



Somerset's Water: 2000 Years of History

Ours is a managed landscape, where over 2000 years of drainage has created a special place that is productive for agriculture and rich in wildlife. The land is maintained by thousands of miles of rhydes, as well as around 15,000 water management structures and large manmade channels like the Sowey and King's Sedgemoor Drain. Our flood defences, both inland and coastal, protect homes and land from all but the most extreme weather conditions.

"The Somerset Levels are an ever-changing, largely man-made landscape, and what we see today is a snapshot in its long history. Over the millennia, from primitive times, those who have lived in this unique place, who know how to read its nature and who respect, understand and deeply value it, have learnt how to live alongside the challenges that come with calling this landscape home. The changing climate now requires these same people of the Somerset Levels to adapt again in order to create a new vision for a climate resilient future."

— Anne Maw: Lord-Lieutenant for Somerset

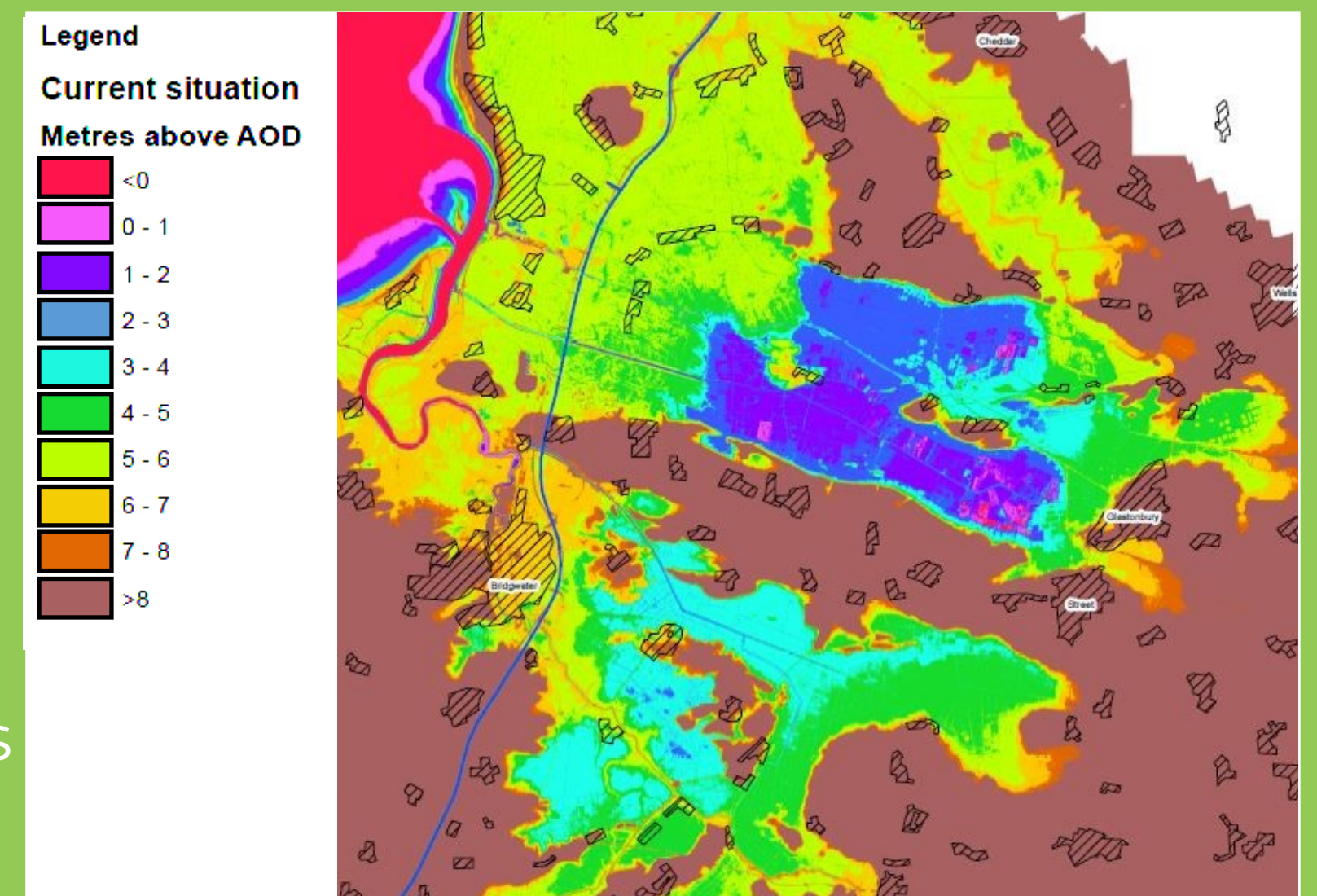


Climate Change & Natural Solutions:

Changing environmental pressures are putting more demand on our water management systems. Working with natural processes can ease some of the pressure on traditional defences, and these low-cost methods can create green spaces for communities and wildlife to enjoy, and lock up carbon through options such as tree planting or salt marsh creation.

Tide Locked System:

The long history of drainage and peat-digging have created a bowl-like shape, where most of the landscape sits below the level of the highest tides. Coastal defences protect us from the sea, but inland flood water on the lower land can only be drained or pumped out when the tide is low and the river levels drop.



Lidar image showing land height above sea level

Share your thoughts!

This is where your community knowledge, ideas and experience come in.

Can you identify opportunities for nature-based solutions to flooding and drought? Are there opportunities within your community- from household level to bigger scale investments? Would you like to take part in an Adaptation Pathway workshop?