River Meon at Riplington, near Drayton.

A Project Proposal by the Wild Trout Trust – January 2016

1. Introduction

This Project Proposal follows on from a Wild Trout Trust advisory visit and report carried out in 2014 on a 0.5km section of the upper Meon at Riplington, near Drayton in Hampshire. The reach inspected runs from NGR SU 662236 down to SU 663235 at the bottom boundary, indicated by the arrow on map 1.

A project to improve in-channel habitat at this location is similar to a project delivered by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust on the reach located immediately upstream of the Riplington section.

The request for the visit was made by Mr. Alistair Lacy who has recently purchased the property and is keen to gain advice on the best way to manage the river corridor for wildlife. Mr. Lacy is particularly keen to ensure that wild brown trout thrive in this section of the upper Meon.

Throughout the report, normal convention is followed with respect to bank identification i.e. banks are designated Left Bank (LB) or Right Bank (RB) whilst looking downstream.

Map 1.

The proposal is to restore favourable habitat to the 500m of channel running through Mr. Lacy's land by:

- Removing an old concrete hatch (cover photo) which currently impounds the upper half of the reach, fragmenting habitat and potentially impacting on fish migration.
- Create five new "pool and run" features by redistribution river bed materials with a tracked excavator.

2. Weir removal and pool and run creation.

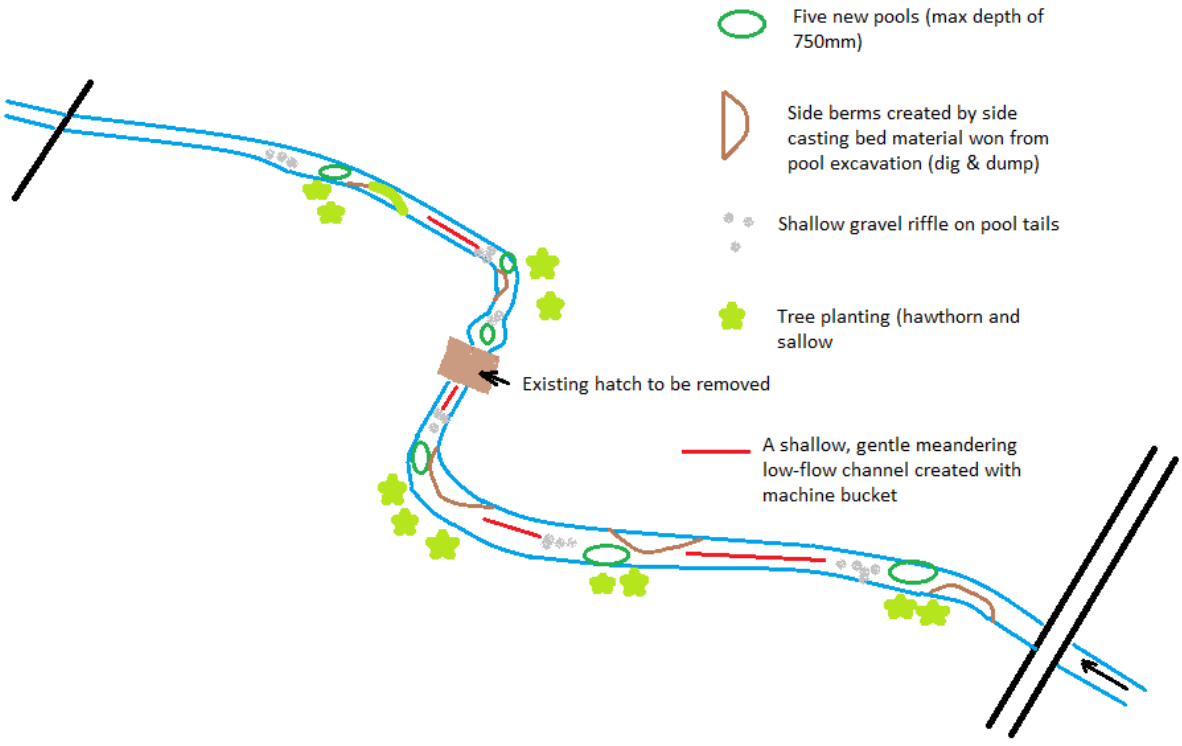
The weir/hatch structure is of a concrete construction and was probably installed in an attempt to hold up water levels for amenity purposes. The proposal is to break out the existing hatch using a tracked excavator and remove broken concrete from the site.

Deposited bed material on the upstream side of the existing hatch can be regraded with the machine to create a gently meandering thalweg to accommodate low-flow conditions. Spoil won from existing central channel locations can be side-cast to create a series of berms with the objective of promoting a more topographically diverse and sustainable channel. Currently the channel is far too wide for the average flow discharge, resulting in complete coverage with cress over the entire reach (photo 1 and 2). The redistribution of existing river bed materials to create a varied planform with a pool, run and riffle sequence will contribute towards this section of the Upper Meon meeting Water Framework Directive objectives for Good Ecological Condition.

Photo 1. Wide, shallow channel choked with Water parsnip and Fools cress

Photo 3 A wide, shallow and flat section near the upstream boundary. Here the definition of bank and bed has been lost through previous livestock poaching.

A schematic plan highlighting the proposed location of the improvements is depicted in sketch 1 below (not to scale).



Acknowledgement

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