



River Mease SSSI Restoration Project Culloden Farm

Planning, Design and Access Statement

2025



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1.0 Introduction

The development proposals are for the creation of a wetland for the purposes of river and habitat restoration. With reference to the *Culloden Farm Design Proposal and Sections* document, the works will involve creating a new channel in the centre of a field between two existing straight ditch-like channels with inlets and outlets, along with wet meadow and grass meadow creation (centred at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SK 33853 07991). The field location is at Culloden Farm (Dreamy Cow Ice Cream), near Snarestone, CV9 3QJ.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

This river restoration construction project falls with the Construction (Design and Management) regulations 2015 (CDM). These regulations set out the process to ensure that the construction work is safe. The following structure below lays out the role and responsibilities for each partner to ensure the work is completed in a safe and satisfactory manner.

2.1 Funders

Environment Agency

Adam Noon

Catchment Co-ordinator for Tame, Anker & Mease, Environment Programme Team, West Midlands Area

Email; adam.noon@environment-agency.gov.uk

Jess Andrews

Biodiversity Technical Officer

Email; jess.andrews@environment-agency.gov.uk

Main responsibilities:

- Approve plan of works.
- Provide Biodiversity and nature conservation advice when required.
- Provide link with EA responsibilities.
- Facilitate the application for Watercourse Consent.

2.2 Client

Trent Rivers Trust

Emma Smail

Landscape Recovery Manager

Mobile; 07771313835

Email; emma@trentriverstrust.org

Main responsibilities:

- Oversee design and planning of work.
- Ensure compliance with environmental and health and safety legislation.
- Site Supervision until TRT staff are confident that the contractors are capable of carrying out works unsupervised to a satisfactory standard.
- Contractor appointment and contracts.
- Landowner Liaison.
- Applying for all necessary consents and permits.

2.3 Designer

Trent Rivers Trust

Alan Graham

Technical Specialist

07923 878880

Email; alan@trentriverstrust.org

Main responsibilities:

- Site visits to scope feasibility of works.
- Design of scheme.

2.4 Contractors and Workers

TBC

Main responsibilities:

- Check own competence.
- Co-operate with others and co-ordinate work so as to ensure the health and safety of construction workers and others who may be affected by the work.
- Site supervision.
- Carry out assigned work.
- Report obvious risks.

3.0 Project Background

Trent Rivers Trust (TRT) have been delivering river restoration schemes within the catchment of the River Mease since 2019, using funding provided from the Environment Agency. The aims of the funding are to restore river and riparian habitat that is degraded as a result of historic modifications and is for use both on the Main River Mease, and its tributaries. The River Mease is a SSSI and SAC as a result of the presence of nationally and internationally rare and important habitat and species assemblages.

The work of the Mease River Restoration Project aims to deliver the objectives laid out in the River Restoration Plan that was developed by Natural England and The Environment Agency in 2012. TRT take a strategic approach to river restoration, targeting the poorest reaches and sub-catchments in need of restoration, whilst also being opportunistic when suitable and willing landowners are supportive. The project is entirely dependent on 3rd party private landowners allowing work to take place on their landholdings.

4.0 Location and Site Description

The development site is located on the Upper Mease tributary of the River Mease SSSI/SAC. The Upper Mease has been identified in a number of catchment investigations as a key priority tributary for targeting restoration as it is a large source of sediments and poor water quality into the SAC. Historically landowner engagement in this sub catchment has been low but recently headway has been made.

TRT were asked by the landowner of Culloden Farm in 2023 for advice on improving the field which is the proposed development site for habitat and biodiversity gains. Culloden Farm is a dairy farm that has diversified in recent years to having its own ice cream production facility and shop on site. The current land use of the 2.1ha field is pasture which is primarily grazed and occasionally cut for hay or silage. The grassland is primarily improved ryegrass although a more varied herbal assemblage has emerged in recent years as fertiliser has ceased to be applied as due to the narrow shape and size of the field it is not the most productive.

As the field is situated between 2 watercourses, 2 different arms of the Upper Mease tributary, TRT saw the potential for wetland creation.

5.0 Design Proposal

The development proposal is to create a wetland with inlets from both watercourses which border the field to the north and south at a series of points. A wide shallow channel will be created in the centre of the field to guide the flow but ultimately it will find its own route through the field and fan out into a large wetland area at the downstream end of the field and following the topography into the field to the south, before returning to the watercourses through outlet channels before it goes under the road culverts at the eastern end of the field.

The wetland has been designed using principles of Stage Zero restoration. This is an increasingly common methodology used in river restoration design as it requires minimal intervention, allowing the channel to find its own course, a truly natural process. In this case, the topography of the land will not allow for true stage zero as the main flow would be to the more productive field to the South and works are limited to the field in the proposal. Therefore a modified stage zero is proposed, with a wide shallow channel excavated to help guide the water through the field where there is space for it to flow. Instead of the existing watercourses being completely backfilled as they would be in true stage zero, there will be earth ramps at stages along the watercourse utilising the excavated clay, to push the water out of the channel and into the inlets to the wetland.

The site will be planted with a grassland meadow mix to the dryer western end of the field, and a wetland meadow mix to the lower eastern end of the field. Pre-planted coir mats and rolls will be installed in the southern channel and within the excavated channel to kick start the vegetation establishment and enhance the habitat and biodiversity.

6.0 Site Access, safety and security

6.1 Accessing the site, material delivery and storage

The site access point will be a farm entrance off the Ashby Road, B4116, [///hack.com/point/honey](https://www.hack.com/point/honey) (What 3 Words point), driving towards Culloden Farm (Dreamy Cow Ice Cream), CV9 3QF – near Snarestone.

Once machinery is delivered to site it will remain until site works are completed. It is envisioned that works can be completed with a maximum of 2 excavators and 2 dumpers with delivery on 1-2 low loaders on 1 occasion at the start of works, and removal on 1 occasion on completion. The site will be accessed daily by the personal vehicles of construction staff (max. 4 people) and TRT site supervisors

(1 – 2 people) with vehicles parked in the farm yard and operatives walking to the site and compound from there.

6.2 Spoil arisings

Topsoil and subsoil arisings will be generated as part of the proposals. Any surplus not utilised in the design will be deposited on the farm near the yard to be utilised by the farmer in farm operations or spread to land. No spoil will be removed from site or disposed of.

6.3 Construction Traffic Management Plan

All workers and visitors on site will receive a site induction. This induction will include information on:

- Project objectives and design;
- Site hazards and risks, control measures and the project Works Method Statement;
- Site designations, protected species e.g. water voles, bats, salmonids;
- Compulsory bio-security risks and control measures;
- Pollution control and the response to incidents;
- Emergency procedures.

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is to be worn whenever required by the risk assessment. The minimum requirement is to include steel toe-capped boots, wellies or waders, Hi-Visibility jackets and hard hats when working in an area where plant is operating.

Designated routes between the development site, the spoil tipping location and the machinery compound will be agreed between landowner, contractor and TRT. The routes will avoid the main driveway track to the farm and the public footpath that runs along it. Where possible cattle will be removed from fields where access routes are to be located. Where this is not possible, temporary fencing will be in place to exclude livestock from the access routes. Compound and spoil disposal locations will be sited away from the floodplain and out of site of the main road.

There is no general public access to the site, but the access track is along the farm track open to the public and incorporating a public footpath. The site is also adjacent to this track. While machinery is being brought to site, being removed from site, or any other occasion where it needs to travel down the access track, the site will be attended by a site supervisor in PPE in place at either end to warn members of the public and perform traffic management. 'Work in progress' signs will be put up daily at the site entrance.

Works are expected to take place for a period of 3-5 weeks. Works are proposed to take place in spring and months when ground conditions are dry and suitable for excavation work.

6.2 Highway Trip Generation

Section 6.1 outlines the highway trip generation during construction. After construction, it is not expected that additional trips will be generated. The wetland is primarily a private enterprise for the purpose of nature restoration. The wetland will be accessible by foot from the ice cream shop on site and adjacent public footpath, which is a secondary benefit intended to enhance the existing visitor experience for those interested, rather than generate additional visitor volume.

7.0 Environmental legislation and pollution control

Works are to take place in the Upper Mease. This is not part of the River Mease Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), but is upstream of the SSSI and SAC. All work is designed to enhance the ecological value of the designated site and will be carried out in a manner which does not harm the downstream site's designated features, habitats or wildlife following the methods included within this document.

7.1 Protected species

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken on 14 May 2024. The survey identified the potential for the works area to accommodate nesting birds, together with:

- Trees with potential to support roosting bats;
- Water Vole habitat.

Further surveys for otter and water vole presence were undertaken in summer 2024 where no signs of the 2 species were identified.

An aerial inspection of the tree on site identified as having potential to house roosting bats and barn owls was undertaken on 5th February 2025. This inspection confirmed that the tree is likely to support numerous roosting bats and nesting owls. Instead of undertaking nocturnal activity surveys it has been decided to work under the proposed methods in section 7.2.1, assuming bats and owls will be present and working to minimise impact to these species and the tree.

An ecological clerk of works will be present at the start of construction. The ECOW will undertake a pre-works inspection to ensure no nesting birds or other species are present in works areas, and will ensure work areas and access routes assigned minimise any disturbance to protected species and go through ecologically sensitive ways of working with the contractor via a ToolBox Talk.

Please note the two ecology reports refers to 2 different sites within the Mease catchment, and 2 sites within Culloden Farm itself. The sections of relevance to this application are those that refer to Culloden Farm, Field 1.

7.1.1 Bat and Barn Owl Mitigation Method Statement

The following practices will be adopted in relation to the tree with potential to support roosting bats and owls:

- A 20m buffer will be placed around the tree of interest with heras fencing covered in an acoustic quilt to reduce noise disturbance. The buffer will be in place for the duration of works.
- Construction Machinery above 3 tonnes will not be permitted within the buffer zone.
- For the small amount of excavation that needs to take place within the 20m buffer zone, a 3 tonne excavator will be used. This will be positioned to be at the maximum distance from the tree reaching in towards the tree. This area of excavation is to be completed in one block to reduce the time spent in this area.

7.2 Biodiversity Net Gain Exemption

Pre Application Advice advised that this project would likely be exempt from statutory BNG via the 'De Minimis' exemption due to the site having no net loss of habitat.

A BNG assessment was undertaken demonstrating pre and post-development BNG metrics as demonstrated in the *Culloden Farm – BNG Assessment Report*. The report highlights that

“Using current landscape plans, the proposed development would result in an overall new gain in habitat units (+69.09%), hedgerow units (+14.49%) and watercourse units (+22.01%)”.

7.3 Pollution control

Silt and sediment

Silt mats will be used where work is completed in watercourses. Sediment run off must be continually assessed during works to ensure no run off to the river. Works must be paused in heavy rains to minimise the risks of ground poaching and run off. Methods within this method statement must be followed to minimise the risk. Channel modification works will require silt barriers that will be temporarily fixed within the channel downstream of works. If conditions change, for example due to inclement weather this must be reconsidered by the contractor and TRT.

Refuelling and oil

All refuelling is to be carried out at least 8m away from the river to avoid spillages leaching through the ground and into the channel. If a spillage does occur, refer to PPG-5 (Pollution Prevention Guidelines part 5), which can be found in the spill kit readily available on site. PPG5 guidelines shall be included in the site file for reference in an emergency spill incident.

Spill trays will be used at all times to store or keep machinery (power pack hydraulic post rammer, chainsaws).

A bunded fuel tank can be brought to site but must be stored as close to the eastern site boundary as possible to avoid risk of pollution to the river. Ideally, fuel would be brought to site daily for daily usage.

Any incident shall be reported promptly to the Environment Agency – Tel 0800 80 70 60.

7.4 Bio-security

TRT is committed to a high level of biosecurity in order to prevent the transfer of undesirable plants, disease or animal species between sites. Particular attention is paid to the prevention of invasive plant species such as Himalayan Balsam, Orange Balsam and Japanese Knotweed, the transfer of Signal Crayfish and the associated crayfish plague, and the transmission of Killer Shrimp.

Biosecurity measures include:

- Inclusion of biosecurity in site inductions and method statements
- Training of site operatives to ensure they understand the importance of biosecurity, can identify species which pose a biosecurity risk, and are fully aware of the potential vectors for invasive species

- Mechanical cleaning and disinfection of personnel, kit, tools and machinery

The excavator and other plant and equipment brought in by sub-contractors will be inspected for cleanliness prior to being allowed on site. PPE and clothing will be dipped or sprayed with 'Virkon' before being brought to site to eliminate transferal of any unwanted alien diseases or species.

7.5 Flood Risk Assessment

The works are largely within Flood Zone 3; i.e., land having a high probability of flooding as we are working within the watercourse and its floodplain.

The design will excavate approximately 2474m³ of spoil from the floodplain creating significant additional capacity to store floodwaters, therefore, flood risk will not be increased as a result of the scheme. A land drainage consent application has been submitted to Leicestershire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority. This will be supplied to the LPA on receipt and works will not commence until signed off by the LLFA,

All designs are based on best available levels data from the Environment Agency including Digital Terrain Modelling and Flood Modelling.

The Trent Rivers Trust appointed site supervisor, and the contractors shall sign up to receive flood warnings/flood alerts from the Environment Agency. Upon receipt of the alert/warning the works shall cease and temporary works removed to allow the river to flow at full capacity. (<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings>). In the event of a flood, if materials or equipment are washed downstream, the operator shall use best endeavours to recover lost materials and equipment once any flood water has receded.

For all works at all times, moveable materials will be removed from the watercourse overnight and during working hours when works are not being carried out.

8.0 Heritage Considerations

A Historic and Environment Geoarchaeological Desk-based Assessment was undertaken in the summer of 2024 by York Archaeology. The report is provided in full. Please note the report refers to 2 sites within the Mease catchment and 2 sites within Culloden Farm. The sections of relevance to this application are those that refer to Culloden Farm, Field 1.

The report concludes that there is a low likelihood of features of archaeological importance to be unearthed or disturbed during the proposed works. The study identifies potential for remains of sluices from the late 19th and early 20th century to be present in the southern watercourse and may be impacted by works, but states these features have low archaeological significance.

The report also highlights that there is a lack of previous archaeological information from prehistoric to early medieval periods for this area, meaning it cannot be stated for certain that there is limited impact to the site as there is uncertainty about what lies there.

York archaeology will be consulted prior to excavation work taking place and an archaeological watching brief will be in place during construction if deemed necessary.

8.0 Ownership, monitoring and long term maintenance

The TRT will monitor the schemes for 12 months after installation. A site visit will be undertaken soon after the first large flood event to check installations are in place and functioning as planned.

The landowners and any tenant farmers have been fully consulted in detail regarding the proposed works and future maintenance. All features have been designed and will be installed using methods that require no or minimal maintenance. Trent Rivers Trust are supporting the farmer with a Countryside Stewardship application to receive land management payments that suit the new land use, to ensure long term maintenance can be supported. Trent Rivers Trust will monitor the sites after installation in conjunction with the farmers.

9.0 Conclusions

The proposed restoration will provide benefits to the environment such as; protected species habitat, habitat diversity and enhancement, flood resilience and water quality. The innovative stage zero methodology has already been reported to have significant benefits to habitats and water quality which are both key aims of the River Mease Restoration Plan. Therefore, while the work will be taking place on tributary, it will be of benefit to the River Mease SSSI/SAC by reducing the amount of pollution flowing downstream and providing habitat connectivity.

The site is privately owned and sheltered from view of public areas such as the main road. The burden of additional traffic from work machinery will be minimal and temporary. The site will provide public benefit directly as once completed it will be open to the public who will be able to access it from the adjacent public footpath and from the ice cream shop on site; also indirectly through habitat and water quality improvements.