

Catchment Restoration Fund Project Briefing Note



The Taw River Improvement Project (TRIP)

TRIP is a partnership project that will use CRF funds to manage restoration work to deliver habitat improvements in the Taw catchment. The partnership, led by the Westcountry Rivers Trust, has been carrying out river restoration and addressing the causes of Water Framework Directive issues together for many years.

The partnership includes:

- North Devon Biosphere Reserve
- Farming and Wildlife Group South West
- Devon Wildlife Trust
- Silvanus Trust
- River Taw Fisheries Association
- Tarka Country Trust
- Natural England
- Mole Valley Farmers
- Environment Agency
- South West Water
- North Devon District Council
- Communities Living Sustainably
- Exeter University

Through restoration work, the project will address issues including:

- Sediment, which has a direct adverse effect on water quality
- Fertiliser run off into rivers, which can cause nutrient enrichment, impact on river ecology and cause WFD failures from agricultural derived phosphate
- Barriers to fish migration, preventing fish from reaching habitat where modeling shows they should be present
- Interrupted conveyance of river gravels, reducing spawning habitats for salmonids
- Habitat loss of wetted and wooded land that has an important role to play in improving water quality & quantity.

Key facts	
River Basin District	South West
Catchments	Taw
Outcomes	<p>Water quality management – More consistent supply of better water quality</p> <p>Improved biodiversity - increased habitat biodiversity and renaturalisation</p> <p>Social - Improved leisure environment for angling and recreation</p> <p>Economic - Improved fisheries and spawning for commercial stocks</p> <p>Flood attenuation and management - Increased wetted and wooded areas</p> <p>Counteract climate change - Carbon sequestration through wetland sinks</p>
Start Date	TRIP 1: 26 May 2012 TRIP 2: 20 July 2012
End Date	31 March 2015
Budget	TRIP 1: £124,957 (£114,957 from CRF & £10,000 from match funding) TRIP 2: £1,860,047 (£1,672,047 from CRF & £188,000 from match funding)

Description of Works

To tackle issues in the Taw river catchment, the TRIP project will manage delivery of the following activities:

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- **Weir removal/easement** – Direct physical action to remove obstacles or to increase its pass-ability to fish and/or eels will remove the factor that is causing a water body to fail for **fish**.
- **Gravel augmentation** – Restoration of fish spawning habitat by means of gravel works will increase spawning rates, and survival of the early stages of salmonid and other fish life cycles improving areas that are failing for **fish**.
- **River bank management** – This approach combines shade management through coppicing, selective planting, and Coarse Woody Debris (CWD) addition or removal (depending on ecological benefit and flood risk assessment), improving areas that are failing for **fish**.
- **Agricultural farm plans** – Working with farmers in intensive agriculture water bodies that are currently failing for agriculturally derived diffuse **phosphate** to improve nutrient and soil management. This will include nutrient plans and soil testing as well as the creation of integrated farm management plans, which will articulate with biodiversity plans.
- **Biodiversity farm plans** – working with farmers in less intensive areas where there are still failing for agriculturally derived **phosphate** to establish where land use change to wetlands and/or woodlands can improve water quality.
- **Floodplain woodland planting** – working with farmers in the main river channels to identify opportunities for strategic floodplain woodland planting to roughen the channel to slow water flow and reduce **flood risk**.
- **Fencing** – Where agricultural inputs contribute to a failure under WFD, riparian fencing and associated drinking points can have multiple benefits; reducing poaching of banks caused by livestock, allowing patch-work mosaic of different riparian habitat growth and acting as a partial capture system to intercept land and road run off effectively increasing in-stream ecological diversity. This will improve areas currently failing for agriculturally derived diffuse **phosphate**.
- **Sewerage works** – working with South West Water to identify Sewage Treatment Works and septic tanks across the catchment that play a part in areas currently failing for sewage and water industry derived **phosphate**. Management actions will be written into SWW's management plans.
- **Partner engagement** – working with partners across the catchment to monitor, identify and communicate what actions are required
- **Stakeholder engagement** – working with stakeholders across the catchment to identify and communicate what actions are required

What will success look like?

Success in the Taw catchment will include the direct delivery of the above actions but will also include the development of a strong partnership that brings together the organisations and groups that have a role to play in managing the catchment for the wider society. The partnership not only aims to improve WFD status on many of the water bodies across the catchment but also develop a catchment plan that starts joining up what we want from our land and how we work with land owners and managers to achieve this vision.

About the team – Westcountry Rivers Trust

Project Manager – Laurence Couldrick
Head of Catchment Management

Finance Director – Lynne Hyland

Director – Dr Dylan Bright

Other contacts

Environment Agency - Tom Fletcher

Natural England - David Appleton



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