

## Tyne Adopt a Stream

### Vision

To create a community of individuals, groups and businesses engaging with their local area of stream. Engagement will be through data collection, curriculum based education and activities to improve the whole river system. This community engagement will create data that can be used to identify issues and activities that they can undertake with partners to improve the all areas of the catchment.

### Partnership

The project will be lead by Tyne Rivers Trust and delivered through the Tyne Catchment Partnership which is a group of interested organisations, working together on integrated catchment management. The partnership currently comprises of the following organisations but we are looking to bring in further organisations onto the partnership to work on this project such as the National Trust, the Moorland Association and the Chamber of Commerce.

- Country Land and Business Association
- Durham Wildlife Trust
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Gateshead Council
- National Farmers' Union
- Natural England
- Newcastle City Council
- North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership
- North Tyneside Council
- Northern Farmers and Landowners Group
- Northumberland County Council
- Northumberland National Park Authority
- Northumbria Community Flooding Partnership
- Northumbrian Water Group
- Northumbrian Wildlife Trust
- Port of Tyne
- South Tyneside Council
- Sunderland City Council
- Tyne Riparian Owners and Occupiers Association
- Tyne Rivers Trust

### Geography

Initially the Adopt a Stream concept would cover the whole Tyne Catchment. However there has been desire from partners in the Tyne Catchment who cover different geographical areas to expand the project over time. Therefore there is a desire to make the platform that Adopt a Stream runs from to be scalable to cover the whole of the North East of England or indeed the UK in time.

### How it would work

Groups (schools, businesses, Scouts, community groups etc) and individuals would select a local area of stream to adopt. They would then be signed up to the adopt a stream community and be able to access online information about rivers that will include downloadable activities that provide information on survey technique, curriculum based activities (for a range of abilities), species identification and a wider range of activities that they can get involved in. Activities and data collection would vary depending on type of group to ensure suitability to age range and interests.

Data would be submitted through the website or a mobile app. Activities that could be undertaken with collaboration with partner organisations or within the groups. Businesses will be able to sponsor local areas or elements of the project to provide equipment. Data would be available to local record centres and partners in order to work with volunteers and authorities to improve the river.

An interactive website is required that allows sign up and available stream areas as well as access to a survey methodology, data collection, activity planning and communications between adoptees and partners. A mobile app could also be used for data gathering. A staff member would be required to administer the adoptees, support the adoptees in data collection and activities, publicity and training events. Basic equipment for citizen science monitoring would be required. Funding would be required for supporting volunteering, education and training.

### **Data Collection**

One of the key elements of the project will be to collect data from all areas that will identify issues as well as work that can be done to improve the river. Data collection will be based on citizen science principals with the public working together with the partner organisations. Instructions and reporting will be available through website and mobile app and concentrate on surveys that can be done with minimal training.

- Invasive species
- Rare and important indicator species
- Areas of point pollution
- Areas of diffuse pollution
- Area where habitat could be improved
- Areas of antisocial behaviour

### **Training**

Various members of the Tyne Catchment Partnership have expertise in many areas of the river, its history, habitats and species. The Adopt a Stream project will give a platform for training programmes to reach a large active audience.

Training to enhance data collection and activities to improve the river can be offered including RiverFly training, invasive species identification, diffuse and point source pollution sources as well as practical training in river improvements including Japanese knotweed treatment and green engineering,

### **Community**

Adopt a stream can create a community of people that care about their rivers and streams with Adopt a Stream at the centre of it. It is important that people can link the different areas of the Tyne Catchment and see sources and pathways of issues and be able to work together to solve them. As well as large catchment wide community – communities will develop in local areas between groups and individuals monitoring sections of the same burn.

The Adopt a Stream project will be able to offer the following through its website and mobile app:

- 1) Maps of streams that have been adopted
- 2) Areas that issues have been identified
- 3) Work that is ongoing to solve the issues.

- 4) A forum to allow users to discuss issues, monitoring techniques and solutions
- 5) A knowledge bank to allow self-education
- 6) Activities to enhance the adopted streams sections.
- 7) Data collection activities

### **Activities**

Members of the Tyne Partnership already run various activities that adoptees could join in with and have various volunteer programmes active in improving the river and surrounding landscape. Adoptees could join in these activities or work as individual or within groups on their local stream with guidance from the project. Simple activities could be invasive removal, litter picking, keeping footpaths clear etc. Led group activities could be targeted to issues that adoptees had identified that need some expertise or additional health and safety such as green engineering or in river works.

### **Education**

As well as the a knowledge base on the website there are a range of curriculum based activities that can be offered to schools and youth groups looking at particular species, habitats or lifecycles. Examples of programmes that currently take place include Mayfly and Salmon in the Classroom.

### **Sponsorship**

As well as individuals, schools, groups and businesses adopting an area of stream to monitor and look after there would be an option for those who do not have the time to practically take part to sponsor a stream. This would allow local businesses to get involved and allow equipment to be purchased for practical activity or monitoring equipment.

### **Outcomes**

- Communities, groups and individuals covering both urban and rural areas becoming engaged in the health of their streams and also the Tyne as a whole
- Business more involved in communities
- Outputs to local records centres
- Increased knowledge of rivers and species including strong links to areas of the curriculum
- Outputs to partners and Tyne Partnerships to allow projects to be developed to solve issues raised
- Early warning of pollutions
- Decrease in antisocial behaviour
- Improved job prospects from volunteering experience and training
- Better awareness of under monitored areas of the Tyne Catchment
- General health and wellbeing from being involved in outdoor activity
- A project which can be extended into other areas