

Broads Plan 2017

Summary of progress: November 2019 to June 2020

This report highlights key actions by the Broads Authority working in partnership to implement the strategic management plan for the Broads. All progress reports are on our website at www.broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/how-we-work/strategy.

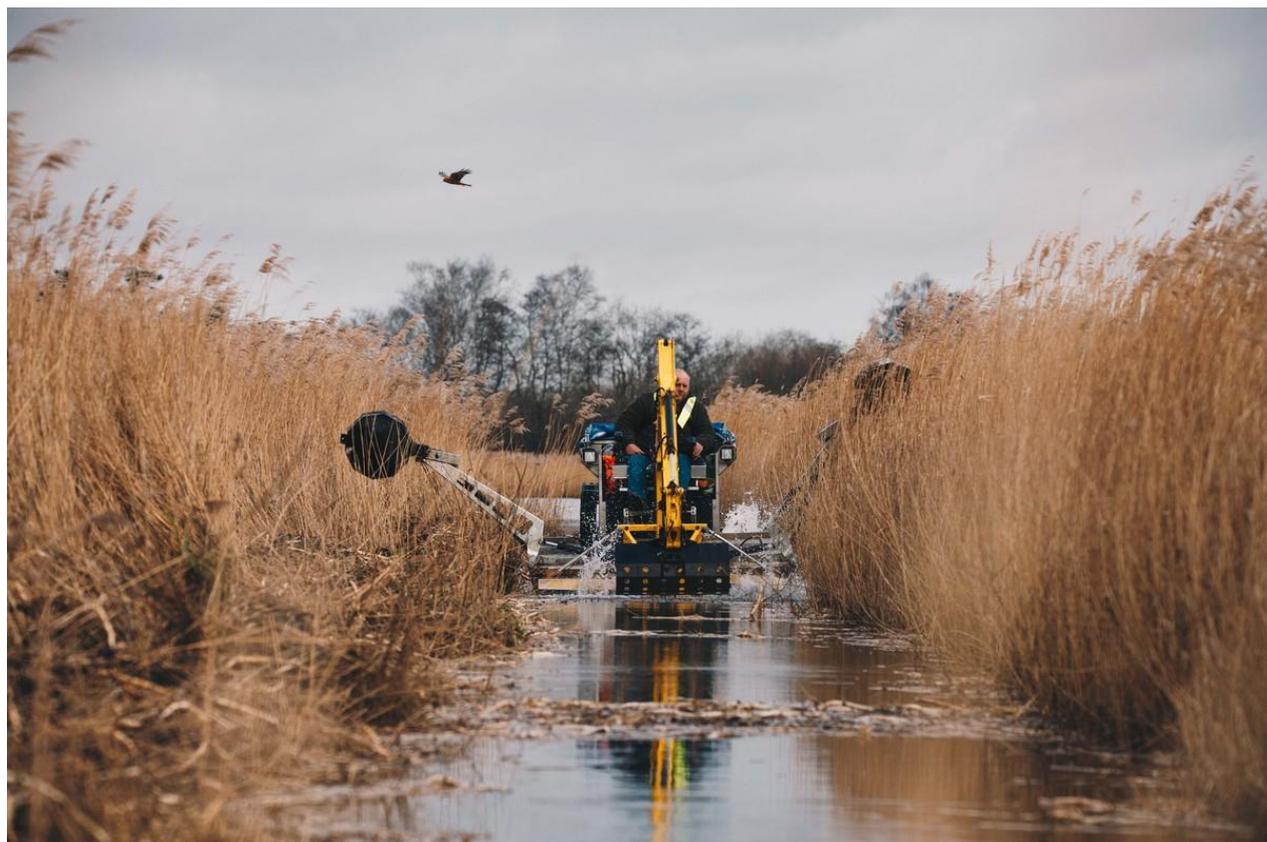


Photo: Amphibious digger excavating lost ditches in reed beds © Broads Authority

Contents

A. Managing water resources and flood risk	2
B. Sustaining landscapes for biodiversity and agriculture	2
C. Managing water resources and flood risk.....	4
D. Conserving landscape character and the historic environment	5
E. Offering distinctive recreational experiences.....	7
F. Raising awareness and understanding.....	8
G. Connecting and inspiring people.....	9
H. Building 'climate-smart' communities.....	11

A. Managing water resources and flood risk

1.1 Promote and implement best practice water capture and water use measures at a community level, and support a whole farm water management approach across the Broadland Rivers Catchment

- Rivers Trust, Environment Agency and Water Resources East submitted 'Water for Tomorrow' Interreg bid focusing on Broadland Rivers Catchment, particularly Ant and Upper Thurne. Project proposal is to run computer modelling scenarios of multi-sector sustainable water storage and abstraction licensing to predict effects on ground and surface water and on dependent wetland habitats and species.

1.2 Promote and implement catchment measures to manage water resources and respond to periods of water shortage and scarcity (incl. abstraction controls, water transfer and trading, infrastructure improvements)

- Environment Agency (EA) providing ongoing water abstraction advice and onsite visits to farmers and other stakeholders.
- EA monitoring shows surface water flows below normal; groundwater levels across East Anglia recovered during wet winter but now declining. No recorded significant fish kills or low dissolved oxygen incidents. EA held online conference on 22 June for public and private sector on sharing info on dry weather situation to support operational decisions.

1.3 Maintain current coastal, tidal and fluvial flood risk management strategies relevant to the Broads, Gt Yarmouth and interrelated coastal frontage, and prepare a longer-term, integrated, strategic approach

- Broadland Futures Initiative: Partnership work progressing on planning for future flood risk management. Physical public engagement events postponed to spring 2021 and online virtual events being planned for 2020 using story maps, infographics and 'walk through' virtual exhibitions. All project updates at www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/climate-change/broadland-futures-initiative
- BFI local consultation - see action 10.1

1.4 Investigate, plan and promote schemes to hold back or divert flood water, moving from retrospective to proactive approaches

- Water Sensitive Farming initiative 2018-21: Two new field corner bunds (silt traps) installed at West Somerton and Winterton to protect Martham Broad, local properties and wildlife areas, in response to severe run-off from harvested potato fields left uncultivated in winter 2019/20.
- All BCP project updates at www.broadlandcatchmentpartnership.org.uk/news

B. Sustaining landscapes for biodiversity and agriculture

2.1 Carry out lake restoration, maintenance and enhancement work including bio-manipulation; use monitoring evidence to trial and implement further innovative lake restoration techniques

- CANAPE Hickling Broad restoration: 15,000m³ of sediment moved into new land creation area; equipment demobilised and works to recommence in autumn with further 4000m³ dredging

and completion of Catfield mud pumping. Trials ongoing using updated DNA method for identifying *Prymnesium parvum*.

- Hoveton Great Broad: Sediment removal complete and monitoring of new fen areas to be undertaken by drone. Environment Agency consultation on temporary fish barriers holding up project progress and extension sought.

2.2 Promote and implement measures to reduce point and diffuse pollution into the floodplain and water courses, commensurate with EU/national water and habitat targets and with sustainable farming

- See Water Sensitive Farming projects – action 1.4

2.3 Maintain and enhance existing areas of priority fen, reed bed, grazing marsh and wet woodland through site management agreements/prescriptions and support services to site managers

- Water, Mills and Marshes:

Chedgrave Common Enhancements: Tree, scrub and reed bed clearance carried out.

Broads Land Management: Engagement event held to attract landowner interest in conservation land management for breeding waders and wintering waterfowl. RSPB team met advising farmers on wet grassland management. Winter surveys show good numbers of Lapwing, Snipe, Pink-footed geese, Wigeon and other wintering ducks. Breeding Wader survey postponed.

- ELMS test and trial: 100+ days of interaction with farmers and land managers (Nov-May) including workshops and site visits; tier structure and cost review drafted; collaboration topics, collaboration plan and Local Delivery Board tested/ready to be trialled.

www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/projects/environment-land-management-system

- Ant Broads and Marshes SSSI restoration project: Hydrological monitoring and habitat restoration works ongoing at three sites in Ant Valley SSSI including excavation of lost ditches at How Hill NNR, turf ponding at Barton Fen and assessing hydrology and options for vegetation enhancements at Catfield Fen. NWT survey of Catfield Fen shows site improvement.

2.4 Define, implement and monitor management regimes for priority species and invasive non-native species

- 24ha of grassland on edge of Halvergate Marshes recently reverted to wet fen attracting large numbers of breeding wetland birds including scarce species; breeding Marsh Harrier exceeding numbers found at Minsmere and representing nearly 2% of British breeding population.

- Invasive species control:

Mink project coordinator training scent dog to assist search. Waterlife Recovery East pilot study assessing feasibility of eradicating mink by creating core elimination area and 60km buffer including Norfolk and Suffolk. New measures such as automated trap monitoring devices and mink genotypes will help process.

BA operations include routine control of Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed in agreed areas. Control of New Zealand pygmy weed has not been successful, and plans are to isolate, drain water and spray.

- Species Recovery: BA working with PhD intern to update status and planning of Nature Recovery projects for key species, based on latest research from UEA, Plantlife and independent ecologists.

2.5 Create 'bigger, better and more joined up' areas of priority habitat by identifying opportunities and developing site-specific plans for new habitat areas, connections, buffer zones and pollinator networks

- SWT Carlton Marshes habitat recreation work completed; area seeing great success with winter and breeding birds.
- Halvergate Fleet scheme working well, with c.10cm higher water levels compared to 10-year average. Site reporting marsh nesting avocets and sightings of great white egrets for first time.
- Loughlins Marsh Habitat Improvement Project partners planning next works to improve water supply on Halvergate Marshes, and developing purchased land adjacent to Breydon Water. BA supporting funding bid to Highways England to create habitat to mitigate disturbance to Breydon high tide roost area.
- Broadland Catchment Partnership facilitating development of Upper Thurne Holistic Water Management project to deliver benefits for wildlife, access, water quality, drought reduction and wetland habitat. Project hopes to encourage further investment in sustainable eco-tourism, economic regeneration and rural development over next 10 years.
- ELMS Test and Trial – see action 2.3.

2.6 Improve partnership coordination and communication of Broads biodiversity monitoring and research efforts, linked to national biodiversity network

- PIPs intern commissioned to work with BA to report results and recommendations for species recovery projects relating to Nature Recovery Strategy. Outputs to include case studies from Biodiversity Audit 'species of conservation concern' and greater public awareness.
- Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society producing '150 Species' book to celebrate 150 years of the Society.

C. Managing water resources and flood risk

3.1 Implement dredging regimes in accordance with defined water-ways specifications, and seek resources/legislation to accelerate the removal of sediment in the Broads system

- 43,930m³ dredged sediment removed from prioritised sites in 2019/20 from programmed target of 44,000m³. This year's dredging programme priorities and progress is reported regularly to Navigation Committee at www.broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/committees/navigation-committee
- Phase One of CANAPE project at Hickling Broad completed. Planned volume of sediment to be placed in lagoon area for reedbed creation exceeded (15,620m³ of targeted 19,000m³).

3.2 Implement plans and good practice guidance to reduce soil erosion into the waterways, manage areas lost or vulnerable to erosion, and dispose of dredged material in sustainable and beneficial ways

- BA Waterways Management Strategy and Action Plan in production, updating Sediment Management Strategy (2007) and embracing latest dredging methods, hydrographic surveys, and water plant cutting and riverside tree management regimes.

4.1 Maintain existing navigation water space and develop appropriate opportunities to expand or extend access for various types of craft

- River Wensum: Project to complete missing link in riverside walk between New Mills Yard and Carrow Bridge, Norwich in design phase, with predicted completion date of Feb 2021.
- Liaison meetings ongoing between BA and Network Rail (NR) with standard agenda on operational issues of swing bridges, communication with signalmen and NR capital investment programme. BA awaiting NR business case for bridge replacement programme.

4.2 Carry out appropriate aquatic plant cutting and tree and scrub management programmes and seek resources to increase operational targets

- Cutting and management programmes running to agreed schedules. Further information is available at www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/managing-land-and-water/riverside-tree-and-scrub-management

4.3 Implement, promote and monitor measures to maintain and improve safety and security for the navigation and boats

- BA Ranger team carrying out routine patrols and fortnightly asset checks, including during Covid-19 lockdown. Head of Safety Management providing guidance to ensure all BA operations are Covid-secure.
- BA attended two meetings of Norfolk Drowning Prevention Group; joint social media campaign held to support RLSS drowning prevention week in June and water safety messages promoted through patrolling by all agencies of popular waterside sites.
- BA Ranger navigation patrolling and performance target update reports published at www.broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/committees/navigation-committee

D. Conserving landscape character and the historic environment

5.1 Implement measures to protect, conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape character and historic assets of the Broads

- Water, Mills and Marshes – Land of the Windmills: Restoration works at Six Mile House Mill due for completion by summer. CPT survey scheduled for end July at Muttons Mill, with piling works to begin shortly after. Tender being prepared for external contract to restore Highs Mill.
- Quinquennial surveys underway for heritage assets within BA area to inform updating of Heritage at Risk Register.

5.2 Produce, update and promote local landscape conservation action plans, appraisals and enhancement schemes

- Conservation Area Appraisals: Horning - draft complete, consultation on hold due to Covid-19; Ludham - out to consultation, anticipated adoption by BA Planning Committee in Aug 2020. BA

and neighbouring authorities agreeing review programme of all conservation areas, with work likely to start in autumn 2020 on Halvergate Marshes and Belaugh CAAs.

- BA providing ongoing heritage input into Neighbourhood Plans and other policy documents.

5.3 Develop measures to investigate, record and protect local built and cultural features, archaeology and potential hidden heritage (incl. waterlogged assets, waterways history, settlement patterns, WWII remains)

- BA agreed SLA with Norfolk County Council agreed for archaeological services for development management and drawing up agreement with Suffolk County Council.

- Water, Mills and Marshes:

Broads Hidden Heritage: Earthworks survey volunteers at Halvergate marshes recording visible remains and producing site drawing. Survey of second site held up by Covid-19. Research on early maps continuing, and information being transcribed from tithe maps and apportionment (land use, owners, occupiers, field names) for subsequent digitisation. Project also hosted Lidar volunteers in Aerial Archaeology team at Gressenhall.

Waterside Heritage: Research group met Nov and Feb to review work to date. Presentations included review of artwork found in Norfolk Museums Service collections; progress on trawling newspaper archives; and researched staithe/trade history in Catfield/Hickling.

Chet Boat: Boat complete and certified for recreational use. Target launch delayed to autumn 2020 (Covid-19 dependent). Discussions underway with local sailing club on handling boat and recruiting volunteer crews for tour.

5.4 Implement and promote measures to conserve and enhance local geodiversity sites and assets across identified work areas in Norfolk Geodiversity Action Plan

- Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership: Day schools in 'Palaeolandscapes of the Broads' delivered as part of Water, Mills and Marshes scheme.
- Data on County Geodiversity Sites (CGS) and 14 candidate CGS in Norfolk part of Broads made available to local authority planners through Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service.

5.5 Expand the longer-term resource of land management and heritage construction and maintenance skills training and qualifications

- Water, Mills and Marshes: City College Norwich heritage skills programme on hold due to Covid-19. Project managers working on revised training programme for September. Apprentices now back on site at Six Mile House Mill.

5.6 Build on measures to reduce the impacts on the Broads of visual intrusion and noise and light pollution, and pursue potential for dark sky place status

- Undergrounding wires scheme: £172k costs approved by UK Power Network Protected Landscapes Steering Group for removal of overhead power lines at Ludham Marshes and £270k of undergrounds sent to UK Power Networks/OFGEM for final consent.
- BA messages on avoiding running engines between 8pm to 8am put on mooring signs and on floating keyrings issued to hire boat operators.

E. Offering distinctive recreational experiences

6.1 Develop and implement schemes to upgrade and improve the network of access points and routes (where adverse effects can be prevented), linked to visitor facilities and including easier access for people with mobility and sensory needs

- Water, Mills and Marshes: Audit completed of Halvergate Bridleway for use as trail with new permissive links to allow for new Broads Mills Trail. Working with Broads Charitable Trust on funding and developing Gateways/Discovery Hubs in conjunction with Project 2A: Gateways to the Broads.
- Broads Integrated Access Strategy 5-year action plan produced.
- Planning application submitted for new pontoon mooring at Peto's Marsh. Pontoon canoe launching facilities installed at New Mills.
- GIS data recording and mapping ongoing, starting with angling access, to be published on BA website. Further work will record slipways, moorings, trails, cycling routes and so on.
- BA working with Norfolk County Council on programme to restore and enhance Wherryman's Way, including new circular walks, bank stabilisation, signage and 'access for all' paths. BA also working with NCC and Cycling UK as part of Interreg EXPERIENCE project to create a series of cycling hubs; Hoveton/Wroxham likely to be pilot region.
- Reedham permissive path agreement awaiting formal signing and contractor lined up to install furniture. New permissive footpath agreement at Belton Reach signed, forming first part of new Broads Mill trail to Somerleyton. First bundle of footpath extinguishment orders carried out as part of cleaning up PROW network following BESL flood alleviation works.

6.2 Implement measures to improve the network provision of riverside facilities, incl. refuse and recycling services, electric power points, water and pump out

- Acle Bridge 24-mooring re-piling contract delayed by 2 months due to Covid-19 – refurbished mooring due to open August and electric charging points installed in autumn.
- Detailed BA construction and maintenance updates available at www.broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/committees/navigation-committee

6.3 Maintain, develop and promote a coordinated and year-round programme of activities (taking measures to prevent any adverse environmental impacts)

- Water, Mills and Marshes:
Gateways to the Broads: Sites finalised in southern area of scheme with Beccles Quay a priority. WMM working with Broads Charitable Trust on funding and developing Discovery Hubs to integrate with gateway projects.
Heritage assets: WMM partnering with Wherry Lines Community Rail Partnership to provide new maps and guides to local built and environmental heritage assets near stations.
Broads Hidden Heritage: Festival to promote Broads heritage and archaeology postponed to 2021.
Celebrating the Landscape: Woven Waters exhibition of local artists held at Norwich Cathedral in Dec-Jan, attracting more than 2,500 visitors.

Mapping the Broads: 3 artists exhibited mapping works consisting of drawing, printmaking, digital print on textiles and film documentary. Exhibition in Jan-Mar drew 1346 visits. Exhibition events included workshop on 'Yare, Polkey's and Halvergate' book and 'Reconnecting with Nature' film and talk.

- English National Park Experience Collection: Work ongoing to engage with travel trade in Australia, Germany, Canada and North America. Funding for central ENPEC team ended in March and new bid prepared; local funding secured from Interreg via Norfolk County Council. Initial work carried out to develop Broads Experience website in consultation with existing providers. Tender invitation drafted to secure services of travel trade and marketing consultant.

6.4 Implement Broads Angling Strategy action plan through partnership working and securing of additional resources

- GIS data and mapping of angling access points in Broads being produced for subsequent publication on BA website.
- Broads Angling Services Group updates: <https://basg.online/>

F. Raising awareness and understanding

7.1 Develop integrated, multimedia communications to boost local community and visitor awareness and appreciation of the special qualities of the Broads National Park

- Water, Mills and Marshes: First virtual mill tour created by group of children from Suffolk Young Carers, with 10 360° images of Hardley Mill annotated and uploaded for viewing by phone, computer and VR goggles - see <https://poly.google.com/view/1OV7igmhHUy>. Virtual versions of Mapping the Broads and Portrait exhibitions to be uploaded later this year.

7.2 Maintain and upgrade the range and provision of multi-media and 'point of need' visitor information and interpretation

- Water, Mills and Marshes: New interpretation to be installed at Wherry Line stations in partnership with Greater Anglia and Community Rail Norfolk. First briefs for mill interpretation sent out in June.
- New Water, Mills and Marshes website in development, and will include trails and activities for parents/educators. Since Nov 2019, scheme has had 138k Twitter impressions, 2.4k website users and 250 Instagram followers.
- COVID-19 recovery campaign to promote Broads National Park:

Publications: Broadcaster visitor newspaper, Broadsheet for toll payers and monthly Chief Executive's e-briefing published.

Promotional messaging: BA using all communication channels to keep public and businesses informed on latest Government COVID-19 restrictions and guidance. BA working with Visit the Broads (Broads Tourism), Visit East of England and other DMOs to promote safe return of tourism industry. Visit the Broads social media campaign and BA-managed accounts to focus on promoting the area and the Broads 'experience'; Visit East of England also running campaign to promote Norfolk and Suffolk as a combined destination, including the Broads.

Information Centres: Centre at Whitlingham Country Park closed in March following decision by Trust to end BA management partnership. BA reached agreement with Norwich City Council and Jarrolds for Broads National Park presence in Norwich Forum, but refurbishment works postponed by Covid-19. Planned new displays at Lowestoft train station and new SWT Carlton Marshes visitor centre also postponed.

- Broads National Park signage: Most road signs in place and generally well received, though opposed in some places. Second phase planned to include consultation with parish councils, and application using tourist road sign process once non-essential highway works restart. Broads National Park logos added to platform signs at 9 train stations on Bittern and Wherry lines, provided free by Community Rail Partnership. Other stations being considered for similar projects.

7.3 Implement industry-based measures to strengthen the quality and distinctiveness of the Broads tourism offer, including careers and skills training

- BA supplying Broads Tourism with links on 'Covid-19 safe' measures and training to support businesses, including Government advice and BA guidance, Visit England and Visit Britain resources and training support, and grants available to tourism sector to help businesses adapt to latest guidelines. Broads Tourism issuing weekly information to their members.

G. Connecting and inspiring people

8.1 Update and adopt Broads spatial planning policies and site-specific allocations to support local business, housing need, community facilities and transport choices, and to ensure development occurs within environmental limits

- Updated Broads Flood Risk SPD adopted.
- Better Broadband schemes for Norfolk and Suffolk ongoing.

8.2 Develop comprehensive approach to enhancing sites that are strategically important for their heritage or green infrastructure value

- BA working with Broads Charitable Trust to develop external funding bid for 'Discovery Hubs'.
- Hoveton Riverside Park: Concept design shared with Hoveton Parish Council and Roys.
- BA contract at Whitlingham Country Park ended in March.
- BA working with Norfolk LPAs on countywide Green Infrastructure Plan.

9.1 Widen the range of active and entry level/ taster initiatives that promote physical and mental health and wellbeing, based in the Broads natural environment

- Water, Mills and Marshes - Marsh Arts and Us: 7 sessions held in 2020, engaging small groups of people from social support charities in Lowestoft and Yarmouth via mental wellbeing arts activities in the Broads landscape.
- BA applied for grant in partnership with other National Parks and Clarion Housing to run activities for disadvantaged youths.

9.2 Offer a flexible range of practical volunteering programmes, events and training, and establish a longer-term succession strategy

- Water, Mills and Marshes: Overall scheme volunteering target met (Nov 2019); 450 volunteers engaged across projects between Nov 2019 and March 2020.
- BA volunteering programme: New e-Volunteer Handbook developed and well received. Annual volunteer record review, volunteer survey and equal opportunity monitoring analysis carried out. New modular training system ready to be rolled out together with ELMS online training online. New monthly e-newsletter 'Big Sky Views' sent to volunteers.
- Youth and Community Engagement officer group set up to address ways to encourage more young people and those from disadvantaged groups to try volunteering; Youth Action Days and Youth Forum being developed.

9.3 Increase the scope for partnership fundraising and other income generation initiatives to support Broads-themed projects

- BA supported Broads Tourism bid to Visit England's DMO Covid19 support fund, which resulted in grant of £7,200 to Broads Tourism.
- Covid-19 lockdown measures caused closure of BA information centres and yacht stations, and cancellation of passenger boat trips from start of season to early July, with loss of potential revenue of £24,500 for TICs and boat trips and £29,130 for yacht stations. It is hoped to recoup some of these losses in the remaining 3 months of the season.
- Partnership project work for Interreg funded 'Experience' initiative delayed by Covid-19 but expected to resume in July. Decision on joint National Parks bid for additional Discover England amplification funding for English National Park Experience Collection postponed. Visit England inviting revised submission by 10 July in light of changed tourism priorities and opportunities. Bid is for maximum of £175,000, requires some match funding by participating Parks, and would run for six months to March 2021.
- Water, Mills and Marshes continuing to fund local projects through 'Grand for a Grand' community grant fund.

9.4 Improve the capacity of the Broads Environmental Education Network (BEEN) to develop and run educational programmes and events for local schoolchildren

- BA producing further e-Broads Curriculum KS2 resources for science, history, geography, land use, food webs and habitats, and other resources in development. Proposed post Covid-19 schools outreach project 'The Big Walk Out' subject to DEFRA funding. Broads Trust /HLF wherry educational resources project completed.
- 15 school groups (281 contacts) engaged between Jan-Mar 2020; later bookings postponed due to Covid-19. Rivers project and environmental sculpture project completed with primary schools at Whitlingham Country Park.
- Water, Mills and Marshes:
 - Greater Water Parsnip Conservation Project underway with four schools.
 - Art on the Line project run in conjunction with Community Rail Norfolk for six schools on Wherry Line, with exhibition of 221 works at Lowestoft Railway station.

Broads Album: Primary and 6th form students composed and sang songs for album, and Broads Album performance held at Marina Theatre, Lowestoft.

Range of school trips planned for 2020, including litter picks and wildlife monitoring, but many postponed due to Covid-19.

Weekly posts and activities on Broads National Park produced for schools and families, covering everything from pollinators and peat to wherries and ghosts.

Life in the Dykes school art competition attracted 73 entries.

9.5 Develop and run motivational outreach activities and award schemes for young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, focusing on life and work skills training and practical experience

- BA proposed project within bid to #Iwill fund led by Clarion Housing for youth social action. Project aims focused on biodiversity net gains and learning about habitats and countryside management. Programme planned to start early 2021.
- Most planned work placements in 2020 on hold due to Covid-19.
- Completed outreach activities include 17 John Muir Award courses (Dec-Mar), 3 MINT team building courses at Whitlingham Country Park (Jan-Mar), environmental activities with Douglas Bader School (Feb-Mar), 8 work experience sessions to SEN students from Parkside School/ Pathways College (Nov-Mar), careers fair in Sheringham, and weekly outreach project with Holiday Property Bond owners at Barnham Broom.

H. Building 'climate-smart' communities

10.1 Develop and promote tailored 'climate-smart' mitigation and adaptation measures, guidance and support to local communities

- Broadland Futures Initiative (BFI): BFI team reviewed first draft technical report on impact of climate change on flood risk to inform BFI Plan. No flood risk management actions being discussed at this stage. Aims include summarising latest climate evidence and long-term projections, and assessment of impacts on flood risk, drainage, saline intrusion and coastal erosion; and outlining potential approaches to mitigate and adapt to climate change as flood risk management is delivered. Technical report will inform public facing document that will include largely case study presentation of climate change impacts across Plan area. www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/climate-change/broadland-futures-initiative
- BA contributing to inventory of natural capital assets in Norfolk and Suffolk.
- Green tourism continues to be promoted through local businesses: www.visitthebroads.co.uk/the-blog/a-sustainable-broads-national-park

10.2 Commission and coordinate research to inform management approaches to decrease carbon emissions and increase carbon sequestration in the Broads

- CANAPE project: Sales of Broads charcoal continuing and Fairhaven Water Garden creating their own. Reed biochar to be incorporated into soil at Farmshare to test its effectiveness as stable form of carbon.

- Working group set up to consider carbon offsetting options in Broads, initially looking at need to offset peat loss through planning applications.
- Peat and Carbon Mapping Project: Consultants commissioned to digitise peat depth data and assess bulk density. Data on peat accumulation rates and peat wastage under drainage to support spatial assessment of peat gains and losses in the Broads. Site emission tool being assessed to support development of lowland carbon calculation system.

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