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Stowlangtoft River Restoration

As part of Anglian Water's broader commitment to addressing habitat degradation and improving river conditions, Salix began work on the Stowlangtoft River Restoration project.



Situated on the picturesque Stowlangtoft Estate in Suffolk, this 6-week project, involved numerous ecological interventions aimed at restoring the river's health and functionality.

The objective was to enhance low-flow conditions and revitalise the river's ecological and hydraulic dynamics through a series of innovative measures.

www.salixrw.com
Email: info@salixrw.com
Tel: 0330 002 1788

Salix

Case Study

Stowlangtoft River Restoration

Brushwood berms were constructed within the channel to narrow its width, creating a more sinuous flow and increasing flow diversity. Tree hinging, achieved by selectively cutting and bending trees, reduced excessive shading, promoted vegetation growth, and helped stabilised the banks. Gravels were introduced to create riffle-pool sequences, improving habitats for aquatic invertebrates and fish. To improve floodplain connectivity, riverbanks were regraded and reshaped enabling the river to interact more naturally with its surroundings. Additionally, large woody structures were incorporated to introduce structural diversity, support geomorphic processes, and provide critical refuges and habitat for wildlife.



The programme required the set-up of separate compounds due to land access constraints, with progress advancing downstream to upstream to accommodate landowner agreements. Berm construction and gravel installation were carried out simultaneously, optimising time and resources.



Although ecologists identified potential water vole activity, resulting in temporary work stoppages and exclusion zones, the project was completed on time and within budget. Further surveys confirmed no active vole presence, allowing the team to resume work and make up lost time without schedule impacts. Further benefits will be seen over time as the in-channel and riparian features establish, altering river dynamics and improving biodiversity.

