

BEACON NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the latest issue of the BEACON newsletter. Now that the clocks have gone back it's a good time to reflect on a busy year for Mersey Rivers Trust. We've had a full schedule of invasive species control work, habitat enhancement, surveying and monitoring, training and community engagement activities, but we're not done yet!

Water Friendly Farming

We have successfully secured funding to be able to offer free business advice and create farm water management plans for farms in the Bollin catchment. These plans will look at how farms can manage clean and dirty water in the farmyard and field, with the intention that funding to make these changes will be available in May 2023. Interventions will include concreting, guttering, livestock tracks, gateways, fencing, tree planting and soil aeration, amongst other things. This will all help the Bollin reach better water quality standards. To find out more please contact Sally Potts on sally@merseyrivers.org.



Wilmslow Town Council grant success!

Wilmslow Town Council has recently awarded grants to help improve the town's environment and Mersey Rivers Trust are grateful to have received £2,000 towards the Carrs Wetland project. The grant will be used to buy reeds, seeds and plug plants to enhance the wetland area. Our wetland project is a crowdfunded project to restore and create wetland areas in the Carrs Park. The project was devised following the recommendations made in 'The Carrs Landscape Development Package', published by Cheshire East Council. Friends of The Carrs has also received £720 from Wilmslow Town Council towards their wildflower planting scheme. The money will fund wildflower plug plants to improve the biodiversity of the park.

Work Parties

With your help we have been able to continue with vital habitat restoration work, including riverbank restoration, heath management, Japanese knotweed control, meadow management, and footpath, scrub and stream clearance. Over the next few months things we'll have a slight break from invasive species control work as the majority of the species we control die back for the winter. In the meantime we will keep up with footpath clearance and maintenance work, along with rhododendron control and woodland management tasks.



VOLUNTEERING

If you are interested in joining us, email: abic@merseyrivers.org to register as a volunteer. You can also see details of our upcoming work parties on our Eventbrite page below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/mersey-rivers-trust-33379819495>



National news—New Yorkshire and North West Project Officer

British canoeing have recently filled a new environmental project officer role, which has been funded by Defra until April 2023. The aim of this position is to help with management of floating pennywort in the North West, working in partnership with partners including the Environment Agency, Canal and River Trust, Angling Trust and affiliated BC paddling clubs. Floating pennywort is an invasive non native species widespread in canals, ditches and slow flowing rivers. It disrupts movement of animals, out-competes native aquatic plants, blocks light needed for photosynthesis, leading to localised oxygen depletion and increases water temperature by absorbing sunlight.



United Utilities CaST project

Thanks to funding from United Utilities we have been able to host a range of community engagement activities along the Bollin this year. The last few months have seen us taking to the river for a series of litter picks and wellbeing walks. Our litter picks have involved over 30 local people clearing up the banks of the Bollin and the river itself, for a total of 79 hours! We have also recently run our first wellbeing walk at the Quarry Bank estate, with a focus on woodland mushroom ecology and identification. Our next walk is scheduled for early December, keep any eye on our Eventbrite page for updates! These events have been a big success, allowing us to engage a wider range of people with our work on the Bollin and surrounding natural spaces.

River Guardians

With support from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund and United Utilities we have been able to recruit and train 10 new River Guardians! As part of the catchment monitoring cooperative project, our new volunteers will be undertaking monthly sampling of the Bollin and surrounding brooks to monitor water quality and aquatic invertebrate populations using the ARMI Riverfly methodology. Results from monthly river guardian sampling efforts can act as an early warning system for pollution incidents and highlight issues impacting water quality on the Bollin. Huge thanks to our volunteers for learning these new skills to help us with vital monitoring work.



INNS Species Control Program

Since our last update we have completed our invasive species control programme for the year, with volunteers and staff spending over 514 hours spraying, injecting and bashing to improve over 37.5km of river bank! We also took on extra invasive species control contracts this year, allowing us to extend our efforts along the Bollin even further. Thanks to the co-operation of landowners we are able to cover a huge area and are seeing positive results from our consistent program of work. We're not completely done yet though, there's still some Rhododendron on our work party schedule before the end of the year!

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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