

Water workshop summary, 12th December 2015

“What’s happening down by the riverside? Mapping R&D across Oxfordshire’s water environment”

Water is an important natural resource and a growing focus for many stakeholders in Oxfordshire who are tackling multiple and often conflicting concerns including flooding, water quality, biodiversity and development. Wild Oxfordshire brought together all these groups for an information packed water workshop, aimed at gathering and sharing knowledge among all of those working across the county to enable resources to be used more efficiently. Some 50 delegates, representing 34 organisations, listened to 20 presentations, mapped current projects and shared ideas and plans for future collaboration.

Presentations ranged from the citizen science Waterblitz involving hundreds of volunteers and data samples, to ways that farmers can reduce nitrogen and phosphorous entering the water through their soil, to guerrilla flood monitoring and conservation projects in the Glyme and Cherwell. Speakers came from national, international and local organisations and included Environment Agency, Thames Water, NFU, RSPB and Earthwatch.

“Fantastic meeting thank you so much... really good to find people I can work with and create long-term partnerships with” There was a consensus that an annual catch up event was really worthwhile and that specific issues would be best addressed by smaller working groups. By the end of the day two such sub-groups emerged, one focussing on data capture and management, and one for land managers, with both already planning meetings in the new year. Anyone wanting more information about these groups should contact WO in the first instance (see below).

Core partners: None of this could have been achieved without the time and generosity of the core project partners - Wild Oxfordshire and Environmental Change Institute For more information please email hilary@wildoxfordshire.org.uk



People and Nature – Making Connections

Background information

Wild Oxfordshire was established in 1999. We aim to conserve and enhance Oxfordshire's rich and varied environment and wildlife. We do this through co-ordination and partnership. We run education events such as Oxfordshire Goes Wild, run training course for Local Environment Groups, provide up to date environmental information through our website and the free Environmental E bulletin, co-ordinate Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Strategy, the Evenlode Catchment Partnership and much more. For more information about Wild Oxfordshire: www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk

The River Thames: The River Thames is the largest river that is wholly in England, with a total length of 354km. The Thames basin contains many major urban centres, including London, Swindon, Oxford, Slough, Maidenhead and Reading, housing a fifth of the UK population. The Thames is an important water source, providing around two-thirds of London's drinking water. Phosphates and nitrates enter the river at numerous points across the whole water network and can harm ecosystems, sensitive plants and animals and increase nuisance algae incidences and treatment costs and reduce drinking water quality. Seven sub-catchments cover Oxfordshire: Evenlode, Ock, Thame, Cherwell, Ray, Windrush and South Chilterns.

Organisations giving presentations:

National and international organisations: Environment Agency, Natural Environment Research Council, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Earthwatch, Freshwater Habitats Trust, Thames Water/ Atkins, NFU, Natural England, Oxford University and Sylva Foundation,
Local organisations: BBOWT, RSPB, Gloucestershire FWAG, Campaign for the Farmed Environment (BBO), Oxford Flood Network, Oxfordshire LEADER.

Useful websites:

Wild Oxfordshire – catchments <http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/river-catchments>

Nature trade and Sylva <http://naturetrade.net/>

Campaign for the Farmed Environment: <http://www.cfeonline.org.uk/>

FWAG SW <http://www.fwagsw.org.uk/what-we-do/projects/wild-project/>

The River Thame Conservation Trust <http://riverthameconservation.org/>

EarthWatch water-hub <https://www.freshwaterwatch.thewaterhub.org/>

Freshwater Habitats Trust <http://www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/>

CEH <http://www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/river-thames-initiative>

EAs Catchment Data Explorer <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/>

Oxfordshire LEADER <http://www.oxfordshireleader.org.uk/>

BBOWT <http://www.bbowl.org.uk/what-we-do/living-landscapes>

RSPB <https://www.rspb.org.uk/whatwedo/futurescapes/>