

# The Weardale Environmental Trust

## Newsletter Spring 2007

Following our last walk in early December and winter break, organised activities will be resuming in March although some members have continued to work on projects at the Low Bat reserve and the website.

Listed below a number of events we are planning. Could I ask you all to comment or advise?

### **7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> March inc.**

A willow spiling course at Low Bat led by Emma Wilmot of BTCV.

The course is free and the NCFE accredited certificate through the BTCV Institute at Level 2 will be awarded on successful completion.

Please register for this course through Emma on 01388 529022 or David Raymond on 07799583179. More details can be found at:

<http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level4/50/stock/5726>

This portion of spiling will tie in the top of the heavily eroded mid section of the reserve. We hope to make the remainder secure this year.

### **25<sup>th</sup> March at 10.00am**

A moorland walk and talk with Paul Leadbitter the Peatscapes Officer from North Pennines AONB Partnership.

The AONB team are working to preserve the peat moor landscape and are liaising with upland owners with a view to reversing the gripping (land drainage) systems which were installed in the late sixties and though the seventies . If successful this scheme will have a major impact on our area and eventually flow rates in the river Wear.

Meet at Parkhead B & B above Stanhope on the B6278 Edmundbyers Road.

We usually meet up for lunch afterwards. The Bay Horse Wolsingham is booked provisionally for 10 people. A substantial main course is around £7.20.

Please contact Sally Timms on 01388 529423 to confirm either for walk, lunch or both.

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### **Walks**

Northumbria Water have offered to give a guided tour of Burnhope water treatment plant; however they can only take mid week bookings.

The same arrangements apply to the wind farm at Tow Law where the operators are also willing to arrange a guided visit.

If you can make either walk in mid week would you please indicate the best day for you and we shall arrange the event?

Contact me on 01388 527603 or email [admin@twet.org.uk](mailto:admin@twet.org.uk) if you can make it or have a preferred day.

We are also in contact with FWAG and hope to revisit the upper Tees with Lindsay Waddell, the head keeper of Raby Estates to look at conservation work which has taken place there. Date and time to be arranged.

### **The AONB Hay Time Seed Collecting Project**

All members are invited to take part in the Hayseed Collection Project which is being organised by the AONB team. Below are details for the project.

#### **What will volunteers be asked to do?**

Hay Time Seed Collectors will be asked to collect a small quantity of seed from a few special hay meadow plants. They will then be asked to sow the seed and care for the seedlings and plants that they grow. Once the plants

have established and at a suitable time the following year, volunteers will be invited to help plant their 'plug plants' in a meadow identified by the Hay Time project.

### **How will the Hay Time project support the volunteers?**

Hay Time Seed Collectors will be fully supported throughout the project. They will receive the following:

- Invitation to a **welcome event**. An event will be arranged in June 2007 to welcome all Hay Time Seed Collectors. This will include a short talk on the Hay Time project and a field visit to a meadow to look at some of the special hay meadow plants in flower.
- A **hay meadow information pack** including a hay meadow plant identification guide and a series of hay meadow walk leaflets.
- A **seed gathering training workshop**. These workshops will be held in July/August 2007 and will show volunteers how to identify the seed heads of target species, gather the seeds and store them properly. Techniques for sowing the seeds and caring for plants will also be explained and 'Collecting Kits' will be distributed.
- A hand gatherer's **Collecting Kit**. This will include:  
A list of species to gather  
Guidance on identifying seed heads and gathering seeds  
Seed collecting bags

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A fluorescent vest to wear on road verges

'Root trainers' for planting the seeds in

Guidance on sowing and growing on the seeds and care of the young plants

Access to a source of suitable potting compost

- Guidance on **suitable sites** to harvest their seed and appropriate permission to do so
- Guidance on protected species and important safety issues concerning collecting from road verges
- All volunteers will be invited to the annual **Hay Time Gathering** in May 2007 & 2008.

As part of the project a Hay Meadow walk will be arranged around Ireshopeburn.

Please contact me to register interest, once again 01388 527603 or [admin@twet.org.uk](mailto:admin@twet.org.uk)

## **Show Time**

The Trust is funded to promote the Low Bat reserve and would like to put in an appearance at the three main Weardale shows (dates to be confirmed). If you can help either to organise or attend please contact Sally Timms on 01388 529423.

## **North Pennine Genetic Brown Trout Project.**

We have identified an area at Low Bat which has the potential to support a small brown trout hatchery and are in the process of building a project to give the upper Wear with a true genetic strain of North Pennine brown trout. It is envisaged that approximately 30 to 50 thousand fingerlings could be provided to the river.

Brood fish would be sourced from local streams to ensure genetic integrity.

Jim Tague is co-ordinating the project and would appreciate assistance in its development. Jim has made preliminary enquiries and some outside help has been offered.

If you are interested in helping with this project contact Jim on 013688661217.

## **TWET & Low Bat Web Sites**

David Raymond is working to upgrade the main TWET web site and develop an independent site for Low Bat nature reserve. The TWET site remains at [www.twet.org.uk](http://www.twet.org.uk) while the new Low Bat pages are at [www.lowbatweardale.org/](http://www.lowbatweardale.org/) If you have a look at these sites **could you please** send any comments regarding content to [admin@twet.org.uk](mailto:admin@twet.org.uk) or call David on 01915172860.

Best wishes Peter.