

Go With The Flow

Improving SSSI river condition

3 key changes you can make to help rivers thrive:

Create wildlife rich corridors

2

Manage a corridor of water loving plants with some trees like willows, alder and aspen along your watercourse by light grazing or sensitive cutting. The wider the better. This is important as riparian habitats:

- Provide shelter and food for many animals including insects, fish and other wildlife including otters and bats.
- Provide shade helping to keep water temperatures cool in hot weather & help to absorb extra water and mitigate flood risk (especially in the headwaters).
- Natural vegetation filters out nutrients, pesticides, and sediments before they reach the river.

Help is available to improve SSSI river condition

There is lots of help available to achieve these three actions through Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier including the following options:

- 6m to 24m 3-dimensional (3D) buffer strips (CSW 21)
- Manage riparian and water edge habitats (CSW 25)
- Enhance floodplain storage supplement (CSW 26)
- Make room for the river to move (CSW12)
- Connect river and floodplain habitats (CSW 22)

Contact the protected sites mailbox today
ProtectedSites@naturalengland.org.uk

Leave fallen living trees and deadwood in the water

1

This benefits both the environment and your land by:

- Creating areas of faster and slower flowing water including pools. This creates fantastic habitat for fish and invertebrates to thrive.
- Trees in rivers can help to slow the flow during flood events, helping to reduce the flood peak.
- Leaving fallen trees rooted into the bank can help to retain bank stability whilst creating valuable habitats such as otter holts.

Reduce nutrient losses from your land

3

Reducing nutrient losses is one of the most important actions for restoring healthy rivers and has multiple benefits for your farm:

- Apply fertilisers and manures according to soil and crop requirements using nutrient management planning and soil testing.
- Reduce soil erosion and runoff by improving soil health, maintaining ground cover and managing cultivation on vulnerable land.
- Store, transport and apply manures responsibly, ensuring nutrients are used where they are needed, avoiding nutrient applications when conditions are unsuitable.

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