

WATERCRESS & WINTERBOURNES



The Hampshire Downs Chalk River Headwaters Landscape Partnership Scheme.



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Landscapes are an important part of our past and play an important part in our lives today. That's why the heritage Lottery Fund are helping conserve them and getting more people involved in understanding and looking after them for the long term.

Landscape Partnership schemes put heritage conservation at the heart of rural and peri-urban regeneration. Local, regional and national organisations work together to make a real difference to landscapes and communities for the long term. They do this by conserving habitats at landscape-scale, promoting joined-up management, reviving long-lost skills, and much more.

The Watercress and Winterbournes Landscape Partnership focuses on the headwaters of two of the UK's most iconic chalk rivers, the Test and the Itchen. This is an area shaped by the two river valleys, their tributaries and winterbourne reaches, giving rise to a landscape of distinctive wetland habitats which support a rich diversity of wildlife, as well as heritage industries, villages and their communities. The geology

of the area is dominated by chalk from which seven spring-fed tributaries (Pilhill Brook, the Upper Anton, Bourne Rivulet, Upper Test, Candover Brook, River Arle and the Cheriton Stream) provide a steady flow of crystal clear water.

Hampshire's chalk stream headwaters have been harnessed and lived with for thousands of years, shaping and shaped by human activity. This has created a unique landscape, which is as much a product of human as well as natural history. From the development of the first settlements, supplying our drinking water and the use of the streams for business and recreation, the headwaters are an integral part of the landscape and our natural heritage - our history, culture, geography and economy as well as our ecology. Modern pressures put this heritage at risk: changes in land management practices, climate change, increases in population, the need for water and recreation all threaten the intrinsic character and quality of these headwaters.

Led by the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, our partnership intends to take action to sustain this headwater landscape for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. An inspiring programme of learning, community involvement and landscape restoration, working alongside farmers, landowners, communities and visitors will enable us to share understanding, engender pride and develop the necessary skills to care for this precious landscape.

Currently in its development phase, we are working with partners, riparian landowners and community catchment groups to gather ideas and develop a community supported project plan. In October 2019 we apply for funding to turn our plans into actions and the more progress we make during its development, the stronger our application will be.

We hope that more people will join us in protecting their chalk streams by joining their local community catchment group or by volunteering with us. For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Maggie Shelton our Community Catchment Officer, on 01489 774400 or at maggie.shelton@hiwwt.org.uk.



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