

RIVERLIFE: ALMOND AND AVON PROJECT RESTORATION IN AN URBAN LANDSCAPE

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Dr. Jo Girvan Senior Biologist River

STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION



- Overview RiverLife: Almond & Avon Project

 - Background

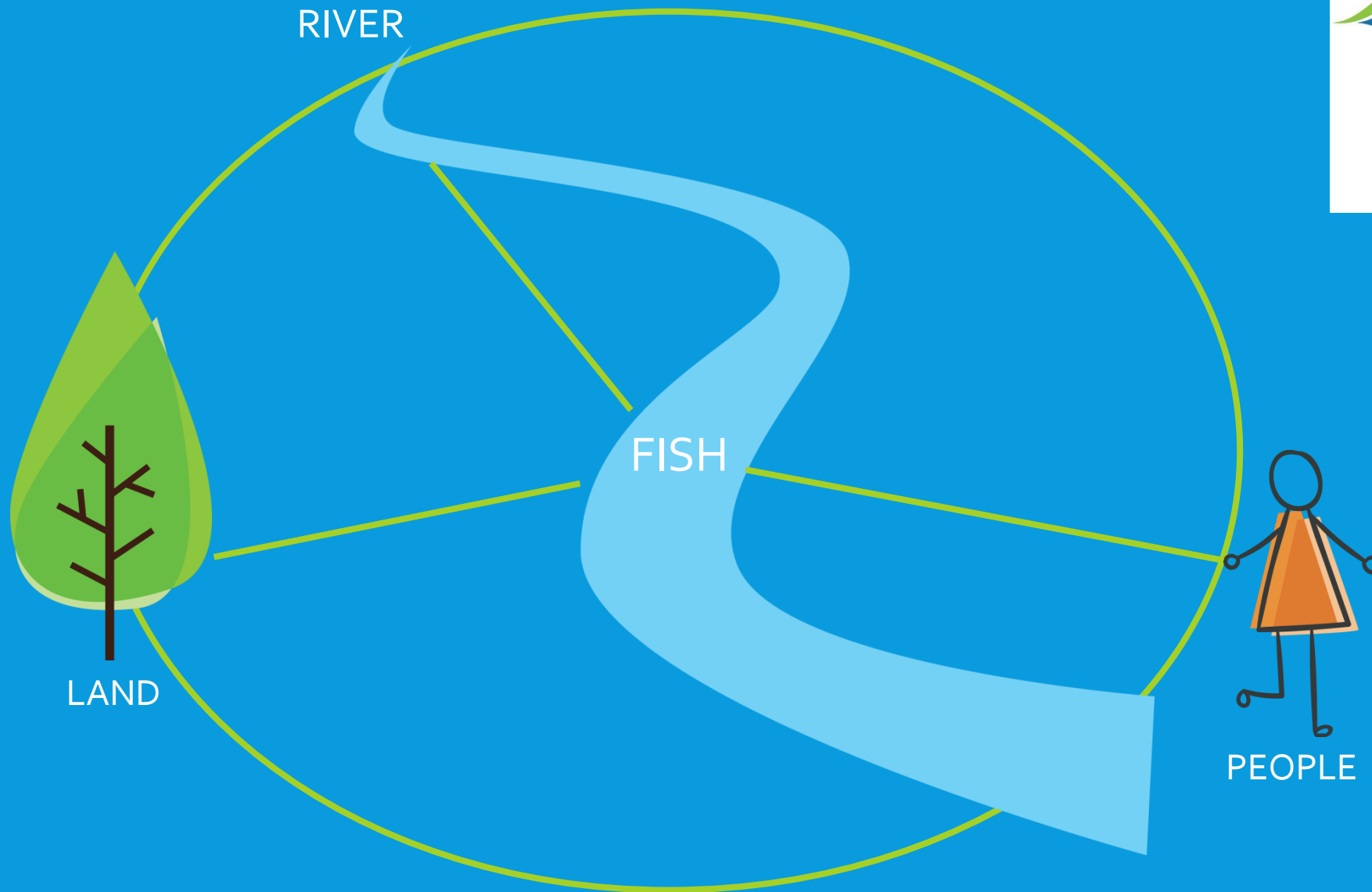
 - Key aims and objectives

 - Project funding

- Restoration Projects

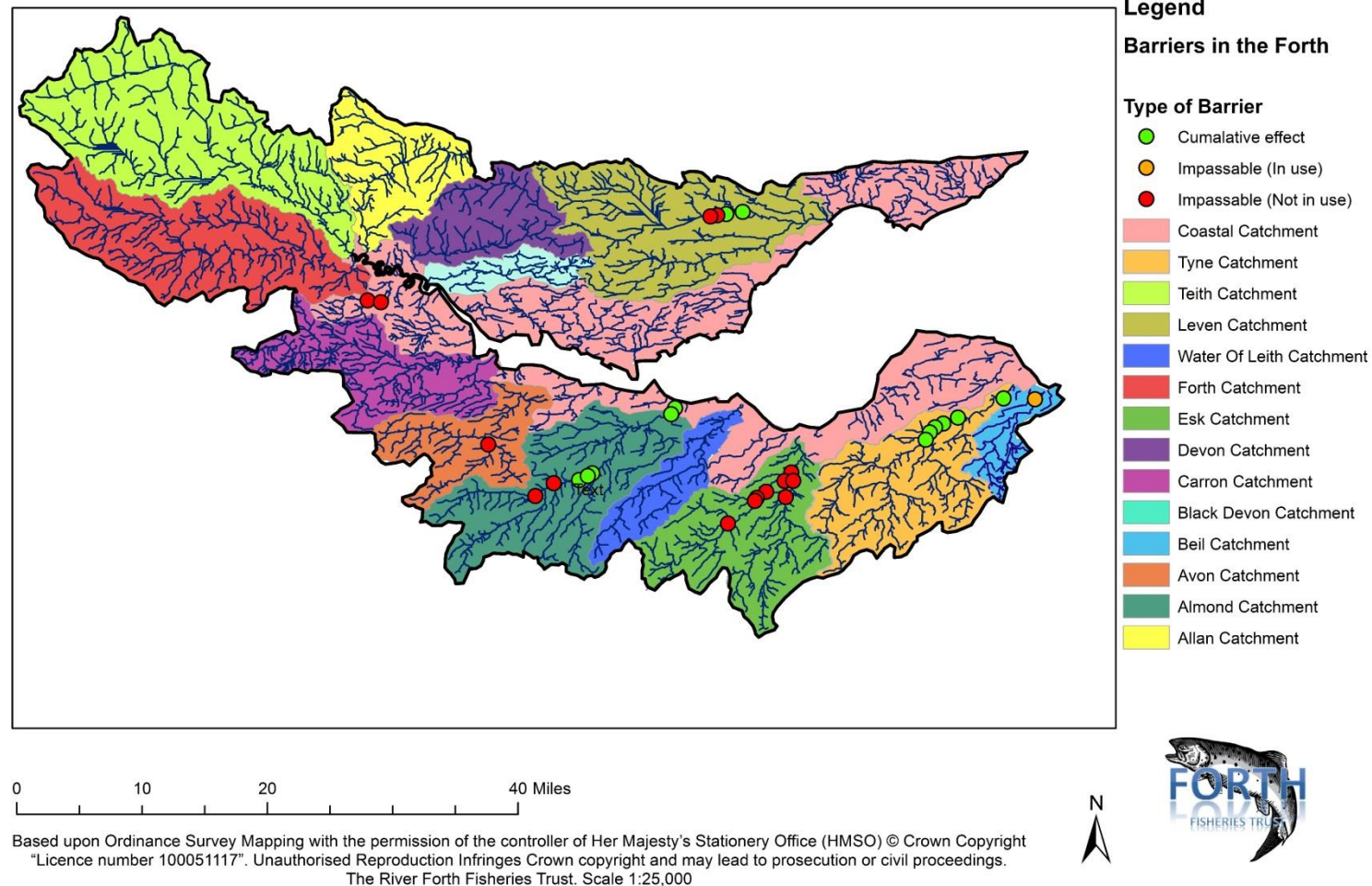
- Engagement activities

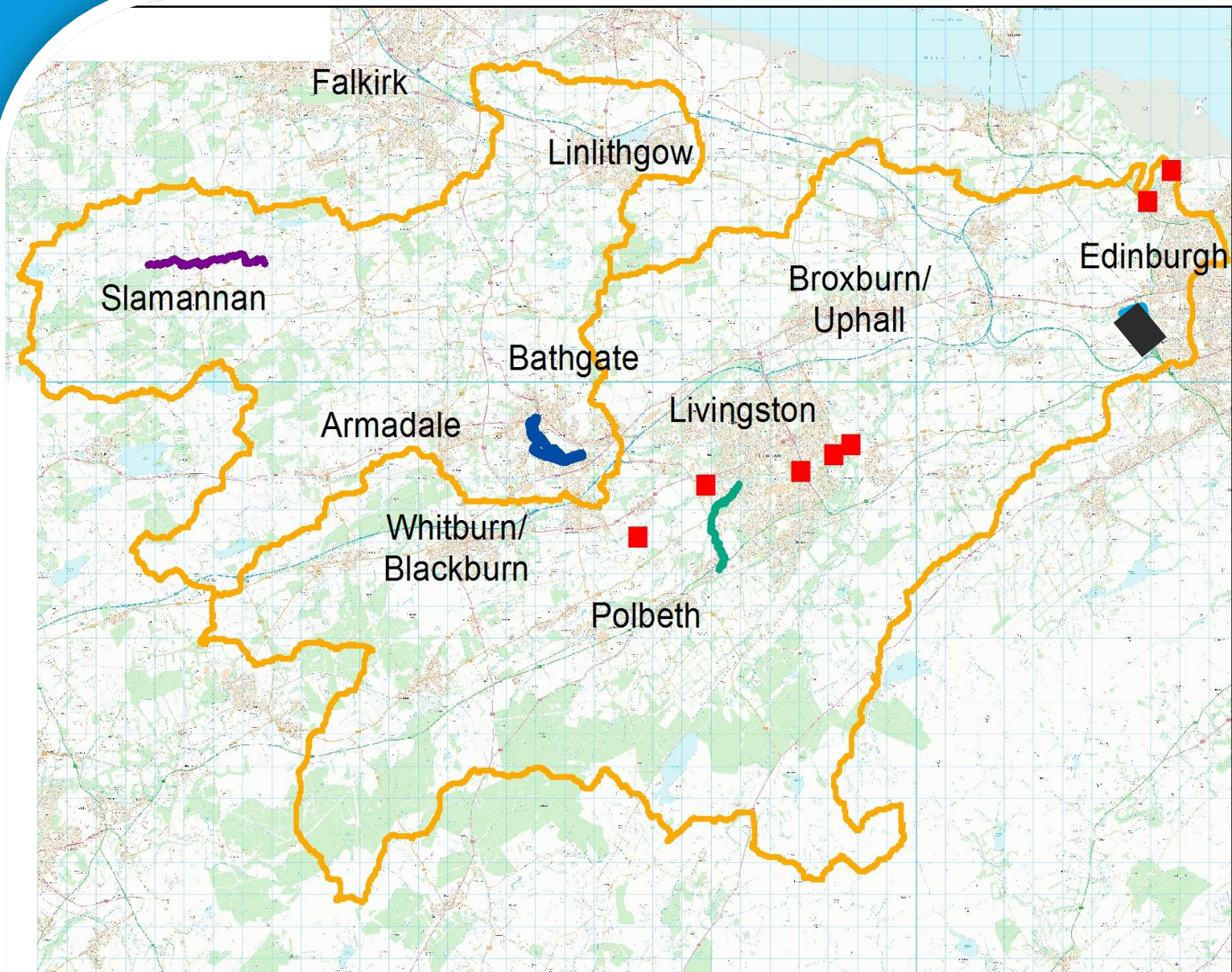
- Monitoring the success of the project



THE RIVER FORTH DISTRICT

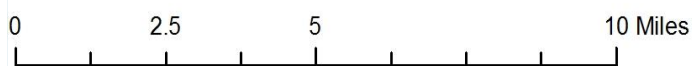
Priority Barriers in the Forth District





Legend

- River Almond Barriers
- Upper Avon Restoration Projects
- Killadean Blue/Green Network
- almav programme boundary
- Bathgate Water Restoration Project Boundary







**RECONNECTING
COMMUNITIES &
WILDLIFE TO THEIR
LOCAL RIVERS**

RIVERLIFE: PROJECT FUNDERS

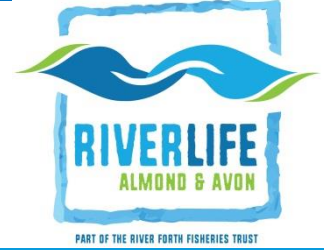


Restoration Projects

The diagram consists of two overlapping rounded rectangular shapes on a solid blue background. The shape on the left is light green and contains a white rectangular box at its top with the text 'Restoration Projects'. The shape on the right is light blue and contains a white rectangular box at its top with the text 'Engagement Activities'. The two shapes overlap in the center, with the green shape positioned slightly behind and to the left of the blue shape.

Engagement Activities

RESTORATION PROJECTS



Almond Catchment

Barriers Project

Killandean Blue / green
Network

Avon Catchment

Bathgate Water Restoration
Project

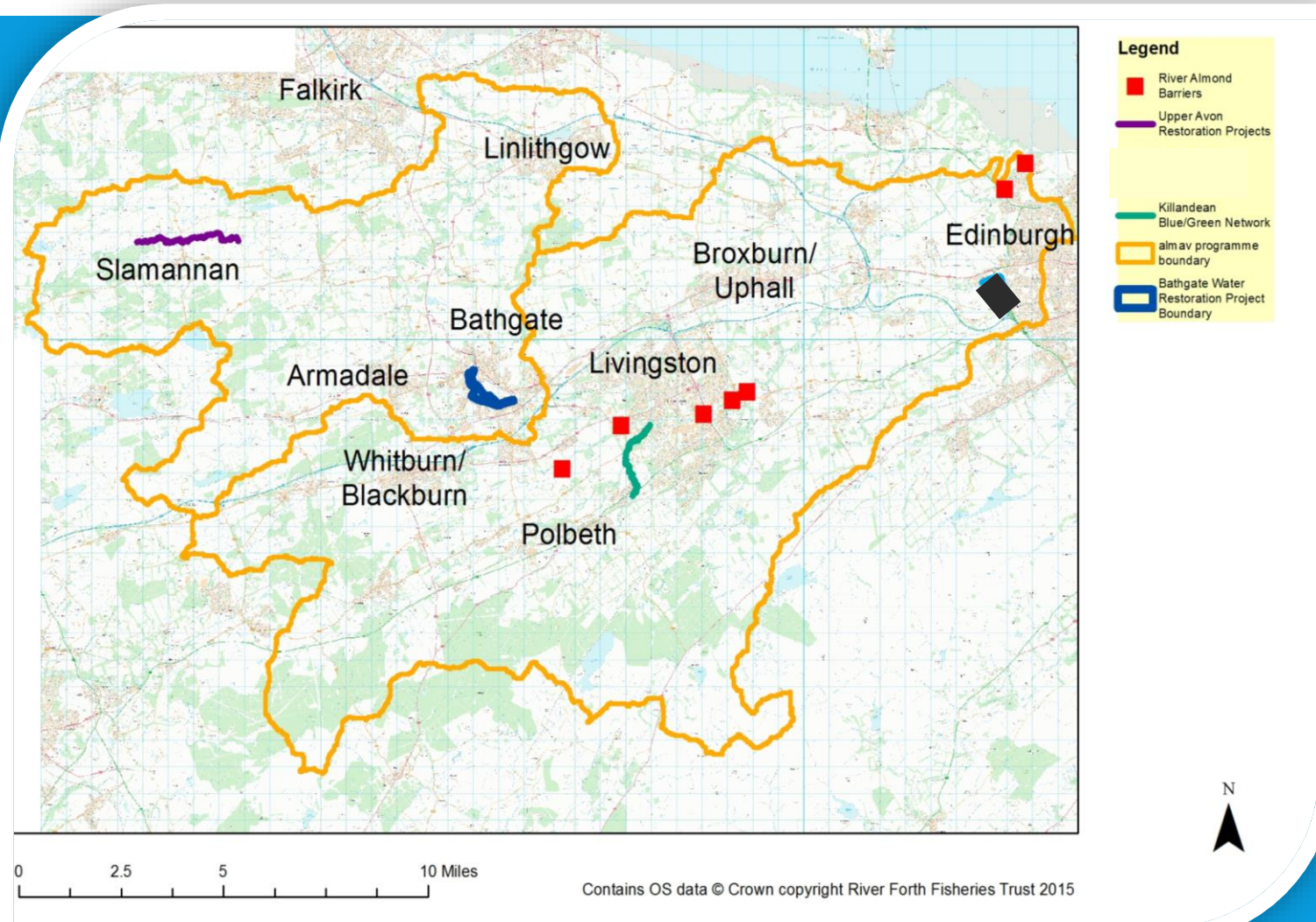
Upper Avon Restoration
Project

Almond & Avon Catchments

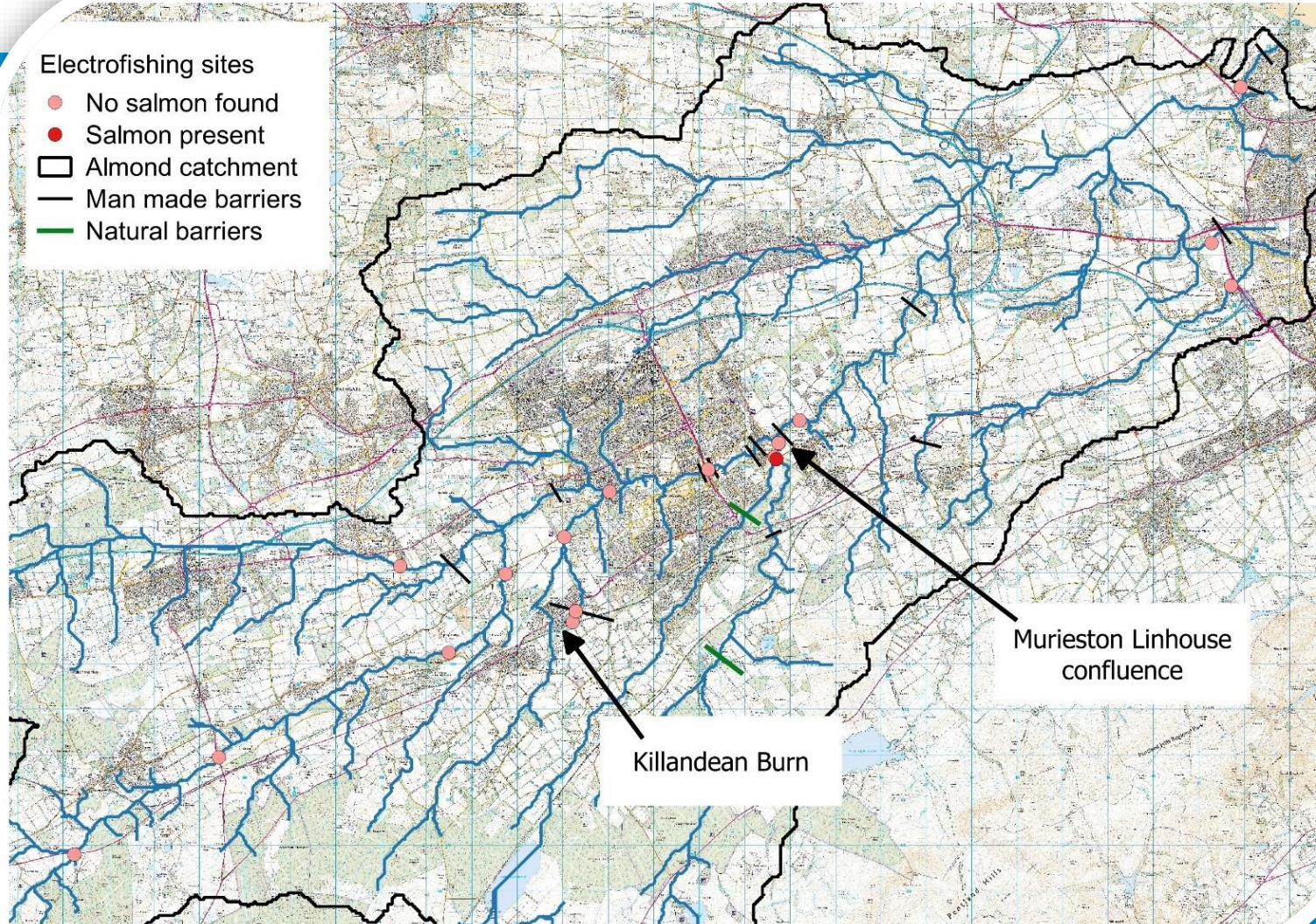
INNS

RiverFly Monitoring

RESTORATION PROJECTS

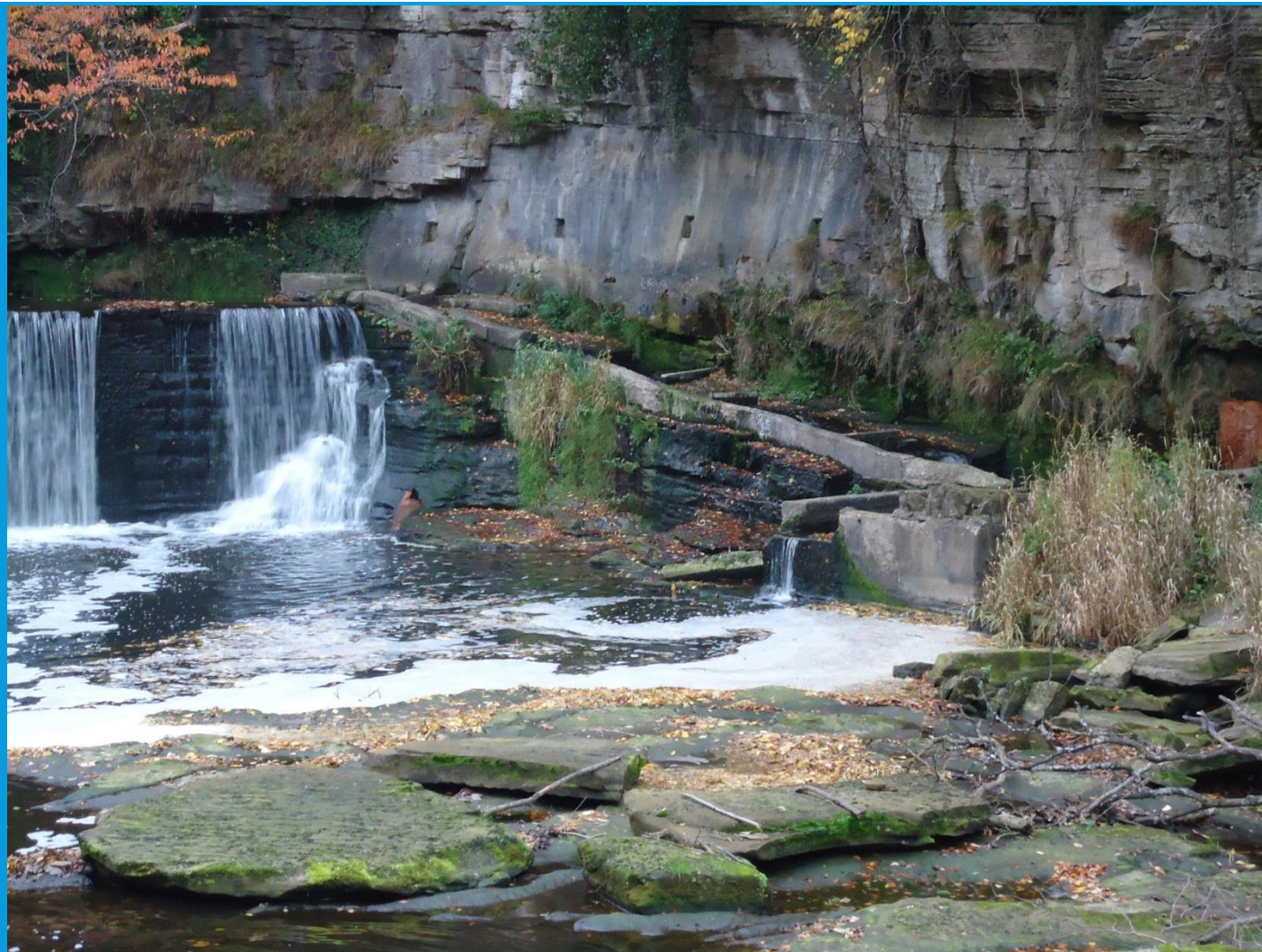
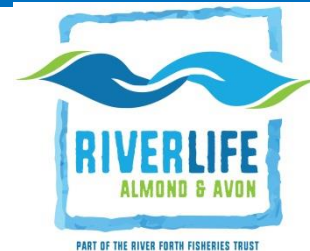


ALMOND BARRIERS

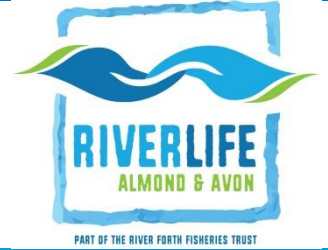




ALMOND BARRIERS: FAIR-A-FAR

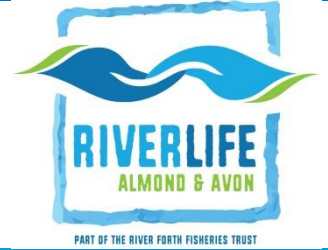


ALMOND BARRIERS: FAIR-A-FAR



View flat at a comfortable arm's length

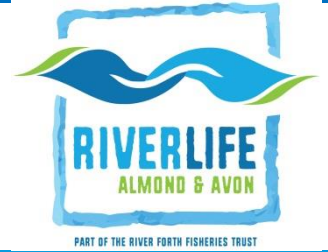
ALMOND BARRIERS: FAIR-A-FAR



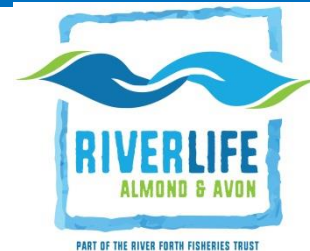
View flat at a comfortable arm's length



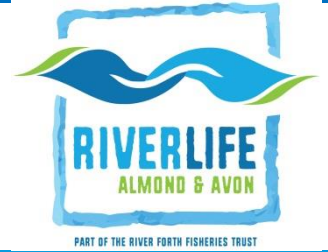
ALMOND BARRIERS: DOWIES MILL



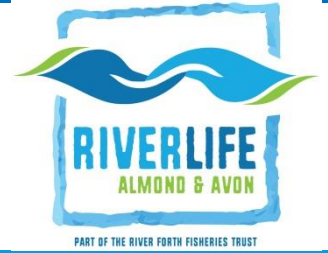
ALMOND BARRIERS: KIRKTON



ALMOND BARRIERS: KIRKTON

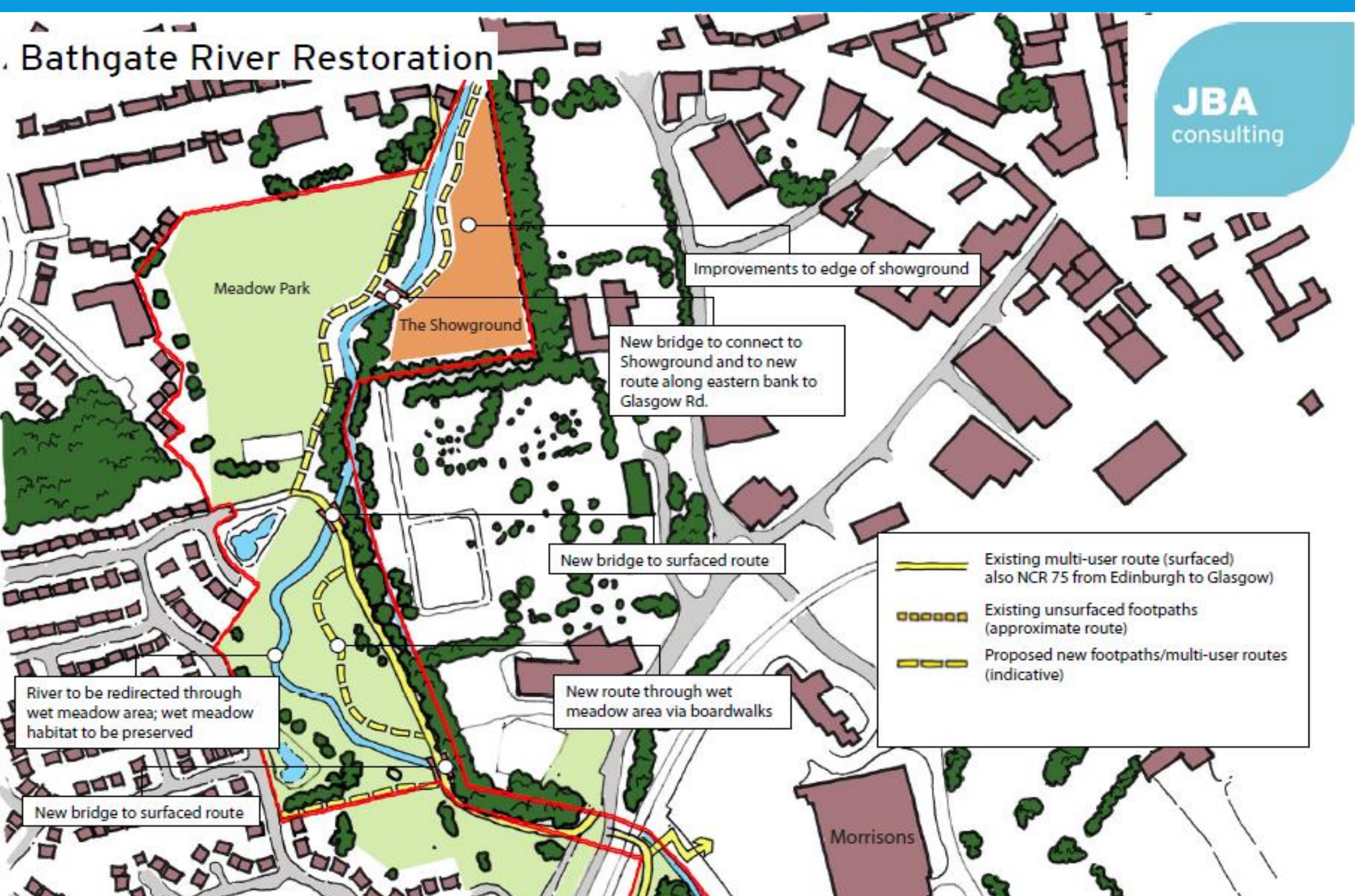
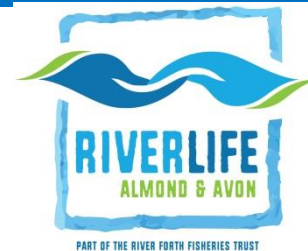


BATHGATE WATER

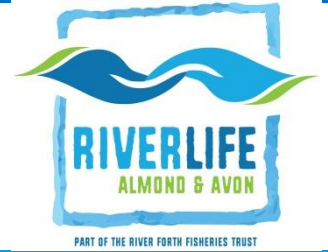


Bathgate River Restoration

JBA
consulting



ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



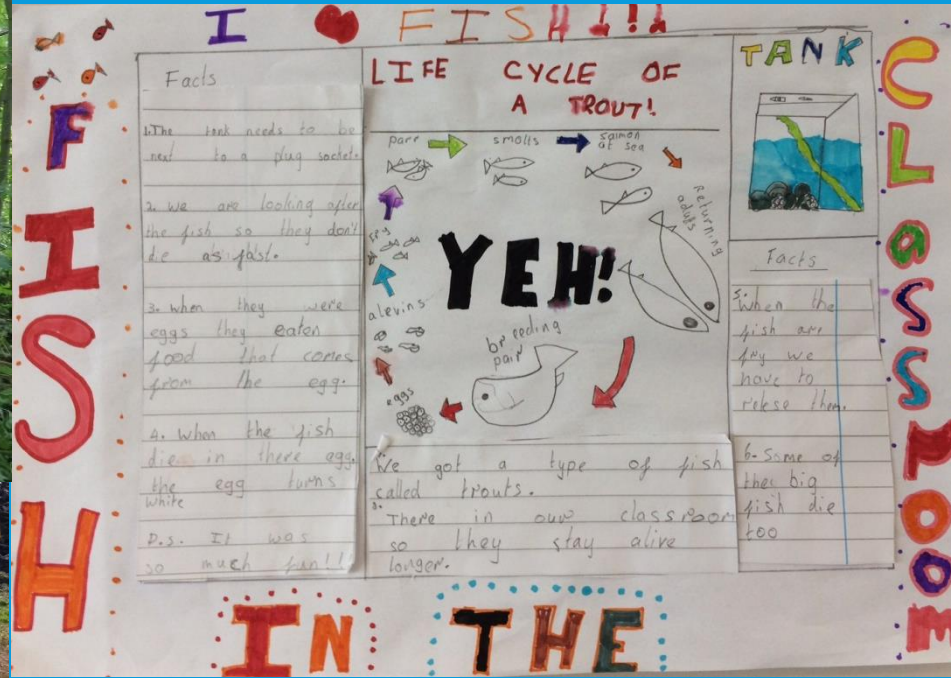
Training

Education and learning

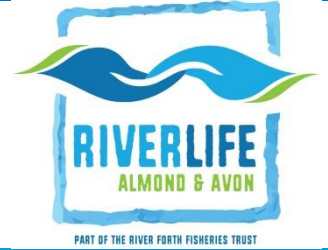
Activities and interpretation

Volunteering opportunities

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



MONITORING SUCCESS



What does project success look like ?



What is success? Is it;

- Number of barriers eased?
- Fishery enhanced – increased juvenile productivity / additional returning adults?
- Area of riverbank INNS sprayed?
- Number of awards received?
- Area of urban landscape restored?
- Length of eroding bank protected?

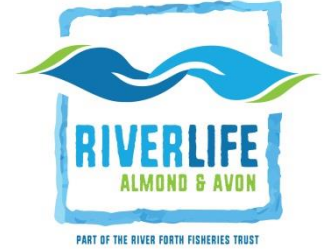




Is it;

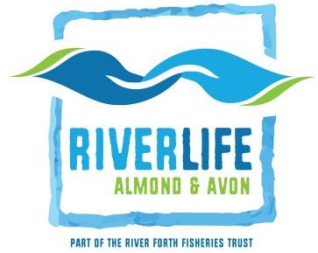
- Number of volunteers completing accredited training courses (electrofishing and PA1/PA6AW spraying)
- Number of volunteers regularly helping with electrofishing
- Number of events attended with exhibition
- Number of untrained volunteers completing volunteer days
- Number of trained volunteers completing volunteer days
- Number of schools engaged with
- Number of members of the public engaged at events (e.g. Bioblitz)

THE ANSWER IS YES – ALL OF THE ABOVE



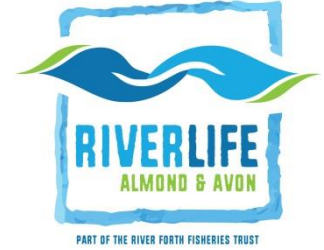
- Physical monitoring of biology/fisheries, riparian habitat, biodiversity, morphology, water quality, restoration
- People and communities engagement, learning and education, social benefit, intergenerational interaction, physical and mental health, skills and CV development, qualifications, getting into work

WHY MONITOR PROJECT SUCCESS?

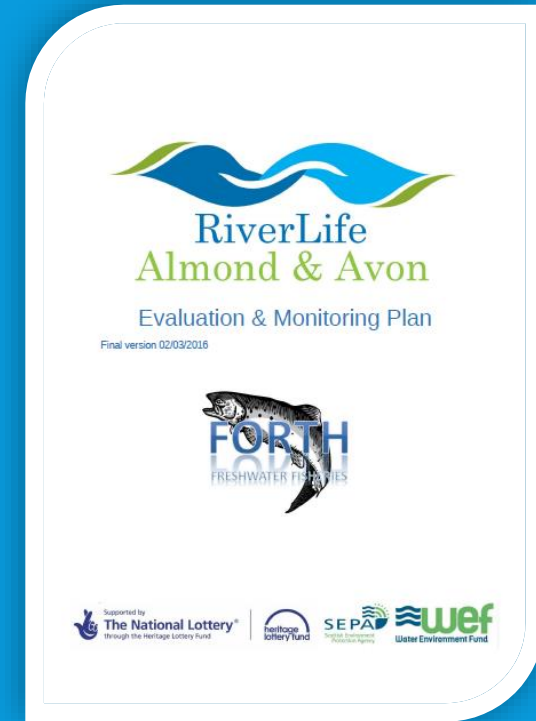


- Funders want to know that their money is achieving what was promised at the outset
- Monitoring is appreciable chunk of project funding
- Board members and stakeholders want to know that we are running successful projects and achieving our fisheries management and education objectives
- We want to know if we are doing things correctly and if we need to change our approach
- Demonstrate and promote our success to attract future funding, followers, skills, good press
- Monitoring forces us to think about the multiple benefits of our projects and hence maximise the priorities that we can achieve
- Linking with other organisations and developing partnership working

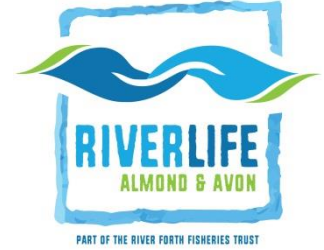
BENEFITS OF HAVING AN EARLY MONITORING STRATEGY



- Baseline will be established at the outset
- Work with research institutions and set up research partnerships
- Project objectives can be assessed properly
- Increase engagement with the outside world
- Developing volunteer network promotes ownership and hence sustainability beyond the four funded project years
- Cant proceed from development to delivery phases of HLF project without comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan

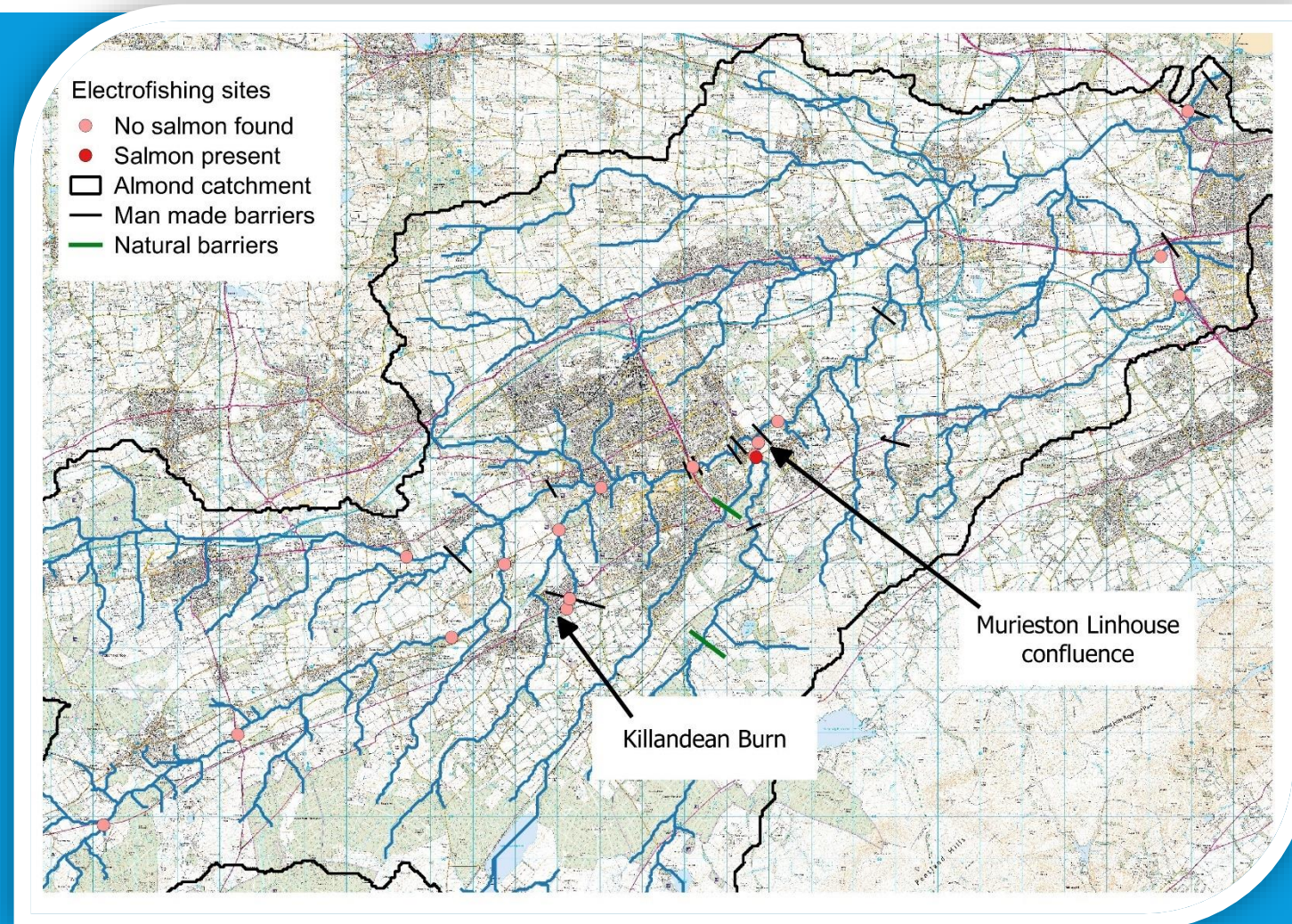


PHYSICAL EVALUATION – CARRIED OUT BY EXISTING TRUST STAFF - BUILT ON OUR CORE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

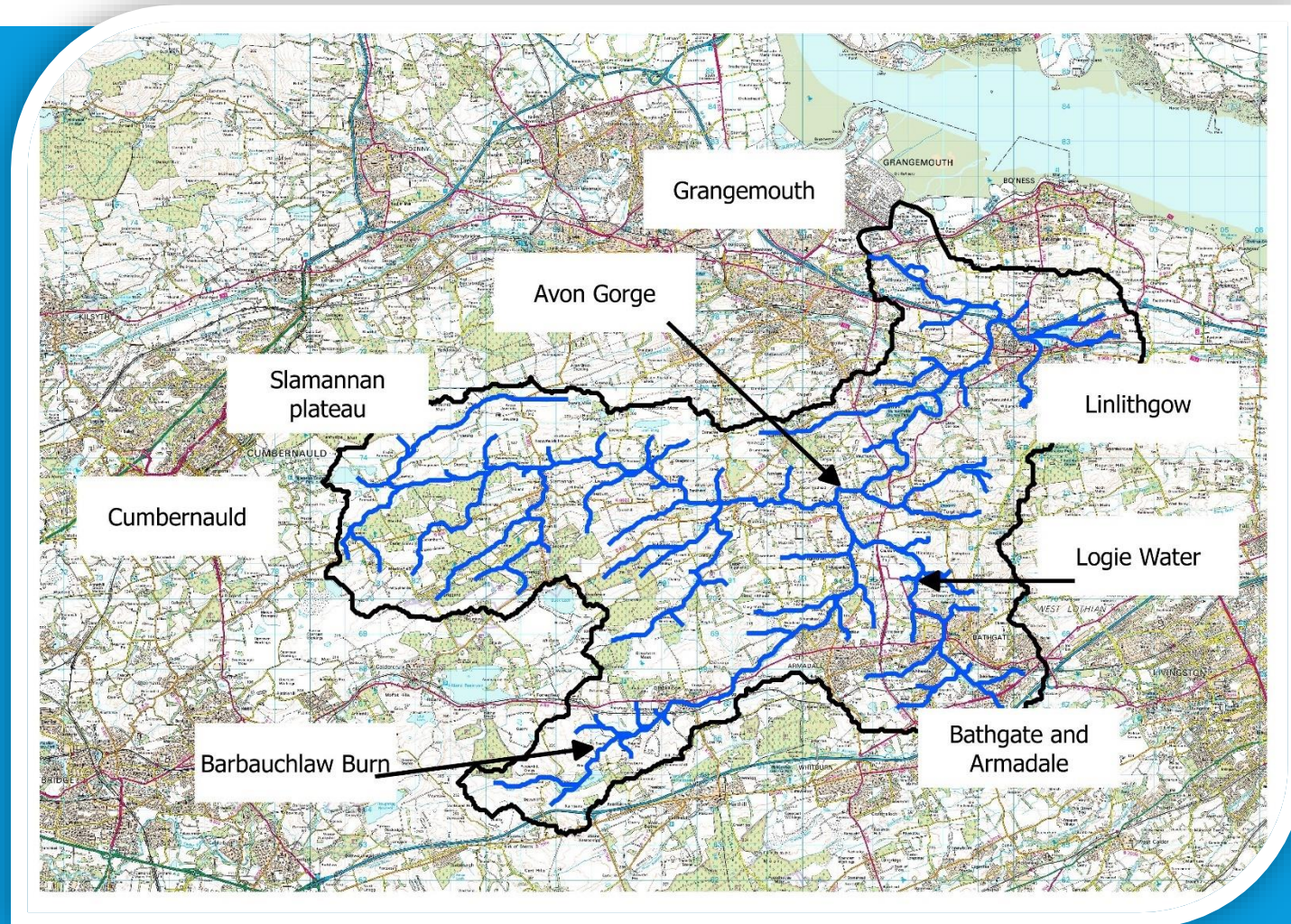


- Electrofishing
- Fish counters
- Invertebrate assessment
- Rapid assessment walkover
- Vegetation surveys
- Fixed point photography

RIVER ALMOND CATCHMENT

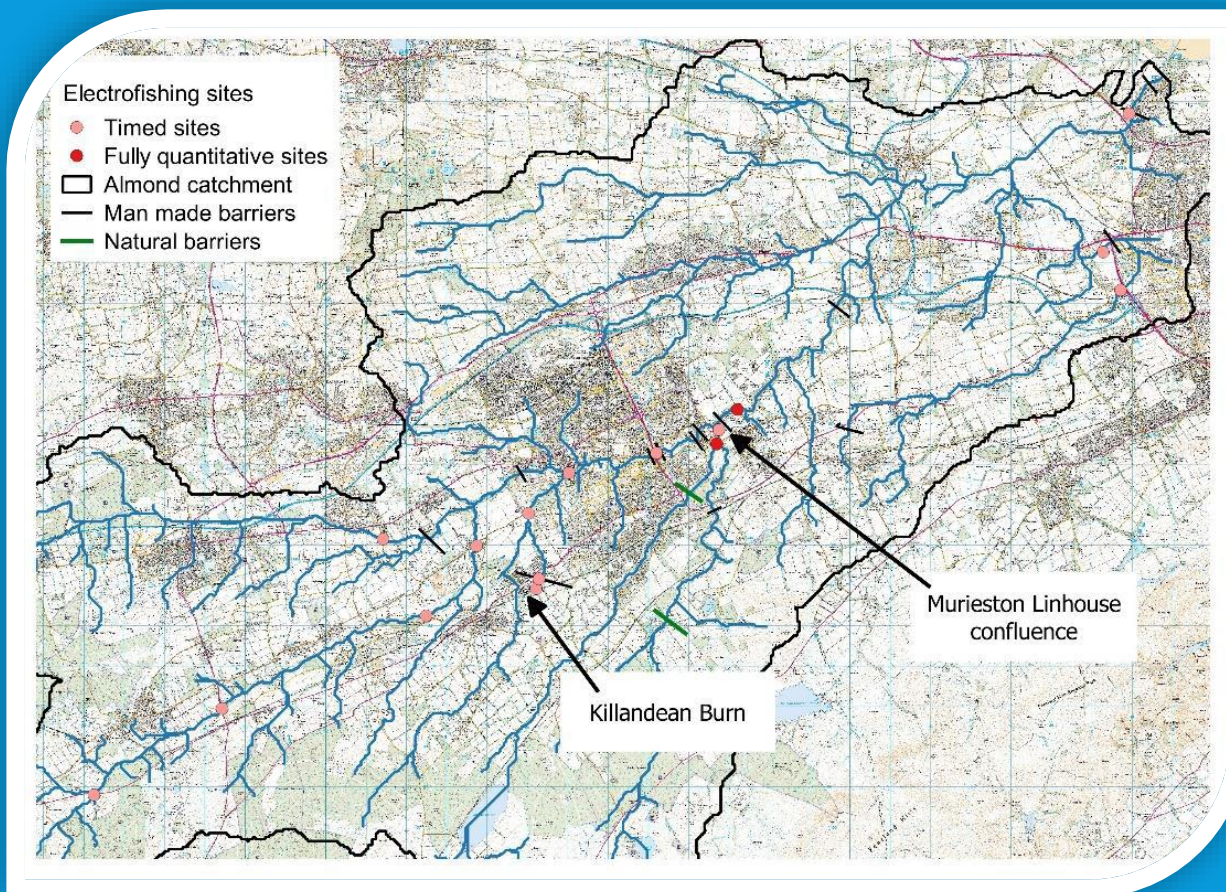


RIVER AVON CATCHMENT



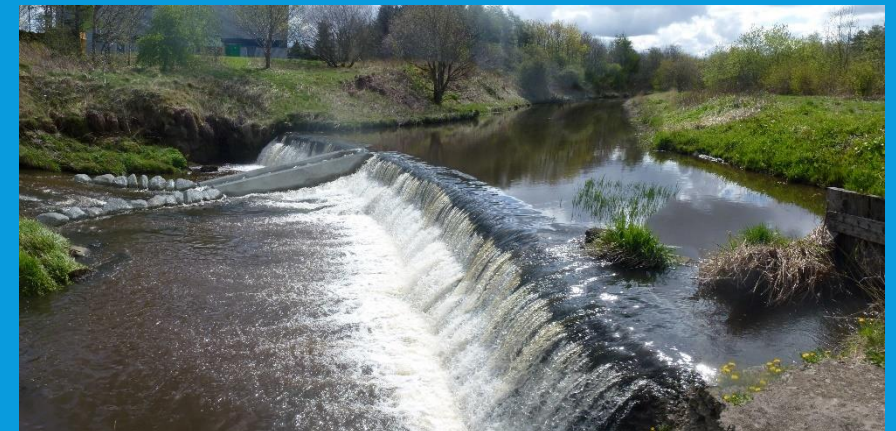
ELECTROFISHING

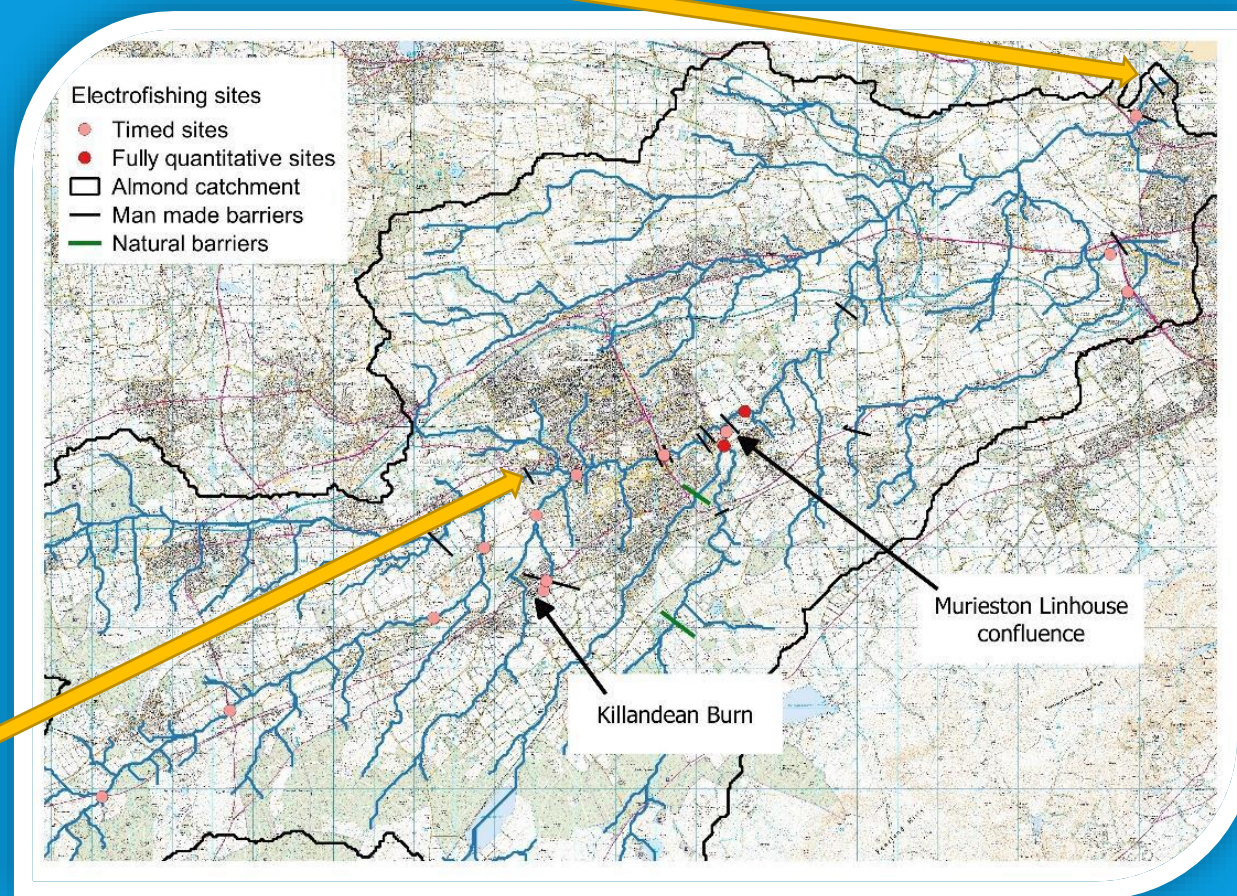
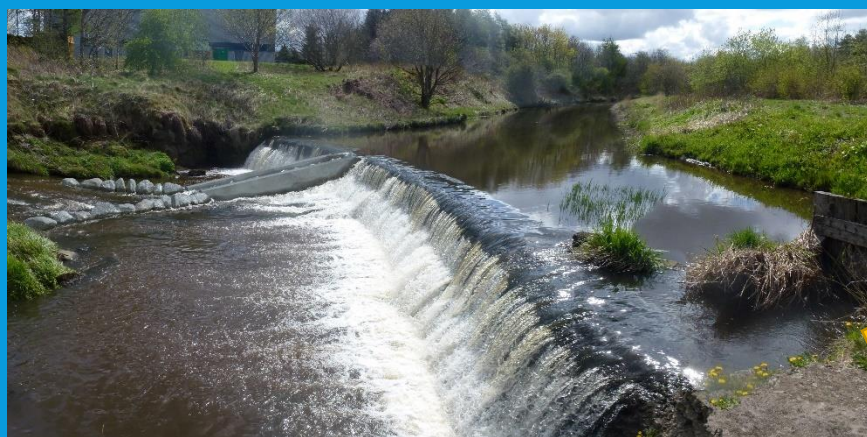
- Who can take part
- Who runs it
- What does it involve?
- Training events
- Site selection
- Resources needed



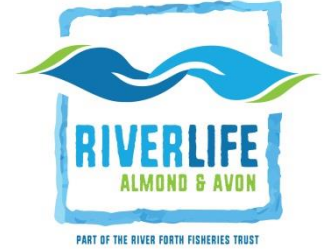
FISH COUNTERS

- Who runs it
- What does it involve?
- Who can take part? (Video feeds and website QR codes)
- Resources needed
- Site selection

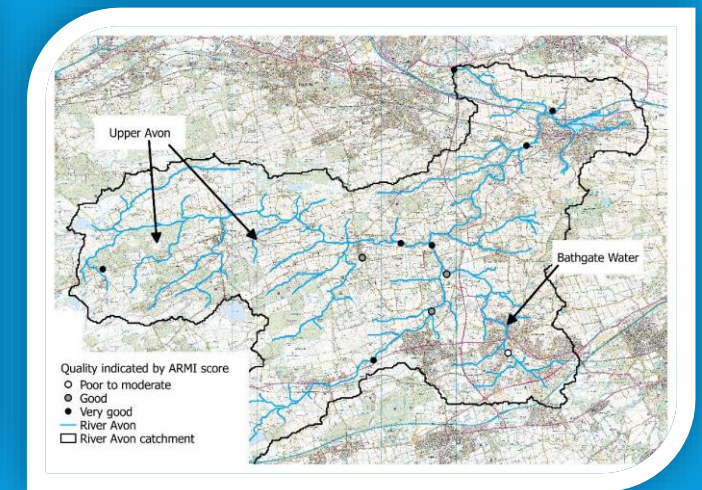
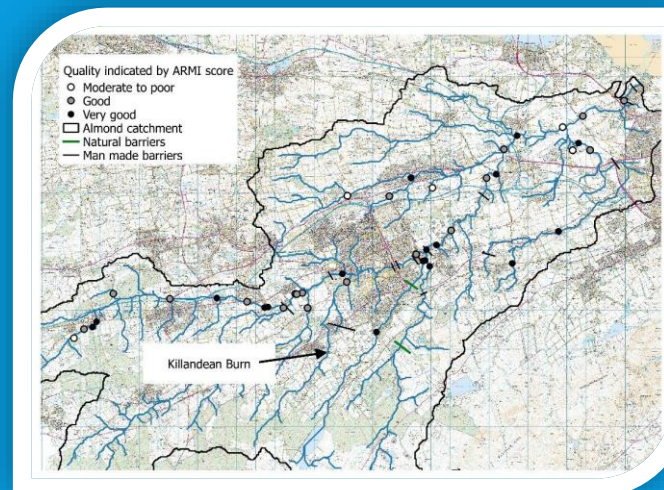




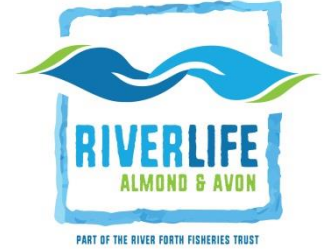
ANGLERS RIVERFLY MONITORING INITIATIVE



- Who can take part?
- Who runs it?
- What does it involve?
- Easy for the layperson
- Ties in with SEPA regulatory remit
- Training events
- Site selection
- Resources needed

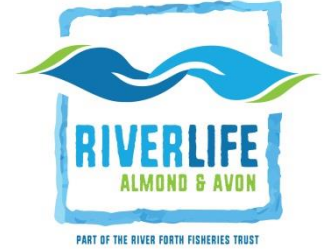


ANGLERS MONITORING INITIATIVE – BOXES TICKED



- Engaged anglers and other stakeholders
- CPD for volunteers
- Biological data generated
- Project monitored
- Can offer clear demonstration of project success where habitat has been improved

HABITAT / MORPHOLOGY RAPID WALKOVER ASSESSMENT



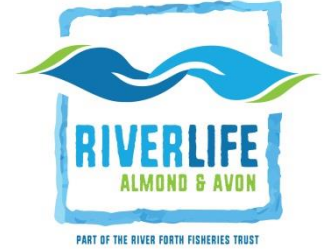
- Uses method adapted from of Environment Agency walkover outlined in Hendry and Cragg-Hine with elements of River Habitat Survey
- Trained staff members rather than volunteers
- Data informative at a simple level, therefore can be directly disseminated to the lay person

FIXED POINT PHOTOGRAPHY

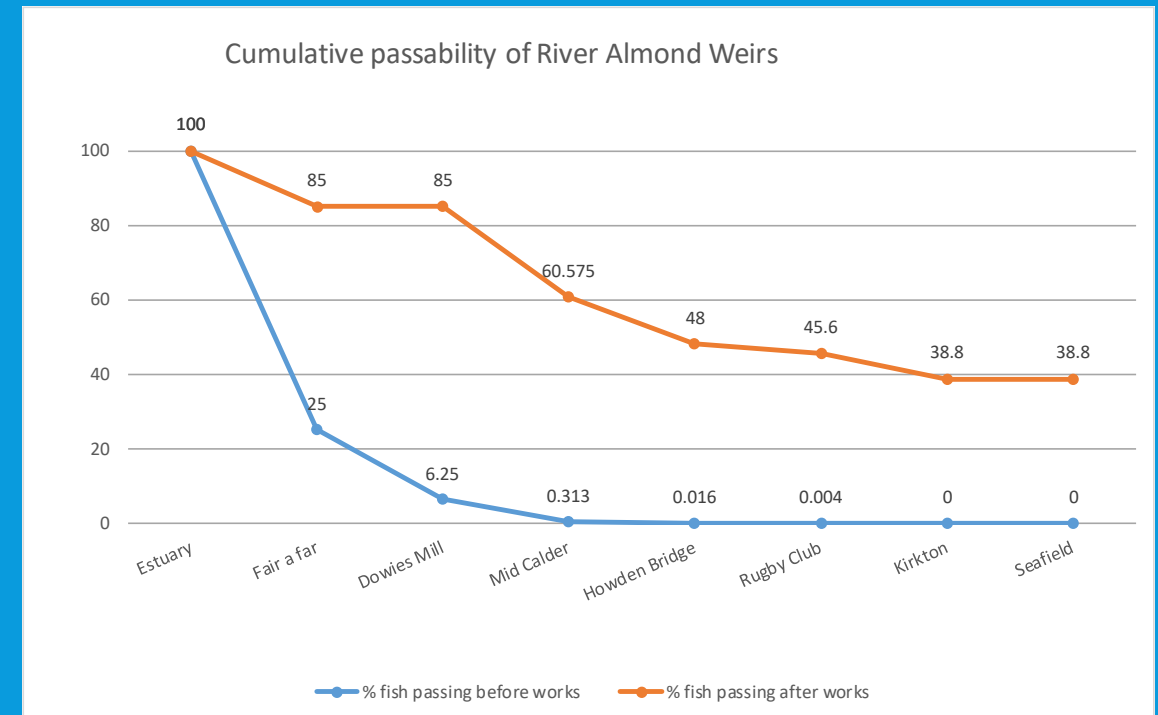
- Focus on capital project progress (e.g. barrier easement)
- Carried out by site contractors
- Lends itself to engagement as it's a visual record, easily presented on social media and websites
- Trail cameras included for shorter interval recording
- Images recorded before, during, immediately after works and the following season
- Frequency depends on rate of works/change



DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS



- Invertebrate / barrier interactions (Napier University)
- Cumulative impacts model



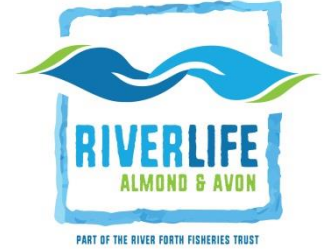
NON PHYSICAL EVALUATION – REQUIRES INPUT FROM EXTERNAL AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT



- Training
- Learning
- Engagement / activities
- Volunteer opportunities

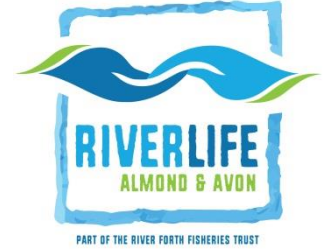


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – WHO?



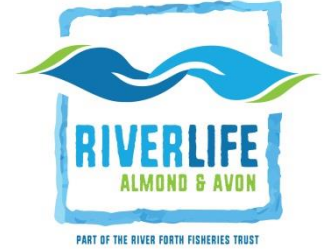
- More ready to engage – anglers, schools, local environment groups, other environmental organisations (e.g. rangers), scouts, brownies, students, work experience placements, visitors (to events/ exhibitions), older (retired) people, corporate (environment sector)
- More difficult to engage – mental health groups, youth groups, young offenders, minorities, corporate (non-environment sector)

WHY AIM TO INCREASE VOLUNTEER DIVERSITY?



- Diversify skills, abilities and knowledge brought to the project (two-way flow of information)
- Reduce risk of volunteer fatigue by having a cross cutting section of the population
- Increase volunteer retention
- Maintain project momentum
- Bring benefit to communities where it is most needed
- Increase range of contacts/potential partner organisations

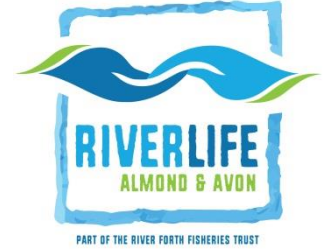
TRAINING ENGAGEMENT – EVALUATED BY NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS ATTENDING COURSES



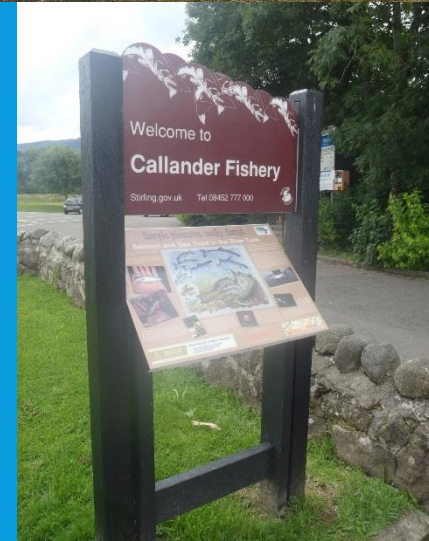
- Outdoor first aid
- Electrofishing
- Spraying PA1/PA6AW
- Anglers Riverfly Monitoring Initiative
- Citizen science – pollution monitoring
- Project and volunteer management
- Work experience students



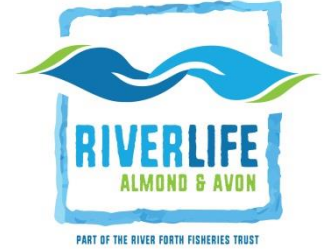
ENGAGEMENT TARGETS



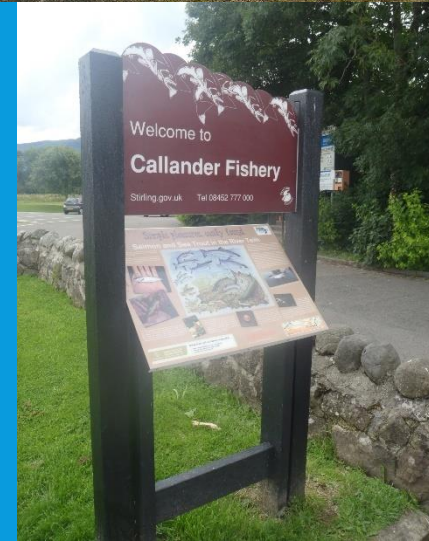
- Successful and recognisable project branding (external designer contracted for this)
- Pop up (touring) exhibition produced
- Leaflets/fliers
- Trail routes available on online interactive map
- Number of Primary (10) and Secondary schools (2) engaged with each year
- RiverLife scout badge (10 troops to be engaged)
- Small grants scheme
- 4 talks given per year reaching 160 attendees, 5% of who go on to volunteer
- Volunteer recruitment 200 over 4 years, 50 from non-traditional groups



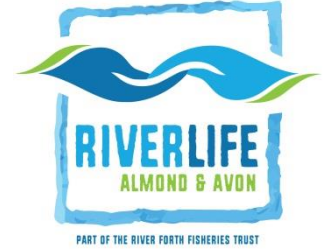
ENGAGEMENT TARGETS CONTINUED...



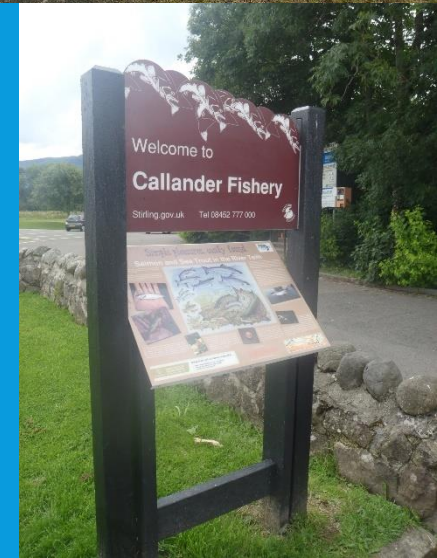
- 1,200 volunteer days delivered
- 50 volunteers funded to attend conferences and events
- Volunteer communications programme developed
- 36 guided walks completed with 360 participants
- 60 people attending introduction to angling events aimed at young people
- Interpretation installations at Almond Valley Heritage Centre (including fish counter video feeds) in place by year 3
- Themed street art in place by year 4
- Barriers bursary fund to promote accessibility to heritage
- Budget spent and outcomes consistent with aims of the programme



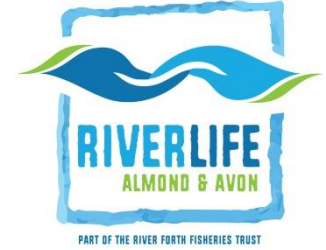
OTHER EVALUATION TARGETS



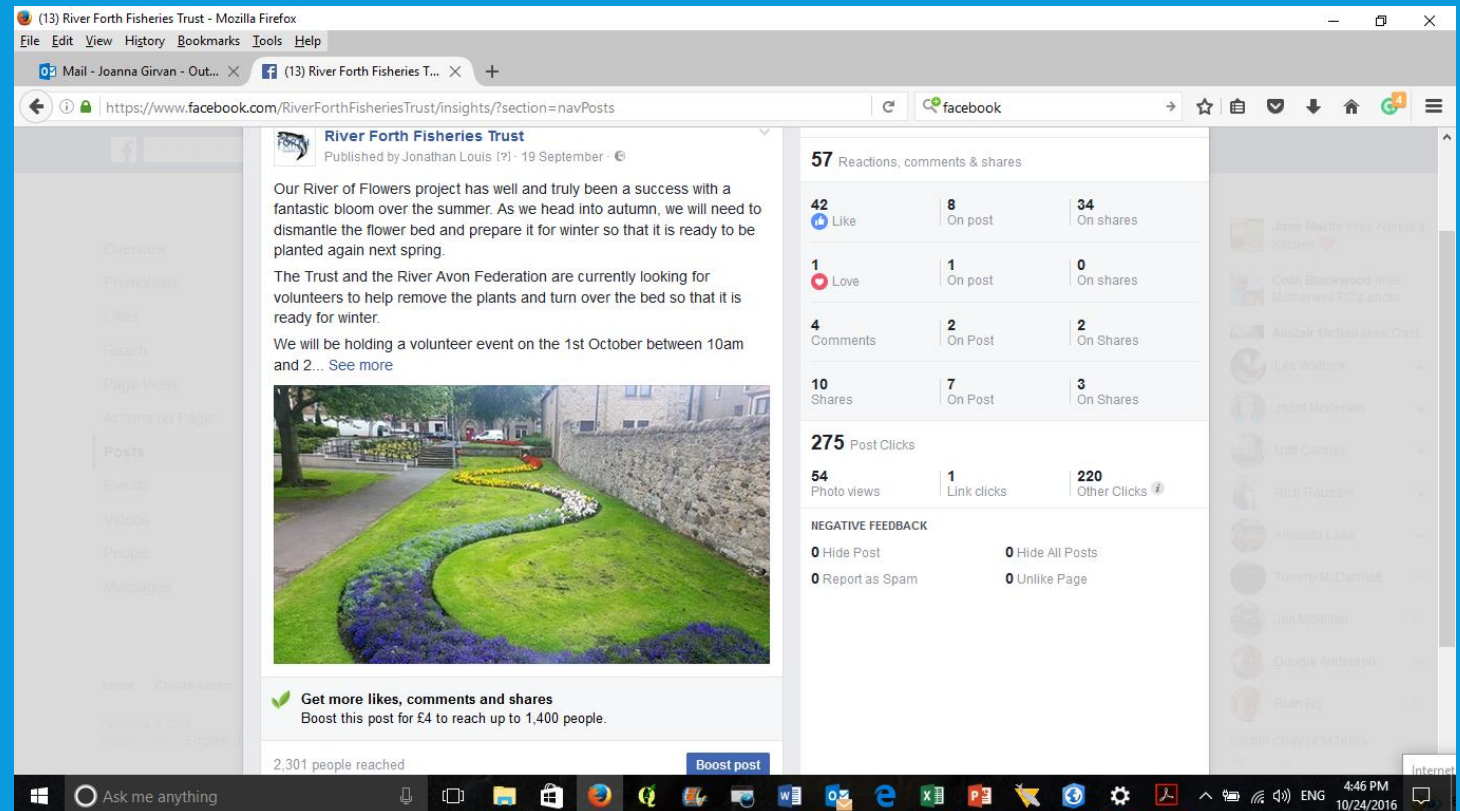
- Raising water body classifications (SEPA RBMP)
- Open up 10km of habitat for migratory fish
- Reduce area of Japanese knotweed
- Website and online forum in place by end of year 1
- Digital outputs...



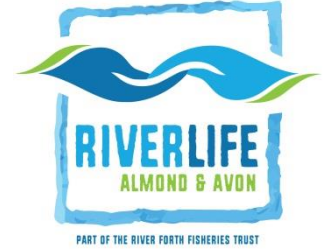
DIGITAL OUTPUTS



- Social media presence
- 1,000 Tweets
- Project mentioned in 6 partner organisation publications
- 30 publications annually of press releases in print and other media
- QR code on interpretation installations linked to dedicated websites
- 3- 4 Facebook posts each week

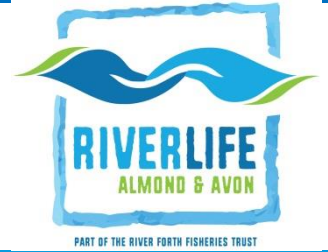


IMPROVEMENTS TO WHOLE ORGANISATION

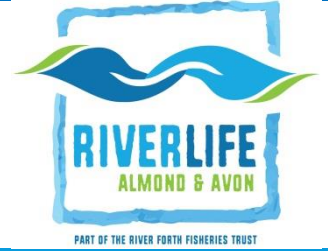


- Wider skill set, increased resilience
- Development of shared experience and working with a wide range of people
- Review of policy and procedure in line with HLF expectations
- Develop new and innovative techniques for future community engagement
- Better resourced organisation
- Centre of excellence, improved presence and public awareness
- Healthier funding future

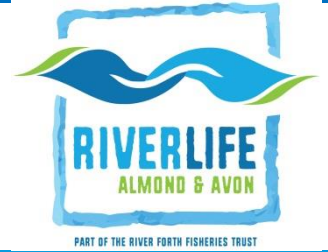
CONCLUSIONS



BY 2020



BY 2020



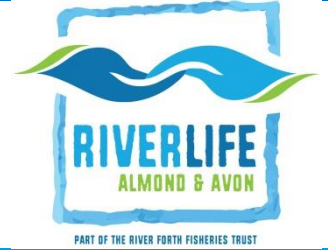
Fishery enhanced

Increased juvenile
productivity

Additional returning
adults

Greater areas of
accessible habitat

THANK YOU



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#MyRiverLife