



UK NATURAL RIVERS THE RIVERS TRUST MOVEMENT



WWF is working with the Association of Rivers Trusts to raise awareness and the profile of trusts and help new ones become established.



The work of the trusts

A rivers trust is a not for profit organisation dedicated to improving a river to benefit people and nature. WWF supports rivers trusts as they offer a valuable way of involving the public and local businesses in the necessary work of improving our river systems. Trusts concentrate much of their effort on practical improvements in their local areas such as the removal of barriers to fish migration, improvements to river banks and increasing the amount and quality of spawning grounds. Most trusts were begun by a small network of volunteers who know their rivers intimately and have a passion for improving the quality of the habitats found there.

Encouraging new trusts

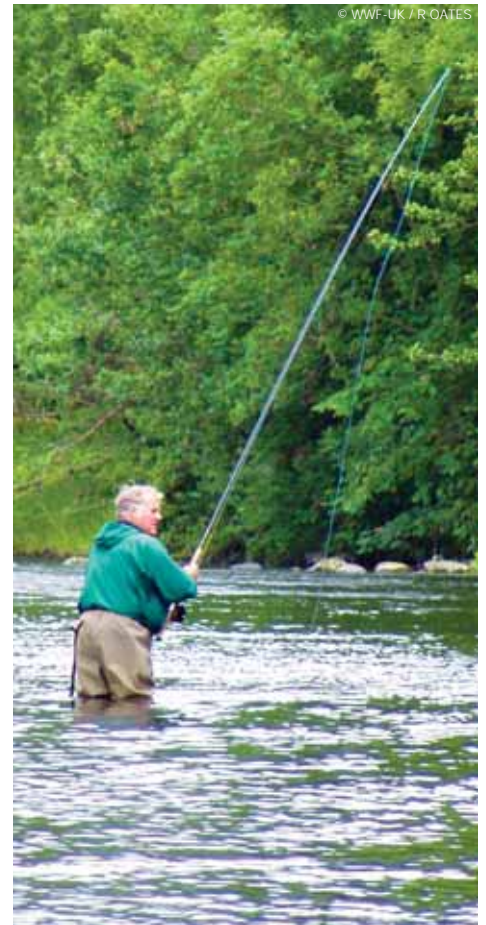
Supported by HSBC, WWF has funded a development programme for the Association of Rivers Trusts (ART) so that more trusts can be established. Using this funding, three new trusts have been set up – Pembrokeshire, Tyne and Teme. Many trusts now have paid staff coordinating their programmes of practical work as well as increasing their capacity to lobby decision-makers to ensure long term-sustainability of their rivers. The programme has also enabled the Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust to join ART.

ART provides an important link between established, new and emerging rivers and fisheries trusts, as well as offering a national platform for regional trusts to showcase their work. At the same time they develop ideas and best practice, and offer policy guidance. The development programme also funded an information pack and a series of seminars to help new trusts set up. As a result of this initiative, two new trusts – Yorkshire Dales and Thames 21 – have joined ART, and others are receiving help to become established.

Working together to achieve results

This project has raised the profile and influence of the rivers trust movement and created the capacity to promote a trust on every river in England and Wales. It has achieved its aim of enabling local people to influence the management of their river. Now, government agencies and departments in England are increasingly using rivers trusts to consult and involve local people in the management of rivers – and at a national level the Association of Rivers Trusts has been invited to join the Defra Water Framework Directive Stakeholder Group.

WWF will continue to work with ART to enable local people and businesses to help protect and restore their local river for the benefit of people and nature. The work of the rivers trusts will also help to improve the quality of rivers, as required by the EU Water Framework Directive.



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