

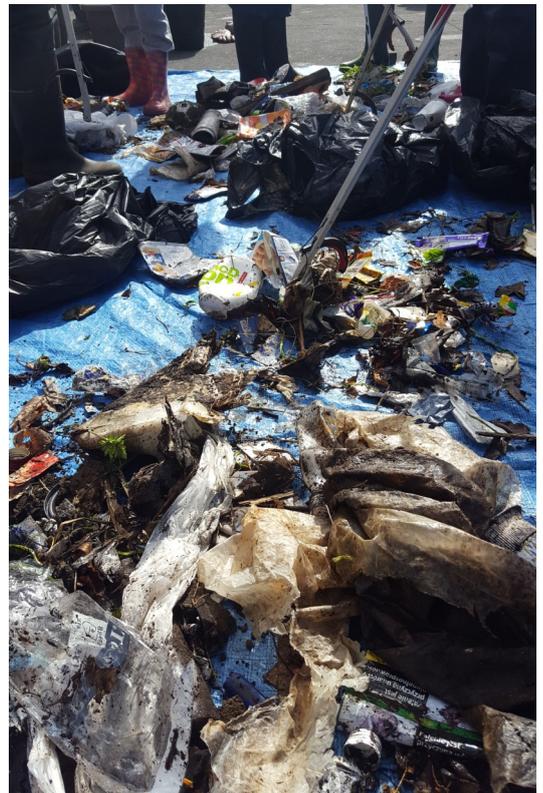
NEWSLETTER No 71 Summer 2018

'Debris Discovery Day' on the Water of Leith What a load of rubbish!!

We have been cleaning up our river for close to 30 years and without fail we find a depressing amount of rubbish. Over the years the nature of the rubbish has changed. In the early nineties we found a lot of fly tipping and large items in the river. The beginning of the 21st century was the era of the plastic bag caught in the tree and the bad neighbour as residents and businesses saw the river as a dumping ground. So what rubbish do we find today and can we do anything to reduce the amount littered and sent to landfill? To answer these questions and to think about where the rubbish would end up if we did not collect it we joined forces with Edinburgh Science Festival and Surfers Against Sewage to create 'Debris Discovery Day'. The idea of this event was to get lots of volunteers and families along to the launch of our Annual Spring Clean season, make them pick rubbish for an hour or so, then collect and process what they found. We bribed them with the offer of hot soup and a story by Alette Willis at the break. A whopping 52 people joined us for the day aged between 4 and 80!! - we were even joined by a hen party (complete with matching pink wellies)

The results were quite surprising. Over all, around 40 bags of rubbish were collected by the volunteers - these were emptied out and sorted into bins: plastic for recycling, glass, cardboard/paper, metal Cans, timber, big plastic items, large metal items, landfill, re-use, weird and wonderful and YUCK!

During the two hour litter pick we collected **179 plastic bottles, 170 drinks cans, 31 glass bottles and 19 paper cups** which could all be recycled. The 10 pieces of timber, a couple of the 12 items of plastic and 16 pieces of metal could be recycled but sadly most will end up in landfill, roughly 20 bags and a few dozen larger items. So much of what we collect is past it for recycling - once something has been littered it gets muddy, starts to degrade or gets mixed up with other things. We also found an enormous amount of cellophane and wrappers. We did have some fun items - a doll's leg, balls, a garland, Xmas lights and some pretty horrid things like a used syringe, nappy and tampon. The main thing is the river is now clean. The 400 items littered over half a mile of river were mainly disposable drinks containers, there was also countless crisp and sweet wrappers - proving that 'snacking on the go' is the main culprit when it comes to littering and probably the main culprit for our nations expanding waist lines. We are the era of the plastic bottle and cellophane wrapper. Hopefully in another decade this will be much reduced like plastic bags are today.



A sample of the rubbish

Debris Discovery Day *continued from front page*

It was great to have the support of Alana and Laura from the Science Festival and 3 volunteers from Surfers against Sewage who really helped to explain the problems this litter could have caused if we had left it in the river - where it would have flowed into the ocean and become a marine problem. So that's some less plastic in the ocean and beside our river. But this was only the start. During the Spring Clean-up season we co-ordinated 10 more clean-ups over 11 miles of river and will continue to recycle what we can by separating out the plastic bottles, cans and glass.

River News Round-up

Path closures

The Dean Landslide - the official comment from the Council is 'The City of Edinburgh Council are aware of public concern over the continued closure of a part of the Dean Path following a second land slip in January 2016. The Council are committed to ensuring that the path is reopened as soon as possible. Various avenues are being pursued by the Council, including court action, to try to ensure that work is undertaken to make the path safe. The Council cannot comment further at this stage due to ongoing legal proceedings'

Bonnington section is still closed as the movement of a telecoms mast is preventing wall repairs - any comments to Miller homes.

Saughton Park - the project to transform this city park into a destination garden continues apace. There is a short diversion around the edge of the park but thankfully no longer along the roadside.

Currie - there was a short closure of the path in Currie to install a new Ultitrec surface. This is a recycled pathway material arising from highway and maintenance works. It provides a versatile and cost effective surface for a variety of locations eg footpaths, cycle ways. What do you think?

The Fishing Season is open and permits are available from the Visitor Centre - we also have a wide selection of flies. The river is not stocked but the fishing for brown trout is good (apparently), providing you catch and release and use barbless hook

Otter sightings - once again it has been an eventful spring for our otter. Sadly a young male was discovered dead after a prolonged cold snap. Three were spotted by a garden 'bush cam' in Colinton. We met a very vocal young otter in a pipe during a clean-up and finally a pair have been spotted sparking rumours of romance near Gorgie. If you see the otter do let us know.

Plant Sale - best year ever !



Once again the Plant Sale in early May proved popular and this year broke all records as we nearly 'Sold Out' in under an hour and a half. We estimate around 200 people joined us for the morning and spent over £1420! This event relies on the skills and generosity of our volunteers and members, tending and growing on plants for us, baking, and selling. We are also grateful to Pentland Plants and Alba Trees for their donations of stock. If you joined us I hope your plants are thriving and we see you next year - with an improved queueing system perhaps.

WOLCT goes to Holyrood



You wait all year for a Parliamentary Reception then two turn up at once. We were delighted to accept invitations to the Scottish Parliament in March to celebrate The Year of Young People 2018 recognising the work and dedication of our young volunteers, placements and youth partnerships. Adam and Fern joined Ruth and Helen for a fun evening of chatting with MSPs and meeting other environmental youth project workers from across the country.

Then in May we were invited by Greenspace Scotland and Tesco to celebrate the two projects we have completed lately thanks to the Tesco carrier bag levy, the Dean Valley Renovation and the Balgreen Community Garden. Overall in Scotland this fund has shared around £6million among over 2000 groups / projects and we were delighted to be in such interesting company.

Community and Wildlife Project begins – welcome to Sandra



In April we welcomed a new member to our team Sandra Maclean. She joins us from the City of Edinburgh Natural Heritage Service via New Zealand. Sandra has joined us as a Project Officer to take forward our funded Community and Wildlife Project.

We are very grateful to a generous private donor, The Mushroom Trust, The Craignish Trust, The Pump House Trust and Cruden Foundation for their support

The main outcomes of the project are to:

- deliver 26 fortnightly Hit Squad Conservation tasks
- support 8 Youth Placements and 4 Youth Partnerships Projects
- deliver 12 projects/supported events with groups from priority groups
- maintain/improve 5 Biodiversity Boost Sites along the river
- deliver 20 INNS (invasive non-native species) tasks
- assist with the delivery of 2 Citizen Science projects and wildlife surveys

Sandra says she's delighted to land a job restoring the Water of Leith in her native country after spending six years on stream side restoration in Auckland. She spent the last 8 months with Edinburgh Council working on invasive non-native plant species so she's particularly keen to get stuck into this side of our restoration work. She has been out and about with the HIT squad and is looking forward to meeting and working with the rest of our regular volunteers.

CHILDREN'S EVENTS (4-12 years) Visitor Centre (2-4pm)

BOOKING ESSENTIAL - £5 accompanying adult free
Tel : 0131 455 7367 or admin@waterofleith.org.uk

Thursday 5th July – River Dipping : put on wellies and join us in the river

Tuesday 10th July – BUGS : track down the mini creatures and create you own 'extreme' bug

Tuesday 17th July – River Dipping

Thursday 19th July—STICK : 101 things to do with a stick, they are awesome

Tuesday 24th July – River Dipping

Thursday 26th July – Fairies : join the 'wee folk' in the Dells as we discover the history of fairies and do some magical crafts (wings optional)

Tuesday 31st July – River Dipping

Thursday 2nd August - Survive : build a shelter, forage for food and learn to create fire (safely)

Tuesday 7th August—Water !! : wet and wild, as we discover the power of water and create our own river craft for racing over the rapids

Guided Walks Historic Villages

Places on these walks will be limited so please call / email to reserve your space. £5 (members £2) 0131 455 7367.

Sunday 29th July - Currie

See one of the river's oldest settlements. Meet at 2.00pm in the small carpark on the Kirkgate off Lanark Road West opposite Currie Post Office.

Sunday 9th September - Belford and Dean (Water of Leith Village) Meet at 2.00pm at the entrance to Roseburn Cliff off Roseburn Terrace, Corstorphine Road (by the crossing and bus stop).

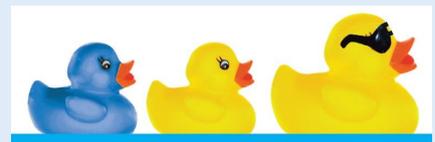
Funding Update

Readers of our last issue would have been dismayed to learn that we have lost funding from Scottish Natural Heritage after some 18 years of support. This prompted many members to generously donate to support our work into 2018 – thanks to you all.

With all the cuts at local authority level we have been pleased to learn that the City of Edinburgh Council continues to value the work our volunteers do on the river in addition to our education programme as they have confirmed funding for 2018/19 at the current level.

In April we were also delighted to learn that we have been chosen by Edinburgh-based investment company Baillie Gifford's to receive a donation of £10,000 for 2018/19. The support will enable us to continue to deliver a diverse programme of volunteering opportunities, raise awareness of this key asset of the city and promote the understanding of its heritage and wildlife through our lifelong learning programmes. Thank you to all in the sponsorship team for supporting our work – it means so much to our staff, trustees and volunteers.

The Great Water of Leith Duck Race and Funday



Sunday 16th September

Join us for this amazing spectacle and sponsor a duck for £2 to win some great prize. Fun starts at 2pm, races from 3pm

How to join the Water of Leith Conservation Trust - Complete the form and post payment to the address below or visit www.waterofleith.org.uk/join and join through our PayPal account

Individual membership	£16	Concession (retired, student, unemployed)	£10
Family	£30	Group (schools and voluntary bodies)	£32

Name..... Date.....

Address.....

Email..... Tel No.....

Post to: Trust Administrator, Water of Leith Visitor Centre, 24 Lanark Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1TQ

www.waterofleith.org.uk admin@waterofleith.org.uk T: 0131 455 7367
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