



EIGHTH WORKSHOP REPORT WATERWAYS AND WETLANDS



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Workshop 8 Waterways and Wetlands

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Workshop 8 Waterways and Wetlands

SURREY NATURE RECOVERY – WORKSHOP 8 WATERWAYS AND WETLANDS

Date: 31st July 2024

Venue: Zero, 168 High Street, Guildford GU1 3HW

Time: 4pm to 7pm

Facilitators: Jim Boot and Mike King, Resources for Change

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

To involve a group of local stakeholders in learning about, deliberating, and identifying priority outcomes related to local nature recovery in the county.

PRINCIPLES / OBJECTIVES

- Participants learn about local nature recovery and establish common understanding.
- Participants work together to develop draft outcomes.
- Participants finalise and prioritise outcomes.

PREPARATION/ HOMEWORK

Participants that have not been to the webinars were asked to watch these back (there was a short recap at the beginning of the event).

EVENT REPORT

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT SURREY?

As a warm up, participants were asked what was special to them about Surrey, in particular (but not exclusively) in relation to nature recovery Responses were:

- Close to London - infrastructure
- Land use - very low key compared to other parts - so many trees, very little farming
- Rivers and streams
- Lowland peat and heathlands
- Historically wild - history of nature
- Variety of geology reflected in the habitats

SURREY NATURE RECOVERY – SEE PRESENTATION (APPENDIX)

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

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Following the presentations, there was the opportunity to ask questions. These will be used to generate a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) page on the website:

Questions	Answers
What percent of land does the LNRS need to cover?	We have been told to be ambitious - 6,800-7,000 hectares restored. It isn't a legal obligation to deliver - yet.
How is it going to be paid for?	BNG, agri-environment schemes, [grants] and Natural Capital Investors
Have we worked out what is required for food security - [agricultural] land [in] hectares?	It is a consideration – [there is] a national strategy - but a lot of land isn't that productive (in Surrey)
Are you considering what might be lost ie by development / solar farms?	LNRS would be part of the jigsaw / framework for decision making. We will be mapping development sites [with planning permission / allocated in local plans].
Who is the Natural England advisor?	Just changed to Stephen Rudd

NATURE RECOVERY IDEA GENERATION BY HABITAT (GROUP ACTIVITY).

The participants undertook a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for the following themes:

- Heathland
- Woodland and forestry
- Waterways, wetlands
- Species rich grassland (watermeadows)
- Farmland including hedgerows, field margins
- Parks, golf courses, school grounds, health, higher education, business and industrial estates

In the last few minutes they were asked to underline the most important factor (particularly but not exclusively from “opportunities”). The results are set out below:

HEATHLAND

Strengths	<u>Water storage - rare wetland spp</u>
	Carbon storage but requires maintenance eg machines / animals - could be a negative balance
	Accessibility
	Peatland
	Heritage of sites - mosaic of habitats provided by ponds / rivers created
	MOD ownership enables negotiation with landowner
	Rare and valuable
Weaknesses	<u>Drain on resources, lack of funding</u>
	Fragmented by other land uses - infrastructure / development

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	Lack of understanding about how heathlands have developed
	Sensitive habitat (tree succession)
	MOD manage for training no necessarily for heathland
Opportunities	Understanding of ecosystems and how it works
	Acidic habitat - impact on river quality eg acidic flushes - natural be aware of and educate
	Grazing with animals is a better way to manage - use of a range of grazers
	To increase young people volunteering
	More grazing animals
	Get more corporate groups - requires supervision
	Better education on heathlands and grazing and management of dogs
	Natural flood management (NFM)
	Insurance companies' funding to reduce fires / making them easier [mitigation]
	Create more ponds / wet areas for habitat and fire control!
	Control of water - allow water levels to rise
	Ins[urance] link - health and activity
Ins[urance] link - fire prevention / control	
Threats / Barriers	Dogs going into water - and grazing animals
	Sewage outflows
	Impact of run off roads into heathlands and changing PH [values]
	Fire
	Climate causing heathland fires / losing carbon storage
	Drainage - lack of understanding about how drainage works and water flow
	Obsession with ponds - need to encourage wetlands
	Dogs flea treatment in water

WATERWAYS, WETLAND AND SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND (WATER MEADOWS)

Strengths	Winterbournes
	Designated areas
	A lot of flood plain isn't developed
	Proximity to sea
	Some plans already in place (Wey Forward)
	Chalk streams / species
	Variety (geology)
	Public interest
	Public access
	Land use
Weaknesses	Limited water capacity
	INNS - floating penny wort, crayfish
	Poor riparian habitats
	Lack of funding for management
	Barriers - weirs etc

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	Pollution - e-coli, nutrients, Pfas
	Poor mapping (Mole)
	Lack of co-ordinated action
	Separated by borough / county boundaries
	Navigation - shortened / narrowed
	Poor hydrological connectivity
	Disconnection between flood plain / loss of habitat
	Not enough attention to side streams and urban areas
	System is broken
	Surface water, outfalls [unreadable]
	Wey Navigation - structural, lack of connectivity, way its maintained, increase INNS
Opportunities	Water storage - rare wetland spp
	Water storage
	Remove redundant features
	NFM - in appropriate places
	Water quality improvements
	Species recovery beavers, water vole etc
	Flood alleviation schemes
	Buffer zones
	Research eg eDNA
	Stage zero - rewilding
	Local business money CSR
	Citizen Science
	WINEP [Water Industry National Environment Programme] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/developing-the-environmental-resilience-and-flood-risk-actions-for-the-price-review-2024/water-industry-national-environment-programme-winep-methodology
	Targeted interventions to improve water quality
	Use of SUDS in the right places
	Beavers
	Reed beds
	BNG
	Improve Wey Navigation - structure removed
Threats / Barriers	Increased demand - population, industry, agriculture
	Invasive and Non-native species
	Planning policy
	BNG is not applicable to riparian areas
	Climate change
	Flood alleviation
	Water company operation
	Environmental Permitting - opportunity to improve

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SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND

Strengths	Reduced diffuse pollution
	Chalk grassland
	Designated sites
	Water meadows / flood meadows
	Marsh and fen
Weaknesses	Undue prominence
	Only 750 hectares
	Lots of modified grassland - golf
	Pollution
	NPZs
	non-statutory designations
	Policies around species rich grassland
	Amenity
Intensive management needs i.e. chalk grassland	
Opportunities	Improve modified grassland
	Carbon storage
	Equi-culture (better practices)
	WINEP [Water Industry National Environment Programme]
	Change management requirements (?) - education
	Urban green space (parks)
	Road verges (Blue Hearts Scheme) Surrey County Council
	Natural flood management (NFM) - education, ditches, leaky dams
	Education
	B-lines concept - connected landscapes
	[unreadable] trenching
Threats / Barriers	Economic viability of farm management e.g. low stocking densities
	Climate change
	Lack of management of ditches
	Highways run off
	People and dogs
	Turning to scrub if not managed
	Poor management of verges and footpaths
	Pressure to make verges "pretty"

FARMLAND INCLUDING HEDGEROWS, FIELD MARGINS AND SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND

Strengths	Amount of farmland - relatively small
	Funding CS
	A farmer can potentially control use of a lot of riverbank therefore can achieve more if get them on side.
	Scope for improvement
Weaknesses	Lack of detailed mapping

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	Old traditional farmers / average age of a farmer 57
	Land tenancy - limited in what can do on land
	Not knowing where farmer clusters are - and funding
	Fragmented funding for farm clusters
Opportunities	Mixed farming
	To get in planners with specialist knowledge
	Buffer strips
	Hedgerows
	Link habitats eg buffer strips / hedgerows
	NFM & treatment wetlands
	Countryside Stewardship (CS) - more water / landscape options
	Sustainable Farm Incentives (SFI) and Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) [grants]
	Water companies offering grants for certain measures
	Solar farms - under grazed
	Dual land use - not best land
	Farmers often have machinery to help achieve [management for nature recovery]
	Farm cluster groups - learn from other active farm clusters
	Regenerative agriculture - improving soil health
	Planning - better educated so understand farming
Habitat banks	
Threats / Barriers	Chemicals used on farm
	Excess nutrients
	Slurry - regulations coming in
	Legacy phosphate
	Poaching adjoining water
	Funding is being spread more therefore less for the habitat type work
	Fruit [unreadable] - plastic [polytunnels?]
BNG 30 year agreement	

PARKS, GOLF COURSES, SCHOOL GROUNDS, HEALTH, HIGHER EDUCATION, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

Strengths	Surrey County Council's countryside estate
	Historic parks and parkland is generally good for biodiversity and well managed
	Farms are regulated and have voluntary schemes such as RSPCA, Red Tractor and LEAF
	[Some voluntary schemes] RSPCA not great for biodiversity
	Aesthetics - look great
	PE also highways and verges
Weaknesses	Lack of public access can be good for wildlife
	Lack of business case for investment - Water Stewardship Scheme struggled
	Boundaries / ownership - not joined up - "not my responsibility"

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	Historic gardens are still being managed for aesthetics rather than nature
	Manicured golf courses - constantly being reprofiled [new fairway designs]
	Golf courses aren't regulated for fertilisers - controlling nutrients
	Pesticides, herbicides are widely used i.e. worm killers on golf courses including some that are banned in agriculture (possibly also on sports pitches). It's a mixed picture
	Lack of ecological coherence and cohesion. Not very joined up / linked up.
Opportunities	Private gardens
	Business champions
	Engaging public on local parks
	Slowing the flow - keeping water out of the infrastructure - prepared to pay for it [water companies / customers]
	Golf courses coming off abstraction licenses so storing water on site for use [on greens]
	Paying landowners to manage rivers for [Biodiversity] net gain [using] ELMS
	Business to invest in water improvement
	Educate ground staff and golfers to leave grass longer
	Design around the natural (river) features rather than against nature [for golf courses in particular - but more widely too]
	Education around waters courses [and other water bodies] near schools, colleges and local communities
	Local / school carbon strategies can all help with educating the wider community
	BNG 30 year [agreement] might be less of a barrier for public bodies
	The way [the] management of the National Trust Wey Navigation has a huge potential impact
	Abandoned mineral and waste sites and former industrial estates
	Education, education, education
	Estate is also highways network
Threats / Barriers	Tourism / recreation
	Mineral plan - sand processing having an impact on water, water pollution - allowing waste water into aquifers
	Dansfield Oil fracking using water
	Free riding - need all parties to invest
	Diversification will lead to losing farming skills and knowledge
	Not a lot of protection for chalk streams and planners aren't properly trained at the moment
	Flow on chalk is not downhill
	Floating pennywort / invasive species
	Where drainage flows off land into water courses
	Business and industrial parks run off - oils, heavy metals, forever chemicals
	Quarrying Upper Slea river catchment for sand
	Doing a lot with too little
	"Its not my problem" i.e. Himalayan balsam or "I don't know..."

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	Business growth / economic growth can impact [but] can be an opportunity
	Pony paddocks and horsiculture are a grey area. Manure near water courses

WOODLAND AND FORESTRY

Strengths	Flow attenuation - roots of trees
	Woodland drives river processes - sediment, movement and storage
	Providing primary food in rivers
	Willow very good for biodiversity
	Species of beetle thrive on dead wood in / near water bodies
	Woodland providing river bank stability
	Shading keeps rivers cool
	A lot of ancient woodland
	Wet woodland
	Pollution, filtration
Weaknesses	Riparian woodland in trouble - diseases i.e. of poplar
	Impact on banks
	Transpiration where water is drawn out of rivers [by trees]
	Missing keystone species such as beavers
	Grants for woodland creation - not management [which are needed]
	Poorly managed ancient woodland
	Lack of funding for looking after existing woodland
	We're dealing with the legacy of previous programmes / legislation
	Under resourced public bodies to investigate or enforce
	Edges of woodland are very vulnerable
Lack of age diversity [of woodland / trees]	
Opportunities	Appropriate tree management mitigates risks / weaknesses
	Pay farmers to slow water down where appropriate - grants from Forestry Commission and Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI)
	Environment Agency's new guidance on managing rivers for riparian owners (8 meters in law - should be 10 meters)
	Education
	Streamlined planning system
	Long term management schemes for tree planting [also a weakness and a threat]
	Corporate funding for trees and carbon
	Venison market
	Habitat connectivity along rivers
	Creating wet woodland (priority habitat and rare)
	Leaving fallen trees in rivers create more diverse habitat. A cheap restoration technique
	Sowing water down - upstream of key infrastructure / land use
	A lot of people in Surrey with an interest [in woodlands]
Bring Black Poplar and other [native] species back in	

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Threats / Barriers	Secondary succession can take over water bodies [of trees]
	Shading can reduce biodiversity
	Water course obstruction because of roots - blocking flood alleviation
	Wrong trees in the wrong place
	Misinformation about how wood should be managed in riparian areas
	Soft wood plantations can cause water quality issues
	Woodland Carbon Code doesn't work
	Deer
	Erosion - loss of soil into rivers
	Constraints and conflicting demands on landowners
	Climate change
	Foraging
	Dogs and cats
	Population, recreation, trampling and compaction
Designation based on historic [link to climate change]	

Commented [JB1]: Need to input from maps into the spreadsheet for this section.

IDEA GENERATION BY PLACE

Participants were able to review maps showing already designated areas (SSSIs, SPAs etc) and ancient woodland (irreplaceable habitat) and asked using the Lawton principles:

1. More
2. Bigger
3. Better
4. More joined up

... to identify opportunities for Nature Recovery in specific locations. These will be mapped for the September / October workshops but in the meantime here are the results in a table:

Location	Issue / idea
Mole & Wey	Mink control - otter and vole recovery
General	Rail lines make good networks / connectivity [for nature recovery]
General	All sewage treatment works, stricter permits, adequate storm tanks
Ockley	Beavers
Tillingbourne	Beavers on Tillingbourne
Leigh	Good, address pollution sources, Thames Water, landfill, others, NNIS [Himalayan] Balsam
Mickleham to Young Street	Swallow holes
Fetcham Mill Pond	Fetcham Residents Association: Row R/6 wet woodland created by a natural spring encroaching on R16 new row (sic)
Rye Brook, Ashstead Common	"rye-to-good" Ashstead Common [otherwise unreadable]
Mole and tributaries	Buffer strips - natural water and waterside corridor

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Location	Issue / idea
General sewage works	Reed beds and wildlife [unreadable] at every sewage works
Great Bookham etc	Winterbourne spring line - Great Bookham, Little Bookham, Effingham, East and West Hosley, West and East Clandon
Bookham Common SSSI	Dip slope mosaic down through fens into Bookham Common SSSI
Redhill to Oxted	Sand quarries
Mole corridor	Mole corridor using regenerative agriculture adjacent to river
Dorking Pipp Brook	Natural Flood Management (NFM) project (stage 1 complete, stage 2 looking for funding)
General	Beavers NFM
Wey Navigation	Barrier removal
General	Stage 0 floodplain connection
North Surrey gravel pits	Greater connection between gravel pits in north Surrey
Wey and Colne	RTS (sic) should be linked w/Wey and Colne
General	Enhance marginal habitats on reservoirs and mineral and waste land
Wish Stream [tributary of the Blackwater]	Heathland, potentially MOD land
Ash Ranges	Heathland habitat
Headwaters	Headwaters located beyond county boundary
Bordon	WQ [water quality] from Bordon WWTW [waste water treatment works] big development area Bordon-Liphook. Is the works being upgraded [?]
Caker Stream	WTW [water treatment works] winterbourne
General	Compulsory designing / designation for wildlife
Wisley Airfield Development	Habitat loss - lack of perceived value in brownfield
River Wey / Wisley	Flood alleviation - woodland, flood planting, orchard revamp - biodiversity opportunities
Albury	Suez owned land
General	Connect Surrey Heath Heathland and heathland connections. Green bridges, heathland plants on roofs
General	Work with large institutional and private landowners to connect biodiversity
Tandridge	Lower woodland Gatwick funding
General	Connect village communities as well as the towns - ID key 'not spots' with active communities ie Bookham
Spelthorne	Staines gaps Heathrow funds

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Location	Issue / idea
General	Looks like very little connectivity between green spaces
General	Using parks as a way to teach people about nature. Every park in Surrey to have a part to play in the nature recovery strategy. People more likely to use a park than go into the countryside.
Horley	Urban connection to nature
General	Look at data re access for people - opportunity for people in areas with no green space
South east Surrey	This area looks like very limited conservation value? What can be added here
General	Need information on map e.g. rivers and indication of slope. Can help identify corridors for movement of species in changing climate
General	Create opportunities for volunteers to clear up 'no mans land' areas around motorways and railways to prevent rubbish and pollution A3 etc
General	Guides, scouts, brownies etc could be encouraged to help with this. Heyeswood site by A3. Create a nature recovery badge.
General	Link HMP, NHS and LA to helping keep homes as green spaces
General	Every town needs to be reviewed for corridors for walks, 15 minute corridors, allow areas of overgrown grassland, give land banking areas to communities where landowner isn't using for 3 years to grow green spaces, make accessible green spaces for disabled, give destination feeling for open spaces, coffee/cafe spaces linked to green spaces

DEVELOPING NATURE RECOVERY OUTCOMES (GROUP ACTIVITY)

Following a break for food and networking, participants were asked to select a high priority from the earlier SWOT activity to explore in more depth and to identify priority outcomes and actions that could be taken forward into the strategy. They were also asked to underline the most important outcomes and actions for their topic. The following are the results:

WEY NAVIGATION, FLOODPLAIN AND RIVER RESTORATION

Outcomes	Actions
Longitudinal connectivity for all species in channel	Identify and remove redundant barriers - identify constraints
Improved flood plain connectivity	Identify opportunities for flood plain restoration - existing mapping / modelling
Creation of wetland habitat, sediment retention	Tools and plans including Surrey Wildlife Trust, Wey Landscape Partnership, Environment Agency
Improved riparian connectivity - buffer zones	Landowner engagement strategy and co-ordination to progress projects - linking people with funding / delivery mechanisms. Showcase successful projects
Improved access to data	See above
Diverse in-channel habitat	Buffer zones in local planning policies
	Reserve impact of historic land drainage activities - re-meander, gravel, wood

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Appropriate flow splits between navigation and river weir management	Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) Identify where you can't remove barriers and fish / eel passes are needed WLP to approach National Trust re flow splits - how do we progress?
Appropriate flow splits between navigation and river weir management	Landowner engagement strategy and co-ordination to progress projects - linking people with funding / delivery mechanisms. Showcase successful projects

WATER QUALITY

Outcomes	Actions
To achieve "good chemical status" for all watercourses and water bodies / All watercourses and water bodies to have bathing water status	Wastewater treatment works
	More stringent water quality discharge permits
	Better water quality standards (regulations)
	Improve storm tank capacity
	Ensure new developments separate rainwater and waste
	More funding for compliance
	Recommission reedbeds
	"Green" water treatment i.e. reedbeds
	Better maintenance
	Agriculture
	Promote regenerative agricultural practices
	Engage with cluster groups
	Road runoff
	Promote secondary / natural treatment and SUDS
	Implement road sweeping
To achieve "good chemical status" for all watercourses and water bodies / All watercourses and water bodies to have bathing water status	Industry
	Tighter regulations
	Separation of industry waste
Biodiversity	Review waste permits

BEAVERS

Outcomes	Actions
Widespread beaver populations doing great things for watercourses	Surrey wide beaver group - dealing with beaver dams, promoting beavers in local communities
"Natural' flood management - water storage, prolonged wetter areas throughout summer	South East beaver group - Kent, Surrey, Sussex, London boroughs too
Increase public and landowner support	Beaver 'merch'. Get PR right. [generate] income

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Improved biodiversity; aquatic invertebrates, amphibians, birds, wetland plants, mammals	More research; human interaction, appropriate release sites, positive and negative impacts, increased awareness
Improved woodland management; opening up woodland canopy, light levels improving, better mosaic habitat	Official applications and planning for long term monitoring - complying with government policies
	Education of landowners to reduce objections / reluctance
Plans in place for population explosion [growth], culling and control	
	Widespread beaver populations doing great things for watercourses

CHALK STREAMS

Outcomes	Actions
Full understanding of the location and type of all chalk streams in Surrey to enable habitat protection and restoration	Map current knowledge
	Ground truth old maps - universities etc
Ecology study to understand winterbourne vs perennial	
Chalk streams with resilient channel shape	River restoration programmes (opportunity mapping)
Fish passage through county	Understand and map barriers
	Mitigate / remove / notch etc barriers
Naturally functioning chalk streams - hydrology and river processes	De-culverting (map)
	Landowners to have access to guidance
Research programme	Graduate project kicked off with CGI SKI

WATER VOLES

Outcomes	Actions
Thriving water vole population	1. American mink eradication - long-term control and monitoring
	2. Reintroduction of water voles to appropriate sites across southeast England
Ecosystem improvements; river bank barrows	Educating and encouraging landowners to improve riparian habitats - 8-10 meter buffer zone - continuous cover year round - unshaded
Species baselining across Surrey	Water vole surveying - where are they?
eDNA	Cross-catchment coordination - Surrey wide water vole groups [also] Sussex, Kent Hampshire

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CARROT SACK (SOMETHING TO CHEW OVER LATER)

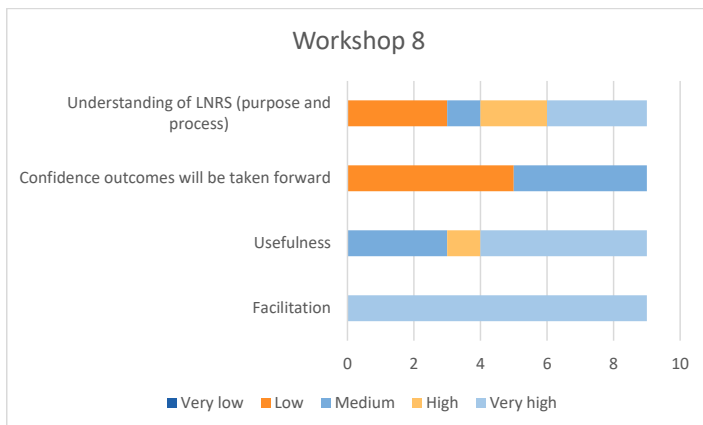
Participants were able to comment more generally during the sessions and the following points were captured:

- Population and population density a factor. Differs across Surrey
- Improving water courses feeding into SSSIs etc will bring [wider] nature benefits.
- Consider mapping farm - landuse - the best of this [agricultural land classification - most versatile]
- Feed up the lack of information on chalk streams up to DEFRA / Magic.
- Reviewing standards / drivers ie effluent in River Wey for salmonid species.

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Participants were asked to evaluate the workshop and give some feedback at the end:

- I thought it was a really good session to develop my understanding of what more people are thinking
- Generous food and drink offer too - and good venue! Thanks very much :)
- Much better than expected. Very good, thank you. Well facilitated.
- Productive networking



GLOSSARY / JARGON

At this and the other events, inevitably some acronyms or jargon were used. These will be used to populate a glossary on the website. Here they are explained:

CSA	Corporate Social Responsibility - businesses investing in social (also environmental) projects as a way of "pay-back"
eDNA	Environmental DNA allows scientists to discover the presence or absence of specific species in an ecosystem https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/what-is-environmental-dna-edna.html
ELMS	Environmental Land Management Scheme https://www.nfuonline.com/updates-and-information/everything-you-need-to-know-about-elms/

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INNS	Invasive and Non-Native Species
Stage Zero	Restoration particularly of rivers to their original flood plain / course
WLP	Wey Landscape Partnership
NNIS	Non-native invasive species

Jim Boot, Senior Consultant, R4C 27th August 2024