



# Mid-Season Newsletter 2015

## CHANGES WITHIN THE ASSOCIATION

As you may be aware we have had some changes within the working team of the Association when Tom Davis retired at the end of last year. Since then the board has been working towards providing you, the members, with the support you need from your Association.

We have arranged to use the facilities and knowledge of the Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust to provide the scientific, regional and financial assistance that we need to ensure you have access to anything you may need.

We are looking for a new part-time Executive Director who can spend his/her time looking after you, visiting your interests within the T&I and providing you with the contact that you need and to work alongside Jacqui, who will continue to provide the administration and accounts support to the Association.

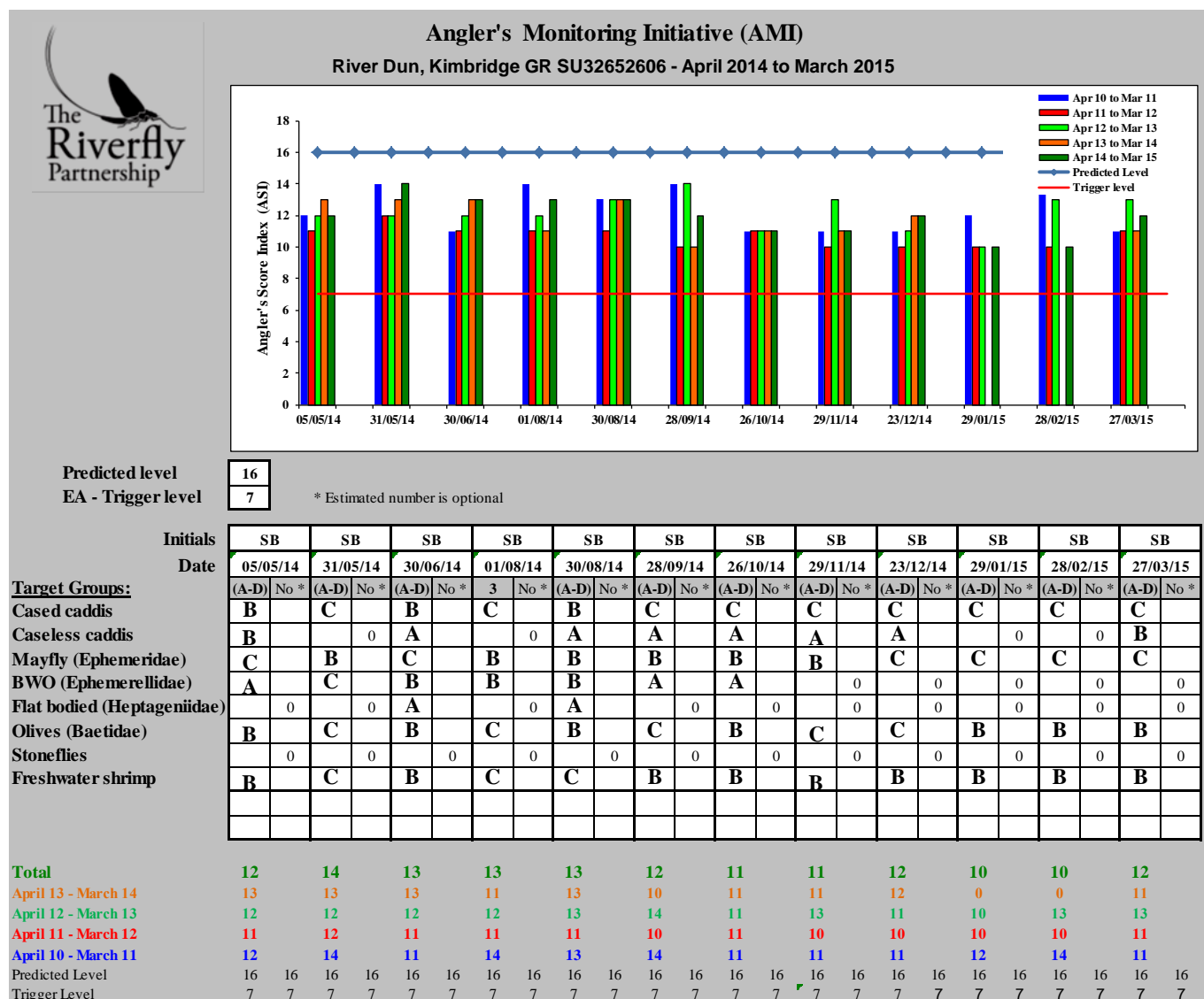
We have produced a brief job specification for the role and this has been included at the end of this publication. If you or anyone you know would be interested in filling this role please contact Jacqui Williams – 01794 341874 or [administrator@testanditchen.co.uk](mailto:administrator@testanditchen.co.uk) - who will send a detailed terms of reference for the role. The board will then arrange to meet the interested parties. We hope to fill the role by the end of this year.

The board remains fully committed to serving you to the best of its abilities during this transitional period.

## AMI MONITORING

In 2009 the T&I started training keepers and owners to monitor the river for invertebrates. Since then we have trained 45 members of the Association in AMI monitoring. Monitoring involves getting into the river and taking samples of eight different invertebrates. They look for Cased Cassis, Caseless Caddis, Mayfly, Blue Winged Olives, Flat Bodied up-wings, Olives, Stoneflies and Gammarus. Each of these shows how healthy the water is. Where they are plentiful the water is healthy, where they are few in number we are able to look at why this is so. The monitoring takes approximately one hour per month and the results gained have proven to be very useful with the EA. We have had occasions when the results/counts have dropped and the EA have investigated and found a pollution source, which was then stopped. The AMI monitors carry out a very important task in providing the Association with the scientific proof of the wildlife in the river.

Historically the monitors would enter a category letter for the number of each invertebrate type found. These are then translated into simple numbers to show on a graph (see below) the pattern of invertebrates in that area. We have set a trigger level of 7 for each area, whereby if the number in the pattern falls below 7, we ask the EA to investigate reasons for the low number. Each area has a predicted level of 16; this is considered to be the ideal pattern number of invertebrates. You can see in the graph below that this area falls between these two lines. As this is consistent, it shows the water quality to be consistent. These graphs would then be sent to Tom Davis who would check them and file them. The graphs show five years' worth of data at a time. Each coloured column is data from one year, as per the legend in top right corner. The graph below shows September to be a varied month over the five year period, yet October to be very stable on fly numbers.



We don't believe this is enough; therefore Jacqui has started working with Ben Fitch, the national AMI Coordinator, to have our AMI records entered on the national AMI website. We will then link our website to the local results, so that all members can see the AMI results on our rivers quickly and easily. In order to do this over the next few months Jacqui will contact the trained monitors to confirm if monitoring is still in place and if they need any additional assistance. Where monitoring has stopped we will ask for it to be restarted or if this isn't possible we will provide training to new monitors where they are needed.

Where data has been collected and not reported to the T&I Office we ask that you send/bring all data to Jacqui as soon as possible so that she can collate all the information. We appreciate your hard work and the more data we have the more accurate the information we can provide.

## **TRAINING WORKSHOP – Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015 (tbc)**

Your board is planning a training day for members of the Association. This will be held at Sparsholt College and although the majority of the cost will be borne by the Association we will be asking for a small contribution from each attendee. The day will consist of an overview of health and safety, habitat management and a forum to discuss activities such as AMI, the process of weed cutting and river restoration. We will have speakers from WCSRT, Riverfly Partnership, EA and NE.

This event is directed to keepers and owners as the people who carry out the duties and tasks near and in the river. We have space for 120 attendees. Please put the date in your diary and an invitation will follow in due course.

### **WEBSITE**

Due to many reasons the website did not go live at the beginning of the year. You will be able to access our new website by the end of the month. The majority of the website is available to the general public giving information on the Association and the work we carry out on behalf of our members; however there are some sections which are only accessible by members.

The Late Availability Fishing section, which is available to members only will be password protected and will enable owners to offer rods to members at a discounted rate in order to sell the day/beat which would otherwise not be sold due to the closeness of the date. The Association will not profit from this service. After the owner/manager has entered the details of the day/beat any contact will be between the rod and the owner/manager. The T&I office will not take bookings or offer any further information. We hope that this will encourage owners to sell unsold days to our membership as this will offer our ordinary members access to locations where they may not have fished before. We will be contacting each owner to offer training in entering the available days/beats.

The Archive section of the website is also password protected and offers reading material to members. You will find past copies of the River Reports, Newsletters, advice provided by the board. In due course we will post other reports/information which we have gathered and you may find useful.

Your membership password will be sent to you by email, where we have this facility or post where we don't. If you haven't received a password by mid-August, please contact Jacqui Williams and she will provide this to you. Your password will change annually and will be communicated to you with in February each year.

### **WEED CUTTING**

Weed cutting has been completed on the Itchen in May and June with only one known instance of weed coming through after the clearing down dates.

On the Test it was mostly a lighter cut in June than expected which made the absorption of the reduction of one cutting day easier to manage. We are aware that a heavier cut could impact on the keepers on the upper reaches of the river, although we hope that as most keepers have a good cutting regime this will be kept to a minimum. Cutting and clearing on the river Dun seems to have gone very smoothly, the new cutting/clearing dates together with better communication between keepers have worked for the first weed cutting period this year. We hope that this continues.

The river wardens have taken on board the many comments from keepers and owners and the board has discussed them. If you have comments that you wish the board to be aware of please contact the office or the river wardens on their next visit to you.

Whilst Natural England have withdrawn a clause for the River Itchen to revoke permission for weed cutting consents we must remain vigilant and only cut what is necessary and sensitively lest they decide to look at this practice again.

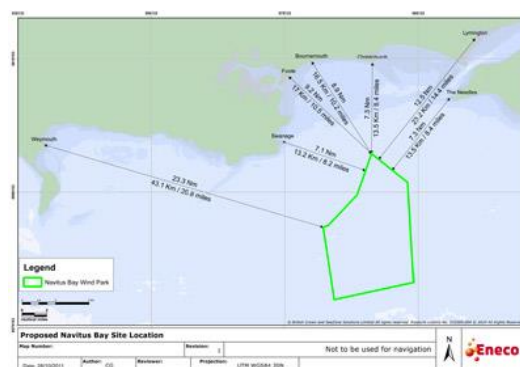
## PROPOSALS FOR SOLAR PARK AT HOUGHTON

Following the rejection of the original application, the Company involved submitted a second proposal, for fewer panels on land of the same size. Again the T&IA objected to the second application as there had been no change to the implications of the Solar Park. The Vice-Chairman of the Association is closely monitoring the situation and keeping the board informed on any movements on this proposal.

We have also objected to a proposal for a Solar Park at Goodworth Clatford on the River Anton for the same reasons. Both proposals are for solar panels to be placed alongside the rivers where flies can be fooled into thinking the flat reflective surface is the river, thereby losing them from the river. We can't afford to have a reduction at a time when we are trying to increase the fly life.

## NAVITUS BAY OFFSHORE WIND FARM PROPOSALS

One of your directors has been closely involved with the Navitus Bay proposals and has attended many meetings regarding the site location, which lies directly in the migratory path all chalk stream salmonids. We have been working closely with the WCSRT, GWCT and S&TA to discuss possible mitigation with Navitus during the three year construction phase and have presented the company with a three staged proposal of juvenile habitat restoration, monitoring and cryopreservation to ensure the future of our genetically unique salmon stocks. Discussions have been positive with Navitus and we will keep you updated of any further developments.



## TESTWOOD ABSTRACTION PROPOSALS



The Testwood abstraction saga continues. Following representations made by the T&I and others that Southern Water's draft Water Resources Management Plan was flawed, given the uncertainty over whether the environmental impact of the Testwood expansion would be acceptable, it was rejected pending presentation of alternative options. This work has now been done and a new Water Resources Management Plan published. However it still includes the Testwood expansion as the preferred

alternative. At a local level the EA and Natural England remain firmly opposed to it and discussions continue as we go to press.

## CATCHMENT INVERTEBRATE FINGERPRINT PROJECT – Update

The WCSRT Catchment Invertebrate Fingerprinting (CIF) Project, funded by The Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, has successfully completed its first year. During this time the Trust has collaborated with Dr Nick Everall of Aquascience Consulting Ltd to review all past Environment Agency aquatic invertebrate sampling data for the river catchments of the Test, Itchen and Hampshire Avon.

Then, water quality indices showing the impacts of fine sedimentation, excess reactive phosphorus, organic pollution and low-flows were calculated for each sampling site on all three catchments and GIS mapped by WCSRT staff to show the distribution of pollution impacts over time and geographical location and whether each effect at each site is improving, remaining constant or deteriorating.

The data for all three catchments show serious extensive fine sediment and reactive phosphorus impacts and this information is being explained and disseminated directly to riparian owners and through the respective river catchment partnerships. The GIS maps are also available free to all interested parties on the WCSRT web site: [www.wcsrt.org.uk](http://www.wcsrt.org.uk).

First year results have already led to a suite of new projects, from sediment pathway work on the T&I and Avon, septic tank and phosphorus awareness on the T&I and Avon, discussions with the fish and cress farming industries, and with water companies, clearance of blocked road drain sediment traps and collaboration with AMI fly life projects across all three catchments.

We believe that the CIF project is of great interest and value to T&I members as it develops an appreciation of pollution effects across the catchments of both the Test and Itchen in both time and space. The project also allows individual owners to see how their fisheries sit in the greater scheme of things and prompts people to engage in further water quality research to discover how problems can be solved and how water quality, habitat quality, fly life and fisheries can be improved in seasons to come. At the time of writing WCSRT awaits the decision from Esmee Fairbairn on a continuation grant application which will allow an extension of the study from its successful inception on the Test and Itchen into both the Meon and Dorset Stour catchments.

Dr Paul Jose, Director, WCSRT

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

We understand that planning is important and therefore we have provided dates for coming events this year. These dates will also be available on our website. Please check here for future planned events.

Late August 2015	Weed Dates to Board Proposed dates and suggested changes to 2016 dates
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2015 – 2pm	Board Meeting Board directors meet to discuss current issues and ideas Including weed cutting dates
Mid-October 2015	Request River Reports Send finalised weed cutting dates for 2016
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	Sparsholt Training Day An all-day event to for owners/keepers of the Association
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2015 - 10.30am	Autumn Meeting All members invited to Longstock Village Hall where there will be two speakers, a lunch and a river walk afterwards
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2015 – 2pm	Board Meeting Board directors meet to discuss current issues and ideas, to include dates for 2016

## Part-Time Executive Director – Job Specification

**Job Title:** Executive Director of the Test & Itchen Association

**Reports to:** Chairman and Board of the Test & Itchen Association

**Critical Purposes of the role:**

To represent the Association and its members in all river and fishery management

To guide the Board in setting the strategic direction of the Association

To maintain a buoyant and vibrant Association

**Main Responsibilities**

1. Membership
2. Communication
3. Liaison with WCSRT
4. Policy
5. River Management
6. Conservation
7. Regulatory
  - Environment Agency, Natural England, Local Authorities
8. Administration

If you or anyone you know would like more information on the role, please contact Jacqui Williams in the T&I Office on 01794 341874 or [administrator@testanditchen.co.uk](mailto:administrator@testanditchen.co.uk).

Clay Brendish  
Chairman