

# Sensitive techniques for managing vegetation (beds and banks)

## Project Summary

**Title:** River Pinn Blue Ribbon Network Enhancements

**Location:** River Pinn, London Borough of Hillingdon, England

**Technique:** Hand-picking and manual clearance

**Cost of technique:** ££

**Overall cost of scheme:** £££

**Benefits:** £££

**Dates:** 2008 - 2013

## Mitigation Measure(s)

Retain and improve existing water's edge and bankside habitats in modified watercourses  
Sensitive techniques for managing vegetation (beds and banks)

## How it was delivered

Delivered by: London Borough of Hillingdon, with funding from the Big Green Fund, Section 106 Agreement, and Heritage Lottery Fund  
Partners: Groundwork Thames Valley, Friends of Eastcote House Gardens, Blue Sky Social Enterprise



Friends of Eastcote House Gardens planting resistant Elm trees

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## Background / Issues

Long Meadow is part of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and consists of semi-improved neutral grassland which is managed as a hay meadow, a strip of amenity grassland with a mosaic of copses, scattered trees and scrub alongside the River Pinn and High Road Eastcote.

The London Borough of Hillingdon in partnership with Groundwork Thames Valley and community groups / volunteers aimed to enhance the River Pinn as a strategic river corridor and a key part of the local Blue Ribbon Network. This entails river restoration as well as regular vegetation clearance, with the aim of achieving a number of biodiversity and environmental benefits.



(1) The River Pinn 1846-1901; (2) The River Pinn prior to scheme  
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## Step-by-step

The River Pinn Volunteers have been involved in managing the River Pinn on a monthly basis since 2008. This work includes:

- Scrub management via hand picking adjacent to pathways.
- Removal of Himalayan balsam from river banks through supervised manual clearance.

The current project involves the work of a range of volunteers groups including River Pinn Volunteers, Countryside Conservation Volunteers, Friends of Eastcote House Gardens and local charity Groundwork Thames Valley. Blue Sky, a social enterprise organisation which employs ex-offenders also works alongside the volunteers. Community groups participate in delivery of the project through:

- Wetland planting along the stretches of restored river.
- Monitoring surveys.
- Scrub management, including bramble clearance.

A 5 year management plan for Long Meadow, including long-term involvement from volunteer groups, has been completed. Hands-on training days for local

residents are run by the Wild Trout Trust and supported by the Environment Agency, and have resulted in the development of skills useful in achieving the long term management of the site.



River Pinn Volunteers pulling Himalayan balsam



Old River Pinn ditch (1) prior to and (2) after clearance

## Benefits

- By involving existing groups in the river restoration projects and monitoring, a connection is created between the community and the aquatic environment creating environmental responsibility and a culture of environmental stewardship.
- Integrating the community with the aquatic environment converts the aquatic environment into a community resource providing education, recreation opportunities.
- Vegetation management reduces flood risk in the area, and prevents the spread of invasive species.

## Lessons Learnt

- The future of a maintenance programme can be secured through including the local community within the construction of a scheme, thereby creating an interest in the river and a desire to provide volunteer workforce to maintain the river for future generations.

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