

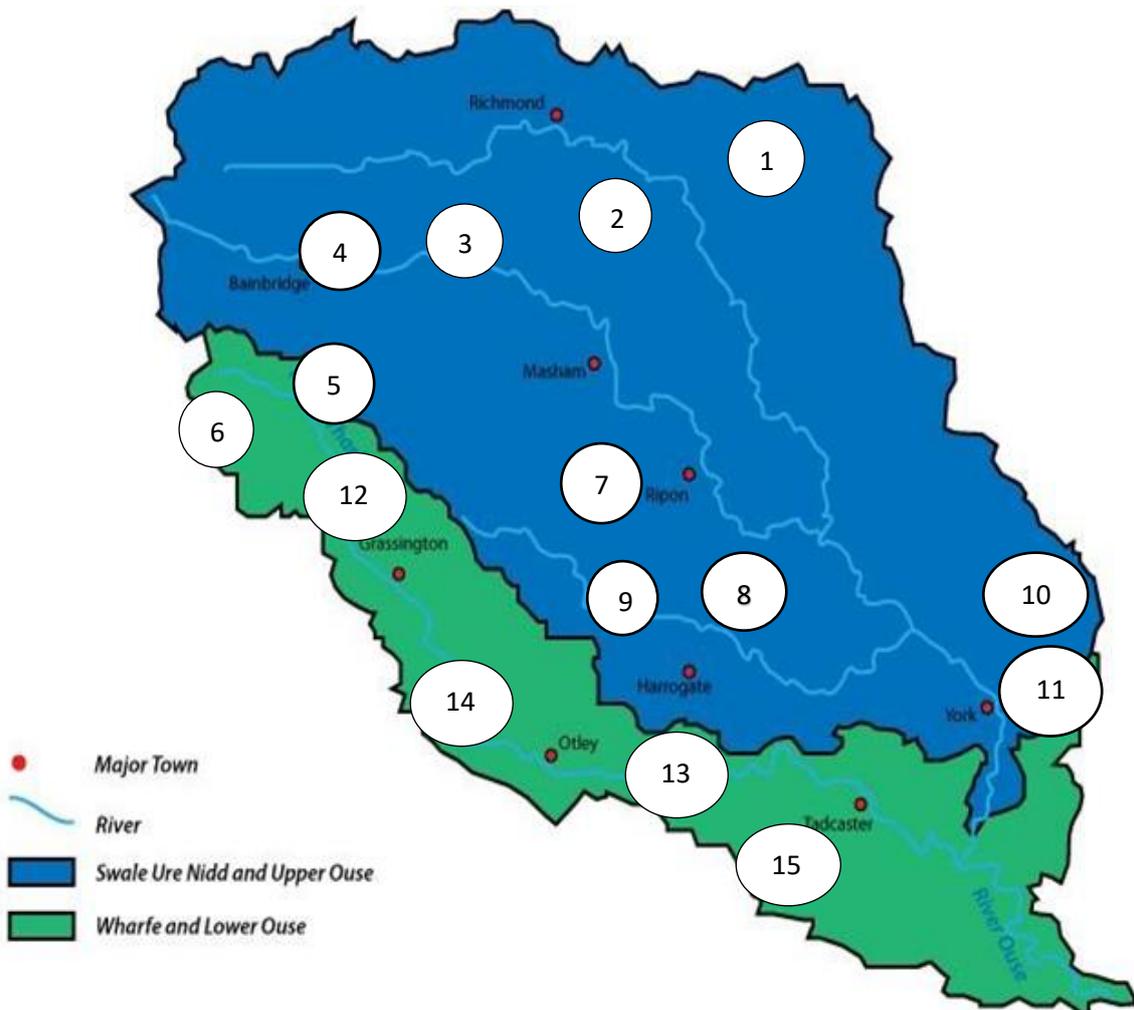


Dales to Vale
Rivers Network

Newsletter – Winter 2018

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter with an update on how the Catchment Partnership for the Swale, Ure, Nidd, Ouse and Wharfe has developed since its formation in November 2013.

Our partnership covers a wide and diverse area – there are now 15 active projects under our umbrella and we work closely with over 50 partners! In this edition we'll give an outline of how we have created the individual Catchment Management Plans and report on the progress of our projects.



Catchment Management Plans – What are they and how do you write one?

That was the question facing us when we started the process.

Catchment Management Plans (CMPs) bring together background information on each catchment, highlight key issues and identify a range of projects that will contribute to addressing the issues and improving the quality of the environment in the catchment.

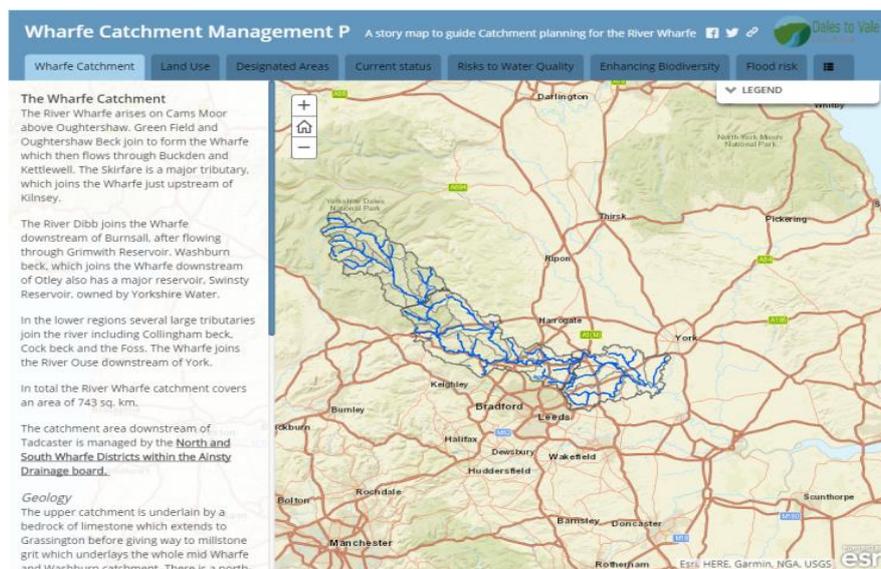
Collaboration is fundamental to a CMP – no one person knows everything about one river but lots of people know one or several things in detail and when these are added together, we get the whole picture. CMPs are not written by one person but drawn up collaboratively with the DVRN bringing all interested parties together to agree on what they would like to see happening on their river.

First Caitlin Pearson and Tom Throssel worked on gathering the data and putting it into a readily accessible format – the StoryMaps. Rita Mercer and Charlotte Simons have brought people together to generate ideas. These two areas of work are closely linked. The background data gives everyone a picture of what is known about each river and when various data sets are brought together it can highlight issues and or solutions on how to improve the river and its environs. Accessible data can help prompt discussions and stimulate more ideas.

Gathering people together has involved a series of meetings for each river, to which we have invited the people who live, enjoy and work along the river. From local community groups to wildlife groups, anglers, parish, district and county councillors, statutory agencies, land owners, flood groups, walking groups and river users.

So, what has come out of these? - For each river we now have details on what the issues are and around 70 existing and potential projects in total! We are working to prioritise the new ideas and develop new groups working together to get projects off the ground.

But where is the CMP itself and how will people get to see the document? The CMP is web-based, hosted on the Dales to Vales Rivers Network at <http://dvrn.co.uk/>, so the information can be updated as and when it becomes available and progress reports can be added as projects develop.



This screen shot shows the opening page of the River Wharfe Plan.

1. River Wiske Corridor Project

The River Wiske gently meanders through picturesque villages and farmland before flowing around the market town of Northallerton, and eventually draining into the River Swale. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is working in partnership with the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, Swale and Ure



Bank Re-profiling along the River Wiske.

Internal Drainage Board and local landowners to deliver a restoration project to rejuvenate this watercourse as it has many issues that need to be addressed.

Flooding - Settlements within the river catchment, including Brompton, Northallerton and Romanby, have experienced significant flooding. Other local groups including the Brompton Flood Prevention Group and Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust are working with the River Wiske Corridor Project tackling this issue.

Water pollution from run-off from arable land, via livestock accessing the water and from sewage overflows and waste water treatment. We are also advising farmers to consider using different methods of pest control as the level of Metaldehydes from slug pellets is becoming an issue in the water course.

Lack of wildlife - The surrounding area is mostly arable land, which provides very limited habitat. In addition, invasive non-native species have taken hold in several locations. YWT have surveyed the whole of the River Wiske looking for issues such as pollution, bank erosion, cattle poaching, vegetation, land use and the results will help us focus future works.

2. Mid Swale Tributaries

Many of the becks that flow into the middle stretch of the River Swale suffer from high levels of sediment smothering spawning gravels for fish, with increased levels of nitrates and phosphates causing excessive growth of algae and other plants.

Water bodies covered by this project

- Gilling Beck
- Skeeby/Holme/Dalton Beck
- Scorton Beck
- Bedale/Newton/Burton Beck
- Scurf Beck

YDRT is leading a partnership project involving the landowners, the EA, NE, the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and Wild Trout Trust. Most of the funding is coming from the Environment Agency, with farmers contributing towards costs of the installations on their land.

The first phase of the project focused on Gilling Beck, where with help from volunteers, a range of measures to reduce run-off and improve habitat have been installed. This included putting in 1.2km of fencing to prevent cattle and horse poaching of the river banks, willow bunding to control bank erosion and planting 350 trees. Experimental reed beds, sediment traps and three flow deflectors have been installed to increase flow diversity. The focus now is on Bedale Beck and promoting pollution control measures with land managers – as a partnership with NE's Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer for the area.



Tree Planting along Gilling Beck

3. YorePast – UreFuture – The Wensleydale Project

YorePast - UreFuture, is the Catchment Management Plan for the upper Ure and focuses on encouraging and supporting water-friendly farming, ensuring clean and safe water, and enhancing Wensleydale's special wildlife and habitats. It has been developed by a partnership of local farmers and interested organisations, led by YDRT and YDNPA.

In the last 60 years agricultural practices have modernised and tourist numbers increased. These developments, along with climatic change, have put pressure on the landscape, particularly on the River Ure and its tributaries. Pollutants from agricultural land and sewage works have affected the water quality causing excessive seasonal growths of algae. This produces low oxygen levels and, together with an increase in fine sediment in the river channel, has reduced the amount of habitat suitable for fish and invertebrates.

The Strategy Document was printed and distributed in summer 2017 and it contains ideas for projects which will help achieve the aims. Several have already received funding, including the Wensleydale Dormouse Project, run by YDNPA to plant 1700m new hedgerows to not only connect dormouse habitat but to slow the overland flow of water. The Ure River and Naturally Resilient projects are also a product of the Wensleydale Project Strategy and are described more fully in this newsletter. Work continues to develop the next round of project ideas and to widen the partnership to include local businesses and recreational interests.

4. Ure River

In August 2016 YDRT received a £24,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an exciting project to celebrate the River Ure in Wensleydale and collect information on its current condition. This project forms part of the wider YorePast-UreFuture Wensleydale Project coordinated by YDNPA and YDRT.

Over the last year 24 volunteers have been trained in water quality monitoring techniques and have collected samples each month. This data is helping us to pinpoint the issues on the river, so we can take actions to ensure the river remains as a healthy environment. Two University students have also helped collect and analyse the data.

An exhibition about the river was displayed at the Aysgarth Falls Visitors Centre in August 2017. Family River Days and a photographic competition have also been held.

Working with Bolton Estate, YDRT have installed a river webcam at Wensley bridge allowing anyone to keep a close eye on the river and see how it responds to varying weather conditions in the dale.

(www.farsondigitalwatercams.com/locations/wensley).

Enjoying the Family River Day





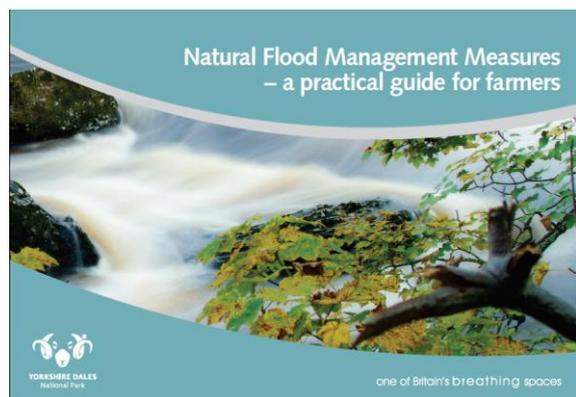
Masham and Leyburn primary schools and Leyburn and Hawes scout groups have enjoyed using the educational river table to think about how rivers work and what we can do to protect them.

5.NFM Farmers' Pack

YDNPA, YDRT and North Yorkshire County Council, with support from NE and the EA have produced a booklet *Natural Flood Management Measures – a practical guide for farmers (2017)*, helped by YDRT's summer intern student Emily Brown. It provides clear advice to farmers and landowners who are considering implementing natural flood management practices and was specifically requested by the farmers and land managers of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The pack helps farmers to choose which NFM techniques to use to provide the best flood protection, gives advice on how to construct them and provides up to date guidance on which consents and permissions are needed. The measures included in the guide have been grouped into three different levels of intervention. Each is described in terms of its effectiveness, its benefit to agricultural production, and its overall set up and maintenance costs.

Printed copies of the pack are being made available to Dales farmers and a digital version can be downloaded at http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1010991/11301_flood_management_guide_WEBx.pdf

A template which can be adapted for use in other areas has been produced and work has started on a Lowland version.



6. Naturally Resilient

Naturally Resilient is a project to educate farmers and local communities in Wensleydale and Wharfedale in what Natural Flood Management is and how it can help reduce flood risk in the local area and further downstream. It is led by YDRT and YDNPA, with EA and NE. YDRT secured a £50,000 grant from the Princes Countryside Fund in February 2017 to fund a part-time Project Officer who is give training, guidance and support to individual land managers wishing to use low-

cost NFM techniques. Two demonstration sites have been created in Bishopdale and Nethergill in upper Wharfe catchment and they are being used to promote the benefits of NFM to a wider audience of farmers and other interested groups. Funding from Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Scheme is supporting the operation of two Facilitation Groups for farmers in Wharfedale and Wensleydale, run in partnership with YDRT, YDNPA and the Dales Farmer Network. Implementation of practical NFM measures in Bishopdale will be funded by EA's Landscape Scale NFM pilot. A further strand of the project including implementation of features, training of contractors and community work in Wharfedale has been made possible by a grant from Postcode Local Trust, a grant-giving charity funded entirely by players of People's Postcode Lottery. YDRT were awarded £20,000 for this work in early 2018.

More information is at <http://www.yorkshiredalesrivertrust.com/natural-flood-management/naturally-resilient/>

7. River Skell Landscape Partnership

The catchment of the River Skell, just to the west of Ripon encapsulates a transitional landscape between upland and lowland - with moorland to the west eventually culminating in the internationally important gardens and parklands of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal.

This is a project being developed by the Skell Catchment Partnership led by the National Trust, YWT and Nidderdale AONB with EA, Historic England, YDRT and Ripon City Council. It will invest in the restoration of elements of the original Aislabie gardens and in the natural heritage of the wider Skell by improving the ecology of the river for priority species like otters, brown trout, salmon and white clawed crayfish and working with land managers within the catchment to reduce the high levels of siltation, flood events and agricultural run-off.



Flooding at Fountains, May 2012

The overall aim of the project is to increase the resilience of the World Heritage Site (WHS) in the face of climate change and to maintain its place as one of England's most cherished heritage attractions. Restoring the historic link between Fountains and the Skell upstream and working with other land managers will help reduce flood risk and sedimentation through NFM techniques.

8. River Tutt Restoration

The River Tutt is a small tributary of the River Ure lying south-west of Boroughbridge and is part of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's River Ure Living Landscape. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) classifies the River Tutt as being heavily modified and having only 'Moderate Ecological Potential.' It fails WFD standards on fish habitat and numbers and is over-straightened and over-deepened.

Leading on from initial works funded by EA, YWT has been carrying out further restoration on the river in their own nature reserve at Staveley thanks to funding by Biffa Award. Work has included re-profiling sections of the river banks to help stabilise them and installing flow deflectors in the river channel. These are made by securing logs to the riverbed and vary the velocity of the water at low flow levels to create a more diverse habitat for fish and aquatic invertebrates.



The DVRN Project Board looking at a flow deflector in the River Tutt at the YWT's Staveley reserve

Gravels are cleaned by the faster moving water creating spawning ground for fish. Invertebrates and plants benefit from the pools and slower moving waters created by the flow deflectors. A backwater has also been created which links to the river channel providing a calm refuge area for young fish and aquatic insects.

9. Natural Nidd

The Natural Nidd project is led by Nidderdale AONB, with EA, Yorkshire Farming and Wildlife Partnership, NE, Yorkshire Water and YDRT as key partners. The project has funding of £25,000 to provide advice to farmers on NE's Catchment Sensitive Farming initiative and to use practical measures such as providing fencing to keep livestock out of rivers. YDRT have coordinated volunteers in gathering additional water quality data on the River Crimple, south of Harrogate. This helps target the next round of farm-based mitigations.

The emphasis has been on improving soil management through CSF and providing training and advice to farmers through the Upper Nidd Facilitation Fund Group.

There is also an ambition to expand the Natural Nidd project in the lower Nidd catchment by undertaking and implementing a feasibility study to look at diffuse pollution, restoring traditional wet Ings grassland management, linking, buffering and extending riparian habitats, as well as mitigating the effects of the old floodbanks which isolate the river from its floodplain.

10. River Foss Community Project

The Foss Society, Friends of St Nicks and YDRT have come together to start a Citizen Science project to monitor the water quality in the River Foss, a major tributary of the River Ouse, which runs through York. Members of the Society and volunteers from St Nicks have regularly been sampling the water using simple kits supplied by YDRT, who have provided training and interpretation of the results.

In 2018 we aim to seek funding to expand the project to deliver a partnership based citizen science monitoring scheme alongside public engagement activities. The River Foss Catchment Project will train more local volunteers to monitor the river, and expand the range of data which is gathered. It will help to inform management and develop a whole catchment plan to ensure a healthy environment for both people and wildlife. Monitoring methods will include freshwater invertebrate surveys to assess river health, water quality testing, riparian vegetation mapping, including presence of invasive species, riparian mammal surveying and fixed-point photography. A programme of walks, practical conservation sessions and field sessions with schools will provide people of all ages with opportunities to learn about and help improve the river environment.



Learning to test water quality in York, Jan 2017

11. York Urban Becks

Partners in this project aim to recreate, restore and re-naturalise parts of York's urban becks, Osbalwick Beck, the River Foss and Tang Hall Beck so that they are teeming with wildlife and enjoyed by all.

The number and nature of historic flood protection and access culverts along these becks limit the amount of suitable habitat for some species. This new partnership project will focus on habitat improvement and creation and also land management improvements to eventually include de-culverting & river meandering.

Friends of St Nicks had a small grant in 2014/15 to fund monitoring and biodiversity improvements on the becks through St Nicks, with a focus on Water Voles. They now hope to try and scale it up and roll something out city-wide in the future as another strand to this project. It will include a wider range of species but following the same process of mapping, monitoring, feasibility planning, providing training to local conservation groups, delivery of practical works and continued monitoring. Schools and youth groups would be included with plenty of citizen science and lots of awareness raising, reconnecting people to their rivers.

The partners working with Friends of St Nicks are EA, City of York Council, Yorkshire Farming and Wildlife Partnership and YDRT.

12. Upper Wharfe Catchment Project

Since 2016 the Upper Wharfe SSSI River Restoration Project has expanded and has been renamed as the Upper Wharfe Catchment Project reflecting work which is happening in the catchment outside the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) boundary. It is led by YDRT in partnership with NE, YDNPA, EA, NT and farmers. Alongside work to improve a section of de-culverting, the project has mapped the condition of the flood banks along the SSSI and the flood flow paths along the dale to show where there may be potential to make space for water.

Under the linked Naturally Resilient and Wharfedale Connecting Communities projects, YDRT is exploring several NFM techniques within the Upper Catchment to help reduce the effects of flooding downstream by creating a demonstration site which is being used to raise awareness of what can be done, how it can fit into farming systems and the benefits it can provide.



An Earth Bund on the Demonstration Site, designed to slow the flow of floodwater

In addition, the project will also be a pilot catchment for the WaterCOG project which is a European funded programme looking at examining and demonstrating the value that building active partnerships and engaging stakeholders can bring and using these partnerships to get the best for the environment, the local communities and the local economy.

13. Wharfedale Connecting Communities

This is a newly funded project, led by YDRT, aiming to increase awareness about Natural Flood Management (NFM) within the communities of Addingham, Otley, Collingham, East Keswick, Bardsey and Thorner, making links with work being done by the farming community at the top of the River Wharfe.

Starting in 2018, a series of events in each community at risk of flooding will be run, to raise awareness of how rivers function, describe what work is happening to reduce flood risk, both locally and further up the catchment, and to make links between the communities that have flooded in the past and the land managers who are installing NFM measures.

Setting up Flood watchers is another part of the project. We will run a citizen science project, looking at flood pathways to help each community build up a better idea of how the flood water flows and to identify where NFM or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) measures are suitable.

Working with schools and youth groups in these communities, we will be raising awareness of how rivers work and how the river interacts with the features within its catchment. This will be done using YDRT's Mobile Classroom – which has a river table and a model to demonstrate features of SuDS.

YDRT's New Mobile Classroom



The project is supported by Leeds Community Foundation and will be working with East Keswick Wildlife Trust, Addingham Environment Group, Flood Groups in Collingham, Otley, Environment Agency, Leeds City Council, Skill Mill and linking in with the Naturally Resilient Project.

14. Addingham 4 Becks Project

The aim of this new community project is to recognise the place that the four becks (Town Beck, Back Beck, Lumb Gill Beck and Wine Beck) have in Addingham and to make them a focal point of the village and surrounding countryside.

This partnership project is led by the Addingham Environment Group - part of the Addingham Civic Society and facilitated through the DVRN – and will be increasing the awareness of the Becks and their wildlife, water quality and role in reducing flood risk. The main partners are EA, YWS, Addingham Parish Council, Bradford Council, Addingham Anglers, YDRT and Wild Trout Trust.

Planned activities include meetings with the local community to find out what role the Becks currently play in village life and how they would like to see the Becks in the future. This will be alongside understanding the impact of recent floods on Addingham and helping to develop a local plan to implement NFM and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Local volunteers have continued Himalayan Balsam control work started last year. Other volunteer activities being planned are mapping the becks to record wildlife, the condition of the banks, where water flows during a flood and building up a picture of the water quality.

15. Rivers in Elmet

Rivers in Elmet project is led by the YDRT in partnership with the EA, NE and NYCC, funded by EA and the Nineveh Trust.

It's a three-year project aiming to address sediment, nutrient loading and habitat modifications in five adjoining waterbodies in the lower Wharfe and Ouse catchment. Other partners include the East Keswick Wildlife Trust and the South Milford Against Flooding group.



Rivers In Elmet

Water bodies covered by this project

- Collingham Beck
- Thorne Beck
- Cock Beck
- Mill Dike
- Bishop Dike

This project will build and extend upon two previous projects, 'Cleaner Collingham Beck' and 'South Milford' which have engaged with communities, installed an interpretation board and facilitated citizen science water quality monitoring. YDRT have encouraged water friendly farming through advice events and farm visits covering precision farming and soil management.

The Rivers In Elmet project will continue to engage and advise farmers and the wider community to bring about changes in land management practices. The project will also deliver practical improvements to water quality by fencing, tree planting, creating buffer strips, constructing online sediment traps and wetland creation. The project will supplement routine EA monitoring, by extending the citizen science monitoring programme including the use of phosphate, nitrate and turbidity testing kits as well as invertebrate monitoring via the Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative.



James Broughton talking about soils to farmers at Forshott Farm

A Big Thank-you to Our Sponsors and Partners



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