

WaterLIFE in the Severn River Basin

24th – 27th November 2015

Background

The WaterLIFE project, EC LIFE+ funded, is working towards healthy rivers for people and nature by bringing together communities, business and government. The Project focuses on accelerating delivery of the Water Framework Directive, initially in five demonstration catchments across England and Wales.

The WaterLIFE project team spent a week in the Severn River Basin, giving a series of well received presentations at The Rivers Trust (RT) Autumn conference, engaging with representatives from across the Basin, including environmental NGO's, farmers and water companies, and participating in a workshop for the catchment partnerships active across the wider Severn.

This engagement is part of a series of WaterLIFE catchment partnership workshops and related activities. In this instance, they were hosted by Severn Rivers Trust. Visit www.waterlife.org.uk to read previous workshop reports.

1. Rivers Trust conference

WaterLIFE was the focus of a dedicated session at the Rivers Trust 'Springs of Rivers' conference, hosted by Severn Rivers Trust and held in Ironbridge. The session included three presentations delivered by staff working on WaterLIFE delivery:

- WaterLIFE: One Year On
- Progress in the Camlad
- Progress in the Soar

All presentations are available to view on the WaterLIFE website:

<http://waterlife.org.uk/2015/12/waterlife-tour-of-the-severn-river-basin/>

Participants

140 delegates attended from a range of organisations including – local authorities, rivers trusts, water industry, government, academia and the private sector.

Outcomes

Raising awareness

This was one of the first opportunities for a wider audience to learn about WaterLIFE and hear what it has achieved within its demonstration catchments. The session generated considerable interest reflected within feedback that found that 77% of delegates* felt more informed about current projects as a result of the conference.

Generating interest

Many delegates showed interest in how they could exchange with the ‘knowledge transfer’ aspect of WaterLIFE and 85% of them felt they could apply some aspect of what they heard at the conference in the catchment/area they work in.

2. Severn Catchment Partnership workshop

One of WaterLIFE’s key objectives is to upscale the work happening in the five demonstration catchments – from catchment to river basin level. This workshop sought to engage with the wider Severn partnership, share what has happened across the three civil society catchments and identify needs across the wider partnership.

The workshop was split into two sessions. The first session was designed to ensure participants were aware of the Project and its broad objectives, in particular its key upscaling action as well as showcase what had been done with data and evidence in other catchments.

The second session split participants into two groups and asked them to think about their data and evidence needs and what tools and support they might benefit from.

Participants

19 individuals attended and included representatives from the NFU, Wildlife Trusts, EA, Severn Rivers Trust and Natural Resources Wales.

Participants showed a keen interest in the range of activities happening in the Project’s ‘civil society’ demonstration catchments and expressed a desire to use this opportunity to strengthen the ‘Magnificent Severn’ identity being developed for the river basin, as well as take advantage of the data and evidence platforms available.

Outcomes

Discussion

The break-out group discussions were lively, uncovering many possibilities to develop tools and support. The fact that the Severn Catchment Partnership is already very cohesive and effective offers a platform which WaterLIFE can help to strengthen further.

Data and evidence needs

- A shared platform to map current projects happening across the Severn basin
- A platform to share information about funding – bids and opportunities
- Shared monitoring data
- Land ownership data
- How do we best use and consolidate data and evidence?

What tools and support is needed?

- Monitoring training workshops
- Data surgeries
- Building a shared platform
- GIS training
- Help to define 'Magnificent Severn' and create a strong identity

Next steps

- Make WaterLIFE slides available online via the WaterLIFE website
- Work with catchment partnership to organise 'Magnificent Severn' conference/workshop in 2016
- Share information and links to online resources with workshop participants

Contact

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Gallery



Ruth Needham, Trent Rivers Trust, speaking at RT conference about progress in the Soar catchment.



New fencing at Wernddu Farm in the Camlad catchment designed to ensure livestock doesn't enter the river that runs through the farm.



Fish and Eel passage at Lingen fish and eel pass on the River Teme.

**Based on 26 completed feedback forms*