

Date: 13 November 2017

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing to inform you about our project which aims to improve the flow of the Lower River Crane. You are probably aware that the Lower River Crane suffers from very low flows for prolonged periods each year. This is due to a historic arrangement which diverts most of the flow down the Duke of Northumberland's River. Our project aims to split the available flow more evenly between the two rivers and thereby improve flows in the Lower River Crane for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Based on our studies so far we do not expect these change in flows to negatively impact the Duke of Northumberland's River. However, we have planned a one year test to investigate this further.

We would like to invite you along to mark the start of this test for our 'Lower River Crane Flow Improvement Project' on 29 November 2017. The test involves lowering Mereway Weir to increase flows along the Lower River Crane. We will be holding a drop-in from 12:00 till 13:00 at Mereway Weir which is located at the south end of Kneller Gardens on Mereway Road, TW2 6RG (See map for reference). We aim to change the level of Mereway Weir at 12:15.

The purpose of the test is to identify the impact of improving flows in the Lower River Crane on local water abstractions, ecology of the Duke of Northumberland's River and ecology of the Lower River Crane. If the test proves to be successful the weir will remain at the lower operational level.

This project is running alongside the Crane Valley Partnership's Vision for an improved landscape along the River Crane from Kneller Gardens to Cole Park Island. More information on the Vision can be found at www.cran valley.org.uk/projects/lower-river-crane.html.

What will we monitor during the test?

Real time river level monitoring will be carried out at our gauging stations and Mereway Weir. If the levels fall outside our set limits we will receive an automatic notification allowing us to act accordingly. Real time river levels can be viewed at www.gaugemap.co.uk.

In addition to river level monitoring, we will observe water depth and velocity (flow speed) at multiple sites along the Duke of Northumberland's River and Lower River Crane each month.

We will monitor the ecology through habitat, fish and invertebrate surveys alongside fixed point photographs.

How can you be involved?

We are recruiting volunteers to help monitor the rivers using fixed point photographs. If you would like to be involved there are 2 options.

Firstly, we are looking for volunteers to walk along stretches of the river on a monthly basis and send in photos from fixed points that we have identified.

Secondly, we would like photos of stretches of the river that are not open to the public. If the river is visible from the bottom of your garden along a stretch that has no public access, you can help us by sending in a photo every month.

Please phone Amanda MacLean on 07557 190 457 or email amanda.maclean@environment-agency.gov.uk for information on how to participate.

What effect will changing the weir settings have on flood risk?

The change of settings will allow more water down the Lower River Crane at medium and low flows, diverting it from the Duke of Northumberland's River. At very high flows the weir automatically lowers to allow as much water through as possible, this will not be changed. Therefore, the test will not alter the current flood risk on either river.

We hope to meet you at the lowering of Mereway Weir on Wednesday 29 November.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Perry
Project Manager
Environment Agency

Alchemy, Bessemer Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL7 1HE

Email: HertsNLondon@environment-agency.gov.uk

