



NPA members rejected the Latchmore Brook scheme last year after campaigners staged a protest

Delight for campaigners over brook

**Christopher
Yandell**



CAMPAIGNERS living near a Hampshire beauty spot have won another round in their battle to defeat a controversial scheme that sparked hundreds of objections.

Organisations involved in the restoration of internationally-important habitats in the New Forest have decided not to lodge an appeal after plans for a wetland restoration scheme were thrown out.

An application to carry out the work was narrowly rejected at a meeting of the New Forest National Park Authority (NPA) last November.



Latchmore Brook

The Forestry Commission had sought consent to "restore" Latchmore Brook by reinstating the natural meanders that existed before the stream was artificially straightened in the 19th century in a bid to improve drainage.

Officials said the £1.5 million scheme would ease erosion by reducing the speed of water.

But many of the 340 objectors complained that proposals to infill the existing brook with almost 100,000 tonnes of material would result in hundreds of extra lorry movements.

They also claimed that the work would destroy current habitats.

The Friends of Latchmore (FoL) group staged a demonstration outside the meeting and were delighted when the plan was rejected. Now members are celebrating again following the decision not to lodge an appeal against the NPA's decision.

A FoL spokesman said the

scheme would have resulted in the Commission filling-in and re-routing the existing stream.

He added: "The plan to import 96,000 tons of hoggins and clay - enough to cover Wembley football pitch to a depth of 8.5 metres - was strongly opposed by the four local parish councils, over 300 objectors and many national and international experts.

"We welcomed the decision to reject the application on the grounds that any possible benefits would be outweighed by the destruction of existing wildlife.

"The area is far better served by thoughtful, gentle stewardship and local knowledge than by the heavy handed imposition of European wetland targets inappropriately applied."

The decision not to lodge an appeal was taken by the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme.

CONTACT ME

t: 023 8042 4522

e: chris.yandell@daily-echo.co.uk