

Adur Adaptation Project

The Adur Adaptation Project is an exciting, ten-year, collaboration between the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust and Environment Agency, aiming to inspire a partnership approach to working with natural processes to improve the condition and function of the River Adur. The core objectives of the project are, through the use of Nature Based Solutions, to;

- Reduce the impact of flooding to property and infrastructure
- Achieve a 10% reduction in peak flows during heavy rainfall
- Create drought resilience through increasing annual base flow recharge
- Enhance the river and floodplain environment through diversifying in-channel and riparian habitats.
- Deliver tangible improvements to water quality through alterations to land management and the creation of integrated constructed wetlands.
- Create a water environment more resilient to the impacts of climate change

Since 2021, the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust have been working closely with landowners, farmers, and communities to identify where flooding and ‘wet-spots’ occur throughout the River Adur Catchment. This collaborative approach has identified numerous opportunities for Natural Flood Management (NFM) initiatives that could help alleviate flood risk to the most vulnerable properties in the area. Through this effort and local support, the Adur Adaptation Project has begun.

As part of the project, we’ll be installing a monitoring program to record river flows, assisting the project and its partners in understanding how the river responds to different rainfall events and current river flow conditions, allowing us to gauge the effectiveness the project. Combined with our modelling of the most appropriate locations for NFM projects we are ready to start making the Adur catchment less vulnerable to climate change.

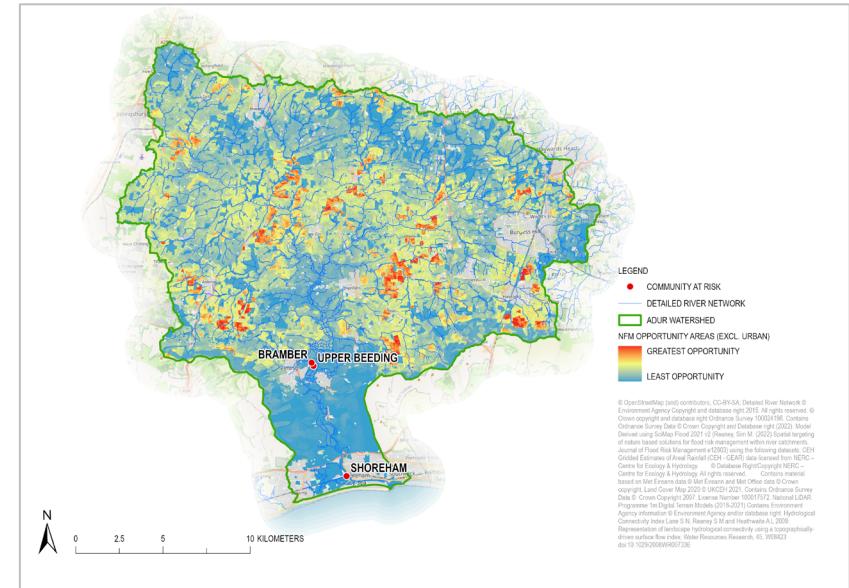


Working With Natural Processes

Working with natural processes such as the implementation of NFM techniques is based on the principle of working with the river system and its floodplains to slow and store water in a more natural way. This can also provide multiple benefits to landowners, farmers, communities, and wildlife. We will be taking a strategic approach, based on the outputs of computer modelling and hydrological monitoring, to ensure the right intervention in the right place.

Examples of NFM techniques include:

- Introducing leaky woody dams to slow the flow and create in-channel habitat.
- Introducing wetlands, ponds, and scrapes in the floodplain to provide increased water storage, providing both flood and drought resilience.
- Seeking opportunities to create floodplain woodland or reinstate historic cross-slope hedgerows, both known to benefit flood risk management.
- Supporting improvements to soil structure and rebuilding levels of organic matter to increase landscape permeability.
- Modifying flood embankments to improve channel diversity, water holding capacity and/or re-connecting rivers with their floodplains.
- Creating Urban Wetlands to reduce the impact of runoff, reducing localised flooding and pollutants entering the river.



Results of opportunity mapping underpin the development of suitable locations to install NFM.



Previous Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust NFM projects include the creation of urban wetlands (left), installation of leaky dams (centre) and planting cross slope hedgerows (right).



Large capital projects such as the Cockshut Restoration (Lewes Brooks) reduce peak flows to Lewes by 40 minutes, provide biodiversity benefits and create functional floodplains.

Get Involved

The Adur Adaptation Project is leading the way in reducing climate vulnerability to the waterways of the River Adur, taking an approach which will provide resilience against both increased rainfall and periods of drought, improving carbon retention and sequestration within the landscape, and providing high quality habitat for a range of wildlife.

There are many ways to get involved in the project, and we are always interested in hearing from any organisation or individual who wants to support our work.

Become a Partner

We are stronger together and supporting this established project will enable faster action across the catchment, we already have more projects to deliver than the funding currently secured.

Free Landowner Advice

If you own land in the River Adur catchment we can provide advice, fund projects which meet our aims and, where appropriate undertake baseline surveys for Biodiversity Net Gain and assist with Stewardship options.

Volunteer on Practical Works

Many of our projects are suitable for volunteers of all ages and abilities. Connecting with nature and being part of the solution to the pressures on our rivers is hugely rewarding.

Impart Some Wisdom

Our success is built on co-design and delivery with communities and landowners. No one knows the river like those who live there and we are delighted to learn more from the experiences of those who live, work or play in the catchment.

Learn About NFM

We are always delighted to attend events, provide informative talks and raise awareness of the benefits of Working with Natural Processes. If your community would like to find out more about the project and the work of the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust please contact us.

To find out more about the project and how you can support our work please contact Tara Dawson, tara.dawson@oart.org.uk