



## **Rivers and Wetlands Community Days Application Criteria and Process 2021**

### **I. Introduction**

The Rivers & Wetlands Community Days (RWCD) programme seeks to fund practical action for local people to make things better for their rivers and wetlands, now and into the future. Following on from its success in previous years, RWCD is looking to support projects big and small, from a couple of practical days with volunteers and now too, some larger-scale improvement work for rivers and wetlands.

We welcome applications from local, non-Governmental community groups working in the Thames Water catchment, including rivers and wildlife trusts, flood groups, countryside/catchment partnerships, angling clubs and conservation volunteers.

In this round of funding, we will seek to support a number of:

- Larger-scale projects, each £15K-£20K. These might be, for example, river restoration improving habitat through the introduction of gravel and woody material or a project improving public access to a wetland;
- Smaller-scale projects, each up to £5K. These might include practical demonstration and training days with volunteers or small-scale river and wetland improvement projects.

The current commitment to RWCD funding is for one year. Successful applicants should aim to complete their project(s) before the end of March 2022 but, in the current circumstances, we will of course be as flexible as possible.

Funding will be provided upfront for smaller-scale projects (up to £5000) and in two tranches for the larger-scale projects: 50% upfront and the remainder to an agreed timetable, proposed in the first instance by applicants in the application form. In both cases, applicants will be expected to act with best endeavour to complete the project and reporting commitment.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be agreed with larger-scale project applicants which, whilst not legally binding, will establish the obligations of the Delivery Panel and the successful applicant. The Delivery Panel includes representatives from the Angling Trust, Environment Agency, Institute of Fisheries Management, Thames Water and Wild Trout Trust.

## 2. Application Criteria

Successful applicants should aim to deliver the bulk of their work during the 2021 calendar year, with completion (including report submission) before the end of March 2022 but, in the current circumstances, we will of course be as flexible as possible. The application window will open on 5/2/21 and close on 12/3/21. We will not consider applications received after the closing date. The Decision Panel will meet on 19/3/21, with applicants informed of outcomes within 10 days thereafter.

We are looking for applicants and projects that demonstrate:

- a). that they are within the Thames Water catchment (see Figure 1 below);
- b). wide and inclusive community benefit. The site(s) for the work must be publicly accessible (e.g. river reaches, lakes or other wetlands) to a broad spectrum of the local community;
- c). a strong element of public engagement. We will prioritise those applicants who aim to involve local communities *practically* in improving rivers, wetlands and their environs;
- d). objectives clearly aimed at improving the ecology of the work site(s), including broader environmental concerns e.g. recycling, biosecurity. Proving the response of biological systems to habitat enhancement can be difficult, costly and time consuming. We do not anticipate funding extensive pre- and post-works monitoring but we do expect some assessment of change as part of the project e.g. through clear objectives and fixed-point photography;
- e). a clear and transparent commitment to complete the proposed project to the best possible standard, with a focus on value for money;
- f). a degree of delivery readiness such as site selection, necessary consents in place at least in principle (e.g. appropriate EA Flood Risk permit, full landowner agreement), participant groups engaged. This will be essential for the larger-scale projects - we will not fund scoping studies or speculative or loosely-formed projects;
- g). a track record of successful delivery of previous, similar work and/or the involvement in the project of an appropriate, expert partner. We will consider inexperienced groups who can demonstrate enthusiasm to be trained and supported towards effective delivery;
- h). unqualified acceptance of full liability for any work undertaken. No liability will be assumed by any member of the Delivery Panel for any aspect of RWCD projects;
- i). commitment to a post-delivery report, submitted to an agreed deadline, highlighting (amongst other things) benefits to the community, extent of public engagement and habitat change effected; your report will include high quality photographs. You must ensure and confirm that any material included in your report is GDPR compliant. By applying, you confirm that the Delivery Panel are free to use information in your report which might in turn be used in reporting to the funder and in disseminating the successes of the project.

### 3. Application Process

Complete the brief application form at <http://www.wildtrout.org/content/rivers-and-wetlands-community-days> and submit it electronically to Sam Meredith: [Samuel.Meredith@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Samuel.Meredith@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Note the submission & notification timelines under *Application Criteria* above.

**Figure I: the Thames Water Catchment**

