

Catchment Restoration Fund (CRF) Project Briefing Note

The Sherborne Windrush Restoration Project

The Sherborne Windrush Restoration Project is a partnership project that will use CRF funds to improve the River Windrush and the Sherborne Brook in the Sherborne area of Gloucestershire.

The river suffers from a degraded habitat arising from insensitive dredging which has removed river bed gravels and built up banks causing a disconnect from the water meadows as well as suppressing in-stream habitat variation. There are also problems caused by diffuse agricultural pollution and areas of over-shading. These issues are preventing this stretch of water from meeting the required standards under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

has already restored the drainage channels and sluices in the water meadows and has completed some remedial works on sections of over-widened channels on the Sherborne Brook. This project will build on the work already completed by addressing the following issues:



- Inadequate levels of fish spawning gravels
- Lack of in-stream habitat variation
- Pollution from agricultural run off
- Poaching of the banks by cattle
- Lack of hydrological connectivity with the flood plain
- Over shading by streamside vegetation

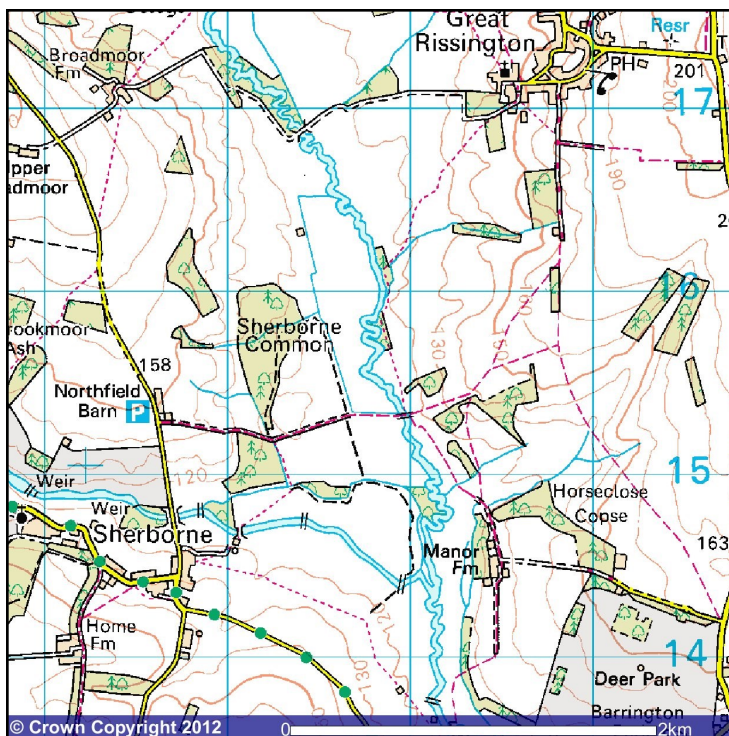
Description of Works

- Improvement of in-stream habitat over a length of the River Windrush (approximately 1.5km);
- Enhancement will focus on increasing the availability and quality of salmonid spawning gravel, the introduction of increased amounts of Large Woody Debris, and the removal of elevated sections bunding alongside the river, which were formed by the deposit of dredgings from the river during 1930's onwards;

Key facts	
River Basin District	South East
Catchments	Thames
Outcomes	Improved biodiversity - increased riverine habitat, connectivity and re-naturalisation. Improved river water quality - reduced diffuse and point pollution sources. Social - improved environment for recreation.
Start Date	November 2012
End Date	March 2014
Budget	£93,000
Project Partners	National Trust and Cotswold Flyfishers

- These measures are aimed at improving fish populations within the river to enable it to achieve good ecological status under the Water Framework Directive (currently, the river fails to meet this target). They will also improve hydrological connectivity with the floodplain. This is a vital component of the work and will both increase the rate and extent of groundwater infiltration and also provide a significantly increased degree of flood attenuation; the Windrush catchment was subject to catastrophic flooding during July 2007.
- Finally, the works to the Windrush will raise river water levels, allowing the upgrade and re-opening of the water meadow system by the National Trust.

Additional works are also proposed under this project to the Sherborne Brook, which joins the Windrush within the National Trust's Sherborne Estate. These works include:



- Addressing a number of diffuse source run-off issues in conjunction with National Trust and its farming tenants. This will involve changes to track drainage, cattle drinking areas, and the reduction of access to the brook by livestock plus the erection of fencing and the creation of coarse vegetation and deciduous tree buffer strips in line with published literature recommending this action.
- Reducing over-shading on an approximately 800m section of the brook;
- Introducing LWD to increase channel heterogeneity in sections of relatively uniform gravel dominated shallows.

What Will Success Look Like?

As a charitable organisation, the Cotswolds Rivers Trust want to work with farmers, landowners and other associated partner organisations to ensure that our priorities are aligned in order to achieve farm management solutions that benefit both people and the environment. Through education, we hope that farmers and landowners will take ownership of the issues affecting their watercourses, ensuring that they understand their direct and indirect dependence on these natural resources and the services they provide. Our principal aim is to see the Windrush and the Sherborne Brook within the National Trust Sherborne Estate achieve Good Ecological Status under the Water Framework Directive. This will mean improved water quality, increased riverine habitat and reconnected habitat, ultimately resulting in a better river environment that can sustain greater biodiversity.

About the team

Project Manager: Vaughan Lewis

Finance: Steve Payne

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Other contacts

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Department
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