

From Beck To Beach

The newsletter of West Cumbria Rivers Trust

£3.4m awarded for West Cumbria river improvements

We're thrilled to announce we've secured funding for several major projects that will contribute to flood risk reduction efforts, improve wildlife habitats and restore river environments.

A £1.5 million project will restore the River Keekle near Whitehaven. The river was lined with plastic in the 1990s amid fears that possible future erosion could expose deeply-buried mine waste underneath. The plastic is breaking up and pieces being washed downstream, creating blockages, localised flooding and plastic pollution. We plan to remove the plastic and restore the riverbed with funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development's Water Environment Grant and the Environment Agency's River Restoration Programme.

A second project aims to reduce pollution in Crookhurst Beck, which flows into bathing waters on the coast at Allonby, by working with farmers to reduce nutrient run-off into the beck. Measures will include new slurry storage systems, watercourse fencing and clean and dirty water separation systems. We've been awarded £235,000 by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development's Water Environment Grant which complements



The damaged liner in the River Keekle

previous funding from United Utilities' Ellenwise project, and funding we have from the Natural England Facilitation Fund to host a farmer group in the area.

Three further projects focus on 'natural flood management' (NFM) – using techniques inspired by nature to hold rainwater on the land for longer during extreme weather, reducing the rate at which it flows towards communities.

In the Cocker and Glenderamackin river catchment areas we'll work with landowners to develop NFM measures such as leaky dams, kested hedgerows and tree-planting, aiming to contribute to flood risk reduction in Cockermouth and Keswick respectively. These projects will also include other work, such as invasive species control and improved fish habitats. We've been awarded £818,000 for the Cocker and £693,000 for the Glenderamackin, each from a combination of DEFRA's NFM Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development's Water Environment Grant.

In Bootle a natural flood management project will look at improvements to the River Annas catchment, aiming to reduce flood risk to the community of Bootle, in a project awarded £166,000 by the DEFRA NFM Fund and the Walney Extension Community Fund.

We're really excited about getting started on these projects and will be working closely with a wide range

of partner organisations, farmers and local communities. These works will deliver key elements of the West Cumbria Catchment Action Plan developed and overseen by the West Cumbria Catchment Partnership and the Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership. We'll keep you updated through our website and future issues of this newsletter.

westcumbriariverstrust.org/projects



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Partnership working to reduce flood risk

Highways England, the Environment Agency and West Cumbria Rivers Trust, together with other partner organisations and the local community, are working closely together on a project to improve flood resilience in the Portinscale/Braithwaite area.

Highways England and the Environment Agency are investigating options to improve the flood resilience of the A66 and Braithwaite community respectively. We're developing options to improve Newlands Beck, which has poor habitat quality and contributes to flood risk due to the straightened and embanked nature of this modified watercourse. Working

with the local landowners, we've undertaken a feasibility study for the restoration of a 7km section from Stair to Bassenthwaite Lake.

We're hoping this project will be really successful due to all stakeholders working together. Highways England are leading a working group of the West Cumbria Catchment Partnership to liaise with other parties, including local communities. They have also developed a detailed flood model for the whole area that all parties are using to develop options. All three elements – road resilience, community flood protection, and river restoration, are being looked at together

so complementary improvements will be developed. The project will take shape over the next few months so watch this space!

The river restoration feasibility study was funded by the Environment Agency's River Restoration Fund and the EU LIFE Natural Course project.

westcumbriacatchmentpartnership.co.uk/projects/a66-communities-flood-alleviation-and-newlands-beck-restoration



Ray of hope in salmon crisis

Atlantic salmon face a battle for survival, with threats from climate change, habitat destruction and predation. Another major problem is that dry spring weather results in low river levels. When levels are low over barriers such as weirs, young salmon trying to reach the sea congregate and are easily picked off by predators. Plans to remove Yearl Weir - a major barrier to fish migration on the River Derwent - remain in their infancy, so a short-term solution was needed.

We teamed up with the Derwent River Corridors Group to use an existing mill race to allow fish to swim past the barrier. The 'attraction flow' – the flow rate that helps fish find channels – was increased by improving the channel and working with Iggesund Paperboard, who have abstraction rights at the weir, to allow much more water down the mill race in the May to June period.

This was a very simple project but an incredibly important one as it could mean many thousands more baby salmon survive. Our thanks go to all stakeholders, but especially Iggesund Paperboard. It is fantastic to see one of largest local employers and water users stepping up to the plate in this way.



Yearl Weir

10th anniversary party and prize draw

It's West Cumbria Rivers Trust's 10th birthday in 2019 so we're planning a party and everyone's invited!

We'll be having a ceilidh at Braithwaite Institute on Friday 20 September with the fantastic local band Striding Edge playing. Mobile bar the Thirsty Horse will be there, and we'll also have sausage baps and cake available. There'll be a raffle with prizes so far including afternoon tea at any Lake District Hotels group hotel and Via Ferrata at Honister Slate Mine. Ceilidh tickets are £10 and are available from our visitor centre at 32 Lake Road, Keswick and Braithwaite Village Shop

We're also selling prize draw tickets all summer long. Tickets are £1 and available from our visitor centre at 32 Lake Road and from our staff at events we attend. The prizes are: quad biking with Lingholm Quad Bike Treks, dinner at The Cottage in the Wood, a day's salmon

fishing on the Derwent courtesy of Lord and Lady Egremont and the Leconfield Estate, alpaca walking with Alpaca Ever After, afternoon tea at The Lingholm Kitchen, and paddle boarding with Ullswater Paddle Boarding.



Get your tickets now for our ceilidh with Striding Edge!

We'd like to say a huge thank you to all the local businesses that have generously supported us with prize donations and ticket sales.

westcumbriarivertrust.org/events/ceilidh

News in brief

Dash Beck walking guide

Take a walk from Bassenthwaite along Dash Beck and see the results of one of our recent projects delivered through our Adopt-a-Beck scheme. We've completed fencing and bank stabilisation work to reinstate the footpath to the lake, and improved the habitat for a range of wildlife by reducing sediment inputs and increasing shelter in the stream. Download our new walking guide which gives directions for 2.5 mile and 4.2 mile routes. We'd like to thank the Lake District Foundation, the River Corridors Group, the Environment Agency and the Lake District National Park Authority for their support.

westcumbriariverstrust.org/projects/other-projects/dash-beck

New insights into Cumbria's salmon habitats

Evidence of the preferred habitats of Cumbria's native Atlantic salmon has been provided by our latest annual fish survey report. We had our most successful season ever in 2018 with a record 157 sites surveyed across the River Derwent

catchment area and nearly 7,000 salmon and trout recorded and measured. We found that salmon prefer major watercourses to smaller tributaries, with high numbers of salmon fry – those less than a year old – in these main river sites.

Read the report at westcumbriariverstrust.org/projects/fish-surveys

From intern to staff member



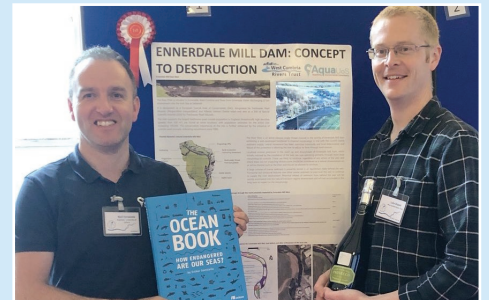
We're delighted to welcome Jo McCurrie to our staff team as an Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Assistant Project Officer. Jo volunteered during our 2018 electrofishing season

before interning with us from September 2018 to May 2019. Jo is delighted to continue being part of the team and likes being involved in practical conservation and loves the variety of work she got and still gets to do. As part of her new role Jo is arranging Himalayan balsam pulling events and needs lots of budding volunteers to help out. Contact jo@westcumbriariverstrust.org for more information.

Prize win for river restoration poster

Assistant Director Luke Bryant presented a poster about our Ennerdale Mill weir removal project at the 20th River Restoration Centre Annual Network Conference in Liverpool recently. Nearly 40 river restoration projects from around the UK were showcased and attendees voted for their favourite poster. Ours, 'Weir's it Gone?', produced by West Cumbria Rivers Trust, AquaUos and the University of Salford won! Jodie Mills also gave a talk on the weir project at the event and thanked everyone for voting for the poster and the lovely bottle of prosecco prize!

westcumbriariverstrust.org/projects/ennerdale-mill-weir-removal



Did you know?

The wild Atlantic salmon population has declined by 50% globally in the last 20 years, despite efforts to reduce overfishing. The causes are complex but include:

- climate change affecting both freshwater and marine habitats
- increased disease due to parasites and veterinary residue from commercial fish farms
- poor water quality due to pollution
- dams and weirs blocking access to river spawning grounds

Several Cumbrian rivers are home to Atlantic salmon populations and we're working to protect them. Our recently completed Yearl Weir project (see p.2) is helping young salmon migrate past a large weir.

Find out more about the threats facing wild salmon at our screening of Patagonia's new film, *Artifishal*, at the Keswick Alhambra Cinema on 23 July. Tickets available now from the cinema with proceeds going to West Cumbria Rivers Trust. With thanks to George Fisher for generously supporting this event.



Volunteering

Himalayan balsam pulls

Help us control this invasive species: Monday mornings in Lorton, Friday mornings in Threlkeld and full days departing from Keswick. Contact jo@westcumbriariverstrust.org

Fish surveys

We need help conducting fish surveys throughout the summer in the Derwent catchment area. Contact ruth@westcumbriariverstrust.org

Derwent River Watchers

Regular group departing from Keswick on the third Thursday of the month. Contact philippa@westcumbriariverstrust.org

- Thursday 18 July – Himalayan balsam pull
- Thursday 15 Aug & Thursday 19 Sept – fish surveys (limited spaces, sign-up required)

Summer family fun

Our summer programme of family events includes river dipping, wildlife spotting and craft activities. We've got events across the west Cumbria region from 31 July to 2 September. Check out our website for more details.

Other events

23 July	Film screening: <i>Artifishal</i> (Keswick Alhambra Cinema)
3 August	Cockermouth Show
17 August	Gosforth Show
28 August	Ennerdale Show
31 August	Broughton Show
1 September	Loweswater Show
20 September	Ceilidh (Braithwaite Institute)

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

A year in numbers...

The year March 2018 to March 2019 was another fantastic one for the Trust.
Our team grew to 16 and we've been working on over 30 different projects.



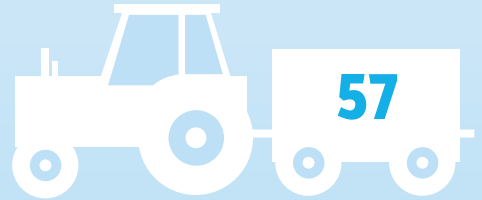
1,760

volunteering
hours



78

education sessions,
teaching
900
children about
rivers



57

advice visits
given to farmers

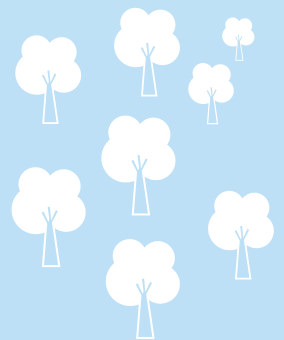


2.4km
of hedge
planted



10.4 km
of riverside fencing
erected

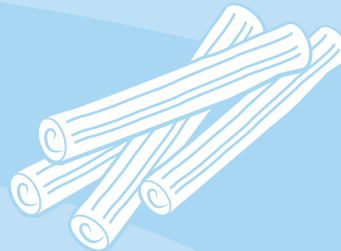
3,000
trees planted



8 Ha
of priority habitat
created

3

barriers to fish
moving upstream
removed



44

woody debris features and
dams and constructed to
slow flood water



6km
of riverbank
cleared of litter

27

fish rescues to move
fish away from in-river
construction works

870m

of river bank
protected from erosion



140

events and
talks



180km

of habitat
surveyed

223

sites surveyed
for fish numbers

We couldn't have done it on our own so a big thank you to all our volunteers, land owners and funders.
Here's hoping that next year is even better!