

An amazing 50,000 cubic meters of lake silt has been moved. Roughly half has been taken out to dry on two sites within the park, the remainder has been fashioned to create a number of large reed beds around the margins of the lake as well as the islands. These new reed beds will help restore the lake's ecology by extracting water-born nutrients and creating habitats for fish, insects and birds.

The reed beds may take some time to establish themselves but in a few years' time the lake will look very different indeed. The removal of the silt means the lake will now be much deeper with some sections over 2.5metres. This will also help to improve the ecology by providing a more stable core temperature. Water levels in the lake will now be automatically controlled by pressure sensors which will operate gates at either end.

A new lake-side path is currently being created that will take visitors around the lake's edge with an option to walk into our arboretum across a new footbridge. At its southern edge visitors will first walk on a raised boardwalk then cross the lake via a 90m pontoon to reach the eastern shore. A new horseshoe-shaped weir has also been built to allow water to constantly spill over and should be a very attractive feature.

The original roundhouse, close to the lake's edge, is being expertly renovated so it can be used as an activity centre. For many years it has been hidden by a willow fence. Close to the roundhouse and beside the sandpit will be a paddling area for young children on a newly-created beach. Behind the roundhouse will be a grass amphitheatre that will hold over 250 people and which will feature a performance space at the front.

The new path will take visitors from this area southwards and they will pass another shingle beach on the other side of the historic model boating lake.

The recent weather has had an impact on this large project. This is likely to mean a delay of a few weeks in the opening of the new walking routes around the lake, particularly the southern edge. The opening date is scheduled to be in late April.

This ambitious project would not have taken place without the huge support of HLF and the Wicksteed Charitable Trust. Kettering Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council have also been generous in their assistance.

Further information

Robert Smith, Communications Manager, HLF on 020 7591 6245 or email: roberts@hlf.org.uk.