

December 2020 Newsletter - Issue #6

Message from the Project Coordinator and Project Lead

In this edition of our newsletter – our penultimate one – we will focus on outreach and public engagement. The primary reason for this is because we were delighted to accept a top prize for our ‘explainer’ film in the North Sea Region’s video competition in November. This autumn, we also rolled out our volunteer water sampling campaign, called RiverDip, online, which has been generating interest in Belgium, the UK and as far afield as the US and Tunisia. In addition, we ran a virtual workshop on biotesting in sediment management strategies to support the development of our Biological Effects-Based Assessment guideline as part of Work Package 3 – Sediment Assessment.



Behind the scenes, we have been equally busy. Lab work has continued at a hectic pace with great care being taken to maintain Covid-secure workplaces. Our partners have also been working hard on the various reports and academic papers that will enable us to share the key findings and impact of our work. These publications will represent four years of extensive field work, experimentation and analysis and we look forward to presenting them to our target audiences and end-users soon.

As the Sullied Sediments project comes to an end on 31 December 2020, our final newsletter, published early in the New Year, will offer a reflection on our journey as a partnership and an overview of all we have achieved, despite the challenging circumstances that we and all NSR projects have faced. In the meantime, we would like to wish you all the best for a safe and happy festive period.

From Annabel Hanson, East Riding of Yorkshire Council (Project Coordinator), and Jeanette Rotchell, Professor of Aquatic Toxicology, University of Hull (Project Lead)



Sullied Sediments Project Video Scoops Top Prize

At the 2020 North Sea Region (NSR) Conference in November, we were honoured to receive one of the top prizes in the NSR’s annual video competition. The competition had two categories: the ‘explainer’ video and ‘people in focus’. The Sullied Sediments project

partnership entered videos into each category; both are featured on our You Tube channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUmQeGzXk0zKHIIQxKK48Fg>



Explainer video



People in Focus video

The judging panel, comprising 14 judges appointed by the NSR's Monitoring Committee, chose our 'explainer' video as the winner out of 16 entries in this category. Needless to say, we are absolutely thrilled with this honour and would like to congratulate the runners-up as well as all the projects who entered the competition.

We are also grateful to our colleagues at the University of Hull, VMM, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Pocklington Canal Amenity Society as well as to our film-makers, Nova Studios in Hull (UK), for their involvement in creating the videos.



Catchment Profiles

In our last issue, we presented a profile of the Scheldt – one of three river catchments where the Sullied Sediments partnership has been active. In this issue, we are focusing on the UK's Humber catchment.

Nick Smith and his colleagues at the Canal and River Trust (UK) have provided the following profile:

The Humber river basin district covers an area of 26,100km² and extends from the West Midlands in the south, northwards to North Yorkshire and from Staffordshire in the west to part of Lincolnshire and the Humber Estuary in the east. In total, more than 10.8 million people live and work in towns and cities within the district.



The Humber river basin district has a rich diversity of wildlife and habitats with a mix of uplands, river valleys, heavily modified watercourses and chalk stream systems. It comprises urban and rural landscapes with key sectors including business services, health, wholesale and distribution, manufacturing contributes and agriculture.



Within the Humber, the Sullied Sediments project is focused on two management catchments – the Aire and Calder and the Derwent. The two watercourses where sampling has taken place are the River Aire and Pocklington Canal, both of which are managed by the Canal and River Trust. The former represents an urban freight-carrying waterway which is affected by phosphate and some Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPHs). Pocklington Canal (pictured right) is a rural, remainder waterway that has been affected by agricultural run-off and siltation, causing a decline in macrophyte populations. Both are heavily modified or artificial waterbodies, and both are mostly achieving moderate ecological status.

In our final newsletter, we will profile of the Elbe catchment.



Sullied Sediments and NuReDrain Featured in NSR Blog

In a recent blog post, the NSR's Communications Advisor, Tuuli Veikkanen, posed an important question: Have you ever wondered if it is worthwhile cooperating with other Interreg projects or programmes?



Our Project Lead, Jeanette Rotchell, was more than happy to give a decisive 'yes' to this question, reflecting on our close cooperation with the NSR's NuReDrain project. Jeanette's comments on this collaboration were included alongside the experience of other projects in Tuuli's post called '5 reasons why project should work together'.

Over the past four years, the Sullied Sediments and NuReDrain projects have created various opportunities to exchange information, knowledge and experience, for example attending each other's annual meetings, cross-promoting events and sharing newsletters. NuReDrain partners have also helped us by testing our pollen-based water treatment technique in the field and performing early trials of our RiverDip app which has been developed for the volunteer water sampling campaign.

To read Tuuli's article, please visit the NSR's blog and why not subscribe while you are there:

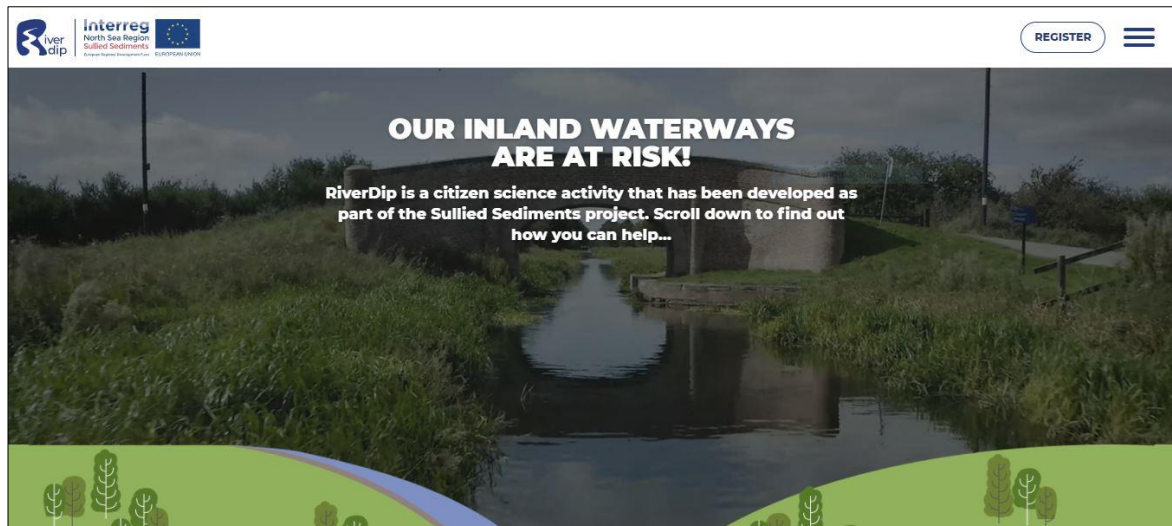
<https://northseablog.eu/5-reasons-why-projects-should-work-together/>



RiverDip Goes Digital

Early this year, we were poised to roll out our volunteer water sampling campaign, called RiverDip, beyond the Humber and into all three river catchments. In January, colleagues from the University of Hull and VMM delivered a workshop for volunteers in Gent, Belgium. Additional workshops were planned for the spring and summer but had to be cancelled due to coronavirus.

Given the uncertainties created by the Covid crisis, we realised that we needed to move RiverDip onto a digital platform rather than relying on face-to-face volunteer training if we were going to reach volunteers in as many locations across the North Sea Region (and beyond) as possible. After a couple of months of development, we launched the RiverDip website (see home page below), which is aimed at volunteers interested in taking part.



The website explains what is entailed in the phosphate sampling activity, including a video and step-by-step guide, and how volunteers can get involved. The website also provides information about the presence of chemicals in our inland waterways and some of the simple changes that we can make to reduce our impact on the environment.

In tandem with the website launch, a second volunteer workshop was held in Belgium in October with our RiverDip Lead, Mark Lorch, broadcasting live from the University of Hull (UK). We also had lots of help promoting the website, including support on social media from the NSR and from our partners, including a blog post written for the Network of Inland Waterways Europe (NIWE) by a Canal and River Trust volunteer, see <https://waterwaysnetwork.eu/riverdippers-get-dipping/>.

Another volunteer has also shared his thoughts on being involved in RiverDip as one of our citizen scientists:

“We should all be concerned about the condition of our rivers and waterways so I was keen to assist with the Sullied Sediment project. The process of testing was very straightforward and the app easy to use. The data obtained will be essential in highlighting how our ecosystems are coping with the variety of chemicals that end up in our rivers and canals.”

With the Sullied Sediments project in its final weeks, the RiverDip programme has now been “put into hibernation” while we make plans to resume it in the spring. The training website and video remain live and can be accessed here: <https://riverdip.com/>.



Sullied Sediments Partnership

Project Beneficiaries

Canal and River Trust
EcoSSA
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Hamburg Port Authority
Hamburg University of Applied Sciences
Institut Dr Nowak
OVAM
Radboud University
Socotec UK
University of Antwerp
University of Hull
University of Leeds
VMM (Flanders Environment Agency)

Advisory Partners

East and North Yorkshire Waterways Partnership
Elbe Habitat Foundation
Environment Agency
Federal Institute of Hydrology
Foundation for Applied Water Research
Hamburg Ministry of the Environment and Energy
Northumbrian Water
River Hull Board
SedNet
Thames Water
Vlakwa
Yorkshire Water

For more information about the project, please contact our Project Coordinator, Annabel Hanson, at sullied.sediments@eastriding.gov.uk.

The Sullied Sediments project has been co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg VB North Sea Region Programme and is being delivered by the project beneficiaries listed above. Our advisory partners provide technical knowledge and expertise and we are grateful for their ongoing input.