



Conserving Herefordshire's Ice Age Ponds February 2021 Newsletter

Dear Volunteer,
We hope this finds you well and that you are staying positive in these difficult times.
Here is a brief update on what the team has been doing in the last few months.

Welcome Sarah King.



Sarah joined us in December as the Project's Volunteer Trainee and has, among other tasks, been making great progress on developing the Geocache Trail (see Geocache update).

Training.

The 'Walking Surveys' which have been going on throughout the lockdowns have produced a list of over 300 pond sites.

Beth is currently in the process of distilling the information into a spreadsheet so that we can create a shortlist of the most promising ponds to visit during the coming spring and summer with your help. The shortlist will include some of the ponds we were hoping to visit during the Development Stage in 2019.

Training events and plans.

We have some new training programs for our volunteers planned for the Spring, starting with an on-line event on **5th March** which will be similar to the events held in the Development Stage in 2019 with introductory talks and instructions on how to carry out surveys.

The Program will look something like this:

- Intro and Plans for the Spring/Summer surveys – David Hutton
- An Introduction to Ice Age Ponds, their Wildlife and Ecology – Will Watson, (Project Ecologist.)
- Survey Techniques, recording and collecting the data
 - Geological data collection – Beth Andrews (EHT & Project Officer)
 - Ecological data collection – Giles King-Salter (Project Ecologist)

This will be followed up with a socially distanced **field visit** which will need to be pre-booked to an Ice Age Pond with Project staff and/or previously trained volunteers at a site to be arranged. More details to follow from Beth soon.

Everyone will be welcome to join these sessions but we are hoping that our newer volunteers who have yet to have any training will make up the majority of our audience.

Pond Surveys.

We are hoping to be able to survey around 60 ponds this summer and to do this we will need all the help we can get from our volunteers, although this will need careful planning and coordination to do this safely.

If you are still willing to help survey ponds once you have attended one of the upcoming training events or were trained in 2019 during the development stage, please, get in touch with Beth at e.andrews@worc.ac.uk so that we can send you details when the time comes.

Pond Water Quality. During this year's survey season we aim to carry out a specific survey and study of Pond Water Quality. We will be recruiting another volunteer trainee for the project who will, among other duties, help undertake a program of water quality sampling in order to find out more about how the ecology and water quality of the ponds is affected by surrounding land use.

Birmingham University have offered support in doing this, including the use of one of their labs.

Hereford Museum Ice Age Exhibition



The exhibition closed early on 4th November because of the latest lockdown and despite significant visiting restrictions throughout the summer the exhibition reached a good number of people. Total = 2,034. Adults 1,436, Children 598. Activities = adults 94, children 110. Family activities led by HWT's Wildplay Team on Saturdays and holidays were advertised and fully booked and received lots of very positive feedback.

Geocache update.

Our Volunteer Trainee Sarah King with help from volunteer Nic Howes has made great progress with the Ice Age Pond Geocache trail. We will have a number of caches in various parts of the project area including walking trails at Birches Farm, The Sturts Reserves and Tittley Pool. Additionally there will be 'Earthcaches' in a number of locations which are mostly on, or close to the Ice Age Pond App Landscape trail. These aim to give the finder an earth science lesson helping to build knowledge of the Ice Age landscape. The Geocache trail will be launched soon with information on the HWT website and Social Media posts etc.

Practical Pond Management

Unfortunately, planned management on more Ice Age Ponds has been delayed until next Autumn (due to ground conditions) so we have our work cut out to reach our target number of 15 ponds by the end of next Winter.

Ghost pond restoration. After a search for potential 'ghost pond' restoration sites using maps, aerial photos, LiDAR and ground surveys on a large farm in the Blakemere area, the IAP team have identified a site suitable to attempt the restoration. It's in the Blakemere

geological landscape area, quite close to some of our existing Ice Age Pond sites but on some quite intensively farmed land, at the edge of an arable field.

The next job is to produce a plan for excavation, working with the farmer (A Duchy of Cornwall Tenant) and his advisors so that we can incorporate the pond into a Mid-Tier Stewardship Scheme which will provide the farmer with funding to replace any income lost from lack of production whilst increasing the farms 'Natural Capital'.

As well as creating a valuable wildlife asset we hope to uncover pond sediments which have been buried for thousands of years!

Farmer/Landowner Leaflet



The new leaflet aimed at Farmers and Landowners has been distributed among advisors from various organisation including Natural England, Environment Agency and Wye and Usk Foundation.

This follows a webinar hosted and presented by the Project Team aimed at farmer/landowner advisers on Thursday 3rd at 10am which was attended by 15-20 people. Following feedback, a new information leaflet for Farmers and Landowners has also been uploaded to the website from where it can be downloaded.

<https://www.herefordshirewt.org/iceageponds/landowners>

Website update.

There a number of new items on the <https://www.herefordshirewt.org/iceageponds> website including recordings of:

- The Farmer/Landowner advisor Webinar (and a copy of the leaflet)
- A talk by Beth Andrews and David Hutton on the Ice Age Ponds Project
- A talk by Ian Fairchild for the Teme Valley Geological Society - Ice Age Ponds and Glacial Landscapes in Western Herefordshire
- A short, rough and ready film of our day hunting for Ghost Ponds
- There are more Ice Age Resources for children to download too.

We are looking forward to seeing you soon at the on-line training and in the field! As always a huge thank to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, who have provided support and advice to help us keep our project going at this difficult time.

Beth, Sarah, David and the project team.