

CaBA Agriculture Working Group Case Study

CaBA partnership name:	Across Caba partnerships in Devon and Cornwall
Name and location of project	Devon and Cornwall Soils Alliance
Partners involved:	A collaboration of NGO's, government bodies and interested groups, forming a wider alliance - including ADAS, Wildlife Trusts, FWAG, North Devon Biosphere, EA and NE.
Dates carried out:	June 2019 to November 2022
Introduction to project:	<p>The aim of the Alliance is to build capacity and capability in soils advice across Devon and Cornwall.</p> <p>Our soils are in a perilous state with more than 40% of soils degraded. Coupled with this, the accuracy, quality and consistency of advice across Devon and Cornwall is insufficient to deal with the scale of the problem.</p> <p>The DCSA builds on work done through the Channel Payments for Ecosystem Services (CPES) project - to improve the articulation between advisors and regulators - and the Risk Aqua Soil (RAS) project - looking at monitoring soil water health as a way of assessing management outcomes.</p>
Farmer/ landowner/ land manager engagement:	<p>Farmers and land managers were engaged directly, in target SAC catchments - through Farm Advisors - undertaking soil condition surveys and reviews, with advice provided.</p> <p>In these SAC catchments, soil remediation works were also undertaken including: pasture slitting; sub-soiling; and the under sowing of maize to reduce run-off.</p> <p>A major part of the project was to undertake workshops and training events to improve Farm Advisors understanding and technical knowledge of soils - as they are the key stakeholders who are providing soils advice. It is important the consistent and correct information is given out to farmers across the region.</p>

Further project details:	<p>7 catchment feasibility studies in Devon & Cornwall, focused on the root cause of WFD sediment failure - including a review of regulatory failures and where land cropping is not aligned with land capability.</p> <p>These were delivered through a mix of partners including: ADAS; Cornwall Wildlife Trust; North Devon Biosphere; Creedy Associates; and Westcountry Rivers Trust.</p> <p>2 SAC catchment reports on the Allen and Corry Brook, identifying causes of WFD failure and potential mitigation.</p> <p>Soil remediation works in the Allen and Corry Brook including under sowing of maize.</p> <p>10 micro-catchment studies where there are flooding and WFD issues.</p> <p>6 training workshops and 4 conferences - with 137 people trained.</p> <p>Soil Organic Carbon testing on farms.</p>
Environmental benefits of the project:	<p>The state of soils is fundamental to overall catchment health. Recent research papers indicated that 38% of soils are degraded in the South West. Sediment from soils choke gravels and spawning beds in rivers and cause ecological damage through excessive turbidity.</p> <p>Phosphate and agri-chemicals are also bound to soils and transported to aquatic systems causing increases in nutrients and ecological degradation.</p> <p>The rapid shedding of surface water from landscapes can also cause localised flooding, further soil erosion and lead to deterioration of geology and loss of bed load - causing wider issues.</p>
Social benefits of the project:	<p>Raised awareness of soil issues across the environmental sector, among Farm Advisors and the farming community. Some of the outputs can be used and disseminated to a wider audience.</p>
Economic benefits of the project:	<p>Economic benefits to farmers through improved soil health and management and reduction in soil loss.</p> <p>Soil remediation works have also helped to retain soils and improve structure.</p>
Monitoring, evaluation & outcomes:	<p>-</p>
Next steps:	<p>To continue the DCSA through existing projects and continue to raise awareness.</p> <p>Attempt to raise funds in the feasibility study areas utilising the business cases.</p> <p>Ongoing training events and conferences.</p>
Project partner comments:	<p>-</p>
Web link for more information:	<p>https://wrt.org.uk/project/dcsa/</p>