

Severn Tidings

Working in partnership for the future of the Severn Estuary

www.severnestuary.net

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Welcome!



Cllr Martin Quaile,
Chair of the Severn
Estuary Partnership
Management Group

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Spring edition – and also my first edition as

Chair – of Severn Tidings, in which we can reflect on what a successful year this has been for SEP.

Partnership highlights include: SEP's involvement in the European DeltaNet conference; helping to contribute to 2 international conferences; seeing significant progress within the field of Marine Planning and continued cross-border liaison; the extremely rewarding annual Severn Estuary Forum held at Cardiff University and the launch of the eagerly anticipated, first ever 'State of the Severn Estuary Report -2011' which can be accessed at: <http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/publications/soser.html>

The past 6 months as Chair of the Severn Estuary Partnership have been fast paced and highly interesting, with the next 6 months set to be even busier – with the likes of the imminent FRMS review by the EA. This will be the third consultation for flood management of the River Severn, following the EA's response to recommendations recognising the need to work with all parishes along the river, looking at issues and guidance as a whole. This resulted from a task group hosted by Gloucestershire County Council – the findings and responses of which can be viewed at: <http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=6136>

<http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=6210>

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support of the Severn Estuary Partnership and for welcoming myself as the new Chair. I hope that the following year proves to be both enjoyable and successful and that we can continue to build our networks and joint working relationships to stride towards the sustainable management of our unique and valuable Estuary.



SEP staff, from left to right, Paul Parker (SEP Officer), Beth Taylor (SEP Assistant), Gwilym Owen (SEP Communication Officer).

Communicating Coastal Change

As I reflect on the past 6 months, I appreciate how quickly the marine sector is evolving and how busy we have been here at SEP, working to keep you informed whilst improving our network alongside the developing legislation and plans.

It has been a challenging 6 months, with changes both internally and externally – however the achievements of the Partnership continue to influence and inform on both local and national scales.

Firstly I would like to begin by welcoming Beth Taylor to the Partnership, who joined us on a student placement and worked tirelessly on the development of the eagerly anticipated 'State of the Severn Estuary Report'. I would also like to extend the Partnership's thanks to Rhys Morgan and all at the Environment Agency for their continued support on the project. More details on the report can be found on page 4.

Our congratulations also go to Christine Marsh, SEP and ASERA Officer, who welcomed Lucie Rhiannon into her family in August 2011. Sadly, Christine will not be returning to the Partnership post maternity leave. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank Christine on behalf of all at SEP and ASERA for all her hard work over the past 2 years and wish her all the best in her new venture with Associated British Ports. I do hope we can continue to work jointly in the future.

The past year has seen SEP undertake numerous projects, one of which being the development of the overarching 'State of the Severn Estuary Report' (SOSER).

The report was launched in February 2012 and has been positively received by contributors, practitioners and Estuary users alike. We are currently in the process of identifying a robust set of sustainability indicators to be used in future editions of the report. We would welcome thoughts and ideas on potential ways forward with these indicator sets especially with regards to data sources and future dissemination.

The 2011 Forum was extremely well supported, with contributions from a wide range of industries, organisations and individuals; including the BBC presenter Miranda Krestovnikoff, who provided an entertaining insight into her work within the marine environment and life on the Severn Estuary. The Forum focused on flooding and energy within the Estuary and saw over 200 delegates participate in a number of interesting and varied debates.

This year's Forum will be held in September and will focus on 'Marine Planning in the Severn: a Partnership approach'. Further details regarding venue and date confirmation will be circulated via E-news and advertised on our website. If you would like to receive notifications of SEP E-news articles please email the Partnership at severn@cf.ac.uk

Work at a European scale has continued, with SEP being actively involved in the INTERREG IVB IMCORE Project and the INTERREG IVC DeltaNet

Project. Additional details on these projects can be found on page 3.

With Marine legislation continuing to develop, including a focus on MCZ's and Marine Spatial Planning, it is as important as ever for us to continue to work in Partnership towards the sustainable management of our Estuary. We are continuing to work closely with the Marine Management Organisation, Welsh Government, Wales Coastal Maritime Partnership and the Coastal Partnerships Network to ensure maximum collaboration and cross border working in terms of marine planning in the Estuary. Official Planning has not yet commenced, however the Partnership hopes to be well placed and engaged when planning does formally begin. Both the MMO and WG have been busy behind the scenes, with the MMO continuing to plan for the East inshore and offshore zones, as well as preparing baseline data for the whole of England such as the Socio-economic benefits study and the development of the Marine Planning Portal: <http://planningportal.marinemanagement.org.uk/>. The Portal allows users to view a range of information and locations, from details of wind farm developments to conservation areas, helping us all to understand how busy our seas have become.

<http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/se.htm>
<http://planningportal.marinemanagement.org.uk/>

The Welsh Government has also been busy developing their approach to Marine Planning with a public consultation launched in spring 2011. Since then, Ministers of the new administration have reaffirmed the approach to marine planning but with a review of timings. In addition, a further focus on cross departmental working has been affirmed due to the cross cutting nature of the work. In the meantime the Marine team have been working with relevant WG policy areas to plan and map in detail what the different spatial priorities are now and what they may be in the future for the Welsh Marine Area. The Marine team have also been working closely alongside the developing Natural Environment Framework, currently out for consultation.

<http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/whatsnew/consultations.html>

It is clear to see that it is a busy and exciting time for the marine sector and I look forward to continuing to work closely with you all to enjoy, harness and protect our unique Severn Estuary. I hope you enjoy this issue of Severn Tidings. If you have any comments or suggestions for future articles, please do not hesitate to contact me.

*Paul Parker
Severn Estuary Partnership Officer*



2011 Severn Estuary Forum, Cardiff University

Severn Estuary Forum 2011

The 2011 Severn Estuary Forum attracted over 200 delegates to Cardiff for a full day of formal presentations and informal networking. The day was divided into a number of sessions with themes including flood risk, energy production and adaptation to climate change with associated lessons from Europe. Delegates also had the opportunity to view informal displays, which included information on the INTERREG IVB IMCORE Project and INTERREG IVC DeltaNet Project, Flatholm Island, The Royal Yachting Association and Bristol Channel Yachting Association, Severn Area Rescue Association, Wales Environment Link, the Marine Management Organisation and aquatic consultants APEM.

The first formal session focused on the work of SEP, followed by the port sector. Cllr. Martin Quaille, Chair of the Partnership and SEP Officer Paul Parker set the context for the day in addition to outlining the achievements of the Partnership over the last year and the importance of continuing to work together towards the sustainable management of our Estuary.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Boris Hochfeld from Hamburg Port Authority, described the Tidal Elbe concept and how the Authority sustains the tidal river seaport of Hamburg. Boris focused on dredging issues and the need for and challenges of, conforming to European legislation. He also complimented the Severn on its Partnership approach to managing the Estuary. An article by

Dr. Boris Hochfeld can be found on page 2.

In the following session, focus turned to flood risk and adaptation, with Dr. Kevin Horsburgh of the National Oceanographic Centre, discussing the 1607 flood and exploring potential comparisons with recent storm surges and weather events in the Severn. Graham Quarrier from the Environment Agency South West, outlined the developing Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy (FRMS) and SMP2; before Dr. Rhoda Ballinger concluded the morning's session with an informative account of the European INTERREG IVB IMCORE project.

Dr. Ballinger reviewed adaptation options to climate change on the Estuary and concluded her discussion by launching the IMCORE Guidelines and the 'State of the Severn Estuary Report' summary document, jointly with Miranda Krestovnikoff, BBC Coast TV Presenter.

Miranda kicked off the afternoon sessions with an entertaining account of her experiences while filming the BBC Coast TV series. Delegates then enjoyed two clips from the series before having an opportunity to participate in a lively panel debate based around adaptation options to climate change in the Estuary.

The final session of the 2011 Forum focused on energy in the Estuary with presentations from the major energy providers around the Severn's coastline. Dr. Mark Picton from RWE npower, began the session by outlining the operations of Aberthaw coal-fired Power station, drawing attention to their pioneering technology.

David Eccles of EDF Energy then outlined EDF's proposed Nuclear Power Station development – Hinkley Point C. He discussed the proposals and development process, showing delegates visualisations of where the new station could be developed and what it could look like. David also focused on the environmental aspects of the proposal as well as the planned mitigation measures.

The final two talks of the day were centred on marine renewables, with Dr. Bettina Bockelmann-Evans outlining the aims of the Marine Renewable European project (MAREN); highlighting various tidal energy technologies. Dr. Nigel Nayling of the University of Wales concluded the day's formal proceedings with a presentation on the cultural impacts and responses to offshore renewable energy, speaking on behalf of the Offshore Renewable Energy Impact Network.

Feedback from delegates who attended the 2011 event has been positive, with individuals praising the broad diversity of topics and speakers present and the value of sharing the experiences of our European colleagues.

Planning for the 2012 Forum is now underway with this year's event focusing on 'Marine Planning on the Severn: a Partnership approach', due to be held in September.

Copies of all speakers' presentations and information on past and future forums can be found at: www.severnestuary.net/sep/forum.html



Port of Hamburg © Hamburg Port Authority



Neßsand Natura 2000 site, Lower Elbe © Hamburg Port Authority

The Severn and Elbe are mates

Speaking at the annual Severn Estuary Forum in September last year, was for me, probably like showing a piece of artwork at the Tate for anyone who seriously paints. Since first being concerned with estuaries, the Severn has always seemed to be in a class of its own. I am not only talking about its enormous tidal range, which is more than three times as high as the Elbe's, where I was born and bred. Nor am I referring to my fascination with the tidal bore that allows you to surf a single wave for 35 minutes – a challenging dream for anybody who has ever tried to stand up on a long board. But my true fascination for the Severn is based on the fact that it is the home of a truly cross-border and cross-sector partnership, the Severn Estuary Partnership (SEP).

Why is it fascinating? Managing an estuary for me is all about communication. Of course there are scientific and technical issues – estuaries are amongst the most complex of environments – but let's be honest; many tasks are not thoroughly tackled, not because of a lack of knowledge but because of disjointed communication. With the worst, but unfortunately quite common action, being that of no communication at all.

So, I was amazed to witness the open and fair discussion taking place between all Estuary stakeholders – as different as nuclear power and nature conservation. Everybody's point of view was heard and considered on neutral grounds which the SEP provided at the Forum. Having clear neutrality is, I guess, the one great prerequisite for a Partnership like this.

At the Elbe, we are gradually moving towards this. The Elbe Estuary itself hosts the Port of Hamburg – Europe's second largest seaport – situated roughly 120km inland and employing nearly 150,000 people in the region. However, the communicative processes here are driven by particular interests; such as capital dredging or port development – that or the implementation of Europe's challenging nature directives. For the latter, we have now managed to set up an integrated management plan as a true joint project of the three Lander Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony and Hamburg, the Federal Administration for Waterways - and my organisation, the Hamburg Port Authority (HPA). During this process, all relevant stakeholders contributed actively to the plan with the result of basic consensus.

One lesson that can never be repeated too often, is that estuaries need to be seen as one system. Common strategies are necessary, such as the Severn Estuary Strategy or the more specific Elbe's River Engineering and Sediment Management Concept. Europe is helping to teach this lesson by funding projects like DeltaNet (where I met Paul Parker who invited me to the Severn Estuary Forum) or TIDE – a more specific project on tidal estuaries – where the HPA has the lead. We learn that we have similar challenges in estuaries all over Europe, even if the tidal range differs by more than ten meters. Knowledge on estuaries will improve gradually but sustainable decisions need to be made now, preferably consensually. Besides technical knowledge – open communication is the key. Maybe one day, we will have an Elbe Estuary Partnership and I hope I can invite Paul to speak at the opening Forum.

*Boris Hochfeld,
Hamburg Port Authority*

DeltaNet: Recent Progress

First reported in the last issue of the *Severn Tidings*, the DeltaNet Project – financed by the European Union's Interregional Cooperation Programme (INTERREG IVC) – is a partnership of eight estuaries and deltas around Europe (The Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt (Belgium/Netherlands); Elbe (Germany); Vistula (Poland); Severn (UK); Tagus (Portugal); Ebro (Spain); Minho (Spain/Portugal) and Danube (Romania)).

Its aims are linked across five consecutive and concurrent 'theme' areas: 1 - Integrated Delta Approach; 2 - Flood & Sediment Management; 3 - Healthy Environment; 4 - Delta Awareness and 5 – Coordinated Delta Policy, which seeks to integrate the results of the first four themes into a concrete sustainable policy. Each theme is organised around a series of expert workshops with field visits, larger conferences involving local politicians and follow-up workshops.

Since the last article, the Severn Estuary Partnership has been able to develop a work plan for Theme 1 to share our knowledge and experience of promoting a sustainable approach between often competing interests of the environment and the social and economic development of the Severn Estuary through the inclusive Partnership approach. One of the first actions of this plan was to invite Dr. Boris Hochfeld of the Hamburg Port Authority and representative of the Elbe Estuary in Germany as a guest speaker at the 2011 Severn Estuary Forum, as well as providing a networking and site visit with the Bristol Port Company.

Members of SEP also attended the International Conference "Delta & Wetlands" in September in Tulcea, Romania. This was organised by the Danube Delta National Research and Development Institute (DDNI) as a preparatory event of the Sixth World Water Forum, to be held



Danube Delta, Tulcea © Gwilym Owen

this year in Marseille and was attended by over 120 scientists from 12 countries over 3 days.

As part of SEP's increasing role within the DeltaNet Project, we actively participated in all three theme workshops in Tulcea, which were: Flood Risk and Sediment Management (theme 2); Healthy Delta Environment (theme 3) & Delta Awareness (theme 4). There was also the opportunity for a study visit to the Dunavat-Holbina restoration areas within the Danube Delta where examples of work by the DDNI to restore the area back to its original habitat were evident.

The expansion of SEP's commitments within DeltaNet allows us to influence policy and increase our exposure across Europe, which should therefore be increasingly beneficial to the Partnership as it allows us to tap into best practice policies in Europe and disseminate this information to our own partners here in the Estuary.

The next International DeltaNet conference and workshops will be held in Gdansk, Poland on the 7th – 10th of May 2012.



DeltaNet Conference Tulcea © Gwilym Owen

For further information about the DeltaNet Project and INTERREG IVC, please visit SEP's DeltaNet page: <http://bit.ly/1Om7Ys>

To read the DeltaNet article in Issue 13 of *Severn Tidings*, please visit SEP's *Severn Tidings* page: <http://bit.ly/zyeAK8>

For details on Boris Hochfeld's presentation to the 2011 Severn Estuary Forum: <http://bit.ly/ynH3u7>

Gwilym Owen,
SEP Communication Officer

An IMCORE output: CoastalAdaptation.eu

The IMCORE partners from the nine study sites across North West Europe, including the Severn Estuary, have come together to publish an informative, new website: CoastalAdaptation.eu

Designed for practitioners and policy makers, the site provides a wealth of information to help develop the capacity for coastal adaptation at local levels. The site includes a tool box with details of key tools for adaptation, including visualisation and stakeholder engagement techniques. There is also a set of guidance notes for developing a coastal adaptation strategy and lessons from all study sites as well as basic and advanced e-learning courses on



coastal adaptation (see: <http://www.coastnet.org.uk/imcorelearning/>).

The Severn Estuary IMCORE website has also been developed to include key outputs from

the project. See: <http://www.severnestuary.net/sep/imcore/index.html> Further details, including the final guidelines will be provided in the next issue of *Severn Tidings*.

The 'State of the Severn Estuary Report'

Plans to produce the 'State of the Severn Estuary Report' report first began in late 2009, with collaboration between the Severn Estuary Partnership, Cardiff University and the Environment Agency (Wales). The purpose behind creating the report was to provide an easy to understand, non-technical overview of the Estuary's natural and human environment; focusing on its use and resources. The aim was to inform a wide ranging audience, including local people and practitioners alike, on why the Estuary is so unique. With support from the INTERREG IVB IMCORE project, the report has since been developed to incorporate contributions from Cardiff University lecturers, local industries, stakeholders and even Estuary residents – such as Miranda Krestovnikoff, the presenter of the BBC's Coast series – who kindly wrote the foreword and launched the summary document at the 2011 annual Severn Estuary Forum.

This document is set to be the first in a series that reports on the state of and changes in the natural and human environment of the Severn Estuary, establishing baseline data in the context of climate and other coastal change. By taking a broad perspective and focusing on themes



Miranda Krestovnikoff, presenter of the BBC's Coast series, launching the 'State of the Severn Estuary' summary document at the 2011 Severn Estuary Forum – with members of the Severn Estuary Partnership, Environment Agency and Cardiff University.

relevant to the sustainable use of the Estuary, the report has aimed to use the best available science and data to inform and engage its target audience.

Many people benefit from the Severn Estuary, as it provides resources for communities and industries around its shores; through recreation, transport, trade and materials. It supports many activities ranging from tourism to dredging; whilst also offering opportunities for renewable energy generation. The Estuary is however an extremely fragile habitat and therefore needs to be sustainably managed and looked after for future generations. Subsequent editions of the report will therefore focus on the identification and analysis of a robust set of sustainability indicators which can be used to determine the health of the Estuary environment and its resources. For this reason, the Partnership intends to hold 'report workshops' for stakeholders, in conjunction with creating a network of data providers that accept the role of regularly

contributing information for the purpose of updating each report both accurately and effectively.

Hard copies of the report have been distributed to all Local Authorities and central county libraries within the Severn Estuary study area; with a downloadable PDF version of the document available now through the Severn Estuary Partnership's website:

(<http://www.severnEstuary.net/sep/publications/soser.html>)

For more information on the 'State of the Severn Estuary Report' or to offer assistance with the 2012 edition, please contact a member of the Severn Estuary Partnership on, Tel: 029 20 874713 or email us at: severn@cardiff.ac.uk

Beth Taylor,
SEP Assistant



Geology of the Severn Estuary and the Severn Way Walk



Faulted Jurassic limestones and mudstones, at Lilstock, Somerset. © Tom Sharpe

The shoreline of the Severn Estuary is formed of rocks which range in age from about 200 million to 400 million years old. The spectacular cliff scenery of the Glamorgan Heritage coast from Barry, westwards to Southerndown and the cliffs at Lavernock Point and Penarth Head, are made up of 200 million year old limestones and mudstones from the Jurassic period.

At the height of the last ice age, approximately 20,000 years ago, much of northern and western

Britain was covered by a thick ice sheet whose southern limit lay through South Wales. As the ice melted, the water returned to the world's oceans and sea level rose in stages. In the Severn Estuary, this rise in sea level inundated a wooded coastline, burying trees deep beneath deposits of fine grey clays. At low tide, these 'submerged' forests are still visible in a number of places along the Severn Estuary coast. The places which best display such features including fossils and even unique rock formations, are protected as 'Sites of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI's) which are preserved for both education and science.

The 'Severn Way Walk' follows the route of the River Severn, passing through many of the Estuary's SSSI's. The River Severn, known as Afon Hafren in Wales, stretches across 210 miles and is the longest river in Great Britain. The Severn has over 600 natural watercourses and has a

catchment area of 21,590km², supporting a variety of native fish, mammal and bird species. The walk itself is 223.9 miles long and runs along the entire length of the Severn Valley from its source on the Plynlimon plateau in Mid-Wales, through the Hafren Forest, Shrewsbury and along the Avon to Bristol city centre.



Waymarker: the Severn trow logo. © South Gloucestershire Council

At one time, the Severn was Britain's busiest river, with the bustling ancient ports of Chepstow and Newport serving boats full of both people and cargo – with Bristol being the major port on the Estuary many years before it began its lucrative trade with the New World in the fifteenth century. One of the most common boats to be seen during this time, was the Severn

trow; specially designed with a flat bottom to allow the vessel to safely sail over sandbanks if necessary. The way-markers dotted along the Severn Way Walk, use the distinctive image of the Severn trow to mark the extensive route.

Enjoy the Estuary, but please be considerate about the wildlife you share with it. If you are interested in learning more about the wildlife and how to protect it, or want information on any other Estuary issues, please contact the Severn Estuary Partnership on Tel: 029 20 874713, or visit our website on: www.severnEstuary.net/sep. More detailed information on the geology of the Severn region itself can be viewed in the 'State of the Severn Estuary Report', found at: <http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/ad5b93bd#ad5b93bd/1>

Beth Taylor,
SEP Assistant

Tanking on the Severn

Coincidence alone left two wrecked Harkers oil tankers, the Wastdale H and Arkendale H, beside the beached crafts and bank stabilisation works at Purton. Collectively they are now all known as the “Purton Hulks” and can be viewed along the Purton estuary bank, making for a well displayed collection of maritime history and a highly rewarding walk in general. The Friends of Purton, a dedicated group of likeminded people, are actively engaged in a systematic programme of archaeological surveying and promotion of the site.

<http://www.friendsofpurton.org.uk/index.html>

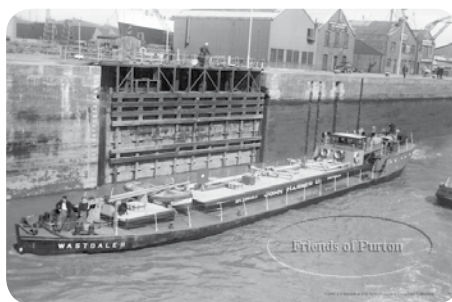
However, what one sees at low tide is not quite the timewarp it may seem..... as the Easedale H - a Harkers tanker which is very similar to the wrecked Wastdale H - can still be found afloat in Yorkshire! The Wastdale H was built in Sharpness in 1951 for the Severn oil trade, whilst the similar Easedale H was built in Beverley in 1952 for the Humber oil trade - their similar lines are easily recognisable from modern day photographs. Their fates though, are very, very different.

Whilst the Wastdale H was wrecked in the tragic Severn Bridge disaster on 25th October 1960, the Easedale H still soldiers on. After the decline of the oil trade, several tankers had their tanks removed in a conversion that enabled them to carry sand and gravel; a practice that is still healthy on the Trent/Ouse/Aire and Calder route via Goole today.

John Goldrick



Wastdale H and Arkendale H at Purton © John Goldrick



Wastdale H © Friends of Purton



Easedale H near Goole © John Goldrick

Coastal Partnerships Network

Established in 2006 (as the Coastal Partnership Working Group), the Coastal Partnerships Network (CPN) exists to encourage the exchange of information and debate between Coastal Partnership Officers, whilst establishing links with other coastal stakeholders. Presently, there are over 50 Coastal Partnerships operating around the coasts of the UK, many with over 20 years experience. A map of the distribution of these Partnerships can be found at www.coastalpartnershipnetwork.org.uk

As well as offering increased opportunities for learning and providing a collective voice for Coastal Partnerships at a national level, the CPN seeks to influence the development of Integrated Coastal Zone Management strategies and the marine planning process itself.

The role of the CPN with regards to the development of marine planning has so far focused on adding value to the work already being conducted by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) in England; by contributing

and advising on the stakeholder engagement process that will be carried out by the MMO as part of marine planning. The CPN has to date, hosted two specific meetings in conjunction with the MMO to specifically explore this stakeholder engagement process and the merits and possibilities of further utilising the services of local Coastal Partnerships. Work on further developing the findings of these meetings continues.

The CPN itself is run by a small committee of Coastal Partnership officers who operate on a voluntary basis reporting to the annual Coastal Partnerships Forum. This year's Forum was held on the river Exe, in Exmouth Devon on 1st and 2nd of November. The meeting attracted 44 delegates from 21 partnerships, with representatives from England, Scotland and Wales. The event was generously supported by the Marine Management Organisation and The Crown Estate, with a vast array of speakers helping Partnership officers to explore themes including the Natural Environment White Paper, marine planning, current directions on ICZM



at the UK and European level and a discussion regarding the new Coastal Communities Fund.

The two day conference was supplemented by a field trip on the first morning, where delegates viewed coastal defence, estuarine management and wildlife disturbance issues from aboard the 'Stuartline' Exmouth Ferry.

Officers of the committee are elected at the annual forum which this year saw SEP's Officer Paul Parker, elected as the new Vice Chair of the Network. A full Forum report can be obtained from a member of the CPN committee on request.

News in Brief:

The Association of Severn Estuary Relevant Authorities (ASERA)

Since the summer, ASERA have continued to develop the revised scheme of management for the Severn Estuary European Marine Site, with a draft being published for consultation in August 2011. Around a third of ASERA members responded to this consultation confirming that they found the Management Scheme useful and that it provided Relevant Authorities with sufficient information to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. Whilst this consultation was extended to encourage more comments from Relevant Authorities, ASERA hopes that the low response rate was a reflection on the general acceptance and accuracy of the document. A programme of work is now proposed to finalise areas of uncertainty in the action plans for some of the authorities, with the aim of completing all documents ready for approval at the 2012 AGM.

In spring 2012 it is proposed that the ASERA Officer will collate all available existing information on unknown impact and managed significant impact activities in consultation with Relevant Authorities and the Advisory Group members. Water and land-based recreation will be a focus for this work and a key deliverable will be a Severn Estuary EMS Recreation Baseline Report. ASERA, Natural England and CCW will review the available data and make connections between activities and bird populations in the Estuary to focus on real issues and specific locations for a possible, more in depth evaluation.

ASERA has also been represented in the stakeholder group of Finding Sanctuary which is establishing

The Severn Estuary Partnership

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Edited by Paul Parker & Beth Taylor

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Cover Photograph: © Pete Brabham, Cardiff University.

The Severn Estuary Partnership is an independent, estuary-wide NON-statutory initiative led by local authorities and statutory agencies. We work with all those involved in the management of the Estuary, from planners to port authorities, fishermen to farmers and many more with an interest in the future of the Estuary.

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) throughout the SW coastal areas. ASERA has been active in discussion on the need for any further protected areas. Given that the Severn Estuary is already protected by its European Site designations, the outcome of this process was that no MCZs were proposed along the Somerset Coast of the Severn Estuary when the regional plans were submitted. A written Ministerial Statement made by Richard Benyon on 15th November 2011 signalled a change in the timetable and intent to improve the evidence base underpinning the designation of MCZs. Natural England, CCW and the JNCC are now reviewing the plans submitted to them and will report to DEFRA in July 2012. A further public consultation will follow so we anticipate further involvement in this important process before Government designates the first tranche in 2013.

Looking forward, the final work on the draft Management Scheme will provide an opportunity for us to remind our colleagues and partners of our duties in considering the Severn Estuary and its features of interest in our daily operations. Although there will be a need for some ongoing action, we will enjoy a relative period of calm, which we can use to review how ASERA members can best co-operate to achieve our common goals and duties around the Estuary with the greatest effectiveness.

A more detailed account of ASERA's activities over the past 12 months can be found in the ASERA Annual Report available through ASERA's website: www.severnestuary.net/asera

The final recommendations from the four regional MCZ projects can be viewed on an interactive map using the following link: <http://www.mczmapping.org/>



The Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG)

The Severn Estuary Coastal Group has continued to work on the development of the Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2) over the past months. The group have been exploring storage options for all SMP2 data alongside continuing to work on the monitoring and implementation of the SMP2, with annual reports and public friendly leaflets planned for the future.



In terms of final adoption of the SMP2, the group are awaiting sign off on the Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) case from both DEFRA and Welsh Government, which is expected later this year.

The group have continued to inform other Estuary related groups and plans, including the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre, Regional and National Coastal Groups and the Environment Agencies Flood Risk Management Strategy.

More information on the work of the SECG and development of the SMP2 can be found on the Severn Estuary Coastal Groups website at: www.severnestuary.net/secg

Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy

The Severn Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy (SEFRMS), which covers the coastline from Lavernock Point near Cardiff to Gloucester, and back down the southern coastline to Hinkley Point in Somerset, aims to identify the most effective and sustainable way

to manage flood risk in the Estuary over the next century.

The consultation on the draft SEFRMS last year, prompted concerns from individuals and organisations, many of which related to the proposals for the managed realignment of defences - all of which are in England - in the short or longer term.

The EA recognise the need for greater community involvement and wants to work closely with communities to develop and reach general agreement on the Strategy before it is republished, which will be post April 2012.

In the meantime, we will help those communities concerned about possible changes to their defences, to describe and assess their preferred short and longer term options for managing flood risk within legislative and technical constraints in addition to offering advice on what could be funded using public money.

The longer term strategy options to manage flood risk are likely to be linked to actual levels of sea level rise rather than specific data based on current predictions. These options would only be needed once a certain rise in sea level has occurred and makes the short term option unsustainable for the community.

The Strategy Engagement Officer for Wessex is Rachel Burden (01278 484595) and for Gloucestershire, Dan Matthews (01684 864318) and Simon Cullen (01684 864394).



Coming up...

Captain Scott: South for Science	14/01/12 – 13/05/12
'Fore & Aft' Friends of Purton guided tours	18/03/12 – 18/11/12
Joint Estuary Day	15/05/12
Olympic torch relay – Cardiff	25/05/12
Bristol Harbour Festival	20-22/07/12
Cardiff Harbour Festival	25-27/08/12
Severn Estuary Forum	11/09/12