

Steeping River Community Update

August 2021



Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board
Water Management Consortium



Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Working for a better future



This newsletter provides an update on the work of the Steeping River Catchment Steering Group and other actions that help manage flood risk in the catchment.

The activity will bring to life the Catchment Action Plan and Catchment Action Plan Refresh May 2021 that outline actions that partners, and the community, can take to reduce the risk of flooding.

Both plans can be seen online here www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/flood2019 along with a specific Activity Programme 2021/22 for this financial year.

If you would like a hard copy of any of the documents, please call the Environment Agency (EA) on 03708 506 506 or email LNenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Dredging

Great progress was made with the completion of Phase 1 of the dredging in March, despite the challenges of getting the crew back into the country owing to Government lockdown announcements over Christmas to help combat Covid 19.

Phase 2 of the dredging has been put back slightly from September and is now due to begin in January 2022. A permit is needed from the EA's National Permitting Service to carry out the dredging. As a result of Covid 19, the demand on this service has meant processing times have been longer. The team remains committed to helping to protect people and the environment, while adapting to the effects of Covid 19 on how they work remotely.

A third lagoon – Lagoon C – has now been constructed ready for Phase 2. This is just off the B1195, north of Wainfleet Relief Channel (WRC).



Lagoon B is being decommissioned with the silt being spread across the whole field – see photo. Lagoon A is also being decommissioned during the summer/early autumn.

Dredging remains a key priority for partners who know just how much it means to the community as one of the ways to help reduce flood risk.

Maintenance

The first of two grass cuts has started. This encourages good root growth, which helps protect and bind the surface of a bank. It also means banks can be inspected more easily to monitor the condition of the defences and it reduces vermin burrowing.

A weedcut will take place in late summer/early autumn to help water move more freely along the Steeping River and WRC. It will also prepare the WRC for Phase 2 of the dredging.

Strengthening defences

Berm repairs – see photo of the left bank of the WRC – have almost been completed. It will be strength tested before top soil and grass seed is applied. The seed will be covered with hessian matting to help protect it and bind the bank while it grows. The mat is a natural material and will rot away over time. This has taken place on sections of the WRC and when complete will provide excellent angling sites.

‘Toe protection’ work to help protect the bottom of the embankment near the waterline from erosion has now been completed on the



left bank of the Steeping River upstream of Salem Bridge. This has

involved using a combination of coir reed rolls near the bank and rock material below the waterline.

Before some of this work could legally take place, water voles (a protected and endangered species) were displaced from the working areas into alternative safe habitat by a specialist team of ecologists under Licence from Natural England. This meant the usual June weed cut could not take place. The work was still ongoing at the time and the habitat had to be retained.

Bid to replenish fish stock

The design of the defence strengthening, which provides enhanced habitat, has enabled the submission of a bid for more native fish from the EA's own facility at Calverton Fish Farm. It is a key objective for the EA to conserve and maintain the diversity of freshwater fish and to increase the social value of fishing as an accessible and healthy form of recreation.

The bid requests 1,500 Roach, 1,200 Bream and 200 Tench to help bolster numbers, providing more opportunities for local anglers. The bid is also in recognition of how important fishing is to the community here and follows the installation previously of five fishing pegs on Vicarage Lane. The weedcut later this year will include cutting around these fishing pegs.

More information about the Farm, which is funded by rod licence sales, can be seen online here:

www.gov.uk/government/news/bumper-weight-of-fish-produced-at-environment-agencys-national-fish-farm

<https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2017/01/31/when-the-weather-gets-tough-calverton-gets-going/>

Creating new eel habitat

A scheme for new eel habitat creation is currently going through planning permission. It will be located in two places downstream of Clough Farm on the Burgh Sluice Relief Channel. This is mitigation for all phases of the dredging. It is a requirement of the Eel Regulations 2009.

Lady Wath's Beck

A bid for funding to investigate whether an embankment, or wall, might help to reduce flood risk from Lady's Wath's Beck at Great Steeping has been successful. The investigation will take place this year.

Thorpe Culvert Pumping Station investigations

Inspections of culverts (tunnels) under the Steeping River at Thorpe Culvert Pumping Station are due to start late autumn to see if any refurbishment is needed. This is part of investigations into the potential to safely reduce pumping from the pumping station during times of increased river flow. It will look at options for storing water in the lowland system and also for emergency discharges into the Bell Water Drain. This would be used in an emergency only, with the agreement of Witham Fourth District Internal Drainage Board.

Working with natural processes

The EA, Lincolnshire County Council, Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board and the National Farmers' Union are looking at working with natural processes within the upper catchment including Natural Flood Management e.g. leaky timber barriers that have the potential to slow water coming down the system by up to 5% if the right opportunities can be found.

An experienced advisor has walked the catchment, talking to landowners to see where suitable opportunities may exist. The expertise, local knowledge and co-operation of landowners will be key to establishing what can be done over the next few years.

New pointing doors at Burgh Sluice

A new set of pointing doors has been ordered for Burgh Sluice to replace the current old ones. A platform to safely locate the crane that will install them is currently being designed.

Contact us

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LNenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

To report an incident please call (24-hour service) 0800 80 70 60

Floodline: 0345 988 1188

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