Re-discovering & Re-wilding a ‘lost landscape’- Lincolnshire’s Ancholme Valley

This exciting community-led project in the remarkable and unique Ancholme Valley starts at the present day to peel back layers of history and discover hidden landscape heritage and biodiversity. The project combines ecological and historical information with research into memories and reminiscences of recent landscape change, and the drainage of once-extensive wetlands. The activities lead to potential ‘rewilding’.

We will engage and train community volunteers to undertake historic archival research, and landscape-history fieldwork; rediscovering lost landscapes and cultural heritage. Modern mapping and imaging techniques will create landscape time-slices to identify / interpret the past in the present.

Computer graphics / artwork digital archives promoted at Community Heritage / Biodiversity Days will visualise displays and digital trails for wider public appreciation and education.

The project captures historic information (heritage, archaeology, ecology) to reconstruct models / images of former landscapes. Drained through 1600s ‘land improvement’, the project addresses climate change, sea level rise, and regional socio-economics. Supported by local stakeholders it will reverse negative socio-economic trends and simultaneously help the area become more resilient to current and expected future environmental changes. Heritage, biodiversity, and landscape will underpin a regional growth-pole for nature-based tourism.

**THIS HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS ONE OF THE BEST REWILDING OPPORTUNITIES IN LOWLAND ENGLAND**

Ian D. Rotherham, Sheffield Hallam University & SYBRG research team

Supported by
The River Ancholme runs from the heart of Lincolnshire due north to the Humber. This is an early example of a major drainage scheme which converts the land to what is now mostly low-grade farmland and increasingly at risk from inland flooding, sea level incursions, salinification and more.

Experiments to re-wet some of the 4-5 landholdings suggest that the reversion process can be quite easy and effective, and the results for biodiversity would be outstanding. Furthermore, the project sees the re-wetted Ancholme Valley as an economic growth hub for the region’s underperforming tourism economy.

The context of the project is also exciting as the nearby towns of Scunthorpe and Grimsby both experience high levels of economic decline and of associated socio-economic multiple deprivation.

This project will make a unique difference and engage some of the poorest communities in rewilding and associated benefits from health and fitness to economy and education.

We are currently seeking partners, Sponsors, and champions.