



RIVER GARA CATCHMENT SUPPORT FOR ON-FARM IMPROVEMENTS

To all landowners in the River Gara catchment area -

We wanted to let you know about our intention to run another small capital grant scheme shortly which aims to deliver improvements in water quality.

You may be aware that we ran a previous round in 2019/20, these works are completed and paid. We now have a second round to follow a similar approach, but due to Coronavirus restrictions we are unable to deliver this under our normal method with an event to meet you and discuss it. We are writing to you initially to let you know about the opportunity and to gather your interest instead.



GRANT FUNDING
SUPPORT FOR
WATER QUALITY
PROTECTION

We are working in a Partnership - Westcountry Rivers Trust, Catchment Sensitive Farming and the Environment Agency (WRT, CSF & EA); and have managed to secure a small amount of funding from the EA to address issues of water quality. The Gara currently suffers from diffuse inputs - mainly Phosphate, from livestock and arable activities. This is of concern for river health and is failing to achieve Good Ecological Status for Water Framework Directive standards, but also impacts the biodiversity of the wider area and ultimately Slapton Ley, and bathing and coastal waters downstream.

The fund is primarily designed to help reduce losses of soil & nutrients, keeping them on the land and protecting the watercourse whilst helping to manage stock access. Eg. previous work supported watercourse or wetland area fencing, alternative livestock drinking provision of troughs & pipework, track diverters, sediment traps or clean & dirty water separation (similar to CSF items). Grants are offered at 50% intervention and paid after completion based on simple evidence checks by WRT.

THE FIRST ROUND OF
FUNDING ALLOWED US
TO MORE THAN DOUBLE
THE ORIGINAL VALUE
THROUGH FARMERS OWN
INVESTMENT AT 132%



INTERESTED IN THE SECOND ROUND?

Timescale

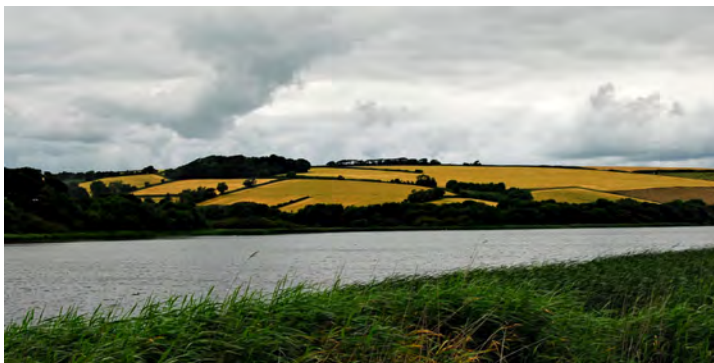
Currently we hope to be able to set out the full details later in June/July, subject to Coronavirus limitations. We will welcome your interest in coming months and set out a deadline to get in contact and next steps. Any works will need to be assessed by us first for priority and fairness, to ensure we feel its appropriate and best use of funds as we anticipate more demand than funding, before completing a simple contract - with works to be carried out later this year.

CPES Project

The funds complement the wider works locally under WRT's CPES (Channel Payments for Ecosystem Services) project, which aims to investigate if or how to lever investment into land & water management. Our other focus area on the Lyd (Tamar) has seen investment brought about through a group of supportive Companies (<https://wrt.org.uk/tamar-water-stewardship-business-board/>). WRT would like to expand this where possible - and one option is interest in **Soil Organic Carbon (SOC)**. WRT will be offering free sampling this autumn, to expand our previous trials on this subject and to provide you with an assessment of current levels - and its potential to maximise this in the future, at a farm and whole catchment scale: Bringing about better soil health and function.

We would like to link this work with better understanding of actual river conditions and to encourage landowners in actively contributing towards that via a local network of water quality sampling; in and around farms - by farmers, for comparison. We can provide simple testing kit and a confidential recording method to group members.

By working in the Gara alongside CSF & the EA collectively, we aim to provide supported investment to help your farm business and the local environment longer term. We will be issuing more information shortly, in the meantime if you are interested in any aspect of this project - please contact either of us as below to register your interest for follow up at this stage.



WESTCOUNTRY RIVERS TRUST

HAZEL KENDALL

Email: hazel@wrt.org.uk

M: 07977 141186

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

JON GRIMES

Email: Jon.Grimes@naturalengland.org.uk

M.07789 278621