

WaterLIFE DEMONSTRATION CATCHMENT FACTSHEET

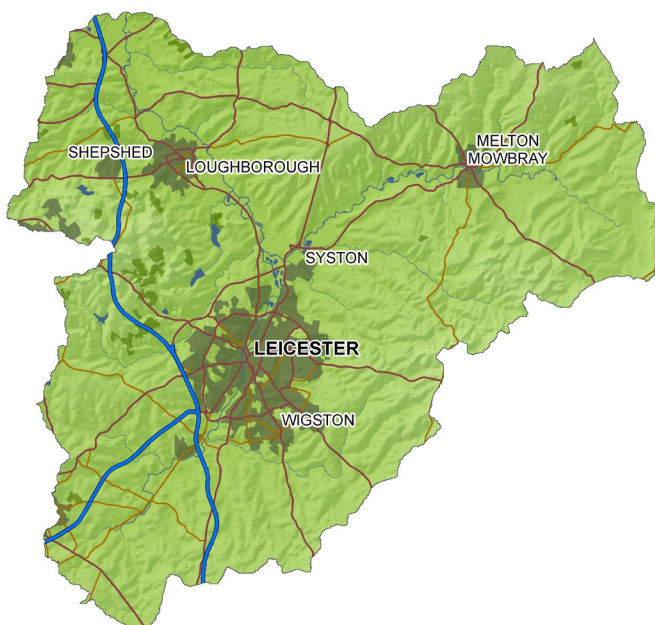


RIVER SOAR

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The River Soar is the principle river in Leicestershire, covering a catchment area of approximately 1,380km² and flowing through Leicester and Loughborough before confluencing with the River Trent. The catchment has a mix of urban and rural land uses, and is home to a wide range of species including the endangered white-clawed crayfish.

The Soar Catchment Partnership was established in 2013 by Trent Rivers Trust and has grown considerably in size and strength under WaterLIFE.



RIVER SOAR CATCHMENT AREA

ISSUES IN THE SOAR

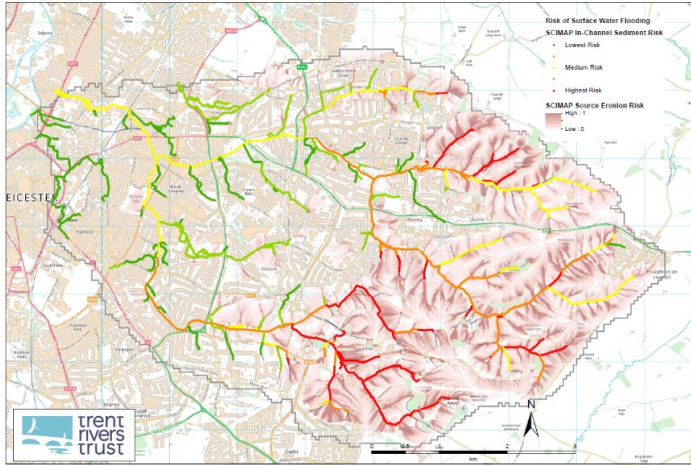
Indicative of the industrial heritage of the area, many of the Soar's watercourses have been modified, with the Grand Union Canal a predominant feature of the catchment. With increasing urbanisation, and due to the modified watercourses being over-wide, over-deep and separated from their flood plain, the Soar is prone to flooding. Soil erosion is also diminishing water quality and exacerbating flooding by blocking pipes and culverts. The sediment also carries particle pollutants such as phosphorus that trigger eutrophication and a further worsening of water quality. Currently, 87% of water bodies in the Soar catchment are failing to meet good ecological status.



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WHAT DID WATERLIFE DO?

WaterLIFE has supported Trent Rivers Trust to invest time, energy and resources to grow the Soar Catchment Partnership. A range of Partnership workshops and events were delivered: ranging from developing an agreed stakeholder vision for the catchment, to investigating data and evidence for the Catchment Plan.



Willow brook SCIMAP Model (In channel sediment risk and source erosion risk)

A range of innovative partnership projects were also developed and delivered. The Partnership, in collaboration with Southampton University, used an innovative sediment “fingerprinting” approach to determine the sources of sediment eroded across the wider catchment. Combined with flood risk mapping, the fingerprinting approach is being used to target interventions to reduce flood risk, trap sediment and improve water quality.

A range of site-based works were also undertaken, including: in-stream and riparian habitat improvements; installing site based interventions to store water and trap silt; engage with farmers to reduce agricultural pollution; develop urban SuDS solutions; promote citizen science; and work with stakeholders to reduce flood risk. There was a particular focus on the Willow Brook sub-catchment, on the eastern edge of Leicester.

The River Soar catchment was one of five demonstration catchments that were part of WaterLIFE, an EC LIFE+ project that brought together communities, business and government to accelerate the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

For more information and to contact the Catchment Partnership, visit www.trentriverstrust.org

WHAT DID WATERLIFE ACHIEVE?

- Secured over **£2 million in additional funding** from a diverse range of sources.
- **Enabled local authority inputs** to the Catchment Partnership, and additionally engaged and **obtained funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** around flood risk.
- Developed a **strong identity and vision** for the Catchment Partnership, and generated robust data and evidence for the catchment, to enable production of the ***Soar Catchment Plan***.
- Grew the Soar Catchment Partnership, which now **includes 40 organisations**.
- Established an **online mapping tool** that captures a range of project work and provides a **visual “storybook”** of the issues impacting the Soar.
- Used **sediment risk mapping (SCIMAP)** and a programme of **farmer engagement** to identify and **install a series of site-based interventions** such as silt traps.
- This has led to a much larger **Soar Natural Flood Risk Management Project**, which continues after WaterLIFE
- **Enhanced the visual appearance and natural functioning** of 2.2km of reach of the River Eye SSSI through river restoration work.
- **Established a new Soar Community Project Officer post**, who has delivered a range of SuDS-focused projects in the urban area of Leicester – engaging with schools and local communities.
- **Established 3 Citizen Science groups**, and **delivered several thousand hours of volunteer inputs** to the catchment, including litter picking, tree planting and guerrilla knitting!



CREATING SUDS WITH COMMUNITY PROJECT OFFICER, FELICITY ROOS

