



During

Habitat Creation

Project

Batheaston Reservoir reinstatement, Cotswolds AONB

Client

Wessex Water

Background

Batheaston reservoir became operationally redundant in 1994. Originally constructed of stone and concrete, it lay within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and was surrounded by land of high nature conservation value. The client agreed to restore the site to a quality that matched its setting. Landmark was appointed to oversee the creation of mixed wildlife habitats, including species rich meadows, to supervise hedgerow and streamside planting, and to manage the site for 5 years.



After

Description

After partial demolition of structures the reservoir was filled with locally-excavated calcareous stony subsoil. Spring water, which flowed naturally through the site, was channelled to create two ponds within the filled reservoir basin.

Initial establishment of the meadow was hampered by the poor structure of the subsoil and low nutrient levels, exacerbated by landfill compaction. Landmark employed innovative techniques to overcome these deficiencies. Soil structure was improved by adding 10,000 imported earthworms, which were distributed throughout the site in introduced piles of compost. Heavy application of fertiliser would have encouraged grasses to flourish at the expense of wild flowers, so soil fertility was gradually increased by adding 'Biogran', a by-product of sewage treatment. After 4 years of careful management, diverse flower-rich meadows have been successfully established, with over 36 species recorded. The tree and hedgerow planting is beginning to mature, helping the site to blend into its surrounding landscape, and the valley now has the added feature of two new ponds linked by an attractive stream.

Client benefits

Innovative techniques and careful management created a site of high nature conservation value, promoting the reputation of the client as a responsible land manager.