

Culm Grassland Natural Flood Management Project Autumn 2019



A more traditional Autumn is upon us! Thankfully the summer wasn't as wet, allowing work on our Culm Grassland sites to commence with relative ease.

Over the last few months the project has been busy...

Visiting and working with landowners - We've carried out wet grassland habitat creation works on just over 30 hectares, spreading 187 bales of green hay on sites across the Taw, Torridge and Tamar catchments. Sites that were seeded in 2016 and 2017 are already looking fantastic, it's hoped that this tranche of sites will fare equally well, increasing in value for wildlife and contributing to natural flood management whilst forming part of a productive farm system.

We've **presented talks and led walks** for several local community groups.

Look out for our input in the latest edition of **Wild Devon**, available to DWT members - where the work of landowners and staff has been recognised. If you wish to become a member and [support Devon Wildlife Trust](#) please follow the link.



We've **organised workshops** (for all walks of life), we ran two very successful workshops over the summer; a 'Culm grassland management' day at Lower Ash Moor farm, kindly hosted by the inimitable Cyril Cole, was attended by nearly 40 landowners; and a botanical training day led by Devon Biodiversity Records Centre gave a grounding in Culm wildflower identification to the dozen landowners and volunteers who joined us. We held a soils training day for DWT advisors, attended by the [Torridge River Restoration Project Officers](#) and members of the Culm team.

We've **harvested around 300kgs of seed** from species-rich donor sites and spread these on species-poor receptor sites. Local contractors have been vital in helping to re-create these Culm Grassland sites with green hay work and Hannah Gibbons has carried out botanical surveys on all previous and current creation sites so that we can monitor changes in diversity over time.



Working with landowners, the project has created Culm Grassland on a grand total of 78 ha whilst 374 ha has been brought into positive management.



The butterfly monitoring season didn't start well, with wet and cold weather meaning only a few sites were surveyed for adult Marsh Fritillaries. Despite this we were very pleased to find a new site with no previous fritillary records, supporting a good population. Later in the year staff and volunteers carried out web surveys on several sites, and were very excited to record a web on Common Moor. This is the first record in many years for this SSSI site - a positive result suggesting all the hard work put into assisting with the restoration of this area is paying off.

Looking ahead - as the project enters its final year we are still keen to meet landowners with Culm grassland, or those who would like to improve parts of their holding for wildlife so please **get in touch!**

Contact Us! Culm Grassland Natural Flood Management Project Advisors
Telephone us on 01409 221823
 or **click our name** to send us an email
[Tom Parsons](#) : [Shanti Smallwood](#) : [Lisa Butt](#)

Latest Countryside Stewardship news



Applications for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier, Mid Tier including Wildlife Offers, and Hedgerows and Boundaries are now closed for 2019.

You can apply for woodland creation, management plan and tree health grants all year.

You can use the [Rural Payments service](#) to apply online for the Woodland Management Plan Grant.

Contacting RPA about Countryside Stewardship

From 1 July 2019, if you need to contact the RPA about Countryside Stewardship, Basic Payment Scheme or Environmental Stewardship you can either call the Customer Service Centre on 03000 200 301 or email: ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk and include Countryside Stewardship in the subject line.

Application packs should be available again in February 2020 for a 2021 start date. If you are interested in applying for Mid Tier and want some advice please get in touch.



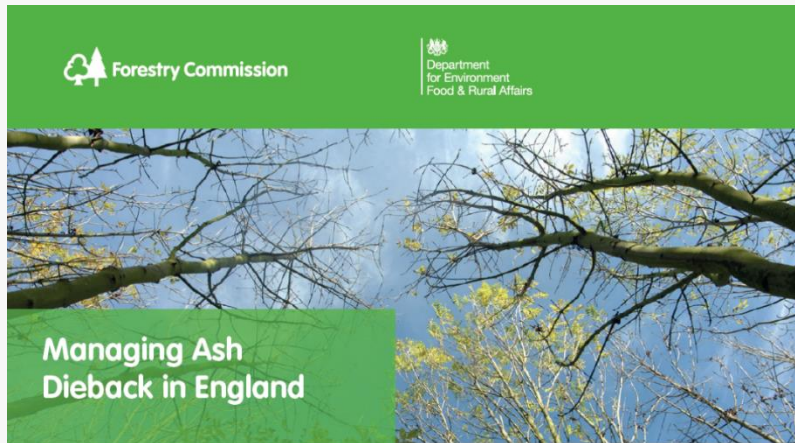
Likewise, if you have Culm grassland on your farm and would like to understand more about whether this scheme might be suitable for you contact us using the information above.



The Devon County Council has launched a new campaign to encourage landowners with ash trees on their property to inspect them for Ash dieback - '[My tree, my responsibility](#)' supported by the [Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum](#).

The time for action is now!

Please encourage new trees of other native species to grow to help reduce the effects of ash dieback in Devon and follow the 3:2:1 rule - at least 3 new trees for every large one, 2 for every medium one, and one for each small one.



The latest information from the [Forestry Commission](#) is for anyone who owns or manages ash trees, including private trees and woodland owners, local authorities and highway and railway authorities.



An Update from our Ph.D Student Nicola Ellis

Most of you will be familiar with the work of Nicola Ellis, our Exeter University PhD student. A few of you perhaps too familiar with the heavy weight of the equipment used in her rainfall simulator work. Nicola has been collecting data on exactly how Culm grassland responds to heavy rainfall events, she has also engaged the use of a drone to develop an understanding of structural connectivity and how that affects water storage within unimproved grassland in comparison to improved grassland. Last year she installed 55 dipwells across 11 fields to monitor water storage potential of different grassland types. As you read this Nicola is processing all this data – we look forward to finding out the results.



An unstoppable force!



Our hard-working team of volunteers have been invaluable; helping with seed harvests, surveys and the relentless battle to keep Culm Grassland sites in healthy condition. We'd like to say a **BIG THANK YOU** to those who have been involved with the project so far! If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for the NIA Culm Grassland Natural Flood Management Project please contact Tom Parsons tparsons@devonwildlifetrust.org or via the office number 01409 221823.



We welcome Jasmin Urwick to the NIA office. Jasmin is our Torridge Headwaters Facilitation Project Officer. She is currently organising workshops for landowners, recently Jasmin held an ['Introduction to Silvopasture - Farming with trees'](#) (an interesting read for those keen to enhance farm animal well-being), next in line is a parasite management workshops. These events are restricted to registered members within the headwaters of the Torridge catchment, if you have further questions please email [Jasmin](#).





[Farm Wilder](#) is a not for profit Community Interest Company that helps farmers receive a just price for food that is produced in a manner that supports important wildlife habitats. [Marsh Fritillary](#) butterflies are one of many species that could benefit from this enterprise. For more information contact [Luke](#) from The Farming and Wildlife Advisory group South West.



Devon
Wildlife Trust

Established over fifty years ago by a small group of volunteers, Devon Wildlife Trust is the only charity that exists to protect all wildlife in Devon and to safeguard Devon's unique natural environment. Please consider supporting us and visit our website at www.devonwildlifetrust.org

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We are sending you this information because you have an interest in our Culm Grassland Natural Flood Management Project or have attended an event, or received land management advice/support.

If you do not wish to receive these email newsletters from us in the future please email lschneidau@devonwildlifetrust.org or call Devon Wildlife Trust on 01409 221823

