Advice note | Wet grassland restoration

Habitat re-creation: specialist techniques

In strategic riparian locations, by-passes can be constructed to re-create a narrow riverine bank and associated habitats. Techniques that have been most successful include:

- Sediment removal from the river bed to allow for successive, increased floodplain development. This is an expensive operation, as it is generally carried out in small areas in high priority locations. The operation offers the opportunity to reintroduce landscape features such as old river beds and islands. The techniques often provide suitably diverse conditions for specialist wetland species and grasslands.

- Deep peat extraction and base level realignment up to 0.5 m or above the present floodplain. This enables wetland areas, in some cases with shallow substrates to develop.

Legislation

Wetland restoration: habitat creation often involves a complex regime of operations that are governed by environmental protection, fluvial erosion, flood risk management, and floodplain/dam protection assessment regulations. It is essential that advice is sought from Working Wetlands on appropriate land management practice before you embark on any project.

Sources of funding

Natural restoration and manipulation operations in target areas may be assisted by Environmentally Sensitive Areas or agreements.

The Working Wetlands East Devon group is a network of volunteers involved in the protection and restoration of wetlands. For more information and to contact the Working Wetlands, please visit: www.wetlands.org.uk or email to working.wetlands@eastdevon.gov.uk.

Sources of information

Natural England has published a series of practical information notes on a range of wetland restoration techniques.

www.naturalenglandontherivers.net/ workingwetlands.html#resources
Site selection

The site of a groundnut cultivation project is key to determining the diversity and abundance of flowering plants, which is essential in maximizing the availability of habitat for the target species. The site selection should include:

- Access to water:
  - Groundwater levels should be considered, as groundnut cultivation is not suitable if the water table is too high.
  - Soil drainage should be assessed to ensure adequate water infiltration.

- Native vegetation:
  - Presence of native vegetation provides a habitat for pollinators and other beneficial insects.

- Climate:
  - Groundnut cultivation is most successful in areas with a warm, dry climate.

- Soil type:
  - Suitable for groundnut cultivation, providing adequate drainage and fertility.

Raising the water table

In areas where the water table is low, raising the water table can be an effective way of increasing its depth. This can be achieved by:

- Using irrigation systems to increase soil moisture levels.
- Implementing drainage systems to improve soil drainage.

Sward enhancement: green-hay sowing

With well-managed, appropriate and strategic reseeding efforts, the following steps can be taken:

- Ensure adequate seed spacing and depth for optimal germination.
- Use appropriate seed mixtures that provide good growth and flower production.

Sward enhancement: over-seeding and slit-seeding

Successful reseeding requires careful planning and execution. The following steps should be followed:

- Ensure the seed mix used is appropriate for the desired outcome.
- Ensure the soil is properly prepared for seedling establishment.
- Use appropriate tools and equipment for seedling establishment.

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