

NENE VALLEY

Nature • Improvement • Area

connecting people and nature

Update

January - April 2013

And overview of Year 1

This project has been supported by Defra, DCLG, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Natural England

Celebrating our first anniversary!

The Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA) has been running for a whole year and recently celebrated this at a high-profile event in Westminster. Minister Richard Benyon seemed impressed and incredibly supportive of our work and Sir John Lawton who advocated NIAs said it was the "the most exciting, interesting and worthwhile thing I have ever done."

Recap: The Nene Valley NIA covers 41,000 ha in a complex landscape of built up areas, farmland, and flooded gravel pits where there is strong competition for water resources, recreation, wildlife conservation, and food production. A strong partnership has been developed between local and national organisations and is delivering effectively against five key objectives. Our priorities for the NIA will address sustainable development, access and recreation, improving the river environment, providing support for wildlife-friendly farming, and attempting to put an economic value on the services that the valley provides to people. For more background information please visit our website www.nenevalleynia.org.

Key figures 2012-13

£166,499 project income from Defra

3,496 volunteer days

£2,006,402 in-kind contributions

162,500 people reached through written publicity (websites, newspapers etc.)

Conference – 10th July 2013

A conference led by the Northamptonshire Local Nature Partnership to advocate the Natural Environment will be held at the University of Northampton this summer. More details and invitations will follow.



Highlights from 2012-13

- 'Accessible Natural Green Space' register compiled and analysis of provision and gaps across the NIA completed to inform green space provision.
- Neighbourhood planning settlements in the NIA engaged.
- Projects developed for inclusion in North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan for future CIL and s.106 funding.
- 636 visitor surveys undertaken in the Nene Valley and more survey days planned at key sites such as Summer Leys and Stanwick Lakes.
- Online survey about community awareness and access to the NIA developed and received over 200 responses.
- Volunteers recruited and trained to carry out breeding bird surveys in the Special Protection Area.
- 'Urban studies' investigating Water Framework Directive related issues in Northampton and Peterborough have been produced to inform regeneration.
- Restoration project under development at Duston Mill Channel in Northampton to improve habitat along 1.1km of the river Nene.
- 1,500ha of farmland to come into HLS in 2012-13. At least 73ha of priority habitat will be created and restored through these schemes.
- New mapping tool is being trialled to map provision and demand of ecosystem services, with ultimate ambition of developing markets for payments of ecosystem services.



Keep in touch

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.

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Destination Nene Valley

Destination Nene Valley is a partnership project which aims to promote the Nene Valley as a competitive, sustainable destination offering world class wildlife to local, national and international audiences.

The project will guide strategic development around green infrastructure, support and strengthen the tourism offer and develop a brand which communicates the Nene Valley's unique identity to visitors. In pursuit of these aims, Destination Nene Valley will work with a variety of partners. We welcome input from other organisations that can help the project to achieve these goals.

For more information and to obtain a copy of the new strategy, contact Karen Williams on 01832 742064 or email kwilliams@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk.

Public Dialogue in NIAs

The Nene Valley NIA has been selected as one of three NIAs to receive funding through Sciencewise to reconnect nature with people and build on communities' vision for nature and biodiversity. Sciencewise is a Department for Business, Innovation and Skills funded programme to bring scientists, government and the public together to explore the impact of science and technology in our lives.

The purpose of the public dialogue project in the Nene Valley NIA is:

- To engage local people in meaningful dialogue which will contribute to making change in the Nene Valley NIA more sustainable.
- To give local people a sense of ownership in the solutions to address issues in the NIA, thus contributing to the sustainable delivery of those solutions both during and beyond the end of the NIA.



Who's who?

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 is supported by Heather Ball at the Wildlife Trust and the finance and admin team at RNRP. Colin Wilkinson (RSPB) is coordinating the delivery of objective two, access and public awareness.

What nature can do for you

Ecosystem services are the processes by which the environment produces resources utilised by humans such as clean air, water, food and materials. For example:

The **value of natural resources** extracted for use in the UK economy in 2007 was **£41 bn**.

Air pollution reduces life expectancy over the UK population by an average of 6 months at a social cost of **£15 billion per annum**.

People who live within 500m of accessible **green space** are 24% more likely to meet recommended levels of physical activity.

Reducing the sedentary population by just 1% could **reduce UK morbidity and mortality rates** valued at **£1.44 billion**.

[Read more...](#)

The University of Northampton is currently working to put a value on services that the Nene Valley provides to people. For more information speak to Jim Rouquette.

Photo credits: The Washlands, The Wildlife Trust; Stanwick Lakes, Colin Wilkinson; Golden plovers, Chris Gomersall (rspb-images.com); River Nene Dusk, Dave Porter Photography /NEP.