

# RESTORATION OF NORTH EAST GRASSLANDS CAN BOOST HABITATS

Work to create or enhance grasslands on two sites in the North East are blooming.

Lowland meadows, a once common colourful feature of our countryside, are in serious decline. We are championing their cause by establishing a wildflower meadow at Guisborough, near Redcar, and enhancing existing areas of poor quality grassland at Mosswood, County Durham.

The site at Guisborough is being restored following the construction of an underground flood alleviation storage facility next to the company's sewage treatment works, which was completed earlier this year.

A specially selected native wildflower seed mix was sown in late summer and is now starting to germinate. It will look its best from 2017 when the site will also be ready to cut for hay. Wildflower meadows also support a variety of pollinating insects including bees and butterflies, giving them an important habitat in which they can thrive.

A similar project is underway at Mosswood, enhancing land that had previously been disused and of poor quality, having historically been a site for the spreading of sludge from the adjacent water treatment works.

This is being done in partnership with Cumbria Wildlife Trust, responsible for the Coronation Meadows Project in the North of England, and the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which sourced a local meadow donor site and are managing the scarifying and hay spreading.

Two fields at Mosswood have already been reseeded with a meadow mix, while another two are due to be scarified, where debris is cut and removed, and covered with green hay sourced from a nearby meadow site, utilising funding from the Biffa Landfill Tax as part of the Coronation Meadows Project.

Stuart Pudney, our conservation and land manager, said: “Restoring land in a sympathetic way to boost native wildlife is a hugely valuable and rewarding part of our work.

“At Northumbrian Water, we are passionate about looking after our environment, so to see these two projects coming to fruition is fantastic.”

In addition to this grassland restoration at Mosswood, more than 600 metres of new hedgerow have been created with a mix of native shrubs and trees, including 30 elm trees which were been planted as part of a Great British Elm Experiment, along with more than an acre of native woodland. Bat and bird boxes, plus two “bug hotels” and an amphibian hibernacula have also been installed through our conservation partnerships with Durham and Northumberland Wildlife Trusts