

South Devon Catchments Partnership Working Group Meeting

18th May 2017

1. Introductions

Attendees:

- Andy Pratt – Field Studies Council
- Nigel Mortimer – South Devon AONB (nigel.mortimer@SouthDevonAONB.org.uk)
- Isabel Carlisle – Bioregional Learning Centre (isabel.carlisle@me.com)
- Jane Brady – Bioregional Learning Centre
- Steph Davies – Devon & Severn IFCA
- Eve Sanders – Marine Biology Student, Plymouth University
- Roger English – South Devon AONB
- Adrian Dowding – Westcountry Rivers Trust
- Jonny Miller – Teignbridge District Council
- Chris Giles – Dartmoor National Park Authority
- Rosie Lear – Westcountry Rivers Trust (rosie@wrt.org.uk)
- Olivia Cresswell – Westcountry Rivers Trust
- Graeme Smith – Teignbridge District Council
- Christine Wood – Marine Biological Association
- Stacey De Amicis – Plymouth University
- Adam Davison – Torbay Council
- Eamon Crowe – Natural England
- Lesley Newport – Environment Agency
- Nick Paling – Westcountry Rivers Trust (nick@wrt.org.uk)

Apologies:

- Emma Reece – National Trust
- Bill Robertson – Dart Fisheries Association
- David Smith – South West Water
- Val Mercer – AONB Parish Councils
- Ed Parr Ferris – Devon Wildlife Trust
- Saeed Sadri – Met Office
- Sarah Jennings - Devon County Council
- Lynne Kenderdine – Devon Wildlife Trust
- Bob Harvey – AONB Amenity Groups' Representative
- Roger Furniss - South West Rivers Association
- Simon Tame – Natural England

2. Update on CaBA at a national level

- Host funding confirmed for this year.
- Benefits working group have been collecting monitoring and evaluation data from all partnerships – the first country-wide assessment of partnership working.
- WaterLife – 5 year EU Life project came to an end this year. Outcomes include working with Coca Cola to improve sugar beet farming in East Anglia, and a community engagement campaign in the Tamar.

3. Round-up of successes of the partnership so far, and ongoing projects:

Completed projects:

- CPAF 'Addressing Nutrients in South Devon' - working in the Kingsbridge-Salcombe estuary and Slapton Ley area to reduce diffuse pollution. Activities included:
 - Septic tanks - community engagement and tank emptying by local contractor
 - Citizen science - volunteer citizen scientists recruited to undertake monitoring
 - Education - including drain-marking campaign with local schools
- Estuaries Management Plan (for the Yealm, Erme, Dart, Avon and Salcombe-Kingsbridge estuary) – completed with a text only version now up of the South Devon AONB website.
- Dart and Teign River Improvement Project – river restoration work. Funds not directly leveraged by the Catchments Partnership but the work has potential to be continued under the CP.

Current projects:

- Local Action Project in Newton Abbot - a review of existing ecosystem services and opportunity mapping for improving ecosystem service provision. Final report currently in preparation.
 - CPAF Frogmore Creek - continuing from previous CPAF project, focusing on Frogmore Creek catchment. Activities include:
 - School visits and community events in Frogmore, Stokenham and West Charleton
 - Identification of pollution sources, following up with farm visits and advice
 - Engagement video commissioned
 - Upstream Thinking – South West Water funded project working with landowners to reduce pollution and pesticides in the upper reaches of rivers across the Westcountry, including the Dart. Plans for next 5-year round currently being discussed.
 - Estuary Biosecurity Plans (again for the Yealm, Erme, Dart, Avon and Salcombe-Kingsbridge estuary) – in progress.
 - CP website and new logo – to create a brand and become a rallying point, to gain support and share information with the public.
4. Presentation from the Bioregional Learning Centre:
- New Community Interest Company in South Devon
 - Since the last meeting of the Working Group the Bioregional Learning Centre has established itself in South Devon to offer collaborative working in the areas of community involvement in catchment working, sustainable livelihoods and whole systems change towards resilience. The website is here: <https://bioregion.org.uk/>. Isabel Carlisle and Jane Brady are in active project-development mode at the moment, keen to have conversations and make connections that take the work of the Catchment Partnership forward.
 - River Keepers project – in development, aiming to reconnect people to their local rivers and to take ownership of protection and management, starting with the River Dart. Variety of initiatives – engagement, education, mentoring/apprentices.
 - Re-energise the Catchments Partnership!
5. Vision for the Catchments Partnership (ideas discussed in pairs then fed back to the group):
- Work more closely with farmers, landowners and communities
 - Literacy (eco-, water-, marine-) and experiencing environments
 - Citizens reporting back – eyes and ears for local environment
 - Businesses take responsibility for their waste (and the waste/litter created by their customers)
 - Water quality and multiple benefits from good quality water
 - Access to good evidence and interface with public – especially through community members' own special interests and drivers

- Make the river a place people want to go (eg. Rivers Keepers as a way of mediating conflict between different users)
- Landscape-led approach
- Integrate – being agile and not replicating effort
- Peatland restoration
- Natural Flood Management (NFM)
- Influence future support mechanisms
- Natural Capital
- Upstream and downstream thinking – and making these two ideas more integrated
- Awareness of where your water comes from and goes. Increasing understanding of impacts of lots of small actions.
- Engage urban areas with water cycle, including how water gets to and goes from their own homes
- Include jobs and economic development in plans and proposals
- Plan long term direction of travel, for example considering where the coasts will be in 50 years time
- Bring in businesses to engage with/own bio-security issues
- Raise awareness of non-native invasive species
- Lexicon of rivers and water – make it intelligible to ordinary people
- Connect disadvantaged people to landscape
- Clean up urban rivers
- Impact of people made visible
- Food that depends on water (fresh and sea) eg. Seafood coast initiative
- Connect up education initiatives in South Devon and get our agenda onto their agenda
- Focus on areas where we can make most impact
- Get clever about not overlapping work – integrate better together
- Open ears in DEFRA
- Repair disconnect with natural assets
- Make economic benefits of Devon’s landscape visible – avoid degradation of environment
- Councils perform statutory duties better to protect the environment

Some new/current initiatives which may be of interest were also mentioned during the meeting:

- MBA Sea Change – Improving ‘Ocean Literacy’, empowering citizens to take action towards a healthy ocean - <http://www.seachangeproject.eu/>
- EA Guide to Foam – a guide to natural and unnatural foam in rivers and still waters, see the guide here <http://severnriverstrust.com/uncategorized/environment-agency-information-sheet-naturally-occurring-foam-rivers/>
- Natural England are developing an app for use on the coast path, including views of the sea floor
- Dartmoor Farming Futures pilot project - <http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/lookingafter/laf-landmanagement/dartmoor-farming-futures>
- Seafood Coast Initiative, celebrating local seafood - <http://englishrivieratourism.co.uk/englands-seafood-coast.php>
- Great Place Scheme - piloting new approaches that enable cultural and community groups to work more closely together - <https://www.greatplacescheme.org.uk/>
- California Trout's SOS II: Fish in Hot Water <http://caltrout.org/>

It would be great to create some news articles/blog posts on the new SDCP website about the above initiatives – if you would like this and have a little more information on any of them then please send an email to rosie@wrt.org.uk.

6. Action to be taken forward by hosts (WRT and AONB) and Bioregional Learning Centre:
 - Pick approx. 8 project ideas
 - Consult with group – each to suggest 3 or 4 top priorities from list
 - Narrow down to 2 project ideas
 - Create project team for each

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to the interesting discussion. We hope to hold these meetings on a quarterly basis going forward.