

# **SOUTH CUMBRIA RIVERS TRUST**

## **Newsletter No.2**

*Caring for the lakes, rivers and wetlands in the southern Lake District*

The **South Cumbria Rivers Trust (SCRT)** has now been in existence for 12 months. The Trust was registered as a Company limited by Guarantee in February 2006 and registered as a charity in June 2006. The Board of Trustees has the responsibility for the overall management of the Trust and defining its strategic direction. The day to day operation of the Trust is carried out by the Executive Officers and other volunteers.

The initial six month development phase, managed by John Cleaver (Executive Director for the period), ended in October 2006. During this period, the Trust was set up according to a defined code of conduct and certain legal requirements, a management structure was put in place and a Business Plan written. All these initial documents are available to view on the Trust's website at [www.scrt.co.uk](http://www.scrt.co.uk).

John Cleaver also spent a great deal of time publicising SCRT, producing a brochure and a website for the Trust, and developing partnerships with other key organisations. The Trust can only be successful if it operates in partnership with other organisations which have interests and aims in common. Our partnership organisations are the Environment Agency, Lake District National Park, Natural England, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Freshwater Biological Association, National Trust, Friends of the Lake District, Furness and South Cumbria Fisheries Consultative and the Association of Rivers Trusts. Following recent discussions, it is likely that United Utilities will also become a partner of the Trust. Contact has also been made with other local river trusts – the Eden Rivers Trust and the Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust in particular. They have been developing over a number of years and SCRT can benefit from their experiences. John put a great deal of effort into building relationships with these varied organisations and it is important for SCRT that this is continued.

Following John's departure in October, day to day running of the Trust was taken over by Chris Potts, Dickon Knight and Sue Hunter. All work carried out by the Trust is still done on a voluntary basis although it is the Trust's intention to have a full time employee in place as soon as possible.

### **Completed projects**

Two projects have now been completed by the Trust, one on the River Crake between Penny Bridge and Greenodd Bridge and the second on Low Cunsey Beck, flowing out of Esthwaite.

#### **River Crake**

The aim of this project, funded by the Department for Food Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) was to protect both banks of the river and a length of feeder beck from poaching and enrichment by cattle, and from erosion. It is also hoped that the provision of some tree cover will lead to the colonisation of this area by insects and small mammals.

The project included the initial clearance of redundant fencing and scrub along the new fence lines, the installation of 1500 metres of stock proof fencing with a drinking race in each field and planting the banks with a mix of native broadleaf trees - common alder, goat willow, silver birch, rowan and poplars. The final phase of the work – to install a willow/hazel wattle revetment on the outside of the most eroded bend – will be completed later in the year when water levels have dropped sufficiently. The fencing work was given to a local contractor Thomas Kirkbride, who has done a superb job. The rest of the work (and the final phase in anticipation) is the output of volunteer effort. Alan Hind of SCRT project managed the work.

#### **Low Cunsey Beck**

Low Cunsey Beck was historically used by both brown trout and sea trout for spawning. However, there has been little fish life in the beck in recent years and cattle poaching and erosion are common. The aim of the project was to protect the banks of the beck from further poaching and erosion by installing fencing. The project was identified by the Environment Agency and sponsored by DEFRA and SCRT. Chris Potts of SCRT managed the work which was carried out by local contractor James Herd who did an excellent job.

### **Education**

Fiona Clucas and Annie Kent, the Trust's Education Team, ran a very successful 'Experience the River' project in 2006. The project was initiated by KRIG but transferred to SCRT for insurance reasons and consisted of 5 days on the river with groups of primary school children from of Staveley C of E School (on the Kent), Crosthwaite C of E School (on the Gilpin), Beetham Primary School C of E (on the Bela), St Patricks C of E School, Endmoor (on Peasy Beck) and Stramongate County Primary School, (at Busher Walk on the Kent). The day started with the children observing the river habitat and sketching and describing what they saw. River dipping then involved the use of nets and trays and identification keys to find and identify creatures in the river.

The children next investigated the riverbank habitat by collecting plant samples, making rubbings of tree bark and recording any insect life found. Cross sections of the river were drawn up by measuring the river width and depth at measured intervals. In the afternoon, inspired by the river visit, the children produced a painting based on the different levels of the river from it's bed to it's bank to the air above.

For 2007, Annie and Fiona have already approached 10 schools which are really keen to participate. They are all fairly near to Kendal as the final focus for the project this year is, hopefully, going to be at the Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal. The project will involve a 2 day event for each of the schools this year. The first day is to be the same as last year, on the riverbank and run by Annie and Fiona. The second day will be run by two ceramic artists and will involve the children producing a ceramic tile mural based on the river to be on permanent display outside at the Brewery Arts Centre and ceramic river creatures for display in the warehouse gallery at the Brewery. The Brewery have selected an outside wall for the mural and will let Annie and Fiona have the warehouse gallery for 1 or hopefully 2 weeks in September. In September there will be an unveiling of the mural and the exhibition of paintings, drawings and ceramics in the warehouse gallery.

Funding for their part of the project has yet to be secured by the Brewery and, should this not materialise, the project will just go ahead with the first day, as last year, supported by SCRT funds.

## River Association News

Two River Associations (RA) have now formed, the Duddon RA on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and the Crake RA on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2006.

Alan Hind of the Duddon River Association has initiated a project to investigate the water quality and habitat of the Duddon. The river looks pristine but it is not returning the weight of salmon and sea trout that would be expected and the aim of the project is to investigate what is causing this underachievement. The project is in the initial phase with chemical, biological, abstraction, discharge and incident data being collected from the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the Freshwater Biological Association (FBA). Gap analysis is underway already at the FBA and once the data collection is complete and gaps in the data identified, the scope of the remainder of the project can be assessed. Alan has also recently produced the first Duddon RA newsletter.

## River Invertebrate Monitoring for Anglers

The Anglers Monitoring Initiative, organised by the Riverfly Partnership (an organisation working together to further the understanding and conservation of riverfly populations) is to be launched nationally at the 2nd Riverfly Conference in March 2007 at the Natural History Museum, London. Endorsed by the Environment Agency and the Salmon & Trout Association, the initiative enables angling groups to monitor riverfly populations and highlight severe changes in the water quality of their rivers.

SCRT is supporting a project, developed by Peter Moreton of the Trust, to be a part of this initiative. The project will include hosting a training workshop in South Cumbria to be run by an accredited trainer from the Riverfly Partnership, with support from the Environment Agency, identification of suitable monitoring sites, purchase of monitoring equipment and the setting up of a system for collation and analysis of results. The workshop will include both field and lab sessions and will take place in late April. The location for the workshop is Beetham on the River Bela.

It is important that anyone wishing to be involved in this initiative should recognise the commitment implied by the survey i.e. that they are prepared to do the ongoing field work and regularly submit the results. For further details on this initiative, please contact [PMoreton@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:PMoreton@dsl.pipex.com).

## Future Work Activities

- Following a meeting with John Martin of the Environment Agency, it is apparent that there are a very large number of worthwhile habitat improvement projects within the Windermere catchment which SCRT could potentially carry out. Support for such projects (in the form of a Fisheries Officer's time if not financial) is likely to be forthcoming from the EA. The number and scale of any such projects which could be carried out by SCRT is dependent on the Trust gaining full time employees as well as continuing to have voluntary support.
- Natalie Bibby, a member of SCRT and an MSc student at Lancaster University, has suggested that the Trust and the University could work together to find suitable projects for undergraduate students and which could also be of benefit to the Trust, either to understand better our river catchments or to investigate particular problems. Projects involving field work would be preferred and chemical and biological water quality sampling can be done at the University. Work has started in trying to identify suitable projects.
- Peter Moreton, together with other members of Milnthorpe Anglers and John Foster of the EA, hope to start work in the spring surveying the Stainton Beck, a tributary of the River Bela.

- At their Fourth Annual Liaison Meeting last November, the Still Waters Partnership announced that the Windermere Catchment Restoration Plan would start in January 2007. SCRT will be active in supporting this work.
- Windermere on Water (WOW), was a new festival held for the first time in 2006 showcasing the lake and what it has to offer. Numerous businesses on and around the lake offered 'sampler' sessions to the public and this was augmented by a variety of world renowned entertainment acts on the Glebe. In 2006, 2-3000 people attended the event and plans are now being made for the 2007 WOW Festival. It is hoped that environmental issues will also be highlighted this year in events to be held at Brockhole Visitor Centre. If this is the case, it would be a good opportunity for SCRT to be involved.
- SCRT members contributed extensively to the formation of the South Cumbria Fisheries Action Plan. Many of the actions identified in the Plan require input by SCRT. The extent to which the Trust can fulfil its obligations in this respect depend on gaining funding for a full time employee.
- United Utilities have recently completed a study on the impacts of abstraction from Windermere. A report on the findings will be available for comment by SCRT in the Spring.
- Input to the Environment Agency Water Framework Directive consultation document, South Cumbria CAMS and other relevant documents.

### **The Catch and Release Restriction on the Leven and Crake**

The official review of the Catch and Release bye-laws on the Leven and Crake is due in 2008. However, the Environment Agency held an interim review in 2006. The conclusion was that stocks have improved but not sufficiently nor over a long enough period. The restriction therefore stays in place.

### ***We are looking for supporters, both organisations and individuals, who can help us financially, and/or with their time and skills***

Anyone with an interest in preserving the local aquatic environment can become a supporter, not just anglers. We encourage you to join your local rivers trust and help ensure a healthy future for our waters. If you have some time available and would like to play a more active role, say doing river surveys, project management, or executive/administrative work please do let us know. Perhaps you have good local knowledge of the landowners, farmers and who have the fishing rights; if so we are interested. The catchments that benefit the most will be those with keen volunteers walking the river banks, talking to the riparian owners and farmers, and assisting with, or managing, projects.

If you would like further information, or would simply like to comment, please do not hesitate to contact us.

<b><i>Please donate and become a supporter. Contact details :</i></b>
For <b>Information</b> please contact : Sue Hunter e-mail : <a href="mailto:sue@scrt.co.uk">sue@scrt.co.uk</a> . Website: <a href="http://www.scrt.co.uk">www.scrt.co.uk</a>
To <b>donate</b> (guideline: Individuals: £15 Organisations: £50) please contact Niovi Ducker, The Estate Office, Cark in Cartmel, Grange over Sands, Cumbria LA11 7PH. Tel: 015395 58313 or e-mail : <a href="mailto:office@scrt.co.uk">office@scrt.co.uk</a>