



Staffordshire Wildlife Trust



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The Central Rivers Initiative

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The Central Rivers Initiative is working to shape and guide the progressive restoration and revitalisation of the river valley between Burton, Lichfield and Tamworth.

Recognising the potential of quarries

For many years, Staffordshire has been the UK's largest producer of land-won sand and gravel. The majority of the

county's quarries are concentrated within the Tame and Trent valleys - around Burton-on-Trent, Lichfield and Tamworth.

The Central Rivers Initiative (CRI) believes that it is these sites, all in various stages of extraction and restoration, that are key to the future of this 40 square mile region and the 180,000 people who live there.

The vision of the Central Rivers Initiative

After reaching the end of their working lives, quarries offer huge potential as places for tourism, employment, recreation and wildlife. The vision of CRI is to carefully restore these sites to create beautiful places where people can explore and enjoy water, landscape and wildlife, and to form a sustainable network of wildlife habitats, public amenities and agricultural land.

Founded 15 years ago and led by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, the Central Rivers Initiative is a partnership of local authorities, mineral companies, tourist attractions, charities and Government bodies who are working to drive and coordinate this massive restoration project.

On the ground

The Central Rivers area already has several shining examples of what can be achieved when quarries are restored carefully. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Croxall Lakes nature reserve, in Alrewas, was formerly quarried for sand and gravel, but now this 104 acre site is an important wetland habitat for wildfowl and wading birds such as snipe, oystercatcher and redshank.

The National Memorial Arboretum close by is another example of success. Established in 1997 on 60 acres of former sand and gravel workings, the arboretum is now visited by 300,000 people every year. As well as being a special place to honour the fallen, the site also contains a wide variety of natural habitats including emerging woodland, hay meadows, riverbank and marsh.

The Living Landscape approach

In addition to guiding the progressive restoration of quarries, the CRI partnership is also concerned with shaping the landscape in between. The aim of the partnership is to inspire and encourage landowners, communities and individuals to get involved in shaping their local landscape.

This approach to conservation - continuing to protect and expand core areas of high quality wildlife habitat, investing energy into improving the land in between these areas and involving people in the process - is called the 'Living Landscape' approach, a concept pioneered by The Wildlife Trusts.

More information

To learn more about the Central Rivers Initiative, visit the [project website](#)  

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