

Historic Mill restoration, River Vidå, Tønder

Reducing the risk of flooding, tackling subsidence and improving access for fish was dealt with by removing sluice gates and installing a weir allowing fish to swim over more easily. Retaining the historic mill and mill pond were central to the scheme. Economic, social and environmental benefits have been reported in a project that dealt sensitively with the cultural heritage at the site.

Project summary

Location: Bachmanns Water Mill, River Vidå, Tønder, Denmark

Length: 1000m

Cost: €1,370,000

Dates: 2009-2010

Delivery

Delivered through: EU LIFE+ funded project to restore habitat and passage for houting.

Partners: Danish Nature Agency, Municipality of Tønder local authority.



Background and issues

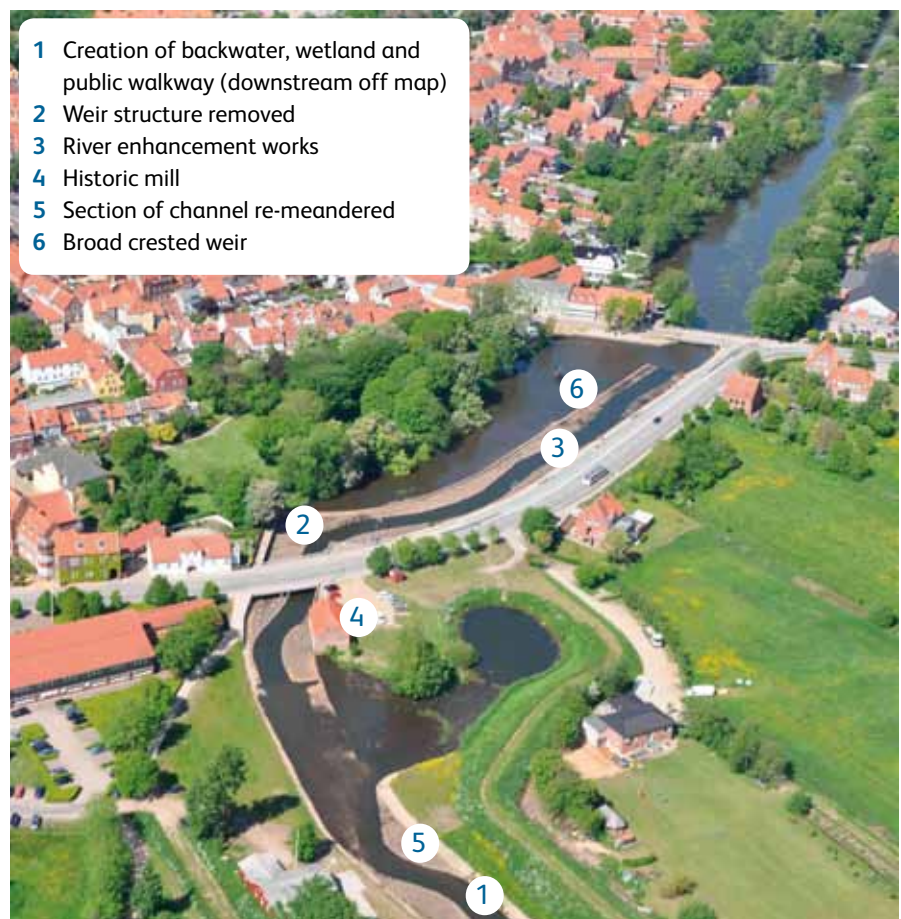
- Risk of flooding in the urban centre of Tønder.
- 2m high weir preventing fish from migrating, an endangered EU designated species, houting.
- Subsidence issues around the millpond.

Step-by-step

1. The mill pond and river were separated with a sheet-piled, concrete-faced weir. Flood banks were set back to increase capacity for flood waters.
2. Sluice gates and the fish ladder upstream of the mill bridge were removed. The millpond was retained as a functioning nursery area for fish.
3. Downstream of the mill, spawning grounds were formed by creating areas of shallower water using gravel (riffles). Resting areas (backwaters) were created and an otter pass was built under the bridge.
4. A new access point downstream of the mill was made for the Tønder Rowing Club to minimise disturbance to nature.
5. 700m of wetlands was created downstream of Tønder to create a wider nature corridor. This has been very popular with walkers and local people.

Benefits

- Historic mill retained.
- Aesthetic improvements have led to an increase in local house prices.
- Public access to nature improved - wetland walk.
- Balanced project aims with recreational needs.
- Improved river habitat.
- Fish pass more freely past the mill.
- Passage for houting has been restored.



Lessons learned

- Taking into account the historic context of the site, the project was delivered sensitively.
- The legacy of the project will benefit wildlife and people in a number of ways (access to nature, recreation).

Project Contact: Danish Forest and Nature Agency