

Catchment Restoration Fund Project Briefing Note



The South Hams River Improvement Project (SHRImP)

SHRImP is a partnership project that will use Catchment Restoration Funds to manage restoration work to deliver habitat improvements on the South Hams Rivers. The partnership, led by the Westcountry Rivers Trust, has been carrying out river restoration and undertaking works to address the causes of Water Framework Directive issues for many years.

The South Hams River Improvement Project partnership includes:

- South Devon AONB
- Environment Agency
- South West Water
- South Hams District Council (via Salcombe and Kingsbridge Estuary Association)
- Yealm fishing association
- Erme fishing association
- Slapton Ley Field Studies Centre
- Salcombe & Kingsbridge Estuary
- Aune Conservation Association
- Forestry Commission

Through restoration work the project will address issues including:

- Sediment which has a direct adverse effect on water quality
- Barriers to fish migration, preventing fish from reaching their natural spawning grounds
- Fertiliser run-off into rivers which can cause nutrient enrichment and have a negative impact on river ecology
- Acidified moorland that creates low pH levels that are detrimental to the river's ecological health
- Interrupted conveyance of river gravels, reducing spawning habitats for salmonids

Key facts	
River Basin District	South West
Catchments	Rivers Avon (Devon), Erme & Yealm
Outcomes	<p>Water quality management – More consistent supply, better water quality</p> <p>Improved biodiversity - increased habitat diversity and re-naturalisation</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 wetland areas</p> <p>Counteract climate change - Carbon sequestration through wetland sinks</p>
Start Date	26 May 2012
End Date	31 st March 2015
Budget	£698,608 (£666,608 from CRF & £32,000 from match funding)

Description of Works

To tackle the issues in the South Hams catchments, the South Hams River Improvement Project (SHRIMP) will undertake the following activities:

- **Weir Removal/Easement** – Direct physical action to remove an obstacle, or to increase its passability to fish and/or eels, will remove the factor that is causing a water body to fail for fish.
- **Water impoundment work**— Through collaboration with partners such as South West Water, improvements can be made to the release cycle of ‘fisheries bank’ water to maximise migratory salmonid movement upstream to re-created spawning areas.
- **Gravel Augmentation** – Restoration of spawning habitat by means of gravel works will increase spawning rates and survival of the early stages salmonid and other fish life cycles.
- **Vertical Profiling of Impounded Water Column** – The physical and chemical composition of impounded waterbodies varies with depth of water. Profiling of the water column will allow targeted works to address these issues, resulting in improvements to waterbodies downstream of the impoundment.
- **Fencing** – Where agricultural input is a causative issue of failure under WFD (phosphate), targeted riparian fencing along with associated drinking points will be constructed or alternative supply provided by drinking troughs.
- **River Bank Management**– This approach combines shade management through coppicing, selective planting and Coarse Woody Debris (CWD) addition or removal.
- **Nutrient Management** – Soil testing will be made available to farmers in the catchment, particularly on the Bathern and Blackwater, to enable better targeting of expensive inputs and help to reduce losses of nutrients to watercourses.
- **Improved Soil Management** – Soil investigations for compaction will be undertaken to help target work for soil structural improvement. Farmland work like sub-soiling will aim to improve crop growth, as well as reduce soil erosion and run-off which can lead to flooding and damage to the river ecology.

What will success look like?

Success in the South Hams catchments 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 stakeholders that have a role to play in managing both catchments and helping to meet the standards required for the Water Framework Directive.

About the team – Westcountry Rivers Trust
Project Manager – Karen Lawrie Land and Fisheries Officer
Finance Director – Lynne Hyland
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Other contacts
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AUNE CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
'Conserving the Devonshire Avon from source to sea'



FSC Slapton Ley Field
Studies Centre



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