

# Making Rivers Better

... a free networking event for CITIZEN SCIENTISTS ...

"We all have rivers, catchments & wildlife in common"  
"What does all this DATA ACTUALLY MEAN?"

## EAST DEVON CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP

strategic projects  
landscape restoration  
wildlife-rich habitats

our VISION  
learning from BEST PRACTICE

encouraging long term COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

engage  
educate  
empower

value lies in bringing people together

Some lessons learned:  
★ the extent of BEAVERS  
★ about RIVERFLY testing  
★ non-native crayfish... loads!  
★ learning from the EXPERTS  
★ feedback on shifting baselines

river science WALKS & TALKS

- demos & talks!
- ✓ monitoring techniques
  - ✓ water quality
  - ✓ wildlife ID
  - ✓ river health

IMPORTANT for volunteers to understand how their DATA is used.

## the VALUE of CITIZEN SCIENCE DATA

the Environment Agency uses citizen science data to inform its work

Helen Dobby, Environment Agency

early warning of potential change  
better local knowledge  
agile approach to gathering EVIDENCE  
valid alongside scientific data

invaluable

can drive behaviour change  
helps to TARGET solutions

citizen science "improves & enriches all our lives"

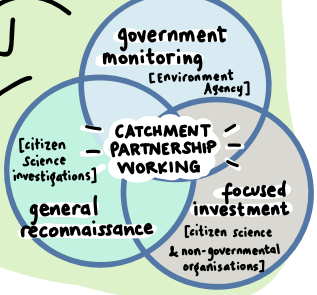
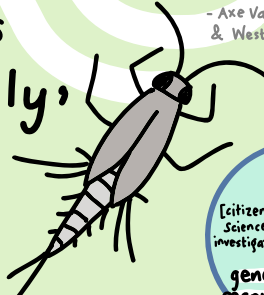
the GOAL of Citizen Science Investigations: to EMPOWER people to CHANGE behaviour

- ★ we test for PHOSPHATES
- ★ AMMONIA
- ★ SUSPENDED SOLIDS

## CITIZEN SCIENCE MONITORING - what it tells us...

- Axe Vale Rivers Association (AVRA) & Westcountry Rivers Trust (WRT)

'riverfly' a GREAT indicator of river health



3500+ Surveys in 2022

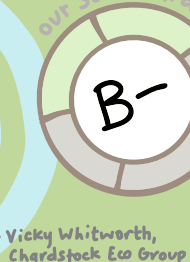
CHALLENGES...  
!CAPACITY!  
!FUNDING!  
increased & sustain

how to create trusted, shared resources?  
-Environment Agency & Partners

"the Kit Brook is a Special Place"

NO ONE is going to make RIVERS better unless we do this ourselves!

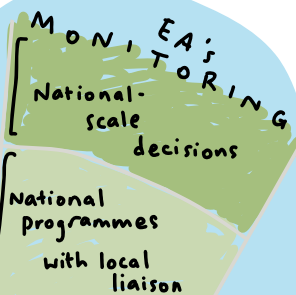
## citizen science to CITIZEN ACTION!



ACTION PLAN Kit Brook

★ involve the people, the politicians, the little ones... build relationships

★ co-created by the PEOPLE of the PLACE



★ all EA test sites visible on map

★ all data is open data: accessible to all

"citizen science in conjunction with other data is an excellent early warning system"

## ENVIRONMENT AGENCY monitoring

- Michael Thomas, EA Analysis & Reporting

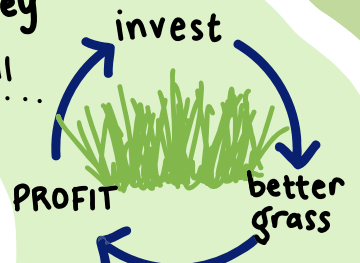
Programmed Surveillance [patterns over time]

Investigative Monitoring [find cause for an issue]

Field Survey & Lab Work [reporting on how systems respond to pressures]

## FARMING in SENSITIVE water catchments

★ need to make enough money to pay for environmental schemes...



remember to go easy... older farmers have heard it all before, when 'best practice' told them to do the opposite...

★ important for all of us to work together

managing our soils is key

-Sam Parris, Dairy Farmer Yarcombe, East Devon.

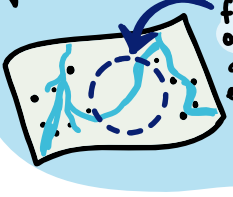
## CASE STUDY: how to tackle himalayan balsam?

- ★ get proper ADVICE
- ★ survey & write a PLAN
- ★ educate & engage locally
- invasive non-native species
- ★ can we get ACCESS to it?
- ★ learn from others' successes

## CASE STUDY: what to do with a fallen tree in river?

conflicting views...  
use as NATURAL FLOOD DEFENCE  
misunderstanding about VS. CLEARING the river "to IMPROVE the FLOW"

## how to INCREASE our IMPACT?



- fill GAPS on MAPS - approach existing groups?
- approach SCHOOLS near water courses
- ask CSI volunteers to take on additional tasks
- an ENVIRONMENT GROUP mapping exercise for Axe catchment?
- establish new groups where there is motivation over current issues [flooding, beavers etc.]

We'd WELCOME new volunteers!

## engaging WITH THE Public about river monitoring



"most people are KEEN & POSITIVE"