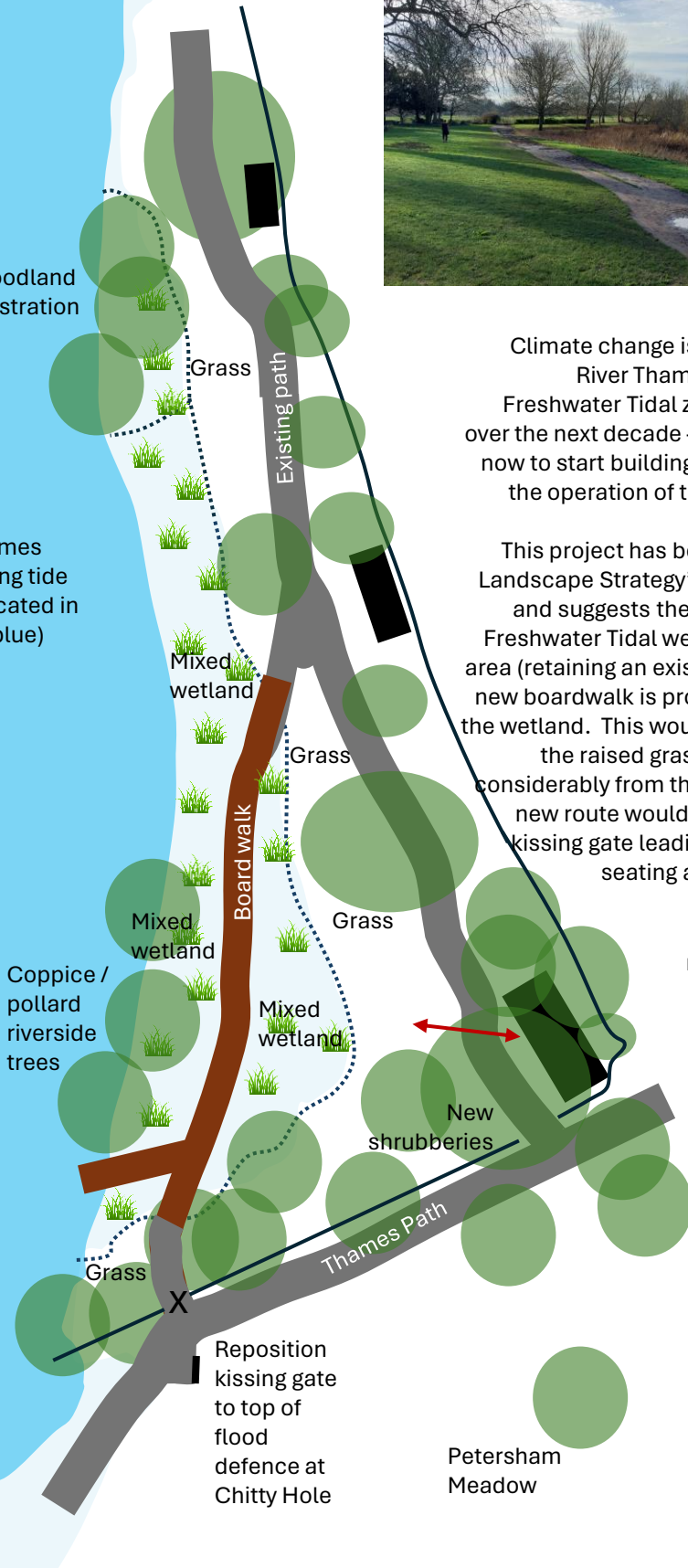


Buccleuch Gardens Freshwater Tidal Habitat Creation



Wet woodland demonstration area

River Thames (with spring tide level indicated in a lighter blue)



Climate change is set to alter the way that the River Thames floods. It is likely that the Freshwater Tidal zone will become a lot wetter over the next decade – measures need to be taken now to start building floodplain resilience before the operation of the Thames Barrier is altered.

This project has been proposed by the Thames Landscape Strategy’s Rewilding Arcadia scheme and suggests the creation of a demonstration Freshwater Tidal wetland in an existing low-lying area (retaining an existing small wet woodland). A new boardwalk is proposed, meandering through the wetland. This would replace the desire path to the raised grassed lawn that has detracted considerably from the garden’s appearance. The new route would terminate at a re-positioned kissing gate leading directly to the Chitty Hole seating area in Petersham Meadows.

The raised lawn can be restored and better linked to the café to encourage users to sit and enjoy the space. Tired shrubberies would be removed and replaced with steps, an accessible slope and new planting.

The historic role of Buccleuch Gardens as ‘Richmond’s Seaside’ could therefore be re-interpreted for the C21st – created in a way that takes account of and interprets the challenges that climate change will have on the floodplain over the coming decades.





Buckleuch Gardens Café

Remove 15m length of railings and adjacent shrubbery (retaining trees) in front of the café to link the facility directly with the grassed area. New steps and border adjacent to the existing steps into the gardens.



Buckleuch Gardens Freshwater Tidal Wetland

To create a formal Freshwater Tidal wetland that can be used to demonstrate this endangered habitat and the potential for its restoration in the Richmond area. Retain trees but pollard and/or coppice riverside specimens. Where tree roots allow, lower land to create areas that will flood during neap tides (to be planted with reeds). Tides over 6.2m will overtop the embankment replenishing newly created wetland areas. Planting to include reed and swathes of riparian native species – installed by volunteers using coir matting (sedges, flag iris, purple loosestrife, angelica, burdock etc).

A small area of wet woodland can be interpreted at the downstream end of the wet woodland through the retention of existing trees. To include a small interpretation panel about Freshwater Tidal habitat.



Buckleuch Gardens Boardwalk

Make good the desire path and return to grassed lawn. Create a new footpath through the wetland. This path would ideally be formed as a raised boardwalk constructed from recycled plastic. Walkers will be discouraged from re-making the desire line by the repositioning of the kissing gate at Chitty Hole - walkers will naturally navigate to the boardwalk. To each end of the boardwalk, a bound path would connect with existing footpaths.

Riverbank Treatment

It is not proposed to carry out any works to the riverbank wall itself. Rather a 50cm high spiled willow and hazel hurdle would be created (by volunteers) to form a robust edge to the floodable area and deflect the power of the tide (and litter) from the wetland. EA predictions indicate that this particular stretch of the Thames is likely to get a lot wetter over the coming decade.



Next Steps

If the TLS proposals are supported, the scheme will need to be costed and flood levels determined to inform detailed design. Land drainage consent will be needed. Funding has been identified from the Father Thames with monies matched from various sources (LBRuT). Additional funding however, may be needed – this will be secured through grants such as the GLA Rewilding Awards and Heritage Fund Small Grants Scheme.