



# WILD CITY



ISSUE ONE Winter 2011/12



Update



**Welcome** to our first Wild City newsletter. Wild City is an exciting three-year project linking people with green spaces and nature reserves throughout Bristol.

With the support of community groups and organisations across the city, Wild City is working to encourage people from deprived

communities and other priority groups to make contact with nature through visiting their local wildlife sites. The project provides opportunities for people to experience, enjoy and access the natural environment in creative and meaningful ways.

Read on to get a flavour of just a few of the fabulous activities that took place in 2011.



## Wild City goes Wild!

What better place to launch Wild City, than a site which was once an airfield, has been used to dump landfill, is surrounded by busy roads and yet is a wonderful wildlife sanctuary. Hengrove Mounds provides an amazing meadow habitat waiting to be discovered

right in the heart of South Bristol.

Wild City was launched in July with help from nearby Bridge Learning Campus primary school. Children created beautiful artwork using flight as their inspiration and on the day helped visitors to make their very own Wild City 'passports' using flowers and seed heads collected from the meadows before taking them off for a guided tour around the site.

"The Wild City inaugural event was absolutely great. The work that had obviously been put in with the children became very clear not only from their great artwork but from the commentaries that they gave us as they took us around the Mounds. I was quite stunned to hear such young children explaining the habits of nocturnal animals – and that was only one example of what they had learned."

Susan Acton-Campbell,  
Friends of Troopers Hill



## Mounds & Meadows, a wildlife playground

Hengrove Mounds and Hawkfield Meadows are proving to be wonderful places for local students to spend valuable time on a wide range of projects.

Children from Fair Furlong Primary looked through 'telescopes' on the Mounds. Back at school they plan to examine old maps and see how the landscape has changed over the years. Alice Potter, the teacher, commented, 'Just wanted to say a huge thank-you. They all had such a good time and were raving about it when they got back!'

At Hawkfield Meadows, a class from Wansdyke School celebrated its agricultural connections with the past. After the meadows blaze of colour in the summer, those very same plants then provide a stunning array of sculptural seed heads which inspired follow up artwork back at school. Alice Hall, teacher, said "Thank you for a brilliant morning, we had such a great time. In the afternoon every child managed to focus for

20 minutes on a close up drawing - that would never have happened if they hadn't seen them on the field."

Post 16 Horizons students from South Bristol Skills Academy were amazed by how close this wild site is to their college. None of the group had visited the site before, and there was a sense of adventure. To go out 'into the country' and get muddy feet and trousers was a new experience for many. Early in the new year a class from Bridge Learning Campus (BLC) primary will start their



terms 'Mother Nature' topic by visiting the site whilst GCSE students from BLC secondary will make full use of the site for their Eco Tourism project.



Inside: River Song Celebration; Northern Slopes; Blackberries & Butterflies; Riding on the Wild Side





# Wild City update

## KEY SITES

Seven key sites provide the major focus for Wild City projects with communities and priority groups.

1. Lamplighter's Marsh
2. Avon New Cut
3. The Northern Slopes
4. Hengrove Mounds and Hawkfield Meadows
5. Callington Road LNR
6. Eastwood Farm LNR
7. Stoke Park



## Wild River Festival

A major highlight of 2011 was July's Wild River Festival staged at Eastwood Farm Local Nature Reserve and Conham River Park, which lie opposite each other across the beautiful River Avon. The festival was organised jointly with the Wildways Project (another Access to Nature project, run by South Gloucestershire Council) and the Avon Frome Partnership.

The fortnight of wild and wonderful events included Riverside Rambles, the River Song Celebration (see below) and an afternoon of watery tales with storyteller, Martin Maudsley. Families joining Martin said, "The whole experience was fun and full of adventure" and "Great to see the kids using their imaginations and exploring the local countryside."

The festival's main event was the Family River Discovery Day, an afternoon of riverside activities that included pond dipping, willow weaving, owl encounters, and bird box making. First time visitors to Eastwood Farm were astounded to discover such a peaceful rural site tucked away so close to the city. Even people living close by had been unaware of the Farm but having been seduced by its serene and beautiful charms, they vowed to visit again.

Access Eastwood Farm from Whitmore Avenue off Broomhill Road in Brislington.



## River Song Celebration

River Song Celebration brought together over 150 children and young people, and their families and friends, to celebrate the river through song.

Comments given on the day included "Great community event with the emphasis on connection between people and the natural world" and "Children and families coming

together to sing and celebrate the wonder of the river. It was great."

We worked closely with Hannah Klewin from Gathering Voices and Laurie Stewart from St. George Music Trust to create a wonderful programme of songs. Children and young people from Jingle & Jive parent toddlers, Broomhill Infants and St Annes Park Primary, Cosmos Choir, New Roots South & Central and World Roots came together to magical effect in the beautiful Beeses Tea Gardens.

Wonderful visual and sound artworks were created by Ruth Worsley and Peter Margerum of earth-works, working with Hanham Youth Group. These included a giant recycled swan which sailed serenely past to the music.

## Discovering Stoke Park

Stoke Park is the large sweep of land that rises up from the M32 towards the Dower House. It is a site of great importance for both wildlife and geology.

With guidance from expert Steve England and support from the Lockleaze and Horfield Strollers walking group, local people learned to weave their own baskets using hazel and ivy collected from the woods, foraged for fabulous fungi and joined in a thrilling evening safari to search for bats and other nocturnal creatures. Watching Daubenton's bats hunting for insects over the fishing lake proved a real hit, particularly for those that returned to see them again the following evening!



**A woodland festival, a new leaflet and lots more walks and workshops are planned for Stoke Park in 2012.**



More key site news on back page



## NETWORK SITES

Wild City is also working with groups on a further seven network sites. Wild City supports these groups with networking and planning activities.

- 8. Lawrence Weston LNR
- 9. Badock's Wood LNR
- 10. Narrowways Millennium Green
- 11. Manor Woods Valley LNR
- 12. Stockwood Open Space LNR
- 13. Trooper's Hill LNR
- 14. Royate Hill LNR



## Blackberries and Butterflies!

Kerry Rowe of 'Discovering Nature @ Lawrence Weston City Farm' says "With fishing nets and bug magnifiers at the ready, a group of 8 adults and 12 children set off to explore the green space between Lawrence Weston Community Farm and Lawrence Weston Nature Reserve. Stopping often to collect a good few blackberries and to identify different bugs and insects, we made our merry way to the dipping platform on the reserve. A brief glimpse of a possible water vole and lots of water insects made the walk well worth every step".

Wild City worked with Kerry and Avon Wildlife Trust to lead the walk. Please call in to the farm for directions if you would like to follow in our footsteps (approx 2hr round trip).

For a map and leaflet of the LNR, please visit our website.

## GREEN CORRIDORS

Frome and Avon river corridors.

- 15. St Phillips Greenway/Whitchurch Railway Path
- 16. Malago Greenway
- 17. Bristol and Bath Railway Path

## Ride on the Wild Side!

Wild City has been helping cyclists get closer to nature. In partnership with Life Cycle, a local cycling charity that enables people of all abilities to get out on bikes, we have injected a little bit of wildlife into bike rides.

We have joined Silver Cyclists (over 55s groups!) on routes along the rivers Malago, Frome and Avon. We introduced young adults with learning difficulties, from City of Bristol College, to the joys of riding a tandem. And we took children from St. Pauls Adventure Playground on a Wild Food Foraging expedition along the Bristol & Bath Railway Path.

The Bristol & Bath Railway Path is also a perfect city route for tandems. Cyclists with hearing and/or visual

impairments and those with early onset of dementia, and their carers, were given the fantastic opportunity to cycle on the back of a tandem with an experienced front rider as their partner. Pat, an enthusiastic cyclist and walker, who is visually impaired, said "you've made me so aware of what's under my feet. I wouldn't have noticed otherwise."

**Plenty more Wild Rides are planned for 2012!**





## Events January to April 2012

## Update

### January

#### Saturday 28th January – Avon New Cut

*(organised by Friends of Avon New Cut)*

#### Coronation Road riverbank clean-up.

10am to 12 noon. Meet at Gaol Ferry Bridge (south side). Wear warm, waterproof clothing, strong shoes and protective gloves if you have them. Spare gloves and litter pickers supplied. Free coffee and cake afterwards. Tel: 0117 923 1039 or email: [contact@franc.org.uk](mailto:contact@franc.org.uk)

### February

#### Saturday 4th February – Troopers Hill

*(organised by Friends of Troopers Hill)*

**Forest Club.** 10am-11.45am. Fun activities for 7-9 year olds in the woods led by a qualified Forest School Leader. Free but places are limited and MUST be booked. Contact Susan on 0117 947 5037.

#### Saturday 25th February – Avon New Cut

*(organised by Friends of Avon New Cut)*

#### Cumberland Road riverbank clean-up.

10am to 12 noon. Meet at Gaol Ferry Bridge (north side). Wear warm, waterproof clothing, strong shoes and protective gloves if you have them. Spare gloves and litter pickers supplied. Free coffee and cake afterwards. Tel: 0117 923 1039 or email: [contact@franc.org.uk](mailto:contact@franc.org.uk)

### March

#### Sunday 11th March – Lamplighter's Marsh

*(organised by Wild City & Shire Greens Action Group)*

**History Walk.** A fun and informative local history walk around Lamplighter's Marsh, led by local historian Judy Helme. All welcome - no need to book. Children must be accompanied by an adult and well behaved dogs on leads please. Suitable for wheelchairs. Meet outside the Lamps Pub for a 10.30am start. Tel: 0117 982 9963 or email [ash@shirecaf.org.uk](mailto:ash@shirecaf.org.uk)

### April

#### Saturday 14th April – Troopers Hill

*(organised by Friends of Troopers Hill)*

#### Dawn Chorus Walk.

6am to 7:30am. A guided walk to listen to bird song and spot birds with expert Ed Drewitt. Booking is essential. To book your place phone Judith on 0117 955 9819 or email [events2012@troopers-hill.org.uk](mailto:events2012@troopers-hill.org.uk)

**(Note: these events may be cancelled in the event of bad weather)**

### Out and About on the Slopes

The Northern Slopes set the scene this summer for courses in Bushcraft skills, and Positive Futures encouraged



local young people to attend. Most were teenagers but Ziggy ... leader of the sessions said "the youngest participant was only six and he really enjoyed himself. He lit his own fire and cooked several sausages and marshmallows on his own, it was really nice to see that Bushcraft and survival training is for all and not just older people." Julia Tutton, member of local group the Northern Slopes Initiative (NSI), says "This is so on the mark for what we try to achieve on the Slopes".

Wild City is working closely with the NSI to try and encourage a wider range of people to use the Slopes in a positive way. We held an Owl Prowl in November when 20 intrepid people came for an exciting and atmospheric walk across the Slopes. A Disability Access Audit is being carried out over the winter, to pinpoint what could be done to make the Slopes more accessible to local people.

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