

## Update from the North Devon Biosphere

### Introduction

North Devon UNESCO World Biosphere is the first of its type in the UK and is a designation that seeks to secure a better future by linking people and nature. The reserve includes over 30 partner organisations working together under a common strategy. The BR has been influential in the Joint Local Plan for North Devon and Torridge and delivers a wide range of primarily economic and environmental programmes. This Biosphere Reserve is regarded by UNESCO as a beacon for other reserves around the world..

More information on [www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk](http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk)

Under the single partnership there are a number of working groups that lead strands of the strategy. These are Catchment, Community, Forestry, Green Economy, Nature Improvement, Marine and Research.

Much of the work is delivered by partners along with the BR team that do the coordination between the disparate groups. Funding comes from a wide range of sources.

Since this is an international designation, we are twinned with Malindi-Watamu Biosphere Reserve in Kenya; a coastal and forest site.

Due to the innovation of the BR being shown, Defra has chosen the area to deliver 2 of the 4 Pioneer programmes highlighted in the England 25 Year Environment Plan. The pioneers will serve as an initiative to find better ways to deliver gains in natural capital for the area by:

- Improved decision making;
- Better integration
- Innovative finance
- Sharing the lessons

We endeavour to apply the principles of the Pioneer and the new tools through our current and developing programmes.

### Current programmes:

#### Catchment,

- Natural Flood Management in Caen (c£80K over 2 years)
- Proposals being drafted for Ilfracombe and Combe Martin. (C£300K over 3 years)
- About to start another experiment in the Kenwith catchment to the north of Bideford.
- Diffuse pollution reduction in the estuary basin (C£500K 3 years)
- Culm Project; led by DWT with EU funds to increase the area of restored Culm grassland to increase flood resilience (£700K 3 years)

#### Community,

- Programme of community engagement with Beaford Arts and Hidden Histories. (£612K, 3 years)
- Developing Community Ambassadors around the area to champion work of the BR in their community.
- Developing projects for Health and wellbeing; linking people with green and blue space activity for healthy outcomes
- Supporting plastic free north Devon

- Life on the Verge; working with communities to enrich and maintain biodiversity in the verges of village and towns (c £20K)
- Films documenting farming in the BR pre EU exit (£14K)

#### Forestry,

- Redeveloping a woodland economy based on the small woodlands in the area working with and developing social enterprises
- Expanding woodland and improving woodland management for water quality and flood resilience (Woods 4 Water) (c £1.2M)
- Restoration and survey of ancient woodlands (C20K)

#### Green Economy,

- Reducing energy use waste in manufacturing companies (with Chamber of Commerce and Petroc)
- Supported Feasibility study re tidal impoundment on the estuary ( not viable by the way)
- Signage and marketing (£10K)
- Leading new Interreg Project on Biocultural heritage Tourism (£4M in 4 Biosphere reserves)
  - Tourism master planning
  - New tourism activity
  - Supporting local social enterprise and SMEs

#### Nature Improvement,

- Freshwater Pearl Project; improving river condition for freshwater pearl mussels (c£600K)
- Greater Horseshoe Bat project; mainly in the river Caen catchment. (c£200K)
- Biodiversity net gain (offsetting as was) programme
- Facilitation Fund groups in Caen, Tav and Torridge areas. To work with landowners on collaboration for environmental and economic gains. (c £60k)

#### Marine

- Coastal Natural Flood management (£100K 2 years)
- Shoreline management issues (Northam Burrows, Horsey Island, Instow Dunes)
- Marine pioneer (£100K+£100K WWF)
  - Marine Planning, marine research, decision support and planning, MPA designation and management, community engagement, sustainable finance, fisheries management, value added from fisheries, critical fish habitats

#### Research.

- Largely under the SWEEP programme (Exeter & Plymouth Universities and Plymouth Marine Labs) £7M
  - Land use decisions and resilient farms and resilient landscapes
  - Estuary ecosystem services
  - Marine Planning
  - Geo data abase
  - Bioremediation
  - Predicting and reducing harmful algal blooms
- Sustainable intensification platform (North Wyke/ Rothamstead research)