

2.0 Community guidance

2.1 Knowing your river, your project and your community

In order to adopt and champion a section of urban river, it is important to understand how healthy or degraded a river is to start with and also what is realistically achievable in the future. Knowing something about these baseline conditions is really important - especially when they are already good - since it is impossible to predict when a problem might arise and proof of any damage that has occurred will be invaluable. Also, whenever corrections to a problem are attempted, it is useful to assess if the corrections have been successful or whether additional efforts are required. In addition to knowing the river corridor, there is a need to understand what benefits local community members obtain from participating in, or being affected by, urban projects such as TinTT. As a final piece of the community puzzle, the communication of the value of a healthy urban river's flora and fauna is a vital means of gaining support. In other words, both monitoring (2.1.1) and education (2.1.2) are important if the wider community is to share the collective passion of those directly involved in trying to improve their local river, such as TinTT chapter members.

2.1.1 Monitoring

As well as providing guidance on what a project has achieved, future funding will be far easier to secure and current funders will be reassured that their money is well spent if good monitoring practices are adopted. This monitoring need not be hugely onerous, and should be tailored to the resources that each particular project has available. To meet this aim the TinTT Monitoring Strategy has been developed as a tool for assessing both biological and sociological factors; as with all the elements of the TinTT guidance, the monitoring strategy is available online for all to access and download (http://www.wildtrout.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=337&Itemid=311). Further complementing this strategy is a template for a survey to capture sociological benefits of TinTT. This has been developed by the research co-operative "SUBSTANCE" (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/trout>). Questionnaires are

tailored to capture the benefits to both participants and local residents as well as delivery partners and their institutions. The great thing about applying this strategy is that it encourages creativity in the ways that project aims are achieved. For example, in order to get a good handle on the current ecological status of a river, there are many options that can be pursued (even without expensive, professional consultants). For instance, the presence and relative abundance of fish, aquatic invertebrates and a wide variety of bankside flora and fauna can be assessed by mixing and matching the following:

- Monitor catch returns per hour of angler effort.
 - routinely for each angler trip....**OR**.....
 - via a friendly competition that could be held on a regular/annual basis

supported by





The results from catch returns and competitions held on the River Don in South Yorkshire have been used to produce evidence of game fish thriving and reproducing in previously unmonitored reaches of river (**Figure below**). These records are forwarded to local council ecologists and entered into a permanent database. Damage or loss of populations of fish following a pollution incident would provide powerful evidence of the scale of damage that polluters would be liable for – but this would be impossible to assess without the collection of pre-existing fish population data.

- Get Riverfly Partnership training: <http://www.riverflies.org/>
- Attend invertebrate and plant identification courses run by the Freshwater Biological Association (F.B.A. <http://www.fba.org.uk/index/training/>)

What is true for fish population assessment is equally true for invertebrates and plants and a really notable example of the Riverfly Partnership success in bringing polluters to book is the guilty plea entered by Kingspan Offsite Ltd. regarding pollution of the river Rhymney. Monitoring work carried out by the River Rhymney Riverfly Monitoring group was central to the success of this prosecution.

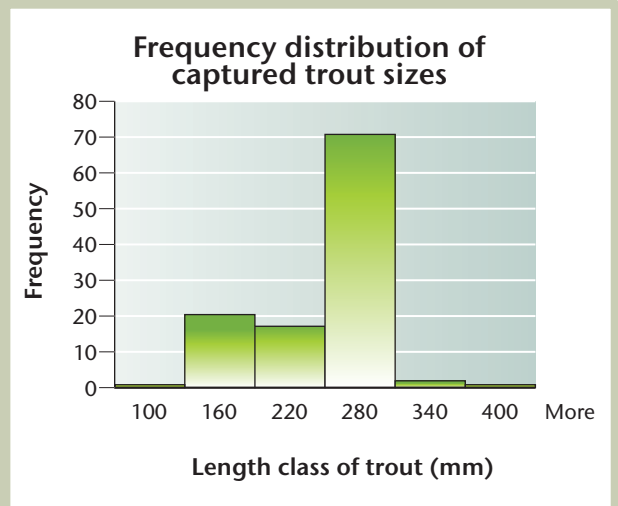
- All our TINTT projects have been started by anglers. Whenever this is the case, seek also to involve wildlife interest groups and local “Friends of” groups to encourage surveys of bank-side plant and animal life. There are lots of people who enjoy and appreciate our urban rivers and who would welcome a chance to meet other local enthusiasts. Groups of such

volunteers walking the banks can, for example, very quickly assess the locations and extent of invasive plant species such as Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed.

- Where specific funding exists, specialist contractors could also be hired to perform ecological surveys in areas that are not covered by routine E.A. monitoring programmes. Possible sources of funding are discussed later in this document (**section 2.2.4**).
- Contacting your local wildlife trust will also allow you to research what existing survey/monitoring data there are and when subsequent surveys are planned

The WTT or other expert bodies will be able to assist with the interpretation of biological monitoring data, as well as advising on how to collect and record such information. Furthermore, the template for sociological surveys developed in a partnership of the WTT and SUBSTANCE is expressly designed to yield clear, simple and easily interpreted responses. Just remember it is crucially important to identify and set appropriate and specific goals for project work. Once the goals are clear, it becomes obvious where to focus assessment efforts in order to judge success. Don't just know what to do, first know why it should be done and then be creative/seek advice on how to measure it. For example, the members of Lancashire's Colne Water Trout in the Town want to encourage scour pool formation to provide habitat for adult fish. To assess the success of physical structures in promoting stream bed scour, members of the

WILD TROUT CAUGHT, MEASURED AND RETURNED DURING FUN URBAN FLYFISHING COMPETITION (LEFT) WITH COMPETITION RESULTS USED TO PLOT BIOLOGICAL DATA (RIGHT) SUPPLIED TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DATABASES





angling club can obtain pre and post depth measurements at three cross sections of the river. In this way, the action of the flow deflectors in scouring out pools and creating gravel ramps is tracked through time, all for the cost of some string, a few pegs and a tape measure (**Photo below**)



WTT STAFF HELPING TO TRAIN COLNE WATER TROUT IN THE TOWN VOLUNTEERS IN SIMPLE STREAM CROSS-SECTION DEPTH MEASUREMENTS. PEGS ARE PERMANENTLY SITED AT EACH CROSS SECTION AND TWINE CAN BE ATTACHED EACH TIME MEASUREMENTS ARE TAKEN. THE DISTANCE FROM THE TWINE TO THE STREAM BED IS MEASURED AT 30-CM INTERVALS ALONG THE TWINE

2.1.2 Education

Educational programmes (such as **Trout in the Classroom**: e.g. http://www.clyderiverfoundation.org/index_files/Page834.htm and http://www.wandletrust.org/?page_id=6) as well as **Mayfly in the Classroom** (www.mayflyintheclassroom.org) provide fantastic means of engaging local schoolchildren, their families and local teachers with the rivers on their own doorsteps. For Mayfly in the Classroom (MIC) in particular, any interested volunteer can easily set up and run the apparatus using the online materials and support provided by the WTT. This includes apparatus assembly instructions, natural history facts and figures, classroom activity ideas, ready-made recording sheets and much more. A significant portion of the support materials for MIC is focussed on pollution-sensitive aquatic invertebrates and fish as well as raising awareness of our responsibility for conservation of good quality river habitat.

DISPLAY WORK AND EXAMPLES OF GROUP WORK PRODUCED DURING MAYFLY IN THE CLASSROOM





Involving people of all ages with their local river often underlines the importance of that river and the need to protect and enhance it for current and future generations. In addition to classroom-based activities, practical teaching in the river is invaluable for inspiring pupils in mainstream education. It can also become a vitally important vehicle for engaging those who may reject more formal teaching. Angling coaching is emerging as a crucial tool in this respect, with many case studies from the experience of initiatives such as “**Get Hooked on Fishing**” (<http://www.ghof.org.uk/>) and “**Angling for Youth Development**” (AFYD: <http://www.afyd.co.uk/>) reporting dramatic and highly significant success stories in tackling antisocial behaviour. Within the local “chapter” structure of TinTT, funding has been secured to train and certificate angling coaches (including relevant child protection measures)

in order to provide tuition free of charge to local youngsters. Details of **level 1** and **level 2 Angling Development Board** (ADB) coaching qualifications are available (<http://www.anglingtrust.net/land-ing.asp?section=27§ionTitle=Angling+Development+Board>) and TinTT chapters are encouraged to run fishing taster sessions and coaching events, especially to try to involve young people. Informal teaching, practical participation, demonstration and the sheer enjoyment of responsible angling help to pass on the value of healthy urban rivers to future generations of river custodians.

DE-CULVERTING OF THE RIVER QUAGGY AND CONNECTION TO FLOODPLAIN LEAD TO THIS LOVELY WETLAND ECOSYSTEM.
PHOTO: THE RIVER RESTORATION CENTRE



2.2 Campaigning for your river

Knowing how to stand up for your own piece of river is vital to any urban river caretaker. In all cases there will be many local quirks that significantly influence potential threats to the river, and good local knowledge will be required to find solutions. However, there are enough success stories to identify some widely applicable principles. A great example would be the successful campaign of the **Quaggy Waterways Action Group** (<http://www.qwag.org.uk>), which TinTT has learnt much from. In particular, QWAG’s dramatic ecological improvements to the river since 1990 were achieved by enlightened

flood risk management practices on the back of a campaign slogan “**Flood the Parks – not the Properties**”. In other words, floodwaters that have been temporarily diverted into parkland cannot damage and destroy residential and commercial properties. At the same time, valuable wetland habitat is created.

The following sections cover topics that are likely to be common to all TinTT projects.

2.2.1 Public records

Both water quality consent values for licensed discharges (the chemical quality of effluent that must be complied with) and the records of actual effluent quality that are measured during routine monitoring are publicly available. However, do not be discouraged if it seems to take a very long time to obtain such records; persistence is the key as well as knowing your rights. In England and Wales, the local E.A. office will hold a public register of discharge consents and routine monitoring results. In Scotland, such public records are held by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and can be inspected free of charge by any member of the public. In Northern Ireland it is the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and their Water Management Unit (WMU) which hold such records whilst the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) performs this role in the Republic of Ireland. Similarly, these agencies will also hold details of abstraction licences from surface watercourses. In areas of the UK covered by the Salmon & Trout Association (S&TA), local and national officers receive notifications of new applications and variations to existing consent values for both discharge and abstraction. Contacting your local **S&TA** representatives (<http://www.salmon-trout.org/branches.asp>) should enable them to put you in contact with the most appropriate Water Resources Officer for your location. Both the S&TA and WTT should be able to help with the interpretation of these facts and figures. Broadly speaking, measured discharge values for each chemical must be smaller than maximum consented values – for example the maximum permitted Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) may be set at a value of 50 mg/l (i.e. 50 milligrams per litre of water). This means that any published results for this characteristic that are greater than 50 mg/l can be highlighted and challenged. In this way – it is not necessary to know what every individual chemical characteristic actually is – just as long as what is measured coming out of the pipe is at a lower concentration than the relevant maximum limit.

Clearly, when breaches to legally defined conditions are uncovered, these should be brought to the attention of the relevant regulatory body in your part of the UK. In addition, prosecutions anywhere in the UK may be sought through **Fish Legal** (<http://www.fishlegal.net/default.asp>). In both accessing public records and approaching potential prosecutions, it helps to know your rights and your local Citizen's Advice Bureau is a good place

URBAN RIVER COLNE, EAST LANCASHIRE



to start if you are unsure. Again, help and guidance is available from, for example, the WTT, S&TA, Angling Trust (AT). If your prosecution is successful and damages are awarded – please do not automatically campaign for funds to be spent on fish stocking. Instead, first assess the physical and chemical habitat bottlenecks and lobby for funds to be directed to solving the environmental problems before resorting to fish stocking. There is no point in putting fish into degraded habitat they will either die or migrate out of the area.



2.2.2 Publicity and Communication

The message here is basically “Get into the habit of publicising your group’s work”. An increasingly convenient way of doing this is via the internet – particularly via the free access to “blog” facilities which can be used to produce a project website or blog (e.g. <http://wordpress.org/> or www.blogger.com). It also really helps if you can spice up your web publicity with good photographs and especially with short videos (via youtube for example). Do not underestimate the power of publicising your project’s events and websites/blogs on the many local and national-interest internet forums (e.g. www.flyforums.co.uk or local interest forums <http://www.sheffieldforum.co.uk/showthread.php?t=545301>). This is particularly true if your group’s activities stimulate passionate discussion and you are able to outline your own case clearly. Even those who do not contribute directly to such discussions will form opinions based on the various viewpoints expressed. Being someone who actually gets out there with their group and does things in the community or for local wildlife lends a great deal of credibility. A really excellent place to “plant” details of your group’s activities is on the BBC “breathing places” website (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/>) which allows like-minded people to take part in planned activities and events wherever they might be in the UK.

More traditional approaches to publication should not be neglected of course. Local newspapers are very happy to be given stories of action groups within their communities; supply good quality photographs to accompany these pieces if one of the paper’s photographers is not assigned. In the same way – when it comes to stirring accounts of really laudable campaigns - both local radio and TV coverage obviously give a great publicity boost to your work. The endorsement of relevant authorities (e.g. E.A., SEPA, NIEA or EPA) and ensuring that any works also fit into a good wider plan is an excellent way of ensuring credibility, which is very important for the work itself and the attendant publicity.

It is extremely important to recognise that the publicising of groups and activities requires a great deal of effort and commitment. The dedication and patience of volunteers will be vital and additional funds may need to be sought ([section 2.2.4](#)) to support public relations work. Some examples of the kind of efforts that can be undertaken are given in the following paragraphs.

Appropriate use of flyer posting and letterbox drops can be a great way of letting people know what your project stands for, gathering volunteers



HIGH -PROFILE MAYORAL PARTICIPATION ON TinTT-AFFILIATED PROJECTS INCLUDING THIS WITH THAMES21



and giving local people a chance to give their opinions on the aims of your project. This type of targeted publicity obviously lends itself very well to directing local residents to the relevant sociological survey (see “**Monitoring**” section 2.1.1). Local politicians, personalities and opinion-formers are often keen to be associated with community-led projects; there are great examples in London, Sheffield and Huddersfield.

As well as improved access to media coverage (as outlined above), associations with higher profile community figures can open up supplies of governmental resources/support and act as a catalyst for action.

Finally, do not neglect the fantastic opportunities to communicate directly via public events. Whether it is having a stall or giving a talk at a local environmental or community-themed fair or perhaps holding an event of your own design, these are a great means of talking - and listening - to the public directly. Again, there are many opportunities to express creativity in coming up with activities and events with which your group and the wider community can participate. A very simple idea is to hold a celebratory activity/fete

on your local river that coincides with “World Rivers Day” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Rivers_Day) or something as simple as holding a “duck race” and riverside fete for local residents (<http://colnewaterangling.club.officelive.com/duckrace.aspx>) during the warmer months of the year.

2.2.3 Working parties (trash clearance)

Following the extensive experience and great successes of working parties run by the Wandle Trust (<http://www.wandletrust.org/>) over the previous decade – the following set of rules are paraphrased from Theo Pike (current chair of the Wandle Trust). Remember, Perfect Preparation is central to success and the following must be prepared and put in place ahead of your event:

- **Clear objectives** – you must be clear in your own mind (and be able to communicate to your volunteers) what is to be achieved during each specific working party. So, what is your working party going to do on a given day and what are they trying to achieve?. On this latter point it is worth emphasising that volunteers must understand the aims of the work undertaken.



ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF MAYORAL PARTICIPATION ON TinTT-AFFILIATED PROJECTS, THIS BEING THE WANDLE TRUST

With trash clearance, it is far more important to send the sociological message that the river is valuable rather than seeing trash clearance as necessarily having a significant direct biological benefit. Thus, it may be better to leave some of the less visually intrusive trash in place to act as habitat – as long as it is not dangerous or leaching pollution into the river (i.e. it is not a battery, or a container of any kind of industrial/agricultural chemical). Of course, the setting of clear objectives must also include defining the boundaries for work activities at each particular event (e.g. specific upstream and downstream limits).

- **Risk assessments** – (e.g. <http://www.flyfishersrepublic.com/environment/restoration/staying-safe/risk-assessment.html>) must be formally prepared and hard copies should be



available for volunteers to sign up to as accepting their contents as well as acknowledging their own responsibility for health and safety compliance. This should form part and parcel of a pre-work...

- **Safety briefing** in which you tell your volunteers what you expect from them in terms of keeping themselves and others safe and give them a chance to ask questions before signing up to the risk assessment.
- **Appropriate equipment** must be supplied or brought along for volunteers to use (e.g. robust gloves, litter pickers/grabs, antiseptic handwash, robust waste sacks). Stress the use of appropriate footwear and ensure that people lacking equipment find suitable, alternative tasks. To this end...
- **Offer a variety of activities** that are well suited to participants' range of abilities. Administration prior to a working party or tea-making on the day is just as vital as the physical works. Some volunteers on the day will also be required to ensure that passers-by are not put at risk by any of the working party tasks and are kept informed of what is going on.
- **Publicise** via the full range of publicity tools outlined in [section 2.2.2](#) to attract people to your project (and hence build up volunteers for working parties).

- **Offer thanks!** Make sure that volunteers are thanked frequently for their contribution and celebrate successes. This is vital, not only because it is entirely proper to acknowledge voluntary contributions, but also to keep a project vibrant and ongoing.
- **Arrange refreshments** and a fun social aspect or ending to working parties (a well-earned pint at the end of the day is definitely in order!).



THE TRASH CLEARANCE WORKING PARTY - A STAPLE OF URBAN RIVER CUSTODIANSHIP!
RIVER GOYT (LEFT) AND RIVER EREWASH (ABOVE)



2.2.4 Securing Funding

The WTT can offer advice on fundraising, with the following essential components ;

- **Understand the potential donor** Whether the donor is an individual, business, public funding body or charitable trust they will have their own particular agenda and it is important to understand that agenda. Use the internet to search company profiles or policy statements to gain a good insight into the affiliations and ethos of each potential donor. Through this process of research and, possibly through formalised funding application processes, it is vitally important to understand what any funder aims to get out of the relationship. This could be recognition, business promotion, corporate responsibility fulfilment, common aims, designated funding streams where grants are made available for specific purposes or any number of additional factors or combination of factors. Successful applications for funding will depend on the right buttons being pressed; if the funding partner can be offered the opportunity to support a project that meets their needs, then there is no reason for an application to be rejected (funds permitting!). In most cases, this will require specific tuning of the project to fulfil the needs or aspirations of the funder. However, if your own aspirations would be too compromised or lost during this process, then it is time to approach a different funding partner. Of course, it is important that all funding applications are written

using very clear and simple language. This avoids the problem of confusing, and consequently discouraging, the people who assess each application.

- **Formally and informally say “thank you”** for funding that is donated and keep funders apprised of progress and achievements via both formal processes and informal updates. This is not only right and proper, but also improves the chances of repeat funding or even generating new funding partners.

The WTT and other specialist conservation organisations will be able to offer more detailed advice on fundraising for individual projects. Many UK conservation groups, including the WTT, employ specialist officers who undertake and advise upon funding applications.

TinTT VOLUNTEERS BEING TRAINED IN RIVERFLY PARTNERSHIP METHODS FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL FUNDING APPLICATION BY JOHN BLEWITT

