

Staveley Embankment Removal

South Cumbria
Rivers Trust



Date carried out (from and until)

May - October 2016 (extra tree planting, reseeding and general tidy up work to be completed March-April 2017).

Location

Staveley, Kentmere, Cumbria.

Background

This embankment is situated at the confluence of the River Gowan and the River Kent. The embankment has been formed from historic dredging spoil and stands up to 60cm above the field on the left bank.

The removal of this embankment is of significant interest to the Staveley Flood Action Group as the river is no longer connected to the flood plain. The removal has full support from the SFAG, Cumbria County Council LFRM and the Environment Agency FCRM as this will reconnect the river with the floodplain in the neighbouring fields and reduce flooding issues in the region upstream of Gowan Bridge.

Project

This project involves the removal of approximately 1km of informal embankment, created from decades of accumulated dredging material. This will reduce the height of the river bank by around 60cm in an area opposite to the confluence of the River Kent and River Gowan, reconnecting the river to the floodplain and allowing greater capacity for

Partners

Natural England, Biffa Award, Environment Agency, Catchment Based Approach, John Nichol (land owner/farmer).

Themes



Rural



Water
Quantity



Community
Engagement

"Projects like this can really demonstrate the multiple benefits for both people and the environment, which can be realised through the delivery of river restoration schemes".

Oliver Southgate, Environment Agency

"Following the recent flooding in Staveley and Kendal, this project not only demonstrates the importance of working with, rather than against, nature but also how a single, enthusiastic and environmentally minded landowner working with the community can help safeguard that community and its natural heritage. This project forms part of the Rivers Trust's 'whole catchment' approach to flood alleviation and is one that should be encouraged far more widely in flood prone valleys like the Kent".

Dr Mike Sturt, South Cumbria Rivers Trust



flood waters to spread out, thereby potentially reducing flood risk for nearby properties close to the confluence and those further downstream.

As part of the project, the field boundaries which were damaged during the last floods will be repaired and made more flood resistant. Following the earth works, the site will be tidied up and trees planted within a riparian buffer strip.

Outcomes

Reconnection of river with floodplain therefore alleviating flood risk to properties in the immediate vicinity and those further downstream.

This project also helps to recreate a wide range of habitats which are not found in modified or straightened rivers. Examples include improved gravel beds where fish can lay their eggs, shallower margins where aquatic plants can survive and deeper pools where larger fish can take refuge.

Increases in the availability of these habitats will help to improve the populations of several threatened and endangered species such as the white-clawed crayfish, freshwater mussels, Atlantic salmon, brown and sea trout, otters and kingfishers.

Trees planted in the riparian buffer strip following the embankment removal will help to stabilise the bank, reduce sediment input to the river and create shade which will all enhance the habitat for fish and invertebrates.

Learning

Working in partnership to overcome issues for mutual benefit.

Next Steps

To deliver a site tidy up, organise visits and write a project completion report.

[Watch the timelapse video here.](#)

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