

Ouse Washes: Middle Level Barrier Bank raising works

March 2021

Year 5 - 2021 works

The work we are doing is to comply with recommendations made by the reservoir Inspecting Engineer and we have a statutory deadline to complete the works by, under the Reservoir Act 1975. Due to the delays that we have experienced, it has not been possible to meet the deadline. Last year the Inspecting Engineer did a new inspection, and he has set the new deadlines. We must complete the physical work by December 2022, and we have to establish good grass cover by December 2024.

We will be starting ecological surveys and grass cutting shortly and have met with our environmental stakeholders to agree what activities we can start early, before the agreed working window of 15 July to 31 October. We are working with Natural England to possibly start work in June to repair the haul road and topsoil slips before we start the bank raising works.

Bank raising works

We need to finish all the bank raising works before we can start building the foundation for the demountable flood barrier at Welney. This is because the access to the haul road at Welney is the only way to bring clay in to finish the bank raising between there and the railway bridge. There's not enough room, and it won't be safe, to bring deliveries in at Welney and do the barrier works at the same time. We will also repair flood damage sustained during the winter.

Year 5 (2021)

- April – May Ecological surveys and grass cuts full length of the Middle Level Barrier Bank.
- June – July Haul road repairs and topsoil slip repairs.
- July - Oct Repair flood damage sustained during the winter.
- July – Oct Finish the bank raising work between:
 - Welney and the railway bridge
 - Welches Dam and the railway bridge.
 - A142, Mepal and Welches Dam
- Sep – Oct Installation of the remaining 2 bird hides at the Ouse Washes RSPB Reserve.
- October Reinstatement of the haul road.

Demountable flood barrier works at Welney - consultation results

We held an online consultation from 12 March to 30 September 2020 asking communities for their views on the best time to close temporarily the Welney Wash Road to complete the demountable flood barrier works.

We received 101 responses to the consultation and the majority of respondents chose June to August as their preferred period for closing the road based on school holidays.

The full consultation response document can be viewed online on our Citizen Space information page along with the Frequently Asked Questions documents.

Our contractor has programmed the construction work to meet the preferred timings as best they can.



Year 6 (2022)

- April – May Ecological surveys and grass cuts on the full length of the Middle Level Barrier Bank.
- June Divert the public footpath north from Welney to Welmore Lake Sluice to Low Bank.
 - The barrier work will be carried across the access to the public footpath.
- June – July Build the abutment walls each side of the road.
 - We should be able to do this work without traffic management on the road.
- July – Aug Full road closure to excavate and construct the foundation slab across the road.
 - This will take about 6 weeks.
- Aug – Sep Temporary traffic lights while we install the stub walls the barrier attaches to.
- Sep – Oct Reinstate the footpath, fencing and tidy up the embankments.
- October Practical training session to install the barrier.

Public footpath and bridleway access

The Inspecting Engineer has made the grass cover an explicit measure to be delivered by a deadline; it is essential to the safety of the bank and to us complying with the Reservoirs Act. This is why we have continued to enforce public footpath closures where we have been working most recently, and why we get concerned when the public access the bank. The inspecting engineer has given us 2 years after the bank raising works are finished to get the grass cover in an acceptable condition for him to sign off, so we will continue to close sections of the footpath where we need to in order for the grass to establish.

Where is open

- Welmore Lake Sluice to Welney.
- A142, Mepal to Sutton Gault, will close for work from June 2021.
- Earith Sluice to Sutton Gault.
- South Level Barrier Bank – Sutton Gault to Short Drove.

Where is closed

- A142, Mepal to Welches Dam – access to bird hides from RSPB car park will close from June 2021.
- Welches Dam to railway bridge.
- Welney to railway bridge.

Diversions and closures are clearly signposted.

Keeping your community up to date

We have updated your local MPs, have held a Parish Council teleconference call during March and have briefed our stakeholders on the progress and programme.

We will continue to provide updates about the project through our newsletters, the noticeboards that are located in Welney on Bedford Bank by the old village hall, Welches Dam at the Ouse Washes RSPB Reserve, Sutton Gault by the old Anchor Inn pub and at Earith by the sluice.

You can access information on our Ouse Washes online information page

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/east-anglia-c-e/ouse-washes-section-10-works/>

We are busy organising a virtual drop-in event for May 2021 to showcase the project so far, provide information about the demountable flood barrier at Welney, provide a visual representation of the Ouse Washes and respond to any enquiries.



Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact our Public Liaison Officer: Monica Stonham via email ousewashesprojectea@gmail.com or call 07534 457348.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list to receive future updates about this scheme, please contact us through the email address and telephone number given above.

Thank you for taking the time to read this update.



The project is being carried out by JacksonHyder on behalf of the Environment Agency with support:

