

River Pool Linear Park Enhancement Project, Lewisham

Techniques: Berm creation, tree felling, invasive vegetation management

River: Pool, tributary of the River Ravensbourne

County: London

Project start date: November 2011

Project end date: May 2012

Length: 300m

Cost: Minimal – free voluntary labour, spoil from nearby Environment Agency project and site-won wood. Gravels may be needed long-term.

Grid reference: TQ371723 (Upstream) - TQ372726 (Downstream)

Site background and objectives

This section of the River Pool was featureless with very little marginal vegetation. The channel was overshadowed and habitat for fish and invertebrates were limited. In a built up borough of London, the river is flashy and the aim was to design works that would account for this, while improving the in-stream condition and the wider river corridor.

Design and Implementation

A team of volunteers led by Vic Richardson (Thames 21) have helped to implement the works, which comprise a series of berms on alternating banks along a section of 300m constructed from site-won wood felled along this section; and spoil from an Environment Agency project near Catford. The positions of the berms have been carefully thought about to create a more sinuous channel, and to encourage a riffle-pool sequence to diversify flow. Watercress flowers in the summer months so particular care was taken when deciding how much to narrow the river to ensure that works make a difference, but to avoid choking the river when watercress is in bloom. Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed are all present in this section, and volunteers have, and will continue to manage this in an appropriate manner to allow native vegetation to grow and mature.

Subsequent performance – RRC's views (2012)

The project was in-construction when Nick Elbourne (RRC) went along to assess the progress of the project. A few of the berms created in late 2011 had begun to flower within two months and this was promising. This is most likely due to the 'wetness' of this section as there is moist undergrowth (despite drought conditions at the time!) The empowerment of local volunteers fosters understanding, and long-term, there is a greater aspiration to re-visit the works (and maintain where necessary).

Acknowledgement of Project Partners

Thames21 is an environmental charity working which mobilises thousands of volunteers every year to clean up rivers and create new habitats for wildlife.



Facing downstream, looking towards the bottom end of the restored section. Wood from trees felled on the right bank was used to construct the berms in the photo



Thames 21 volunteers helping to backfill a side berm on the left bank of the River Pool

the River Restoration Centre Case Study Series

This site was last visited by RRC staff on 4th April 2012

Tel/fax: 01234 752979 Email: rrc@therrc.co.uk <http://www.therrc.co.uk>