

CREEKSIDE RETREAT BACKWATER PROJECT, MORGAN SINDALL



BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT OVERVIEW

The Creekside project was initiated to offset disruption and temporary landtake of the Thames sea bed during piling work and culvert creation for the Lee Tunnel Project.

Piling works can affect fish breeding/migration along with invertebrate ecosystems, therefore the creation of an intertidal habitat on Barking Creek (a tributary of the River Thames) would offer an alternative and mitigate biodiversity and individual losses. The Creekside was specifically designed with biodiversity and habitat creation in mind.

The area was densely populated with Japanese Knotweed, an invasive and detrimental species to our indigenous ecology. As such, it was removed in line with a Knotweed management plan. Knotweed was placed in a secure treatment area which is now under specific control and should be eradicated by 2016.

Vegetation clearance was done alongside ecologists, this ensured that provisions were made for any animal that may have been disturbed, namely snakes which had been recorded in the area. Shrub and other material were saved from the site clearance to make hibernacula to re-house any snakes found. Even though none were seen during this work, the hibernacula were retained on site to increase wildlife habitats.

Once the 2000m² area had been graded to a suitable depth – designed to allow the water to flow with the tide, 1.2m posts were driven in for stability. Then specially designed bundles of twigs and sticks were wound around the protruding 0.3m of the posts. These bundles offer hundreds of tiny habitats for invertebrates which promotes a food source for juvenile fish and enhances the biodiversity in the area.

Fact box

Company name:
Morgan Sindall (MVB JV)

Project name:
Creekside Retreat Backwater Project

Location:
Barking Creek, London

Biodiversity enhancement:

- Hibernacula
- Habitat for juvenile fish and invertebrates
- Reduction and control of invasive species

Size:
2000m²

Cost:
£200,000

Tips:
Information from London Wildlife Trust should be used to improve the design of these habitats. If not maintained they have previously been known to silt up, thereby reducing the usability of the area.

Year completed:
2013

Categories:

- Large scale permanent

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT OVERVIEW *(cont.)*

The area has been sampled and analysis carried out on the fish / invertebrate population which MVB JV organised electively with Kings College London. The hope was to continue this monitoring to allow a PhD student to study the area over four years to report species that had successfully colonised / used / bred in the area.

The funding was declined by NERC, however the area will continue to be monitored by the London Wildlife Trust.

Independent analysis demonstrated that the area, one year after creation, was being used by a range of species of fish and invertebrates and was the most biodiverse intertidal habitat compared with two similar schemes in the local area.

Pictures of the enhancement



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