

Bradford Beck Bulletin 3.5.12

BRADFORD BECK PROJECT

Monthly Bulletin - May 2012

1. The Moral Imperative of Water

On the 25th of April the Bradford Beck programme director Professor DN Lerner and myself attended a DEFRA conference in London. The conference was about the pilot projects in the UK undertaking participative catchment management plans (of which Bradford Beck is one) and looking at how these will influence Government policy towards catchment management in the future with an eye on the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The WFD is the European legal tool that requires all signatories to improve the quality of their respective water bodies over the next 15 years.

One of the most anticipated addresses of the day was that of Richard Benyon, the Minister for the Natural Environment and Fisheries. The minister's speech was listened to carefully by all present and many of the audience made particular note of the following comments about the value of water in different ways:

“Currently only a quarter of our water bodies are functioning ecosystems that are capable of supporting wildlife and provide good quality water to human beings. Under EU law we have a legal imperative to make a substantial improvement to this figure by 2027 but much more importantly we want to do this because we want to do this. We recognise that we have a clear moral imperative and an economic one. We know from the National Ecosystems Assessment, done here and overseas, how vital a sustainable and well managed environment is for our economic wellbeing, as well as much more.

We can't do without water, its vital to our economy, its an essential part of our lives and we've been taking it for granted for much too long. We must now start valuing it in every sense, as the precious resource that it is, and together we must ensure that the value is understood and make everyone in this country aware of its vital importance of the health of their local river.”

2. The Water Framework Directive

The overarching legal tool for how the UK should be managing its water resources is currently up for consultation now. Is the WFD fit for purpose? If you would like to make your case consultees remarks are invited until it closes on the 7th of June.

To respond to the consultation, you need to:

- 1) Read the background consultation document - <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/pdf/blueprint.pdf>

2) Complete an online questionnaire - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/blueprint_en.htm

3. A Short History of the Bradford Beck

This weblink highlights a short history of the Bradford Beck and its relationship to the Bradford Canal in the 19th Century. A fascinating insight into the world of Victorian infrastructure creation.

<http://www.penninewaterways.co.uk/bradford/bf2.htm>

4. Volunteers required for Beck clean-ups and data gathering - June 2012

We are seeking volunteers to become involved in the clean-up of the Beck i.e. litter picks, and the collecting of data, i.e. water quality and aquatic life. Training will be provided in June and work will commence the same month. If you are interested in this or know of individuals or groups who would be interested please feel free to pass this on and ask the interested parties to contact me directly.

5. The Anatomy of a River

While this is an American resource and there are probably many British ones, it is quick to read and its information is spot on (aside from having an Americanism for estuary!).

<http://www.americanrivers.org/about-rivers/river-anatomy.html>

6. The ecological implications of drought

This recent Guardian article could be seen as slightly alarmist but it does raise many pertinent points about the effects of drought. Bear in mind though that the last Australian drought lasted a decade! However if anything, it absolutely reinforced the preciousness of water in that country. Something which is much needed in the UK.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/apr/16/drought-wildlife-farming-disaster-warning?intcmp=122&utm_source=RESTORE+April+18%2C+2012&utm_campaign=RESTORE+April+18%2C+2012&utm_medium=email
