



Eden Rivers Trust
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NEWS RELEASE

22 November 2013

Volunteers battle invaders!

A staggering 500 volunteers have spent more than 2000 hours helping Eden Rivers Trust battle against invading non-native species in the Eden Valley during 2013. Without their help invaders such as signal crayfish and Himalayan balsam would go unchecked, causing problems for the animals and plants that naturally live in and alongside rivers and lakes.

In total the volunteers have contributed to:

- clearing 16 miles (26 km) of riverbank and lakeshore of balsam, along with 11.5 hectares (28 acres) of adjoining land;
- managing 1100 m² of newly discovered Japanese knotweed;
- continuing the management of Japanese knotweed at sites managed in 2012;
- removing 899 signal crayfish;
- eradicating 300 giant hogweed plants which were sprayed, injected or dug up and composted.

The project has been funded by the Environment Agency and Natural England.

Paul Greaves, Invasive Species Officer at Eden Rivers Trust, said, "We are extremely grateful to all the volunteers involved because they have made a significant contribution to the conservation of the waterways and wildlife of the River Eden system. We look forward to carrying on the good work in 2014!"

Many of the volunteers this year have been under 18 years old and it has been a fantastic opportunity for them to learn about invasive species and how they are introduced and transported. They have also heard about the simple biosecurity steps that can be taken to reduce the chances of it happening. As introduction is often through hitchhiking on equipment or clothes, when people move from one

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water body to another, the Checking Cleaning and Drying of equipment is essential to minimise the risk of carrying seeds, plant fragments or animals themselves to where they shouldn't be.

Not all invasive species are introduced unintentionally. Some are still sold in garden centres and escape from the gardens where they are planted. One such plant is American skunk cabbage which has a large yellow flower, a pungent smell and can dominate wet boggy areas. This plant has been identified in several areas locally this year and chemical treatment has been carried out to prevent it taking over, as it has done in other parts of the UK.

People are asked to bear this in mind when next buying plants for their garden or pond. If any advice is required they can get in touch with the Trust or look at the "Be Plant Wise" campaign on the internet.

Ends

Pictures



Caldew School pupils clearing Himalayan balsam on the River Caldew at Dalston



Before and after photos showing members of the Rock Youth Project from Carlisle removing the invasive plant Himalayan balsam along the Eden at Lazonby

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Kirkoswald Guides clearing Himalayan balsam along the River Eden at Lazonby



Inspira summer youth programme clearing Himalayan balsam along the River Caldew at Cummersdale Holmes, Carlisle



Blue Badge Tourist Guides removing Himalayan along the River Eden near Ousenstand Bridge, with giant hogweed in the foreground



Notes to Editors

Eden Rivers Trust

1. Eden Rivers Trust is a charity dedicated to conserving the beautiful River Eden in Cumbria and its hundred of miles of tributaries.
2. It was set up in 1996 and has completed over 200 projects to improve the condition of the river for its wildlife and for people to enjoy.
3. The River Eden is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is classed by Europe as a Special Area of Conservation.
4. The Trust has been working with more than 200 farms to help them manage their land in the most environmentally-friendly way for the river.
5. To protect the Eden from erosion and pollution fences have been installed along more than 90 miles of the river and in excess of 20,000 trees have been planted. This has not reduced access for people but it has stopped animals trampling the river banks and polluting the water.

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6. In the last five years staff from the Trust have met more than 10,000 people, half of them school children from 50 different schools.
7. Annual surveys use electronic devices in the water which momentarily stun the fish, allowing experts to assess their numbers and whether the population is improving. This is carried out at hundreds of sites and allows the Trust to identify any problems.
8. The Trust relies on fund raising and grants to carry out this vital work. It needs sponsorship and donations from individuals and businesses. People can donate, become a Friend of Eden Rivers Trust or volunteer.
9. Contact details for the Trust are Eden Rivers Trust, Dunmail Building, Newton Rigg College, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 0AH, tel: 01768 866788 or email: office@edenriverstrust.org.
10. Further information on Eden Rivers Trust is available at www.edenriverstrust.org.uk.

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