

## **“To restore or not to restore, that is the question, whether ‘tis nobler...”**

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Using examples from UK and other estuaries both elsewhere in Europe and further afield, this presentation discusses the benefits of using ecoengineering with ecohydrology in restoring the ecology and ecosystem services in estuarine areas and wetlands. It considers whether such restoration improves the ecology in an area for the long term or only in the short term and whether any ecoengineering benefits those carrying out the restoration more than the ecology of the area.

This covers the philosophical aspects of whether creating any ecology, even for a short time, is better than doing nothing and also the response of those developers who have to fund such restoration efforts even if the benefits are short lived. Hence it considers examples where an objective may be to restore an area but not maintain it once restored. The examples are taken from the remediation of poor water quality (as in the Thames Estuary), as recovery from temporary habitat loss, and the restoration of ancient wetlands which have been farmland in historical times (e.g. in the Humber).

The examples cover the way in which socio-economic benefits may equal, or even outweigh, the ecological benefits (as in flood defence schemes) and thus the way in which economic imperatives can be the justification for ecological restoration and ecoengineering (such as using tunnelling waste to create new bird habitat).