

TEST & ITCHEN CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP

Quarterly e-Newsletter: Issue 1 – June 2014



The Test & Itchen Catchment Partnership: Working with stakeholders to develop and deliver practical improvements in the Test & Itchen catchment

What is CaBA?

Along with all other European Countries, the UK has a duty under the **Water Framework Directive** to put its waters into better condition. Our rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwaters are all monitored and assessed against criteria which determine whether they are in good condition – and sadly, many of them are not.

The Chemical and Ecological status of our waters, whilst improving, lacks behind that of many of our EU counterparts, and **CaBA** is part of the UK's solution to this.

The 'Catchment Based Approach' will see **issues being identified and tackled at a local level**, giving key stakeholders and local communities the opportunity to get involved.

Throughout England, Catchment Partnerships are forming to collectively agree on the priorities for their local water environment. Many are developing **catchment plans** to guide the work of the partnerships, and to feed in to larger-scale WFD 'River Basin District Plans' being developed by the Environment Agency.

But CaBA is about much more than just complying with Directives – it allows local stakeholders to come together to undertake actions or develop projects which incorporate **local priorities** such as flood risk management and biodiversity – both important issues in the Test & Itchen Catchment.

Working with stakeholders, the TICP will quickly be bringing together existing initiatives and new projects, and **championing action on the ground**.

WHO ARE THE TICP?

A number of organisations have come together to host and support the partnership on behalf of all of the wider stakeholders. Funding from Defra as part of a national scheme has enabled the **Wessex Chalk Stream & Rivers Trust** and the **Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust** to host the partnership & to allocate staff resources to developing a catchment action plan.

The other partners support and steer the work of the officers, but anyone can get involved by feeding in - see the final page for contact details.



A clear solution
for farmers
CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING



Hampshire
County Council



STAKEHOLDER EVENTS

Stakeholder Workshops

Following on from the inaugural Stakeholder Group meeting in December 2013, the TICP held a series of workshops in January this year where stakeholders from local authorities, agriculture and the water cress industry, were invited to share their views on priority issues and pressures in the catchment, and to inform the partnership of existing works and any plans in the pipeline.



Input from stakeholders is a vital part of the catchment based approach and the outputs from the various workshops have been adopted to help shape the Partnership's Catchment Action Plan.

Stakeholder Group Meeting

A second stakeholder group meeting is being held on **Monday 7th July 2014** for stakeholders to have their say on the future direction of the TICP Catchment Action Plan. The partnership has begun to outline a range of potential projects and is seeking help from stakeholders to determine which of these can have most impact on the water environment and where stakeholders can get involved and pledge support to help deliver various projects. The meeting is being held at Testwood Lakes – to reserve a place, please email:

rupert.kelton@wcsrt.org.uk

FUNDING

Thanks to generous support from Southern Water and from DEFRA's ongoing commitment to CaBA, the TICP has recently secured additional core funding towards the continued development of the partnership.

TEST & ITCHEN RIVER RESTORATION STRATEGY

The Environment Agency and Natural England worked collaboratively with landowners and fisheries on the Test to restore nearly 1 kilometre of river in 2013.

The works, all identified as actions within the River Restoration Strategy, comprised of altering impounding structures, narrowing sections of river using historically dredged material, creating meanders, bed raising and promoting a more natural form of river management.

Although protected as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) both the Test and Itchen are assessed as being in 'unfavourable condition'. The actions and restoration options within the Strategy Report provide landowners and fishery managers with guidelines on how best they can improve their stretch of river with the aim of changing the SSSI status to 'favourable condition'. The various collaborative restoration works of 2013 will have improved spawning and juvenile habitat for salmon and trout, encouraged good weed growth by increasing water velocities, provided better habitat for various chalk stream invertebrates and increased bank side habitat for water voles.

Heb Leman, the Environment Agency project officer for the Restoration Strategy said "the collaboratively funded works in 2013 have gone really well. The restored sites are already looking better than before and this will only continue with time.

It's great to be working with landowners and Fishery managers all wanting to improve our local rivers."



Working collaboratively with the Houghton club historically dredged material is used to create a bar to narrow the river and increase water velocities for the benefit of chalk river species.

The Restoration Strategy is a long term project. While future funding will be based on certain prioritised actions within the Strategy those wishing to be involved in improving the Test and Itchen should contact Heb to discuss options and arrange a site visit. Heb can be contacted at:

heb.leman@environment-agency.gov.uk

or phone 07702 719398.

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

The CSF Capital Grant Scheme for 2014 is now closed, but free one-to-one confidential on-farm advice is still available. For further information contact Serena Leadlay at:

serena.leadlay@naturalengland.org.uk

or phone 07796 993 138

UPSTREAM THINKING: CASE STUDY

Upstream Thinking is a flagship initiative funded by South West Water which aims to improve water quality.

If 'raw water' – contained in rivers and reservoirs – can be kept free of silt, pesticides, bacteria & pollutants, the economic & environmental impacts of treatment to make it safe to drink can be significantly reduced.

Catchment-wide projects have been set up across all of the key river catchments in the Company's area.

In the Tamar, Westcountry Rivers Trust are working to assist landowners in the protection of river catchments. Topography, soil character and land use data are used to identify areas where action can be targeted for best effect. One-to-one advice and farm plans are supported by a capital grant scheme which allows landowners to improve farm infrastructure, preventing run-off, & protecting raw water quality as well as the environment.

On the Penwith peninsula, Cornwall Wildlife Trust are similarly working with landowners to provide farm advice, best-practice workshops and capital-grant awards. Techniques include offering soil nutrient testing to advise

on fertiliser application, reducing resource costs for farmers, and preventing excess nutrients finding their way into rivers.



Slurry injection – a demonstration of best-practice (CWT)

These projects see farmers effectively being paid for the non-food goods that their land management delivers – such as cleaner water.

This '**Payment for Ecosystem Services**' or PES is fast becoming recognised as an effective way of achieving sustainable land management. Upstream Thinking will deliver over £9m of improvements between 2010-15, as South West Water recognise that it is cheaper (and so better for their customers) to help farmers deliver cleaner raw water than it is to pay for expensive treatment later. And, it's better for the environment too.

<http://upstreamthinking.org/>

The TICP will look for opportunities to deliver similar work here in Hampshire.

The work of the TICP

Since the beginning of the year the partnership officers have been collating and digesting a wide range of information about the catchment from existing assessments, plans and strategies, and from stakeholders within the catchment. This has been compiled into an outline Catchment Action Plan, which identifies a number of priority work areas within 4 Key themes of **Water Quality, Channel Habitat & Biodiversity, Water Quantity, and Multiple Benefit**.

We will be sharing the results of our initial assessment at the **stakeholder meeting on 7th July** and will also be seeking feedback and stakeholder's views on priority projects to take forward.

If you would like to know more about the work of the partnership or want to get involved, please get in touch:

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Hampshire & Isle of Wight
Wildlife Trust
Protecting wildlife. Inspiring people.



**Wessex
Chalk Stream
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