

Achievements – Case Study 2

Meadow Creation and Restoration

Overview

This work has been central to the objective strand of improved land management in the NIA. Working with private landowners and community groups a number of meadows have been restored and created to increase the extent of this valuable habitat in the valley.

Summary

Nationally, we have lost over 97% of our wildflower meadows, and the Nene Valley is no different. Lowland meadows hold important assemblages of wildflowers and provide habitat for a range of species including butterflies, bees, dragonflies and bats.

The aim of the land management objective was to support and encourage landowners to better manage land for wildlife through creating, linking and buffering existing habitats as well as improving whole-farm management through entry into environmental stewardship schemes.

Three meadows were created on ex-arable land, where the previous crop was removed, the ground prepared and an Emorsgate Wildflower seed mix sown. Initial results have been promising with 2 of the meadows producing a good wildflower meadow flora after only two years.



Dovecote Farm Meadow North



Hall House Farm Meadow

Four meadows were restored where wildflower cover across existing meadows was increased through over-seeding wildflower seed into grassland swards. These meadows have been monitored in subsequent years to influence management and assess success. Two of the meadows have shown good progress with a range of wildflowers recorded; Hunsbury Hill and Kingsthorpe North Meadows. The latter is being restored as part of the Coronation Meadows project, with seed from the County's coronation meadow at Boddington. The meadows will take years to resemble the natural meadow communities but are already providing an important wildlife resource.



Increased wildflower Cover at Hunsbury Hill Country Park Meadow

Wins

- Three meadows created and four meadows restored, creating additional habitat for wildlife in the Nene Valley.
- Meadow restoration techniques developed and lessons learnt that can be applied to future restoration work
- Continued monitoring ensured continued good management of sites
- Work has created showcase sites to show other landowners what can be achieved.

Key message

Meadow restoration requires careful site selection, good technique, time and patience. Monitoring is crucial to ensure continued success.