



Newsletter

Issue 1 Summer 2017

Welcome to the first issue of our quarterly newsletter with news and events from Eden Rivers Trust, we hope you enjoy reading it!

Healthy Rivers For All Dawn of a new chapter

by Jo Spencer, Acting Director

Turning 20 years old at the end of last year, marked an important juncture in the history of the trust and provided the ideal opportunity to review our place in the world and produce a new business plan for the trust.

Highlights of the new three-year plan include:

- The introduction of three strategic themes: **Connect**, **Improve** and **Protect** that will form our central programmes of work,
- A focus on creating a resilient organisation well-placed to meet the challenges of the next 20 years,
- Implementation of smarter, more effective processes so that we can make the most of every opportunity, linking work to achieve our vision of healthy rivers enjoyed by all, and
- Continuing to develop a robust evidence base to target our work to where it will be of most benefit.

Look out for more about Healthy Rivers for All in our next newsletter.



“ Our new three year plan sets out a bold direction for our organisation, as we strive to connect more people and ensure our rivers are healthy and can be enjoyed by all.

Over the course of three years we will be enhancing all areas of our organisation and challenging ourselves to ensure that our work is integrated, cost-effective and delivers benefits to both people and nature.



Meet the trustees

Our Board of Trustees play a vital role in the continued growth and success of the charitable trust.

But who are they ... and what do they do?



Eden Rivers Trust's Board is made up of 10 trustees who meet on a regular basis and take decisions at formal board meetings. They have overall legal responsibility for the trust, set and monitor the strategic direction for the trust and provide financial oversight.

Our Trustees bring a wide range of professional skills, knowledge and expertise from both the private and public sector, reflecting both the vision and priorities of Eden Rivers Trust.

Each Trustee is responsible for a portfolio of work in accordance with their particular skills and interests

and works closely with the staff team providing challenge, support and advice.

Introducing the Chair and Vice-Chair

Leading us into the next chapter of our growth and development is our new Chair, **Charles Ecroyd**.

He succeeds Glyn Vaughan who stood down in May 2017 after three years (and we're delighted that he remains a trustee).

We are also pleased to announce the new appointment of the role of Vice-Chair, **Sandi Bradney**.

Sandi became a trustee in 2016 and took up the role in May.

Sandi is a retired magistrate who has a long association with, and interest in the River Eden and its well-being.

Other trustees include: (see main picture) From L-R: Professor John Quinton, Glyn Vaughan, Sandi Bradney, Robert Warburton, Hilary Wade, Nigel Milsom, James Turner, John Sander* and Alex Thursby*
*not pictured.



Meet the Chair of the Trustees

Charles lives near Armathwaite in the Eden Valley with his wife and their 2 children where he runs the family's agricultural and sporting estate.

In recent years their home has become a licensed venue for a host of activities including weddings, varied events, lunches and dinners



I am delighted to have the opportunity to assume more responsibility in the running of the trust following the example set by my late father who was one of the founding trustees several years ago.

As a riparian owner on the River Eden, and a life-long fisherman, I am relishing the opportunities and challenges that the trust faces, and am looking forward to working with Acting Director, Jo Spencer and all her team, to take our numerous projects forward.



On 'yer bike Rob!

Trustee, Rob Warburton (along with Dave Smith, Pete Smith and Malcolm Mounsey) is undertaking the **Prudential Ride London - Surrey 100** on 30 July to raise money for Eden Rivers Trust and the Rob Stephenson Trust.

Not just a scenic tour of London's sights, this ride also takes in the infamous Box Hill in Surrey (made famous during the London 2012 Olympics!)

Sponsor him on his Just Giving page at: www.justgiving.com/Robert-Warburton5

Breaking down the barriers to migration

Although they may look as though they've always been there, weirs pose a real threat to people and wildlife, so we're undertaking a major programme to safely remove them.

by Will Cleasby

For centuries people have modified and adjusted river systems. Historically this has been for many reasons such as: to create new farm land, generate power, and to install critical infrastructure like railways and roads.

Weirs are one such modification. They were built in our rivers to impound and divert water, or to enforce a change in levels where rivers have been shortened. Over time, these man-made features can have a negative impact on both people and the environment.

Why remove them?

Some old weirs now impound too much water and river bed material causing a flood risk to local communities. Old weirs are expensive to maintain, and, if allowed to collapse in an

uncontrolled fashion, can cause costly destruction to people and property further downstream.

The controlled removal of redundant weirs is a key target for Eden Rivers Trust. We believe that rivers are healthier and safer if they can be removed in a controlled and planned way.

Not only can we help to safeguard properties in the immediate vicinity, but the free passage of water and river bed material often means our rivers are better able to cope with the large storm events we now experience.

Many of our iconic river species such as the Wild Atlantic salmon rely on being able to migrate up and down our river systems in order to breed and survive.

Weirs often represent a barrier to this great migration, and hence are

contributing to the decline of this magnificent fish, so we have targeted the removal of weirs in areas of the Eden Valley where we know that Salmon need to get to in order to spawn.

We are also removing weirs from rivers where the latest scientific research has shown us that a more natural river system will have a bigger impact in reducing future flood risk.

Weir removal is a long-term project. In 2016 we successfully removed two weirs, one on the River Eamont and one on the River Caldw. More are planned for 2017 and beyond.

This work is delivered through the Cumbria River Restoration Strategy in partnership with the Environment Agency and Natural England. To date the partnership has invested over £1.1 million restoring the River Eden and tributaries, with £200,000 spent on weir removals.

Watch our short film of the removal of Sheepmount and Carleton Hall Weir on [You Tube](#) >>



Carleton Hall 2016

Sinks, saplings & surveying

All in a day's work as an Eden Rivers Trust volunteer

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, our volunteers gave over 2160 hours of their time in 2016, coming out in all weathers to undertake valuable work caring for our rivers ... and enjoying some stunning scenery and fellowship at the same time!

Being a volunteer is certainly varied - last year they tackled everything from river clean-ups and crayfish surveying to planting trees and bashing Himalayan balsam!

In the aftermath of Storm Desmond, Eden Rivers Trust's focus was to support flood-affected communities as much as possible. Our volunteers cleaned up riverbanks on some of the worst affected stretches of river, and we



Kier Construction

supported local community groups who wanted to clean up their local stretch of the river.

Coming from all walks of life, our volunteers may not be river experts or have volunteered for a charity before, but they all share a desire to make Eden's rivers a better place for people and wildlife!

Corporate volunteering is growing with Cumbrian-based companies getting involved such as Kier Construction and staff from Carlisle McDonalds and the Co-op in Denton Street all turning out in force to make a real difference in their communities.

In fact, Kier did such a good job, they cleared away everything along the riverbank ... including the kitchen sink!

Introducing micro-volunteering

Modern life is hectic, and not everyone can spare a full day or even a morning to volunteer, but would still like to do something to help Eden's rivers and wildlife. This is where micro-volunteering comes in!

Basically, micro-volunteering can be done from the comfort of your own home, often on your computer or smart phone, whenever you have a spare moment. It may involve looking & noting down landscape features to help us plan projects, lobbying your MP or using water wisely at home, the list is endless.

We have just launched our first micro-volunteering opportunity - undertaking **hedgerow surveys** using Google Earth. Interested? Call Paul Greaves to find out more and sign up!



Could you spare some time to volunteer?
Why not sign up your workplace or community group to take part in a project with us?

Get in touch with Paul Greaves, River Action Group Coordinator for an informal chat about what being a volunteer involves by calling 01768 866788 or email him at paul@edenrt.org

Staff from Carlisle McDonalds
River Caldew, June 17



Working with Eden's Farmers

Agriculture is the biggest land user in the Eden Valley, 97% of the Eden is farmed in some form.

Certain farming practices can cause lasting damage to our rivers and streams. Adopting good water-friendly farming practices can provide us with many more benefits in addition to safe, affordable food.

These benefits are clear: clean water for drinking, protection from extreme weather (including floods and droughts), the provision of fuel, and also an attractive countryside that supports wildlife, recreation and other businesses.

Our work with farmers in the Eden Valley is about helping farmers to not only farm efficiently, but also helping them to deliver all of these other benefits to wider society.

On the tributaries of the Eden such as the Petteril, Leith and Lowther, we are working with local farming communities within the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund.

Supported by funding through Natural England, as part of this scheme we are able to offer farmers training and support in applying for grant funding to help deliver environmental improvements to the river.

Typically the type of projects individual farmers are carrying out include: roofing over of dirty farm yards to stop water becoming contaminated, hedgerow and tree planting, and riverside fencing.

Our Facilitation schemes are ably coordinated by our two in-house farming experts, Alice Robinson and Matt Jenkinson. As well as working for us, Alice and Matt both farm in the Eden Valley and therefore appreciate the challenges faced by local farmers.

Two themes are coming through from members of the Facilitation Fund.

Farmers want to know more about **managing water** on the farm to improve water quality and reduce their business costs, and **grassland management** – having healthy soils to increase productivity, improve drainage and reduce the amount of fertiliser spread onto the land.

We are running a series of events that highlight different aspects of these topics, sharing the latest thinking in grassland and water management and showcasing good practice in the catchment.

- Alice Robinson



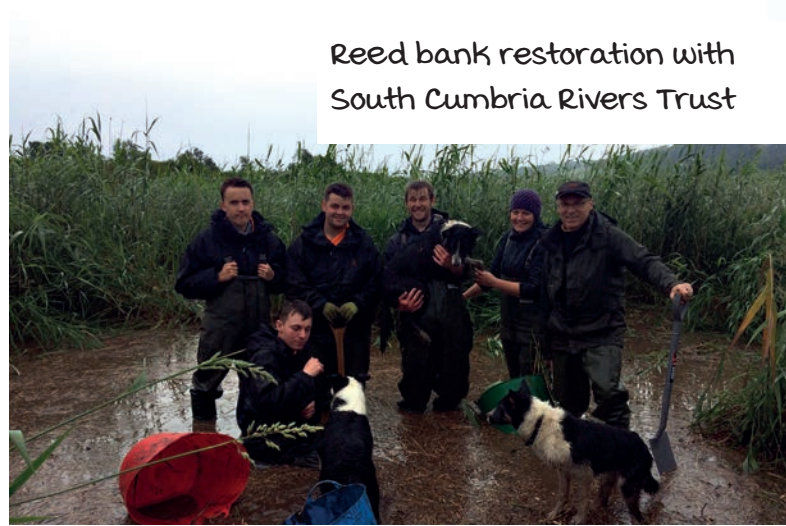
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas. This project has received European Union funding under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme's Facilitation Fund. The scheme is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)

Find out more about how our approach works in our **Water Friendly Farming leaflet**, available to download from our website:

[Water-friendly Farming leaflet >>](#)



Reed bank restoration with South Cumbria Rivers Trust



Out & about with the Apprentices



Susie, Apprentice Coordinator, has it written into her contract that she is carried everywhere!



Rescuing a bin stranded in the River Eamont at Eamont Bridge



Winching logs to make 'leaky dams' in Grisedale



Creating a public footpath in Keswick for Lake District National Park Authority

Apprentice Eden is supported by



LOTTERY FUNDED

Working with nature to reduce flood risk

Since the devastating floods that hit Cumbria in December 2015, many people have been talking about Natural Flood Management and the role it can play in the county to help reduce flood risk. So what is Natural Flood Management? And how can it help us manage flooding in the future?

Firstly, why are we experiencing bigger and bigger floods?

As our **climate** warms, our warmer atmosphere has the capacity to hold more water and hence produce more rain.

Many researchers are now predicting that the North West of England will have wetter winters and drier summers in future.

Our **landscape** has changed; farmland fields are now larger, with fewer boundaries that can intercept water running off the fields.

Our **rivers** have been straightened, carrying a greater volume of water from the hills to the valleys much more quickly.

Our **population** has increased along with the spread of **urbanisation**. UK-wide, our population has increased by over 10 million people since the 1950s, resulting in the building of more housing, roads and railways, creating greater expanses of urban areas and increasing the strain on existing infrastructure.

These activities and circumstances have contributed to an increase in our exposure to larger floods that affect more people.

What is Natural Flood Management?

Natural Flood Management (NFM) is a technique used to reduce the impact of land use changes that have speeded up the flow of water to our centres of population.

By restoring natural features (or installing features that mimic natural processes) in the landscape, we can reduce downstream flood peaks.

For example, hedgerows, stone walls and trees can intercept rainfall and slow down the flow of water off the land. If our rivers are longer, through having more features such as meanders, then it will take more time for water to reach

downstream - this can delay and reduce the flood peak in towns and villages further down the valley.

Ways to manage water:

Ideally, we want to reduce the amount of excess water reaching the river in the first place. If this is not possible, then our aim is to delay the time taken for that water to flow down the river. There are three ways this can be done:



There are a variety of techniques available - how do we decide which one(s) will be the most effective?

At Eden Rivers Trust, we use the latest modelling software, coupled with local knowledge and physical surveys to determine which NFM measures are best suited to particular areas/problems.

Scale is key

The concept of Natural Flood Management is dependent on doing lots of this type of work right across the landscape.

If this can be achieved, then the total volume of water in the river channel can be spread over a longer time scale and reduce the size of the flood peak downstream.

However, this is not a quick fix, working with natural materials and processes takes time to establish and reach full effectiveness. These features can be expensive, but unlike engineered defences, will improve in efficiency over time, be more economical to maintain and will not degrade.

Why do it?

Reduce risk of flooding
Increase carbon storage
Increase diversity of wildlife & habitats
Leisure activities
Reduce riverbank erosion
Improve water quality

The features we install are great for people and nature as well.

As well as providing habitats for invertebrates and small fish, they make great places for people to visit and enjoy.

After all, the creation of woodlands and the restoration of hedgerows and walls all add great value to our landscape, a landscape that up to 16 million visitors pay to enjoy every year!

It's just about flooding - right?

No! We must avoid the temptation to be fixated by flooding. Whilst flooding can be devastating, it is still a natural process that can help to clean our river systems from a build-up of pollutants.

Droughts are also expected to become more prevalent in the future, so we need to be able to help our valleys act like sponges, slowly soaking up and then releasing water to give us a more consistent supply of drinking water.

Look out for more articles about our NFM projects in future newsletters.

Techniques to store, slow and filter water include:

- Planting hedgerows to intercept water,
- Building leaky dams and storage ponds,
- Reducing soil compaction, and
- Targeted tree planting.

Offline storage pond



Leaky dam in an ephemeral channel



Targeted tree planting in mungrisdale



Hedgerow planting



Where there's a Will there's a way

After thirteen years at the trust, our co-director, Will Cleasby, is moving on to pastures new (no pun intended!) So we couldn't miss the opportunity to look back on his career before he leaves!



Will out on site as part of the DTC project

Initially taken on as Habitats Officer to manage and maintain our practical projects, Will devised and developed the trust's approach to land management.

This interest in tackling the problem of diffuse pollution led to the role of Engagement Officer on the **Demonstration Test Catchment research project**, (DTC) a high profile project working with universities and local farmers to find cost-effective ways to mitigate diffuse pollution.

As a farmer in the area himself, Will appreciates the challenges facing the farming sector, and his combination of river conservation knowledge and farming background has been instrumental in embedding our approach to working with a wide range of farmers in the catchment, implementing measures that are good for both farming businesses and the environment.

Will, what have you been most proud of in your time at the trust?

Probably the ALFA project. We were the lead UK partner on a

European project led by Lucy Butler that featured some major players alongside ourselves - at that time, a small charity with six people.

It was an exciting time, bit of a roller coaster, but we had the right team to pull off such an ambitious, ahead-of-its-time piece of work.

It was at this time that Glyn Vaughan got more involved and his visionary leadership was pivotal in both this project and in setting the tone for the future.



Will and the ERT staff team in 2008 - can you spot him?!

You've seen some changes in the last thirteen years ...

When I joined, there were three staff and a student. We were small in size, but big in ambition, spear-heading work that was ground breaking in the river conservation world.

The team may be bigger these days, but the level of ambition and our ethos of leading the way in river conservation and management remains as strong as ever. It's been great to have been part of the team building the trust into the organisation it is today.

I'm proud of the way that we have broadened our work from what traditionally may have been



perceived as the role of a rivers trust by taking our work with farmers in new directions, engaging with more communities in creative ways, and upping our game in communicating and encouraging participation in our work to our audiences

Funniest moment?

Too many to choose from...and not fit for print! One time at the Lowther Show, we were running a casting competition, casting lines into hula hoops on the water. Chap comes up and asks what's going on. Reply comes, "It's a casting competition". Chap thinks for a bit then says, "How do you get the fish to stay under those hoops?" *speechless*

Personal highlight?

The day Lizzie Fenton joined the trust...she's my world. (ahh, who knew he was such a romantic! - Ed)



Will and Lizzie at the Trust Auction 2016
Will, we will miss your wise counsel and your encyclopedic knowledge of the catchment, however, you leave a fantastic legacy for us to build on and we wish you all the best for the future.

Remembering James Carr

by Will Cleasby

It was with great sadness that we received news of the death of one of our founding trustees, James Carr. The Eden Rivers Trust as we know it today would not have been possible without the vision, passion, influence and generosity of James.

Over 20 years ago James was one of the early pioneers, thinking about how we can manage and look after our rivers at a true catchment scale for the benefit of every living thing.

Without James' foresight and determination Eden Rivers Trust would simply not be here, and as founder of one of the first rivers trusts in the country, James laid the pathway for others to follow.

It is extremely rare in life to meet people who give so freely of their time, advice and wise counsel, James always did and it always ended in a confident, friendly smile that left you knowing everything would work out well.

Rest in peace James Carr, you have inspired us all.



Events

Saturday 12 August Dalston Show

Bring the family & test your marble-rolling skills

Come along and meet the team, find out more about our work or get stuck in with a volunteer project!

Thursday 31 August River Action Day: Crayfish surveying

Join us for a day surveying these increasingly rare creatures.
Call 01768 866788 to book your place

Thursday 28 September River Action Day: Slow the Flow

Take part in one of our Natural Flood Management projects to slow the flow of water.
Call 01768 866788 to book your place

That's all for this issue

The next Eden Rivers Trust newsletter is due to hit inboxes in October. In the meantime, you can keep up to date with all the latest news from Eden Rivers Trust via social media:



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