



In collaboration with the Environment Agency, Stonbury's environmental team installed specially-designed access steps at a gauging station in Devon.

Situated in an engineered channel, the gauging station monitors flow volume and speed along the River Tale. Safe access to the river channel is required to enable operatives to conduct routine maintenance and sampling.

The Environment Agency supplied a design for a custom fold-away access system, as a permanent ladder would change the channel profile and could interfere with data capture and increase the risk of flooding. The system is the first of its kind to be installed by the Environment Agency.

To deliver the solution, Stonbury worked with a supply partner to manufacture all parts according to the drawings, reworking elements of the design where necessary. All components were fabricated offsite and tested during a factory acceptance test with the client.

On site, the team constructed a self-draining recessed concrete foundation within the embankment to accommodate the extending platform and step ladder, before installing it. The completed lockable access system can be manually operated by a single person, then retracted and stowed away safely leaving a flush surface on the riverbank.

Before project completion, Stonbury provided operation and maintenance training to Environment Agency staff.

The novel system provides safe and efficient access, facilitating consistent monitoring so the Environment Agency can achieve accurate water level tracking to support flood forecasting and management. The solution has not only addressed this site's unique challenges but also sets a new standard for future installations in similar environments.