

# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2014 - ISSUE 1



## WELCOME

Welcome to the fourth CFINNS Initiative Newsletter. Lots has happened since our last newsletter and I would like to thank everyone who has worked with the Initiative and the local Rivers Trusts on invasive non-native species control over the past few years.

This newsletter gives you just a taste of what has been going on this past year which I hope will be of interest to you.

Bekka Corrie-Close

## Identification and Biosecurity workshops

Five identification and biosecurity workshops were held this year and 56 people trained. The purpose of the workshops were for individuals to familiarise themselves with aquatic and riparian FINNS, including those now listed on Schedule 9 and to develop their identification skills for these species. The workshop included an overview of the listed species, their ecology, distribution and new legal status.

Those who took part have now become part of the early warning and reporting network in Cumbria, as identified in the Cumbria Freshwater Biosecurity Plan. This network allows us to find and identify new populations of FINNS enabling us to implement biosecurity and control measures.

**If you or your colleagues or volunteer group spend time on or next to the water, please get in touch as we are looking to run further free workshops during 2014. The more people we have keeping a look out for new FINNS the better chance we stand of finding and eradicating them.**

## Inside this Issue

Identification and Biosecurity workshops	1
Cumbria Freshwater Biosecurity Plan	2
Event Biosecurity Support Pack	3
INNS Officers	4
Electricity North West – Biosecurity Case Study	5
Local Action Group – Case Study	6



# Cumbria Freshwater Biosecurity Plan



Launched in early 2012, the Cumbria Freshwater Biosecurity Plan is entering its third year of implementation. It addresses freshwater and riparian FINNS issues in the county, identifies how to protect Cumbria's rivers and lakes from new INNS and the best management strategies for those already present. It contains a number of actions to achieve this which are carried out by partner organisations throughout the county and coordinated by the CFINNS Initiative. We have made lots of progress and some of the actions are mentioned in this newsletter. However, there is still lots to do in order to achieve our aims.



A PDF copy of the plan can be downloaded **HERE**.

## Event Biosecurity support pack



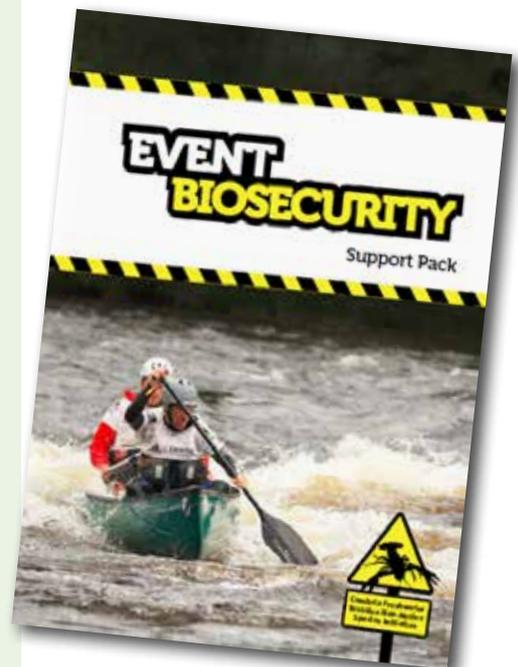
We were very pleased to announce the launch of the Event Biosecurity Support Pack back in September.

The pack is aimed at organisers of events on our lakes and rivers, introducing them to what freshwater invasive non-native species are, their impacts, how they spread and what they and their participants can do to help prevent this.

We are incredibly grateful to all who have helped to develop this (you know who you are – thank you!) and hope that it may be of use to you or your colleagues.

The Pack has been received well by event organisers and is also being encouraged by the Cumbria Event Advisory Group where many event organisers who wish to access relevant agencies or notify them of a forthcoming event submit their intent.

We have a number of hardcopies available; you can download it from our website (<http://www.scrt.co.uk/biosecurity/biosecurity>) or if you would prefer a hi-res printable version, please contact us directly.



## INNS Officers

The Seasonal INNS Officers based with the three Rivers Trusts in the county (West, South and Eden) continued into the second year of their three year projects thanks to funding from the Environment Agency.

Developing on the significant amount of work started last year, the INNS Officers have taken INNS by force and have begun to implement longer term management strategies and biosecurity for each catchment. Awareness and understanding of biosecurity has been a focus this year, working with groups such as canoeists, boaters, anglers and swimmers, educating them about the risks INNS pose and encouraging good biosecurity practice.



A huge amount of work has also gone into controlling those species that are already through our boundaries. The summary below shows some of the key achievements for 2013:

- Over 1657 volunteers engaged in control work
- Over 5910 volunteer hours on controlling INNS
- Over 1311 hours of skilled labour/contractor time
- 32 presentations reaching over 800 people
- 78 Check Clean Dry interpretation boards displayed
- Allerdale Invasive Initiative recording scheme launched
- 'Be picky with your plants' local Be Plant Wise campaign launched and promoted
- 'Check Clean Dry' local and user specific campaigns launched and promoted
- Coniston and Lune catchments surveyed for the first time and control work begun on present INNS
- River Ellen mink programme developed for recording mink sightings and control.
- More than 24km of river banks and 10 hectares of adjacent land cleared of Himalayan balsam in the Eden catchment alone.



## Bring on Biosecurity

In order to change behaviour on a larger scale, the Initiative has been working at embedding biosecurity into policies, plans and procedures of organisations who have an interest in freshwaters. To date we have trailed these with South Cumbria Rivers Trust, United Utilities, Aquatic Control Engineering and Electricity North West.

Working closely with these organisations, the Initiative has written Individually tailored freshwater biosecurity plans. These plans describe why biosecurity is so important, the implications and measures that are required from both the organisation and from the staff.

These plans are then integrated into the company's policies and procedures, on-site method statements and risk assessments.

### Electricity North West has written an article for us to describe their work with us.

“In December 2011 an electricity cable fault caused a power cut in the small hamlet of Wasdale Head where Electricity North West is responsible for the electricity network. The network which supplies Wasdale Head comprises of 5 different sections of 11,00volt underwater cable within Wast Water, England's deepest lake and the only feasible solution was to replace the full section of underwater cable within the lake.

Wast Water is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation, which is the top European designation for a site. Early discussions with Natural England proved useful in understanding the important features of the site, the main one being the oligotrophic nature of the lake; however other important features include small isolated colonies of plants, mainly in the shallow shore areas, and Artic Charr. For these reasons biosecurity measures were extremely important to ensure that the work would have no impact on such an important site.

The network company became aware of the work which the Cumbria Freshwater Invasive Non Native Species (CFINNS) Initiative were doing to try and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive non-native species and soon had the Initiative Coordinator working closely with them on the Bio-Security needs for the work.

The CFINNS Initiative Coordinator produced a comprehensive Biosecurity Plan which included risk assessments, method statement reviews, on-site tool box talks, pre & post site surveys and reports.

These proved invaluable in gaining the Natural England consent to undertake the work and covered Electricity North West in case any third party or none-related action damaged or introduced invasive species to the site.

This precaution, of having the Biosecurity Plan produced, greatly reduced the risk to our company. All methods/practices which the Biosecurity Plan identified as essential were inexpensive and simple to implement.

The fault at Wast Water received a lot of attention, involved a large number of key stakeholders and received national media coverage. It was essential that every aspect of planning and execution was sound. The input from the CFINNS Initiative helped ensure the smooth-running of the work.”



If this sounds like something your organisation may be interested, please contact the CFINNS Initiative Coordinator to find out more.

## Local Action Group Case Study – Eden

Each newsletter we would like to highlight some of the fantastic work going on around the county. In this issue the focus will be on the Eden Invasive Species Group, and written by **Paul Greaves, the Eden INNS Officer.**



“In 2013 500 volunteers contributed more than 2000 hours towards the Eden Invasive Species Group’s battle against non-native species like the American signal crayfish and Himalayan balsam. Without their help these invaders would go unchecked, causing problems for the animals and plants that naturally live in and alongside local rivers and lakes.

Many of the volunteers this year have been under 18 years old and it has been a fantastic opportunity for them to learn about the ways that invasive species are introduced and transported and some of the simple biosecurity steps that can be taken to reduce the chances of it happening. As introduction is often through hitchhiking on equipment or clothes, when people move from one water body to another, the Checking Cleaning and Drying of equipment is essential to minimise the risk of carrying seeds, plant fragments or animals themselves to where they shouldn’t be.

Not all invasive species are introduced unintentionally, some are still sold in Garden centres and escape from the gardens that they are planted in. One such plant is American skunk cabbage which has a large yellow flower, a pungent smell and can dominate wet boggy areas. This plant has been identified in several areas locally this year and chemical treatment has been carried out to prevent it taking over, as it has done in other parts of the UK. Please bear this in mind when next buying plants for your garden or pond. If any advice is required please contact your local Rivers Trust, or look at the Be Plant Wise campaign on the internet.

In the Eden catchment we are looking forward to continuing the battle against invaders in 2014 as part of the Heritage Lottery funded Cherish Eden project. The existing volunteer involvement will be added to with the formation of River Action Groups throughout much of the catchment. The aim of the Groups is to actively involve local people in looking after the river where they live. This will have benefits not only for the environment, but also for the people and communities involved. If you would like to take part in the project or would like further information please get in touch with Eden Rivers Trust.”

### We are very grateful for all the volunteer contributions, as they have assisted us in

- ensuring 16 miles of riverbank and lake shore are balsam free with 11.5 hectares of adjoining land also being cleared
- managing 1100 m2 of newly discovered Japanese knotweed
- continuing the management of Japanese knotweed at sites managed in 2012
- removal of 899 signal crayfish
- eradication of 300 giant hogweed plants which were sprayed, injected or dug up and composted



## Have you visited our Facebook page recently?

Keep up to date with what is going on around the county. Please 'like' us! *CLICK THE LOGO to visit it.*

We also now have a Twitter account!  
*CLICK THE LOGO to visit it.*

