



Evenlode Wetland Creation Grant Scheme Handbook

2025 to 2027



**Funded by
UK Government**

The Evenlode Catchment Partnership



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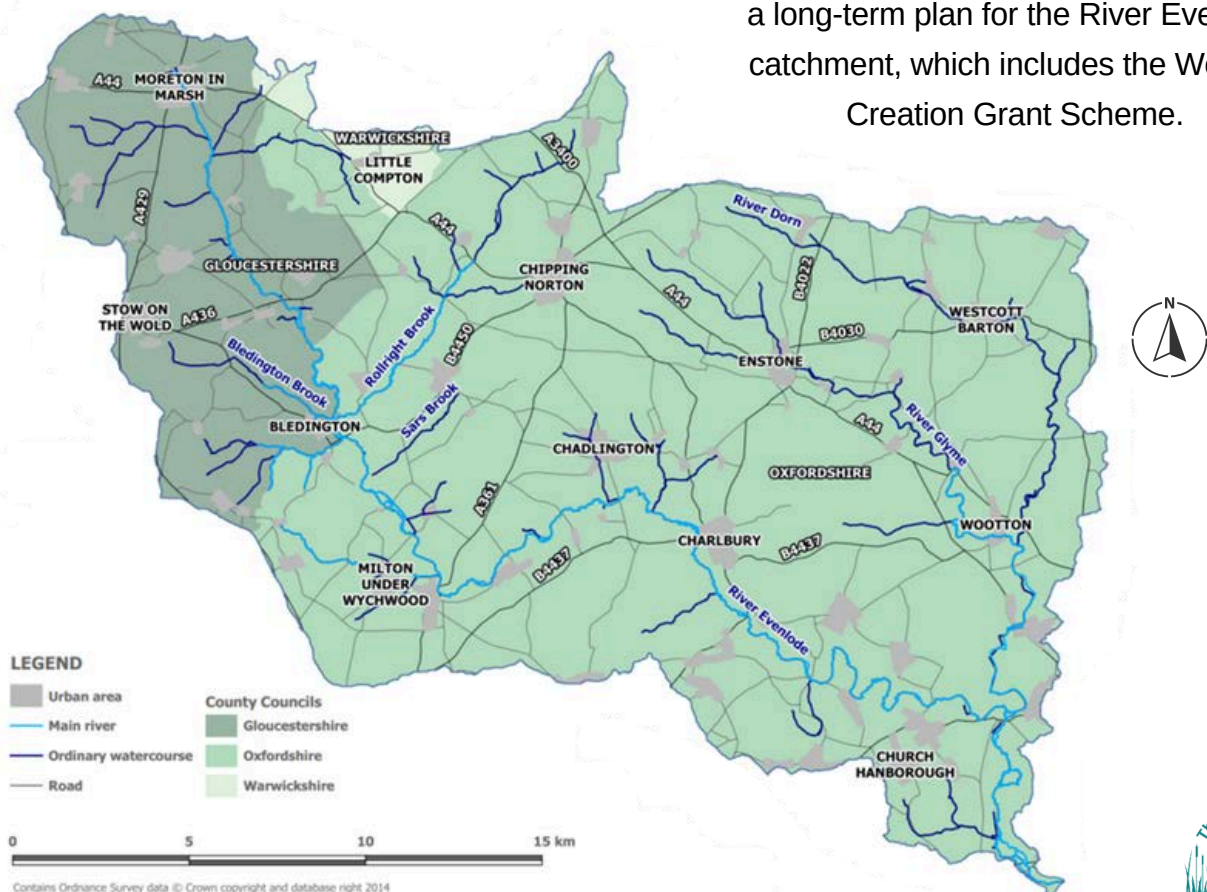
Manor House,
Little Wittenham, Abingdon,
Oxfordshire, OX14 4RA



The Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP), hosted by Wild Oxfordshire, has a vision for an Evenlode with improved water quality, enhanced flood management, enriched biodiversity, and greater community engagement with rivers, at local and landscape scales.

The ECP wants to achieve good ecological status across the whole catchment by reversing the degradation and fragmentation of our habitats and species, historic landscapes, and freshwater bodies. To effectively tackle these issues and achieve our aims, we have developed a long-term plan for the River Evenlode catchment, which includes the Wetland Creation Grant Scheme.

The Catchment



Welcome

Welcome to the Evenlode Wetland Creation Grant Scheme. The Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP) has set up this scheme to help farmers and landowners create wetland habitat on their holdings to improve water quality, create habitat for wildlife, reduce flood risk, and provide opportunities for education and recreation.

Introduction

This handbook sets out how to use the scheme to create a wetland on your land. The scheme is hosted and funded by the ECP through the Water Restoration Fund. Funding is available for projects within the Evenlode Catchment until Summer 2026. The scheme anticipates the average project to cost around £20k and will cover up to 100% of the costs. If you are being more ambitious, talk to us. The scheme is also offering to fund the installation of in-channel and flow pathway measures.

What is a wetland?

Wetlands are unique ecosystems that form a transition between terrestrial and aquatic habitats. The water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is periodically covered with shallow water, supporting species that are adapted to live there. They're dynamic, change with the seasons and over time forming intricate habitats, which are home to a huge diversity of wildlife and provide positive ecosystem services.

Scheme themes

The ECP works across four key themes which have strong links to wetland ecosystem services. Your wetland must deliver against some or all of the scheme themes, which comprise:

- **Improve water quality**
- **Create habitat for wildlife**
- **Reduce flood risk**
- **Improve opportunities for education, access or recreation in the community**



The more of these themes that are satisfied, the more likely your wetland is to be funded, so designing a wetland to embrace as many themes as possible will be advantageous.

Using the Scheme

We have tried to make using the scheme straightforward. If you need assistance at any stage, your local Catchment Advisor can help.

Steps	Details
1 Initial Consultation	The Scheme Manager and your local Catchment Advisor need to meet with you in person to explore how you intend to create a wetland. Email ann@wildoxfordshire.org.uk and tom@cotwoldfarmers.org
2 Work up your Design	We can provide guidance about your design and on how to complete your application form. Develop a design and obtain three quotes.
3 Making an Application	You can submit your completed application form via email or the postal service.
4 Panel Assessment	The Scheme Panel will assess your application and contact you if you are successful.
5 Permissions & Consents	Secure all necessary permissions and consents. We will help with applications to regulators for permission to construct.
6 Entering into an Agreement	When all permissions have have been obtained, you must enter into a signed agreement that commits you to adhering to the rules of the scheme. The agreement will be with Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE).
7 Construction	Work cannot commence until you receive a formal grant offer from TOE.
8 Sign Off	Your local Catchment Advisor will need to sign off the wetland on your land once it is constructed. You will be paid once it has been signed off. You will need to display a sign stating who the funder is; we will supply this.

Scheme Details

Making an application

Should you decide to make an application to the scheme, the application form can be downloaded from the ECP website or can be posted to you upon request. Please speak to your local Catchment Advisor who can help. The application can be submitted via email (ann@wildoxfordshire.org.uk) or by post (Manor House, Little Wittenham, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4RA). You can only submit one application.

All figures must be inclusive of VAT.

If you are going to submit an application over £5k, you will need to obtain three quotes.

TOE/ECP does not give grants up front, but reimburses the costs incurred in delivering a project as agreed and outlined in the formal funding offer. We can provide longer-running and/or expensive projects with interim grant payments to avoid applicants facing cash-flow problems. These projects will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Working up designs

Before implementing measures on your land, you will need to develop your design. Designs will be needed to set out how measures will be implemented on the ground. We can help guide you on the development of your wetland design.

Assessment of applications

All applications will be assessed by a review panel comprising specialists in wetland design, water quality, natural flood management, agriculture and nature-based solutions. The assessment will be focused on the ecosystem benefits provided by the wetland and implementation risks.

Securing permissions

You must secure all permissions required by regulators to implement measures on your land. Your local Catchment Advisor will support you in securing permissions.

It may be that the measures you propose for your land are exempt from all permissions. If this is the case, you must still demonstrate this to your local Catchment Advisor.

Entering into an agreement

The Agreement will be with Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) who are managing the Agreement and payments on behalf of the ECP.

Sign off

Your local Catchment Advisor will need to sign off the wetland on your land once it is constructed.

You will be paid your grant award in full within 30 days of submitting a compliant grant claim.

Applicants must complete their projects and claim their grant before the completion deadline date stated in the formal funding offer. If the project is delayed, grant holders should notify TOE/Project Officer of the revised delivery schedule. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to extend project completion deadlines, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Your responsibilities

Care should be taken to ensure materials used to build your wetland (e.g., timber and earth) are not swept downstream during floods. Material lost from measures can block structures, putting people and property at risk.

Ideas for Wetland Design



Floodplain wetlands in the Evenlode Catchment

As a starting point, use your answers to the questions below, together with the photos and artistic representations in the next few pages, to decide which wetland type best matches the wet area on your land.

Then use the advice provided for that wetland type to develop a design for your wetland. It may be that the wet area on your land is a combination of wetland types in this handbook. If this is the case, use ideas from

all the relevant wetland types to develop your design. Note that the scheme also supports construction of in-channel and flow pathway measures such as leaky barriers.

If you wish to only implement land management changes to your wet area, and not construct anything new, this scheme will not be able to fund the changes. There are other schemes such as ELMS that you can apply to for possible payment.

Ideas for Wetland Design

Understanding your wetland

1

Where is the wet area on your land?

Understand the potential locations on your land where wetland habitat could be created or enhanced.

Where is the wet area situated?

- On a slope - side of a valley
- In a floodplain - next to a river
- Within an agricultural field
- Along a channel - river or stream

2

What makes this area wet?

Understand what is making the wet area wet.

- Is the area influenced by groundwater?
- Is surface water making it wet (such as a spring, an open channel, a naturally wet area where runoff accumulates)?

Consider how long on average it is wet for each year.

3

What wetland type does your wet area look similar to?

- Flow pathway wetland
- Marginal area wetland
- Small river or stream wetland
- Floodplain wetland

Look at the examples in the following pages to decide which wetland type best matches the wet area on your land. Use this as the basis for the design of your wetland.

Wetland Types

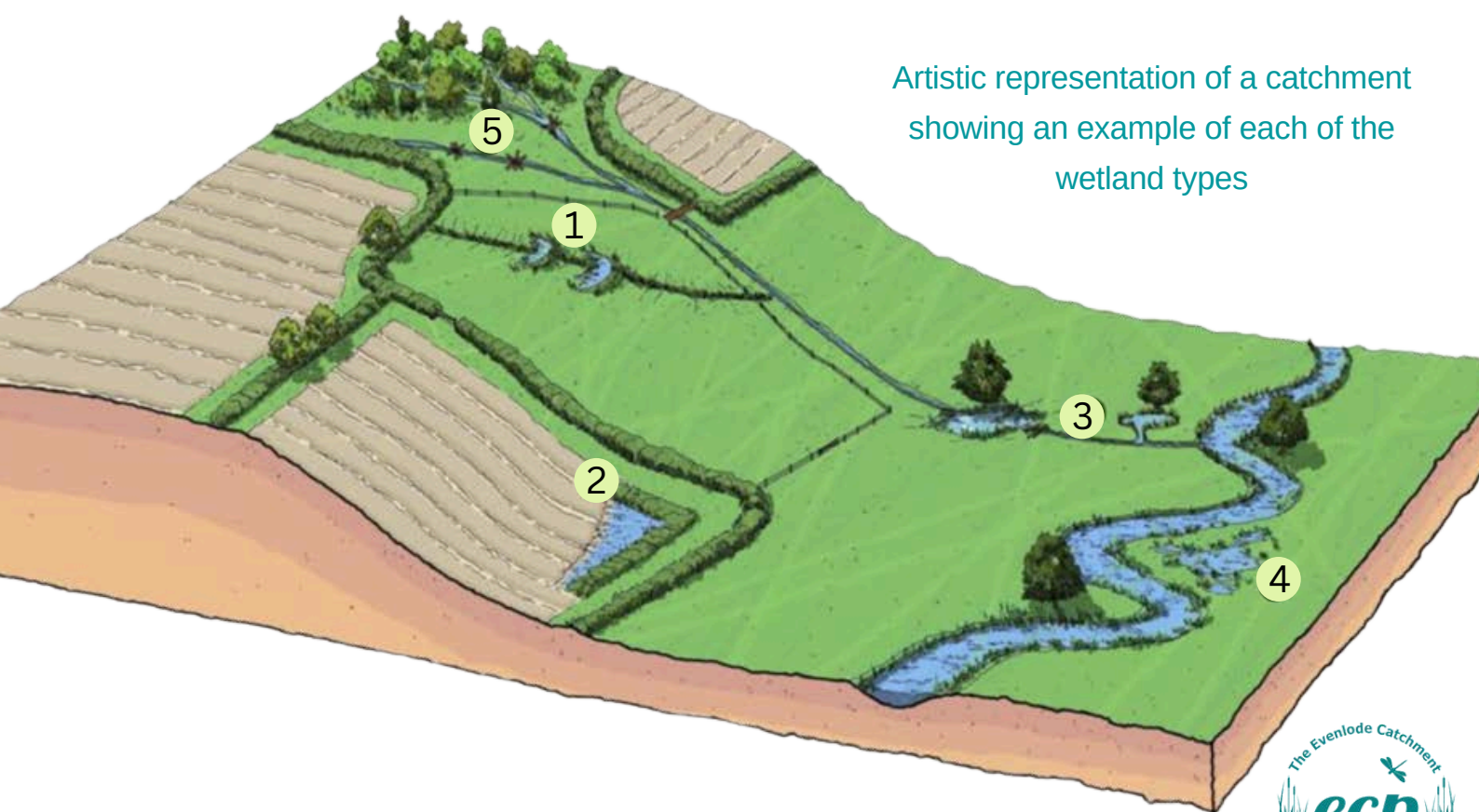
The 'location-led designs' set out in this handbook are based around four typical wetland types as shown in the figure below. More information on each wetland type is set out in the following pages.

- Flow pathway wetland
- Marginal area wetland
- Small river or stream wetland
- Floodplain wetland

Wetland Types



- ① Flow pathway wetland
- ② Marginal area wetland
- ③ Small river or stream wetland
- ④ Floodplain wetland
- ⑤ In-channel and flow pathway measures
(not a wetland in itself - these measures help to slow the water flow, more detail on page 17)



Artistic representation of a catchment showing an example of each of the wetland types

Wetland Types

① Flow Pathway Wetlands

Introduction

This type of wetland is normally associated with pathways where there is only flow for part of the year, particularly after high rainfall, or with smaller more constant flows from springs. You could consider this option if your wet area is:

- a surface flow pathway that flows part of the year;
- a spring fed small flow pathway; or
- a field drain.

Note, any alteration to tufa springs will not be covered under this scheme as they already provide specialised habitat.



One of a set of two ephemeral flow pathway wetlands in the Evenlode Catchment



A set of three flow pathway wetlands in the Evenlode catchment

Examples of ways to create a wetland of this type

- Constructing bunds across the flow pathway, often in combination with excavation of depressions behind
- Promoting diffuse flow by filling in channels/blocking ditches
- Breaking or blocking field drains (potentially in combination with excavation).

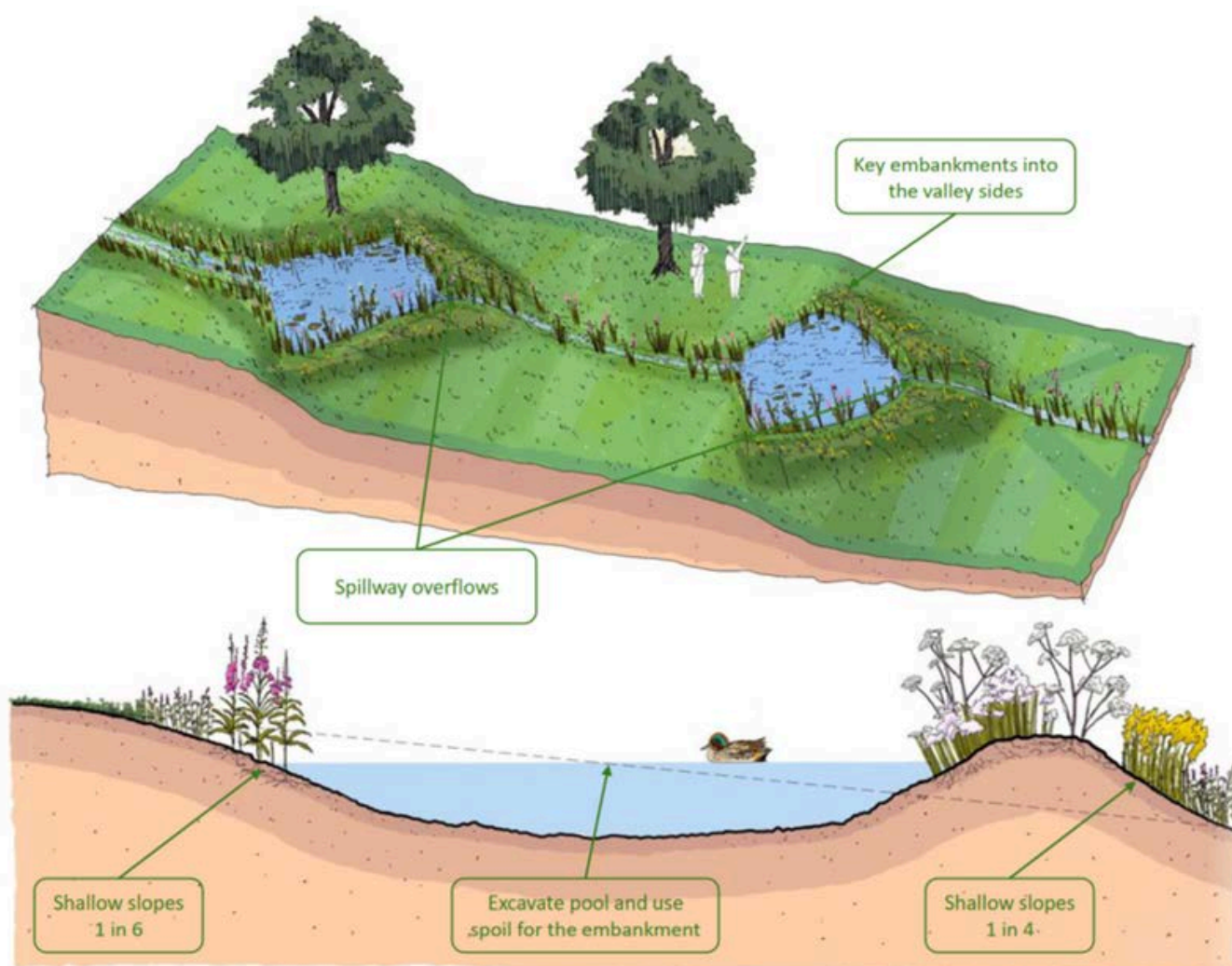
Principles of design

- All excavations should have shallow slopes (1 in 6 or shallower) to best promote the development of a biodiverse wetland. Shallow slopes and variable form provide the best range of habitats.
- Excavations should have a maximum water depth of 1m.
- Embankments should have slopes of 1 in 4 or shallower for stability and to help blend it into the surrounding landscape.
- Maximum embankment height of 1m.
- Any embankments should be keyed into the existing contours of the land.
- If an embankment is constructed, some form of overflow will be required. This could take the form of a spillway, a pipe, a pipe with elbow or a rock infiltration layer through the embankment.
- Water levels in the wetland will change throughout the year and the feature may dry out in summer.

Wetland Types

1 Flow Pathway Wetlands - infographic

Artistic representation of a flow pathway wetland where bunds are constructed across the flow pathway using soil excavated to create a wet area behind



Wetland Types

2 Marginal Area Wetlands

Introduction

This type of wetland is normally associated with areas where water naturally accumulates, particularly after high rainfall, but potentially longer term due to springs. You could consider this option if your wet area is:

- a wet field corner;
- a wet depression; or
- a low-lying area



Wetlands behind field corner bunds in the Evenlode Catchment after heavy rain



Artistic representation of a field corner bund with established wetland

Examples of ways to create a wetland of this type

- Creating bunds in field corners
- Enhancing existing depressions
- Blocking field drains

These can be done individually or in combination

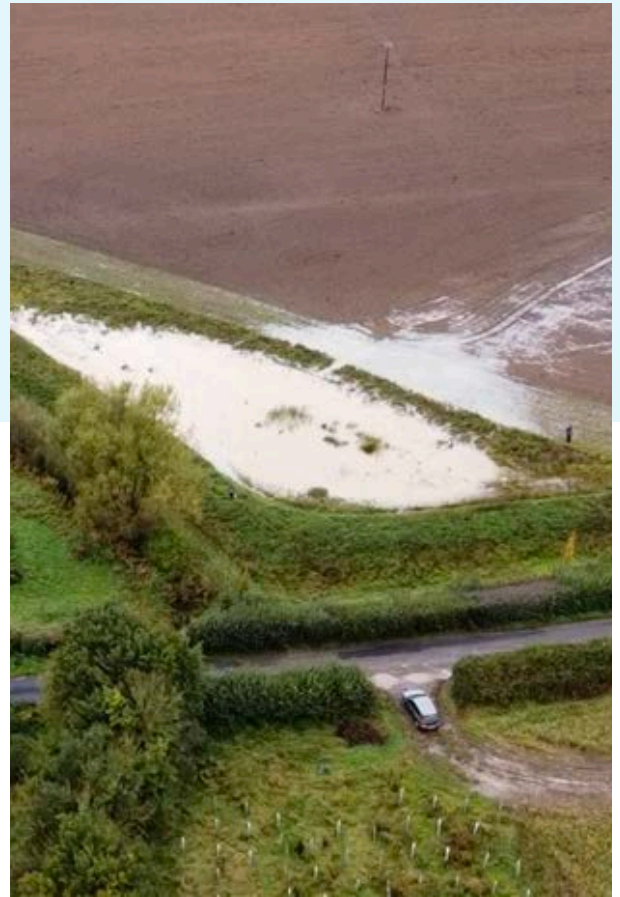
Principles of design

- All excavations should have shallow slopes (1 in 6 or shallower) to best promote the development of a biodiverse wetland. Shallow slopes and variable form provide the best range of habitats.
- Excavations should have a maximum water depth of 1m.
- If possible, excavations should be deeper than seasonal groundwater levels to increase the duration that the feature lies wet.
- Embankments should have slopes of 1 in 4 or shallower for stability and to help blend it into the surrounding landscape.
- Maximum embankment height of 1m.
- If an embankment is constructed, some form of overflow will be required. This could take the form of a spillway, a pipe, a pipe with elbow or a rock infiltration layer through the embankment.
- Water levels in the wetlands will change throughout the year and the feature may dry out in summer.

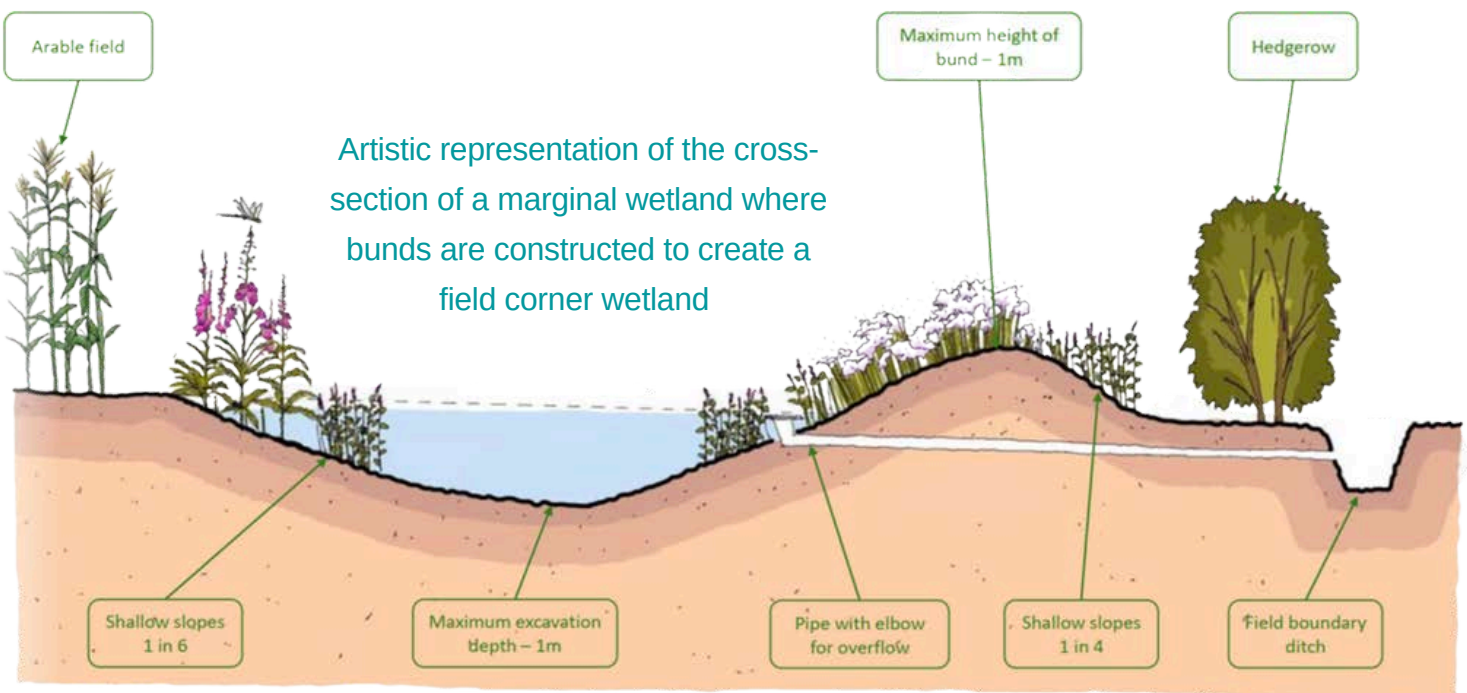
Wetland Types

2 Marginal Wetlands - Infographic

Artistic representation of a field corner bund with established wetland



Artistic representation of the cross-section of a marginal wetland where bunds are constructed to create a field corner wetland



Wetland Types

③ Small River or Stream Wetlands

Introduction

This type of wetland is normally associated with small or medium size channels, ideally with adjacent low-lying land. There will be a regular or constant flow of water. You could consider this option if your wet area is:

- a small stream or brook;
- a ditch with regular or constant flow; or
- a medium sized channel.

Note, any alteration to the River Evenlode is not covered by this scheme. Instead, funding for works to the Evenlode may be available through the ECP's river restoration scheme (ask your local Catchment Advisor for details). A map showing the course of the Evenlode can be found on page 2.



One of a set of two ephemeral flow pathway wetlands in the Evenlode Catchment

Examples of ways to create a wetland of this type

- Constructing backwaters off the channel
- Constructing ponds within the channel – online ponds
- Inserting in-channel measures (see pages 14-16 for more information) to promote connection with the floodplain.



One of a set of two ephemeral flow pathway wetlands in the Evenlode Catchment

Principles of design

- All excavations should have shallow slopes (1 in 6 or shallower) to best promote the development of a biodiverse wetland. Shallow slopes and variable form provide the best range of habitats.
- Excavations should have a maximum water depth of 1.5m, but most should not be deeper than 1m.
- The position of backwaters needs to consider deposition and erosion. Backwaters are best placed on a section of channel between bends in a river where neither erosion nor deposition are likely to be at their highest.



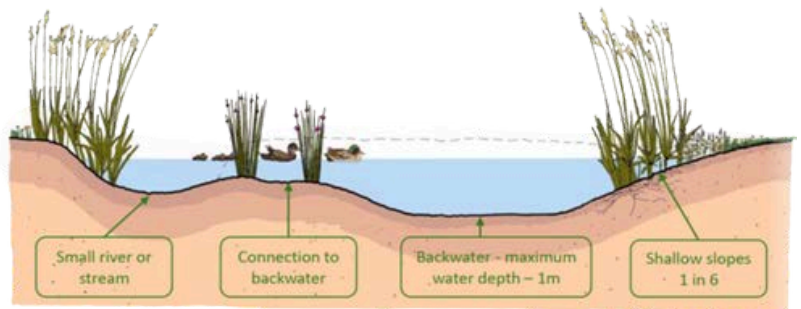
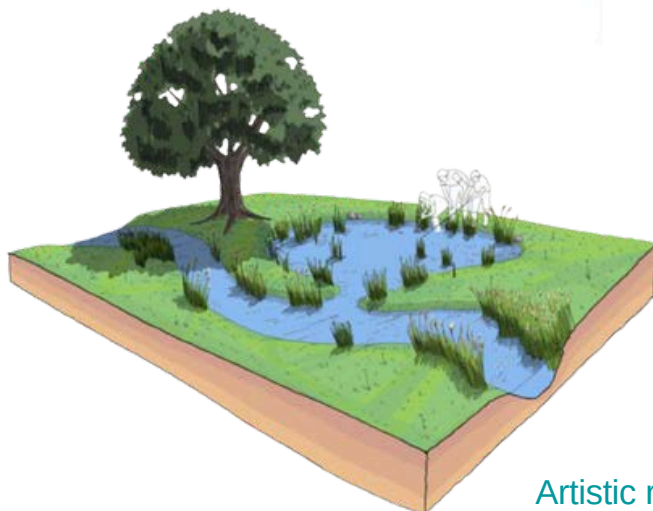
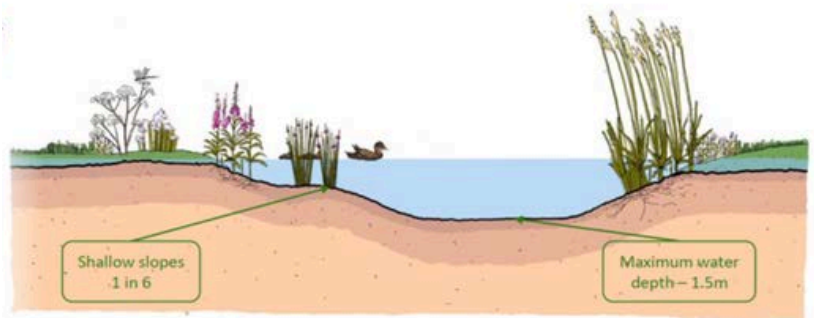
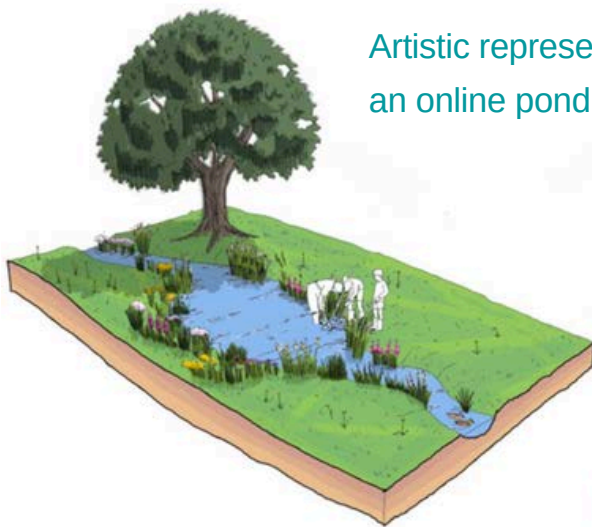
A backwater off a river in the Evenlode Catchment

Wetland Types

③ Small River or Stream Wetlands - Infographic



Artistic representation of an online pond wetland



Artistic representation of a backwater off a stream or small river

Wetland Types

4 Floodplain Wetlands

Introduction

This type of wetland is normally associated with the floodplain of medium or large size channels. You could consider this option if your wet area is:

- the floodplain of a medium or large river regularly inundated in winter; or
- a floodplain with good connection to groundwater

Whilst this scheme can be used to fund creation of wetlands on the floodplain of the Evenlode, it does not cover works on the Evenlode river itself. Alternative funding for works specifically on the river may be available from the ECP's river restoration scheme (ask your local Catchment Advisor for further details).



Ponds and scrapes on the floodplain of the River Thames

Ponds will usually contain water for most or all of the year. Scrapes are shallower features that often dry out during summer months. A combination of both ponds and scrapes provides the greatest variety of habitat and therefore biodiversity.

Principles of design

- Ponds should have variable and shallow slopes (1 in 6 or shallower). These provide the best range of habitats and most biodiverse wetland.
- Ponds should have a maximum water depth of 1.5m, but only occasionally deeper than 1m.
- Where possible, ponds in a floodplain should be fed at least partially by groundwater to maintain some water all year round.
- Scrapes should have shallower slopes of mostly 1 in 10 or shallower to best promote the development of a biodiverse ephemeral wetland.
- Scrapes should have maximum water depth of 0.5m.



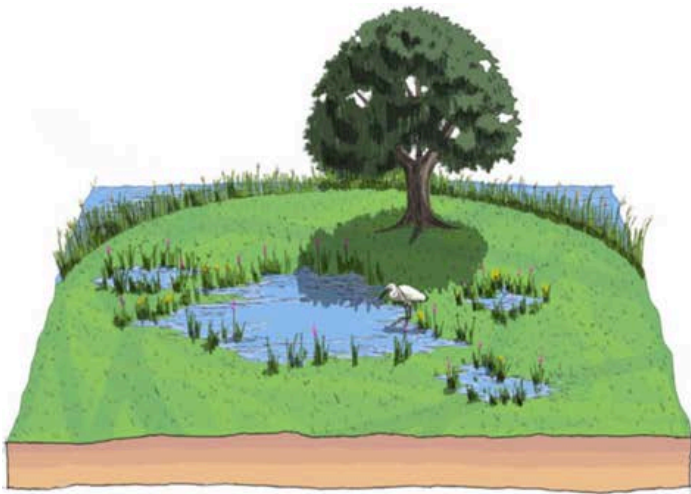
Floodplain pond and scrape in the Evenlode Catchment

Examples of ways to create a wetland of this type

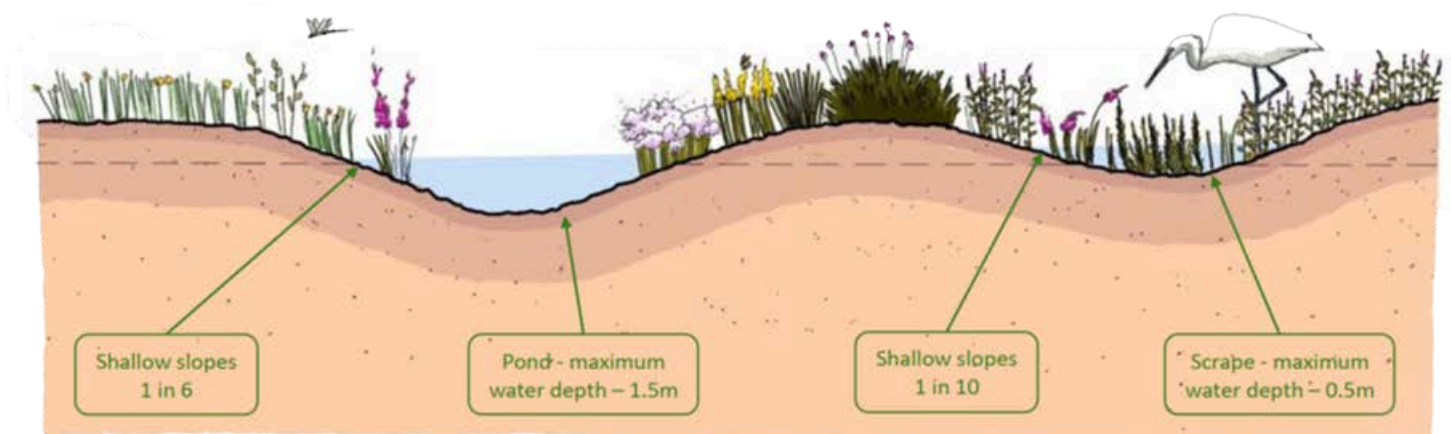
- Constructing ponds
- Constructing scrapes

Wetland Types

4 Floodplain Wetlands - Infographic



Artistic representation of a floodplain wetland, including both ponds and scrapes



In-Channel & Flow Pathway Measures

A number of different types of in-channel structures exist. The different types are based on their location within a river catchment and three of them can be applied for as part of this scheme

a) Overland Leaky Barrier

Overland leaky barriers are discrete measures that are strategically located and fixed on a floodplain or preferential flow pathway to intercept and temporarily store water. They are typically constructed from wood, including whole tree trunks, laid perpendicular to the flow pathway.

They are designed to slow and attenuate the flow of water by roughening the ground surface and providing a barrier that acts to increase the time it takes water to move downstream.



b) In-Channel Leaky Barrier

In-channel leaky barriers are designed to temporarily impound and hold back flood water within the channel. The water then leaks away once the flood peak has passed.

They are constructed in small permanently, or intermittently, flowing channels that are 2 - 3m wide, through the placement and securing of woody material such as sections of tree trunks or large branches.

Leaky barriers can be installed and secured individually, or as a series of barriers with the exact design and location dependent on factors such as channel form, flow character and proximity to local assets (bridges/culverts).



c) Headwater Channel Woody Bundles

Headwater channel woody bundles are of a similar concept to in-channel leaky barriers. However, they are more typically associated with temporarily (ephemeral) flowing channels/gullies in the upper catchment and only become active during or following rainfall events. The purpose of these measures is to roughen the flow route within temporarily flowing narrow channels/gullies.



More information on each one of these measures is in the following pages

In-Channel & Flow Pathway Measures

a) Overland Leaky Barrier

Overland Leaky Barrier Summary

- Discrete
- Strategically located and fixed to intercept and temporarily store water
- Typically constructed from wood, including whole tree trunks
- Laid perpendicular to the flow pathway
- Roughens the ground surface to slow and attenuate the water flow
- Increases the time it takes water to move downstream

Location Suitability

Overland leaky barriers can be used in both lowland and upland settings. Key locations may be within floodplain woodland, where there are local sources of materials for ease of construction and where measures will complement the environmental setting.

Complimentary Measures

In-channel leaky barriers may be used in the adjacent watercourse to promote water-spill from the channel on to the floodplain where it can be attenuated by overland leaky barriers.

Overland leaky barriers can sometimes be used in the creation of marginal area or flow pathway wetlands.

Considerations

Locally available trees should be used wherever possible, which will reduce costs of sourcing and transportation of materials.

Protected species in the area may constrain implementation and the use/felling of local trees is likely to trigger the need for appropriate protected species surveys.



Overland leaky barrier on the upper Pip Brook NFM scheme, Dorking, Surrey (© Jay Neale)

Consideration of construction locations and the requirement for fixings is needed where there is risk of blockages to downstream structures should wood become mobile.

Agricultural and other Benefits

Agricultural and other Benefits

Overland leaky barriers may provide valuable habitat for plant and animal species. The provision of wood habitat and increased wetting of the surface can act to improve biodiversity in the area.

Floodplain surface erosion and subsequent sediment transport may be reduced as a result of lowered floodplain flow velocity.

In-Channel & Flow Pathway Measures

b) In-Channel Leaky Barriers

In-Channel Leaky Barriers Summary

- Constructed in small 2-3m wide, flowing channels
- Constructed from woody material e.g. tree trunks or large branches
- Can be individual or part of a series
- Designed to temporarily impound and hold back flood water which then leaks away
- Location is dependent on the channel features

Location Suitability

In-channel leaky barriers are best suited to watercourses in locations where the temporary slowing and storage of flood waters will not create additional flooding issues. In-channel leaky barriers shall not be installed within 30 times the channel width of a structure (e.g., culverts, outfalls or bridges) and should always be anchored properly.

Implementing in wooded areas means that materials can be sourced locally to reduce cost and effort required to construct. Leaky barriers can be particularly effective in channels that have been historically straightened and are very responsive to rainfall events.

Complimentary Measures

In-channel barriers can be used to back-up flow or push water out onto the floodplain. They can sometimes be used in this way when creating floodplain wetlands, small river or stream wetlands or flow pathway wetlands.

Considerations

Protected species in the area may constrain implementation and the use/felling of local trees is



Overland leaky barrier on the upper Pip Brook NFM scheme, Dorking, Surrey (© Jay Neale)

likely to trigger the need for appropriate protected species surveys.

Consideration of construction locations and the requirement for fixings is needed where there is risk of blockages to downstream structures should wood become mobile.

The height and positioning of the barrier requires careful consideration as to not affect flood risk, or negatively impact low flows, impede fish passage or cause damage to local habitats/species.

Agricultural and other Benefits

In-channel leaky barriers aim to strategically flood certain areas to reduce localised flooding, possibly within farm holdings or other land uses and to provide temporary wetland habitat.

These measures can trap sediment and large debris and therefore, improve local water quality and reduce undesirable blockages downstream.

In-channel leaky barriers can vary flow conditions within the channel, creating additional benefit to fish, aquatic mammals, plants and invertebrates, increasing biodiversity and habitat provisions.

In-Channel & Flow Pathway Measures



Headwater Channel Woody Bundles

Headwater Wood Bundles Summary

- Similar to in-channel leaky barriers
- Only become active during rainfall events
- Roughen the flow route
- Set within temporarily flowing, narrow channels/gullies
- Mimic naturally occurring woody accumulations to cause blockages
- Installing multiple, in sequence, maximizes effectiveness

Location Suitability

Since temporarily flowing channels/gullies are targeted, these measures are typically located in the upper catchment. They are ideally located within wooded headwater sections that lie naturally wet and are periodically flooded. Implementing in wooded areas means that materials can be sourced locally to reduce cost and effort required to construct.

Bundles are typically designed and fixed where necessary to mimic naturally occurring woody accumulations that cause blockages within a catchment headwater setting. Multiple bundles can be installed in sequence to maximise effectiveness, acting to slow smaller volumes of water per feature, rather than store a large amount of water behind a single feature.

Complimentary Measures

Additional attenuation and storage may be provided in combination with overland leaky barriers (see above). **This combination of measures can be used in the creation of flow pathway wetlands.** Downstream, in permanent



Headwater channel woody bundles in wooded valley (© Dave-Gasca-Tucker)

flowing sections, this measure can be replaced by in-channel leaky barriers.

Considerations

Protected species in the area may constrain implementation and the use/felling of local trees is likely to trigger the need for appropriate protected species surveys. Re-use of fallen trees should be prioritised over fresh felling where there is an abundant local source.

Consideration of the risk of wood mobilisation and the requirement for fixings is needed where there is risk of blockages to downstream structures associated with the measure.

Agricultural and other Benefits

Through slowing the flow and encouraging spill of water to the floodplain, downstream flows can be reduced and may reduce localised flooding, potentially within farm holdings. The reduction in flow velocity may also reduce erosion and gullying within the headwaters.

Woody bundles may act as a sediment barrier, reducing sediment transport into channels downstream, which may in turn increase water quality. These bundles may also provide refuge for wildlife and provide habitat and increased local biodiversity.

Final Checks

There are other checks you should undertake before submitting your application to ensure that you can construct your wetland safely and without undue risk to the environment. These checks include (but are not limited to):



Field corner bund wetland in the Evenlode Catchment

Flood zone check

A service that allows you to find out which flood zone your wetland creation site is located in (<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>).

Utility check

To identify and locate any buried utilities on a proposed site such as electricity cables, gas pipes, water mains, fibre-optic cables and sewers. A utility search should be done prior to undertaking any earthworks.

Archaeology check

To identify any buried historical artefacts. An archaeology check should be done prior to undertaking any earthworks.

Benefits Assessment

Whilst reviewing your application we will make an assessment of the benefits generated by your proposal.

We would also like to monitor your wetland to better understand the benefits generated by the scheme. Your application includes a question on whether you would be willing to help monitor your scheme.

The monitoring techniques we use will be dependent on the type of wetland you have constructed.

We would like to collect data on the following, where possible:

- **size of wetland**
- **type of wetland**
- **colonising vegetation**
- **colonising insects**
- **colonising birds**
- **changes to water quality**

Apply and Find Out More

You can find everything you need to make an application to the Evenlode Wetland Creation Grant Scheme under the Resources section of our website.

In particular, you will find the following key items:

- Application form
- A template of the agreement

You will need to enter into an agreement to participate in the scheme

If you need any assistance preparing or making an application to the scheme, please contact Ann Berkeley at the ECP or your local Catchment Advisor, Tom Hall.



CONTACT DETAILS

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