



Suffolk FWAG's Natural Capital Baseline for Super Buffers

Recovering the Deben: From Source to Sea aims to restore the land, water, and nature throughout the river Deben catchment and estuary. The Deben flows for nearly 38 miles from source to sea and the estuary is a Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI). Climate change resilience depends on highly functional landscapes to protect us from catastrophic events that put farm businesses and communities at risk. Suffolk FWAG are conducting the first ever natural capital baseline for the river Deben. From this, we will identify a range of key priority areas for exemplary water management, leading with a Super Buffer to protect this vital riparian system.

[Read more about the project: Recovering the Deben: From Source to Sea](#)

What are natural edges and Super Buffers in riparian systems?

Natural edges are the transitional areas between land and water such as riverbanks, flood plains and wetlands, where vegetation and natural features provide super buffers to support human and ecological health. These edges serve multiple functions;

- Soil health – mitigating risk and vulnerability to secure sustainable food production.
- Erosion control – roots from native plants stabilise soil and reduce bank erosion.
- Water filtration – vegetation filters out pollutants and excess nutrients before they reach the river.
- Flood mitigation – natural edges absorb and slow down flood waters protecting nearby communities and vital land for food production.
- Habitat creation – provides critical habitat for fish, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals.
- Climate resilience – helps buffer the impacts of extreme weather while supporting biodiversity.
- Public benefits – enhance beauty and recreation and connection to nature.



In river management, preserving and restoring natural edges is a sustainable and cost-effective strategy using a diverse range of nature-based solutions.

Natural edges can be integrated and designed into becoming Super Buffer Zones, delivering highly functional and resilience landscapes for the future.

Water management opportunities extend to include;

1. The banking and storing of water for drought
2. Wetland creation for floods
3. Super Buffer beyond subsidised margins
4. Soil management for at risk soils and farm business security
5. Cleansing and pollution opportunities such as reedbed



All these “nature-based solutions” can be integrated on site and at scale to ensure the river Deben acts as one large, functioning ecosystem for current and future generations.

FAQs

What will the project involve?

In collaboration with the Lower Deben Riparian Owners Group, Upper Deben Farm Cluster and other organisations, the Recovering the Deben: From Source to Sea initiative, will contract FWAG advisors to undertake the Riparian Opportunity Study. We wish to use this partnership approach to enable delivery of enhanced and effective riparian operation along the river Deben.

What access will be needed?

To enable FWAG staff to suitably access to the riparian area, they would require permission to access your land, and your cooperation would be greatly valued. We look forward to working with you.

What will happen next?

Once you have confirmed you are willing to participate, our advisors Sven, Ellie or Dora will contact you to arrange the site visit for when best suits you.

What will the outcomes be?

FWAG will produce a report identifying opportunities throughout the river Deben and wider floodplain from an agro-ecological perspective. This will lead to an appraisal at site and landscape scale to design progressive and resilient future projects for water management. This stage of funding is to produce a strategic preliminary baseline from which to launch action for nature-based solution.

How will my data be used?

Naturally, your data will be secure and protected, and will only be used for the purpose of this project, with your permission. Ultimately, you will benefit as a landowner for any opportunities identified and funding secured.

