

Chalk Streams of Lincolnshire



Planning a chalk stream restoration project

WHY RESTORE CHALK STREAMS?

The number of Lincolnshire Chalk Streams in good environmental condition has declined rapidly due to, amongst other things, over abstraction of water, nutrient enrichment and changes to streamside and catchment management with a consequent loss of associated species. These changes have also resulted in a loss of landscape quality, with many attractive, clear, flowing streams being reduced to no more than field-side ditches. Well-managed and structured chalk streams with an abundance of wildlife are a significant component of the scenic quality of the Lincolnshire Wolds, a quality that contributes to the local economy through tourism.

As one of the most important and threatened wildlife habitats and landscape features in Lincolnshire it is essential that action is taken to reverse the declines.

PROJECT PLANNING AND RESTORATION OBJECTIVES

Landowners, farmers and other land managers can take a wide range of measures to improve the quality of chalk streams and a number of organisations, members of the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project, are available to help define restoration objectives, plan restoration projects, design schemes and assist with implementation. For further assistance contact the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project.

Before embarking on a restoration scheme it is important that you gather as much environmental information as you can about the project site by conducting a simple environmental assessment. This should include an appraisal of existing wildlife and archaeological information, particularly if excavation work may be planned, and new survey work to ensure that the project does not affect existing environmental assets. Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust may be able to supply wildlife information and information about archaeological sites is available from Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council or North East Lincolnshire Council depending upon the project location.

Once the environmental assessment has been completed it is time to determine appropriate project objectives. The overall objective of any chalk stream restoration project should be to increase channel diversity and to minimise the impact of adjacent land use. Possible objectives could include one or more of the following:

- Create a more meandering channel;
- Create areas of light and shade;
- Create areas of fast and slow moving water (turbulence);
- Increase in-stream cover for invertebrates, fish and other aquatic life;
- Remove in-stream obstructions to fish movement;
- Create areas of marginal wetland;
- Reduce agricultural run-off and soil erosion;
- Reduce the impact of streamside grazing.



For further information and opportunities to improve Lincolnshire Chalk Streams contact:

The Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project,
c/o the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service,
Navigation Warehouse,
Riverhead Road, Louth,
Lincolnshire LN11 0DA

Tel. 01507 609740

Email. aonb@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Website. www.lincswolds.org.uk

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Steve Brayshaw

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CONSULTATION AND CONSENTS

It is vitally important that, in addition to taking advice on scheme development and design, you should ensure that you have permission to proceed with a proposed restoration project. It may be surprising to learn that you may need the consent of various organisations to undertake work on a stream running through your own land.

- **Work in or adjacent to a watercourse**

The management of all watercourses is regulated and if you intend to carry out a chalk stream restoration project you should first contact the **Environment Agency** to discuss your proposals. The Agency will advise you about any consents or licenses that may be required.

- **Management of streamside trees**

If you propose to manage streamside trees, particularly if a substantial amount of felling is required, the **Forestry Commission** may require you to obtain a felling licence. Trees may also be protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), so the **local district council or unitary authority** should be consulted about your proposals.

- **Agri-environment schemes**

If works are likely to affect land that receives payments through an agri-environment scheme, such as Countryside Stewardship or the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme, you should contact **Defra** to determine whether or not permission may be required or your agreement needs to be varied. If the land is not covered by an agri-environment scheme your project could be eligible for Defra grant assistance.

- **Underground services**

If you intend to excavate material, for example to create a wet berm, you should ensure that there are no buried services, such as gas and water mains or electricity and telephone cables, in the vicinity. Contact all the **public utility companies** for information and advice.

THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL RESTORATION PROJECT

- Take advice from the Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project;
- Define your objectives based on an initial environmental assessment;
- Incorporate a range of improvements into a single restoration project;
- Obtain the necessary consents and permissions;
- Make time to plan – the grant making, consultation and consenting process can be lengthy.