

# RED RIVER

## Quarter 4 SLA Report for Jan – Mar 2013

### General background, aims and objectives

The aim is to work in partnership with the Friends of Red River to deliver an annual work programme, agreed with Heanor and Loscoe Town Council representatives, on the Red River Local Nature Reserve at Loscoe.

The intention is to improve the site for the benefit of the local community by ensuring public access, and to manage, maintain and develop the site to improve habitats and encourage bio-diversity of species.

The Local Nature Reserve is home to a variety of both local and visiting wildlife. Additional funding will be sought to deliver a selection of environmental events, activities and guided walks to ensure ongoing public interest and involvement.



Red River in flood following the snow melt in March.

## Volunteer Practical Activities Summary

This quarter has included three Saturday action days with the Friends of Red River Group, the last of which, in March was a joint event with the Church. We worked on the thin strip of land between the church car park and the new path alongside the stream.

On the January task, we started to clear the glade at the top of the site. This is the area that has been identified for additional planting as the Town Council contribution to the Queen's Jubilee. We cleared bramble and vegetation encroaching into and over the stream.



This shows the team hard at work on the first day of clearing the glade at the top of the site. The fire was very welcome due to the bitter cold and the heavy snow showers. This was a day and task not easily forgotten.

At the February task, we worked close to the new viewing area. We weeded the new seeded area, cleared bramble alongside the path and next to the Women's Institute Oak tree and reinforced the dead hedge stopping access to the woodland.

There have also been four Conservation Volunteer task days in this period. On one of them we were joined by another Groundwork team comprising of two supervisors and eight unemployed teenagers on a government training

programme. They helped us to clear a large fallen Willow and to trim overhanging branches from the trees around the pond.



The broken Willow branch, before the team got to work to clear it. This type of task is perfect for the team of young unemployed people who occasionally visit and help out on the site. It needs large amounts of physical work to help keep them motivated and interested

Details of the other days are included in the Quarter 4 task list below.

Over these three months we have had 19.5 (practical task) volunteer days completed by adults and 3.5 by young people. Twelve (12) different adults and two (2) children have been involved in volunteering on the reserve in this period.

A further two Groundwork staff have been involved providing specialist skills and additional supervision to a team of eight unemployed teenagers, thereby giving a further eight practical days on site.

## Tasks in Quarter 4

- Clearance of bramble from the glade near stile at top of site. Cleared the encroaching vegetation growing into the stream.
- Cleared encroaching vegetation and overhanging branches on all paths
- Crown lifted the trees alongside steps leading to bridge over stream at top of site
- Cleared larger branches from trees over and along the Stream
- Litter picks on site to remove and recycle cans, bottles etc
- Built dead hedge and habitat piles to benefit wildlife
- Removal of large, fallen, Crack Willow tree
- Clearing overhanging branches from trees around the pond
- Pruning back overhanging branches from over the new path and viewing area
- Clearing bramble from alongside the new path and around the WI Oak tree
- Brash Burning from tree clearance
- Pruned large Hawthorn, removing side branches to improve view from new viewing area
- Removed fallen tree from over stream bed to ensure water flow
- Worked jointly with church volunteers on the area of land between church and path alongside stream



Dennis and Claire lasso a branch to stop it falling into the pond when removing it as part of the clearance work around the pond to remove overhanging branches and let more light in.

## Meetings

During this quarter there have been two Friends Of Group meetings attended by 7 members of the group. At the meeting we discussed news from the Charles Hill Development, the joint action day with the St Luke's Church Volunteers and the April to June 2013 programme. We also discussed a programme for newt identification and surveying.



The endangered Great Crested Newt, for which the Red River site is very important. We are planning a number of Newt surveying and monitoring sessions during 2013.

## Green Flag Award

The group proposed a visit to a Green Flag community site to learn how best to achieve Green Flag (Community) status. We hope to submit a Green Flag application in 2014, and need to work towards achieving the Green Flag requirements during 2013.

## Funding during 2012/2013 financial year

Additional funding of £633 from the Children and Younger Adults Department of Derbyshire County Council enabled us to run the two very well attended Environmental Educational Play Scheme sessions on the reserve, in the summer.

We were successful in an application to the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. Their Conservation Volunteer team spent a day on site on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October helping the Friends of Group with habitat development tasks. We all donned waders and got into the pond pulling the reed mace at the inflow end of the pond.

We were also successful with an application to Derbyshire Primary Care Trust for some funding to support the promotion of volunteering as a way of improving health in Amber Valley. The Red River reserve has been included as a site to provide opportunities for people to improve their physical and mental well being, and has been included on the promotional leaflet to publicise the scheme. The funding will allow me to provide a few extra activity days on the site and also, hopefully, attract new volunteers to the Friends of Group.

## Management Plan

The existing management plan is due for an update. Sharon (from the Friends of group) and I have met to sort out the requirements of the new management plan and to agree on the contents and sections required. Sharon is now producing a draft management plan and will be bringing it to a future FOG meeting for discussion and comments.

## Statistics

<b>Statistics</b>	
No. of individual volunteers on practical tasks	14
No. of individual volunteers on events	0
No. of Friends of group meetings/action days	5
No. of Practical volunteer days contributed by adult volunteers (117 hours divide by 6 hours) =	19.5
No. of practical volunteer days contributed by young people (21 hours divide by 6 hours) =	3.5
No of days on events contributed by volunteers =	0
No of activities/events/practical days delivered by GDD	7
No of additional days on site by extra Groundwork Staff *	2
No. of young unemployed teenagers working on site *	8

\* not included in volunteer statistics



Thomas, our youngest volunteer regularly keeps the stream bed clear to avoid the flow being restricted. He is very enthusiastic in his work and often finishes up very wet and muddy.

<b>Volunteer Information - Quarter 4</b> <i>(when information available)</i>	
Male volunteers	9
Female Volunteers	5
Unemployed	6
Employed	2
Retired	2
Students	4
Registered Disabled / Health problem	N/A
Under 18	2
Aged 18-25	1
Aged 26-40	3
Aged 41-65	6
Over 65	2

## Wildlife

Flowers seen before the snow fell included; Snowdrop, a few early Daffodils and some crocuses near the entrance.

Birds seen or heard on workdays this quarter include:

- Sparrow Hawk
- Nuthatch
- Goldcrest
- Blackbird
- Song Thrush
- Starling
- Tree Creeper
- Mistle Thrush
- Dunnock
- Robin
- Crow
- Collared Dove
- Magpie
- Black-headed Gull
- Great Spotted Woodpecker
- Wren
- Mallard
- Chaffinch
- Moorhen
- Goldfinch
- Wood Pigeon
- Pied Wagtail
- House Sparrow



This photograph shows a Goldcrest, which is, occasionally, seen on site feeding on the stream side trees, particularly the Alder.

## Publicity

The Nature Reserve is publicised in the Groundwork/Derbyshire County NHS Primary Care Trust leaflet promoting the health benefits of volunteering in the local environment.

## Future tasks

In the next quarter the following meetings/practical days/events/activities are planned:-

Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> April	Community Action Day
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> April	Conservation Volunteer Task
Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	Wildlife Recording and Monitoring Walk
Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	Friends of Group Meeting at 7pm
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> May	Community Action Day
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> June	Newt Survey
Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> June	Community Action Day
Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> June	Conservation Volunteer Task



Sharon at work in the snow, we would have lost her without her bright yellow top. She is clearing the lower branches of the trees to allow more light in so that the wildflowers get the opportunity to grow.