

From Beck To Beach

The newsletter of West Cumbria Rivers Trust

Bringing rivers to classrooms

Nearly 2,000 primary school pupils took part in our programme of free river days and assemblies for schools in 2019, and we're aiming to reach even more children this year thanks to new funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation, United Utilities and Sellafield Ltd.

Cathy Gruba, our Learning and Engagement Officer, runs a range of fun, hands-on sessions for schools, all designed to help teachers deliver National Curriculum geography and science and engage children in the natural environment and its conservation. Intern Chris Gray helps Cathy deliver the sessions.

In 2019, funding from Copeland Community Fund and United Utilities enabled 1,005 Key Stage 2 pupils in Copeland and 979 in Allerdale to take part, making it our biggest year yet. We'd now like to thank the Garfield Weston Foundation who have awarded us £25,000 to continue this work, and Sellafield Ltd, who are providing further funding as part of our partnership People on the Keekle project.

We run a range of different sessions. Wild Rivers days combine classroom learning about

ivers and their wildlife with a field trip where youngsters can river dip, do wildlife surveys and suggest ideas to improve the river based on what they learnt in the classroom. Mussels in the Classroom sees pupils learn about the critically endangered freshwater mussel which has its last stronghold in England in the rivers of Copeland. The latest addition to our line-up is People on the Keekle, teaching children about plastic pollution and its impact on the environment by exploring our project to remove a plastic liner from the River Keekle.

It's always fantastic to see how inspired the kids get by the amazing creatures that live in our rivers and lakes. Getting to know their local wildlife really helps them understand why it's so important to conserve our freshwater systems. Inspiring the next generation to protect and enhance these habitats will benefit the area for generations to come by helping to reduce flood risk and increase biodiversity.

Schools in Copeland and Allerdale can book free sessions by contacting Cathy Gruba on cathy@westcumbriarivertrust.org. Sessions are designed for Key Stage 2 but can be adapted for Key Stage 1.



Pictures: Year 2 pupils at St. Bridget's Catholic Primary School in Egremont enjoying a Wild Rivers class. Thanks to St. Bridget's for the fantastic photos!

westcumbriarivertrust.org/projects/education



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- Volunteering programme funded for another year
- Toad Patrol returns to Cumbria's roads
- Our new Chairman

Update: Natural flood management projects

Our four major natural flood management projects introduced in our Winter 2019 newsletter are well underway, with lots more landscape features installed since our last issue.

Flimby

Since last issue:

- 29 leaky dams installed
- 470 m kested hedgerow completed
- Over 3,500 trees planted

Coming up next:

- More leaky barriers and kested hedgerows
- Keep working with the local community through our fantastic group of regular volunteers
- Working with a Lancaster University MSc student who will model the effectiveness of our work

Bootle

Since last issue:

- 21 more leaky dams installed
- Water storage area installed
- Over 1,300 trees planted
- Over 1.5 km hedgerow restored and planted

Coming up next:

- Fencing off 1.2 km of watercourse
- More leaky dams
- Several large bunds to create temporary water storage areas

River Glenderamackin catchment

Since last issue:

- 1.1 km hedgerow restored
- 750 m hedgerow created
- 26 leaky dams installed
- 30 in-field tree cages built
- Almost a hectare of trees and scrub planted

Coming up next:

- Creating two water storage areas
- Installing more large woody debris
- Working with farmers and landowners on soil maintenance

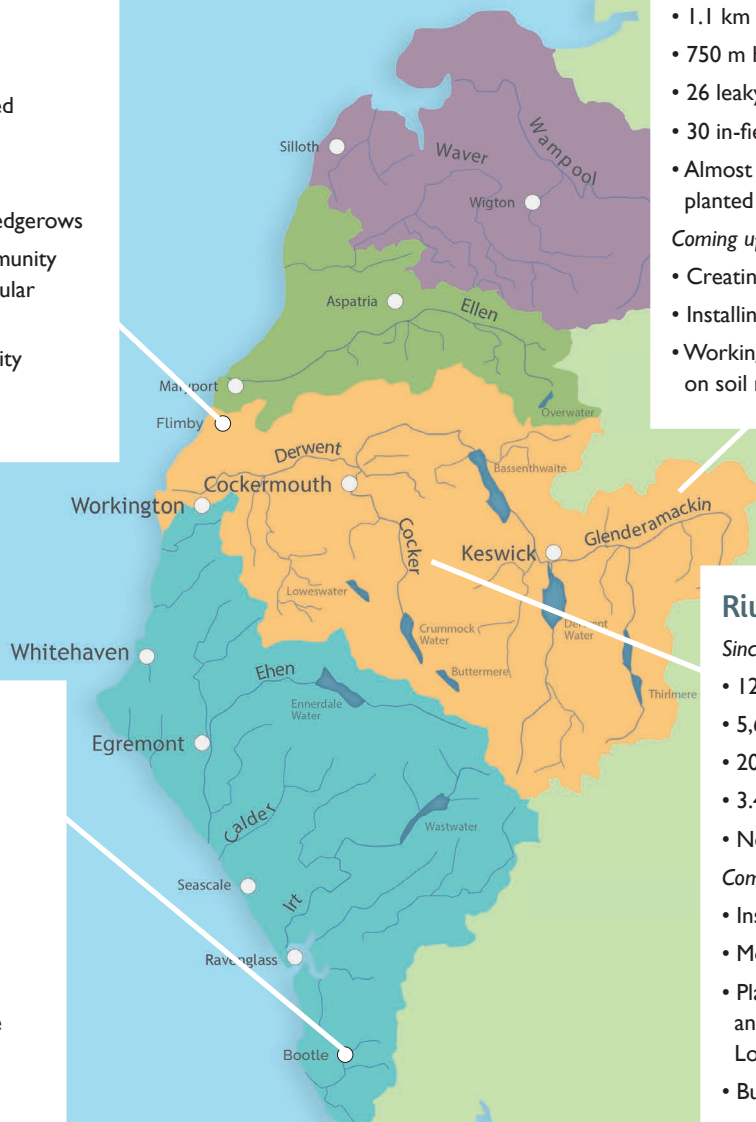
River Cocker catchment

Since last issue:

- 12 acres fenced off for woodland
- 5,650 trees and shrubs planted
- 20 in-field trees
- 3.4 km riparian fencing installed
- Nearly 1 km of kested hedges

Coming up next:

- Installing leaky dams
- More fencing and tree planting
- Planning beck re-meandering and floodplain restoration near Loweswater
- Building NFM features at Whinlatter



We'd like to say a big thank you to all the farmers and landowners we're working with across these catchments, and the many volunteers across the region who have helped with the work.

All four projects will run until 2021 and are being delivered in partnership with the Environment Agency as part of DEFRA's £15 million National NFM Programme. The Woodland Trust has provided generous support with trees. The Glenderamackin and Cocker projects also receive funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development's Water Environment Grant. The Bootle project also receives funding from the Walney Extension Community Fund.

westcumbriarivertrust.org/projects



One of our leaky dams at Flimby...

...working to slow the flow after heavy rain



Free tours and talks return for 2020

Babbling About Rivers, our series of free events, tours and talks giving you an insight into all things water-related, is back for 2020 and bigger than ever.

- Join us on Saturday 28 March for an early evening bat walk along the River Ehen in Ennerdale.
- In Cockermouth on 20 May you can hear a talk on invasive non-native species and the threat they pose to Cumbria's biodiversity from our Invasive Non-Native Species Project Officer, Jo McCurrie.
- Join us and a representative from United Utilities for a guided tour of Thirlmere dam on Saturday 6 June, where you'll gain a unique insight into the history and workings of the dam.
- National Trust Water Advisor and West Cumbria Rivers Trust Trustee John Malley will lead a guided walk of the Borrowdale valley on Friday 17 July.

More information and details of how to book are on our website. We're planning further events for later this year, so keep an eye out for future listings!



These events are possible thanks to funding from Cumbria Community Foundation's Cumbria Fund.

westcumbriarivertrust.org/events



Farming Rules for Water advice visits

We're offering free, confidential advice on complying with Defra's Farming Rules for Water to farms in the Crookhurst Beck catchment and surrounding area.

In 2018 Defra introduced new rules for farmers in England to tackle diffuse pollution from agriculture, known as the Farming Rules for Water. The rules are designed to both improve farms' environmental performance and provide benefits to farmers, such as increased productivity through better use of resources. Landowners and farmers need to keep soil on the land, match nutrients to crop and soil needs, and keep livestock fertilisers and manure out of the water. Compliance is monitored by the Environment Agency.

Through our Water Friendly Farming Project, we offer farmers and landowners a practical on-farm approach to understanding the new rules and how best to implement them. Our work is confidential and purely advisory. We can help with soil sampling and analysis, nutrient management plans, risk maps for slurry and manure spreading, and soil compaction and structure surveys. We can also signpost grant aid available to deliver farm infrastructure improvements.



Southall Trust enables volunteer programme to continue

In just ten years we've grown from employing two staff to 16 and now have almost 40 projects underway. We couldn't achieve the amount of work we do without our wonderful volunteers who generously donate their time – 1,760 hours in 2018-19.

Our ethos is that volunteering benefits individuals as well as our work. Connecting people with rivers and nature is central to our mission and through volunteering we aim to give people practical skills and real-world conservation experience. Both volunteering and physical activity outdoors have been shown to have positive effects on mental health.

At the heart of our volunteer network is our Volunteer Co-ordinator, who organises events to help our Project Officers achieve their goals. This role is currently filled by Esther Foster who was one of our wonderful interns and we'd like to thank the Southall Trust who have provided funding that will enable the role to continue for another year.

westcumbriarivertrust.org/support-us/volunteer



Volunteer Co-ordinator Esther Foster

News in Brief

Our new Chairman

We're delighted to announce that long-standing Trustee Dave Magrath has been appointed Chairman of our Board. Dave is fascinated with all things rivers and is a keen angler. He has worked in the nuclear industry supply chain for more than 25 years and is Head of Commercial for Sellafeld Ltd. Dave joined us as a Trustee in 2011 and has been a valued member of the Board ever since.



New Atlantic salmon research project

We're excited to be working with the University of Glasgow, the Environment Agency, Natural England and local angling groups on a fantastic research project. Young Atlantic salmon (smolts) will be tagged and tracked on their journey from their birthplace, through the River Derwent and Bassenthwaite lake, and out to the Irish Sea. The data will help us understand survival rates and the impact of barriers like weirs, different lake environments and the tidal zone that the fish have to navigate. The results will inform management decisions and hopefully help increase numbers returning to the River Derwent. Funding of £9,000 from the Robin Rigg Community Fund will enable us to run a smolt trap daily in spring/early summer when the fish are moving downstream. Look out for more on this project in our Summer issue!



A salmon smolt



History volunteer needed

We're looking for a volunteer with an interest in looking through archives to research historic information about land use and watercourses in the River Cocker catchment area. Please contact Annabelle Kennedy on annabelle@westcumbriarivertrust.org if you can help!

Check, clean, dry

The weather's warming up and everyone's looking forward to spending more time outside again. If you're a water user, it's all too easy to accidentally contribute to the spread of highly damaging invasive plants and animals. Don't forget: If you're a swimmer or angler, make sure your clothing and equipment is dry before being re-used. If you go boating, make sure your craft is thoroughly drained and dried before you take it to another water body.

westcumbriarivertrust.org/projects/invasive-species

Have your say on how our waters are managed

The Environment Agency wants your views on the challenges our water faces and how they should be managed. The Challenges and Choices survey, which closes on 24 April 2020, explores how we can work together to manage our waters and who should pay for the actions needed. Responses will inform updates to river basin management plans. West Cumbria Catchment Partnership is encouraging everyone to get involved – your responses will help shape the management of the water environment and how it needs to change in response to a changing climate and growing population.

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/environment-and-business/challenges-and-choices/>

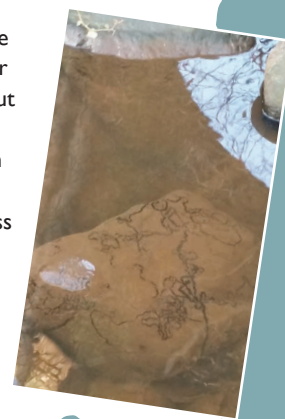
Toads on roads

As we go to print in early March, toads are starting to wake up from their winter hibernation and migrate, sometimes several miles, to their favourite breeding pond. Many toads are killed when their migration route takes them over roads. This is where volunteer toad patrollers come in! We're running Toad Patrols again this year in areas we know toads like to cross the road and we need you to help transport the toads safely in a bucket. Email our Learning and Engagement Officer Cathy Gruba on cathy@westcumbriarivertrust.org for more information.

What is it..?

Look out for squiggly lines on underwater rocks...

These are trails made by feeding freshwater snails. There are about 40 different species of freshwater snail in Britain, ranging from just 2 or 4 mm across to 4 cm. They avoid acidic water as they need a little calcium, which is alkaline, in the water to grow their shells.



Event calendar

9 March	Volunteering	Tree planting (Whinlatter)
11 March	Volunteering	Tree planting (Whinlatter)
11 March	Volunteering	Wasdale Wednesday: Willow planting
17 March	Volunteering	Tree planting (near Keswick)
28 March	Tours	Bat walk (Ennerdale)
30 March	Volunteering	Hedge planting (Keswick)
31 March	Volunteering	Tree planting (Threlkeld)
8 April	Volunteering	Wasdale Wednesday
7 May	Volunteering	Flimby Flood Group
13 May	Volunteering	Wasdale Wednesday: Tree guard removal
20 May	Talks	Invasive species (Cockermouth)
4 June	Volunteering	Flimby Flood Group
6 June	Tours	Thirlmere dam guided tour
10 June	Volunteering	Wasdale Wednesday: Balsam bashing

Events are subject to change and more will be added after we've gone to print! For full details & all the latest information, see our website or contact us on 017687 75429. *Booking essential.*
westcumbriarivertrust.org/events