



**SAVE  
RADLEY LAKES**

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**Statement issued 23 July 2007**

## **Warning of Increased Flood Risk from Filling Thrupp Lake**

For the second time in a month, large parts of England have been devastated by floods, and it is generally agreed that much of this flooding is caused by building on flood plains. Here, in Abingdon, huge areas of flood plain have already been built on, and many residents are finding their homes flooded and lives disrupted as a result. In North Abingdon / Radley, in recent years, 40 hectares (100 acres) of flood plain have been compromised by the clay lining and ash filling of the Radley Lakes and a further 12 hectares (30 acres) has been removed by developments in Audlett Drive like the Leisure Centre and the Quadrant Industrial Park.

Now RWE npower wish to fill Thrupp Lake with ash. Thrupp Lake is a huge area of 12 hectares (30 acres) which is currently available to soak up excess water in an emergency. Whilst the Environment Agency quibbles about whether Thrupp Lake is in the flood plain or not, its size and proximity to the river mean that it *could* be used to mitigate flood risk, while previous irreversible development in North Abingdon means that its removal will contribute to an already raised risk. RWE npower's proposal will raise the area of this lake by up to 4 metres above the surrounding land, and, instead of absorbing rainwater, this structure will shed it, via an outflow system, straight into the Thames. About 10cm of rain fell over Oxfordshire on Friday. That represents 12,000 cubic metres of water falling directly into Thrupp Lake, not counting that which will have flowed in from the surrounding land – probably several times more. All of that water is currently still in the lake. Npower's proposals would put it straight into the Thames, and thereby possibly onto the streets of towns and villages downstream.

Thrupp Lake lies within a few hundred metres of 'Lakes' H and I, which were destroyed in 2001/2002, by first being clay-lined, making them impervious to water, and then filled with power station ash. Subsequently, in January 2003, residents of Abingdon and Radley suffered heavy floods. At the moment, it is very evident that this ash tip is blocking the flood plain - flood water that would previously have been able to flow harmlessly into what were once lakes is now lapping at the clay barrier at its edge and forced to go elsewhere. With this part of the flood plain now unavailable, water that that would otherwise have gone into these lakes will now flow towards Abingdon instead, meaning that flood water will rise higher in Abingdon than it might otherwise have done.

Marjorie White of Save Radley Lakes said "Long term predictions are that global warming will increase the frequency and severity of severe flooding. Under the circumstances it is absolute madness to go ahead with the destruction of Thrupp Lake and increase the threat of flooding downstream in Abingdon. None of this is necessary! Npower can change their minds now if they want. So we ask them will they please change their minds for the sake of the safety, security and peace of mind of the people of Abingdon!"



Flooding in Ock Street, Abingdon on Sunday. Photograph by Basil Crowley

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