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April - June 2024



Molly, Rix and Ashley in the community garden



WoofFest

Welcome to our Newsletter

Midsummer is such a bittersweet time of the year for me. On the one hand there are the midsummer celebrations with friends and neighbours, there are skies full of bird song and gardens and verges bursting with flowers... The vegetable garden grows fast and it seems that all of nature is rushing to replenish itself.

On the other hand as we pass the longest day it's reminder that we are back in the time of diminishment, the days will shorten and eventually the sun will loose it's heat, the flowers will wilt, the new young will reach adult hood and all too soon it will be winter again....

It is the same here at the Trust. There are so many exciting things happening, things to be enthusiastic about, so much important work to deliver. But as with all things, the flow is shadowed by the ebb and we are set to diminish!

Despite our best efforts (and they are excellent efforts) we have been unable to attract funding for any new projects in the last six months. The current economic situation is placing increasing pressure on existing funding pots and, in the absence of serious investment to support the Governments aspirations to address the climate and nature emergency thus far opportunities are limited.

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We will, of course, continue to make funding bids and to work with our partners to design and develop projects that can support us all as we face into the ongoing challenges projecting and repairing our natural environment but our team will change shape in the coming weeks as we loose valuable team mates and dear dear friends through lack of funding.

This makes all of us here at the trust feel very sad and a little fragile. We try to remain hopeful however and are buoyed by the support of our partners in their continued involvement of us in their plans and in their willingness to share their resources with us. We are working hard to make sure that we do not suffer any further losses.

If you find yourself with the capacity to support us in this difficult time it will be very much appreciated by myself and by the remarkable group of people who currently call the Nene Rivers Trust their professional home. It doesn't necessarily have to be in the form of hard cash, although obviously this would be helpful, we are open to hearing your bright ideas, invitations to collaborate or just a gentle ear and a cuppa!

-Kat Soares, Chief Executive

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The Learning Garden



Progress in the Community Garden has really excelled in recent months, as I'm sure you can imagine with the copious amounts of rain (and odd days of sun) that we have been blessed with.

We're happy to report that all of the rainwater soon filled up the two tonne IBC's that we installed on the side of Building 1. This was a complicated project and required various trips back and forth to plumbing suppliers. However, the garden is being watered entirely from rainwater thanks to a very wet Spring.

This has not been without its trials and tribulations. One afternoon was spent emptying a tonne of water into various containers so we could move the IBC, only to refill it afterwards.



Another great achievement in the garden has been the potting shed. Made from old palettes and repurposed floor boards from the Threshing Barn at CHE, this is a real central feature to the garden and will allow us to keep our veggies safe over the winter months, and will be a warmer spot to get our seedlings going in the spring.

So far, we have had one pea (and more on the way) and some strawberries and onions! We are in a constant battle with rabbits, slugs and other pests, along with the difficulty of keeping everything sufficiently watered (despite the rain), without members on site every day.

Next up, we will be adding felt roof tiles to the shed, hopefully installing a pond, and we continue our search for a digger to get the path ready for our summer visitors.

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Big Spring Clean



In April we did two community litter picks that were hugely successful.

Our first was with Stanwick Lakes where we were joined by the Wellie Wombles and 60 members of the public, including young families and retirees, who collected 23 bags of litter throughout the day!

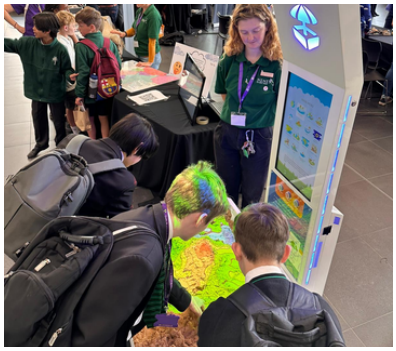


At the end of April we did a litter pick along Wellingborough Embankment with the Wellie Wombles and Wellingborough Eco Group.

In total we collected 54 bags of litter that had washed up around the area from the winter of flooding.



Community Engagement





Spring is always the busiest time at NRT for being out and about and engaging with the community.

We had an enjoyable and useful morning at Northamptonshire Women's Institute coffee morning, where we shared information about our project and made some useful contacts with landowners and local WIs. The WI have 'Cleaner Rivers' as one of their campaigns, and were delighted to help distribute information about Local Nature Recovery Schemes across their networks and at their events.





We also attended the Green Living Day at Stanwick Lakes, where handed out water saving devices and LNRS Top Trumps to members of the public.

Finally, we attended one of our highlight events of the year, Northamptonshire STEAM at the University of Northampton. We showcased the iSand River box and got hundreds of students input on their desires for nature recovery over the next 10 years.

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Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)

We have been very busy with the consultation for the development of the local nature recovery strategies in both North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire.

Working with key partners we successfully convened a working group of stakeholders who are now working together with our support to make decisions about not only the style and content of these important documents but also to negotiate on the priority habitats, species and the outcomes and measures that will best deliver for nature and for our communities and business.

It's a delicate thing to balance the various interests of humans that include recreation, agriculture, industry, and housing with the needs of nature. More so in a changing landscape that is already under pressure and is further threatened by a rapidly changing climate.

Even so, this is exciting work for us. At NRT we have always believed that the people who are impacted by decisions should be part of the decision making process so having this incredible opportunity to work with people from all across our geography and from all sectors of our communities to feed into the decisions that are being made to support the natural environment that supports us feels very powerful indeed.

It's also given us a great opportunity to get out and about, meeting more people and hearing more perspectives about the areas of work that we are committed to.

The list of events is numerous but has included briefings for landholders, workshops with landholders and parish council representatives, gathering input from youngsters through various events including the STEAM event recently hosted by the University of Northampton and activity days in the catchment.



If you would like to have your say on the future of nature where you live please do take the opportunity to participate in this survey and for any additional information please do check out this website.

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SPA Champions

The Nature Activity Day at Stanwick Lakes was a roaring success once again. We had more young people than ever attend the event, once again with places selling out fast.

The weather was testing at times, but did not dampen our spirits. The girls took part in various activities including pond dipping, nature detectives, feathered friends (making beaks to catch worms with and playing bird games), den building, a heritage trail and of course some free time in the adventure playground. Throughout the day the girls learnt all about the protected wildlife at Stanwick Lakes and surrounding areas and at the closing ceremony we sang nature songs and some groups arrived chanting 'Save Our Environment'. Some units who couldn't join us on the day have since done the workshop in their meeting time.

In the evening we hosted a leaders event where some adults stayed and other joined for some nature connection activities, crafts, a guided nature walk and, of course, more singing. It was a lovely event and was fantastic to see women of all ages connecting.






We also visited Year 4 at Upton Meadows Primary School to run our SPA workshop. This lovely group of children from an urban school were delighted to learn all about the nature that sits on their doorstep. And mostly, for the infamous Top Trump Quiz!

Nene Valley Woofs

We ran our final dog walk of the season at Northampton Washlands, a lesser known nature reserve between Riverside Retail Park and Brackmills Industrial Estate that is a particularly problematic area for dogs off of leads.

We also attended various community engagement events to chat to dog owners including Wooffest at Chester House Estate, the Green Living Day at Stanwick Lakes, and we had another pop up station at Summer Leys Nature Reserve, where we were delighted to be told by some birders that they had been seeing less dogs off leads of late!



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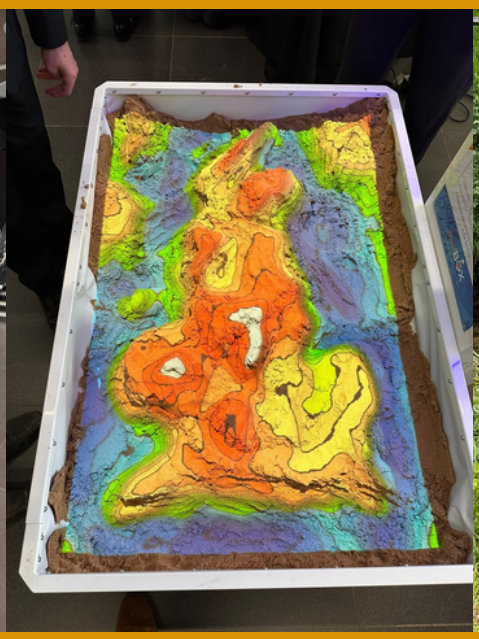
RAIN & LENS

Rain has been working on an education hub for schools and young people all about flood resilience and natural flood management measures, specific to the Harpers and Wootton Brooks.

As part of this project we are collaborating to develop a rain garden pack for homeowners, which will include instructions, materials and plants so that people can build rain gardens in their own gardens to improved localised flood management.

Part of the education element of this project resulted in the purchase of a river table from iSand Box, which will allow us to provide interactive demonstrations about the water cycle, natural flood management, river typography and more. We extend a special thanks to our funders of the RAIN project, Natural England and DEFRA.







The team have continued working with farmers and landowners to implement larger scale NFM projects such as leaky damns, pond creation and bunds.

One example pictured above demonstrates some work completed in Deanshanger where the original brook channel has been reconnected for the first time in 40 years. A new logjam was installed, along with gabions to reinforce the bank, and several tons of silt were removed.

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Rockingham Forest Vision

The Rockingham Forest Vision team have been as busy as ever. A particular highlight was the planting of micro wood along Dunnock Road in Corby where 760 trees were planted by local children and the Scouts, fueled by free pizza!



Katie Field from the East Mercia Trust has now trained a total of 32 river wardens in the Rockingham Forest. This vital training means that our local rivers, streams, brooks will have regular surveys carried out and this data will be used both locally and nationally to help support the health of our water courses. The latest training took place in Barnwell Country Park when five new volunteers signed up to be river wardens.

Last month saw the relaunch of the Tree Warden scheme at East Carlton Country Park with plenty of enthusiastic volunteers turning up to become our local tree champions. Training will continue in May and June and the good news is it's not to late to join the team. For more information on becoming a tree warden please click the link to the RFV website -tree wardens

Sophie has been working with the parishes and friends groups to develop their Nature Recovery Plans. Including spreading the word with community engagement events in both Easton on the Hill and Oundle. They have been making wildflower seed bombs etc!

Above you can see her working with Moulton College students. They spent a day in Raw Haw Wood learning about a hazel coppiced woodland and doing forest school activities.

In June Sophie began working with Home Start families in Corby running after school Nature Club.

Corinne has been working on a creative competition - What does the Rockingham Forest mean to me - see link for more information about the competition.

Finally, we are busy preparing for a whole partner event at Prior's Hall on August 28th. This is a free family fun day with lots of exciting activities taking place. Check out the flyer on the following page.

FREE FUN FAMILY DAY

Prior's Hall Corby

Wednesday 28th August 2024
From 10.30a.m till 3.30p.m

COME AND JOIN THE FUN...

AT THE GREEN AMPHITHEATRE AND THE GULLET







- BUG HUNTING & MOTH TRAPS
- NATIVE WILDFLOWER SEED BOMBS
- TREE ACTIVITIES & LEAF PRINTING
- FIND OUT ABOUT THE LOCAL WILDLIFE AND FLORA ON A GUIDED STROLL THROUGH THE GULLET
- NATURE ART - MAKE A CRAFTY BUTTERFLY, RED KITE AND MORE
- LEARN ABOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE
- BIRD FEEDERS
- APPLE PRESSING AND MORE...

Made possible with Heritage Fund

All children must be accompanied by an adult

ROCKINGHAM FOREST VISION

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Out and about





On June 22nd, some of our team joined the Rivers Trust movement and many other environmental groups for the 'Restore Nature Now' march in London. Thousands of people attended and it was a great atmosphere full of people supporting the need to restore nature.



Later that week, many of us enjoyed some solstice celebrations, marking the longest day of the year by gathering with friends to enjoy the many hours of daylight.





At the end of the month, Tris had an outing to Groundswell, where he learnt lots about sustainable land schemes and had some useful conversations with fellow farmers.