

Summary Report of the Sussex Otters and Rivers Partnership



**Projects and Progress
April 2008 – March 2009**

INTRODUCTION

Sussex Otters and Rivers Project (SORP) was created as a Partnership between four funders in March 2000. Since its inception the project has been continuously delivering targets for wetland habitat and species conservation, and advising landowners and others throughout Sussex on the conservation of wetland habitats and wildlife.

In 2007, the project partnership was formalised, and a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Development Plan were drawn up between the current project partners – Environment Agency (EA), Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT), South East Water (SEW) and Southern Water Services (SWS). The project has evolved significantly over the past seven years, and news aims and objectives reflect changes in the project focus. SORP's main objective is:-

To promote the sustainable management of river catchments and their landscapes, and the restoration of wetland habitats for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

The aims of the Sussex Otters and Rivers Partnership (SORP) are:

1. Help maintain and enhance a landscape that improves the wildlife value of wetlands
2. Encourage the creation of more sustainable wetland ecosystems, working with natural processes.
3. Promote wider understanding of and involvement with riparian habitats, species and ecosystem services
4. Support the project with sound information on the changing wetland landscape of Sussex.
5. Support the delivery of wetland conservation and recreation targets by others.

This report outlines SORP achievements for the year 2008 - 2009.



Looking at living wetland landscapes

I. SUMMARY OF SORP ACHIEVEMENTS 2008 - 2009

FINANCE

Core funds carried over to 09/10 = **£34k**
Unallotted project funds available 09/10 = **£7k**
Total grant bids submitted = **£803k**
Total grant funding received = **£21.9k**
Total donations received = **£1.1k**
Other project income received = **£4.3k**
SORP contributions to projects = **£12k**
Estimated volunteer hours = **1131**
Estimated value of volunteer hours = **£5.6k**

EVENTS

Total number of SORP events = **15**
No of people attending SORP events = **527**
Total public talks and presentations = **4**
Total landowner events = **2**
Total fundraising events = **1**
Total otter training days = **3**
Total water vole training days = **3**

PRESS & PUBLICITY

Min no press releases and articles = **35**
Total TV Appearances = **2**
Viewing figures of TV appearances = **1,840,000**
Total radio interviews = **2**
Total new leaflets published = **17**
Total newsletters (dragonfly soc) written = **2**
Total web advice sheets = **13**
Total enquiries dealt with (est) = **1141**
Total enquiries otters = **215**
Total enquiries water voles = **150**
Total enquiries black poplar = **178**
Total enquiries dragonfly = **118**
Miscellaneous enquiries = **500**
Unique visitors to website = **4,499**
No of web pages viewed = **12,409**
Returning visitors to website = **13%**

SPECIES & HABITAT DELIVERY

Length of watercourse surveyed for otters = **18km**
Total spot checks for otter signs = **106**
Length of watercourse surveyed for water voles = **19km**
Total new species records to SxBRC = **1425**
Total Black poplars distributed = **400**
Total wet woodlands surveyed = **9**

LANDOWNER DELIVERY

Total letters to landowners = **290**
Area of land with advice given = **9,891 acres**
Unique landowners visited = **32**
Ha of habitat restored = **0.5**

2. FINANCE

2.1. Core Funding

Core funding was received from all SORP partners for the 08/09 project period.

Core funding covers SORP officer wages, travel, equipment, volunteer costs, survey work and general administration of the SORP project.

TOTAL CORE EXPENDITURE FOR THE SORP PROJECT 08/09 = £38k

TOTAL CORE FUNDS CARRIED OVER TO 2009-2010 = £34k (inc. £20k unanticipated income Sussex Wildlife Trust appeal). **NOTE:** Figures are subject to audit & include agreed project 'buffer' of £8k

2.2. Additional core income (Non partner)

In addition to Core funding from Partners, **SORP contributed £5,000 to core funds**. This includes **£5,000** from Leader + funding of Brede Wetlands for Wildlife Project

ADDITIONAL CORE INCOME = £5k

2.3. Project funds

Within the financial year 2008/09, SORP managed the following budgets for the following projects:-

PROJECT	AVAILABLE INCOME	EXPEND	BALANCE REMAINING
Sussex Floodplain Forests	£14.9	£4.1	£10.8 (inc. £8k allotted funds)
Pett Wetlands 4 Wildlife	£56.4	£54.7	£1.7
EA projects money	£15k	£0	£15k (inc. £15k allotted funds)
Brede Flood modelling	£55k	£32k	£23k (inc. £23k allotted funds)
Knepp	£20.6	£0	£20.6 (inc. £20k allotted funds)
PROJECT TOTALS	£162k	£91k	£71k

TOTAL PROJECT FUNDS CARRIED OVER 08/09 = £73k

UNALLOTTED PROJECT FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR 09/10 EXPENDITURE = £7k

2.4. Project and additional income from partners

The following were received this year from project partners as donations to projects:-

£4k – Pevensey and Cuckmere water vole surveys (EA)

£7.3k – Floodplain woodland Restoration at Tun Wells S STW (Southern Water)

£22k – Brede valley Flood and Habitat modelling (EA)

ADDITIONAL PROJECT PARTNER DONATIONS TOTAL = £33.3k

2.5. Grant and other SORP income

Grant bids for project funds were made by SORP to the following grant funders:-

GRANT FUNDING BODY	BID STATUS	AMOUNT REQUESTED
SITA Trust (Arun)	Declined	£44,019.55
Countdown 2010 (wet woodlands)	Declined	£30,623.70
INTERREG (Multiple Projects)	Application withdrawn at EA request	£210,530.00
Leader + (Pett & Brede)	Secured/Completed	£21,887.00
BIFFA (Knepp)	Declined	£496,050.00
TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED		£803,111.25

ADDITIONAL GRANT FUNDING SECURED FROM SORP GRANT BIDS 08/09 = £21.9k

Additional Income from direct donations (Talks etc) = **£1.1k**
Additional Project Income from Other Sources = **£3.2k**
TOTAL ADDITIONAL INCOME = £4.3k



The Ceilidh band who played for the SORP Christmas charity fundraiser which raised £325 for SORP projects.

2.6. SORP contributions to external projects

Other than the Brede Water for Wetlands Project, this year, SORP was able to contribute the following amounts to local projects.

- £1k** to Brede valley wetland feasibility studies
- £3k** to mapping and survey of Sussex Chalk streams
- £1k** to mapping and survey of Sussex fens
- £3k** to River Restoration Reports
- £4k** to Floodplain woodland surveys

TOTAL contributions to External projects = £12k

2.7. Volunteer time

In addition to actual money, SORP also received a large number of dedicated volunteer hours. Valued at £5 per hour, **over 1131 hours of volunteer time** were contributed to the project this year. The value of this time is **£5,655**, not taking into account the specialist nature of much of the volunteer support.



A volunteer helps remove barbed wire from a local watercourse

3. PRESS AND PUBLICITY

3.1. Events

A programme of events has been developed by SORP and SWT encompassing a wide range of media and audiences. Individual events are described below.

A TOTAL OF 15 events were held by, or in co-operation with SORP in 2008/9

The estimated number of people attending SORP events in 2008-2009 is **over 527 people**

3.2. Public Talks & Presentations

Nov 19th – Higher Level Stewardship day for Brede & Rother landowners, 36 attended

Dec 6th – Charity Christmas Ceilidh in aid of SORP, 150 attended

4 Talks were given this year to the following local groups:-

April 23rd - Amberley Wildbrooks talk, 31 attended

Oct 29th – Talk to Chichester natural history society, 73 attended

March 16th – Talk to East Grinstead Natural History Society, 52 attended

March 25th – Lecture to Brighton University Ecology students, 30 attended



Participants discover otter signs at Winnell Moors on a SORP training day

3.3. Courses and Training days

9 training days were held to help establish a group of trained otter and water vole volunteers.

3 Otter training days

6 Water vole training days

Currently **over 40** sites are being monitored for otters and water voles by volunteers in Sussex

Details of training events are below:-

April - Water vole training day, Pagham, 20 attended.

May – Water vole training day (Natural England) – 12 attended

Aug – Water vole training day for landowners and Natural England staff (East), 17 attended

Sept – Water vole training day (East), 12 attended & Water vole training day (East), 10 attended

Nov – Otter training day (Winchester), 22 attended

Feb – Otter training day for Manhood Peninsular project volunteers & staff (19)

March - Otter training day, Winchester (21) & Water vole training day at Pagham (22)

3.4. Guided Walks

0 guided walks were lead by SORP this year due to illness

3.5. Press Releases and Appearances

Press Releases

A minimum of 35 press releases and articles were published in magazines, newsletters, local journals and newspapers. It is likely that a number of untraced articles also featured.

TV Appearances

A piece was filmed for ITV Meridian in June regarding otters in Sussex. The programmes **viewing figures are 500,000**. ITV Meridian airs in West Sussex, Kent, Wiltshire, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Dorset, East Sussex, Surrey and Oxfordshire. The piece was aired three times – at lunch time, and early and late evening.

An interview was given for the **BBC 'Inside Out'** series episode of 'Lost Rivers' on the Lewes Winterbourne. **Viewing figures are roughly 170,000** for Kent and East Sussex, with similar numbers in West Sussex/Hampshire/Dorset. 'Lost Rivers' was also aired on BBC South in March.

Minimum estimated viewing figures for SORP TV appearances = 1,840,000



Artwork © T Bernhard from the new Otters and Water voles leaflet

Radio Interviews

2 radio Interviews were given. A live web interview for BBC Southern Counties regarding otters and a Sovereign Radio interview in Feb regarding World Wetlands day and wetlands.

3.6. Leaflets & Publications

17 leaflets and publications have been produced by SORP and associated projects. These include:-

- Spring and Autumn Sussex Dragonfly Society newsletters
- Otters and Water voles advice leaflet
- River Adur Conservation Society leaflet
- Downloadable advice sheets for website (see below)

3.7. Enquiries

SORP deals with a large number of enquiries regarding otters, water voles, black poplar trees and other wetland species and habitats. Many of these enquiries come via partners, landowner contacts, SWT and Wildcall, the SORP website, press releases and etc.

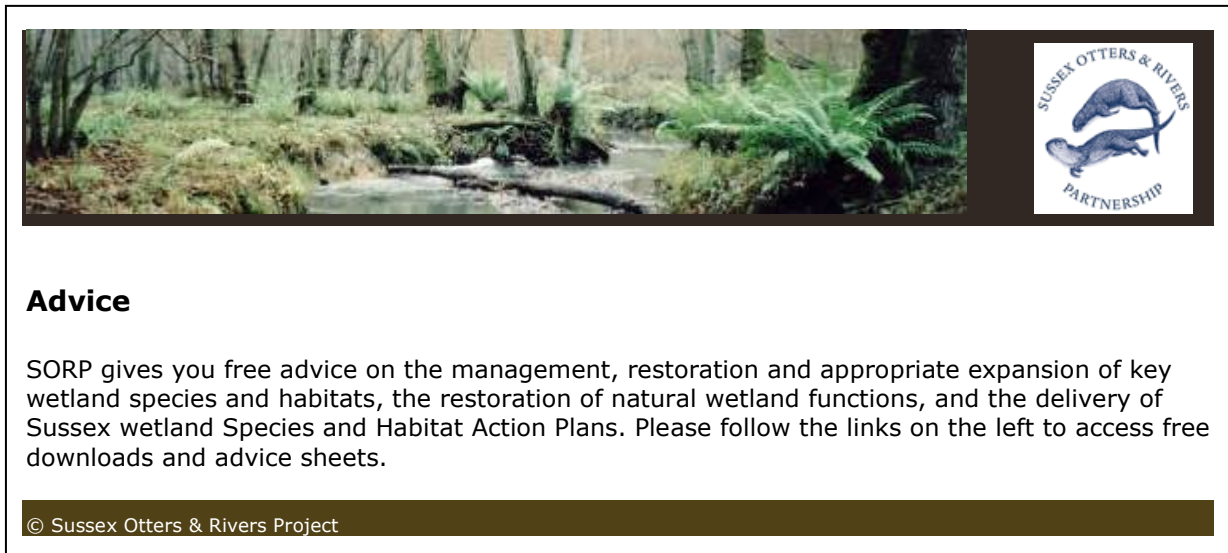
Over 215 otter, 178 black poplar, 11 water shrew, 118 dragonfly, 150 water vole and over 500 miscellaneous enquiries were dealt with by SORP. A large number of these enquiries were also related to planning or student and volunteer projects. Out of county referrals were also frequent.

TOTAL (Minimum) 1141 enquiries dealt with

3.8. Websites

SORP Website

The SORP website www.sussexotters.org was finalised and fine tuned this year. It has proved to be a useful tool for many people and is a popular website for people seeking advice and information on a range of wetland topics.



Advice

SORP gives you free advice on the management, restoration and appropriate expansion of key wetland species and habitats, the restoration of natural wetland functions, and the delivery of Sussex wetland Species and Habitat Action Plans. Please follow the links on the left to access free downloads and advice sheets.

© Sussex Otters & Rivers Project

In its first full year the website received 4499 unique visits who viewed 12409 pages.

87% of these visits were first time visitors to the site and **13%** were returning visitors. The top pages visited related to otters, water voles, the SORP project, Advice, Wetlands and Get involved.

Thirteen downloadable advice sheets have been developed in addition to the 21 advice sheets put on the website last year. These include:-

- Invasive plants advice
- What is the Water Framework Directive and how does it affect me?
- How to create an ecological network
- What are environmental services and how do I provide them?
- Managing a smallholding
- Creating wet woodlands
- Otters and Stillwater fisheries
- River restoration for landowners
- Mink control for Wildlife conservation
- How to create a wader scrape
- Pond creation and enhancement
- How to create and manage reedbeds
- Match the Mammal to its footprint

Sussex Wildlife Trust Website

In addition to the SORP website, the Sussex Wildlife Trust have updated their website to include further details of the SORP project. The page can be found at www.sussexwt.org.uk/conservation/page00013.htm.



3.9. Miscellaneous PR and Resources

Physical resources

This year SORP was able to purchase a microscope for water shrew scat and invertebrate analysis, and relevant reference books on Black Poplar, Otter and Wetland ecology.

GIS Resources

The SORP project is now able to access a fully licensed Geographical Information System mapping tool, and has been provided with a number of wetland layers by SORP partners and other organisations. These layers will be used to create a unique wetland mapping system as a means of targeting wetland restoration to appropriate areas. In the interim, SORP is working with Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre and EA to map fen and chalk stream habitats, and to digitise information on the distribution of wetland species.

The following wetland layers have been developed this year:-

- 1) Point data for Sussex Otter Survey sites
- 2) Digitised Otter Habitat Survey data for Sussex catchments
- 3) Point data for accessible and inaccessible road bridges for otters
- 4) A map of Ancient semi-natural woodland in floodplains (including parcels under 2 ha)

Photographic resources

New pictures have been added to the SORP picture library. In particular, images of water voles donated by D Green and P Stevens, and images of otters donated by B Short, for which we are very grateful.



Baby otter image © B Short



Water vole feeding on tree bark © D Green

4. SORP PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

4.1. Knepp Castle River Restoration



The restoration of 2.2km of river and vast areas of headstreams on the Sussex Adur is being moved rapidly forward as part of a wider re-wilding of the 5,000 acre Knepp Estate. This flagship project has already involved a significant number of local partners (EA, Natural England, West Sussex County Council (WSCC), Sussex Wildlife Trust, English Heritage, River Restoration Centre (RRC)) to get it to a stage where there is a real possibility that river restoration can take place soon. It is envisaged that the final design and consents for the project will be completed by the end of 2009.

In the interim, the estate has many tens of kilometres of ditched watercourse in need of restoration and re-naturalisation. SORP has been working with the landowner and local volunteers to restore channel diversity and create woody debris dams to assist the natural re-stabilisation and re-shaping of these channels. Regular monitoring of the site continues and floodplain woodland planted last year is thriving.

SORP is also liaising with Knepp estate and WSCC to ensure that local people are engaged with projects on the estate and are provided with advice and information on the radical changes which are taking place .

4.2. New floodplain woodland for Sussex

In order to contribute to the Sussex Black Poplar Species Action Plan (SAP), SORP works with landowners and the Sussex Black Poplar Working Group (SBPWG) to plant functioning floodplain woodlands. Floodplain woodland is an incredibly under recorded but rare habitat in Sussex and Black poplar trees would traditionally have reproduced within this rare habitat. Floodplain woodlands are also valuable habitats for the recovering otter and many other scarce Sussex wetland species and habitats.

This year a number of floodplain woodland plantings with black poplar have been carried out by the West Weald Landscape project.

Nine Ancient floodplain woodland sites were surveyed by Niall Sanderson, a national woodland expert.



Image © www.davidplummerimages.co.uk

4.3. Pett Wetlands for Wildlife Project

Established in 2005, this landscape project initially covered a landscape area of 32km² covering the Brede valley, Rye and Pett levels in East Sussex. The key aim of the project was to create, protect and expand a second core landscape area for breeding water voles in Sussex, and to assist local people and landowners in creating a best practice area for wildlife management. This year the project was expanded to include the E Rother and Tillingham valleys.



Teachers at a local primary school being taught how to use new wetland resources paid for in school grounds

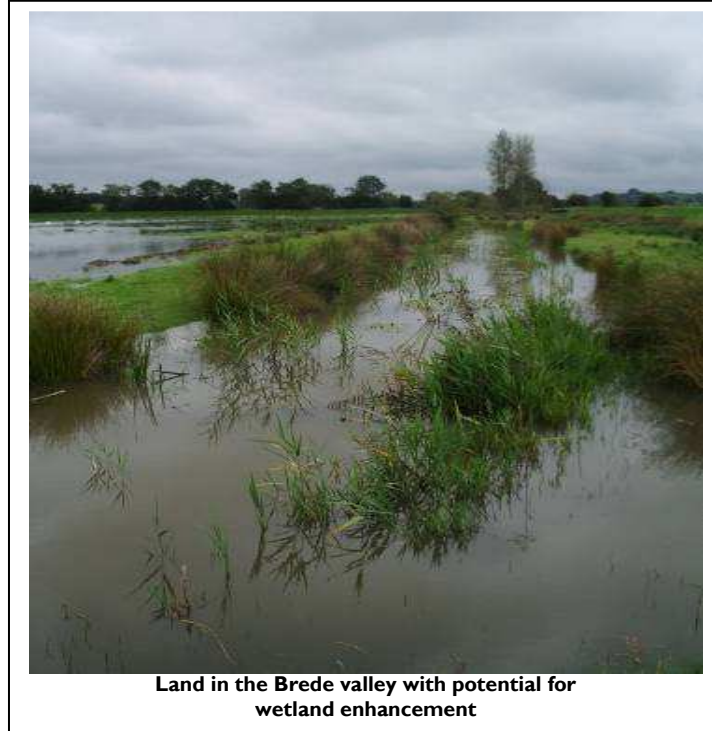
Following the success of the first two year phase, further funds were allocated to the Brede Wetlands for Wildlife Project. **£22.9k was secured for additional work on the project in 2008.**

This included money for:-

- Co-ordinated mink control across Pett, Brede and E Rother valleys
- Water vole and ecological survey of 4 key landowners
- Landowner advice/survey work expanded to the E Rother valley with farm plans for 3 landowners
- INSET days for 4 schools with project funds to enhance school grounds for wetland wildlife
- Barn owl work and other capital expenses

4.4. Brede Valley Restoration plan

The Brede valley is one of the least heavily (land) managed river valleys in Sussex. Despite this, it is currently heavily embanked and criss crossed by a network of land drains. Many landowners in the valley are however interested in pro-active wetland and river restoration.



This year, SORP has been working closely with the EA and landowners to gather technical data Brede river flow capacity which should hopefully show the potential for improved flood management, more sustainable management of water resources, and the enhancement of local fisheries and wetland habitats.

4.5. Chichester Coastal Plain Sustainable Farmland Partnership

This landscape scale water vole and farm management partnership was in 2000. The initial project lasted 3 years and was nationally pioneering in its approach to the wider enhancement of farmland and watercourses, protecting a core population of water voles and other priority species.

SORP continues to work with landowners, the Manhood Peninsular partnership, the Chichester Harbour Conservancy and Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve to provide a trained team of annual water vole surveyors throughout the project area and to provide ongoing advice to local land managers. The project continues to deliver key targets of Water vole, Otter and other wetland Species and Habitat Action Plans.



4.6. Arun Econet

The River Arun is one of only three areas in Sussex where it is possible to protect and expand existing core populations of the endangered water vole on a wider landscape basis. The Arun river is also an important migration corridor for otters. SORP is working closely with partners to develop wetland and water vole projects on this strategic catchment. This includes:-

- Working with Brighton University on a protected species funding bid for water voles
- Work with students to map habitat suitability and survey for water vole around AWWT
- Helping Sussex Dragonfly Society survey Scarce chasers on the upper Arun
- Consulting with landowners regarding potential for Special projects and Higher Level Stewardship funding of wetland and river restoration
- Preparation and training for an Arun Water vole survey



Scarce chaser dragonfly © J Luck

4.7. Sussex Wetland Mapping

SORP is co-ordinating surveys of fen and chalk stream habitats in Sussex for the forthcoming survey season. These rare and protected habitats have remained largely unmapped and unsurveyed in Sussex. Efforts to update information on wetland habitats will help greatly with work to try and protect, link and expand these fragile habitats.

5. SUSSEX SPECIES ACTION PLAN DELIVERY & SPECIES MONITORING

SORP is joint author and implementor of the Water vole, Black poplar and Otter Species Action Plans (SAP's) for Sussex (main partner EA). SORP is also a key co-deliverer of targets of other wetland HAP's.

This year, all three SAP's and their targets were updated for publication on the internet.

Overall, **125 new species records** were added to records directly by SORP and **over 1300 species new species records** were added from surveys commissioned by SORP.



5.1. Water voles

- All 2008/09 water vole records have been added to SxBRC records
- Brede wetlands for wildlife project including mink control throughout the catchment
- Advice on water voles provided to numerous members of the public and landowners
- New advice leaflets developed
- Advice given to a number of organisations regarding planning and re-introductions
- **Over 93 water vole surveyors were trained**
- **Over 19km of watercourse were spot checked and surveyed**

5.2. Black Poplar

- All owners of female black poplars were contacted regarding the availability of black poplar seed
- Contacts and planting updates were collated on the current status of the 5000 planted trees
- A new black poplar nursery was established at Plumpton
- **Over 400 black poplar whips were distributed to 22 landowners and organisations for planting on a number of Sussex catchments**
- A report on the findings of a survey of nine ancient floodplain woodland sites was received. The results of the survey revealed that Sussex may still have some small but valuable pockets remaining of ancient floodplain woodland.



5.3. Otter

- Around **47** new sightings and records of otters have been added to SxBRC systems
- Around **30** sightings of mink have been recorded
- One landowner was advised directly regarding the building of otter holts
- Training was given to **over 60 people** in otter survey techniques
- Around **18 km of river was surveyed for otters and 106 spot checks** were carried out
- **150 hours** of motion sensor footage have been processed from an EA camera in a catchment with probable otter activity



6. LANDOWNER DELIVERY

Thirty two sites, across all Sussex catchments were visited directly by SORP over the past year and landowners provided with specific site based advice. Numerous landowners were also consulted by phone/email and supplied with verbal or written advice.



TOTAL acreage with advice given = **9891.4**

TOTAL new acreage visited = **5219 acres**

TOTAL landowners visited = **32**

At least 290 letters were also sent to landowners and others with information regarding wetlands and wetland management. This includes mail outs regarding black poplars, wet woodlands, Brede valley, Wetland mapping on the Ouse, water voles etc.

In many cases it is difficult to evaluate and measure the response of landowners to SORP advice and expertise. However, following advice from SORP in 2008, volunteers proceeded to restore half a km of stream at Furnace meadows in West Sussex, and over 2km of ditched headstream on the River Adur.



7. PARTNERSHIP WORK

7.1. Local/County

One of SORP's most valuable roles is its ability to link local landowners and the general public with regional and national policies and strategies in order to enable practical habitat restoration for priority wetland species and habitats on the ground. This role requires close liaison with and assistance of a number of local groups and panels.

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA's)

SORP was a consultee on the Sussex Biodiversity opportunity mapping exercise and will be one of the main wetland delivery partners in this exercise. This key piece of work is Wildlife Trust driven and aims to produce a framework within which ecological networks and landscape scale conservation can be delivered Sussex wide.

Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment workshops for Sussex Catchments

SORP acts as a Sussex Wildlife Trust representative at Sussex catchment workshops for the South East River Basin District WFD consultation. By attending these meetings we hope to positively influence the way in which the WFD is implemented on the ground, and to directly deliver some of the key aims and targets of this important piece of legislation.

South East Reedbed project

SORP works closely with the South East Reedbed Officer to locate potential reedbed restoration sites and to facilitate where possible with practical wetland restoration.

Sussex Ouse Meadows Project (Sussex University)

The Sussex Ouse Meadows Project has delivered some fascinating insights into the historic and current distribution and role of floodplain meadows and woodlands on the upper Ouse catchment. Funding for this project is now at a hiatus however. SORP is hoping to help with future grant funding of this project and the potential expansion of the project to the wider Ouse catchment, linking in with work being carried out by the High Weald Meadows Initiative.

Sussex Black Poplar Working Group

New Black poplar nursery

One of the main successes this year was the official establishment of a new Black poplar nursery at Plumpton college (East Sussex) as a safeguard against the potential loss of the Wakehurst nursery from disease or other stochastic events. Most of the black poplar stools are now well established at Plumpton and the first cuttings have recently been taken from them and given to landowners in the local area.



Plumpton college representatives are presented with their new collection of cuttings from the rare black poplar tree for their nursery

New genetic research

Work was also undertaken to establish the genetic provenance of the Sussex Black poplar trees. Cuttings were numbered and delivered to Forest Enterprise who undertook genetic analysis of all 34 Sussex trees. The results showed that within the 34 Sussex trees (33 now alive as mature specimens) there are only 5 unique genetic clones. One of these genetic clones is currently thought to be unique to Sussex.

Information sought on reproduction of Black poplar from seed

The discovery of only 5 genetic clones in Sussex makes it even more important to ensure that a mixture of male and female clones are planted out at all planting sites where possible. Mixed floodplain woodland plantings with black poplar are also important to encourage natural vegetative reproduction or reproduction from seed.

A mail out was sent to all owners of Black poplar plants over 5 years old to establish whether any of them are producing viable catkins or seed. No positive results have been returned thus far. Wakehurst place has therefore agreed to plant one of each Black poplar stool in the wet woodlands in its grounds in order to try and monitor the timing and duration of seed and pollen production.

Historic black poplar plantings updates

A mass mailout requested updates on all trees planted over the last 10 years, owner contact details etc. A good response showed that of over 5000 black poplar plantings only 225 are confirmed dead (although this figure is likely to be higher).

Resistance of Sussex clones to Poplar disease

Recently, poplars in Manchester have suffered a huge decline due to the suspected *Venturia populina* disease or Bleeding Canker. Manchester has a large number of male trees and in 2004, the Sussex group donated cuttings of Sussex poplar clones to see if they have resistance to poplar diseases in the area. There is evidence that one Sussex poplar may have some resistance to *Venturia* and to poplar scab.

Sussex Dragonfly Society

SORP has produced two professional newsletters for this group and attended local meetings. SxBRC have agreed to host a web page for the project which SORP will advise on. SORP also co-ordinates the sales and distribution of the Dragonflies of Sussex book.

River Adur Conservation Society (RACS)

SORP has facilitated the official set up and management of this group and gave a talk at the groups first and second AGMs. SORP attends RACS meetings and provides training and advice on wetland survey and restoration as well as supervision of works at sites such as Knepp estate. A leaflet was produced by SORP to enable RACS to publicise its activities and encourage new members.



RACS members carry out practical wetland restoration work at Knepp estate

Sussex Ouse Conservation Society (SOCS)

SORP liaises regularly with members of SOCS to provide advice and training to the group members.

Brighton University

SORP works closely with Brighton University and provides occasional training, student research projects and lectures to students. SORP is also hoping to establish closer links with hydrogeomorphology departments at the university to encourage their involvement with local river and wetland restoration projects.

Sussex Mammals Group (Mammal Society)

SORP is a technical specialist on the Sussex Mammal Group and provides advice, support and training days to volunteers and members.

West Weald Project

SORP works closely with the West Weald project and in particular is helping to provide wetland advice to landowners and advice on floodplain woodland plantings.

7.2. Regional/National

WFD and South East Regional River Basin Management Planning NGO liaison panel

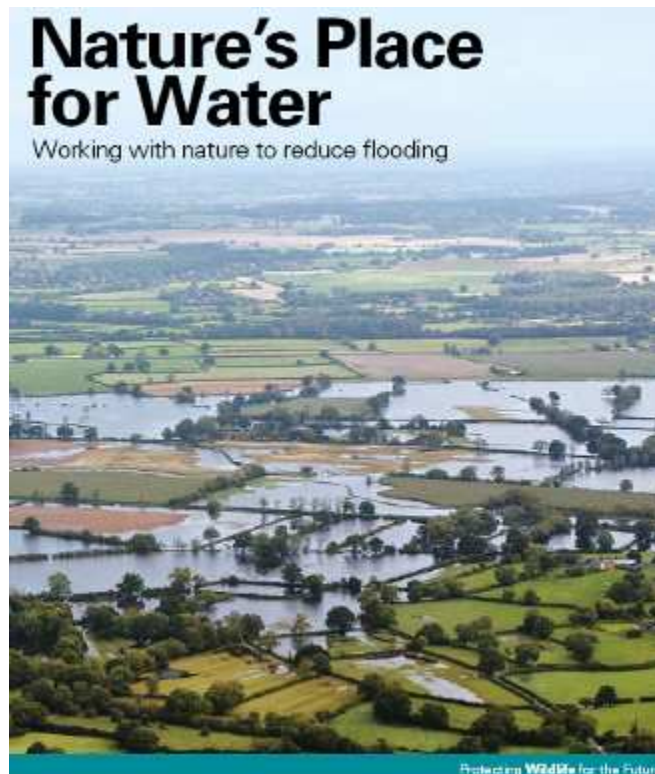
SORP attends the SERBMP group meetings and provides advice on issues on the ground. SORP has also attended and commented at SERBD Issue Work Groups and Catchment Workshops.

South East Water Partnership

SORP is a member of the SE Water Partnership with Water companies, Wildlife Trusts and EA.

Water for Wildlife

SORP forms part of a nationwide network of wetland practitioners promoting key wetland issues and wetland restoration techniques. This group meets regularly to encourage the sharing of best practice. The project is hosted by the Wildlife Trusts who this year have produced a strategic document on 'Nature's place for water'.



7.3 Other Partnership Work and External consultations

In addition to regular meetings and consultations, SORP has attended strategic meetings regarding the following:-

- EA Regional Habitat Creation Programme
- EA State of the Environment Report
- South East Water Partnership meetings regarding the AMP process
- Brede HLS targeting and external HLS consultations
- SWT land purchase strategy and advice regarding potential new wetland sites
- South East Plan target areas for wetlands
- External meeting with Woodland Trust regarding Brede High Woods

7.4 Miscellaneous SORP WORK

SORP is also compiling an evidence base for the following:-

- Wetlands and Ecosystem services
- Wetlands and Climate change

PROGRESS UNDER AMENDED SORP DEVELOPMENT PLAN TARGETS

	2008/09 Achievements	3 Year Target
Publicity and events		
Promote SORP amongst landowners. Articles in NFU, CLA, FWAG and other publications	2	9
Wetland events/forums held for landowners, and others linked to riparian land management	2	3
Support and organise annual educational wetland event	Cancelled	3
Contribute to the event programmes of other organisations	6	15
Produce regular press releases on wetland success stories or wetland concerns	4	9
Training		
Build up and train a Sussex volunteer network for all relevant BAP/wetland species (Otter, Water vole, Black poplar, Water shrew)	151 trained 9 events	Minimum 50 volunteers trained & 2 events p.a.
Influencing		
Work closely with national Water for Wildlife to influence wider wetland issues and provide input into national Wetland Vision	2	Attend W4W meetings & comment on papers
Examine the potential impact of climate change on wetland processes in Sussex	Notes being amalgamated – ongoing	Short report & powerpoint prepared by Feb 2009
Information Management		
Work with SxBRC to improve wetland information and mapping resources and to develop up-to-date, ground truthed layers for all wetland BAP priority species and habitats including:- A strategic wetland layer A water vole layer An otter layer A black poplar and wet woodland layer	All layers close to completion	4 GIS layer by end 2009
Work closely with partners to create areas of opportunity in Biodiversity target areas	Biodiversity target area statements made for wetlands and awaiting wetland priority target areas for action	Summarise wetland elements of Biodiversity targeting maps
Co-ordinate and update incoming records for priority wetland species and habitats to SxBRC	Annually	Annually
Digitise existing river surveys	2	8
Review wetland status and work with NE and others to enhance sites with unfavourable status	Ongoing	By March 2010
Habitat Restoration		
Help to deliver habitat restoration targets of Wetland Vision and other relevant policy documents	0.5 ha (West Weald woodland)	10 ha by March 2010
Contribute to delivery of wetland HAP targets	Ongoing	Ongoing
Work closely with partners and others to develop and fund identified habitat restoration projects i.e. Knepp	Knepp funding bid submitted but unsuccessful	One key project p.a.

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Interpretation		
Create and manage an accessible web resource on wetland issues, to include factsheets and advice sheets, best practice guidelines and interpretation of wider issues and case studies	Site finalised and a further 13 advice sheets added	By end 2008 & ongoing
Advice and Targeting		
Update Sussex Otter, Water Vole and Black poplar SAPs at (annual/5 yearly) intervals and be joint lead on the implementation of SAP targets	Updated end 2008	By end 2008 & ongoing
Provide advice on management for priority species and habitats. Highlight opportunities for developing and expanding wetland networks and the delivery of co-ordinated land and water management	1,141 enquiries, 32 landowners directly visited and over 9,800 acres with advice	Min 200 people p.a advised Min 200ha of land p.a. with advice
Collate evidence base for ecosystem services for wetlands	Ongoing	Ongoing
Projects to demonstrate ecosystem services to be identified	0	3
Promote sustainable land use within priority catchments	Ongoing	Ongoing
Develop wider partnership networks for priority catchments and develop these into funded wetland restoration projects.	Ongoing – Arun and Ouse priority	Ongoing
Investigate the historic context of wetland species, habitat and process in Sussex Historic assessment of otter populations Historic assessment of ancient wetland and wet woodland distribution	Started 1st part completed	Ongoing By end 2009 By end 2009
Work with Highways agencies and councils to ensure improvements in Road crossings for otters	Ongoing	Ongoing
Maintain active links with relevant local groups including Sussex Mammal Group, Sussex Dragonfly Society, SERBMP NGO gp, SBPWG, RACS and SOCS	All groups visited at least once this year	Min 1 meeting per group p.a.
Work with Sussex reedbed project to create viable wetland matrices including reedbed treatment systems throughout the county	3 meetings	2 meetings p.a.
Highlight areas of potential for new floodplain woodlands	Awaiting ancient woodland data	March 2010
Co-ordinate black poplar distribution, wet woodland planting schemes, and regeneration of poplar from seed (where viable)	400 trees 0.5 ha (reported above)	400 trees p.a. Restore 1ha of habitat p.a. By end 2009

