ISLAND RIVERS PARTNERSHIP

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2022

Welcome to our winter newsletter. It was lovely to get such good feedback from our summer edition, and this time we have decided to turn our spotlight on some of the projects you may not have heard about, as well as bringing you updates from partners.

This photograph of the Eastern Yar in flood was taken two years ago, just before Lock Down 1. It is another of the super shots kindly provided to us by Mike Collins.

In this newsletter:

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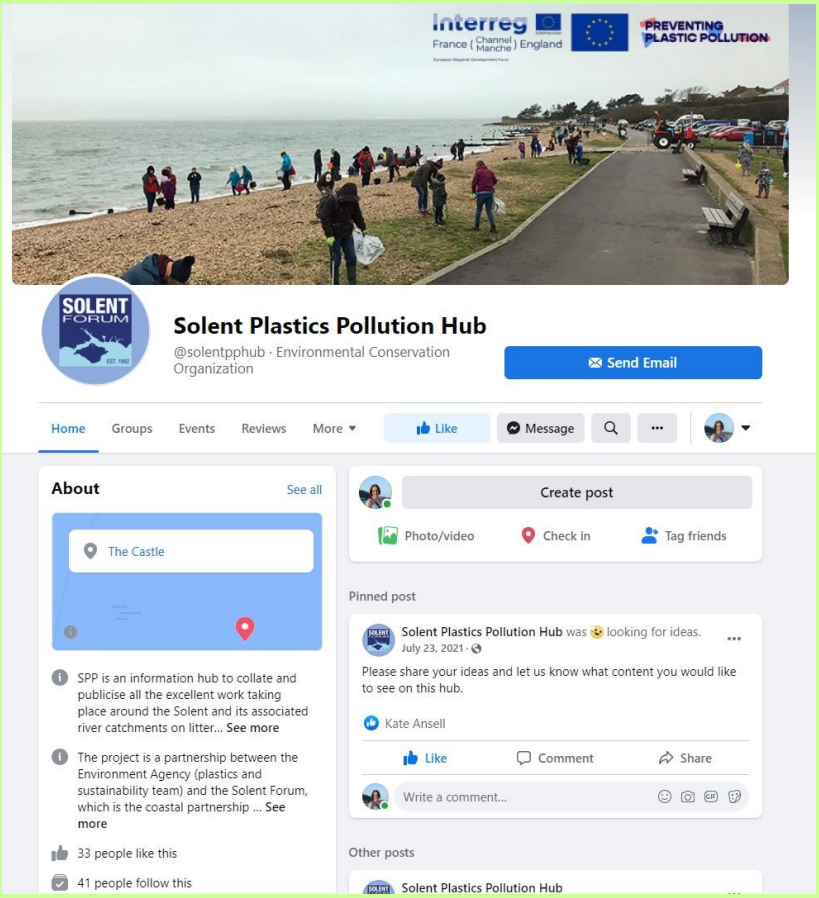
Solent Plastic Pollution hub launched for litter pickers

The independent coastal partnership, the Solent Forum, and the Environment Agency have launched an information hub for litter pickers. The hub covers the Solent, Hampshire and Isle of Wight coasts and the associated river catchments, including Island Rivers. The Solent Forum attends Island Rivers meeting to help to join up coast and river issues to take a wholescale approach to the management of water.



This web-based resource features guidance for new and existing community groups, including group links, information on borrowing equipment, litter recycling and disposal, and great local initiatives. Litter pickers can also join a Facebook page featuring news and local events.

The two-year initiative is part of a wider project funded by the cross-Channel Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution project, which is made up of 18 expert organisations aiming to reduce the impact of plastic pollution in river and marine environments across southern England.

The online resources are being developed and hosted by the Solent Forum. As part of the project legacy the Forum will continue to maintain and develop the website and facebook page in perpetuity after the project finishes in March 2023.

For more information please visit the website and fill in the welcome form or email: solentforum@hants.gov.uk.

Helping farmers to safeguard the Island's precious water resources

Do you know where the Island's drinking water comes from?

47% from groundwater (principally chalk aquifers)

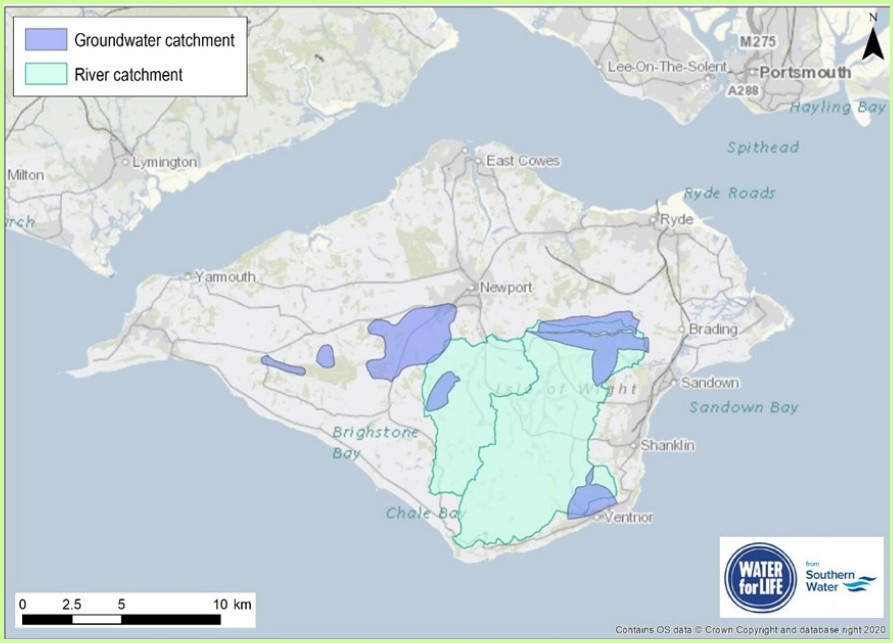
23% from rivers (Eastern Yar, Medina)

30% piped from Hampshire

With growing demands on water supply from population growth, both on the Island and in Hampshire, it is vital we protect our drinking water resources, for people and the environment.

Southern Water is therefore seeking to support those who farm or carry out other land activities in our drinking water catchments, and to work with them to minimise any impacts on water quality. This help can include specialist advice visits to look at farm infrastructure or soil management, and grants to help fund things like farmyard improvements or new equipment for environmentally-friendly cropping systems.

These Farm Capital Grants are available to those who operate within the water catchments shown in this map.



With the importance of the Eastern Yar for the Island's water supply, Southern Water are also particularly keen to work with those who farm in its catchment to develop and demonstrate water-friendly farming techniques. This is an initial phase aimed at identifying the best practical measures that could lead to them being incentivised for the Yar's farmers in the future.

For further details on the Farm Capital Grant Scheme:

www.southernwater.co.uk/water-for-life/catchment-first/grants-and-funding

Contact: Gary Clarke, Catchment Management Officer (Hampshire & Isle of Wight)

gary.clarke@southernwater.co.uk

BATTLE OF THE BRAMBLES

Our balsam volunteers are a tough lot, and won't be put off in the winter by cold weather and a lack of balsam. So instead they take to the riverbanks for a spot of coppicing and bramble removal.

To a large extent brambles are pretty good for wildlife. Their flowers are a food source for bees and other wild animals whilst leaves are eaten by certain caterpillar. Ripe berries are eaten and their seeds dispersed by several mammals and small birds. Bramble is also a habitat for some animals, including grass snakes.

But you can get too much of a good thing and whilst brambles are great protection for water voles from predators, they also can suppress the herby vegetation they like to eat, and can block passage through the stream for kingfishers. They also can make it tricky to remove balsam, and tear our volunteers to shreds. So a little bit of planned management is a good thing.

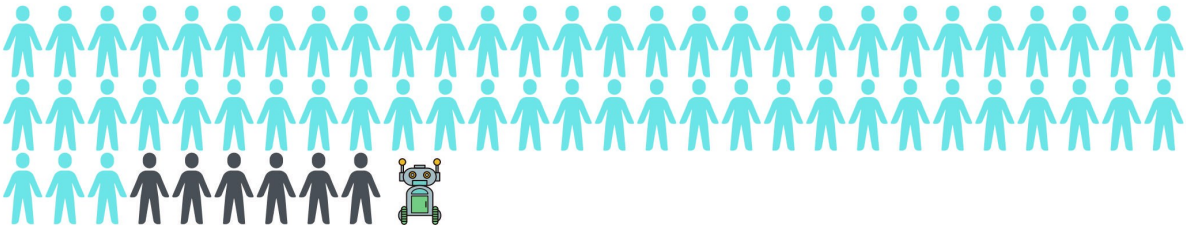
HAVE YOUR SAY!

The aim of River Basin Management Plans is to enhance nature and the natural water assets that are the foundation of everyone's wealth, health and wellbeing, and the things people value, including culture and wildlife. Rivers, lakes, canals, estuaries, coasts and groundwater, and the essential services they provide, are worth billions of pounds to the economy. All parts of society benefit from clean and plentiful water. The plans describe the framework used to protect and improve the quality of waters in each river basin district.

The Environment Agency have produced draft updates of the current plans published in February 2016. The updated plans consider climate change to be a critical challenge that requires urgent action and investment in order to limit future deterioration in the quality of the water environment. The online consultation is open to all and closes 22 April 2022

https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/environment-and-business/draft-river-basin-management-plans/

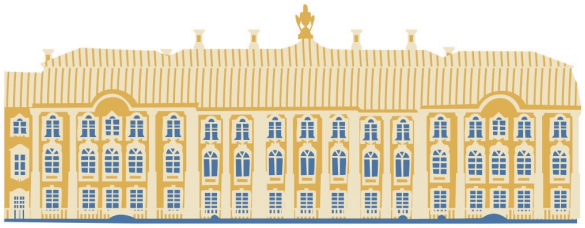
2021 Wight Balsam Bash



59 volunteers, 6 staff and 1 robot

spent 1625 hours pulling balsam, which is the equivalent of

watching every single episode of Downton Abbey 24 times over!



Balsam was cleared on
1 SSSI
3 wetlands
3 rivers
12.2 km of river bank

FAREWELL PAN EEL

The Pan Mill Eel was smashed up one time too many, so sadly we have removed it from the Meadows. The eel was erected to celebrate the in-channel restoration along the reach of the Medina between St George Bridge and Shide.

GET INVOLVED!

ISLAND RIVERS CATCHMENT PLAN This guides the work of Island Rivers and is reviewed annually.

http://www.islandrivers.org.uk/island-rivers/island-rivers-catchment-plan/

VOLUNTEER FOR PRACTICAL WORK Details of opportunities can be found here:

http://www.islandrivers.org.uk/love-your-river/get-involved/

ISLE OF WIGHT INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES PLAN Details threats to the Island:

http://www.islandrivers.org.uk/isle-of-wight-ias-action-plan-feb2020/

VISIT OUR WEBSITE It's a massive source of information on the island Rivers, activities, issues etc **http://www.islandrivers.org.uk**

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK We post here regularly, and love to receive photographs to repost! **https://www.facebook.com/islandrivers**

ISLAND RIVERS PARTNERSHIP

is hosted by

natural enterprise
an economic and environmental partnership

The organisations helping to steer this project are the Environment Agency, Natural Enterprise, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Isle of Wight AONB, Isle of Wight Council, Southern Water, Natural England, CLA, NFU, Isle of Wight Estuaries Project, Solent Forum, Marine Management Organisation and Arc Consulting.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON ANY ITEMS IN THIS NEWSLETTER CONTACT :

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