



Volunteer-led Restoration on the Wandle

The story so far

Local people are often involved in river projects during the delivery phase, for example helping with planting events and monitoring. This means they are usually not involved in the design and development of a project. In this case, on the Wandle, a team of local volunteers helped with a river restoration project through all the phases - from idea and development through to the delivery of their own project on the river.

The Wandle rehab team worked for two years with the South East Rivers Trust to learn all about urban river restoration. They learned how simple techniques can be used to improve the Wandle for wildlife. With this training, the team designed their own project, successfully applying for a permit from the Environment Agency and then delivered it with the local community.

The river was restored by

- Narrowing the channel with large woody structured, creating a meander
- Adding 6 tons of gravel for fish spawning habitat.

How has it helped wildlife?

- New habitats for fish and other wildlife have been created in the previously straight and slow flowing channel.
- Fish now have access to shelter from predators, refuge from high flows and new gravel spawning grounds.

How has it helped people?

- The Wandle River Rehab Team has gained experience in river restoration design and delivery. Local awareness of restoration and its benefits has been increased.
- Volunteers have had their skills improved to monitor changes in fish habitat availability and aquatic invertebrate communities.

Partnership organisations

South East Rivers Trust, Wandle River Rehab Volunteer Team, Living Wandle Landscape Partnership, Heritage Lottery Fund, Environment Agency, London Borough of Sutton.



BEFORE – A straight, over-shaded section of the River Wandle © South East Rivers Trust



AFTER – New woody marginal wetland area with new gravels and increased flow © South East Rivers Trust



Nearest station: Hackbridge