

A scenic view of a river flowing through a lush, green forest. The water is calm and reflects the surrounding trees. In the lower right, a small green kayak with three people is visible. The sky is overcast, and a bird is seen flying in the distance.

# OUR VISION 2023-25

**A HEALTHY, RESILIENT RIVER SEVERN  
FOR EVERYONE**



# OUR CHALLENGE

Our freshwater environments are in trouble like never before. The pressures are seemingly endless – sewage pollution, agricultural run-off, habitat loss and major weather events including drought and flooding are all threatening irreversible destruction of our freshwater ecosystems.

The warning signs in the Severn are evident:

- Atlantic salmon are thought to be at their lowest levels since records began.
- Every single sub-catchment is failing to achieve 'Good' ecological status.
- Summer river temperatures in some areas have soared to 20°C, leading to widespread death of freshwater species.

These are just a few examples of how desperately rivers need our help. Despite the enormity of the challenge, it's not too late.

## WE CAN TURN THE TIDE FOR OUR RIVERS, AND WE KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.



Our team have an intimate understanding of the river Severn and its tributaries. We're proactive and hands on, working with landowners, communities, and all manner of partner organisations, to deliver ecological restoration at a local level, with catchment wide impacts.

Over the next three years we will have:

- Removed yet more barriers to fish migration, helping unlock new habitats.
- Planted substantial areas of new riparian woodland, creating habitat corridors and helping shade our rivers to prevent overheating.
- Established inspiring learning programmes to upskill and empower the next generation of river guardians.

## BUT WE CANNOT DO THIS ALONE.

# OUR WORKING AREA

Some fascinating facts and figures about the Severn and the catchment we cover.



The Severn is the UK's longest river, rising in the Cambrian mountains and flowing 220 miles to the sea!



Our imperilled Atlantic salmon will travel well over 180 miles up the River Severn, to reach their spawning grounds in the headwaters.



We work across two countries, mostly in England, but nearly 20% of the area we cover is in Wales.



The catchment contains a population of the extremely rare freshwater pearl mussel – found at only a handful of sites in England and Wales. Their young live on baby salmon and trout.



The Severn has the highest tidal range of any river in Europe, meaning we get a spectacular 'bore', a wave that can travel upstream for over 25 miles up the Severn.



Baby European eels are see-through and only centimetres long when they arrive at the Severn to grow into adults from where they were born – around 4,000 miles away!



The Severn was formerly a crucial trade route, and is the longest naturally navigable river in England.





# RESTORING OUR RIVERS

Since 1970, freshwater species have seen an 83% decline globally. That's faster than any other type of habitat!

There are lots of reasons our rivers are in such distress. Wetlands and freshwater habitats have been lost. People have built artificial barriers that prevent fish from moving freely. Our rivers are being polluted by industry, sewage and agriculture. Floods and droughts are becoming more extreme.

The mighty river Severn and its tributaries are home to some of the UK's most iconic habitats and species. We are working to improve the ecological resilience of our rivers. If we want to save our Atlantic Salmon, White-clawed Crayfish, and European Eel, we must act now.



## BY 2025 WE WILL HAVE:

### 1 Tackled 30 barriers to improve fish passage throughout the Severn catchment

Our work to remove barriers will allow fish to swim through their freshwater habitats and reconnect migratory routes that in some cases have been blocked for hundreds of years.

### 2 Intercepted 10 point sources of pollution to improve water quality

We will take action to identify and intercept pollution before it enters our river network.

### 3 Restored 100km of in-channel river habitat

With interventions such as 're-wiggling' the channels, and installing boulders and woody material, we will kick-start natural river processes and allow wildlife within our rivers to thrive.



# RECOVERING OUR LAND

**Our work doesn't start and finish in the water. If we want to restore the health of our rivers, we must also help our land become more resilient too.**

The Severn is a largely rural catchment, meaning slurry, inorganic fertilisers and pesticides enter our waterways as a consequence of unsustainable agricultural practices. Alongside these pollutants, we are losing our riparian and floodplain habitat at an alarming rate, pushing some of our most enigmatic species to the brink.

We collaborate with farmers and other land managers, combining professional advice with practical solutions to help restore the health of the Severn's rivers.



## BY 2025 WE WILL HAVE:

**1**

**Influenced the management of 10,000ha of land throughout our catchment**

Our targeted farm advice will shift agricultural practices; helping to conserve soils, reduce pollution and accelerate nature's recovery.

**2**

**Delivered soil management solutions across 2000ha of farmland**

Soil matters – whether it's storing carbon, intercepting flood water or producing food, its conservation is integral to restoring the health of our river catchments.

**3**

**Planted and restored 300ha of native riparian woodland and 15km of hedgerow habitat**

Carefully planned woodlands and hedgerows will intercept overland flow, create habitat corridors and provide vital shade to protect aquatic wildlife.

**4**

**Restored 100ha of floodplain habitat**

We will give rivers space to flow by establishing wildflower-rich floodplain grasslands and creating wetland mosaics connected to the river system.

**5**

**Created 80ha of new wetland habitat**

We will create and enhance ponds, ditches and farm wetlands that help make the catchment more resilient to flooding and drought.

**6**

**Restored 45km of new riparian habitat**

We will create habitat corridors along riverbanks, by excluding livestock from watercourses, removing alien plants and planting trees.



# EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITIES

Rivers are vital for all of our wellbeing – they supply our drinking water, are essential for agriculture, and they are also great places to spend time.

There is nothing better than being out in the fresh air, hearing the wind in the trees and the sound of running water. Waiting for a glimpse of a Shad, the swoop of a Dipper or the tell-tale ‘plop’ of a Water Vole.

Sadly, we know that people often lack opportunities to explore and experience the natural environment. That’s why Severn Rivers Trust are reconnecting people with their local rivers, inspiring them, and empowering them to take action.



## BY 2025 WE WILL HAVE:

### 1 Mobilised 500 volunteers to take action for their local water environment

Innovative citizen science programmes and seasonal conservation tasks will put volunteers at the centre of river restoration.

### 2 Engaged 7,500 children and young adults in educational activities

We will run exciting activities in schools, friendly family learning workshops and fun guided trips to the river.

### 3 Developed a sector-leading skills development programme

An annual cycle of placements will be designed for students, and paid internships will give people a first step into conservation careers.

### 4 Increased SRT's visibility and doubled our number of online followers

Our social media and digital communications will give relevant and uplifting updates for local people.

### 5 Established five community outreach schemes

People care about their rivers, so we want to raise awareness of the Severn Rivers Trust and offer a range of opportunities for individuals and groups to get involved.

### 6 Set up 15 corporate partnerships to engage businesses with their local water environment

We're giving businesses the chance to support our vital work by joining us on staff away days or by sponsoring river restoration and education activities.



# WE NEED YOUR HELP

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR WORK,  
AND HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED AND  
HELP SAVE OUR RIVERS, VISIT US AT  
[SEVERN RIVER TRUST.COM](https://severnriverstrust.com)

You can also connect with us on:

