

This project looked at improving habitats within Nobles Green Ditch which is a tributary of the River Roach. The section of river covered by this project runs through Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park in Rochford and the land is owned by Rochford Council.



Before the wood was installed

With the help of local volunteers from the Friends of Cherry Orchard Park, Essex Wildlife Trust River Wardens, other Essex Wildlife Trust volunteers and Staff and the Catchment Manager from the Environment Agency, woody debris was installed into the river in 6 locations. As well as creating additional in-channel habitat it is hoped that the woody debris will also help to reduce the silt levels in the channel. Some bankside management was also undertaken to remove overhanging vegetation, this will reduce shading and allow more in-channel vegetation to develop.



Installing the wooden pegs to keep the woody debris in place

The woody debris was secured into the bank and wooden pegs were also secured into the river bed to prevent it from being washed downstream during fast flows. See the pictures opposite to see how they look within the channel.



Securing the pegs in place with wire

The wood will change the flow dynamics within the channel, speeding up the flow as the water is diverted around the obstacle and depositing any silt behind the obstacle. The fast flows will increase oxygen levels in the water and help to expose any covered gravels and also clean any that are already exposed. Gravels and well oxygenated water are great fish spawning sites and also ideal habitat for many in-channel invertebrates. The change in flow dynamics will also help small pools to develop; this again is great habitat for some aquatic species so the biodiversity potential is increased within the channel.



Cutting the wooden pegs to size

This project was possible thanks to funding from Essex and Suffolk Water's Branch Out fund, local volunteers who helped us with the ground works and support from various people within the Environment Agency so we would like to thank them all for their support.

Photos courtesy of Samantha Dyer.



The channel now