



Catchment Restoration Fund (CRF) Project Briefing Note

Salisbury Avon Restoration Project

The Hampshire Avon SAC is failing to meet its environmental objectives as required by article 4 (1c) of the WFD. The reason for the river not meeting the objectives is its morphology and the aim of this project is to make a significant contribution to restoring the river to Favourable Conservation Status by implementation of the WFD measure: River restoration programme for protected areas.

This project involves collaboration with a number of angling organisations, landowners and statutory bodies. It will deliver socio-economic benefits through the angling organisations involved improving the habitat and value of the reaches. This will help to improve the sustainability of angling as a recreational activity in the area, potentially improving levels of membership to angling clubs. With a more attractive and productive fishery angling clubs will be more economically sustainable and therefore better able to maintain the river habitats that have been restored.

The project will build experience and capacity within the angling organisations and landowners to deliver restoration and enhancement works within the Avon system, and other rivers in the south of England. The project will lead to improved integration and co-operation between angling clubs, landowners and statutory bodies, thus leading to better working relationships between those involved in river management in the future.

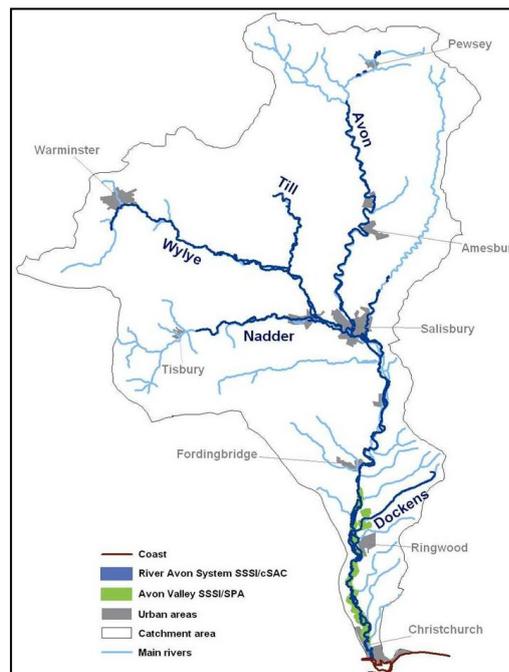
Description of Works

The Hampshire Avon has historically been dredged, over-widened and impounded in many places due to past river management. This has led to a reduction in the river's geomorphological processes, which has, in turn, led to a decline in the habitat quality and quantity throughout the reach. This decline, despite recent sympathetic management, has continued due to the lack of variation in channel form and flows, as well as riparian land use.

Key facts	
River Basin District	South West
Catchment(s)	Hampshire Avon
Outcomes	<p>Encourage the return of natural flow regimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconnect to floodplain Re-meandering Reduce channel width <p>Improve riparian/in-stream habitat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebalance erosion/deposition cycles Increase flow velocity/conveyance Increase amount of available habitat - woody debris, gravel riffles and marginal planting <p>Increase biodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing quantity and variety of in-stream/riparian habitat <p>Climate change mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve channel dynamics to enable adaptation to climate change <p>Socio-Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build experience and capacity within the angling organisations and landowners to deliver restoration and enhancement works within the Avon system, and other rivers in the south of England Encourage ownership of the river within angling organisations
Start Date	May 2012
End Date	March 2014
Budget	£243,000 (CRF £218,000)
Project Partners	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England, Wessex Water, Wiltshire Fishery Association

This project focuses on two 750m reaches of the Hampshire Avon at Figheldean and West Amesbury, identified in the Strategic Framework for the Restoration of the River Avon (SFfRRA) as being in need of restoration for habitat quality. The restoration aims to return a more natural flow regime at the two sites, in order to promote natural bed scouring and increase riparian habitat for a variety of organisms. This will be achieved through:

- the narrowing of over-widened channels to promote bed scouring and increase *Ranunculus* growth;
- re-meandering of channelized sections, through the creation of berms and the use of woody debris, to restore natural deposition/erosion processes;
- introduction of woody debris to aid channel narrowing and create in-channel habitat for fish and invertebrates;
- creation of gravel riffles to create fish spawning habitat and flow variation;
- tree planting for channel shading and to provide future woody debris;
- riparian habitat creation/enhancement, such as scrape creation for invertebrate and bird life and bank re-profiling to reconnect the river to the floodplain (re-wetting wet woodland/pasture).



Each restoration project completed will act as an example to future projects in the area. Through appropriate publication and engagement this project will help to raise awareness of river restoration techniques and implementation on the River Avon catchment.

Restoring natural functions to the river system will also increase the potential of the river to adapt to a changing climate in the future as part of a living landscape.

What will success look like?

The project aims to restore natural processes to the reaches involved and therefore will deliver benefits in terms of biodiversity and morphology on the selected reaches. Improved in-stream and riparian habitats will have benefits for aquatic and riverine species, such as river flies, water voles, otters, birds and fish. Success in this project will therefore be shown in a number of ways:

- Increase and improvement in riparian and in-channel habitat. This will lead to an increase in biodiversity and abundance, with a greater number and variety of invertebrates, fish and riparian organisms such as birds, water vole and otter. This will be monitored by electro-fish and kick sampling, as well as anglers' catch records.
- Increased channel and flow diversity, leading to a reduction in mid-channel silt/greensand deposition (with deposition occurring instead on inside meanders) and a more natural appearance to the river reaches, as evidenced by River Habitat Survey.
- Increased public awareness of river habitats and processes will also be a significant part of the success of these projects. Encouraging stewardship and sympathetic management among river keepers, riparian landowners and members of the public will lead to more sustainable, long-term improvement in the restored reaches. Evidence of this will be seen in management of non-restored areas of the Avon.

About the team : Wessex Chalk Stream Project

Project Manager: John Rattray (Overall view and direction)

Project delivery and support: Lev Dahl

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Other contacts

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