Final Report on EA(W) Funded Project to Improve Water Body Status Within Herefordshire

Introduction

A series of partnership projects between the Wye and Usk Foundation and the Environment Agency is aimed at improving the status of water bodies in the river Wye (SAC) England. These projects include:

1. LARA - a SITA landfill tax /WUF funded project delivering fish passage, habitat restoration and farm pollution management north of Leominster area. Budget £192,000

2. Association of Rivers Trusts /DEFRA funded fish passage project to construct 4 fish passes on the Arrow, a further 4 on the Garren and 1 on the Escley. Budget £173,000

3. Association of Rivers Trusts /DEFRA funded Farm Pollution Management project which has delivered targeted farm infrastructure improvements and farm advice in the Holly, Humber and Lodon catchments. Budget £30,000

4. **EAW funded Habitat Restoration Project**

The purpose of this report is to give details of the latter project but outline information about the other activities is included above to provide context for work within this project and ensure that all priorities are being met.

The Project

The work took place at 5 sites across the catchment and was supported with a capacity building exercise within the Foundation as we developed the ability to assist the EA and Catchment sensitive farming in your efforts to reduce pollution from agriculture.

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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

defra
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

The Wye & Usk Foundation
ACTION FOR FISHERIES

Site 1 - GB109055036620, R Arrow - conf Gladestry Bk to conf Gilwern Bk

Currents status: Good, (but in the absence of fish data)

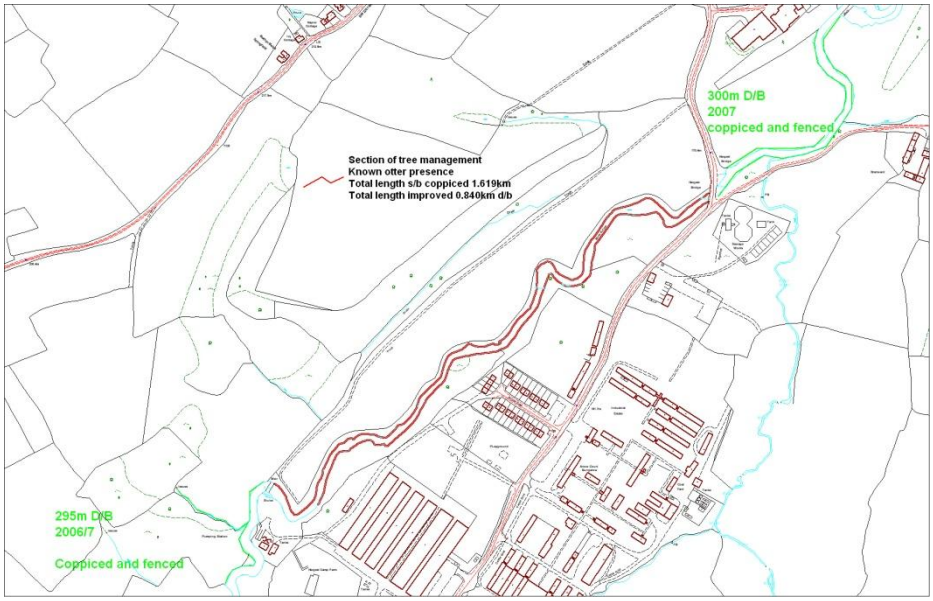
Work completed: 0.9km double bank stock exclusion and silt reduction

Representative photographs:

Description

Surveys in 2006 showed this 5 km long water body to have reasonable/good riparian vegetation except for a section just upstream of Kington, which is shown in these photographs. The owners had previously been approached but work here was outside of the scope of WUF led projects to date and we welcome the opportunity provided by these funds to restore the riparian habitat in order improve the fish stocks and reduce bank sediment mobilisation at a point well upstream.

The site included a breeding otter holt which was in a root bowl of a leaning ash tree. Work was timed to minimise disturbance and conducted under the supervision and licence of Tom Fairfield. The work included stabilisation of this tree to preserve the holt and during the entire period the bitch and cubs continued to use the holt.



In combination with the fish passes completed at Kington, Hunton and Newmills this summer, we expect this water body to achieve good status in 2015 once fish monitoring is included.

Site 2 – GB109055042030 R Lugg - conf Norton Bk to conf R Arrow
Currents status: Good (in the absence of fish data)
Work: 1.6km double bank habitat restoration and silt reduction

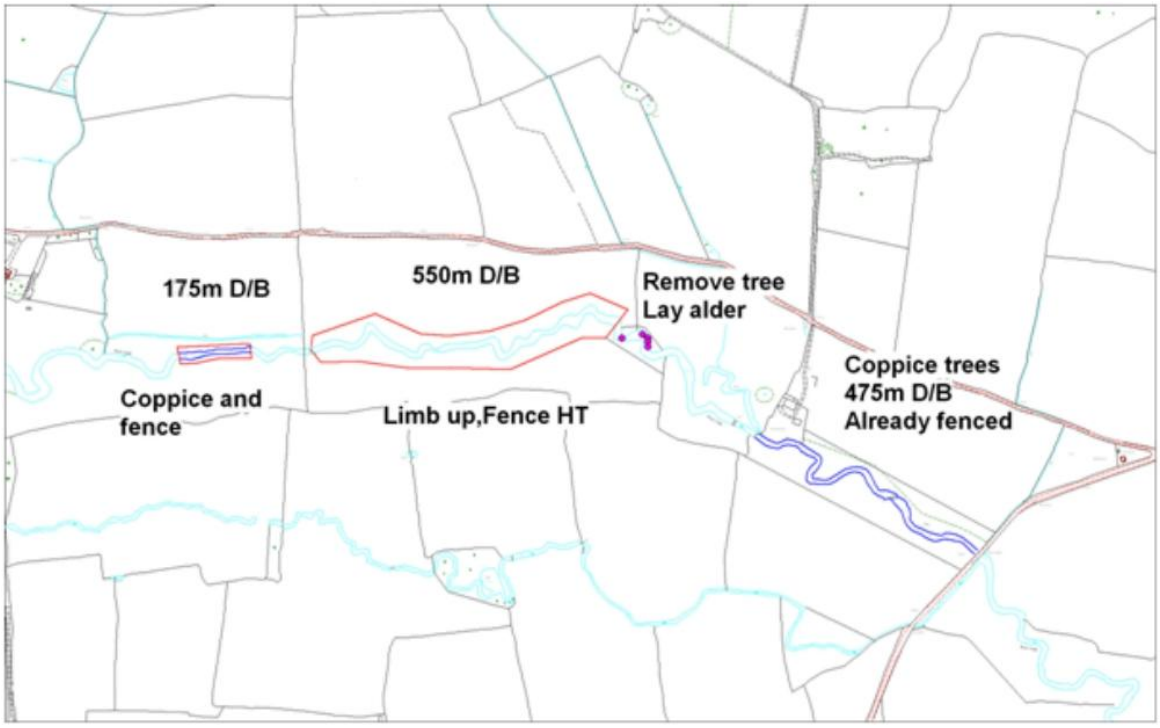
Representative before photographs:


Representative after photographs


Description
This section, above and below the junction with the Hindwell flows through glacial tills and is susceptible to rapid lateral movements and excessive bank sediment generation which occurs when stock access to the riparian strip is un-regulated. Consented and originally targeted for work in 2007 three impacted sections were punctuated by two good quality sections that required no action.

1450m of fencing with designated drinking, 4 soft revetment and 1300m of tree management was used to stabilise the riparian corridor, reduce bank side sediment generation and improve fish habitat.

Salmon have recently reached this section for the first time in 25 years following fish pass work downstream by EAW and WUF.



Site 3- Stretford Bk - Source to conf Tippets Bk WB109055036580

Cause of failure: Phosphate Poor (Very Certain)
Work completed: 0.8km db stock exclusion and silt reduction
Representative before

Description

Whilst the lower Stretford is heavily impacted by sediment from arable farming practices the upper reaches where livestock farming dominates are primarily impacted by unregulated stock access, Phosphate from a STW and livestock farming are the causes of failure. After protracted negotiations with the Lugg IDB about the merits of stock exclusion, four landowners were contacted but only one agreed to have stock excluded. Fencing materials were supplied.

It is the opinion of the foundation that there is a strong case for targeted enforcement of cross compliance in this waterbody.

Site 4 – Lower Lugg – Conf. Arrow to conf. with Wye WB36790

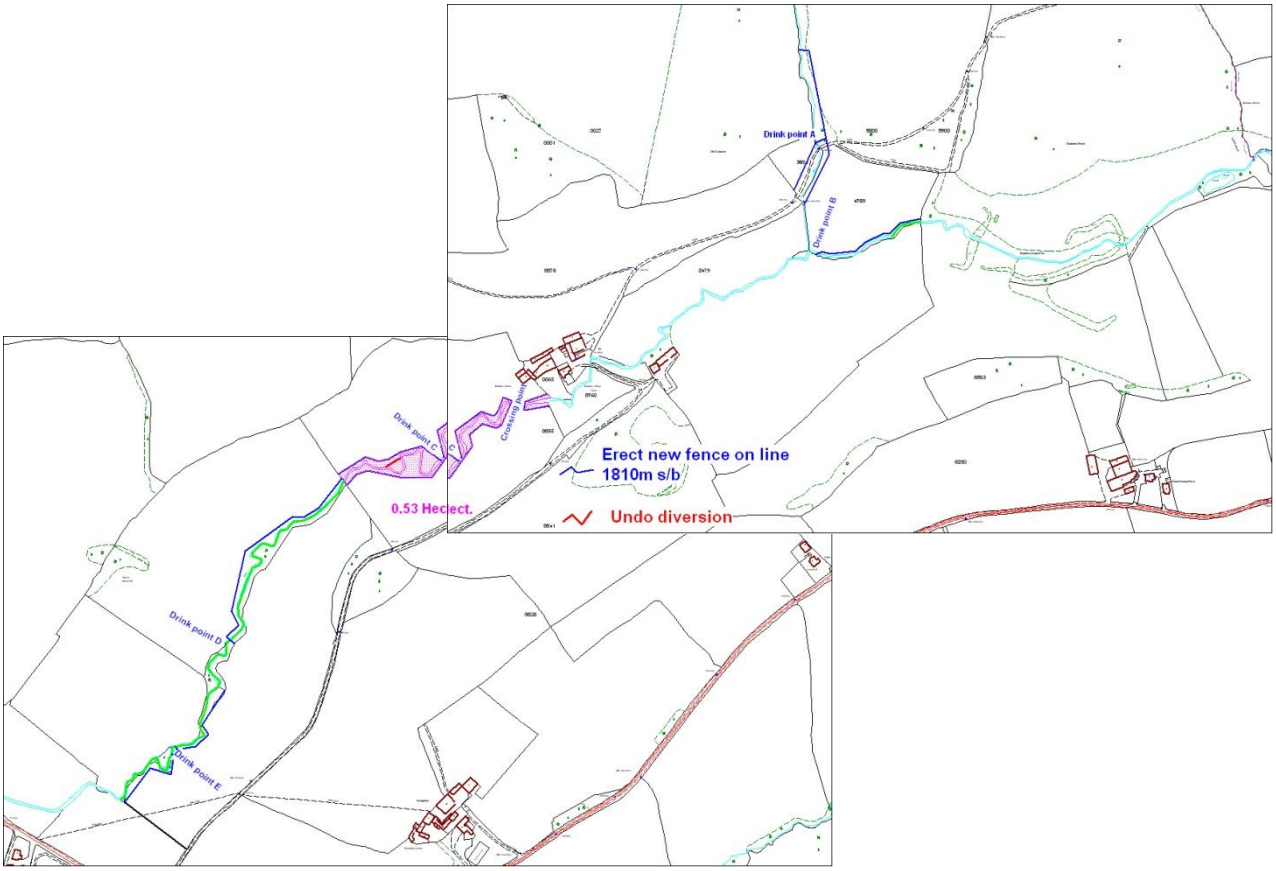
Current status: Poor (uncertain)

Work completed: 2.2km double stock exclusion and massive silt reduction

Representative photographs:

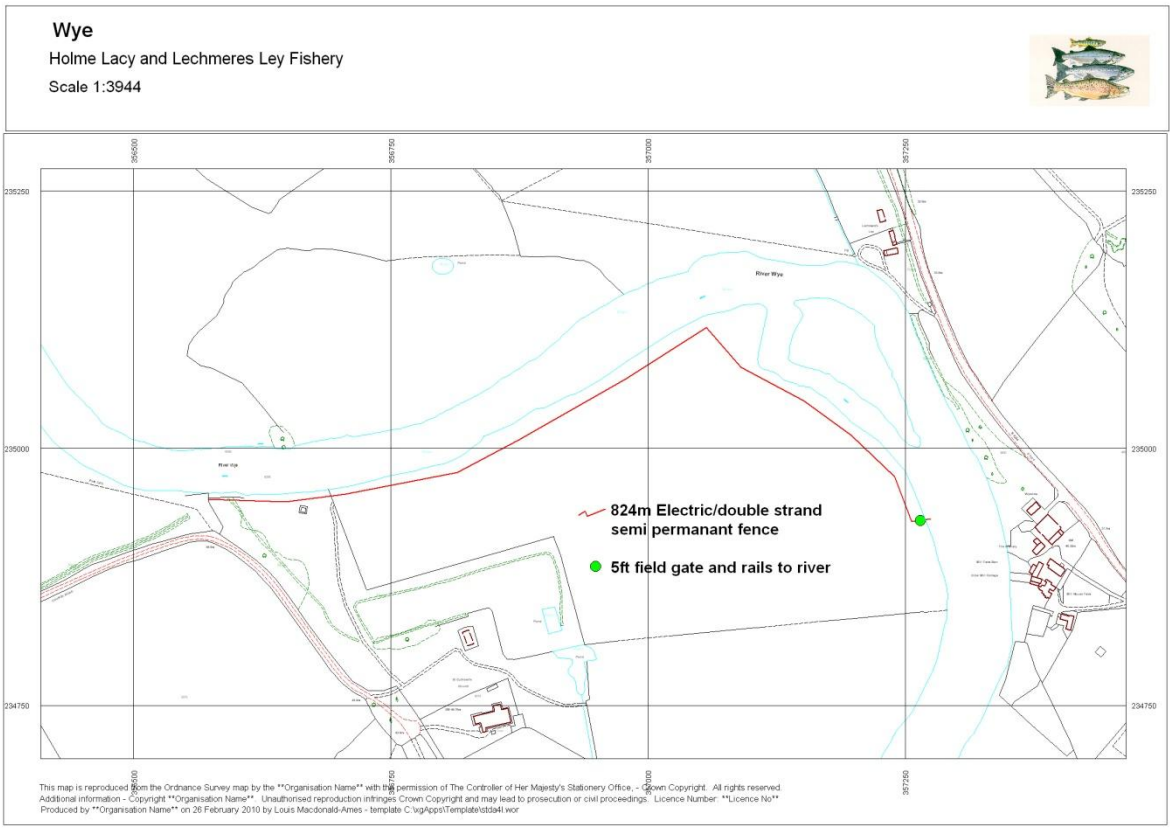
This WB is currently failing due to fish. Healthy salmonid spawning streams and reducing sediment delivery are crucial to the efforts to improve its status and we were shocked to come across this farm on potentially one of the best nursery streams in the water body.

The tree work on the lower section and the installation of the water gates was completed by WUF staff whilst the restoration of the river channel, installation of hardcore drinking place and the fencing was completed by the farmer with grant assistance, at the request of Natural England.



Site 5 Wye – Conf. Arrow to conf. with Wye WB36790

Current status: Good (in the absence of inclusion of fish monitoring)
Work completed: 0.824km single bank stock exclusion and silt reduction



In 2008 the landowner on the south bank of the Wye converted his riparian fields to pasture and started grazing cattle on them, using the river for stock control. The previously stable and well vegetated riparian strip rapidly degraded and its position on the outside of a bend created a risk of destabilising erosion occurring. Due to the high flood risk permanent post electric fencing was erected and a rapid recovery of the riparian corridor has occurred.

This waterbody is currently good status in the absence of the fish data being included in the assessment. Since 2000 EA elecrofishing shows an apparent extinction of salmon in this section of the river and this work protects the structure of one of the most important salmon spawning sites in this waterbody.

The Monnow WFD Project

The Foundation has been carrying out the work in this catchment in partnership with the Monnow Fisheries Association and EA. A sum of £7086 of the grant was spent in this catchment and the works will be accounted for in that project report

Summary budget of all works

	Cost £
Site 1 – WB 036620 Upper Arrow	£7,296
Site 2 - WB 042030 Upper Lugg	£11,828
Site 3 – WB 036580 Upper Stretford – riparian work	£1,242
Site 4 –WB 036790 Lugg Conf Arrow to conf with Wye	£9,754
Site 5 – WB 037112 Wye Hampton Bishop to Kerne Bridge	£3,710
Monnow WFD Project	£7,086
Management, training and farm advice	£4,584
Farmers Contribution to work at sites 3 and 4	£6,790
Total	**£51,790**

Grant from EA(W) £45.5K

All work took place within Herefordshire. SAGE reports and supporting invoices are available upon request.

Wye and Usk Foundation October 2010