



lancashireenvironment forum

essence

essence news from lancashire environment forum
protecting and enhancing the environment of Lancashire

www.environmentforum.lancspartners.org

Spring 2009

Our Moors, Our Planet!

As part of Lancashire County Council's package of measures to address climate change, an initiative called "Our Moors, Our Planet!" has been established to capture carbon and prevent flooding.

Peatlands are the single largest organic store of carbon in the UK, larger than all the forests of Britain and France combined. However, when these areas dry out, carbon is released into the atmosphere. The vegetation of a healthy, wet peat or blanket bog can help to prevent the loss of carbon and in some cases can even "lock up" carbon from the atmosphere.

In addition to carbon capture, this restoration work can also help to:

- Reduce flood risks, by acting as a giant sponge in times of high rainfall
- Reduce the incidence of moorland wildfires
- Improve water quality
- Promote greater biodiversity.

Lancashire has a significant proportion of the nation's peatland, with large areas of blanket bog found on top of the County's moorlands and remnants of raised bogs found in lowland areas.

"Our Moors, Our Planet!" is funding four projects over the next 18 months to help restore

important areas of blanket bog across Lancashire:

- Heysham Moss (near Morecambe)
- Holcombe Moor (West Pennine Moors)
- Langden Head (Forest of Bowland)
- Worsthorne Moor (South Pennines)

County Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, Chair of the Cabinet Committee on Climate Change said: *"Lancashire County Council is proud to be working with a number of Lancashire partners to develop restoration projects under Our Moors, Our Planet! I believe the way we manage our peatland areas has a massive bearing on our ability to tackle climate change in the future; helping to capture carbon and prevent flooding in our valleys and lowland areas"*.

For more information on "Our Moors, Our Planet", contact the Project Manager on 01772 533979 or elliott.lorimer@lancashire.gov.uk



Welcome ...to the Spring 2009 edition of "essence" the newsletter for the Lancashire Environment Forum.

It is fantastic to see such a large number and wide range of articles spanning the depth and breadth of our partnership working.

Good news – The Climate Change Strategy has now been approved by the Lancashire Leaders.

The full report can be seen at <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk> A- Z Climate Change.

Anne Selby, Chair of the Lancashire Environment Forum

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National Updates

EU Parliament backs 80% emissions cut and 60% renewables goal

Discussions regarding Europe's future energy policy this week has seen MEPs backing proposals for new EU targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80% before 2050.

And, the meetings of the full EU Parliament in Strasbourg saw support for a 60% renewable energy target.

As Europe continues to re-shape its energy policy following the EU Commission's Second Strategic Energy Review, the MEPs called for climate change to be the priority for EU spending, rather than energy security, which is the Commission's current priority.

The discussions held this week formed part of the early stages of forming the next wave of EU energy policy, which is expected to result in a number of new Directives or regulations.

For more information and to read this article in full [click here](#)

Text courtesy of New Energy Focus
<http://www.newenergyfocus.com>

Regional News

What can my household or community do? What effect do my travel choices have?

Individuals are responsible for about half of the carbon emissions in the Northwest. We all have a stake in combating climate change and we each have to start taking responsibility to adapt the way we live and travel.

Are you a Low-Carbon Citizen?

Each of us can contribute to tackling climate change and become a 'low carbon citizen' - Simple choices about our houses and transport decisions make a



difference. Maybe you're thinking of taking action for the first time? Or perhaps you've already taken some simple steps at home? Whatever stage you're at, the [Energy Saving Trust's website](#) contains many simple and free things you can do right now to take action on climate change.

Biomass boost for Northwest businesses

EnviroLink Northwest is leading a £750,000 project funded by the NWDA to increase the uptake of biomass energy systems by the region's industries. The programme will work with energy intensive industries in the region that are subject to the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, one of the policies introduced by the EU to help meet its greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.

www.nwda.co.uk

Good News on Greenhouse Gas Emissions but CO2 "Challenging"

New figures released on 3rd Feb 2009 show that overall UK greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by 18.4% since 1990, or 21.7% if the impact of carbon credit trading is taken into account. This compares very favourably to the Kyoto target of a 12.5% cut between 1990 and 2008-2012.

The DECC data shows that total emissions for the six key greenhouse gases in 2007 were 636.6m tonnes, down 1.7% from 647.9m in 2006. This included a reduction in carbon dioxide - which makes up 85% of the UK's greenhouse emissions - to 542.6m tonnes, down 1.5%. Emissions from transport and industrial processes rose, and those from energy supply, homes and business fell.

However, although emissions of carbon dioxide also fell, its total decline since the baseline year of 1990 was 8.5%, off-track for a reduction of 26% by 2020 as required by the Climate Change Act. The decline by 2007 increases to 12.8% if it includes carbon credits bought from emission reduction programmes overseas.

DECC are quoted in the Guardian 04/02/09 as saying "We are making definite progress towards the challenging 2010 domestic CO2 goal. However, we cannot be complacent and must continue to do more. As part of the Climate Change Act, we will be setting carbon budgets and putting into place a clear strategy to bring about real

change, plotting a course to an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050."

To read the full statistical release visit this link:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globalatmos/index.htm>

LANCASHIRE NEWS

LCC to go plastic bag free

Lancashire County Council are committed to setting a good example for people across the county by becoming a plastic carrier bag free council by April 2009. This follows a campaign in the Autumn to encourage everyone in the County to use "a proper bag" instead of plastic carrier bags when shopping. Research carried out as part of this campaign showed that the majority of people re-used any plastic carrier bags they did get, for anything from lining the bin to putting muddy shoes in, but they also said they were using less plastic bags than a year ago.

More companies are taking the issue of plastic bags to heart and offering alternatives so the issue is seen by many as symbolising the environmental awakening of people asking themselves just what they can do to make a difference.



Coming soon to a library near you...

Energy Monitors will soon be available for loan – see how much energy you're using in your home!

This project will help people to see just how much energy they use in the home, helping them make informed decisions on how they could save energy and money, through identified actions.



ENVIRONMENTAL BEST PRACTICE

The rivers Brennand and Whitendale flow through Lancashire's Forest of Bowland, an area of outstanding natural beauty. Their combined waters form the River Dunsop that flows into the River Hodder near the Village of Dunsop Bridge.

The Hodder is an important river for spawning fish that includes Salmon and Sea Trout. It is also an important supply of high quality drinking water for Blackburn and the Fylde District.

Our Victorian forefathers constructed some very impressive feats of civil engineering to supply water from the Hodder Valley to the Lancashire Mill Towns and beyond and much of this work remains today. It is an extremely simple and yet effective solution for the collection of water from the many feeder streams that feed the main rivers. The problem is that they are too effective, the consequences of which is that for long periods of the time during the year, especially during dry periods, there is no flow down stream of the intake points. No flow = no river.

There are no controls on the current intake system, the water simply flows into an open pipe and then flows by gravity to the various supply reservoirs down stream. The contrast between full spate and completely dry cannot be more dramatic than that of the Rivers Brennand and Whitendale. Flood and famine springs to mind.

The impact of this is considerable with high mortality in spawning fish and their new offspring. It is a terrible waste and is having a dramatic impact on fish populations. Clearly it is not just about fish, it is actually about flora and fauna as a whole that depend on the supply of fresh water as a critical component of their natural habitat. The impact on fish is however very visible and is a clear indicator of a stressed river system.

The Brennand and Whitendale (B&W) Focus Group was established around 10 years ago with the clear goal to challenge, support and advise on the necessary processes that could ultimately lead to a permanent solution to the problem.

The B&W Low Flow Alleviation Scheme was identified as an environmentally critical project by the Environment Agency with the agreement and considerable support of the licence holder, United Utilities (UU), and the B&W Focus Group.

During this time a considerable amount of expensive research and consultation work has been undertaken by United Utilities, working in partnership with the Environment Agency and the B&W Focus Group. This pioneering work in which the Abstractor, Regulator and Stakeholders have worked closely together in true partnership to find the best solution for the environment is quite unique, given that it is very unusual for it to continue for as long as it has and more importantly for everyone to

have agreed on the solution, the Headwaters Scheme.

As always it comes down to money and how this scheme was to be paid for and after all of this huge effort the project looked like failing because of the lack of funding or the process necessary to generate such funds.



Lord Smith and Nigel Evans with Members of the B&W Focus Group overlooking the River Hodder at the Inn at Whitewell

The B & W Focus Group never gave up hope and on Friday the 16th of January 2009 at a meeting held in the Inn at Whitewell attended by the EA Chairman, Lord Smith of Finsbury, local MP Nigel Evans, and Members of the Focus Group, a historic decision was reached and all parties are now committed to working towards a successful funding outcome with the aim to be able to confirm this by the end of February 2009.

Summing up as Chair of the meeting, John Wells said ***'The decision reached today is one of a unique environmental partnership the outcome of which will have a significant and positive impact on this beautiful area and our legacy will be there for generations to come. If the Government ever wants to see an example***

of best practice with regard to the Water Framework Directive then they need look no further than what has been achieved here. To Lord Smith and to Nigel Evans thank you both, we couldn't have done it without you, to the Directors of United Utilities thank you for your decision to go ahead and your clear commitment to the environment and to the Focus Group for never giving up on what you truly believe in'.



A new and exciting walking/exercise project has recently been launched for the Burnley/Padiham/Hapton areas. The project is called 'Active Spaces – Burnley', and is based at St Peters Centre, Burnley.

The project will be working in partnership with Lancashire Wildlife Trust; funding streams come from The Big Lottery Fund, Target: Wellbeing, and the PCT, NHS. Groundwork Pennine Lancashire are the delivery organisation.

The project will cover the Burnley, Padiham and Hapton areas. It will offer a series of active options including walks (sessions of varying lengths), gentle exercise and sporting activities to appeal to a **wide range of ages** and individuals. Through promoting the fun and accessibility of these activities the project aims to reach those people who would not necessarily take part in regular exercise. The project also aims to increase the confidence of these participants so that they then feel motivated to continue exercising independently.

Through focusing these activities on local parks, open spaces and Local Nature Reserves, the project aims to deliver direct health benefits through physical activity at easily accessible locations. The project also aims to bring about improvements to wider mental well-being through social interaction and contact with the natural environment.

Active Spaces will involve both local residents in general and also targeted groups and individuals. Our targeted audience will include local community groups, health centre users, people involved in Exercise on Prescription, older people, families and people with mental health needs. It is anticipated that people aged 65 and older will form the majority of the client group.

Those involved in the project will benefit through the opportunity to improve their overall physical health through regular activity such as walking, cycling and exercise. They will also benefit through having the chance to socialise with other people both from their local community and from other areas of the borough. Taking part in sessions outdoors and having contact with the natural environment will help contribute to participants' overall mental well-being.

Volunteers are currently being sought so; if anyone has the time/skills and are willing to lead/instruct people in the following topics (or any good ideas contemplated):

Walking, Novice Golf, Tai Chi/Yoga. Novice Aerobics, Cycling/ Novice Mountain Biking, Dancing (Strictly Come Dancing style), Morris Dancing, Country Dancing

Please contact:
jane.ingham@groundworks.org.uk
Tel: 01282 452381

Office base: St Peters Centre, Church Street, BURNLEY, Lancashire. BB11 2DL.

Ribble Otter Survey 2008

Otters are top predators and their populations give an indication of the health of rivers.

Despite heavy rains and high waters, volunteers from the Environment Agency managed to finally spend a drier day in September to look for otter footprints and spraints (droppings).

Their survey took place across the Rivers Ribble, Hodder and Calder catchments.

Over 25 per cent of the sites they surveyed showed positive signs of otters, which is a higher percentage than in the Environment Agency's previous 2004 survey.

For the first time, otter signs were found on the River Calder and at the Calder/ Pendle Water confluence near Barrowford. This confirmed reports from local fishermen. The otter survey results are in line with the general trend in the otter population over recent years.

The results show otter populations recovering after their decline in the 1950s.





Walking Festival

The Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park have recently had a Walking Festival which comprised of 12 events this took place though out the February Half-term to help people to enjoy the Ribble Coast and Wetlands and learn a little of the wildlife there.

The Ribble Coast and Wetlands area is one of Europe's most special places for wildlife. The area supports internationally significant populations of birds with an average of 340,000 avian visitors per year making it one of the most important wetland places in Britain for migratory and breeding birds. The area's environmental significance together with its location between Merseyside and the Lake District resulted in its being recognised as a potential regional park for the north west.

Some of this series of guided walks along wetlands, sand dunes, riversides, parks, piers and coast were purely for site-seeing and fresh air, while others helped people discover wildlife including mini-beasts, squirrels and the thousands of birds which make the Ribble Coast and Wetlands one of Europe's most special places for wildlife.

<http://www.merseybasin.org.uk/event.asp?id=35320&localpage=2>



Spot the Soprano

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside is looking for companies, organisations and individuals who would like to join in celebrating the tenth anniversary of the discovery of the Soprano pipistrelle bat.

The Soprano pipistrelle is very similar in appearance to the Common pipistrelle and until 1999 it was thought they were one species. Even now, scientists and conservationists don't know all its locations due to the specialised techniques necessary to distinguish its echolocation call from that of its common cousin.

Lancashire Wildlife Trust, with funding from The Sita Trust, is celebrating 10 years of Sopranos by finding out just how widespread this little creature is in the region.

Over 40 new volunteers will be trained to survey 21 sites right across Lancashire and Greater Manchester. The results will be used to decide how best to manage and improve these sites for the bats and volunteers will then carry out the habitat improvements. It is expected that over 100 people will enjoy the various activities necessary to complete the task.

Sue Dunning, the Wildlife Trust's Project Officer, said; *"Each bat detector costs almost £450 and can be used to survey up to three sites. We are hoping that companies or individuals will help us by sponsoring the purchase of a detector to be used at sites near them. We hope to survey around lodges in Bolton, on mosslands near Manchester, in quarries near Clitheroe, on reserves at Heysham and elsewhere if possible. They will be used by volunteers who will survey each site once a month, to give a clear picture of how bats use the sites through the year."*

The results will be shared with Lancashire County Council, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, The Bat Conservation Trust, universities, local bat groups and sponsors. If you would like to sponsor a detection kit, or would like to know more about becoming a bat surveyor, please contact Sue Lonsdale on 01204 663754 or e-mail sdunning@lanctwt.org.uk

Regeneration in Morecambe The Midland Hotel

The iconic hotel on Morecambe's promenade was re-opened in June of this year, following its closure over a decade ago and subsequent decline into dereliction.

Urban Splash have certainly made a huge 'splash' in other parts of the UK, including Liverpool, with their sympathetic (not to mention very stylish) redevelopment of derelict spaces and The Midland has been no exception. As a national employer with a public welfare conscience, Urban Splash were keen to sign up to a *Local Employer Partnership* with Job Centre Plus and went on to help us develop an excellent case study of public and private sector partnership working.

Job Centre Plus, Winning Back Morecambe's West End and the Lancashire Partnership all worked together to deliver a programme of pre-employment employability training courses for local people claiming out-of-work benefits, leading to application support sessions, scheduled interviews for priority (JCP) customers and culminating in three of those priority customers securing permanent employment in the new hotel.



Photograph courtesy of Urban Splash.

Mersey Basin

The Northwest's most successful environmental partnership, the Mersey Basin Campaign, reaches the end of its 25-year lifespan next year.

Set up in 1985, the Campaign pioneered the kind of partnership working that has seen the Mersey transformed from Europe's most polluted river into a thriving ecosystem.

The Campaign's chief executive, Walter Menzies, said: *"What has been achieved by our partners is truly exceptional and an example for the world. We're incredibly proud to have been part of it and to have worked with such dedicated people over more than two decades."*

Ten years ago the Mersey Basin Campaign won the inaugural World Riverprize for the best river clean up anywhere in the world. But back in the 1970s children who fell into the water were often rushed to hospital to have their stomachs pumped because, as people in Liverpool joked, if you fell in the Mersey you wouldn't drown - you'd die of poisoning first. Today, mums take their toddlers to paddle in the river and there is a popular Christmas swim across it. Last year Griff Rhys-Jones attempted the swim for his upcoming series on Britain's great rivers (but was foiled by a passing tanker).



Five million people live within the Mersey's catchment, which covers Cheshire, Manchester and Merseyside, and many of them are discovering that their local river offers a welcome respite from urban life.

Swimmers, canoeists, sailors, anglers and walkers are all returning to the water. Many of them are attracted by the wildlife in and along the river. Although virtually lifeless in parts by the 1970s, today seals, salmon and even sharks can all be found in the river. In fact, before the industrial revolution the Mersey was one of England's great salmon rivers and menus in posh London restaurants boasted of offering Mersey salmon. Within the last few years salmon have begun to breed in the river's headwaters again for the first time in living memory.

It was the proliferation of unregulated and polluting industry spurred by the industrial revolution that helped turn the Mersey into Europe's most polluted river, along with the torrent of human waste poured untreated into the river from the growing number of factory workers. Many of those polluting industries are now gone and the effluent from their manufacturing processes no longer poisons the rivers. Those that remain are governed by strict regulations and, under the watchful eye of the Environment Agency, take their environmental responsibilities far more seriously.

Meanwhile, billions of pounds have been invested by water company United Utilities to treat the area's wastewater. In the five years to 2010 around a billion pounds will have been spent on environmental improvement schemes. But Menzies warns: *"The fact that the Campaign is reaching the end of its lifespan doesn't mean the job is done, far from*

it. New, tougher regulations are on their way from Europe and there's still a lot of work to be done. Our message is that we must build on the success of the last 25 years."

The Campaign is organising a major environmental conference, Environment 09, in Liverpool on September 22nd, which will celebrate the region's environmental success and examine challenges for the future.

To book a place, contact Fouzia Bhatti on 0161 242 8200 or f.bhatti@merseybasin.org.uk

'Green new deal' to create jobs

Thousands of new jobs could be created through investment in the low-carbon economy, according to a new report by the LGA.



Adapting to Climate Change: Guidance notes for NI188

These guidance notes are designed to help manage the process of delivering against Performance Indicator NI 188 as part of the Local Area Agreement process. The guidance is primarily aimed at authorities and their partners. This guidance is also applicable to those Local Areas who have not explicitly signed up to NI 188 as a local area target.

WORKING TOGETHER TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate Change will affect all people, but poor communities in the developing world are hit hardest. They are least responsible for the problem and most vulnerable to climate impacts, such as severe floods, droughts and storms.

Lancashire has had links with Gulu in Northern Uganda for more than 15 years. A new project gives you the chance to contribute to projects in Gulu which help them adapt to the threat of climate change, and help compensate for your carbon emissions. A partnership between Lancashire County Council, Gulu Municipal Council, and the Gulu Link charities in both Lancashire and Gulu support this work. All projects have been developed and will be delivered by local people.

Examples of projects include

1. Wetland Conservation

The project seeks to promote regeneration and conservation of wetlands while providing another source of income for rural communities. As wetlands can control the flow of water, it will also help reduce floods and store water.



2. Timber Plantation

The goal of this project is to establish a minimum

of 100 hectares of timber plantations per year through smallholder forestry plantations. When fully established these will reduce wind speed which will reduce wind erosion in fields and protect house roofs from being blown away.

3. Biodiesel Demonstration

In Gulu district, Jatropha grows in the wild. It is generally regarded as a weed by farmers and is often uprooted and burnt leading to deforestation. Oil from the seeds can be processed into biodiesel. In addition to increasing household income, this project will help communities to adapt to climate change by maintaining vegetation cover to control and prevent soil erosion and landslides associated with extremely heavy rains. Only 6% households have access to electricity and the biodiesel will be used to power small generators and agricultural processing machinery.

For more information about the project, or to make a donation, please visit

www.lancashire.gov.uk/climatechange

or contact the Environment Policy Team on 01772 533906.



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Essence is distributed electronically to conserve resources.