

# NENE VALLEY

Nature • Improvement • Area  
connecting people and nature

Update  
April - September 2013

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

## How do you see the valley in 2020?

This is one of the questions we have been asking a wide range of people in order to start shaping the next phase of funding for work in the Nene Valley. Some of the responses have included "A cultural and ecological landscape that is more highly valued by the inhabitants of Northants" and "Putting Northants on the map; tourism destination, exciting place to live and work".

Strong partnership working is key to the future of the Nene Valley, which is why a series of interactive stakeholder workshops are being held to discuss and collaboratively develop an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a 'Landscape Partnership' project. The first stage application should be submitted in May 2014, and if successful, the final project will be delivered from winter 2015 for up to 5 years. This fund alone has potential to bring in up to £3 million for works to improve heritage and benefit communities. If you have not been involved and feel you have something to add to this process, please contact Kathryn Hardcastle [khardcastle@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:khardcastle@northamptonshire.gov.uk).



## Inspiring Meadows

Through the NIA 'small grant scheme' 9.4ha of Lowland Meadow is being created at Upper Heyford, Orton and Thrapston.

## 'Green Glue'

The inaugural Northamptonshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP) conference took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013. The event, held at the University of Northampton, attracted over 120 attendees who were treated to presentations showcasing the activities of the LNP and our Nature Improvement Area.



Presentation from Simon Bovey, Chair of the LNP.

## Planning advice

NIAs are ecological networks recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework. As such they should be considered during the planning process. A one-page planning advice note has been produced to prompt those involved in planning applications and policy development of the important principles of NIAs. The advice has been kept concise and to the point, and will be provided with a map showing the extent of the NIA in the relevant administrative area. The document is currently being tested with a small selection of planning authorities and will be made available online at a later date. To see a copy of the advice note in the meantime please contact Heather Webb [hwebb@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:hwebb@northamptonshire.gov.uk).

## A successful outcome

As a result of the NDO's input to the draft Daventry s106 SPD, provision for natural and semi-natural greenspace was increased in the final version from 8m<sup>2</sup>/person to 23m<sup>2</sup>/person. The cost per m<sup>2</sup> of natural and semi-natural greenspace was likewise increased from £3.50 to £9.94, bringing it more in line with neighbouring authorities.

## 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](mailto:heather.ball@wildlifebcn.org)). News stories and updates will be regularly posted to our dedicated website [www.nenevalleynia.org](http://www.nenevalleynia.org).

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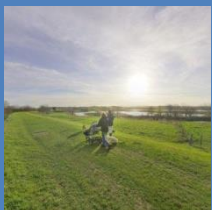
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## Backwaters – hot spots for river restoration

Almost half of the length of the River Nene has been walked now in order to identify issues and opportunities that can be targeted for 'river restoration' projects. The majority of opportunities lie in old backwaters and backchannels of the Nene because these aren't used for navigation. Backwaters were most often created when a meander was cut-off during straightening of the river, leaving an area of still water connected to the river at one end, and backchannels usually exist as a mill race or a by-pass channel around another structure such as a lock. A number of small projects are underway already on backwaters and backchannels of the Nene and the Ise to restore more natural riverine habitats that will support plants, insects and fish. Many projects of this kind will also have benefits for the amenity of the area and result in increased flood capacity. An example of a river restoration project can be found on the NIA website <http://nenevalleynia.org/what-are-we-doing/river-restoration>.

## Engaging in dialogue at the Northampton Washlands

The NIA partnership is trialling an approach to establish dialogue between different user groups, site managers, and conservation bodies at the Northampton Washlands. The Washlands is one of the most popular places for local people to enjoy the outdoors on the edge of Northampton. It is also part of a working farm, is a protected site for wild birds (SSSI/SPA/Ramsar), and stores flood water from Northampton to reduce flooding downstream. A survey in 2009/10 found that numbers of golden plover had declined significantly. This is largely as a result of increased disturbance caused when visitors or their dogs stray from the path on the embankment and enter the basin. Approaches taken so far to resolve this issue, such as interpretation panels, production of a leaflet, and face-to-face communication on site have proven unsuccessful. A community panel meeting will be held in December, and will be facilitated by a neutral professional. The intention is 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.



## Who's who?

Natural Development Officer - Heather Webb ([hwebb@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:hwebb@northamptonshire.gov.uk))  
River Restoration Advisor - Simon Whitton ([swhitton@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:swhitton@northamptonshire.gov.uk))  
Land Advisor - Robin Field ([rfield@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:rfield@northamptonshire.gov.uk))  
Post-Doctoral Research Fellow - Jim Rouquette ([jim.rouquette@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:jim.rouquette@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, [colin.wilkinson@rspb.org.uk](mailto:colin.wilkinson@rspb.org.uk)) is coordinating the delivery of objective two, access and public awareness.

## Catchment Management Plan – out for consultation

The River Nene Regional Park recently produced a draft plan catchment plan covering the River Nene from Northamptonshire through to Peterborough and is now consulting widely in order to gain a range of views and ensure that the plan encompasses all the of issues affecting the area. The plan arises from the implementation of the Water Framework Directive but provides one means of addressing the many the opportunities and challenges facing the Nene in a coordinated, strategic way.

Comments are being accepted via email or through an online survey which will close on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

[Link to download Draft Catchment Plan \(3MB\)](#)

[Link to online River Nene Catchment survey](#)

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Photo credits: The Washlands, The Wildlife Trust; Backchannel works, RNRP; Golden plovers, Chris Gomersall ([rspb-images.com](http://rspb-images.com)); Northampton Washlands and river Nene. RNRP.