

## **Running Water Habitat Action Plan**

### **1. Habitat Description**

- 1.1 This plan concerns all running water habitats (i.e. watercourses such as rivers and streams) on Biffa Waste Services sites apart from canals and ditches. In their natural state running waters continually modify their form and features such as gravel bars, islands, pools and riffles indicate the naturalness of the watercourse and contribute greatly to its biodiversity.
- 1.2 Running waters provide a wildlife corridor link for many species allowing dispersal and movement between other habitats and their natural flooding regime maintains wetlands (such as swamps and marshes), which are habitats of great ecological importance. In addition, marginal and bank side vegetation associated with running waters support an array of plants and animals.
- 1.3 Many natural running water systems are rare and in many cases their ability to rejuvenate and create new habitat has been significantly altered by human activity such as resectioning and flood defences. Erosion of banks has also been caused by human activity, particularly the removal of tree cover. These factors lead to a loss of biodiversity in and around our running waters.

### **2. Current Status**

- 2.1 The primary threats to running waters are:
  - Pollution such as chemical inputs, sewage inputs and urban debris reduce water quality.
  - Low flows caused by excessive abstraction land drainage and flood defence works which if not sensitively carried out, can reduce stream habitat and isolate streams from their floodplains
  - Habitat loss due to inappropriate bank and channel management, including overgrazing.
  - Industrial and housing scheme development within the floodplain.
  - Lack of application of existing knowledge.
- 2.2 The Environment Agency (EA), water companies and local authorities have a statutory duty to further running water conservation in most of their works. The EA has statutory responsibilities for pollution control. Certain works on watercourses are regulated through EA consents, such as drainage.
- 2.3 A Habitat Statement for rivers and streams has been produced by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group. The suggested conservation direction is to maintain and improve the quality, state and structure of rivers and streams and their associated floodplains and to restore degraded river and streams taking account of water quality and quantity, structure and hydraulic connection with the floodplain.

### 3. Example Sites

- 3.1 The running water habitat has been recorded at Birmingham collection depot, High Wycombe collection depot and Howden Clough landfill site near Leeds.

### 4. Objectives & Targets

No	Objective	Target
4.1	Produce appropriate data collection and information management procedures for the running water habitat.	Action to be in place by 2005.
4.2	Develop appropriate site management techniques to maintain and improve the biodiversity interest of the running water habitat.	Ongoing.
4.3	Develop appropriate monitoring and auditing tools to check and review the performance of the running water Habitat Action Plan.	Action to be in place by 2007.
4.4	Develop an appropriate strategy to increase awareness of the running water habitat and its associated action plan.	Ongoing.

## Action Plan

*There are generic actions for Data Collection & Information Management, Site Management, Monitoring & Audit and Biodiversity Awareness that apply to all Habitat Action Plans. These are located in a separate 'Generic Action Plans' section that should be read in conjunction with this document.*

*Please note that the partners identified in the Running Water Action Plan are not an exclusive list and new partners are both welcome and needed.*

Action	Potential Partners	Year						Meets Objective No.
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2013	
<b>5.1 Data Collection &amp; Information Management</b>								
5.1.1 Determine the extent of running water habitats on all Biffa landholdings through an ecological survey programme.	WT	•	•	•				4.1
5.1.2 Develop an information management system, which records and manages running water data alongside other priority habitats.	WT	•						4.1
5.1.3 Implement data management system, recording running water data & keep up-to-date as appropriate.	WT		•	•	•	•	•	4.1
5.1.4 Support research into running waters particularly in relation to threats highlighted in the UK BAP habitat statement.	WT, UNI, EN,	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.1
<b>5.2 Site Management</b>								
5.2.1 Based on the results of the ecological survey, protect important sites where running waters occur by ensuring ecologically acceptable water quality and flow rate.	LA, WT, EN	•	•	•	•			4.2
5.2.2 Where appropriate, prepare water level management plans for the benefit of wildlife, particularly with respect to key sites.	WT, EN, EA	•	•	•	•			4.2
5.2.3 Identify appropriate sites for watercourse and floodplain restoration or enhancement.	WT, EN, EA	•	•	•				
5.2.4 Implement appropriate watercourse and floodplain restoration or enhancement.	EN, WT, UNI		•	•	•	•	•	4.2

Action	Potential Partners	Year						Meets Objective No.
		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2013	
5.2.5 Develop generic management prescriptions to improve running water areas for biodiversity across all Biffa sites.	WT	•						4.2
5.2.6 Ensure that running water management prescriptions are included in Biodiversity Management Modules for sites where it occurs.	WT	•	•	•				4.2
<b>5.3 Monitoring &amp; Audit</b>								
5.3.1 Develop a monitoring protocol for the running water habitat.	WT, EN	•						4.3
5.3.2 Implement a monitoring protocol for running water habitat on Biffa sites.	WT		•	•	•	•	•	4.3
5.3.3 Develop an auditing procedure for the running water habitat action plan.	WT, LA	•						4.3
5.3.4 Implement an auditing procedure for the running water habitat action plan.	WT		•	•	•	•	•	4.3
5.3.5 Ensure the running water habitat action plan is reviewed and updated.	WT					•	•	4.3
<b>5.4 Awareness</b>								
5.4.1 Produce an internal communication so that best practice for the conservation of running water habitats can be used by staff where they occur on site.	WT	•	•	•				4.4
5.4.2 Make areas of running water available for recreation and amenity where this does not conflict with conservation objectives.	WT	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.4
5.4.3 Produce education and interpretive material for relevant Biffa Waste Services stakeholders on the running water habitat action plan.	LA, WT	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.4
5.4.4 Publish results of running water habitat action plan.	-	•	•	•	•	•	•	4.4

## **6. Partners**

EA - Environment Agency  
EN - English Nature  
LA - Local Authority  
UNI - Universities  
WT - Wildlife Trust