



TYNE CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP

6 February 2019 9.30am – 2.45pm

Trees Please, Dilston, Corbridge

Present: Ceri Gibson(Chair), Jessica Anson(EA), Richard Bond(EA), Tony Baines(NWG), Steena Nasapen-Watson(NWG), Lesley Silvera(Groundwork), Sian Atkinson(Woodland Trust), Sarah Tooze(NPAONB), Jimmy Young(GC), Ben Scotting(NPAONB), Phil Hartley (NewcastleCC), Tom Brown(NewcastleCC), Hazel Leah(NWG), Becky Hetherington(NT), Ian Marshall (EA), Tom Nowlan(TRT), Kelly Hollings(NWT), Mark Dinning(DWT), Michele McCallam(Groundwork), Maria Hardy(NE), Scott MacKensie(EA), Rob Carr(EA), Liz Walters(TRT)

1. Welcome and introductions Ceri Gibson Tyne Rivers Trust

2. Revitalising Redesdale(RR) Maria Hardy (NE) and Michele McCallam(Groundwork)

RR is an HLF funded Landscape Partnership project which evolved from the Border Uplands group. There were many issues in the Rede which collectively called for a landscape/catchment scale solution. The HLF funded project began in 2017 and consists of 12 interlinking projects including cultural, heritage and wildlife related work.

MH gave an overview of the:

- geography of the Rede;
- partners of the project;
- and historic features of the area.

The projects planned include community meadows managed by volunteers, rewetting peatlands and reducing sedimentation and improving the geomorphology of water courses.

MMcC discussed four projects:

- Woodburn Hill
- Old Town Farm
- Dunn's Houses
- Smoutel Ford

3. Freshwater Pearl Mussels (FPM) at Kielder Hatchery Richard Bond EA

The adult mussels for this project were removed from a heavily sedimented stretch of the Rede in 2009.

Visits to other projects, especially in Norway, have provided knowledge on the best methods of keeping and breeding FPM. RB has discovered some very interesting information about their gut biota and incidents of dense populations found downstream of concentrated sources of detritus derived from decaying woody debris. Very clean water is required to breed FPMs and growth is faster at higher temperatures. The Kielder Hatchery is due to recruit a FPM officer shortly.

It is likely that restocking of FPM, to the North Tyne, is essential in the short term, but in the medium to long term habitat improvements should ensure natural regeneration in the river.

The first 600 young FPM will be release into the North Tyne and Rede using a soft release method this year. The locations are currently being selected and areas considered of marginal suitability are likely to undergo habitat improvement works to improve them for future releases.

4. Restoring Ratty Kelly Hollings Northumberland Wildlife Trust

KH gave an overview of the projects aims and progress so far:

Restoring Ratty are working with the contractor, Derek Gow, who is carrying out the breeding element of the project. Initially forty water voles were caught in the North Pennines, the Trossachs, the Yorkshire Moors and Glasgow. The releases happen twice a year, firstly in June when pairs are released (the hope being that the female is already pregnant at this stage) and secondly in August when sibling groups are released together.

There are two types of releases:

1. soft release is a gradual process where the animals have a safe haven and food provided for a short period as they acclimatise to their new surroundings;
2. hard release is when an animal is released directly into the wild with no food or safe haven to retreat to, this is only done very occasionally usually for press events.

Restoring Ratty does not carry out satellite tagging. Instead, a team of volunteers survey using several techniques to establish where the voles have settled, either at the release sites or elsewhere. The locations of some planned releases have had to be altered to take account of the areas preferred by the water voles.

Volunteers are essential to the project.

The project includes lots of engagement work with schools near all three stages of the project: at Derek Gow's breeding centre, at the capture sites and at Kielder.

The project has held its first conference last year, which was very successful.

Restoring Ratty is a partnership between Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission and Tyne Rivers Trust. They also work with other partners for example Revitalising Redesdale, First and Last brewery and NWG.

Discussions followed on the health of urban water vole populations within the Tyne catchment.

ACTION EW to send out video link for latest Ratty update:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLoJuyC-f4Q>

ACTION Partners to email Kelly Hollings with details of schools which might like to be involved.

5. North-east Crayfish Conservation Ian Marshall Environment Agency

The Environment Agency, led by Ian, has been producing a National Strategy and Conservation Guidance for white clawed crayfish. EA is the lead organisation for this species which is in critical decline because of habitat loss, pollution and invasive species.

In addition to these national documents, the Environment Agency have been working in partnership to create a regional strategy. The NE and SW are the only regions who have already achieved this. The Northumberland Strategy will be used to inform conservation actions and to apply for funding.

EA has created a 'biosecurity map' because the region has both the native and non-native species of crayfish. The map visualises the biosecurity risk and is intended to help organisations that visit rivers, schedule them carefully to reduce the risk of spreading non-native crayfish species and crayfish plague. The map is currently being reviewed and is not intended to replace 'check clean dry' but to support and add to these procedures. It will be adopted by the EA and it is hoped that other partners also working in multiple catchments will adopt it too.

Next steps:

- Desk study of all known crayfish populations
- Identify priorities
- Develop funding bids
- Run training events for partners and volunteers
- Undertake conservation actions
- Work with National Trust at Wallington
- Ark site creation - process to be started in 2019
- Investigate possibility for partners to work under EA license

6. My Tyne Graham Holyoak Tyne Rivers Trust

Cancelled due to sick leave

7. Medium Term Plan (MTP) update Rob Carr Environment Agency

The MTP draws down money from DEFRA to fund partnership projects.

Recently a pipeline system has been created to prioritise projects suitable for the new spending review (2021-26).

Some applications to last year's new funding scheme, Water Environment Grant (WEG), are still waiting to hear if they have been successful, for example the Northumberland Wildlife Trust FPM project. WEG is a DEFRA environmental grant scheme that sources money from EU underspend.

WEIF Funding for the next financial year is limited. In the hope of maintaining momentum on proposed projects RC has spread the funding thinly over several sub-catchments. The following three catchments may receive small amounts of funding:

- Don £25,000
- Team £35,000
- Tyne Estuary and Metro Green £35,000

Plus

- Cullercotes (failing bathing waters)

These projects were the highest priorities and will hopefully receive the funding.

DEFRA funding is usually for capital projects and there are lots of feasibility studies needed within the Tyne catchment. Opportunities to bid for revenue tend to come up during the year and projects needing this type of funding include: Team, Don, Ouseburn, Stanley and the Rede.

EA are also working on other funding streams eg Highways England and Northumbrian Water.

8. Drainage and Waste Management Plan Steena Nasapen-Watson Northumbria Water

The PR 19 documents were submitted in September and NWL have now been given an assessment response of 'slow track'. Northumbrian Water need to relook at some areas of detail and be clearer in what the outcomes will be.

To bring consistency to this approach OFWAT and EA are working to produce DWMPs which will also be in the public domain and it is very important that it is supported in key documents.

The aim is to create a 21st century drainage programme with a key package of water quality measures that results from the work for the DWMP.

NWG manage lots of assets and have spoken to other partners for a detailed picture of drainage. The idea is that all organisations will come together and align their plans to result in more efficient future work.

The DWM Plan process:

Northumbrian Water has chosen to use river catchment boundaries as the drainage areas for this project. Each area will undergo a drainage area health check using 16 indicators, for example shellfish water bathing water pollution incidents, which give a sense of future trends and how to improve the condition of the area.

Each catchment is ranked using the 16 indicators (eg shellfish water, bathing water, incidents of pollution) which highlight those drainage areas which are failing and how they are likely to change in the future. Following that, investigations into catchment-based solutions with other stakeholders would be required.

The NE encompasses the Tyne/Northumberland/Wear etc and within this region there are 7 L2 catchments which all require a group of relevant partners to be consulted. The Tyne will be divided into 'Rural Tyne' and 'Tyneside'.

There is an ambitious timescale, the plan needs to be published by December 2022 and the biggest part of this project is to work with stakeholders to find solutions. NWL are already seeing issues that could affect the completion of the work within the timescale allowed and the 2022 AMP cycle will need to start earlier. There is already lots of good partnership working, for example NIDP, with strong stakeholders.

There is no funding associated with the project until 2020 which makes getting started early difficult, Tyneside is a pilot catchment and the framework will be run on 3 self-contained catchments. By March 2019, Northumbrian Water will have assessed 3 pilots which will give them a robust methodology to address the remaining 325 catchments.

An external steering group will look after the whole north-east and then will engage with groups like TCP. Changes have been recommended to prevent duplication for example with the IWES steering group. In summary, the DWMP process is:

- ambitious;
- water companies are leading the DWMP process, NWG on the steering and implementation group;
- NWL submitted the plan as part of PR19;
- it is a long-term process, plans are to be complete by 2022 and implemented by 2024.

RC If Tyneside has been chosen as a pilot, we need to think about what partners are being asked to do and how to manage the number of meetings associated with this.

ACTION SN-W needs to speak to TCP again at a later date.

9. Team catchment Partnership Liz Walters Tyne Rivers Trust

A draft of the 'Team catchment Vision' will be circulated to the partners in advance of the next meeting on 27th February. Comments will be asked for at this meeting with the intention that a final draft be produced some time in March or April. An interactive map will accompany the vision, which is being created by Rachel Barstow, Gateshead Council, and summarises the opportunities and constraints of the project.

Rowlatch Burn Lesley Silvera Groundwork

There are several sites next to the Rowlatch Burn that have the potential to be improved:

- Royal Ordnance Pond
- Komatsu site, Birtley
- West Line Industrial estate

Discussions followed on the issues at these sites.

ACTION EA to tackle the issues at West Line industrial estate.

The regulatory side of EA needs to engage with the work of the catchment partnerships to understand the impact on communities and watercourses of illegal sites and the need for enforcement.

One scheme has been delivered:

1. Ibstock quarry: bank material had slipped into the burn. Coir matting and infill was used to stabilise the scour area and a cascading rock weir has been created to break the force of water to avoid any further issues on the site.

One scheme is proposed (waiting for approval from Northumbrian Water):

2. St Bede's: this part of the water course is classified as a sewer and was very constrained. One side of the channel has been widened to create a high flow terrace sites and surplus material moved off site. A butterfly bank has planted with nectar rich species, engagement work carried out with local communities and public access to the area improved, in partnership with Durham County Council.

TB NWG is carrying out more water quality monitoring in the area

10. Don Catchment Partnership Rob Carr Environment Agency

The Don has similar pressures to the Team and Ouseburn, it is a failing waterbody with several large developments planned. The area includes parts of Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside, these councils are all working together as part of the catchment partnership. All three local plans include a stipulation for a 50 metre buffer strip to safeguard the river corridor which developers must adhere to.

The major developments planned for the area include the following:

- A19 Testos roundabout
- International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP)
- Enterprise Zone in Gateshead Follingsby MAX

Discussions regarding the plans for the Testos roundabout resulted in agreement that Highways England had to do more than legal minimum, otherwise it was felt that water quality in the Don was unlikely to improve.

The ecological buffer zone at Follingsby MAX incorporated both SUDS and surface water drainage and a one km, one sided river restoration. This project is now being used as a case study to demonstrate the possibilities to wider partners and the developer is being put forward for an award. Durham Wildlife Trust will manage the new 'ecological zone' on the finished site.

Working with the developers (Highgrove Group) was comparatively straightforward compared to working with some other organisations eg Highways England, who are very difficult to engage with and get finance from.

TRT and the Environment Agency are working in partnership to deliver fish passage and land management improvements on the River Don this year.

The IAMP development (downstream of Follingsby and upstream of the A19 improvements) is still at the planning stage. However, the developers have agreed to carry out river restoration.

The partnership is keen to improve its communications and engagement about the work being delivered in the Don catchment. It is also being used as a blue print for other catchment partnerships eg Team, Ouseburn and Tyne Estuary.

MD is looking into spending funding from NWG to investigate further project ideas. He has received quotes from consultants, Keith Bowey and Mark Parnell this week.

ACTION quotes to be shared with DCP and an update to be emailed round this week.

11. Ouseburn Catchment Partnership Lesley Silvera Groundwork

The 'Evidence and Measures' project carried out by TRT in 2015 highlighted many water quality issues in this catchment including de-icer from the airport, highways runoff and sedimentation.

The TRT Farms Liaison Officer visited Ouseburn land holdings to find the root causes of poor water quality and she then created a matrix of projects to improve water quality in the catchment. This process highlighted West Farm at Callerton as a significant issue. To access his land from the farmyard, the farmer had to cross an unbridged tributary. EA funding was found to build a culvert and install a silt trap which prevents excessive sediment from getting into the river.

A second project at Woosington, to re-meander a straightened tributary, has also been delivered.

The Urban Observatory has assisted with improvements to the catchment by providing SONDES to monitor water quality.

Groundwork currently has an education project funded by HLF called Catchment in Crisis to involve local schools and communities in river related activities including citizen science.

RC A Highways England fund called the 'Environment Improvement Scheme' will fund improvements to divert A1 run-off into a pond to settle out contaminated sediments before the run-off enters the watercourse.

There other potential drainage projects and opportunities to work with developers in the Ouseburn catchment.

12&13. South Tyne Catchment Partnership Hazel Leah Northumbria Water

The South Tyne sub-catchment partnership meeting is next Monday, the last meeting was May 2018. This sub-catchment partnership was established after the storm Desmond flooding attracted media interest and concerns about whether Kielder could have prevented or reduced the flooding. Roughly 20% of the flood water came from the North Tyne and the rest from the South Tyne which cannot be controlled by Kielder reservoir.

Northumbrian Water's plans for PR19 have been submitted and initially assessed by OFWAT as 'slow track' which means OFWAT has concerns around elements of the overall business plan and requires more detail and clarification. The plan must be resubmitted by 1st April 2019. This project plans to take a more holistic view of water management and aims to support projects which will deliver multi-benefits. CaBA partners had been critical of NW's PR14 catchment work as it was single issue focussed (pesticides) and it was felt opportunities were missed for broad delivery. NWG abstracts water on the River Tyne itself and generally water quality is good, although sediments can be an issue at the pumped intake.

It is hoped that the NWG will be awarded £1/2 million which will act as seed funding for further investment and help to deliver a wide range of projects in the South Tyne eg control of metal contaminated sediments and habitat creation and improvement.

Hadrians Wall Loughs Rob Carr

The loughs are failing under WFD and PA status for phosphates and there is now no one at NE to lead the partnership. It has been discussed by STCP members to take in the HWL area and extend the partnership to include the Allen Valleys. This will be discussed further at the meeting on 11th February.

Discussions on the potential for funding the unsuccessful South Tyne WEG projects followed.

The DWMP process has to be driven by biodiversity and habitats but should help alleviate flooding and metal contaminated sediment issues by delivering investigation and capital works catchment wide.

14. AOB Ceri Gibson Tyne Rivers Trust

ACTION The Activity Log was sent out with the agenda, please feedback any projects which need to be added by 15th April ready for incorporation into CaBA reporting form for activity 2018/19

Date of next meeting: 24th September 2019