Welcome!

A big welcome to Henry (below left) who joined as Living Landscape Assistant in October 2022. Henry has been leading the INNS programme for 2023 as well as assisting with reserve work. Also, a big welcome to Silvia, our new Seasonal Rivers Assistant who has been working on the INNS programme since April this year, and Thomas (below centre) as our new trainee who has assisted the team with various tasks. And a big welcome back to Kate who returned from maternity leave in March, working alongside John on the partnership (below right).

Upland Streams Project

We continue to co-design interventions with land managers, working with farmers, using local skills and knowledge to deliver shared benefits. The Derwent Upland Streams Project is taking various actions to improve water quality at a local level across rivers in Northeast Yorkshire.

A solar-operated drinking trough (right) was installed next to the River Derwent, 10 miles west of Scarborough, to improve water quality on the meandering river below. The trough is filled to a set volume without the need for human intervention, therefore when the cattle return in the spring, they will now use this as their main drinking source, leaving the river and its banks to restore and regenerate over the years ahead.

85 native trees were planted within the new buffer strip, between the fence line and the river in areas where the riverbank is eroding fastest. As the trees grow, their roots will
bind the soil and prevent excessive bank erosion and collapse. They will also capture carbon and provide new habitat for wildlife. Other areas of the buffer strip will regenerate naturally.

A fence line (left) was installed to restrict cattle access to the river, preventing them from grouping together at pinch points to drink and eroding the riverbanks, regularly releasing soil and other organic pollutants into the river. The input of excess soil into the river is bad for water quality and bad for wildlife.

Living Derwent Ark Project

In April 2022, YDCP secured funding from Yorkshire Water’s Biodiversity Enhancement Programme for an exciting project focusing on four important species: tansy beetle, greater water parsnip, willow tit and narrow leaved water dropwort. In 2023 YDCP staff helped by our wonderful volunteers constructed post and rail enclosures at Barmby on the Marsh SSSI (left). Volunteers also helped to maintain the 1,100 tansies which were planted at Wheldrake Ings in 2022 and 2023. Their seeds were then collected for growing new plants by the East Keswick Wildlife Trust and YDCP staff. They were planted at Barmby on the Marsh in autumn 2023 (right).

Invasive Non Native Species

It has been another successful year for the treatment of Invasive Non Native Species, INNS, in our catchment. Thanks to dry weather between April and June we managed early and constant treatment of giant hogweed over 61km. This early start has also been helped by having increased capacity of our new seasonal assistant Silvia and our trainee Thomas. We were successful in achieving our goal to prevent plants from flowering and spreading seeds. The response from the public has been fantastic. They recognise the negative impacts of INNS and we have had plenty of support and positive feedback from members of the public. We also surveyed new stretches of the catchment upstream, from Malton to Yedingham, and lowland, from Bubwith to Wressle for a total of 133Km. We treated Himalayan balsam and orange Himalayan balsam at Wheldrake Ings with the help of volunteers and corporate groups. We finished off INNS season with a second year treatment of Japanese knotweed in various locations.