
Culm Grassland Natural Flood Management Project

This four-year project across North Devon is helping us to understand, communicate and increase the flood risk and wildlife benefits that Culm grasslands bring to north Devon's communities.



A large proportion of the UK's nationally important Culm grasslands are found in the Torridge, Taw, Tamar and Exe river catchments. Despite significant conservation efforts, Culm grassland is still under threat, and the habitat is fragmented across a landscape where farming continues to intensify. However, understanding is increasing about the benefits of Culm grassland to society, for wildlife, water management, carbon storage and more.

About the project

The Culm Grassland Natural Flood Management Project is led by Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT), supported and funded by the Environment Agency (EA), Devon County Council (DCC) and the European Union through the Interreg 2 Seas Triple C project. Delivery is supported by a partnership of EA, DCC, University of Exeter and Natural England. The project started in October 2016 and runs to September 2020.

Project aims

1. Learn more about how Culm grassland and wet grassland can help to hold and release water in catchments
2. Increase everyone's understanding about the value of Culm grassland
3. Work with landowners to protect, restore and re-create Culm grassland sites across north Devon
4. Share our learning with others across the South West, UK and Europe

Project progress

Since the start of the project our advisors have made over 550 farm visits, offering advice to landowners of 150 separate holdings. DWT can provide the following services for owners of Culm grassland:

- Habitat management advice;
- Assistance with Countryside Stewardship applications (both Mid Tier and Higher Tier);
- Soft rush topping / weed wiping on Culm grassland;
- Assistance with swaling purple moor-grass dominated Culm grassland;
- We have a small capital grant budget to assist with fencing, installing troughs or clearing scrub;
- Our volunteer group can assist with scrub clearance and species surveys.



This project is part of the Northern Devon Nature Improvement Area Programme

Devon Wildlife Trust, Cookworthy Forest Centre, Beaworthy, Devon EX21 5UX.

Tel: (01409) 221823 E-mail: contactus@devonwildlifetrust.org

Web site: www.devonwildlifetrust.org Registered charity, no 213224.

Culm Grassland Natural Flood Management Project



Devon
Wildlife Trust

To date the project team has helped bring over 300 ha of Culm grassland under positive management and created 57 ha of new species-rich grassland. Overall the project has had a direct positive influence on around 30 km of river. We have held eight training events to raise awareness and understanding of various aspects of Culm grassland management and wildlife value.

Our PhD student, Nicola, has also been busy. Over the summer she installed 55 dip-wells across 11 fields to monitor water storage potential of different grassland types. Recently she has been using a rainfall simulator to increase understanding of how Culm grassland reacts to heavy rainfall events (something we're familiar with here in Devon!), and how this response differs in improved pastures. We look forward to learning about her findings at our upcoming research group meeting.

Get involved!

Are you interested in managing Culm Grassland or re-creating species rich wet grassland on your land? Would you like to know more about any aspect of the Culm Grassland project, either informally or on a training day? Would you be interested in volunteering to help manage and restore this valuable habitat? **Then get in touch! Email tparsons@devonwildlifetrust.org or ssmallwood@devonwildlifetrust.org or call 01409 221823.** We look forward to hearing from you.



This project is part of the Northern Devon Nature Improvement Area Programme

Devon Wildlife Trust, Cookworthy Forest Centre, Beaworthy, Devon EX21 5UX.

Tel: (01409) 221823 E-mail: contactus@devonwildlifetrust.org

Web site: www.devonwildlifetrust.org Registered charity, no 213224.