



Canal &
River Trust

PRESS RELEASE

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WATERWAY NATURE RESERVES TO BE PROTECTED IN NEW CAMPAIGN BY CANAL CHARITY

***Making Special Places for Nature* - 400 hectares of important canal habitat improved**

The Canal & River Trust has launched a 12-month nature project to improve vulnerable wildlife habitats across 10 key sites totalling 400 hectares – a combined area greater than the City of London.

The '*Making Special Places for Nature*' project spans reservoirs and canals in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Greater Manchester, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Berkshire and mid Wales. It will benefit water shrews, voles, otters, bats, dragonflies and other rare fauna and flora.

The Trust, which cares for 2,000 miles of canals and 63 SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest), is appealing to volunteers to join it in this mammoth task and hopes to encourage many residents, particularly young people, to roll up their sleeves and get involved in improving their own local nature reserve.

The project, made possible thanks to a £350,000 award from players of People's Postcode Lottery, will involve a wide range of habitat protection work including bank restoration, shade removal and improvements in water quality. The project will also assess the health and populations of various rare species including the shy water shrew, which was last subject to a national survey more than a decade ago.

Canal & River Trust ecologist Stuart Moodie said: "The Eurasian water shrew and white clawed crayfish are among a wide range of indigenous species which need an extra helping hand. Their natural habitats are threatened by run off from agricultural fertilisers and invasive plants and animals. Increasing the growth of aquatic plants helps encourage

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insects and invertebrates which in turn promotes healthy populations of fish and small mammals. Biodiversity is the key to a flourishing waterway.

“Getting local people involved in managing these reserves is a key priority. We would appeal to anyone who wants to get in touch with nature and play an important role in conserving their local area to contact us. This is a genuine chance to make a real difference.”

Clara Govier, Head of Charities at People’s Postcode Lottery, said: “I am delighted that as a result of funding from players of People’s Postcode Lottery that Canal & River Trust are able to launch this 12 month nature project.”

For more information or to become a ‘friend’ or volunteer with the Canal & River Trust, check out the website www.canalrivertrust.org.uk or ring 0303 040 4040.

More about specific nature reserves....

Site	Important for...	Action
Ashby Canal Leicestershire	Water shrew, rare native white-clawed crayfish, 9 species of dragonfly	Silt levels and water quality improved. 1km of new green bank protection to be installed and planted by contractors and volunteers.
Grantham Canal Leicestershire	Many species of breeding birds, water insects and rare aquatic plants.	Invasive species control, weed management and dredging carried out by volunteers and contractors.
Kilby Foxton Canal Leicestershire	Important community of rare Daubenton's Bats in Fleckney Tunnel, plus rare aquatic plants and invertebrates.	Water quality improved by shade reduction, vegetation clearance, hedge laying and coppicing.
Chesterfield Canal Nottinghamshire	Rare aquatic plants	Water quality improved by creation of reed beds, tree management, shade reduction. Damaging phosphates reduced by Phoslock water treatment.
Huddersfield Narrow Canal Greater Manchester	Freshwater sponges, white-clawed crayfish, invertebrates and rare aquatic plants	Water quality improved by shade reduction, coppicing and vegetation clearance. Surveys carried out by student volunteers.
Montgomery Canal (2 sites) Powys and Shropshire	Otters, several species of dragonflies, rare aquatic plants, including floating water plantain (world's best site)	Habitats will be enhanced by removal of silt, shade reduction, vegetation management, coppicing, removal of invasive plants. Disused Guilsfield Arm will be improved for wildlife. Volunteers will play key role.
Bittel Reservoir Worcestershire	Breeding birds, insects and rare aquatic plants	Invasive species control, silt build up and water quality improved by coppicing, vegetation management, silt clearance and the creation of ponds along the edge of the reservoir.
Belvide Reservoir Staffordshire	Overwintering, migratory and breeding birds	Silt build up and water quality improved by coppicing and vegetation management.
Kennet and Avon Canal Berkshire	Species of fish, damselflies and mayflies	The canal and the River Kennet flow through chalk landscape. Banks are being eroded by livestock leading to siltation. Installation of green bank protection will help to stabilise channel and vegetation removal improve effects of shading.

ENDS**For further media requests please contact:**

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Notes to editors:

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites. We believe that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives* and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature. www.canalrivertrust.org.uk / @CanalRiverTrust / @crtcomms