



Natural Flood Management Natural England Policy Paper

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www.gov.uk/natural-england

NFM: securing environmental outcomes

- **Background to NFM**
- **How NFM links to NE's priorities**
- **How can we ensure NFM delivers for the natural environment?**

A range of perspectives

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Protecting and restoring
natural processes

Emulating and managing natural
processes



What does NE want?

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Natural England is interested in NFM that is:

- **Holistic**
- **Sustainable**
- **Integrated**
- **Based on the principles of natural function**
- **and delivers for the natural environment**
- **NOT just using nature as engineering material**



Start with natural function...

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Good projects ☺

Clear objectives and expectations

Recognise and articulate compromises

Spot opportunities (risks) for environment

Mitigate sustainably + build natural capital

Flooding + role in natural (modified) systems

Natural ecological function + catchment processes

The evidence for NFM



Evidence: Working with Natural Processes

- **NFM is effective for flooding at moderate scales**
- **NFM can deliver other benefits**
- **More research is needed**

How should we use NFM?



NFM is part of the solution

- **NFM won't solve flooding alone**
- **NFM can plug the FCERM viability gap**
- **Quality NFM is worth doing anyway!**
- **(as long as you don't make flooding worse)**
- **(and depending whose funding you're spending)**
- **Greater risk requires greater certainty**
- **We should look at benefits in the round**

NFM is widely applicable



NFM is relevant...

- **At large and small scales**
- **From source to sea**
- **From rural to urban (NFM = SuDS!)**

Think laterally

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Think spatially and laterally about NFM...

- NFM doesn't always go where the problems show
- NFM isn't a competing land use – it's not (necessarily) NFM **OR** something else
- NFM doesn't have to be good for flood risk **OR** the environment – it's a layer cake, not a pie!





Leaky woody dam

**More ecologically
functional = less
flood risk benefit?**

**River morphology
Floodplain topology
Wet woodland**



River Seven, Pickering Slow the Flow

Promoting good NFM delivery



Through our land management work, we can:

- **Push for quality NFM**
- **Show how conservation management can reduce flooding**
- **Show how FCERM projects can do more for the environment**
- **Promote landscape-scale delivery (C21)**

Promoting good NFM delivery



Through our land use planning work, we can:

- **Push for sustainable planning decisions**
- **Promote a green infrastructure approach**
- **Use Net Gain as a tool to build in NFM**

What next for NFM in NE



Next steps

- **Tell government that quality NFM is important**
- **Push for NFM principles in new FCERM strategy**
- **Shape approach to NFM in ELMS**
- **Support local teams with NFM toolkit**
- **Add flooding to CSF advice remit** ✓
- **More evidence on effectiveness and value of NFM**