

## RRC Site Visit Series

# New Forest Wetlands (Hampshire)

## Wednesday October 16<sup>th</sup> 2019



Forestry England



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



**Site Visit lead**

**Nick Wardlaw**  
(Forestry England)

### Project information

The Verderers of the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (NF HLS) is a wetland restoration scheme of huge scale and ambition with a fundamental aim to improve the condition of unfavourable SSSI units affected by historic drainage. The restoration is focused on floodplain habitat connection and so far 14 SSSI units have moved from unfavourable to favourable as a result of the restoration. This means many wetlands will have been restored to a naturally functioning system that supports the unique ecological tapestry of the New Forest. A range of restoration techniques have been used to restore the natural processes, including:

- re-meandering into remnant meanders at the lowest point in the floodplain
- re-meandering the channel within its existing planform
- channel narrowing and bed raising to a more natural width and depth to encourage flooding in high flows
- infilling erosion knickpoints to prevent further headward erosion
- replacing bridges with fords on forest tracks to prevent the energy being focused around the structure

This project aims to restore a naturally functioning ecosystem, with the streams reconnected to the floodplain, allowing for natural storage of water in the woods and mires of the New Forest. This project has successfully identified which techniques work in the New Forest which will enable further restoration in the future. The project has aided education of the organisations involved in managing the New Forest ensuring they understand why there is a need for wetland restoration and also increased their understanding of the benefits that wetland restoration brings.

The Verderers HLS agreement is worth £19 million over ten years from 2010-2020 with this budget covering a number of different workstreams to help to conserve the 20,000 hectares of non-enclosed Crown lands of the New Forest. So far the scheme has delivered 59 wetland restoration projects, totalling 29km of restoration that had previously been deepened or realigned. The restoration of the mires and streams has delivered reduced knickpoint erosion, reduced incision and lateral erosion, increased floodplain connection, increased resilience during times of drought, and reduced flood peaks.

### Site Visit information

[View RiverWiki case study](#)

[Watch Project video](#)

The visit is **FREE to RRC members**, non-members are welcome to attend at a cost of £30.

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

To book a place please email us: [rrc@therrc.co.uk](mailto:rrc@therrc.co.uk)

09:30-10:00 Meet at [Bolderwood Arboretum](#) (toilets available)

10:00 North Sluffers site visit—mire restoration, heather bales, stakeholder interest

12:30 Lunch (please bring a packed lunch)

13:30 Wooton Riverine Woodland—stream restoration, monitoring

The visit will finish by 15:30

There will be a fair amount of walking involved which will in part be through some fairly wet areas and welly boots are highly recommended.

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