



Inspiring Meadows;

Techniques used to reverse loss of species-rich grassland in the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area Northamptonshire

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Partnership Project

- River Nene Regional Park
- Wildlife Trust BCN

Funded by

- Natural England (via HLS)
- SITA Trust & NCC (Inspiring Meadows)
- Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (Land Advisor Fund)
- The Lottery (HLF and Awards for All)
- RNRP Environmental Grant Scheme



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Why is it needed?

- Massive loss of species rich grassland since 1940's
- Nationally only about 3% of the 1930's total left
- Northamptonshire following that trend
- Mostly small isolated meadows remaining
- Much converted to arable production and improved grassland
- Others lost to sand and gravel extraction
- Once extraction completed remaining land restored to lakes, arable production and improved grassland

How much have we achieved?

- Started in 2006 using HLS and RNRP Environmental Grant Scheme
- Now recreated over 210ha of species rich grassland
- Restored over 150ha and returned it to appropriate management

This includes:

- Wet grassland sites (MG4)
- Historic water meadow
- Dry and acid grasslands sites
- SSSI, LWS, LNR and SAMs in various ownership



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Nene Valley NIA

- Focus on improving ecology of Nene Valley
- 5 objectives; development, visitor access, river restoration, land management, ecosystem services
- Land advisor working in conjunction with CSF
- Focus at a catchment scale
- Target priority habitats and Local Wildlife Sites
- Particular focus on meadows
- Mechanisms – HLS (13 schemes) and land advisor fund

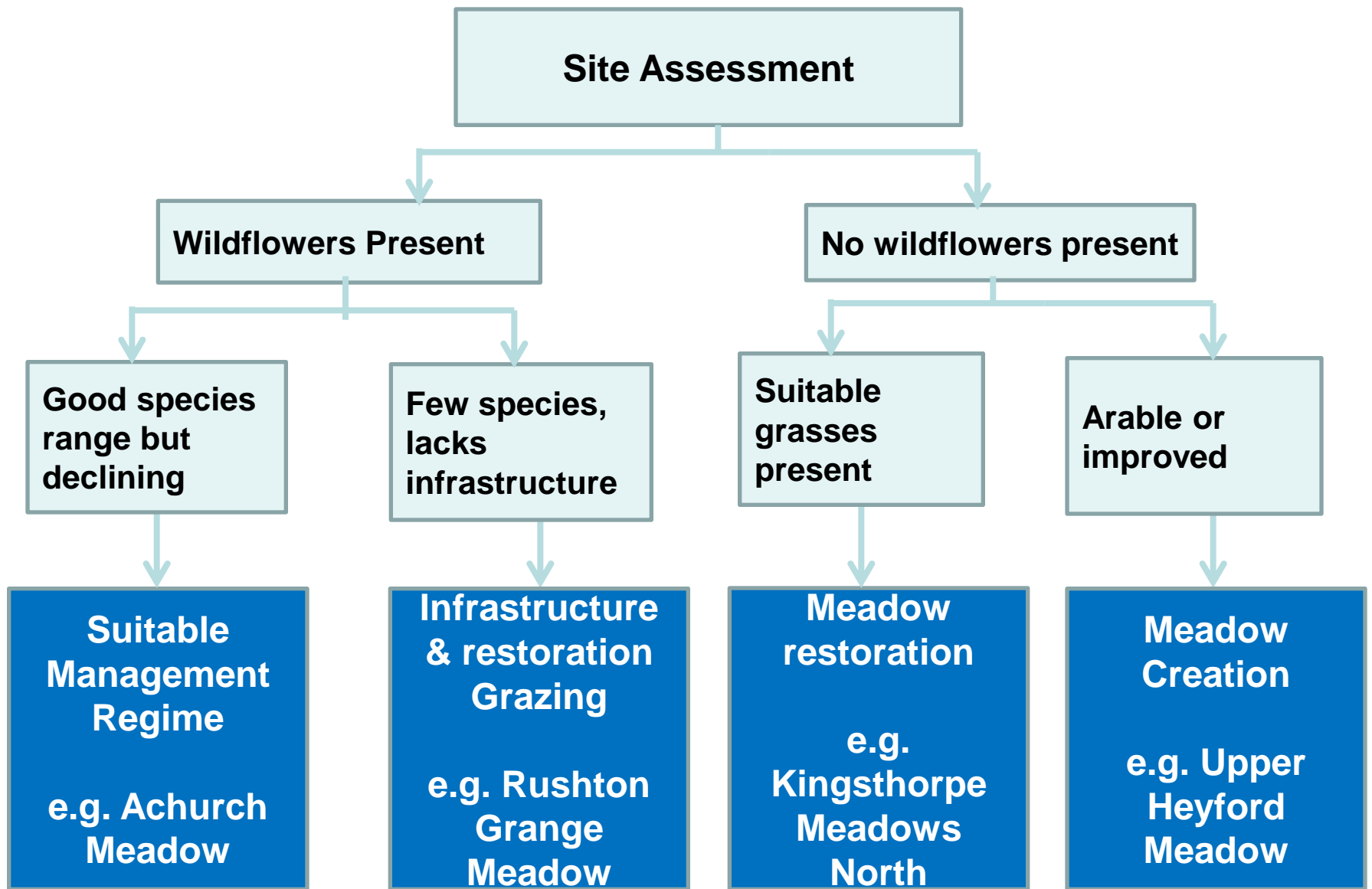


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Meadow Restoration

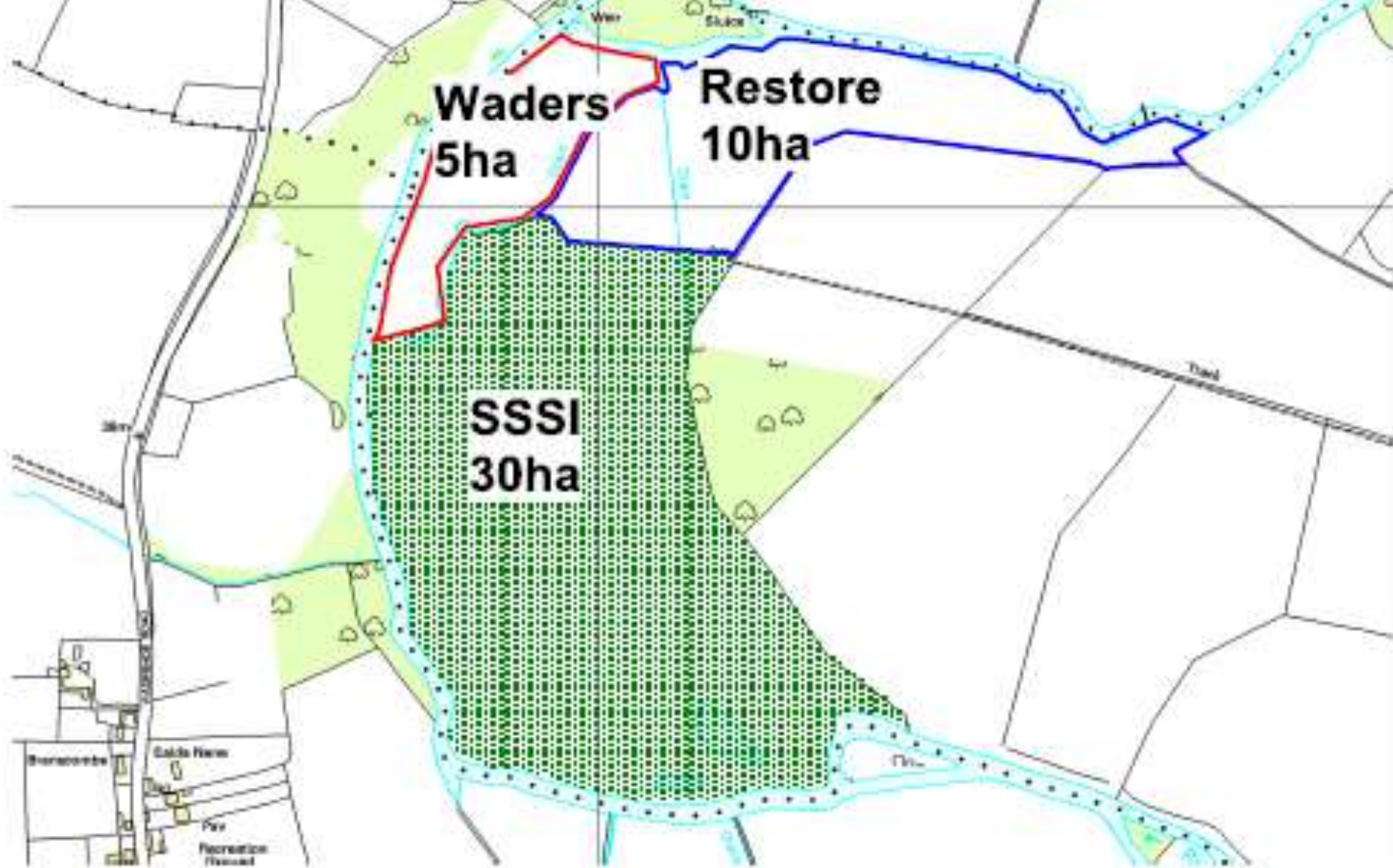
- Worked across a range of sites using differing techniques dependant on;
 - Existing botanical interest
 - Infrastructure
 - Landholding



Achurch Meadow SSSI







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Inspiring Meadows Project

- **Focus on sites with some wildflower species remaining but lacking management and or infrastructure**
- SITA & NCC funded - targeting undermanaged LWS
- 3 year project – survey work, capital and restoration work
 - Restore 20 sites through improved management or restoring features
 - Focus on sites outside of stewardship
 - Capital works to secure/encourage long-term management
 - Most popular funding fencing and water
 - Total of 22 sites worked on (arguably none are restored yet!)



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Rushton Grange Meadows







But - Stanwick Hay Meadow



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Coronation Meadows

- **Grassland sites with potential for restoration but have inappropriate management and infrastructure**
 - Kingsthorpe North Meadows
 - Species poor meadow
 - Owned by Local community
 - Declined due lack management over many years
 - Introduction of hay cut improved slopes, not lower compartment

Kingsthorpe North Meadow 2008



Kingsthorpe North Meadow 2011





<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2sHa46gPNk>









Fotheringhay meadow restoration





A wide-angle photograph of a lush meadow filled with numerous small, purple and white flowers, likely daisies and thistles, growing in tall grass. The background features a line of dark green trees under a bright blue sky with large, white, fluffy clouds. The text "From arable field to species rich meadow" is overlaid in white, bold font across the middle of the image.

From arable field to species rich meadow

2008-13

2008



2008



2008



VER NENE REGIONAL PARK
INSPIRED SPACES

2008



ER NENE REGIONAL PARK
SPIREDSPACES

2008



2008



2009



2010



2011



RIVER NENE REGIONAL PARK
INSPIREDSPACES

2012



2013



Thanks



NENE VALLEY

Nature • Improvement • Area
connecting people and nature



**NATURAL
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**A clear solution
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CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING



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