behalf of the Environment Agency. Consultation will be extensive with a wide range of stakeholders and through a variety of mechanisms. These include workshops and meetings with local authorities, business, NGOs and recreational groups, together with media coverage and on-line surveys to ensure that all key groups are involved and that the general public has an opportunity to engage.

Following the close of the consultation in December the Catchment Plan will be reviewed before a final version is produced early in 2014.

For further information please contact Dr Simon Newell: Tel: 01604 367325 Email: snewell@northamptonshire.gov.uk



Catchment Partnership Fund

The RNRP has successfully bid for a grant from the new Catchment Partnership Fund which was launched earlier in the summer. The fund is intended to help build partnerships adopting the catchment-based approach and is particularly aimed at third party organisations like the RNRP. The grant of over £11,000 will help further establish our role in helping to develop an effective partnership which is able to address the wide range of issues.

For further information please contact Dr Simon Newell: Tel: 01604 367325 Email: snewell@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Revital-ISE Project

The last five months have been very busy for the Revital-Ise Project. Firstly, working closely with Dr Robin Field I have visited a number of farms along the Ise and subsequently written management plans for farmers focussing on the creation of species rich grassland along the river.

I have also held several meetings with Wicksteed Park as they have agreed to restore an area of disused grassland that lies next to Southfield Farm Marsh SSSI. With funding from the Nature Improvement Area we will prepare the ground, restore an old ford and fence the fields this autumn. The fields will then be sown Spring 2014.

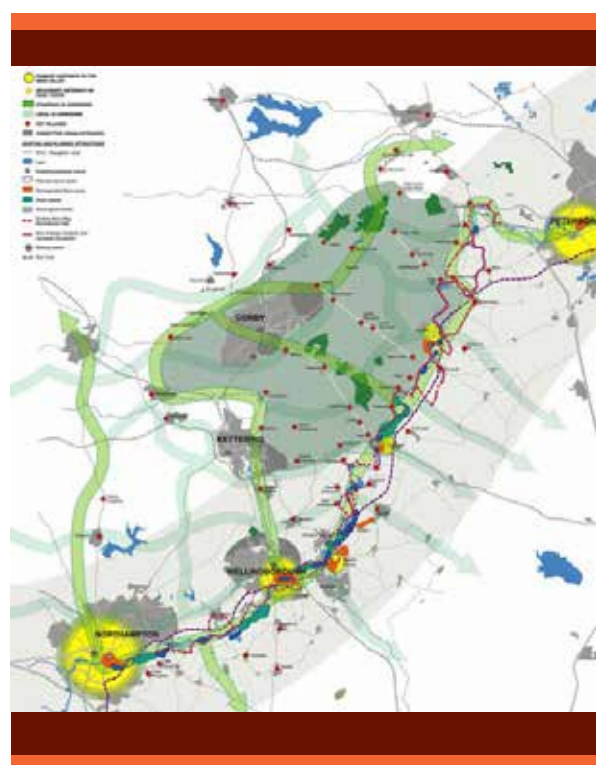
Two walks have been held with the Natural-ISE Group, including a very successful bat walk and bbq, and a walk on the restored water meadow. I have attended all monthly meetings with the group and they have asked me to write a management plan as they have funding to create some bands of species rich grassland through the Ise Valley. This autumn we plan to hold several work party days including scrub clearance on the Abbey Field. We also plan to hold some hedgelaying training at Newton Field Centre near Geddington.

In partnership with Kettering Borough Councils Grounds Team, Revital-ISE is hoping to restore a disused meander located at the bottom of the Green Patch in the Ise Valley Park. Currently a flood defence consent application has been submitted and we are waiting to hear back from the Environment Agency. If all goes to plan this winter several mature, collapsing willows will be pollarded and a pipe will be inserted into the meander, linking it to the river. The meander will also be dug out and the banks reprofiled to allow emergent and bankside vegetation to colonise. To speed this process up the Natural-ISE group will sow the banks of the restored meander with a mix suitable for pond edges.

With support from Simon Whitton I have met with the Highways Agency to try and get a resolution to the siltation issue at Deeble Road Bridge in Kettering. This has been highlighted as being a huge source of silt on the Ise due to water running from the bridge over the bare earth underneath and causing large amounts of erosion. The Highways Agency have currently got an engineer working on it and we hope to have some finalised, costed, plans by the end of September so that it can be sorted by the end of the winter.

Finally, I am currently writing an Urban Management Plan for the Ise mainly focussing on potential instream works that could be carried out this winter to increase flow and move silt quickly down river improving gravel quality etc.

For further information please contact Laura Francis: Tel: 01604 367433 Email: lafrancis@northamptonshire.gov.uk



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Can you see the wood from the trees?

£6000-£8000 per hectare funding for landowners to create woodland.



Forests for Life Rockingham

What is the Forests for Life, Rockingham Forest Area?

The Rockingham Forest was originally established as a Royal hunting forest by William the Conqueror in the 11th century and initially covered much of Northamptonshire. However, pressure from agriculture and development resulted in much of the ancient forest being lost, leading to widespread habitat destruction and fragmentation. This had a dramatic impact upon a variety of species including butterflies, such as the now extinct Chopped Tipper butterfly, as well as birds and mammals.

To address the issue of woodland fragmentation across Northamptonshire, the Great North Regional Park (GNRP) in partnership with the Woodland Trust and Groundwork Northamptonshire has funding for landowners to create woodland where it meets the following priorities:

- Protects and enhances existing ancient woodland through linkage and buffering
- Buffers or increases the size of existing ancient woodlands
- Restores woodland on previously wooded sites, particularly former ancient woodland sites
- Addresses fragmentation by creating connections between existing woodlands

How can you get involved?

If you have land in the Forests for Life, Rockingham Forest Area and are interested in planting trees as it then we would like to speak to you!

We can support you from start to finish providing you with:

- Expert advice on planning and designing your woodland delivered onsite
- Financial support with grants of between **£6000-£8000 per hectare** to help with purchasing, planning and initial maintenance of trees. (These grant amounts will be based on the extent to which a site meets the criteria listed above)
- We can organise and oversee community planting projects for your site.

What criteria do you need to meet?

- Your site must fall within the Forests for Life, Rockingham Forest Area.
- Your site must be suitable for planting trees. You should not plant on wetlands, chalk grassland, grassland that has never been ploughed or heathland. We can help you check this if you're unsure.
- Ideally we want to select sites that either increase the connectivity of the remaining blocks of ancient woodland in the Rockingham Forest, or buffer them from existing agricultural or development activity. As a result sites will be prioritised for planting once applications have been reviewed.
- An intended minimum planting density of 1,000 trees per hectare.
- We can only support the planting of native tree species.

Forests for Life – Rockingham

Following the Rockingham Forest for Life Steering Group meeting in May it was agreed that a landowner offer for tree planting needed to be developed and sent out for this autumn. In partnership with the Woodland Trust and Groundwork Northamptonshire this has now been completed. A leaflet publicising the offer has been developed and is currently at the printers.

Visits to potential sites will be conducted at the end of September with an aim to start getting trees in the ground from November to February 2014. The whole process will be steered by some priority mapping that is being developed by the Wildlife Trust and RNRP to identify the best areas to plant new areas of woodland to link up and buffer existing areas of ancient woodland in the Rockingham Forest area.

For further information about the project or opportunities for planting woodland please contact Laura Francis:

Tel: 01604 367433

Email: lafrancis@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Nene Valley NIA River Restoration Adviser

Update for Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area Objective 3 – River Restoration

I have now walked approximately half of the River Nene that lies within the NIA in order to identify problems with its habitat. I am currently putting together detailed proposals for improving the habitats in the areas I have walked. I then anticipate re-commencing the river-walking in mid-October, with the aim to complete the entire river in January. I will then start to assess the river's tributaries.

In each newsletter, I will highlight a different key issue for the river. To begin with, I will look at erosion of river-banks caused by livestock, as shown in the photo below. This is commonly known as “poaching” (not to be confused with the other sort of poaching associated with livestock!). It is a problem as it brings a great deal of fine sediment into the river, especially following rain, and locally widens the river, which in turn encourages the deposition of silt on the riverbed. The absence of vegetation also means that there is reduced habitat and cover for fish and invertebrates.



Trampling of the riverbank brings sediment into the river

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A simple - and proven - remedy is to fence off the banks. Within a few months, the banks will re-vegetate, providing additional cover for in-stream animals and reducing the amount of sediment entering the river. Livestock will of course still need access to drinking water, so dedicated areas can be created in the fencing that will allow controlled access to the river (as shown in the photo below). These areas can be further protected against sediment entrainment by laying gravel or concrete on the ground. Another way to supply livestock with water is with pumps that the animals themselves operate by either pushing their noses up against levers or by standing on platforms that draw water up from the river through a piped system. We will therefore be liaising with farmers and land-owners to see where fencing and drinkers or pumps can be installed in order to improve the river-banks.



A cattle-drinker on the Castor Back Channel of the River Nene, to the west of Peterborough. Note the stone lining on the ground. (Photo: © R. S. Brayshaw Ecological Consultancy)

Works on the ground for the habitat improvement project on the River Nene at Duston, Northampton, began on Monday 16th September and will last approximately 3 weeks. The work involves re-sculpting the banks of approximately 450m of the river, providing additional conveyance for flood-flows (thereby reducing flood risk to the nearby properties), and using the excavated material to raise the riverbed in localised areas, diversifying the in-river habitats. This work is being funded by the Environment Agency.

We have now been granted planning permission and Flood Defence Consent to create a backwater on the River Ise at Rushton. This is a revision of the scheme to re-create a meander in the river. However, a backwater will still vastly improve the aquatic habitat at this location. Conditions have been applied to these permissions, but we still hope to complete the works before the end of November. This work is being funded by Defra.

For further information, please contact Simon Whitton: Tel: 01604 367445 Email: swhitton@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Nene Valley NIA Land Advisor & CSF

The Land Advisor has now completed the following applications and these are now with Natural England.. The following table shows the progress so far.

Name	Progress	Area (ha)
Sawford	Completed	150
Harpur	Completed	370
Singlehurst	Completed	181
WT meadows	Completed	81
Wicksteed Park (extension)	Completed	24
Brodie	Completed	124
WT Old Sulehay complex	Submitted	88
Moore	Submitted	140
Shrive	Submitted	162
Millbank	Submitted	81
NT Canons Ashby	Submitted	27
		Total 1428

The window for Catchment Sensitive Farming's Capital Grant Scheme has now closed and more farmers have applied than last year. The final number has not yet being confirmed as Nat Eng has had far more applications than last year. Events at Kingsthorpe North Meadow have continued and include guided walks and talks, bird, butterfly and bat surveys. A new bridge, interpretation signs, website, leaflets and a dam are all either completed or will be in the next month.

A priority option sheet has been prepared for farmers and landowners to use. This advice will be based on different reaches of the Nene and what options are key within those areas. This has been sent to all farmers in the NIA who will need to renew their ELS agreement this year.

Two grants under the Land Advisor Grant scheme have been approved and approximately 10 ha of species rich grassland will be created next to the Nene and Ise as part of these grants. Several others are awaiting confirmation and these include wet grass recreation and restoration, fencing for a Local Wildlife Site meadow and wildflower seed for a Potential Wildlife Site.

For further information, please contact Dr Robin Field: Tel: 01604 367243 Email: rfield@northamptonshire.gov.uk



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Beer lovers will be raising a glass to help the River Nene

Beer lovers will soon be able to raise a glass to the future health of the River Nene, following the creation of a special ale to raise its profile.

The River Nene Regional Park, which looks after the river and its tributaries, is launching the beer with Guilsborough-based Nobby's Brewery.

The brew will then be sold at farmers markets and farm shops, and all proceeds will go towards funding the creation of meadows along the Nene and its tributaries, to replace species lost over the last 40 years.

All aspects of the beer will be locally-sourced, including ingredients and bottles.

And the design of the labels and the beer's name will be decided through an open competition.

Laura Francis, project officer at River Nene Regional Park, said: "The money raised will go towards helping fund projects along the River Nene and River Ise - anything which makes the land better for the environment, plants and animals.

"Beer festivals are so popular, and we thought it would be nice if we could have a product just for the river to sell at them. Everyone seems very receptive."

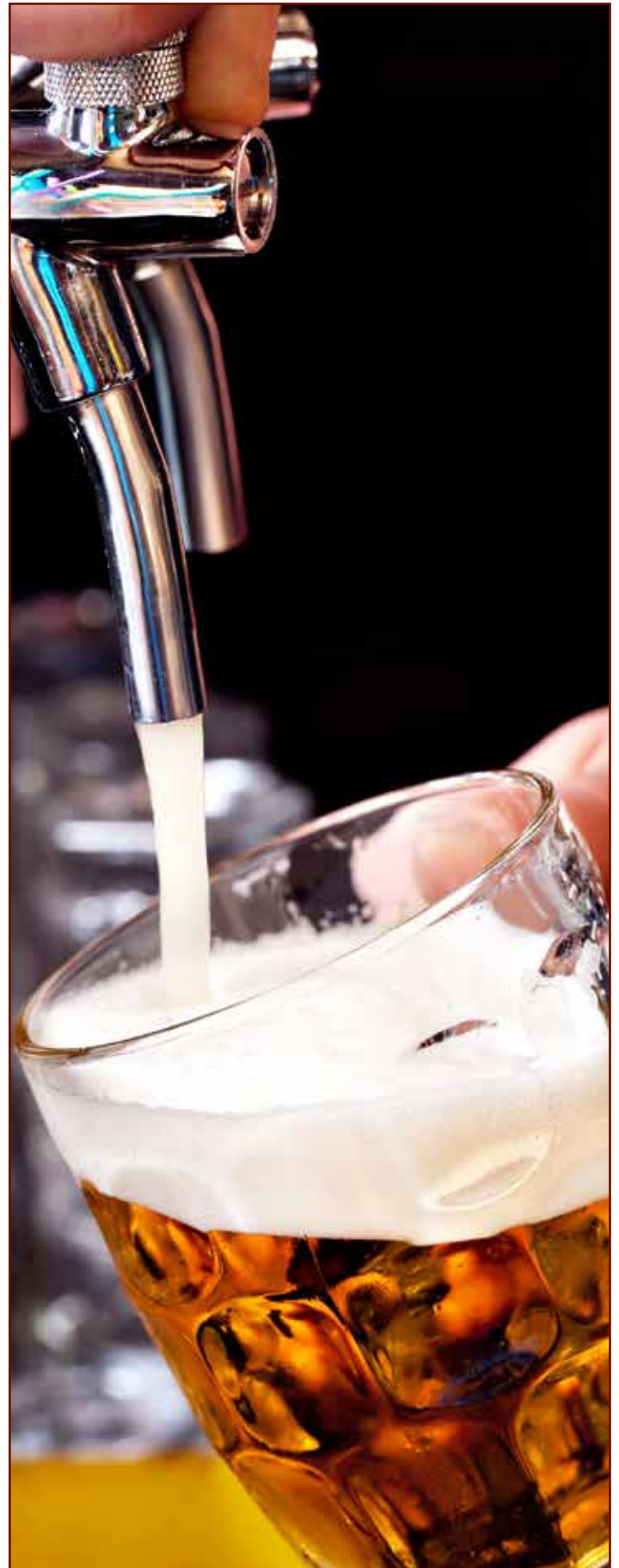
The scheme is part of the Revital-ISE project, which aims to improve biodiversity and the landscape along the Ise and the Nene, and encourage community involvement in doing so.

The money will be spent on projects such as repopulating areas with wild flowers, and water voles, in areas affected by the intensification of agriculture.

The beer creation project will be taking place over the next six weeks, and the finished product should be on the shelves in time for Christmas.

Based on the success of this initiative, we hope this will become an ongoing program.

**For further information please contact Laura Francis:
Tel: 01604 367433 Email: lafrancis@northamptonshire.gov.uk**



Northampton Allotment Awards 2013

It has been a fantastic year for growing vegetables, and there are some stunning, very creative and more importantly plentiful plots to judge between!

The winners were announced at an Awards Ceremony earlier this month where the RNRP's new CEO, Kathryn Hardcastle presented the awards.

1st prize was Sam Stainer

2nd prize was Robert Clayson

3rd Joint prize were Lucie Berry and Lilly May Clayson

All from the Pleydel Road allotments





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

For further information please contact the River Nene Regional Park CIC

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