

The future of Cheshire's flood risk management

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We are the Environment Agency. It's our job to look after your environment and make it a better place – for you, and for future generations.

The Environment Agency. Out there, making your environment a better place.

Gowy Meadows



Introduction

- ➔ Current flood risk management
 - ➔ Asset and incident management
- ➔ Biodiversity – key aims
 - ➔ Can they work together?
- ➔ Risk and what this means in Cheshire
- ➔ The sustainable future of flood risk management

Strimming along a watercourse



Flood risk management - assets

- ➔ We build and repair flood defences
- ➔ Our flood defences are managed – pumping stations, sluice gates
- ➔ We maintain rivers and existing flood defences – before and during heavy rainfall
- ➔ Our field teams mow flood banks, strim, de-weed, and de-silt rivers to reduce flood risk
- ➔ We keep debris screens clear

Debris Screen, River Croco



Flood risk management - incidents

- ➔ Our modelling and monitoring helps us see where it might flood
- ➔ We warn those who have signed up to our flood warning service
- ➔ Field teams are out and about clearing defences and responding to reports
- ➔ We operate our flood defences
- ➔ We carry out exercises to improve how we respond in a flood

Ship Street Course, Frodsham Pump House



Biodiversity – our key aims

- ➔ We have a lead role for looking after the needs of a number of priority species and habitats included in the UK biodiversity Action Plan
- ➔ Many of our rivers are approaching the same levels of cleanliness present before the industrial revolution
- ➔ Our wildlife is still under threat, and climate change is adding to these pressures
- ➔ The Agency supports the adoption of an ecosystem approach

Good river habitat



Biodiversity – does this cause conflict?

- ➔ Our flood risk management operations may not be compatible with the best solution for promoting wildlife and biodiversity
- ➔ Field, flood and biodiversity teams work closely together and with partner organisations to ensure we manage both aims
- ➔ River profiles show us what we can do safely
- ➔ We haven't always got it just right but we're making great improvements

Channel de-weeding



Risk and rural retreat

- ➔ How do we define flood risk?
- ➔ Catchment flood management plans
- ➔ What this means for (most of) Cheshire
 - ➔ Need for better engagement with communities
- ➔ How we target limited government funding
- ➔ Protection of people and properties
- ➔ Looking for alternatives

Working with nature

- ➔ Climate change means we can expect more severe storms and wetter winters
- ➔ The best way to reduce the risk of flooding is to focus on ways that work with nature
- ➔ We need to encourage and promote alternative approaches to managing flood risk
- ➔ Examples of stewardship and wetland creation
- ➔ Working with others

Important aquatic species



And I leave you with the thought...

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
lot,

Nothing is going to get better. It's not."

Dr. Seuss, from *The Lorax*