

News release



18th November 2014

Volunteers get their feet wet for river wildlife

A group of 120 volunteers and staff from Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) and Sembcorp Bournemouth Water have put in 600 hours of work to clear the Gussage Stream near Wimborne of 2km (1.5miles) of weed and vegetation to support rare and threatened wildlife, such as otters and white-clawed crayfish.

The work also complements the Environment Agency and Sembcorp's work with how they manage flows in the future, and explores innovative ways of managing the Gussage Stream in partnership with others and in a wildlife friendly manner. This is the first year 'man-power' has been used to clear the stream, whereas in previous years the work was done by machinery, such as an excavator, to remove the excess growth with a long reach bucket.

DWT Rivers Conservation Officer, Amanda Broom, said, "Using machinery to clear the weeds in the stream isn't the most sensitive method for wildlife, so we are delighted that in partnership with the Environment Agency and with the help of DWT and Sembcorp volunteers, we have been able to cut the weed by hand. Whilst some of the weed is essential for invertebrates and fish, too much can change oxygen levels in the water, causing stress and even fatalities to fish. The Gussage stream is a tributary of the River Allen which is a rare chalk stream, so it is essential that we look after this precious habitat."

Sembcorp volunteer, Mike Vicars, said, "I live locally and I'm interested in wildlife, so it's great not only to help nature, but also get outside in the fresh air. It's definitely hard work, but very rewarding!"

Richard Battersby of the Environment Agency said: "This is a super example of us all working together to achieve common aims and protect not only the environment, but important chalk stream habitat as well. It would be fantastic if we could continue this way of working in the future with such enthusiastic volunteers".

Sembcorp Bournemouth Water has been a long term supporter of DWT's River Allen project, generously donating annually to conservation work. To find out more about river conservation work in Dorset, visit www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/dorsetwildrivers.



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Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

If you are interested in getting involved with Dorset Wildlife Trust's volunteering scheme, visit www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteering



Semcorp Bournemouth Water volunteers clearing weed on the Gussage stream © Sally Welbourn

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Notes to Editor

For more information about Semcorp Bournemouth Water, visit <http://www.semcorpbw.co.uk>

For more information please contact Sally Welbourn at Dorset Wildlife Trust on 01305 264620.

For our latest news RSS feed, see http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/c2/rss/dwt_latest_news.xml

About Dorset Wildlife Trust www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk

Working for a secure future for Dorset's wildlife enriching the quality of life

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Dorset Wildlife Trust works to champion wildlife and natural places, to engage and inspire people and to promote sustainable living. Founded in 1961, DWT is now the largest voluntary nature conservation organisation in Dorset, with over 25,000 members and over 40 nature reserves. Most are open daily and there are visitor centres providing a wealth of wildlife information at Brooklands Farm, Lorton Meadows, Kingcombe Meadows and Brownsea Island Nature Reserves, The Purbeck Marine Wildlife Reserve and the Urban Wildlife Centre at Upton Heath Nature Reserve. DWT plays a key role in dealing with local environmental issues and leads the way in establishing the practices of sustainable development and engaging new audiences in conservation, particularly in the urban areas.



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