

WUF work in Wye in 2019

Report for Autumn LFG



Fish passage:

Ballsgate weir dominated the summer work plan. Not an easy site due to the construction of the weir which was somewhat leaky! When we were finally on the home straight, with the upper flight installed and the foundations for the resting pool and lower flight in place, the heavens opened, the coffers were breached and we had to make the site safe, and retire to complete in 2021. EA have been very helpful in trying to make this happen.

Habitat maintenance and restoration:

6.2km on Edw, Clywedog, Garth Dulas, Llynfi dulas, Hindwell and Middle Arrow. Funding plan being developed for the future, supported in part by NRW.

300t of gravel moved from Intro site to river channel. Funding plan for future being developed. Offer of financial support from Elan Valley Trust.

Autumn fish access checks at 70 locations completed.

Diffuse pollution and Natural flood management:

Work continues with 7 separate projects and over 500 farmers with the shared aim to reduce soil, pesticide and nutrient loss to the river, develop peer to peer support groups.

The Wye Agri Support Project (funded by Tesco and Co-op) allows us to engage farmers through the supply chain, ensuring that it is positive rather than negative for the river. This is a game changing initiative that will develop and deliver solutions to the free range poultry in the Ithon, and dairy in Monmouthshire, amongst other sectors.

Working with Farming Connect in Upper Wye to increase awareness in farming community of high and low risk fields for the growing of stubble turnips.

Point source pollution and the resultant algal blooms

Developing programme to work with developers to install integrated constructed wetlands downstream of STW's in the catchment. This has the potential to reduce overall P loadings to the river of 8%, but in summer this will be closer to 15%. In combination with DCWW's AMP programme, we can reduce Soluble reactive phosphate loadings to the river by 30%. This will reduce the extent and frequency of algal blooms by 2021.

Monitoring

117 sites electro-fished. Focussing on Irfon and Monnow which were not surveyed in 2018.

Overall encouraging results from Monnow and Irfon. Upper Ithon, Upper Wye and Built to Hay tribs remain solid, salmon now spawning successfully in lower Lugg and Wye below Hereford.

Lugg and Arrow are a concern with numbers lower than would be expected.

Hourly phosphate monitoring in Curl and Frome to determine the relevant contributions of agri and STW, and how they get in the river.

Invertebrate monitoring in Elan.

Early stages of restarting Lugg counter.

2018 and 2019 salmon electrofishing results are shown in annex 1. Trout and phosphate data available upon request.

Passport

Sales look set to match 2017 (previous record year)

Abstraction and water releases

Programme for Elan hydrology advanced to incorporate hydroscheme which will improve low water winter/autumn flows.

Canoeing

A solution is in sight for Glasbury-Hay!

INNS

Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed programmes continue. Giant hogweed now down to less than 1 plant per km on the main stem.

Balasm strain has been determined and appropriate Himalayan rust fungus being introduced to middle Lugg.

Upcoming plans

Develop funded action plan for salmon, trout and coarse stocks, based on reducing, or circumventing defined problems.

Finish Ballsgate, Mousenatch, Knill, Mahollam and Floodgates fish passes

Prepare for, and develop the opportunities for outcome based farm support systems (ELMS, Carbon, Nutrient, Natural flood management)

Move 3,000t of gravel from Lower Elan/Glaslyn to below Caban Goch to reset Elan catchment.

Thereafter tri-annual maintenance will come from upper Elan/Claerwen catchment

WUF political wish list for the Wye

- Bring in effective soil protective legislation in Wales (WG) and enforce it (NRW) and in the meantime work out how to enforce the existing better (WG/NRW)
- Relax FEB controls NRW/WG
- Open up governmental funding streams to deliver the action plan. In the absence of structural funds for fisheries NRW's partnership grants are important and need to be opened ASAP.
- Develop non-governmental funding streams, natural capital markets, agri supply chain improvements etc. This is NRW's responsibility under the Environment act but WUF seems to be making more progress so let's do it together.

