

River Wensum

Restoration Strategy

Issue 7 August 2011

Welcome to our summer newsletter

Ryburgh End River Restoration Scheme

We are pleased to announce that later this year we will be undertaking our third major restoration scheme as part of the implementation of the River Wensum Restoration Strategy. The project is located downstream of Great Ryburgh Mill and involves reconnecting over 1km of meandering river channel cut off sometime during the 19th century. The river currently flows along a straightened section of channel which, following ecological surveys, has relatively little biodiversity potential. A new section of river channel will be formed to connect the old course to the existing river channel. A plug will be placed within the existing channel to ensure that all flows pass down the old river course, except during high water flood events, when these will be able to pass over the plug providing additional flood storage capacity.

Works are due to commence in late August, with an anticipated completion date of the end of December.

Catchment Sensitive Farming – Phase 3

Following confirmation of funding, the Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) project will continue in the Wensum catchment until at least the end of March 2013. CSF will continue to provide farmer workshops, events and specialist visits to farms in the Wensum catchment, all aimed at helping farmers to understand and reduce diffuse pollution, keep local waters clean, and improve farm profitability.



Image above: White Clawed Crayfish

During the next two years, the advice target areas where effort will be concentrated are: the River Tat, the Upper Wensum, the Wendling Beck, the Swanington Beck, and a groundwater catchment at Lyng. However, our free workshops and events will be available for all farmers in the catchment. Also of note is the Capital Grant Scheme which is a competitive scheme and can provide up to 50% funding for a spectrum of capital items to reduce diffuse pollution from agricultural sources.

Over 217 farms, covering more than 31720 hectares in the Wensum catchment have already benefited from the training and advice we have on offer, and I look forward to helping many more of you over the next two years of the project. Further information is available on www.naturalengland.org.uk/csf

If you would like to find out more about CSF in the Wensum catchment contact Richard Leishman (Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer), e-mail richard.leishman@naturalengland.org.uk, office 0300 060 1970, mobile 07901 858142

Wensum Demonstration Test Catchment Project

Representatives from the project team recently attended the second year conference at the University of East Anglia for the Wensum Demonstration Test Catchment Project. The project is a joint Defra, Environment Agency and Welsh Assembly Government initiative working in three river catchments – the Wensum plus the Eden in Cumbria and Avon in Hampshire. The project aims to evaluate the extent to which on-farm mitigation measures can cost-effectively reduce the impacts of water pollution on river ecology while maintaining food production capacity. The project is investigating an area in the Blackwater sub-catchment and has recently installed two high specification monitoring stations which are currently being used to obtain baseline water quality data prior to trialing measures to reduce agricultural runoff such as buffer strips and minimum tillage methods.

If you would like to find out more information regarding this project please visit their website: <http://www.wensumalliance.org.uk> or alternatively contact Dr Kevin Hiscock or Professor Andrew Lovett of the UEA (k.hiscock@uea.ac.uk or a.lovet@uea.ac.uk).

Student projects on the Wensum

Two Cranfield University students have recently commenced MSc research projects on the Wensum. Maud Grandry will be investigating the impacts of the Bintree restoration scheme on sedimentation along the reach. This would include sampling aquatic macro-invertebrates to apply indices of sedimentation. Deborah Ansa-Otu will be investigating whether the restoration measures implemented at the Great Ryburgh Common meander loop scheme has promoted diversity of hydromorphology and habitat diversity. We wish them all the best with their studies and we will let you know the outcome of their work in future issues of this newsletter.



RRC site visit

River Restoration Centre members were recently given the opportunity to visit the completed restoration schemes at Bintree and Ryburgh Common. The River Restoration Centre is the national centre of excellence for river restoration, and the visit provided an opportunity to review the restoration techniques used and share experience with other practitioners from around the country.

Looking ahead

We are currently investigating potential future river restoration schemes which we can implement next year. If you are interested in partnership working or would like further information, please contact us at the following email address: riverrestoration@environment-agency.gov.uk or contact us by post: River Wensum Project Team, Environment Agency, Dragonfly House, 2 Gilders Way, Norwich, NR3 1UB.

To save resources we would very much like to keep as many people informed by email as possible. Please email us at the address above to be updated this way.



Please pass this newsletter on to a friend or neighbour and encourage them to sign up to the e-mailed version.