

Water workshop 11th December 2105

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

Background:

Water is a growing focus for many stakeholders across Oxfordshire, as they recognise the challenges of managing this vital resource so that we can enjoy the many benefits it offers as well as the risks associated with it.

The language of Natural Capital and delivery of the economic, social and environmental benefits that it offers through Ecosystem Services is being increasingly recognised as a very useful way of engaging both business and policy decision makers so that these ‘free goods’ which are often taken for granted start to be valued and costed into their decisions. This offers a great opportunity to make a strong case for including environmental and social benefits, so long as we can connect and explain our rationale clearly. Communication is key and visualisation is essential to understanding different views: maps are an excellent starting point in this as most of us have a strong sense of place.

The purpose of the workshop:

Our first objective for this workshop is to share knowledge and understanding: we do not have time to examine details of the state of all the water bodies at this meeting, though we will gain some high level overviews from the mornings’ presentations. But we will at least be better informed about what is going on across the entire Oxfordshire catchment at the end of today.

A second key objective of the workshop is to initiate a detailed map of all the different R&D projects going on across the entire Oxfordshire Thames catchment and its tributaries (and to be aware of those in adjacent parts of the Thames), both as a physical map and also as a data base. We will include in this other water bodies and related land-use projects, as we seek to build up a picture of connectivity. We will then have created a living document that allows our community to identify gaps and opportunities for other related projects to build on, such as those relating to ESS and NC R&D projects right through to Countryside Stewardship bids and citizen science programmes.

By creating a dynamic map of what is going on at all sorts of scales and capturing relevant data, we hope not only hope to avoid duplication or missed opportunities for collaboration, but also to be better placed for effective communication with groups who might make use of visually highly accessible data, and also encourage others to participate and contribute. As a community we will also be able to articulate what further information might be beneficial and to make more convincing and informed contributions to land use decision processes.

Our intention is to build an effective Oxfordshire catchment community, by initiating a process at this workshop where participants (and also those who cannot attend but wish to record their information) will be able to contribute details in the form of project titles, keywords, contact details and so on.

Outputs

- 1) Oxfordshire water R&D projects mapped
- 2) A better connected network and community
- 3) Some opportunities identified
- 4) Beginning process to get Oxfordshire’s water issues / ESS /NC mapped



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