

Multi-million pound investment brings Yorkshire improvements

More than 100km of river has been improved as part of the Environment Agency's programme of environmental improvements across Yorkshire.

The programme, which includes more than 40 projects, has led to the creation or improvement of 570 hectares of habitat, while 36,000 trees have been planted.

Projects include removing barriers to fish movement, river restoration, measures to improve water quality and natural flood management which protect the natural environment, make rivers more resilient to climate change and boost wildlife.

The figures are released during the Environment Agency's #WaterWarriors campaign, which launched last week and urges people to consider how their actions can affect water quality and take action to protect blue spaces for everyone.

Kirkstall weir fish pass

Delivered by Catchment Partnerships

The Yorkshire Environment Programme is managed and delivered by the Environment Agency working mainly in partnership with government backed Catchment Partnerships, bringing together river and wildlife trusts, local authorities and other organisations to improve the environment.

There were 85 partners involved in this year's £5.59million programme contributing more than £2.5million in funding to the projects.

Next year the programme will be even bigger with investment increasing to more than £6million, helping to build a resilient and green future for the region.

Key projects progressed in 2020/21 include:

- The £2.35million DNAire project, which will open up 60km of the River Aire to fish, is moving towards completion and will see salmon return to the river for the first time in 150 years.
- Live Streaming Leeds has delivered river restoration in the Wortley Beck catchment, improving water quality.
- Derwent Villages Natural Flood Management has seen 149 interventions to reduce flood risk, 7km of enhanced river and 17 hectares of new habitat created.
- The Hidden Heritage Secret Streams project has seen the weir at Slitting Mill removed opening up around 9km of the River Rother for fish.

- Pulfin bog habitat improvement and creation project this year delivered 8.5 hectares of designated SSSI improvements and 250m of river improvements.
- A natural flood management project at Bishopdale saw over 35,000 trees and 7km of hedging planted.
- The first phase of York Urban Becks river restoration project at Hull Park Road to remove silt from behind 3 weirs at Osbaldwick Beck and then lower the height of the weirs has started to create a more natural river course.
- It has delivered over 100 hectares of blanket bog restoration working in large landscape partnerships which will reduce carbon release to the atmosphere as well as reducing flood risk and water quality issues downstream.
- The Trees for the Skirfare and Dales to Vales River Network riparian tree planting schemes saw more than 13,000 trees planted to help reduce diffuse pollution and provide habitat.

Trees for Skirfare tree planting

Bumper programme

Oliver Harmar, Yorkshire Area Director for the Environment Agency, said:

This year's bumper environment programme has seen the completion of some major projects across the county, reinforcing our commitment to creating better places in Yorkshire for people and wildlife.

The Environment Agency's #WaterWarriors campaign is highlighting the work our teams do on a daily basis to monitor and improve water quality. The programme showcases a wide array of projects that bring to life our drive to achieve a resilient and green future for Yorkshire, and our partners are integral to its success.

But it's important to remember that individual actions really do count. Small actions can have a damaging impact on water quality and there are some simple steps we can all take to make a difference.

With 4 out of 5 people expected to take a #GreatBritishStaycation this summer, it's more important than ever that we are all #WaterWarriors and protect the quality of our waters and beaches for everyone to enjoy.

Whether you are at home or away this summer, become a #WaterWarrior by taking small steps to protect water quality such as:

- Only flush the 3Ps – pee, poo and paper
- never pouring fats and oils down the sink
- never flushing wet wipes and sanitary products down the loo
- always taking your rubbish away from the beach

- always bagging and binning your dog's poo
- never pouring waste liquids or throwing litter down surface water drains

The campaign is also urging people visiting beaches, lakes and rivers to 'know before you go' by checking the Environment Agency's [Swimfo website](#) which provides instant, easy access to information on over 400 bathing waters in England, including the latest water quality classification – and, for some bathing waters, when warnings are issued due to the temporary effects on water quality after a rainy day or high tides.

Having this information at the fingertips ensures people have the most up-to-date information before they take the plunge. Joint advice with Public Health England is also available on open water swimming – that's swimming anywhere that isn't a public pool – at [Swim healthy](#)