



Working with Nature

Outcomes for people and communities

Through spending time in nature and taking part in hands-on wildlife conservation and enhancement activities near where they live and work along the canal, championing wildlife in their communities and developing maps, walks and surveys as well as creating new habitats, finding and developing new interests and skills and celebrating their achievements, the project will achieve the following outcomes for people and communities:

- **A greater sense of ownership of built and natural environment and greater responsibility for protecting and conserving it**
- **Greater mental and physical health and wellbeing and more cohesive communities**
- **Improved wildlife enhancement and conservation**
- **Increased knowledge, confidence and raised expectations for work, and better life chances**

Engaging People and Communities

A key element of the success of the Working with Nature strategy will be engaging people and communities in the natural environment and wildlife conservation opportunities created along the canal-river corridor. The Cotswold Canal Connected Project will coordinate a broad range of activities for a variety of interests ranging from spending time in nature for health and well-being to building wildlife habitats and/or being involved in species or other environmental monitoring.

Working together the Environment Manager, Community Engagement Team, Volunteer Manager and Stroudwater Navigation Archive Charity (SNAC), have now identified a series of medium sized and smaller action research pilot projects which are being implemented with across the rest of the development stage. This includes restoring a relic orchard and developing a new community orchard at Fromehall Mill in Whitminster, and piloting wetlands projects to test the plan for a biodiversity offset.

These wildlife and conservation activities are embedded into the project's Community Engagement Strategy ([link to CE page](#)), which is currently being delivered by Creative Sustainability, a local Community Interest Company who have extensive experience in engaging people and communities. The Communities Engagement Team work in partnership with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and local environment groups, such as Stroud Valleys Project and the Severn Rivers Trust. These projects will test engagement methodologies and volunteering activities to inform the development of our NHLF Activities Plan.

Cotswold Canal Connected is developing an inclusive approach to all aspects of the project, engaging people and communities with a rich and diverse range of creative responses to their heritage and developing opportunities for deeper involvement in restoration and wildlife conservation. We aim to:

- **Encourage community togetherness**
- **Extend local resilience – adapting to and surviving change**
- **Advance local sustainable development**
- **Develop environmental and sustainability skills, knowledge and understanding**
- **Explore, extend and empower personal, social and environmental responsibility**