

South Devon Catchments Partnership meeting – 26th January 2018

Attendees:

Nigel Mortimer - South Devon AONB

Val Mercer - South Devon AONB

Tom Trevor - Curator for the Atlantic Project

Isabel Carlisle - Bioregional Learning Centre (BLC)

Jane Brady - Bioregional Learning Centre

Mothiur Rahman - Lawyer working with Bioregional Learning Centre

Graham Smith - Teignbridge District Council, Strategic Coastal team

Eamon Crowe - Natural England (NE)

Rob Price - Environment Agency (EA), Catchment Coordinator

Adrian Dowding - Westcountry Rivers Trust (WRT), Devon River and Fisheries Manager

James Rogers - Dartmoor National Park Authority

Stuart Watts - Aune Conservation Association (ACA)

Peter Marsh - Aune Conservation Association

Lynne Kenderdine - Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT)

Jules Florey - South West Water (SWW), Biodiversity Delivery Manager

Rosie Lear – Westcountry Rivers Trust

Stacey DeAmicis – Plymouth University

Update from AONB

Upcoming new projects:

- Plastics Campaign
- Holiday footprints – encourage tourists in the Salcombe-Kingsbridge area to manage their waste and recycling correctly, awareness of disposal of fats, oils and greases, reduce use of detergents etc.
- Steel-piled sea walls – working with Exeter University to investigate the potential to increase the biodiversity value of the sea walls in Dartmouth
- Cellar Bay Gorge erosion – a feasibility study to investigate the potential to reduce this erosion and protect the seagrass beds on the Yealm

The Dart Estuary forum is being brought back into action, speak to Nigel (nigel.mortimer@southdevonaonb.org.uk) if you would like to be involved.

Update from WRT

Upcoming new projects:

- Salcombe-Kingsbridge Diffuse Pollution Investigation – a scoping study to bring together evidence on sources of pollution in the Kingsbridge-Salcombe catchment. This evidence will support NE in the development of the Diffuse Water Pollution Plan for the SSSI.

- RiverFly on the Teign – funds to train and provide kits to 12 volunteers on the River Teign. For more info on the scheme see www.riverflies.org. There was further discussion on this scheme – on the Avon it was set up by DWT and the Devon Nature Partnership and is now self-sustaining. This is WRT’s aim for the Teign too.
- Dartmoor Dips – reducing the environmental risks of sheep dipping on Dartmoor

Update on existing projects:

- Avon gravel augmentation – 3rd year completed in September, bringing the total augmented to 700 tons. Semi-quantitative electro-fishing surveys show success for salmon recruitment so far. WRT are working with Plymouth Uni to assess habitat change and particle tracking to better understand sustainability of the work.

Potential upcoming projects:

- Water Environment Grant – more details later from Rob, but WRT would like to collate thoughts relating to fisheries and river restoration with the idea of following up on SHRIMP (South Hams River Improvement Project) and DTRIP (Dart and Teign River Improvement Project). Contact Adrian (adrian@wrt.org.uk) and/or Rosie (rosie@wrt.org.uk).
- Teign River Festival – more details to come, but hoping to work with Dartmoor National Park Authority to put on a river festival at Chagford.

Update from EA

- Rob Price (robert.price@environment-agency.gov.uk) introduced himself as the new catchment coordinator for South Devon – catchment coordinators work to bring together the diverse range of work the EA does in an area, work with other DEFRA partners, and work with wider partners through CaBA.
- The Teign catchment has been identified as the EA focus area as it is an opportunity to bring together the various EA departments (Natural England are less focused on the Teign). Rob and colleagues have begun listing all the projects they are involved in and aware of across the Teign and this was presented on a map.
 - Key issues in the Teign – water industry, modifications, abandoned metal mines. Questions were raised regarding the ‘Sector not identified’ issues, and a request was raised for more detailed monitoring of water company outputs.
 - Next steps are to identify timescales, combine work packages across departments, understand benefits of potential work and opportunities to work with partners, with the aim of moving towards WFD elemental improvement.
- Water Environment Grant – this is a major funding opportunity from the Environment Agency.
 - Details are not yet fully verified, but it is thought to be in the region of tens of millions available for partnerships across the country. This money will be awarded based on the merit of the project (comparable in that sense to Heritage Lottery Fund)

- No match funding will be required, up to 10% is for project management, and the funding will be for 3 years
- Currently the planned timescale is for a launch date of 19th March 2018.
- Wastewater from Abandoned Metal Mines (WAMM)
 - A national project working to remediate point source and diffuse pollution, while taking into account issues such as heritage value and rare bryophytes which grow in these contaminated areas.
- Several projects were funded through Environment Program Q4 (some mentioned previously):
 - Kingsbridge-Salcombe Diffuse Pollution
 - Dartmoor Dips – tackling water quality issues surrounding sheep scab and sheep dip infrastructure
 - Dartmouth Steel-piled Sea Wall Habitats
 - Salcombe Holiday Footprint
 - Avon Valley Project – working with DWT and Devon Nature Partnership to reduce phosphate levels in the Tor Brook sub-catchment

Introduction to the Dart Charter from the Bioregional Learning Centre

- The Bioregional Learning Centre promotes collective work towards sustainability in a region, through a learning programme, arts programme, environment programme, and economy programme.
- Community Chartering Network – initiative based around people taking action on issues affecting their lives in their local area
- The Dart Charter aims to work with experts, universities, organisations and local people, based on the idea that co-decision making and collaboration brings greater results
- Currently in Stage 1 – discussions on shared values, vision for the future, responsibilities, rights and resolving conflicts
- The charter will be useful for environmental organisations as more people will understand the importance of environmental work, and the agreed document will be a powerful tool
- Interviews will be taking place in February
- Tom Trevor (curator with the Atlantic Project) spoke about the opportunities to build up a network of charters internationally and has worked with European partners to put a bid in to the Liquid Europe Consortium. Also creating links to US communities as part of Mayflower anniversary celebrations and through River Keepers project in the Hudson Valley.
- Mothiur Rahman (lawyer working with the Community Chartering Network and the Bioregional Learning Centre) spoke about the legal aspects of the charter
 - Taking a needs approach – needs of the river, needs met through the river and needs of public bodies
 - Taking a chartering perspective – identifying intangible assets, developing metrics and understanding the importance of place
 - Legal aspects – public trust doctrine – natural processes as public trusts

- Deliverables – understanding the catchment (eg. Creating a 3D printed model – Teignbridge have a model which can be used as inspiration), mapping, developing metrics, legal research, use to feed into DEFRA 25 year environment plan
- Other discussion points:
 - Who holds the charter?
 - How can tourists and visitors to the area be involved?
 - The charter should be used to encourage local action
 - Complexity relating to estuaries should be considered, especially land ownership and because it is where most of the population lives
 - Source communities may affect several catchments or may not know which catchment they live in

Round Table

- **Eamon Crowe, Natural England** – Suggested [Conservation Strategy for the 21st Century](#) as a useful resource. NE are supportive of partnership and partnership projects but are currently struggling for resources – highlighted importance of SDCP
- **James Rogers, Dartmoor National Park Authority** – DNPA were successful in their Facilitation Fund bid for the Tavy, East Dart and West Dart, with the aim of connecting farms with commons. They have also put in another peatlands bid for Moorlands in the South West
- **Lynne Kenderdine, Devon Wildlife Trust** – Relating to the Dart charter, highlighted DWT's Greater Horseshoe bat project and Upstream Thinking project which are both based in the Dart Catchment. DWT also have several reserves in the Dart Catchment.
- **Jules Florey, South West Water** – Water quality information requests can be sent in at any time. The process to respond to these requests and the data have been improved. Visit the [SWW website](#) for advice.
- **Stacey DeAmicis, Plymouth University** – the SDCP is used as an example in workshops with marine biology and conservation student. The Uni holds a student engagement role play day and are looking for organisations to take part on the 3rd May.
- **Rosie Lear, Westcountry Rivers Trust** – the group agreed that more frequent updates on what's happening in the partnership would be useful, so emails will be sent more often. Please send info (eg. new projects, project progress) you would like to be included in email updates to rosie@wrt.org.uk. The group also felt it would be useful to share email addresses (rather than being BCC in emails) – there will be a further email asking for permission to do this.

Thanks to everyone who attended.

