



Project Overview: This project seeks to create several new habitats—including two new wetland lagoons—resulting in a total of four wetland “cells”. The cells will be managed by controlling water levels in a rotational manner that mimics the historic usage of the site by MSSCo. Each cell will be operating at one of the different stages of the lifecycle of a wetland, thus creating a site rich in habitat diversity, including scrub, willow, wet scrub woodland, reedbeds and open water.

Project lead organisation and other organisations involved: Woolston Eyes Conservation Group

Project Location: Woolston Eyes

Project dates: June 2017, ongoing

Project Outputs

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
40 hectares dynamic wetland	40ha	40 ha	Project over-run means that full water levels won't be achieved till winter 2022/23
2 wetland lagoons	2	2	2 x 20 ha lagoons created, the second of which will be finished this autumn.
2 new hides created	2	1	£22,000 raised for an elevated viewing platform which is now in place. Future fund-raising continuing for a second hide.
2 existing hides refurbished	2	1	1 hide repaired and now in use.
Site signage installed	5	1	Other signs planned to be in place before completion in the autumn of 2022
Improved visitor trails and access	2	1	One visitor path opened and made safe, another planned before completion in autumn 2022
Number of training workshops delivered	5	5	Training sessions on various wildlife surveying techniques successfully delivered.
Number of people attending workshops	30	30	Positive feedback received
Number of volunteers engaged	8	8	Involved in weekly habitat management days
Number of volunteer days delivered	400	400	
Additional outputs delivered			

Add rows as necessary...			
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Reflecting on the last 5 years, what's the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Carbon Landscape?

The outstanding highlight of our project has been seeing this huge new wetland nature reserve slowly emerge in an area which was previously infested with Giant Hogweed and ageing Willow scrub. It is probably the largest new wetland to be created recently in the north of England and is already attracting many hundreds of water-birds, including Red Listed species such as Black-necked Grebe and Pochard, as well as large numbers of Odonata and Amphibians.

What difference has this project made to the cultural and natural heritage of Carbon Landscape?

The project has maximised the wildlife potential of this post-industrial landscape. The Mersey Valley was, prior to the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, predominantly an area of wetland habitat, with flood plains, fen and mossland. During the early years of the Woolston Deposit Grounds, which serve to receive dredgings from the Ship Canal, a highly productive wetland habitat was created as a by-product. This habitat has slowly declined in value over the past thirty years as the Ship Canal dredging regime has reduced. The project has now restored the habitat to a condition which will exceed its heyday back in the 1970s and 80s.

What difference has this project made to people?

The project will, over time, continue to introduce local people to the benefits of an understanding and enjoyment of the kind of wetland wildlife which would have proliferated in the Mersey Valley prior to the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal. The health benefits of an engagement with nature and the outdoors are well-documented. Through volunteering and engagement with a variety of structured wildlife surveys, local people will continue to be offered the opportunity for developing specific skills in these areas, as well as connecting with an important local resource. A number of our previous volunteers have gone on to enjoy outstanding careers in the field of conservation.

Useful Links

www.woolstoneyes.com

Future Plans and Legacy

Formal launch of the project after completion – date yet to be decided. Stewardship funding of £40,000 already obtained for developing the adjacent flooded woodland areas as suitable habitat for our important population of Red-listed Willow Tits. Stewardship funding £140,000 already obtained to ensure the wetland is maintained in optimum condition.

Lessons learned?

The value of partnership between voluntary/statutory/commercial sectors has been the strength of this project. It is the combination of skills and expertise from The Peel Ports, RSPB, Natural England, Carbon Landscape allied to the lead role of our own local group, the Woolston Eyes Conservation Group which has brought this large-scale project to fruition.

Photographic Evidence

Insert and scale up to 4 pictures, with brief description



View over Woolston Eyes No.4 bed prior to start of project



Woolston No.4 bed Western Cell under development in April 2021



Diggers at dawn completing the Western Cell on No.4 bed in March 2022



The new Elevated Viewing Platform on No.4 bed in March 2022

Funding Partners



Woolston Eyes Conservation Group

Peel Ports

RSPB

Natural England

For examples of this approach from other LP Schemes see:

<https://ioahc.net/end-of-project-report-tp06/>

<https://ioahc.net/end-of-project-report-tp03/>

<https://www.coigach-assynt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Suilven-Path-CALLP-Project-Report.pdf>