

From Beck to Beach

In This Issue...

Well, it has been a busy few months for us all at West Cumbria Rivers Trust and I'm starting to realise that I don't think there will ever be a time when we won't be busy as there is just so much going on..!

We have welcomed Philippa Chadwick into the team to work as an assistant project officer on the Pearls in Peril Project. She will be undertaking monitoring of the River Ehen and delivering an education package about the critically endangered freshwater pearl mussel. Phil, as she likes to be known, has a background in conservation, including working for the Forestry Commission and the National Trust and is excited to be back in her native west Cumbria. She has been out and about



Jodie Mills Director

already getting people engaged in all things mussels and you can see her in action on page two. In her spare time you'll find her helping on the family farm or playing rugby!

A new Trustee has also joined our board, John Hilton from United Utilities, who is the Director of Operational Services, Network Operations and Future Concept of Operations (the longest job title I have ever seen!), and is leading strategic change programmes across the companies wholesale business. He has worked at United Utilities since 1998 and we are looking forward to using his expertise on all things engineering and watery.

Continued inside...



West Cumbria Rivers Trust

Caring for our Lakes and Rivers

Spring & Summer 2015

Continued from front cover...

We are currently gearing up for the end of a few of our projects; Loweswater Care Programme funded by the DEFRA's Catchment Restoration Fund and Ellen wise funded by United Utilities. Both have been working closely with farmers to reduce pollution going into our lakes and rivers and have been very successful. The Whit Beck River Restoration Project is also soon to be completed and is proving to be very popular with a number of salmon and trout fry spotted already using the new river.



Wild Ennerdale volunteers

This newsletter has some fascinating insights into some of the invasive species threatening our waters and riverbanks along with exciting

developments in Catchment Partnerships and River Restoration which I hope you enjoy reading all about. Please also keep an eye on our website for some great videos of the work we have been doing and our new fundraising campaign to plant trees along our rivers and lakes. Enjoy the sunshine and we will be back again for our autumn newsletter, due out in October.

Did you know?

Some facts from WCRT's trustee, David Calvert (you never know they might just be the answers to a pub quiz question one day!)



Salmon deposit their eggs in depressions dug in the gravel of river pools by using their tails to move the stones. These depressions are called redds.



Female salmon lay between 4000 and 8000 eggs in each redd. It is thought to take 2500 eggs to produce one adult salmon!

remaining spots shrink and fade and they set off for the sea - their bodies undergo an amazing transformation which enables them to live in salt water.



The young fish, called fry, emerge in the early spring, before spending two (but occasionally one or three) years as parr in freshwater. When they are ready the parr change dramatically; their spots and parr marks disappear, their



The fish (now called smolts - I bet the Eggheads don't even know all this!) then spend one, two or three winters at sea before returning to their native becks to begin the reproductive process all over again...

Catchment Partnerships – Who, What, Where?

Catchment Partnerships and the 'Catchment-Based Approach' are the new buzz words at the moment, and we are the 'hosts' for the Catchment Partnerships in our area – but what does it all really mean and what are we doing?

Well, catchment-based working is working on not only a river (or lake) itself but all the land that drains into it. This is nothing new – we have known for many years that we can't improve the quality of a river or lake without addressing issues from the tops of the fells right down to the coast. However, the catchment-based approach and 'Catchment Partnerships' are DEFRA's new way of working to ensure that across the

country, everybody with an interest in catchment land (so everybody really!) is working together.

"We can't improve the quality of a river or lake without addressing issues from the tops of the fells right down to the coast"

So, what does this mean in our area? We have been busy pulling together a Catchment Partnership group to cover both the River Derwent catchment and the West Coast catchments from the hills to the coast from Maryport right down to Ravenglass. To begin with we have started with a 'strategic group' with all the main organisations and councils in our area represented, this includes Cumbria County Council, Allerdale and Copeland, agencies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, charities such as the National Trust and the Woodland Trust and companies such as United Utilities.



One of the aims of the partnership is to ensure everyone is working together, with everybody aware of what others are doing, and looking for opportunities to work together in a joined up way. We think this is an exciting opportunity and we intend to develop our partnerships much further over the coming year to include local angling groups, community groups, landowners and farming interests – just about anybody with an interest in rivers and catchment land basically!

For further information on our Catchment Partnerships work please visit our website: westcumbriarivertrust.org/projects/catchment-partnerships





Wildlife friendly Gardening & Lake friendly Leisure!

With the glorious balmy days of summer upon us you'll be spending some quality time outdoors.

Whatever your preferred activity, whether it's in the garden, or the beautiful Lakeland countryside be aware that you could inadvertently be spreading invasive non-native species (INNS).

Invasive non-native plants and animals are spreading throughout the UK causing devastating impacts on wildlife, our countryside, our homes and our health. Cumbria in particular is at risk due to the number of rare and protected wetland habitats it hosts. These unique areas are at risk from imported pond and ornamental garden plants and animals found in shipping ballast released into UK ports. All of these INNS can thrive here, out-compete native species and degrade habitats.

INNS that started in Cumbrian gardens and ended up in the wild include:



GBNNS

New Zealand pigmyweed is one of the invasive water weeds in a number of our lakes, including Bassenthwaite Lake & Derwent Water. They would have started Cumbrian life in a pond or fish tank.



GBNNS

American Skunk Cabbage is a huge, impressive and smelly ornamental plant has escaped from gardens and parks and now infests

rare designated wetland habitats in Cumbria, including Overwater and Derwent Water.



And we all know the dreaded Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed (left); at one time beautiful additions to gardens, but they have now

colonated riverbanks, parks, roadside verges, anywhere and everywhere. They are a menace to our homes and the countryside.

"Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are a menace to our homes and the countryside"

Fortunately, work is ongoing to protect wildlife with a ban on the sale of a further five invasive non-native plant species in the UK last year. But this is the tip of the iceberg. So next time you're buying plants for your garden, think wildlife friendly or go native!

Top Tips for Gardeners - Be Plant Wise:



Know what you grow – be careful what you buy and avoid using plants known to be invasive.



Do not pass on invasive non-native plants to other gardeners.



Stop the Spread – take steps to prevent the escape of invasive plants into the wild.



Compost with Care – destroy or dispose of invasive non-native plants in a responsible way. Do not introduce them into the wild or into areas where they may escape into the wild.

Top Tips for Lake Lovers - Check - Clean - Dry:



Check all clothing, footwear and equipment for plant fragments and living organisms before leaving a river or lake. Pay particular attention to areas that are damp or hard to inspect.



Clean & wash all equipment & remove any organisms or plant fragments and leave on site. OR wash on a hard standing surface away from any drainage system.



Dry all your equipment & clothing thoroughly before visiting the next water body. Some species can survive up to 3 weeks in damp conditions.

There are many ways you can get involved in tackling INNS in your area. For more information contact Karin at West Cumbria Rivers Trust:

e: karin@westcumbriariverstrust.org,
t: 017687 44347



Environment
Agency



Community gets stuck in with the Pearls in Peril project

It's been a busy but exciting season for the PiP Project; 5,000 trees planted, 2.5km of riverside fencing erected, lots of coppicing, 60 tonnes of rubble removed, and approximately 250m of willow spilling underway.



One of the students, Jess

We've also had a great day with kids from Seascale School. 26, eight-year olds along with teachers and parents came to Ennerdale to learn all about

Autie, won an award for her environmental fundraising for WWF and wanted to spend some of the money on the PiP Project! A bus full of very muddy, but happy kids returned to Seascale to share their newly acquired knowledge about freshwater mussels, how to plant trees and why planting trees is so beneficial to mussels and other critters.

"A bus full of very muddy, but happy kids"

We've also had a couple of conservation days with local volunteers from Wild Ennerdale and apprentices from Lake District National Park and Eden Rivers



Trust. Lots of hard work, chopping down spruce trees and coppicing willow to use in riverbank protection work along the River Ehen. Fantastic effort and many thanks to all involved!



6 Year Plan - Out & About with our Ian



Since Christmas, our River Restoration Project Manager, Ian Creighton has been out and about in the field, not because he needed to lose the pounds from all the mince pies he'd eaten over Christmas, but doing an important task in planning for future river restoration projects on the River Derwent and tributaries.

Since the completion of our large scale river project on Whit Beck, near Lorton, the Environment Agency asked for a new plan of action for projects to be delivered over the next six years. So, it was on with the waterproofs for Ian, as winter is the best time to undertake river surveys due to the lack of vegetation enabling contours, river banks and other features to be clearly seen.

"Some projects will have additional flood benefits for those of us living downstream"

Although the funds won't be available to undertake such large scale restoration such as Whit Beck, there are still plenty of smaller

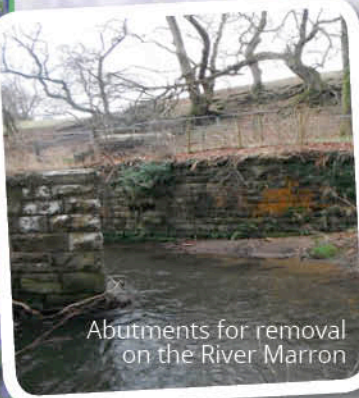
scale projects we can do to re-naturalise some of our modified rivers, which is the aim of this particular project. So far on the list we have projects



Embankment for removal on the River Marron

such as removing derelict structures (such as old railway abutments) from within our watercourses, reconnecting sections of river with the floodplain (by removing flood embankments) and restoring floodplain features such as oxbow lakes and wet woodlands.

These projects will not only help improve the river and the floodplain for fish, plants, insects, amphibians, birds and mammals but some will also have additional flood benefits for those of us living downstream. We have some great projects drawn up now and can't wait to get going!



Abutments for removal on the River Marron

The catchments in our care...



i West Cumbria Rivers Trust (WCRT) is part of the national network of river trusts which have played an ever increasing role in delivering environmental improvements throughout the country.

This newsletter is printed in Cumbria using FSC® accredited recycled paper and vegetable inks.

What is it....?



Is this a ghostly apparition or something rather more down to earth - can you guess?

For the answer please take a look at our website.

Photo: Rannerdale and Crummock Water ©Karin Crofts