



Blackwater Valley Countryside



Hampshire &
Isle of Wight

- Brief and Agenda for Loddon Rivers Week 2013 - Practical Tasks to improve River Ecology

As Dominic Martyn said...

"We did it! A big thank you to seventy plus enthusiastic volunteers of varied backgrounds and ages for turning up to deliver habitat improvements for Loddon Rivers Week. The practical days ran as well as we could have ever hoped for. Even the glorious sun turned up each day! Thanks to the land owners and fishing clubs on each stretch of river and our merry band of organisers from the Loddon Champions Group, including the Wild Trout Trust, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Consultative, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and us at the Environment Agency.

It was really pleasing to meet new faces and actively help our rivers resilience, especially during times of drought. Improving drought resilience we say, but how? Read on... Especially if you want to know what the fish thought!

Did it inspire more work like this? Please feedback any comments to Matt Drew: matt.drew@environment-agency.gov.uk. Matt would love to see the work that has been carried out by volunteers and others outside of Rivers Week."

On that note, I would like to say it did inspire me as a Fisheries Officer to do more work like this, both on the Loddon catchment with the organisations named above, and on different river catchments in the West Thames Area.

Rivers Week 2012 Summary

- Over 70 volunteers safely achieved up to 30 habitat enhancements on the Blackwater, Loddon and Whitewater.
- A draft EA Flood Defence Consent (FDC) advice pack is in circulation. This provides simple guides for woody debris, backwaters and gravel. It is supplemented with a flood defence consent leaflet and main river map to enable viewers to see where EA consent is required by law. I would welcome any feedback on the FDC guides.
- We produced delegates packs providing the know how to enable groups to undertake habitat improvement in future. Local case studies are featured and the process from options appraisal to construction is covered, please see Appendix Four. The 2012 Loddon Rivers Week pack can be viewed at www.lfcc.org.uk
- Eight teams, lead by experts, accomplished a variety of habitat improvement techniques. These techniques included creating gravel fish spawning grounds, installing large woody debris to change river morphology (shape) to scour pools, clean spawning grounds and improve habitat complexity, various refugia installed for fish and wildlife, planting and carefully selecting site won materials. We tackled fish passage at Arborfield by slowing water through the channel exit to facilitate upstream movement.

What is the purpose of Rivers Week?

Did you know that for low or no cost it is possible to make significant improvements to the fish and ecology of your river? The purpose of Rivers Week is to inspire and accelerate habitat improvements and work with natural processes to improve the rivers ecological status. In 2012 we put on a programme of three practical days on rivers in the Loddon catchment to demonstrate varying river restoration techniques available. In 2013 we hope to do this again on the Loddon catchment, where the idea was spawned, and another river catchment in West Thames area to pass out knowledge and the useful information onto others in order to help them improve their rivers. Rivers Week is designed to get members of the public, angling clubs, land owners, wildlife / conservation groups and other organisations working with each other to share knowledge, skills, work ethics, experience and an interest in improving the environment and rivers.

This week is for you if you would like to improve rivers for wildlife. Please see contact details in the header to get involved – its free!

This practical work will deliver Water Framework Directive actions improving the environment for people and wildlife. Please contact Matt Drew (Fisheries Team) to register interest for practical work or viewing on any or all days below. For any site specific information please contact one of the hosts below. Only those that have advanced briefing of risks and methods can do practical work, all attendees must confirm in advance.

Objectives of Rivers Week

- Working with communities and experts to improve wildlife habitats in a safe way.
- Understanding flood defence consenting with the Environment Agency's 'low risk guide to consenting'.
- Inspiring and building capacity for river restoration.
- Understanding techniques and know how to deliver low cost solutions to habitat and ecological status failures.
- Providing technical pack showcasing local and national case studies.
- Improving angling for all ages and abilities.



Loddon volunteers during and after the installation of LWD on the River Whitewater, March 2012. © John Sutton, 2012

Daily Agenda

On each day, we will work through site and task risks, identifying the habitat problem, understanding the solution and delivering the practical work safely.

All attendees will leave with an information pack containing:

- 2013 Rivers Week briefing.
- Decision tool for identifying problems and planning river restoration.
- A guide to flood defence consenting.
- Case studies showing techniques used during the week.

Come and join us, it's free and thoroughly rewarding to watch a river transform before your eyes.

<u>Time</u>	<u>What happens</u>
08:00 to 09:30	Delivery teams arrive and prepare materials
09:30 to 10:00	Guests arrive, tea and coffee
10:00 to 10:30	Deliver river restoration information pack, flood defence consenting for environmental enhancements and Health and Safety Briefing
10:30 to 11:30	Practical work – collection of materials and installing habitat
11:30 to 11:45	<i>Break</i>
11:45 to 13:00	Practical work – installing habitat
13:00 to 13:30	<i>Break for lunch – please bring</i>
13:30 to 15:30	Practical work – installing habitat
16:00	Leave for home (or continue...)



Types of work

- Working with wood to create refuge, pools and riffles
- Gravel introduction to create fish spawning areas
- Fish and wildlife passage
- Gravel Cleaning with Venturi Cleaning Systems
- Bank repairs and swim building

Please Note: *In the event of bad weather, we may have to cancel or change the arrangement for each day. We will endeavour to keep you updated in advance.*

Contact Details to register Attendance and Interest

Matt Drew – Fisheries Officer

Fisheries Team, Environment Agency, Red Kite House,
Howbery Business Park, Crowmarsh, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 8BD.
01491 828 467
matt.drew@environment-agency.gov.uk

Please specify which day(s) you would like to attend.

Hosts, Programme and Dates

Tuesday 19th March 2013 – River Whitewater, Potbridge, Hampshire

Andy Thomas	Wild Trout Trust	athomas@wildtrout.org
Mike Blackmore	Wild Trout Trust	mblackmore@wildtrout.org

Thursday 21st March 2013 – River Blackwater, Coleford Bridge, Hampshire

Steve Bailey	Blackwater Valley Partnership	steve.bailey@hants.gov.uk
Stuart Croft	Blackwater Valley Partnership	stuart.croft@hants.gov.uk

Saturday 23rd March 2013 – River Blackwater, Coleford Bridge, Hampshire

Andrew Price	Blackwater Valley Partnership	andrew.s.price@hants.gov.uk
Matt Drew	Environment Agency	matt.drew@environment-agency.gov.uk



**Completed Large and Coarse Woody Debris installation
on the River Whitewater, March 2012.** © John Sutton, 2012