



Settling into the Landscape

Enhancing the recreational value of the area was part of the brief when the Authority embarked on a challenging engineering project to clean up polluted minewater, which was running into the Mouse Water near Forth in South Lanarkshire.

The purpose of the project was to design and construct a scheme to treat ochreous orange coloured water, originating from disused coal workings, which flowed across the site and into the Mouse Water, a tributary of the Clyde, which rises two miles to the north-east of Forth.

In addition to treating the minewater to high environmental standards, the scheme had to satisfy the Forestry Commission, from whom the site is leased, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and the public.

Prior to construction of the scheme, the site was managed by the Forestry Commission as part of a wider community resource. The area was popular with visitors, mainly because it was a quiet, pleasant green space not far from the village of Forth.

Because of the existing leisure use, a 'soft' engineering approach was taken to create a scheme which was visually more attractive,



utilising passive treatment technology which did not use chemicals or energy.

Considerable design challenges were met to create a scheme which fitted into the local environment and retained the amenity value for the public.

The scheme was designed to merge into and become an integral part of the existing landscape. Enhanced amenity value included wetlands, shaped viewpoints and new pedestrian footbridges and footpaths.

An especially innovative feature was building twin settlement ponds which appeared as one by using a pre-cast concrete dividing wall which finished just below water level. Dividing the pond in this way allowed continued treatment of the water when one side of the pond was closed for sludge removal.

Other environmental considerations included sympathetic use of appropriate materials and extensive landscape planting with native species.

"From the early stages a team working approach was developed. Widespread consultation took place with interested parties with close co-operation between the Authority, our consultants and the Forestry Commission," says Tim Sawyer, Senior Engineering Manager with the Authority.

Now the scheme is completed, local feedback suggests that there has been an increase in the number of visitors to the site.

