



FACTS AND FIGURES

Area of project:	508ha
Lead partner:	Forestry Commission
Project partners:	ODPM, RNRP Initiative, private sector investor, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation
Consultants:	Blyth and Blyth Consulting, Northamptonshire Archaeology
Start and finish dates:	July 2004 (planning start); October 2005
Project costs:	£760,000, of which: engineering design, £62,400; construction, £697,600
Construction:	Pauleys Engineering
Steel fabrication:	Hayley's Engineering
Funding sources:	ODPM – Growth Area Fund, £720,000; Forestry Commission, £40,000

Above: The Salcey Forest Tree Top Way gives users of all ages and abilities a new perspective on the natural world

Below right: The shelter in the Langdon Hills Country park aims to inform visitors, making a visit to the park more rewarding

Langdon Hills Country Park, Essex

THE NEW SHELTER for the Langdon Hills Country Park was to be a practical space for the public to shelter from the sun and rain, but just as importantly a wildlife habitat, constructed sustainably.

There are two separate roofs, one using reclaimed soil and green waste compost,

the other crushed concrete. They are planted with drought-tolerant species but allow bare space to encourage the soil/concrete to heat up, which is important for invertebrates.

The walls are infilled with log sections from the park, crushed concrete, cans and bottles. Gaps between the cladding will provide nesting space for birds, while lengths of bamboo are for solitary bees and lacewings.

Education is a key part of the scheme. The plywood used to brace the building is also a background for maps of the area and information on wildlife in the Park. Tree and shrub species visitors may expect to see in the park have been

planted in a raised bed with name tags and relevant information. Flower species to be found in and around the Park will be planted in front of the new shelter. ■

With additional funding through the RNRP Initiative, the Forestry Commission has been able to provide additional facilities for the communities that the woodland serves. The project has delivered a new two-mile, all-ability trail suitable for families with pushchairs as well as wheelchair users; and a new five-mile family cycle route with a new woodland café. This includes new wooden bridges to take wheelchairs over the archaeological features that date back to the forest's heyday as a medieval hunting forest.

The new 'Canopy Walk' or 'Tree Top Way' is a walkway taking visitors of all ages and abilities from the forest floor to the upper canopy of the oaks. The wooden and steel structure rises gently from the ground with frequent standing platforms and acts as a metaphorical bridge between the ground and the sky, giving visitors a new perspective on the natural world. It is 300m long, and two metres wide, allowing for two-way traffic and people to pause and rest.

The project is the first significant signature project for the RNRP Initiative and celebrates the historic Salcey Forest and woodland birds, insects and animals. It is also a promotion of walking for healthy living and of environmental learning. ■

Visit: www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Environment/MKSM/RNRP

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Client:	Thurrock Council
Shelter design and construction:	Grass Roof Company
Start and finish dates:	June 2005
Shelter cost:	£6,200 + VAT
Funding sources:	xxxxxxxxxx

