

## **Rivermead Nature Reserve Conservation and Maintenance Plan**

*Introduction:* Rivermead Nature Reserve, located near Pulborough and in proximity to the Brooks, is a valuable natural habitat supporting diverse flora and wildlife. This conservation and maintenance plan aims to protect and enhance this delicate ecosystem for current and future generations while emphasising the management of ditches and watercourses, especially given previous flooding incidents.

### *Conservation Objectives:* **Biodiversity Enhancement:**

1. Conduct 5 -yearly biodiversity assessments to monitor species diversity.
2. Implement habitat restoration and enhancement projects.
3. Introduce native plant species to support local pollinators and wildlife.

### **Watercourse Management:**

1. Maintain ditches clearance monthly.
2. Control invasive plant species in riparian areas, including ditches and watercourses.
3. Repair or remove hazards that could disrupt the flow of water.

### **Education and Outreach:**

1. Work with educational programs and materials for schools and the local community.
2. Promote responsible and sustainable use of the reserve, with a focus on watercourse conservation.

### **Infrastructure Maintenance:**

1. Ensure that visitor access is safe and well-maintained.
2. Periodically inspect and repair bridges, fencing and signage.

### *Regular Maintenance Schedule:* **Monthly Tasks:**

1. Trash collection and disposal.
2. Inspect and maintain signage.
3. Monitor and address any safety hazards on walkways and watercourse infrastructure.
4. Remove invasive plant species from ditches and watercourses.

### **Seasonal Tasks: Spring:**

1. Conduct wildlife surveys.
2. Plant native species along ditches and watercourses.

**Summer:**

1. Monitor water levels in ditches and watercourses.
2. Conduct habitat maintenance along watercourses.

**Fall:**

1. Remove fallen leaves and debris from walkways and watercourses.
2. Prepare the reserve for winter, including watercourse management.

**Winter:**

1. Prune and maintain vegetation along ditches and watercourses.
2. Conduct maintenance on watercourse infrastructure.

***Funding and Resources:***

1. Seek grants and donations from government agencies, conservation organisations and local businesses, with an emphasis on conservation.
2. Engage volunteers from the local community for conservation and maintenance efforts, including watercourse maintenance.

***Monitoring and Evaluation:***

1. Track the success of habitat restoration projects, including those related to watercourse management.
2. Seek feedback from visitors and adjust management practices, particularly those concerning watercourses, accordingly.

***Adaptive Management:***

1. Be prepared to adapt the plan based on new scientific findings or changes in the ecosystem, especially regarding watercourse management.
2. Collaborate with experts and stakeholders to address emerging conservation challenges, including those related to watercourses.

***Reporting and Communication:***

1. Publish annual reports on the state of the reserve and conservation efforts, highlighting watercourse management.

2. Maintain an informative website and social media presence.
3. Engage with the local community through newsletters and public meetings, emphasising the importance of the site.

#### *Compliance with Regulations:*

1. Ensure that all conservation and maintenance activities adhere to local regulations.

This conservation and maintenance plan serves as a comprehensive guide for the sustainable management of Rivermead Nature Reserve, with a particular emphasis on the critical management of ditches and watercourses. Regular assessments, adaptive management, and community engagement are vital components for ensuring the long-term preservation of this valuable natural resource.