

Press release: Flood-hit farm groups given £800,000

The focus of this round of the [Facilitation Fund](#) is on developing a new approach to natural flood management, to help communities hit by the winter storms of 2015 and early 2016.

Organisations such as the National Trust, Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Rivers Trust are joining forces with farmers. They will plant trees, create water meadows and restore rivers to their natural meanders within river catchments in Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Northumberland, County Durham and Yorkshire.

In the 2 years since the scheme began 61 groups with 1218 land managers have been supported, covering more than 273,000 hectares of land.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

We are committed to helping farmers better protect their land, and surrounding communities, from flooding.

We're already investing £15 million in natural flood management schemes across the country, making sure we protect homes and businesses as well as protecting our precious wildlife.

This exciting scheme is a win-win and will see us build-up flood resilience while at the same time achieving some real benefits for our rich natural habitats including our ancient woodlands, grasslands and moorlands.

This is the latest in a series of natural flood management projects which demonstrate the government's commitment to using the best available mix of flood protection measures. It builds on £15m already committed to similar schemes across the country.

Chief Executive of Natural England James Cross said:

The Facilitation Fund is enabling farmers to use natural flood management techniques, such as slowing the flow through river restoration and tree planting, which not only help to cope with the extreme climatic events that the environment is throwing at us but also benefit nature.

We've relied heavily on local knowledge from our area advisers and the expertise of our partners to help groups put forward plans that will benefit nature at the same time as reducing the risk of flooding.

The scheme is designed to work with nature in [flood-hit communities](#), in response to priority actions identified in [Flood Action Plans](#).

The [projects funded this year](#) add to our learning around managing extreme climate events through natural flood management. This technique uses nature-based solutions to address flood management through activities such as:

- restoring ancient and native woodland
- creating more wet woodland
- management of grasslands, including traditional hay meadow
- management of moorlands to restore blanket bog and wet heathland
- restoration of river habitat
- improved soil management

Across England a total of £5.4 million has been committed through the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund for groups of land managers to improve their local environment at a landscape-scale. This builds on the principles of partnership working to deliver ambitious, evidence-based actions that will deliver for the environment, business and local communities.