



The Welland Rivers Trust is a charity dedicated to conservation, restoration, and education within the Welland Catchment Area



# The Welland Rivers Trust Newsletter

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## River Conservation School Talks

by Geoff Gilfillan

Over the past 3 months, the Welland Rivers Trust have been working with Primary Schools throughout the Welland Catchment to deliver 17 river conservation presentations to over 500 children aged between 7-11.

Our primary aim is to engage young people in river conservation issues, and to educate them in the importance of our rivers to both people and wildlife. We have worked with Schools in a range of locations including Market Harborough, Ketton, Stamford, Uffington and Market Deeping.

Our presentations give children a background into the formation and main features of river systems, before providing more local knowledge about the River Welland and its catchment area. We also discuss the many ways that people use the water in our

rivers, and why rivers are so important to the survival of many plants and animals. Finally, we talk about why rivers are threatened across the world, and how everyone can contribute to protecting rivers by making small changes at home and at work/school.

The remainder of our session with the children involves a couple of activities. First, we help calculate the children's water usage at home and discuss how everyone can save water to protect our rivers. Finally, the children work together to discover how long our litter takes to break down in the environment, discussing why it is so harmful to litter near our waterways.

Please contact us if your School would like to invite us to deliver a river conservation presentation!!

- River Conservation Talks
- Scout River Dipping
- River Warden Project
- Open Farm Sunday
- Upcoming Events



### Useful contacts:

Geoff Gilfillan – Welland Rivers Trust Project Officer

☎ 07774842229

✉ [ggilfillan@wellandriverstrust.org.uk](mailto:ggilfillan@wellandriverstrust.org.uk)

<http://www.wellandriverstrust.org.uk/>

# Scout River Dipping

by Geoff Gilfillan

To celebrate the British Summer, the Welland Rivers Trust have begun working with Scout groups throughout the Welland catchment to deliver river dipping and mini-beast identification events that engage young people in river conservation issues.

We are inviting Scout groups to meet us at the River Welland on their normal Scout night schedule. All we ask is that the Scouts bring their wellies and a pond net if they have them. We provide invertebrate identification sheets, trays, safety equipment and on-hand assistance during kick-sampling and identification.

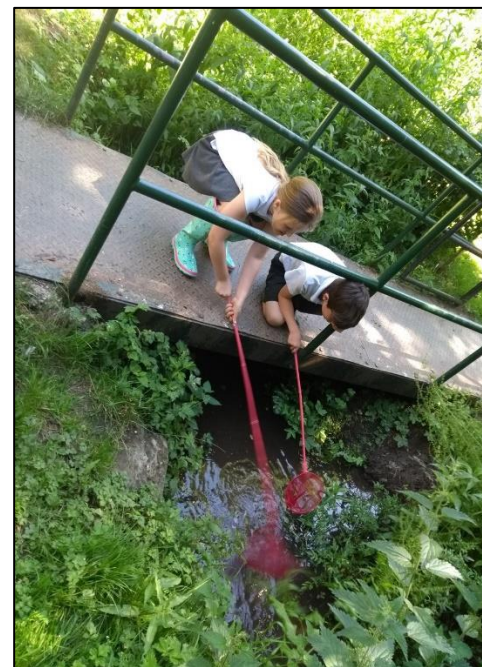
We work with the children to identify the caught mini-beasts, and then use the animals recorded to work out a River Health Score for how clean the river water is as it flows through the catchment.

Certain invertebrate species are only able to live in the cleanest freshwater systems, and their presence can be a sign of 'good quality' water. Examples include the cased and caseless caddis fly larvae, the freshwater shrimp, and the mayfly larvae. These species score the highest points when recorded. Conversely, the species that can live in nutrient-rich waters and/or low oxygen conditions score the lowest points when recorded in the river. Examples of low scoring species include the water hoglice, water snails and leeches.



The combined total score for all species recorded is then used to provide an overall River Health Score. High scores indicate healthy rivers.

So far, we have delivered this event alongside 13 children from the 1st Bowden Scout group to celebrate National Insect Week. However, over the next couple of weeks will be meeting the Market Deeping Scouts and the Elsea Park Cubs from Bourne.



If your Scout or Cub group would be interested in hosting a river dipping session, please contact us to arrange this. All we will need to do is identify a safe river location that can host the event!!!

# River Warden Training Programme

by Geoff Gilfillan



Following several successful funding applications, we are launching a new project to train River Warden Groups throughout the Welland Catchment.

**Project Lead:** The Welland Rivers Trust

**Project Funding:** Tesco Bags of Help Fund + Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation grant

## Project Description:

The Welland Rivers Trust (WRT) are developing a catchment-wide citizen science monitoring programme to better monitor the state and conditions of the Welland catchment.

The WRT are training local residents to become volunteer River Wardens across the largely rural Welland catchment in Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire.

The River Warden Scheme will give people who care about the River Welland and their local environment a chance to:

- Work with the Welland Rivers Trust to provide river monitoring on a short stretch of the River Welland (or a tributary of the Welland)
- Record wildlife and river features – information which adds to our knowledge and helps

the authorities to make good decisions about managing watercourses

- Monitor wildlife including plants, invertebrates, and mammals – information which helps in understanding trends and identifying changes in the health of the ecosystem
- Record and alert the WRT and Environment Agency on pollution incidents – allowing a quick response to deal with the pollution event
- Record invasive non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam – so that species distribution maps can be produced, allowing for catchment-coordinated action to remove and eradicate them
- Report fly tipping and littering – it can be a large threat to people, wildlife and fisheries
- Record localised flooding and other river issues in the community
- Act as a point of contact in the community about river initiatives, raising awareness about the environment and liaising with the Welland Rivers Trust

The River Wardens will ‘adopt’ a stretch of river to suit their

mobility, interests and location.

Wardens will undertake periodic checks and monitoring of their adopted river stretch. On each visit the wardens will survey and record:

1. Invertebrate biodiversity
2. Water quality (testing for nitrate, phosphate, acidity, ammonia, and temperature)
3. Invasive species (e.g. Signal crayfish)
4. Important wildlife sightings (e.g. Otters)

This information is being fed back to the WRT’s Project Officer, who is mapping the data, and supplying data to the Environment Agency.

The River Warden Scheme allows rural communities to take action that will help conserve their river environment. Through simple monitoring techniques, our Wardens will be able to detect any severe perturbations in river water quality, ensuring that action is taken at the earliest opportunity should any severe perturbations be detected.

Please contact us if you are interested in becoming a volunteer River Warden.

# Open Farm Sunday

by Geoff Gilfillan



On Sunday June 10th, we joined the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust for their Open Farm Sunday event at the Allerton Research Center in Loddington, Leicestershire.

The GWCT are one of our closest Catchment Partners, and are a member of the Welland Valley Partnership steering group. Therefore, we jumped at the opportunity to support their community event!

Open Farm Sunday is a national event to promote and share the farming story. This annual event gives the GWCT's Allerton demonstration and research farm the opportunity to ensure people from all ages and backgrounds engage with food production and the countryside around them.

We set up an education stall to showcase the aquatic life that can live on well-managed farmland. Collecting a quick kick sample of the nearby stream, we set out trays and identification sheets to teach children and families about the invertebrates and other animals in our rivers.

Over 250 residents from the surrounding area turned up to the event, and our stall was highlighted by the organisers as attracting a particularly high level of interest and enthusiasm throughout the day.

Our stall also advertised the wider work of the WRT, and allowed us to collect a number of anonymous questionnaires exploring people's diets in relation to dietary phosphate - this work is following on from local research showing a negative relationship between phosphate levels in freshwater, and species richness.



We were even able to recruit new volunteers for our River Warden monitoring programme.

Other attractions on the day included tractor and trailer rides, local produce from the Allerton farm, Leicestershire Longwool sheep, South Devon cattle, chickens, ponies, and farm machinery!

## UP-COMING EVENTS

**River Warden Training**

**Location: Loddington**

**Date: July 14<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**River Warden Training**

**Location: Harringworth**

**Date: July 17<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**River Warden Training**

**Location: Loddington**

**Date: July 28<sup>th</sup> 2018**