

## **Invitation to comment on the river restoration plan for the River Axe Site of Special Scientific Interest**

The Axe is one of the most renowned rivers in Britain, supporting a diverse range of wildlife. In recognition of its ecological value the river is designated as a nationally important Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and internationally as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Over many years the Axe and its floodplain have been modified. This has damaged the condition of the rivers' habitats and species. River restoration is now needed to improve the physical condition of habitats to move the SSSI into favourable condition. Over time, restoration of the river will improve it for the species and habitats that depend on it, and help the river become more resilient to future extremes of flow and temperature. This should also benefit the people who live and work along the river.

The Environment Agency and Natural England welcome your views on a draft river restoration plan for the Axe SSSI. This draft plan sets out how each section (or 'reach') of the river has been modified, what impact these modifications have had, and identifies potential restoration options and constraints. These are high level, but provide a base from which to plan and prioritise actions to achieve favourable physical habitat condition of the SSSI and SAC.

All the potential restoration options identified in this draft plan require further detailed planning and permissions from landowners, Natural England and the lead flood authority and/or the Environment Agency.

### **How to comment on the plan**

The draft river restoration plan is available below from **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015** for you to comment on by **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2016**.

[River Axe draft restoration plan](#)

River Axe draft restoration plan – [Management sheets \(Appendix 1\)](#)

Two copies of the draft plan are also available for viewing at Axminster Library, South Street, Axminster Devon EX13 5AD.

Please send your comments to: [devoncornwallenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:devoncornwallenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk), or by post to Devon and Cornwall Enquiries Team, Environment Agency, Sir John Moore House, Victoria Square, Bodmin, PL31 1EB.

[Comment form for completion](#)

### **Any questions during the comments period?**

We recognise this is a very technical report and are happy to answer any questions you have about the draft report between 7 December 2015 and 17 January 2016. Please contact Mary-Rose Lane at the Environment Agency on 020 302 52367.

## **How we will use your comments**

We will consider all comments received. Comments about factual accuracy will be checked and, where appropriate, incorporated into the final river restoration plan for the River Axe.

All other comments will be collated into a summary of responses. This summary will be incorporated into the final plan as an annex. This means your comments will be available to

inform any organisation and landowners or managers who want to work in partnership to implement parts of the plan. We will not publish names of individuals who respond, only names of organisations.

**Delivery of the river restoration plan**

The final river restoration plan will guide the delivery of restoration projects on the ground to improve the habitat along the river. We envisage that this work could be initiated by the East Devon Catchment Partnership, individual organisations and/or individual landowners or managers.

The plan will also inform decisions made about river management activities including targeting work by the Countryside Stewardship Council and Catchment Sensitive Farming.

We look forward to receiving your comments.