# River Keekle Restoration Project - Whitehaven, West Cumbria

This project aimed to restore the River Keekle near Whitehaven in Cumbria, where damage over several decades was creating potential for dire environmental repercussions.

In the 1990s, mine spoil from nearby coal mining was buried across the site and 2.5km of the river lined with a plastic liner. Unfortunately, this liner had become heavily degraded, shedding plastic particles and creating a risk of downstream blockages and flooding, as well as contamination from heavy metals and chemicals. This contamination issue was not only a concern for Keekle, but also the River Ehen which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation.

The project has been a huge success. The plastic liner was removed and recycled. With extra stone to replace the plastic, as well as removing collapsed bed-check weirs and debris, the West Cumbria Rivers Trust has been able to directly improve 2.5km of the river and open up access of a further 4km upstream for fish that were previously prevented from migrating due to plastic debris. This has improved the habitats of salmon, trout, and other fish species, as well as reducing plastic pollution and flood risk.

# Delamere Wetland Project, Cheshire

- The aim of this project was to improve four sites across the rural Delamere landscape that were suffering from poor water quality, invasive species, and the drying out of the peat habitat. Thanks to the grant, Cheshire Wildlife Trust were able to employ several techniques to create and restore water-dependent habitats and ecosystems, including creation of reedbeds to alleviate diffuse pollution, and removal of non-native invasive species such as Japanese knotweed.

- Invasive species were controlled across 1,050m of watercourse, water quality was improved across 21ha, and 0.36ha of new fen and mere habitat was created. There have also been wider benefits of natural flood management and native species diversity, as well recreational activities and increased local environmental engagement.