

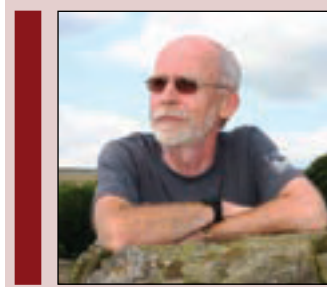
# Slowing the Flow increases Funding Opportunities

**A**s climate change has an increasing impact we are already experiencing more frequent flooding caused by high rainfall events.

In river catchments such as that of Aire, there are opportunities for farmers to attract funding to help to address this problem by “Slowing the Flow” – basically reducing the rate at which rainfall can get into watercourses and speed downstream creating flooding events such as the “Boxing Day Floods” in Leeds in 2015. This “Natural Flood Management” approach involves working with the natural processes to slow runoff and improve soil infiltration by:

1. Increasing the rate at which rainfall can infiltrate or soak into the land, and the amount of water which can be stored in the soil. Key things in this area include minimising soil compaction and damage by avoiding stocking or trafficking when the soil is overly wet and liable to damage; dealing with soil compaction by aeration or subsoiling; and building a healthy resilient soil, typically with an increased soil organic matter content. Interestingly this can also help to counter the impact of drought too by increasing the amount of water stored in the soil, and it will also improve grassland productivity.

2. Slowing the rate of surface runoff, and therefore the speed at



**Phil Lyth, of Yorkshire Farming and Wildlife Partnership, shines the spotlight on the Upper Aire Natural Flood Management Project**

which rainfall can enter watercourses – Slower runoff increases the opportunities for water to soak into the soil too. There are many things that can help to slow runoff, including for example longer “rouger” surface vegetation rather than short-cropped grass in key areas, such as fenced riverside buffer-strips; carefully located areas of woodland and “cross-slope” hedges.

3. Increasing the opportunities for in-channel or floodplain storage of water by, for example, creating leaky dams and temporary storage ponds, which hold additional water during flood events and then empty again ready for the next flood; and protecting areas of “washland” in the floodplain so

that they can be allowed to flood at critical water levels which have the biggest benefit for reducing flooding in key areas further downstream.

The benefits of individual interventions and changes in management may be small on a local level, but add up to have a significant effect if adopted on a catchment-wide scale. Current modelling of the impacts of different interventions suggests that soil aeration and woodland planting, if carefully targeted, can have the biggest bang for the buck.

This is what we have been “beavering away” at (pardon the pun) in the Upper Aire Project since 2011, and by taking advantage of a range of funding sources we have helped to find funding for farmers to deliver an impressive amount of work within the Aire catchment upstream of Keighley, which will already be making a difference, but we need to do even more to address the impact of more extreme weather.

Farming has always been about producing more than just food, so paying farmers “public money for public goods” under schemes such as the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) & Countryside Stewardship is not a new idea by any means, but as BPS is withdrawn this this year and replaced by reducing delinked payments, this funding is becoming more and



more important to maintaining farm incomes.

Schemes are being developed under which those benefiting from reduced flooding can help to fund farmers to adopt management practices and make and maintain interventions which can be shown to make a difference in the long term, so watch this space!

If you would like to know how you can get involved on your land contact Suzie (07879 645030) or Phil (0771 3333 170) at the Upper Aire Project to arrange a visit. Phil Lyth BSc MIAgE CEnv. Yorkshire Farming and Wildlife Partnership. 0771 3333 170. phil.lyth@farmingandwildlife.net www.farmingandwildlife.net

## Free Business Advice for Farmers through FFRF

**H**ello, my name is Frances Wade, born and bred on a beef and sheep farm in Cononley, and I'd like to tell you about some of the opportunities for farmers in this area through my work.

Having graduated from The University of York I am pleased to have secured a position as a Graduate Consultant with ADAS, the largest independent provider of agricultural and environmental consultancy with over 75 years of experience in the sector.

ADAS is offering funded and free business advice and support to farmers in England as part of the wider Defra Future Farming Resilience Funds (FFRF) scheme. With declining BPS, high input costs, changing government policies and weather issues increasingly impacting farmers, this scheme is designed to help farming businesses become more resilient and improve profitability in light of these challenges.

Through FFRF, at no cost to the farmer, we are able to offer a range of different types of support available to farmers from workshops and awareness raising events, phone calls to answer smaller queries, and 1-1 tailored advice visits. Our 1-1 visits can include business, technical and environmental support. We can provide up to 4 interventions or pieces of work relating to these topics.

Some examples of the type of work we have done in the area include nutrient planning, succession planning, enhancing productivity, developing a business plan, carbon and biodiversity audits, and advice around agri-environment scheme applications.

To qualify for the scheme, you must farm in England and claim BPS. The scheme is running until March 2025, so there is plenty of time to sign up for advice and support.



To apply, email [resilience@adas.co.uk](mailto:resilience@adas.co.uk) or call us on 03301 755839 for general information about the project and to register. Alternatively, scan the QR code to fill in the



registration form to register your interest in the fund and someone will get in touch with you. All you need is your email address, farm address and your SBI number.