

Autumn newsletter 2020

Wessex 'Stage Zero' floodplain reconnection opportunity mapping

The Wessex 'Stage Zero' opportunity mapping project is being delivered in partnership of the Environment Agency and Dorset Wildlife Trust, who have contracted Dr Peter Stone to work with the team to develop a set of products including opportunity maps, data layers and case studies that will help practitioners better understand how to develop an appropriate 'Stage Zero' project. The investigation area included the catchments of the rivers Frome, Piddle, Corfe and Stour.

The project is attempting to identify where it is possible to restore a river to occupy the valley floor. Using mapping techniques, a digital representation of the Valley Bottom Floor (VBF) has been defined. The VBF is the unconstrained area where a river can be rehabilitated and is often greater in extent than the current floodplain which is a product of the present river channel.

To identify potential opportunities to rehabilitate a river to an unconfined VBF, nationally available mapping data was grouped into four broad categories;

- Physical characteristics
- Anthropogenic factors
- Restoration factor
- Constraints and opportunities



Potential 'Stage Zero' site.

Image: Peter Stone, Environment Agency



Example valley bottom floor model output.

Image: Peter Stone, Environment Agency

To map opportunities for 'Stage Zero' restoration the valley bottom floor was divided into 100m grid squares. These squares are scored according to the balance of elements that make a site suitable for a 'Stage Zero' restoration.

Mapping out the data provides a guide to suitability and a strategic overview of the potential opportunities at a catchment scale. 6 Case Studies are being developed chosen from across the 4 rivers representing a range of locations within those catchments and that where the mapping is suggesting a good opportunity for 'Stage Zero'. At this stage there is no work planned with this exercise looking at possibilities only with the results of the project being only a starting point for further investigations including conversations with land manager within, upstream and downstream of the highlighted areas.

This approach will also be useful for developing the catchment plan helping to identify which tools will work best in certain locations helping the catchment partnership to achieve its goals. For further information please contact Aly Maxwell: alasdair.maxwell@environment-agency.gov.uk

Dorset LNP needs you!

The Dorset LNP Board is looking to appoint up to four independent board members. These appointments provide a unique and rewarding opportunity. We are looking for experienced leaders, clear strategic thinkers, articulate speakers, those passionate about supporting the local environment, who understand and advocate its importance to local communities, quality of life and the local economy. Deadlines for applications: **9am Monday 9th November**

For more details visit the LNP website [here](https://www.dorsetlnp.org.uk).



Angus Menzies honoured with River Champion 2020 award

Long-standing Riverfly Partnership volunteer and co-ordinator Angus Menzies has recently been awarded the accolade of River Champion for 2020 by the River Restoration Centre (RRC). Angus has coordinated the Dorset Riverfly Partnership for the past 10 years and gives valued input to the Catchment Partnership's delivery groups for both the Stour and Poole Harbour catchments.

The award recognises and celebrates the outstanding efforts of individuals who contribute to river restoration in their local area, improving rivers for wildlife and people. To find out more about the award please click [here](#).

Angus runs Riverfly training days and raises money through grant applications to engage local communities. He has also led the roll out of the Extended Riverfly scheme to further educate communities about 'what lies beneath'. In his spare time Angus has also guided over 40 trained monitors across 50 sites in Dorset to monitor river health.

Furthermore, his work on the River Allen has helped to protect native crayfish, by carrying out extensive surveying including eDNA trials. This work was aided by his collaboration with land owners along the Allen, which enabled greater involvement, and easier access to the river.



Angus Menzies leading surveys for Riverfly. Image: Dorset Wildlife Trust

Congratulations Angus, very well deserved!

Other News

- Environment Agency have released the Water Framework Directive 2019 data for all river bodies in the UK. The data is available through Catchment Data Explorer [here](#).
- East Dorset Forest Design Plan consultation is open until 26th October. The plans define the long term vision for woodland or a collection of woodlands and set out how management will move towards this vision over the next ten years. The Stour Catchment partnership are submitting a response and we encourage others to do the same. To access the full plan click [here](#)
- Woodland and Natural Flood Management free webinar with Tom Nesbit. 19th November 12:30-13:30. Discussion how woodlands and their management can effect flooding. Tom has over 30 years of experience in forest hydrology and applied catchment management. To register and find out more click [here](#)
- Natural England's Chair and CEO launch Local Nature Recovery Strategy. 5 pilot areas have been chosen with selected Local Authorities receiving £1 million of funding to help set up the pilot studies helping to identify the most valuable sites for wildlife. For further information click [here](#)

Dorset Wild Rivers future funding success

Dorset Wild Rivers has been successful in the latest round of Wessex Water's Biodiversity Action Plan Partner Programme fund. The project will receive £20,000 per year for five years, to enable Dorset Wildlife Trust, FWAG-SW and Dorset AONB to carry out valuable waterbody improvement work around Dorset under the DWR partnership banner.

The Partners Programme has been running since 1998, providing funding to conservation organisations for projects contributing to the company's goal of conserving and enhancing wildlife across the Wessex region. The programme is now in its 6th Phase and will support projects over the next 5 years.

Dorset Wild Rivers focuses on Dorset's priority rivers and aims to achieve the restoration of river habitat as well as wetland enhancement schemes. The partnership will be looking at improvements along the Frome and Piddle valleys and the chalk stream tributaries of the River Stour, Allen, Tarrant and the South Winterbourne.

The overall aim is to take a catchment approach to delivering biodiversity enhancements that support multifunctional water environments in Dorset. The underlying principle is to work in partnership with local communities, land managers and the general public to ensure there is buy-in to the work that is delivered. Specifically, Dorset Wild Rivers aims to help improve morphological function and ecological integrity within river systems, provide sustainable catchment management through advice to farmers, develop innovative strategies for nutrient and river management, and improve functionality of rivers and wetlands. Combined, these approaches lead to enhanced delivery of multiple ecosystem services.

For more details please email Amanda Broom at abroom@dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk



Enhanced section of River Allen Image: Dorset Wildlife Trust