

# North Devon Estuary Project



*Agricultural wetlands to improve water  
quality and benefit biodiversity*



**NORTH  
DEVON  
BIOSPHERE**



# Introduction

The Estuary Project worked with farmers in North Devon to reduce soil and nutrients leaving farms and entering our waterways. This was achieved through the use of soft engineering, for example baffle ditches, wetlands and reed beds.



Area in which grants are available from the Estuary Project

## The benefits to the farmers were:

- Reducing the amount of soil and nutrients leaving the farm and thereby saving money, and risk of prosecution
- Improving flood risk and infrastructure on the farm
- increasing biodiversity which is beneficial to pollination on the farm

## The benefits to the environment were:

- Slowing down the flow of water across the countryside and therefore reducing flood risk
- Preventing nutrients leaving the land and stopping them from entering the Estuary where they are damaging to water quality



Cornborough Farm Workshop 22/01/2016



Boode Farm workshop 13/11/2015



# Case study 1

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Sediment trap before the cover was installed

The project supported the building of a sediment trap and the creation of two ponds on a farm near Arlington. The track was concreted via Catchment Sensitive Farming grant and water was channelled from it into the sediment trap. Roof water was also diverted into the sediment trap. The water then flows into the ponds that include plants around the perimeter that help clean the water and attract wildlife. Finally there is a long soak away section after the ponds.



Work in progress. This project was completed over winter, and therefore adverse weather conditions proved to be problematic on occasions, however it still was completed on time

## Case study 2

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Sediment trap during construction



Baffled ditches for overflow water

This farm was struggling with water flowing off the fields and down through the yard. The majority of this has now been diverted into a large sediment trap. The overflow is into a series of baffle ditches. This will save the farmer money, as he won't have to store such a large volume of 'dirty water'.

# Case study 3

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This farm had an overgrown pond which wasn't functioning either as a good habitat for wildlife or flood attenuation. Therefore the pond was reinstated and enlarged. It has sloping edges which have been seeded with wildflowers, and will be a good environment for fresh water invertebrates and birds alike. It will slow down the passage of water from the adjacent fields which drain into it.



Farm D, wetland habitat

## Project Film

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A film based on two of the farms has been made as an engaging way of showing how effective constructed wetlands can be. The film will be shown at conferences, workshops, and is also available on the Biosphere website.

It can be seen on the North Devon Biosphere YouTube channel  
([www.youtube.com/user/NDCCSADMIN](http://www.youtube.com/user/NDCCSADMIN))



# What we learnt

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## Working with farmers

Striking up a good working relationship has been invaluable. We kept paperwork to a minimum, visited sites frequently, and responded to questions promptly which has been key to gaining the farmers' trust. Giving a one to one bespoke service was key to keeping everyone on board.

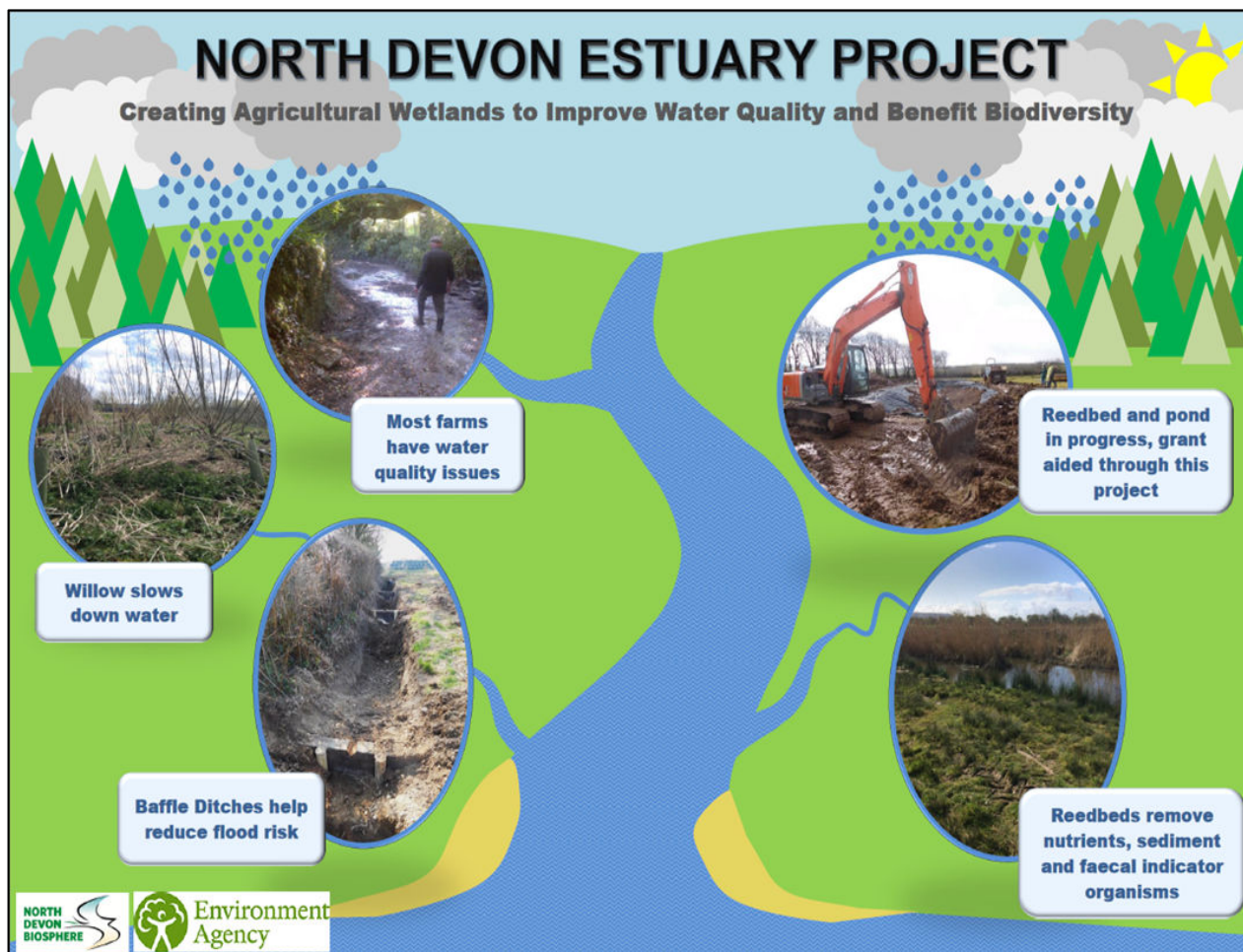


## Working with partners

Throughout the project engaging with other partners has allowed us to have a larger reach. Partners include Devon Wildlife Trust and their Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer, Westcountry Rivers Trust, the Environment Agency, and Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. The first 3 organisations were able to promote the Estuary Project at their own events.

There are limited resources so joining forces with partners will be key to success in the future.





This report summarises the successes of the Estuary Project 2015/16. For any more information please contact us below.

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