



# Wessex Chalk Stream & Rivers Trust

Presentation to the VCT Headwaters Forum  
29<sup>th</sup> November 2010  
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# Wessex Chalk Stream & Rivers Trust

**Why are we here?**

**Who are we?**

**What do we plan to do?**

**What have we achieved so far?**



# *Why we are here*



- The rivers of region are:
- unique
  - high conservation value
  - important recreational value
- ..but they face important threats



# Why we are here



## Current threats

- Low flows
- Diffuse pollution
- Rising water temperatures
- Fragmentation of habitat
- Loss of fly life
- Demise of salmon runs
- Loss of Ranunculus
- Loss of crayfish
- Nutrient inputs – eutrophication
- Pesticides
- Endocrine disrupting substances

## Future threats

- Climate change
  - Increasing temperature
    - 2-3 C up in winter (2080)
    - 4 C up in summer (2080)
  - Changes in rainfall patterns
    - 40% less in summer (2050)
    - 10-30% more in winter (2050)
  - Changes in flow regime
    - Low flow periods extend into November
- Population growth
  - Up 30% by 2030
  - Greater housing independence
  - Consequent pressure on development and resources

# *Why we are here*

In recognition

- Of similarities between rivers of the region
- That many of the issues faced are common across the region and might be better handled by a larger group with influence

Group established to form a rivers trust

# *Who we are*

Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust

*‘a charity dedicated to the guardianship, protection, enhancement and maintenance of healthy functioning ecosystems within the river catchments and corridors of the Wessex region’*

## *Trust evolution*

- Incorporated as company limited by guarantee 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009
- Registered with the Charities Commission 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009
- Formally launched 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010

# Who we are

## Our spectrum of rivers interest includes

- *Conservation and wildlife interests*
- *Fishery interests*
- *Farmers*
- *Landowners*

## Provides the opportunity to

- Share understanding
- Develop common interest
- Address potential areas of conflict



# Who we are

## 13 Trustees and 3 other officers including:

- Directors of 2 wildlife trusts
- Three important riparian land owners
- An estate manager and agricultural expert
- A land agent
- Several company directors
- An educationalist
- A freshwater ecologist
- A river manager
- A banker

*The skills set they bring is a strong asset*



## Who we are

# .....part of a national movement

- Action for the River Kennet
- Ballindary Fish Hatchery
- Calder & Colne Rivers Trust
- Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust
- Clwyd & Elwy Rivers Trust
- East Yorkshire Chalk Rivers Trust
- Eden Rivers Trust
- Lune Rivers Trust
- Pembrokeshire Rivers Trust
- Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust
- River Adur Conservation Society
- Severn Rivers Trust
- Slaney Rivers Trust
- South Cumbria Rivers Trust
- South East Wales Rivers Trust
- Sussex Ouse Conservation Society
- Teifi Rivers Trust
- Thames 21
- Thames Explorer Trust
- Thames Rivers Restoration Trust
- Clwyd and Conwy Rivers Trust
- Welsh River Dee Trust
- Wandle Trust
- Wear Rivers Trust
- Trent Rivers Trust
- Tweed Foundation
- Westcountry Rivers Trust
- Wye & Usk Foundation
- Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust



Association of  
Rivers Trusts

where there's water there's life

# *what we do:* Advocacy

- Influence development of government policy and regulation
- Informing and influencing decisions on development which may impact the rivers  
industrial & housing development, transport, minerals, agriculture and land use, water abstraction etc

*Emphasis on constructive engagement*

# *what we do:* Inspire and inform

Engage local communities to:

- Inform and stimulate interest in the natural habitat and wildlife of the river corridors
- Inspire a sense of value and a culture of nurturing
- Promote responsibility for future protection

Develop and expand existing work across the region

Targeting:

- Schools
- Broader community through project work

# *what we do:* Scientific Research

- Belief in sound science
- Promote support and bring together research – vulnerabilities, threats, approaches to mitigation
- Focus on practical application
- Participate in funding, scoping and direction of work by universities and research organisations
- Strategic partnerships with govt agencies other charities and foundations

# *what we do:* our research priorities

## *The factors influencing Ranunculus success*

- Provides vital structure and habitat
- Plays a critical role in maintaining flow velocity and (indirectly) clean water
- Its periodic failure and the need to know why
- Much work done but little translated into practical recommendation

## *Sources and pathways of nutrients*

- *P and N*
- *Role in eutrophication*
- *Mass balance*



# *what we do:* Delivery of action

## Priorities:

- Linking reaches of good habitat – wildlife corridors
- Enhance salmonid spawning and nursery habitat
- Improve management of agricultural run-off and aquaculture effluents
- Linkage with educational programme



# *what we do:* Delivery of action

*We want to help with delivery of:*

- Strategic restoration of SSSIs
- Catchment Sensitive Farming
- Living Landscapes initiative
- Priority actions under Water Framework Directive



# Sustainable Water Quality project

*Aim: to recover, optimise and enhance natural capacity to counterbalance diffuse pollution*

- Develop simple restoration and management techniques to encourage river cleaning organisms through pilot projects
  - Creating the right conditions
  - Reintroductions
- Focus on:
  - Simulium, E.danica, Gammarus, BWO, chironomids, Ranunculus



# How can you help us?

- Govt, NGO, research institution - talk to us about how we may work together in formal partnership
- Business - become a Partner of ours and help us financially or in-kind
- Club, association - become an Associate Organisation
- As an individual
  - Founder (£500)
  - Life Supporter (£200)
  - Supporter (£20 pa)

# .....to sum up

- Dedicated to guardianship, protection, enhancement of healthy functioning rivers in the Wessex region
- A broad river interest group
- Focus on channels, corridors and catchments
- *We need your support!*

