We are half way through the FLOW project and making great progress surveying and improving habitat across the parishes. With Earnley just completed, Sidlesham is next!

FLOW – Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands

This Heritage Lottery Funded Project is focussed on assessing the many ditches and waterways on the Manhood Peninsula to see how this network of wetland habitat is linked, identify areas of improvement for drainage and habitat improvement, and to highlight the benefits of well-managed ditches for people and wildlife.

Welcome to our February 2018 e-bulletin

This is our first edition of the FLOW e-bulletin in 2018 and it will up-date you on progress of the project. We also have some interesting events and training opportunities coming up so read on for more information! If you don’t already, you can keep in the loop by checking the blog on mwhg.org.uk and by following us on Facebook and Twitter (mwhg.page), where we regularly announce events and post pictures of our work parties in action.

THANKS

A big THANK YOU to Robert Carey who liaised with landowners and farmers to help us to get access for our winter surveys and conservation work. Thanks also to the landowners themselves, for permission to walk their ditches and allow volunteers to carry out valuable habitat improvements. As a result, we managed to get really good coverage of Earnley Parish.

What have the FLOW team been up to?

It’s been a busy few months as FLOW staff and volunteers have tackled ditch surveys and conservation tasks across Earnley Parish. Due to this fantastic effort, the Earnley phase of the project is now complete and Jane is preparing to present the results on 15th Feb. Communications Officer, Rebecca, has produced a new volunteer leaflet and a volunteer welcome pack will also be ready soon.
Welcome to our new FLOW volunteers Sian, Max and Alex. Max and Sian were also trained on GIS and both contributed maps to the Earnley report. We would also like to thank the students and staff members from Seaford College who helped out at two work sites this winter.

FLOW surveys completed to date:
276 West Wittering Parish ditch surveys plus
20 in East Wittering and
21 in West Itchenor and
170 in Earnley

All the farmers that we asked gave us permission to walk their fields and look at their ditches. This totalled 28 landowners. We also surveyed along the roadside, council owned land and some residential areas. Earnley Parish has a high number of nurseries and glasshouses and permission was also gained to survey these.

Statistics for Earnley Parish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Fieldwork days</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers that have helped out</td>
<td>This year we have had great help from Ian, Max and Alex.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of ditches surveyed</td>
<td>19 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approximate % ditch coverage of the parish</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>How many ditches surveyed by volunteers?</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>How many volunteer hours in total used?</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of hedgerows surveyed</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of hedgerows surveyed</td>
<td>18 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of landowner’s land surveyed</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Ash tree records to date</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Some examples of our practical work

Before Dec ‘17 Sparrow Cottage
After Jan ‘18
Before May ‘17 Hilton Business Park
After Jan ‘18

See FLOW Field Officer, Chris Drake’s report below for more detail on the work carried out at Sparrow Cottage and Hilton Business Park.
Field Officer Chris Drake reports on FLOW’s winter work progress

We worked on a number of key Sites worked during December to January including Tile Barn Lane (East Wittering), Regency House (East Wittering), Sparrow Cottage (Earnley), Stubcroft Farm (East Wittering), Hilton Business Park (East Wittering), West Itchenor and Cakeham Manor (West Wittering).

Thanks to a wet Christmas period, the rising ground water levels have made tree works challenging at Hilton Business Park. We were up to our waist in water cutting over-grown Willow, which made the work slow going. In the end though, the wet weather turned a challenge into an achievement. We cleared 60% of the over grown Willow in the pond.

At Sparrow Cottage, the diggers removed a fair amount of soil from the silted-up ditches but the wet weather has restricted our ability to move the soil around the site. One ditch and pond has been completely dug out and we have also planted a hedge row and pollard/ laid 50% willow. At Regency House, 40% of the vegetation growing in the ditch has been removed.

Future works planned for Feb/March 2018: At Tile Barn Lane- Hedge we’ll lay en existing hedge and plant 120m of new hedging. At Sparrow Cottage we plan to finish 60m of Willow pollarding and plant and lay 80m of hedge. We’ll also plant trees and aquatic plants around pond area and arrange a digger and dumper to move soil when dry. At Cakeham Manor, we’ll plant trees and hedge lay selected areas, along with planting woodland/aquatic wild flower plugs in and around the stream. At West Itchenor, the alder trees will be Geo tagged for the management plan, and at Regency House, the plan is to remove the remaining vegetation from the ditch and plant wild flower plugs/trees in selected areas.

Along with practical work and surveys in Earnley, we’ve made a start in Sidlesham Parish and surveyed 115 ditches and 30 hedgerows during December and January.

The Earnley Report

Jane and Chris have both been working hard to complete the Earnley Parish FLOW report. The report collates all the data from the ditch and hedgerow assessments to provides an overview of the Earnley wetland environment and where and how it can be improved. In particular, the assessment looks at where the litter is, what the riparian vegetation is like and the depth of the silt. The report identifies five opportunities to improve drainage and three opportunities to make environmental improvements. The report is just being finalised and will be available on the website next week.

Training Opportunities

On 17th March a trainer from the BTCV will deliver a day’s course on Team Leadership. The course will be held at St Mary’s Church Hall, Church Farm Lane, Sidlesham PO20 7RE from 10am to 4.30pm. There is plenty of parking at this venue and refreshments are provided, but please bring along a packed lunch. There may be a small practical element to this training so bring appropriate clothing for tool work and going outdoors. The hall is not always very warm so please layer up!

On Saturday 24th March 2018, Jane will be delivering a morning of water vole ecology and surveying training from 9.30am – 12.30pm at St Mary’s Church Hall, Church Farm Lane, Sidlesham PO20 7RE. Part of the session will be presentation based with refreshments available and then we will use the adjacent ponds and ditches to carry out a water vole survey. Please bring along wellies, waders, sticks and waterproofs. We will also touch on mink monitoring.

On Saturday 14th April 2018, Jane and Chris will be delivering a training session on hedges, surveying, and dormice ecology from 9.30am – 12.30pm at St Mary’s Church Hall, Church Farm Lane, Sidlesham PO20 7RE. Part of the session will be presentation based with refreshments available and then we will use the nearby hedges to carry out a survey and to identify tree species. Please bring along waterproofs, stout footwear and any tree ID sheets/books. We will also provide teaching material to support this.

We’d love to get as many people involved in this training as possible. Please let Jane know if you wish to attend any of these events so that we can get an idea of numbers. Email: jane@jssj.co.uk
Events. What’s coming up?

**Earnley Parish Drop-in Results Session**
Find out what we have discovered through our ditch and hedgerow surveys in Earnley Parish and see what opportunities we have identified for improving drainage and increasing wildlife.
Thursday, 15th February 2018 10:00am - 12:00 midday Bracklesham Barn

**Next up, Sidlesham Parish….we need more help!**
Sidlesham is the biggest parish on the Manhood Peninsula and is next on the FLOW agenda. There are many kilometres of ditch and hedgerow to survey and practical tasks to complete, so we need lots of help. We have an event to highlight our plans in Sidlesham in the pipeline for early April, so keep an eye on our website calendar and social media for more information on that. In the meantime, if you think you can help the FLOW team tackle Sidlesham we’d love to hear from you. Please email Jane jane@jssj.co.uk or Rebecca hello@mwhg.org.uk

Getting involved: Current opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fieldwork</th>
<th>Data input</th>
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<tr>
<td>We have lots of opportunities for volunteers to help with fieldwork - including hundreds of ditch assessments to do and would like to extend this work to pond dipping and botanical surveys. We also have fields and lanes full of hedgerows to note. Full training given.</td>
<td>We have not used any volunteers for this yet as have been ensuring that the spreadsheet is easy to update and can be used for GIS and mapping. For the next phase of the project we would be pleased to have help with this area, training will be given, and eventually we may be able to offer a place for volunteers to enter data.</td>
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<td><strong>Events and promotion</strong> – With the spring and summer on the (distant!!) horizon, we are planning our events schedule. We’ll need volunteers to help out on our events stands and with other promotional work, so if you’re as proud of the work MWHG does as we are, then please contact Rebecca to discuss how you could help out.</td>
<td><strong>Mink monitoring co-ordinator</strong> - Jane is looking for a volunteer to help collate mink data and input into spreadsheet. This valuable role will take no more than an hour per week so please don’t hesitate to contact Jane for a chat if you want to find out more.</td>
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Please do contact Jane or Rebecca if you would like to get involved in our work jane@jssj.co.uk or hello@mwhg.org.uk

A welcome reminder of summer days. The re-seeded wildflower meadow created by volunteers and staff at Earnley Grange.

For more information about FLOW please go to: [http://mwhg.org.uk](http://mwhg.org.uk) or find us on Facebook and Twitter

Please let us know what you think of our e-bulletin by emailing jane@jssj.co.uk