

Ouse Washes: Middle Level Barrier Bank raising works

October 2021

The Middle Level Barrier Bank is the bank of the Ouse Washes reservoir extending from Earith to Welmore Lake Sluice. The work we are doing is to comply with recommendations made by the reservoir Inspecting Engineer to complete the works under the Reservoir Act 1975.

Progress

We are pleased to announce that the bank works at Welney are now complete.

Once again, this year, the weather has been very wet and in some areas the haul road has experienced prolonged periods of flooding. We will complete the haul road repair works next year when we return to construct the demountable flood barrier.

The bank works between Sutton Gault and Mepal are now complete. The public footpath will remain closed to give the grass time to establish.

We will complete the bank works at Welches Dam by 31 October 2021 although this is weather dependant. We have installed four of the five bird hides at the RSPB Reserve and we will install the fifth one during the 2022 season.

We will remove the temporary bridge, which was installed at Mepal to bring the material directly to the bank, in November as it is no longer needed.

There will still be some activity in the area during October and November whilst the team demobilise and tidy the area ready for winter.

Other works in the Ouse Washes area

As part of our general maintenance works, we will shortly be carrying out repair works to the flood gates at Jolly Bankers and Sutton Gault. The work will be done by Breheny Civil Engineering, and residents at Sutton Gault will receive a letter explaining more. If you have any questions about this, please contact us using the details overleaf and we will direct you to the right person.

Public footpath and bridleway access

We still have a full footpath closure of the Middle Level Barrier Bank in place with Cambridgeshire County Council.

The reason for the footpath closure is to allow for the grass to grow undisturbed. Grass growth is very important to the stability of the reservoir bank and walking or driving over the newly seeded grass will prevent it from growing.

There must be good grass root growth before we can open sections of the bank back to the public.

Middle Level Barrier Bank - where it is closed?

- Sutton Gault to A142, Mepal
- A142, Mepal to Welches Dam
- Welches Dam to railway bridge
- Railway bridge to Welney
- Closures are clearly signposted



Environment

Based on the Middle Barrier Bank at Welney on the Ouse Washes, we were aware of a spigot mortar base in the embankment, on which a spigot mortar gun would have been fitted; these were heavy and rather crude guns. They were not anti-aircraft guns and were intended for use against tanks and ground forces in case of invasion during WW2.

We didn't know how big the base was and hoped we could remove the base to build the bank works and then replace it.

A team of archaeologists surveyed the area and observed removal of the earth around it. It was considered too large to be removed without potential damage and the archaeological team agreed that we could build the embankment around the base under their supervision.



WW2 Spigot Mortar Base

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact our Public Liaison Officer: Monica Stonham via email ousewashesprojectea@gmail.com or call 07534 457348.

You can be added to our mailing list to receive future updates about this scheme, through the email address and telephone number given above.

Thank you for taking the time to read this update.



Stay up to date and visit our information page for the most up to date information

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/east-anglia-c-e/ouse-washes-section-10-works/>

The project is being carried out by JacksonHyder on behalf of the Environment Agency with support from:



Floodline 0345 988 1188

Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60