



WILD TROUT TRUST

wildtrout.org

Revised River Sid Proposal of Work

March 2023

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Proposal

In collaboration with the Sid Valley Biodiversity Group, we are proposing a programme of works to:

- Train Riverfly Monitors to assess water quality in the catchment and use this as an engagement tool in local communities.
- Deliver physical habitat improvement works in the river Sid, whilst simultaneously training volunteers and arming them with the practical skills and know how to develop and deliver future habitat improvements.
- Commission a single year of electrofishing surveys, to act as a baseline on the fish community. Updating the previous fish survey data from the Sid Vale Living Rivers Project 2014.
- Build community and stakeholder support for the river, for example through involvement with the SVBG's Biodiversity Festival in June 2023.
 - in terms of its value as a publicly accessible asset.
 - and the pressures it faces.

Though School Weir is the greatest physical challenge the river faces currently, its removal in the short term is practically impossible. Alterations to the weirs upstream of School Weir (suggested in the original Sid project proposal) should be tackled once School Weir has been addressed. Working in a downstream to upstream approach will ensure that future interventions all tie in together and remain effective, negating risks from unlocking potentially severe nick point erosion. The focus of this proposal is on visible, achievable, and cost-effective interventions to connect the public with their river and provide a platform for education and further engagement.

Breakdown of costs

Task	Quantity	Years	Cost
ARMI Riverfly training	16 people	1	£4,500
WRT Electrofishing programme	5 Sites	1	£3,000
Habitat creation with volunteers, WTT lead	4 days	1	£5,000
Stakeholder liaison meetings and reporting		1	£3,000
Contingency			£1860
		Total	£17,360

Approximate Schedule: Gantt Chart 2023

	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sept-23	Oct-23
Habitat Creation								
Permissions & Consents								
Volunteer marketing/management								
Delivery								
ARMI Riverfly								
Training								
Volunteer Surveying								
Electrofishing								
Survey								
Reporting								
Biodiversity Festival								
River walk and talk								
Riverfly demo and invert ID								

ARMI Riverfly Training, 16 people

The Riverfly Partnership is a dynamic network of organisations, representing anglers, conservationists, entomologists, scientists, water course managers and relevant authorities, working together to:

- *protect the water quality of our rivers;*
- *further the understanding of riverfly populations, and;*
- *conserve riverfly habitats.*

The initiative arms citizen scientists across the country with a simple methodology to collect aquatic invertebrates in a 3-minute “kick sample”. Counting and grouping the insects provides a score that can be used to assess water quality changes.

Training of eight volunteers costs c£2,000 pounds and leaves all participants with the knowledge and equipment to get going and establish a baseline for which to score against.

16 riverfly volunteers spaced around the catchment will build an excellent picture of the environmental pressures and river health.

The Sid Valley Biodiversity Festival would be an ideal opportunity to demonstrate Riverfly surveying and identify people willing to be trained as future Riverfly monitors.



Westcountry Rivers Trust Electrofishing (5 survey sites)

Electrofishing is a harmless surveying technique where an electrical current is passed through the water, temporarily disabling fish so that they can be carefully collected, measured, counted and then safely released back into the river. Westcountry Rivers Trust (WRT) offer a semi-quantitative programme whereby they do 5 minutes of specific habitat survey, allowing rapid data collection and cost-effective coverage.

Fully quantitative surveys could be commissioned from WRT giving an accurate density score for all species but they are four to six times more expensive.



Volunteer Group Habitat Days (x4)

The Wild Trout Trust is a hands-on, muddy-waders organisation, so we like nothing better than teaching people the practical skills they need to improve the habitat of their local river. These sessions take place in the river and on the riverbank and are led by WTT Conservation Officers.

The Conservation Officers are fully trained to run these days, including health and safety aspects of the work, first aid, and use of chainsaws and other equipment. Participants do not use chain saws or other heavy equipment and do not need any special skills other than a reasonable level of fitness and a willingness to get wet and dirty!

Waders, gloves and any other protective equipment required can be provided by the WTT.

As well as physically improving habitat in the river and the river corridor, the objective of these days is to give participants practical experience of how to manage and improve river habitat for the benefit

of wildlife and to spark community engagement and interest. They are hands-on, in the river, wet and muddy sessions, but tremendous fun as well as great learning opportunities.

These sessions will generally also include short talks on the riverbank about relevant issues such as land use, water quality, managing floods and droughts.



Stakeholder Liaison and Asset Creation

Stakeholder liaison and public relations are the cornerstone of this project: to educate, inform and engage locals about the state of the river and its corridor, the pressures it faces and what can be done to improve habitat and river health. Presentations, illustrations and photo-composites are essential tools to explain interventions and their positive effects and to enlist willing volunteers. Again, this is an area of work with which WTT has decades of successful experience.

Governance and Accounting

If this proposal is acceptable to Mr Keeley and before full committal by both parties, a WTT Project Initiation process, involving the lead Conservation Officer (in this case, Ed Eley), Director and Finance Committee, will consider the details of delivery, including the budget and risk mitigation. All WTT project funds are held in ring-fenced cost codes, with dedicated spend ensured by an approval hierarchy of the lead Conservation Officer, the Director, the Trust & Data Manager and the Company Secretary. Income and expenditure for each cost code is then monitored continually by the lead Officer, Director and Finance Officer, reporting triannually to the Finance Committee and thence Board of Trustees. The process is transparent and at any point, a donor can request a detailed fund report and discussion with the lead Officer and Director.