



A unique project in Lancashire is tackling river pollution and creating a legacy that will protect the future of its waterways for years to come.

Groundwork CLM developed the 'Love My River' project in Chorley in partnership with United Utilities, Chorley Council and the Environment Agency. Its initial aim was to provide the Environment Agency and Chorley Council with further information about potential sources of pollution and other water quality issues. Initially this included the River Chor, Clancutt Brook and River Yarrow. However, as it developed, the project exceeded expectations and delivered outcomes far wider than originally anticipated. Such was its success that it led to the project being introduced the River Tawd, which flows through Skelmersdale and Lathom in West Lancashire.

As well as significantly improving local environments, Love My River has also:

- brought stakeholders and communities together
- generated interest and support towards improving the local water environment
- engaged people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities with local waterways and greenspaces, providing health and wellbeing benefits
- built capacity by providing training and learning opportunities and;
- given people an opportunity to make a real difference to the area they live in.

Love My River involves teams of volunteers undertaking weekly river walkovers as well as other small scale projects to improve water quality.

The team carry out regular water quality surveys, INNS (Invasive Non Native Species) removal and habitat management works along the river. They have also carried out a number of clean up days, which have not only been well supported, but also yielded excellent results:

Outputs of the project so far include:

- Nearly 20km of river protected or improved
- 9717km² of land improved
- 827 volunteers hours secured; involving general public, students, partnering organisations & local businesses
- 179 bags of rubbish removed, along with tyres, shopping trolleys and other debris
- A local 'friends' group being set up to continue work with the local Council and schools

With support and training from Groundwork's Senior Ecological Officer, volunteers and other stakeholders have gained a wider understanding of sources of urban pollution to water bodies and actions they can take to reduce or prevent pollution.

Love My River is an integral project within the River Douglas Catchment Partnership Action Plan. At a local level, it is playing a key role in the important work being carried out to deal with the pressures of a changing climate and a growing population.

For more information:

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