

# Newsletter

## Tees Valley Pondscape



*Belasis Hall Technology Park*

Welcome to the first newsletter for the Tees Valley Pondscape project. The project is getting well underway after an excellent start by staff at the Wildlife Trust.

Rachel Jackson started in the post as project officer on the 5<sup>th</sup> January. As well as working on the Pondscape project she will be reporting on the Pond HAP for the Tees Valley.

Rachel has a keen interest in wildlife and comes to the Trust from the Tees Forest. Previously she has worked for the Durham Wildlife Trust on a Great Crested Newt project based in Darlington. In her spare time she has many interests including kayaking and keeping a variety of reptiles at her home.

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### DATA AND SURVEYS

Datasets regarding the location of ponds and species present, including reptiles, amphibians, birds and water voles in the Tees Valley have been collated and mapped on ArcMap. Many thanks to Kenny Crooks for the water vole data, Jeremy Garside and Ian Bond for the amphibian data and Teesmouth Bird Club for the dataset on birds. Wildflower Ark were commissioned to begin mapping this data on GIS and have done a great job.

Basic surveys of these ponds are now well underway, with over 100 done so far. These surveys look at the land use surrounding the pond and the groups of plant species present as well as any knowledge of previous management work that the landowner reports. As well as survey information this dataset will include landowner information, links to management plans for sites and future plans.

This growing dataset is a vital component to the project, linking together all the different aspects of the information available on each site. Landowners can now be contacted regarding their ponds and pond networks can be easily identified using GIS. Using the visual pond networks we can see areas for potential pond creations and follow up groundwork can support this. The database has over 500 ponds on record however there are more to add. Anyone with records of ponds can send them to Rachel to be checked and added if they are new to the database. Ecological surveys will begin this summer and be carried out over the next 2 years and should establish if these endangered populations are still present.



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Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

# Tees Valley Pondscape



## WEBSITE

Our new website is up and running and will include project updates, downloadable advice leaflets, invasive plant species identification, useful links and more.

## MANAGEMENT ADVICE

The project has already given pond management advice to local groups and companies including Friends of Hemlington Lake, Upsall Rural Centre, Corus and Middlesbrough Council.

A leaflet advising rural landowners on services the project can provide and advice on how to manage their ponds is now available. Please contact us for copies or download them from the website. Anyone wanting pond advice can get in touch with Rachel.

*Portrack Marsh*



## MILLION PONDS

Rachel recently attended the launch of Pond Conservation's "Million Ponds" project in London, an excellent opportunity for networking and learning about similar projects on a national scale. More information about this project can be found here:

[www.pondconservation.org.uk/millionponds](http://www.pondconservation.org.uk/millionponds)

They have recently produced a pond creation toolkit, which is a highly recommended resource. Our project is working closely with Pond Conservation and has submitted a funding bid for the creation of new ponds.

## POND CREATION

The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust work team based here at Margrove Park have already dug 6 ponds this winter, which following advice from Pond Conservation, have been left to colonise naturally. These ponds vary in size and therefore offer a new habitat for a large range of species, including those who benefit from freshly dug ponds



*Creating new ponds in rain or shine*

## VOLUNTEERS

As with many things at the Wildlife Trust volunteers play a huge role. Andrew Blewitt and Andy Cooper have been a huge help going out to sites and surveying ponds. Andrew has also set up an access database for recording the survey results, which will later link to GIS. Ecologist, Joyce Moxon, will be helping with pond invertebrate identification over the summer – invertebrates are a good indicator of the successional stages of the ponds and their water quality. Training for more volunteers is underway, initially concentrating on amphibian surveys and habitat analysis. Over 20 people have attended these days. Anyone wishing to volunteer can contact Rachel Jackson.

[www.teesvalleybiodiversity.org.uk/pondscape](http://www.teesvalleybiodiversity.org.uk/pondscape)

