River and floodplain glossary

**Avulse** – natural process by which flow diverts out of an established river channel into a new permanent course on the adjacent floodplain

**Backwaters** – part of a river in which there is little or no current. It can be a branch off a main river, or to a body of water in a main river, backed up by an obstruction.

**Bar** – an elevated region of sediment (such as sand or gravel) that has been deposited by the flow.

**Berm** - A berm is a level space, shelf, or raised barrier (usually made of compacted soil).

**Bifurcated** – where the river divides into two branches of forks

**Biocomplexity** – In the context of river restoration this is the relationship between the hydrology, hydrogeology and ecology of the river and floodplain manifesting in the variety of features which influence the biodiversity that can live there.

**Biodiversity** – the biological variety and variability of life

**Braid** – a network of river channels separated by small, often temporary, islands

**Catchment** - an area of land where water collects when it rains, often bounded by hills. As the water flows over the landscape it finds its way into streams and down into the soil, eventually feeding the river. This includes the Trent and all its tributaries.

**Digital terrain model** – topographic model of the bare earth that can be manipulated by computer programs. Vegetation, buildings and other cultural features are removed digitally - leaving just the underlying terrain.

**Drawdown zones** – Muddy areas at edge of lake.

**Gravel screening** – the separation of material into different sized products. Gravel is usually returned to the watercourse and topsoils removed or redistributed on land

**Re-connecting floodplains** – removing barriers to a river, so that it can use its natural floodplain during flood events and enabling the river to re-establish its natural course.

**Meander** – follow a winding course

**Lagoons** – ponds within the floodplain

**Orthophotography** - An orthophoto or orthoimage is basically an aerial photograph that has been geometrically corrected to allow a viewer to measure ground distances using an Engineer's Scale. The image has been “flattened” so to speak to remove distortion and achieve a uniform scale.

**Oxbow lakes** – a U-shaped lake that forms when a wide meander of a river is cut off, creating a free-standing body of water.

**Palaeochannel** – a remnant of an inactive river or stream channel that has been filled or buried by younger sediment.

**Reach** – a section of a stream or river along which similar hydrologic conditions exist

**Re-naturalisation** – in the context of rivers this is encouraging the river to take its natural course

**Riffle** – dynamic, shallow waters flowing over gravels / boulders causing the water to become agitated as it moves across the feature

**Scrapes** – shallow depressions with gently sloping edges, which seasonally hold water

**Scour** – erosion of the riverbed or riverbanks

**Shoals** – sand banks, sand bars, or gravel bars

**Timber jams** – a dense accumulation of tree trunks and pieces of large wood across a section of a river. Typically more stable than smaller accumulations of woody material such as branches.