

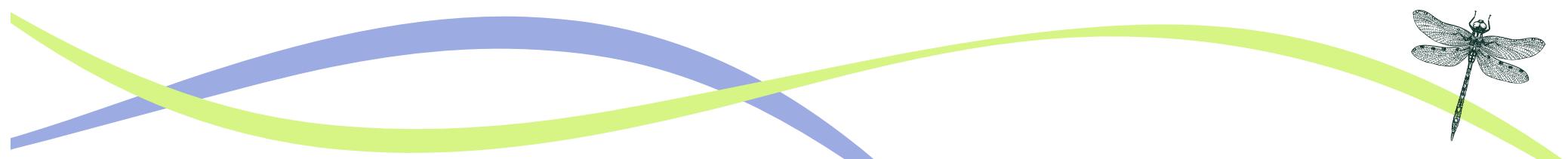
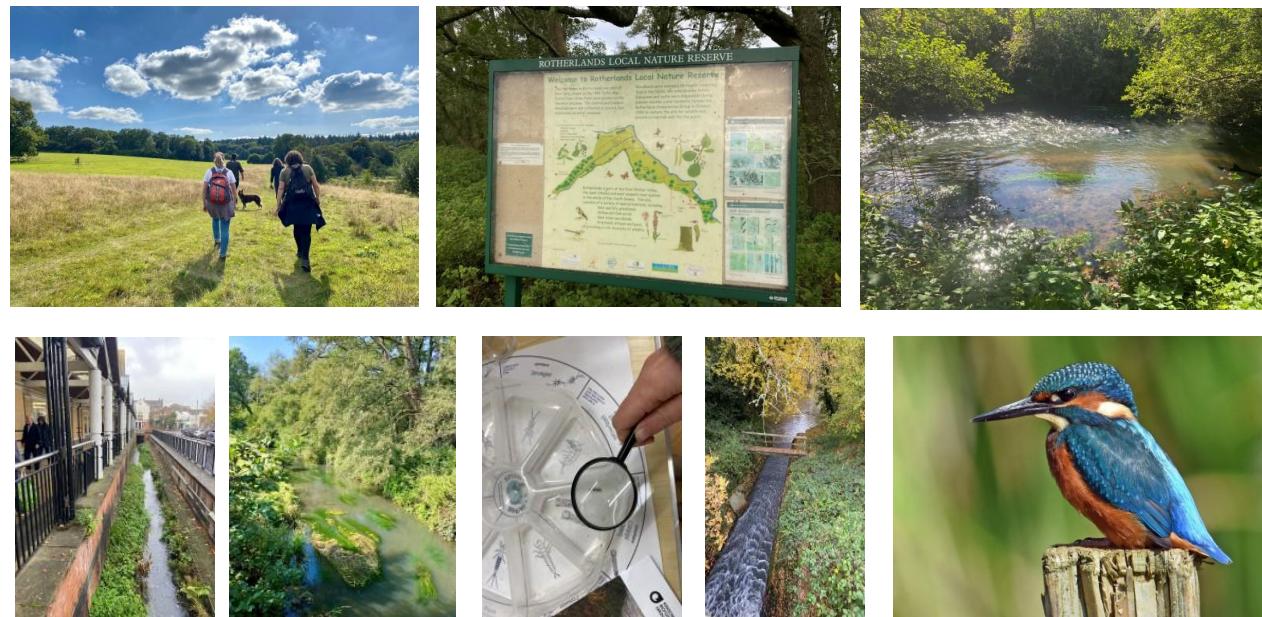


Rother Action Plan 2025-2035

Rother Action Plan Summary: Contents



Contents	Page
Intro	3
Vision, Aims & Objectives	4
Rother Partnership	5
Western Rother Catchment	6-7
Opportunities	8
Current Projects	13
Aspirational Projects	21
Cross-cutting Projects	23
Monitoring	23
Appendices	24



The Rother Action Plan is a sub-catchment plan for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment. It is overseen by the Rother Partnership which was established and funded by South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, Southern Water, Chichester District Council and is coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.

Rother Action Plan 2025-35

The next ten years



Our long-term aim is to see the river Rother and its tributaries that flow across the South Downs landscape, become the beacon of good river health within a National Park. A flourishing river system, guided and championed by all. A **coordinated, urgent and ambitious approach will be necessary** if we are to achieve **Good Ecological Status** for every stretch of the catchment.

This will require **dramatic improvements in reducing pollutants entering the water**; the **removal of many barriers** that currently restrict the free movement of wildlife; and **changes in land management**, particularly along the river corridors.

We will need to address questions around what good looks like, and **balance the requirements of food production, water quality, water quantity and improving soil health all whilst maintaining a rural economy**. With wetter warmer winters and hotter drier summers, we'll need to ensure the local landscape is even **more resilient to an increasingly challenging climate**.

As more stakeholders and landowners come on board and the **local community becomes ever-more engaged in the state of the local rivers and streams**, we will start to see these big changes that are much needed.

What is Good Ecological Status?

Under the **Water Framework Directive**, a **river's ecological health** can be classed as High, Good, Moderate, Poor or Bad. It shows the **combined impact of pressures** such as **pollution, habitat degradation** and **climate change**. Good or High status represents the water body condition being as it would be with little or no human impact. The **Directive aims to ensure that all water bodies achieve good ecological status**. Of the 11 water bodies in this operational catchment, **5 are poor** and **6 are moderate ecological status**. Find out more about the [11 water bodies in the operational catchment](#).

Our Plan

Our 10-year plan is **owned and delivered collectively by the Rother Partnership**. Everyone has a role to play.

Vision: Our Western Rother riverscapes are clean, healthy, free-flowing and rich in wildlife, valued and enjoyed by everyone, now and in the future

Water Quality

Aim: Good water quality and healthy soils

Objectives: Reduce pollutants and sediment entering the river

Ecological Networks

Aim: Connected, healthy habitats with rich biodiversity

Objectives: Champion a coordinated approach to invasive species; Enable species reintroductions; Transform habitat function & passage for all species

Water Quantity: Peak Flows

Aim: Increased resilience to peak flows & flooding

Objectives: Support and progress schemes to slow the flow (NFM)

Water Quantity: Low Flows

Aim: Increased resilience to climate change, drought and over abstraction

Objectives: Ensure everyone plays a part in maintaining a sustainable water supply and flowing river; Create wetland habitats for climate resilience

Engagement & Impact

Aim: Effective engagement and robust monitoring

Objectives: Drive positive change through effective monitoring including citizen science; Champion the Western Rother; Ensure consistent advice is available for land managers, stakeholders & community

Access

Aim: Visible river routes connecting publicly accessible places

Objectives: Establish or improve existing river routes and paths; Develop habitat enhancement schemes in publicly accessible places



A plan for action

This 10-year plan for action has been developed by the Rother Partnership - established to enhance and restore the Western Rother to a state worthy of a National Park. This plan provides an **overview of current activity underway in the Western Rother catchment** and **identifies a pipeline of costed future opportunities** for funders and partners to consider.

Rother Partnership

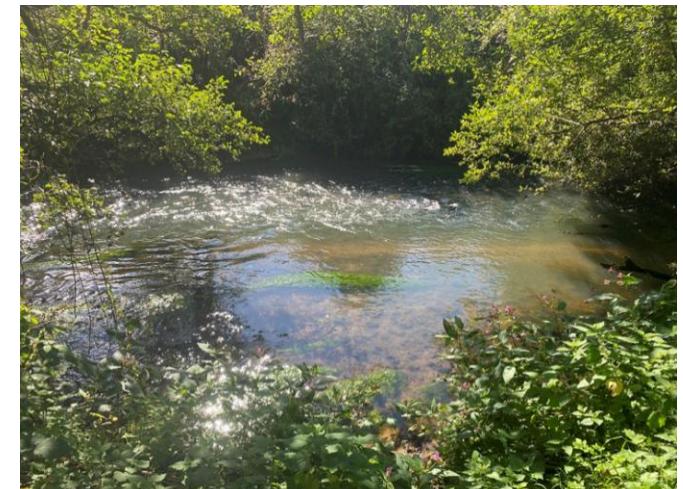
The **Rother Partnership** brings together core funding partners - **South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)**, **South Downs Trust (SDT)**, **Southern Water**, and **Chichester District Council** - with other organisations, **landowners, farmers and local communities** to co-develop and deliver projects to allow the Western Rother riverscapes to flourish again. The Partnership and Plan are **coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust (WSRT)**.

The Rother Partnership Coordinator will help drive progress of this plan, bringing together relevant partners and stakeholders via themed working groups. The Coordinator will dedicate time to build funding bids to support any new initiatives, focussing on projects and schemes that have willing landowners, motivated community groups and partners with delivery capacity. [The Rother Partnership · Western Sussex Rivers Trust](#)

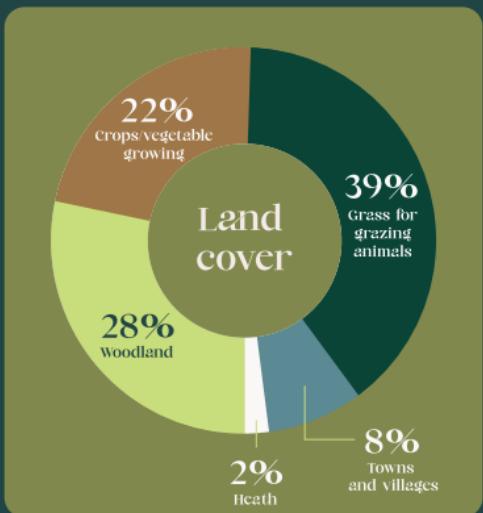
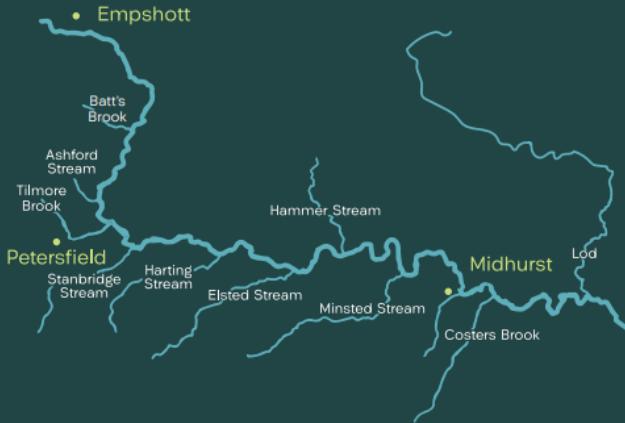
Following two well-attended Rother Summits (Nov 23 and Apr 25), **momentum is building in this catchment**, with partners, landowners and community eager to see new actions delivered. The projects & actions listed have been put forward by attendees of the Summits and through **engagement with landowners and community groups** directly.



Overseen by the **Rother Partnership Steering Group** (see Appendix for governance structure), the **plan will be reviewed annually and refreshed after 5 years**. The plan sits beneath the [Arun & Western Streams Catchment Management Plan](#) which is underpinned by two key pieces of legislation, The Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Government's 25-year Environment Plan which commit the **UK to bring all water bodies to "good health"**. This plan aligns with county and district nature recovery plans, including both the [Sussex](#) and [Hampshire](#) Local Nature Recovery Strategies; these set out how and where nature can be both created and restored. Progress of this plan will contribute to targets set out in the SDNPA plan [Together Now for Nature, Climate & People](#).

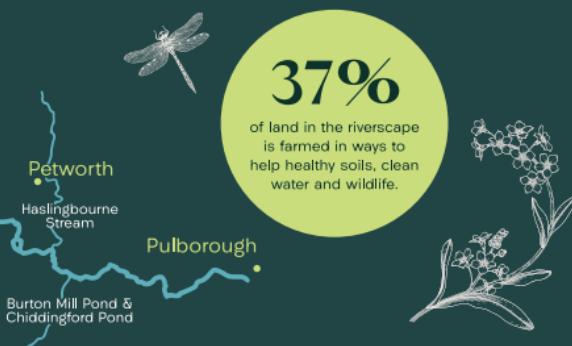


The River Rother



The Western Rother riverscape has over 700km of streams and rivers.

The River Rother and its tributaries flow through largely agricultural land which is looked after by nearly 400 farmers and landowners.



The riverscape provides us with many valuable resources:



Water resources
Drinking water for over 150,000 people.



Productive soils
Vital to grow valuable crops.



Forestry
6500 rugby pitches worth of sustainably managed woodland.



Fisheries
The Rother supports strong populations of both sea and brown trout.



Access & Recreation
More than 750km of footpaths, bridleways and byways for us to enjoy.



Habitats
28% is covered by nationally important habitats that support a wide range of wildlife.

Top Issues Facing The Riverscape

Pollution from farming chemicals

Soil washed into the river

Pollution from sewage and roads

Changes to river flow

Changes to the natural form of the river

Western Sussex Rivers Trust

Overview of the Western Rother

Known locally as the River Rother (not to be confused with the Rother in East Sussex), the **Western Rother riverscape** (a sub-catchment of the Arun & Western Streams) has **over 700km of rivers** (Western Rother; Lod), **streams** (including Stanbridge; Elsted; Minsted; Harting; Hammer; Haslingbourne, Ashford), **brooks** (including Tilmore; Costers; Batt's) and **ponds** (including Burton Mill Pond). The **river flows entirely through the South Downs National Park for 52km**, rising initially as a chalk stream in the west around Empshott in Hampshire and flows through Petersfield and rural, agricultural land to Midhurst and beyond to Fittleworth and then joins the Arun at Hardham, Pulborough in West Sussex. The Environment Agency website has more information on the [operational catchment map and tributaries](#) of the Western Rother Catchment.



Many of the tributaries have **hammer ponds** – structures that were constructed to provide water to the early iron industry. Along the middle stretch of the river the **sandy soils are used for growing high value salad and vegetable crops** (crops vulnerable to erosion), with the river an important source of irrigation in the summer months. There are also many old water mills along the river, remnants of a more industrial past. In the **lower Rother, the floodplains have been separated from the river** by the construction of embankments to aid navigation as far as Midhurst. Traditionally these meadows would have collected silt in the winter floods and provided fertile conditions for the local populations that farmed them.

At Hardham, **water is abstracted for drinking**. The **catchment suffers from various sources of pollution** and is **particularly prone to severe sedimentation** – often recognised as '**the most erodible catchment in the UK**'. There are also many structures within the catchment, such as weirs, sluice gates and culverts (where the river flows through a pipe). These **structures interrupt the natural flow, stop fish moving up and downstream** and, in the Rother, trap huge amounts of sediment behind them.

The **river is designated as a Local Wildlife Site** and is **home to a range of fish** including **brown trout, lampreys and eels**. **Otters** have been recorded returning to the river and **kingfishers** and **grey wagtails** are common sights. The Upper Rother was home to the last remnant population of the UK's only native crayfish, the **white-clawed crayfish**, but there have been no recent sightings. The woodlands within the catchment also support populations of hedgehog, hazel dormice and multiple species of bat. Many invasive species including Himalayan Balsam and American Mink are currently widely distributed.



Opportunities

The pressures affecting all our rivers are wide-ranging and highlighted in more detail in the [Arun & Western Streams Catchment Plan](#) and in the [Water in the Park Report](#). Key **issues** for the Rother are **pollution (wastewater and agriculture), sedimentation, man-made barriers and modifications, and invasive species**, so these can help us to prioritise opportunities.



A cleaner Rother

Of the 11 water bodies in this operational catchment, **none are currently “good” ecological status; 5 are “poor” and 6 are “moderate”**. Over the next 10 years there will be **much-needed investment** into [upgrading wastewater infrastructure and reducing stormwater entering sewers](#) throughout the catchment. There will also need to be a coordinated approach to greatly reduce other sources of pollution, including **road run off**. Southern Water are working directly with land managers and funding **targeted on-farm measures to reduce pesticides** alongside developing **soil conservation plans to reduce the amount of sediment entering the water**.

Collaboration & land manager liaison

Engaging with and supporting land

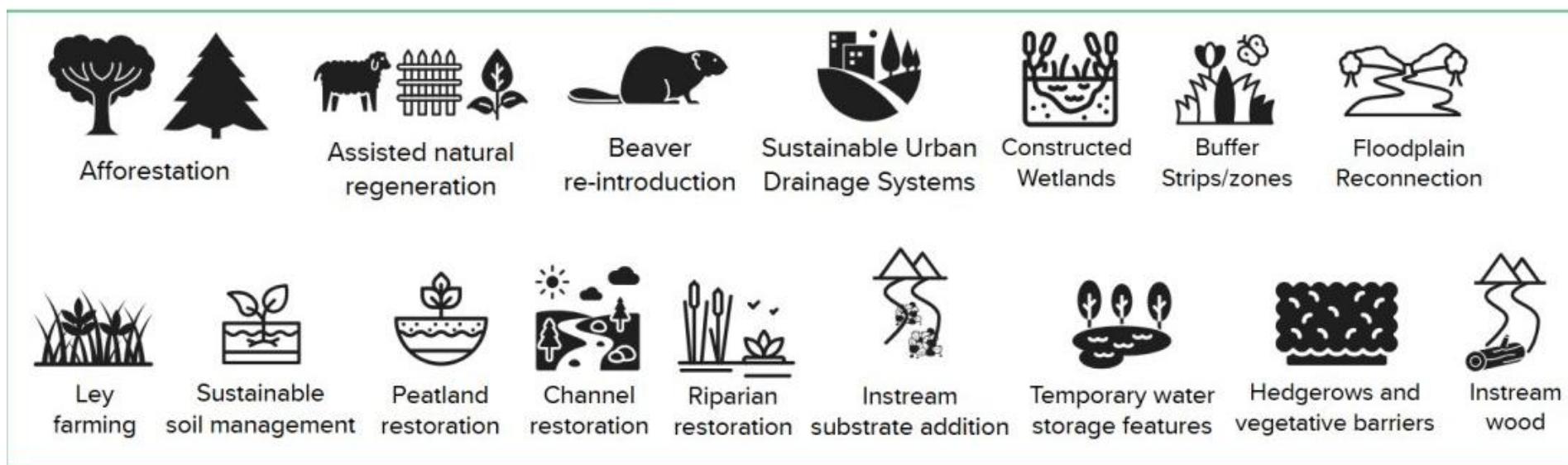
managers in this agricultural landscape is essential. Resource will be given to explore funding and support to **incentivise actions** to benefit people and the environment. There is currently no ambition from the Partnership to reignite the dormant Rother Valley Farmers Group in its existing form, but if smaller farmer-led clusters do evolve, the Rother Partnership will be keen to support them.

The SDNPA has established a **Farm Advisors Network**, which will ensure consistent advice is available to farmers and land managers across the catchment.



Climate resilient riverscapes

Our Rother riverscapes can be restored in ways that provide multiple benefits for people and nature. Blocking drainage ditches, rewetting the land, planting trees and hedgerows and improving soil structure through changes to land management practices are all relatively **low-cost measures** that allow the land to **hold water longer, slow its release, and sustain the flow of water in rivers during dry periods**. Natural Flood Management measures are beneficial everywhere but will provide the greatest impact in the Upper Rother (north of Petersfield), Stanbridge, Elsted, Minsted and Harting sub-catchments.



Water scarcity is a huge concern, with the Southeast region recognised as running out of water. The Environment Agency will **review abstraction licences in the Arun & Western Streams Catchment by 2028**. Southern Water will develop and consult on their **Drought Plan 2027** for the whole of the region. These provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to **look more holistically about current and future challenges of accessing water** and will explore the potential options which could include Water Abstractor Groups and/or Local Resource Options, as well as micro-reservoirs to ensure a sustainable water supply in the future.

Funding & investment

Recent uplifts to [Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier](#) will hopefully prove an effective incentive for improved riparian management. **Private investment will need to play a huge role** in funding opportunities across the catchment, with [Water Industry National Environment Programme \(WINEP\)](#), Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and other [nature markets](#), including [ReNature credits](#), all being explored. National grant schemes and foundations are also being considered and local grants on offer from SDNPA, SDT, [CDC](#), and Southern Water will continue to support delivery of projects as well as enabling projects towards being '[Investment Ready](#)'.

Southern Water are working closely with Barlavington, Cowdray and Leconfield Estates on funding options for the **Western Rother Floodplain Corridor Masterplan** – a major project that could potentially see up to 23km of **river corridor enhanced and reconnected to its floodplain**.

Species Recovery: Tackling Invasive Species

SDNPA has been leading the way in **taking a coordinated approach to tackling invasive non-native species (INNS)**. For Himalayan Balsam, there is a target to have the whole catchment mapped (using INNS mapper) and under control by matchmaking willing landowners with community groups available to remove the invasive species starting at the top of the catchment and tributaries and working downstream. Training, tools and support are available for community groups to take action.

Species Recovery: Reintroductions



There is high level of support for **species recovery** particularly from landowners around **mink eradication** (led by SDNPA). This could pave the way for the **reintroduction of the water vole in parts of the catchment** – a very popular species when talking with landowners and the local community. Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) are also leading efforts to identify and prioritise catchments suitable for the **reintroduction of free-living beavers**. Beavers could provide multiple benefits including natural flood management, climate and drought resilience, improving water quality, and nature recovery. Any potential reintroduction would be a planned process with strong landowner and stakeholder engagement, and long-term beaver management plans in place through the newly established Western Rother Beaver Management Group.

The Rother Action Plan is a sub-catchment plan for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment. It is overseen by the Rother Partnership which was established and funded by South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, Southern Water, Chichester District Council and is coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.



Species Recovery: Fish passage



Sea trout



Juvenile pike, Fittleworth Bridge



Juvenile Grayling



Perch

Despite a downward trend in **fish** numbers over the decades, the Western Rother continues to be home to a diverse range of fish which attracts many angling groups. Through partnership working with landowners, the Wild Trout Trust and angling clubs, and dedicated resource put towards **finding funding for barrier removal**, there will be a continued **focus on** supporting populations and **passage of all fish species**.



Engagement & citizen science

Building on the recommendations from the successful [CaSTCo project](#), attention will be directed towards growing and supporting the **active network of hundreds of River Guardians** – they regularly monitor water quality, undertake river health surveys, engage in conservation tasks and alongside angling clubs, act as the eyes and ears of the river. Their involvement in championing the Western Rother will be key.

A shared Communications & Engagement Plan will be developed and adopted by the Rother Partnership to ensure all partners are championing

the Rother riverscapes. This will include a bold ambition for **every person living in or visiting the Western Rother Catchment, to interact with the riverscape in some way**. A 'Love Your Rother' campaign including a dedicated river festival, could help to grow awareness.

The SDNPA secured funding (NLHF) for a multi-year Downs to the Sea project, with **two new Water Champions recruited** and hosted by WSRT, they will **lead engagement activities** with every school, youth group, Parishes and community groups across the catchment.



A more accessible Rother

You can't love something you don't see. Improving access to and along sections of the Rother could boost the profile of this precious river and ensure it is firmly on the map and in the mind. Any **increased access must be balanced with the need to minimise disturbance to the environment or farming activity**. Whilst the [Rother Valley Way](#), an active travel route between Petersfield and Fittleworth, is being scoped by local groups, this will be a long-term ambition to reach the delivery phase. Another more immediately achievable opportunity is to **make visible all accessible routes along the river Rother and tributaries**, including revising the Rother Walking Trails, and encouraging local groups or Parishes to 'adopt a stretch' keeping pathways clear and free from invasive species. In other stretches, **Open Rother Days** (similar to Open Farm Sundays) could strike the right balance between enabling public access on a specific day at agreed locations, whilst minimising disturbance to wildlife and landowners at all other times.



Publicly accessible places within the Western Rother riverscapes will be the **focus of enhancement & engagement schemes**, with funding already secured to progress projects at **Rotherlands Nature Reserve** in Petersfield, [Town Meadows](#) in Midhurst and Buriton Pond in Buriton. Further opportunities to build projects at other accessible sites are being explored, including Liss Riverside Walk and South Pond in Midhurst.

One of the aims of the [Woolbeding Reimagined Project](#) is increasing access to nature for everyone by **creating new, more accessible, walking, riding and cycling routes and improving existing ones**. The Partnership can support other local landowners that are interested in taking up a similar opportunity to allow enjoyment of their stretch of the river, either temporarily or long-term.



Current Projects across the Western Rother sub-catchment

The current projects are split across 6 workstreams. There will be regular and ad hoc **Working Groups** established to ensure progress is on track. Following this, there is a list of aspirational projects split between those that can be delivered by the Rother Partnership and those that are more suited to the wider Arun & Western Streams Catchment Partnership.

Workstream: Water Quality						
Aim: Good water quality and healthy soils						
Objectives	Current Projects	Location	Lead	Status	Funding	Timing
Reduce pollutants and sediment entering the river	WWTW infrastructure upgrades & constructed wetlands in Buriton, Petersfield, South Harting, Barnetts Bridge, Petworth & Fittleworth	Catchment	Southern Water	Underway	WINEP	2025-30
	Targeted on-farm measures to reduce pesticides; targeted soil conservation plans	Catchment	Southern Water	Underway	WINEP	2025-30
	Soil Carbon Project : measuring & mapping carbon stocks to improve soil health, sequestration & water quality	Petworth area	Omacast	Underway	WINEP	2025-30
	Habitat enhancement measures to support water quality: Town Meadows	Midhurst	Cowdray Estate / SW	Underway	EIP	2025-26
	Woolbeding Reimagined : stabilise soils & enhance soil health by creating species rich grassland, hedgerows, woodlands & wood pasture	Woolbeding	National Trust	Underway	National Grid LEI	2025-30
	AMP 9 2030-35 plan development: asset management period plans set out the proposed investment by Southern Water, to be agreed by the regulator Ofwat for 2030-35.	Catchment	Southern Water	Underway	WINEP	2025-27
	Fencing to improve marginal vegetation / reduce cattle poaching	Stopham	EA / Angling Clubs	Stalled	FIP	tbc

Workstream: Ecological Networks

Aim: Connected, healthy habitats with rich biodiversity

Objectives	Current Projects	Location	Lead	Status	Funding	Timing
Champion a coordinated approach to invasive species	Recording (via INNS mapper) & removal of invasives from headwaters downstream.	Various	SDNPA	Underway	Ranger / NLHF	2025-28
	INNS removal: Floating Pennywort	Petworth Park	SDNPA	Underway	Ranger time	2025-26
	Mink eradication: coordinated approach with Water Life Recovery Trust	Catchment	SDNPA	Underway	SDNPA grant	2025-28
Enable species reintroductions	Western Rother Beaver Management Group to undertake wide engagement, gather evidence and ensure 'beaver ready'. EOI for licence to release free-living beavers submitted to NE Apr 25	Catchment	WRBMG	Underway	Staff time	2025-30
Transform habitat function & passage for all species	Rother Enhancement Project (4km) - bank lowering, river narrowing, riffle restoration, designs for Kilsham weir bypass.	Leconfield Estate	Leconfield / WSRT	Underway	EA WEIF funding secured	2025-28
	Cowdray Home Farm Regenerative Farming	Midhurst	Cowdray	Underway	Staff time	Ongoing
	Fish easements at EA gauging weirs	Iping & Halfway Bridge	EA	Stalled	Seeking funding (£10k)	TBC
	Ambersham Loop Restoration – removal of sluice gate	Cowdray	WSRT	Underway	WEIF	TBC
	Stedham Weir modification to improve upstream habitat & fish passage.	Stedham	EA	Stalled	EA / Open Rivers	TBC

The Rother Action Plan is a sub-catchment plan for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment. It is overseen by the Rother Partnership which was established and funded by South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, Southern Water, Chichester District Council and is coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.

North Mill - natural fish pass feasibility	Midhurst	EA	Stalled	CIL / EA Open Rivers	Open	2026
Fish passage improvements with Rother Angling Club	Woolbeding	Wild Trout Trust	Complete	FIP		2025
Install 'Otter Shelf' to aid safe passage of otters/mammals under the A272	Woolbeding	WSCC	Complete	WSCC Highways		2025
Stanbridge stream woodland enhancement project, to extend and connect with scheme at Rotherlands NR	Stanbridge, Petersfield	Southern Water	Not started	SW staff time / EIP grant		2026
Walkover to map opportunities for habitat enhancement and fish passage improvements along the Costers Brook chalk stream.	Costers Brook - Cowdray Estate	Wild Trout Trust	Not started	Staff time / FIP		2026

Workstream: Peak Flows

Aim: Increased resilience to peak flows and flooding

Objectives	Projects	Location	Lead	Status	Funding	Timing
Support & progress schemes to slow the flow	Brook Farm Wetland Creation to support water vole population, biodiversity and to hold water on the floodplain	Minsted Stream	SDNPA	Complete	ReNature Grant	2025-26
	Development of Western Rother Floodplain Corridor Masterplan -creating a mosaic of wetland habitats to rewet the meadows, supporting biodiversity, water quality and improved river function	Leconfield, Cowdray & Barlavington Estates	Southern Water	Underway	WINEP	2025-26
	<u>Woolbeding Reimagined</u> : Floodplain Meadow Feasibility Plan	Woolbeding	National Trust	Underway	Countryside Stewardship – PA2	2026
	Climate Resilient Playgrounds – demonstration pilot at Fittleworth Primary to stimulate schemes elsewhere across West Sussex	Fittleworth	WSRT	Underway	SDNPA CIL secured	2025-27

The Rother Action Plan is a sub-catchment plan for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment. It is overseen by the Rother Partnership which was established and funded by South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, Southern Water, Chichester District Council and is coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.

Workstream: Low Flows						
Aim: Increased resilience to drought and over abstraction						
Objectives	Projects	Location	Lead	Status	Funding	Timing
Ensure a sustainable water supply	Water efficiency measures for all customers (domestic and business)	Various	Southern Water	Underway	WINEP?	2025-30
	Partnership Water Resources Planning: Utilise review of abstraction licences and development of Drought Plan 27 to look holistically at current and future water supply challenges and explore multi-benefit options.	AWS Catchment	AWSCP – EA, SW, NFU	Underway	Staff time	2025-28
	Ford Water Recycling Scheme : a plan to recycle water from the Littlehampton Wastewater Treatment Works and transfer it via the River Rother to the Water Supply Works near Pulborough	Hardham	Southern Water	Underway	Ofwat	2025-2031
Create wetland habitats for climate resilience	Pond creation & maintenance as part of Downs to the Sea: Recovery & Resilience in Wetlands Habitats	Various – TBC	SDNPA / WSRT	Underway	D2S NLHF grant; + FiPL; CIL; P4P	2025-28

Workstream: Engagement & Impact

The Rother Action Plan is a sub-catchment plan for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment. It is overseen by the Rother Partnership which was established and funded by South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, Southern Water, Chichester District Council and is coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.

Aim: Effective engagement and robust monitoring						
Objectives	Projects	Location	Lead	Status	Funding	Timing
Drive positive change through effective monitoring including citizen science	CaSTCo Citizen Science Programme – Soil SmART / River Guardians water quality monitoring	Catchment	WSRT	Complete	Ofwat / staff time	Ending Sept 2025
	River Guardians – water quality testing, practical tasks, awareness raising	Catchment	WSRT	Underway	Staff time	Ongoing
	Development of Shared Catchment Monitoring Plan for Rother Partnership to adopt	Catchment	AWSCP	Not started	Staff time	2026
	Monitoring turbidity on the Western Rother (WSRT to become involved in checking equipment)	Various	Uni of Oxford / Northampton	Underway	WINEP	Ongoing
Champion the Western Rother	Development of Shared Communications & Engagement Plan for Rother Partnership to adopt. (inc. Rother Summit, landowner events, community events, & practical tasks).	Sub-catchment	WSRT	Underway	Staff time	2025-6
	Downs to the Sea “Water Champions” to help lead community-based action with Parishes, groups, schools and young people to raise awareness of the importance of water in the landscape, water efficiency measures and riparian owner responsibilities.	Catchment	WSRT	Underway	D2S NLHF	2025-27
	‘Adopt a stretch’: Parish & community groups pledge to take action on specific stretch. Parish & Community Event delivered Oct 25	Sub-catchment	WSRT	Underway	D2S NLHF	2025-27
	Delivery of River Rother Day and the ongoing Rother Valley History Project	Coultershaw Heritage Site	Coultershaw Heritage Trust	Underway	Donations	Ongoing

The Rother Action Plan is a sub-catchment plan for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment. It is overseen by the Rother Partnership which was established and funded by South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, Southern Water, Chichester District Council and is coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.

Ensure consistent advice is available for land managers, stakeholders & community	Farm Advisors Network – joined up advice across organisations, shared awareness of who's working where with whom on what	Catchment	SDNPA	Underway	Staff time	Ongoing
	Riparian Owners Groups established in Parishes aimed at smaller landowners/householders with bankside gardens.	Catchment	WSRT	Not started	D2S NLHF	2025-27

Workstream: Access

Aim: Visible river routes connecting publicly accessible places

Objectives	Projects	Location	Lead	Status	Funding	Timing
Establish or improve existing river routes and paths	<u>Rother Valley Way</u> : development phase of active travel route between Petersfield & Midhurst (RVW West) and Midhurst to Fittleworth (RVW East). Engaging landowners, securing permissions and funding.	Petersfield to Fittleworth	Friends of RVW	Underway	SDNPA Access Fund	2025-28
	River Rother Walkway: Walkway and banks improvements - keeping permissive paths open and accessible, managing HB. Grant awarded to vols for tools.	Midhurst	Midhurst Green Volunteers	Ongoing	SDT grant	Ongoing
	Liss Riverside Walk: delivery of management plan	Liss	SDNPA / Liss PC / EHDC	Ongoing		Ongoing
Develop habitat enhancement schemes in	<u>Rotherlands</u> Connections: river & habitat restoration to benefit wildlife & water quality with improved access & connectivity of habitats and walking routes (1km)	Petersfield	WSRT	Underway	National Grid LEI / SW – funding secured.	2025-28

publicly accessible places	<u>Town Meadows Enhancement Scheme</u> : river and habitat restoration which can be enjoyed by local community & visitors through improved access.	Midhurst	Cowdray	Underway – Planning App	SW - EIP	2025/26
	Buriton Pond habitat enhancement scheme	Buriton	EHDC	Underway	UKSPF	2025

Aspirational Projects for the Western Rother sub-catchment

These projects have been put forward by the Rother Partnership and through conversations with landowners, community groups and parishes. Themes are starting to emerge that could be packaged up into a major funding bid (NLHF, major research grants, or Landscape Recovery), or presented to funders or partners as costed opportunities to invest in. Please contact the Rother Partnership Coordinator for further details.

Project name	Description
Let It Flow	Develop bid for further feasibility or removal of multiple barriers to fish passage.
Climate Resilient Headwaters	Develop multi-landowner project that helps deliver multiple benefits, including slowing the flow, focussed on Upper Rother, Stanbridge, Elsted, Harting & Minsted. Explore payment schemes.
Climate impacts	Research project: how does climate impact on water quality, habitats & biodiversity, infrastructure
From the Chalk	Protect and enhance the South Downs Chalk Streams that flow off Downs into the Western Rother. Engaging with landowners to establish wide riparian buffers to become 'Water vole ready' and in-channel habitat enhancements to support fish spawning and other species.
Champion the Rother	Awareness raising campaign. Info, series of events, walks and other cultural activities to put Western Rother riverscapes on the map.
Liss Riverside Walk	Explore options and funding for community-led scheme at Liss Riverside Walk
South Pond	Explore options and funding for community-led scheme at South Pond
Kilsham Weir bypass	New meander to bypass Kilsham Weir, enhancing habitats and fish passage.

The Rother Action Plan is a sub-catchment plan for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment. It is overseen by the Rother Partnership which was established and funded by South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, Southern Water, Chichester District Council and is coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.

Project name	Description
Fish counters	Reinstate fish counter at Hardham and potentially other suitable location(s)
Water Net Gain Ponds	Explore as part of abstraction licence review the demand for a project to establish micro reservoirs (offline) for on-farm water use and river flow recharge - to reduce abstraction levels and increase resilience to low flows
Himalayan Balsam & bank erosion	Research / trials relating to bank erosion and optimal planting for bank stabilisation and biodiversity post Himalayan Balsam removal.
Species Recovery	Water Vole reintroductions
SuDS for Schools	Climate Resilient Playgrounds
Species Recovery	Explore Beaver reintroductions to improve water quality and boost habitat complexity & biodiversity
Species Recovery	Explore reintroductions of native crayfish
SuDS for climate resilience	Sustainable drainage schemes at areas prone to future floods in flood zone 3 – Liss, Petersfield, Midhurst
Rother Valley Way	Delivery of a safe, accessible, traffic-free pathway that follows, where possible, the route of former railway between Petersfield & Midhurst (12km) – and potentially onto Fittleworth.
Helping Hammer Ponds	Multiple landowners keen to enhance their online pond (connected to river/stream), some are hammer ponds . Examples at Liss, Chithurst, Lurgashall and Fernhurst. Scope feasibility for potential project to enhance these heritage features for the benefit of wildlife and water quality downstream.

Cross-cutting projects for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment Partnership

Please contact the Arun & Western Streams Catchment Coordinator to discuss these project opportunities.

Project name	Description
Renewal of septic tanks	Explore potential for scheme based on Wiltshire's Revamp Your Tank: Septic Tank Upgrade Initiative. Develop awareness campaign with partners for riparian owners.
Climate resilient rivers	As part of AWS abstraction licences review, develop Partnership approach to water resources: advice, practical support, networks/groups.
Shared Evidence	Establish shared evidence portal / database made available for all partners
Riparian Landowner Advice	Develop catchment-wide resources & advice for riparian landowners & land managers to share through networks, partners & events.
To the River	Develop partnership plan to prevent (non-water company) pollutants ending up in the river system, 'only rain down the drain', inc. misconnections, road runoff, flea treatments, litter, oil etc
Make Space for Water	Champion and amplify the national Make Space for Water campaign.

Monitoring

The 10-year Rother Action Plan will be reviewed annually and refreshed after five years. As part of the annual review cycle, partners and those involved in delivery of the plan will be asked to provide data which can be used to help track progress towards the vision. This will also be used to feed into strategic targets, including the [SDNPA Partnership Plan](#) and both the [West Sussex LNRS](#) and [Hampshire LNRS](#).

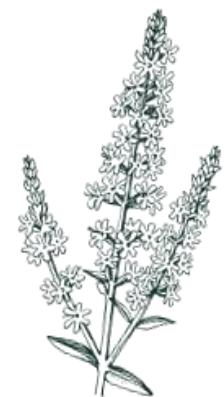
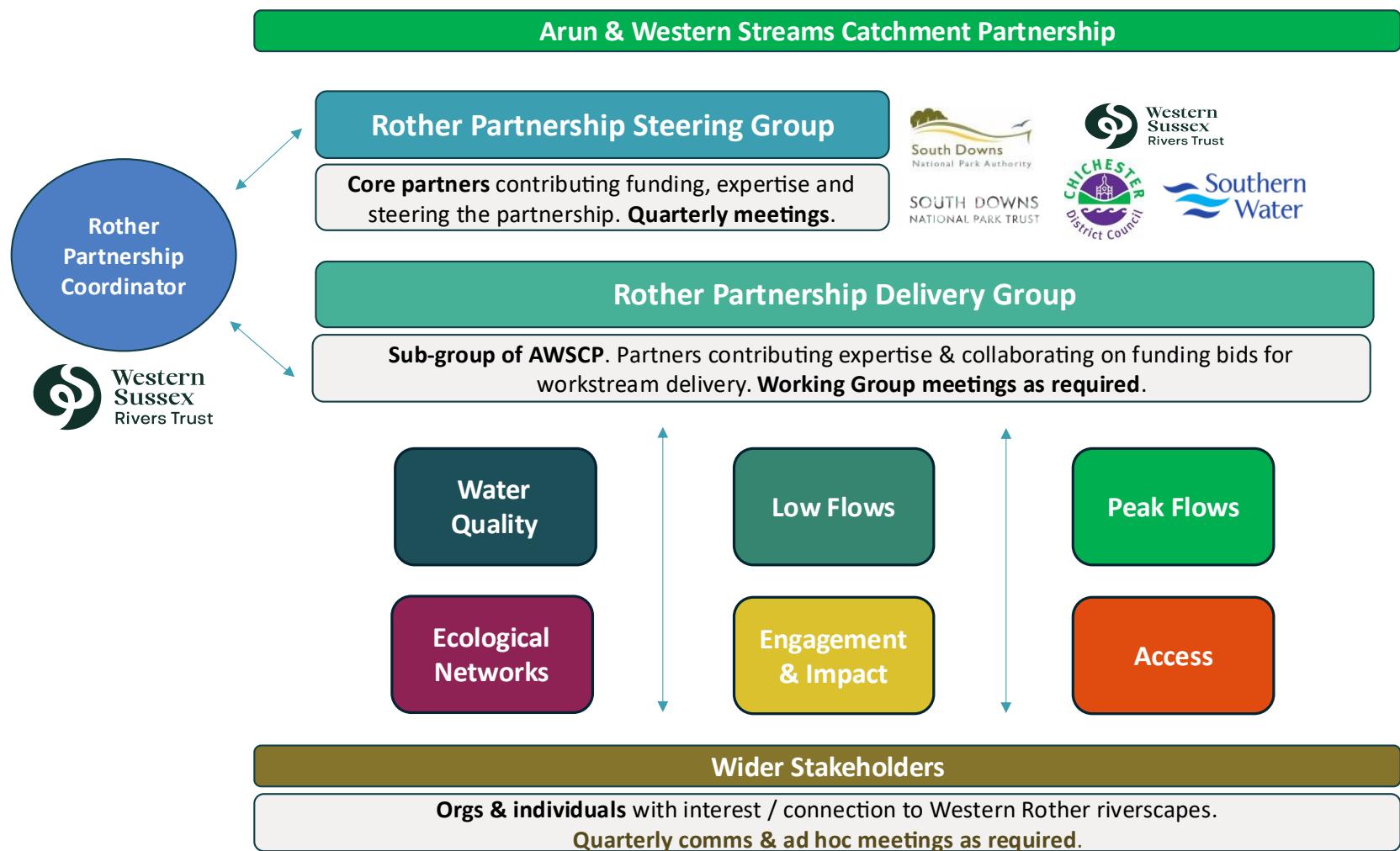
	Measures <i>(how we will know if we are succeeding)</i>	Sources of verification <i>(what datasets and who will provide)</i>	Assumptions <i>(will progress at one level deliver results at the higher level?)</i>
Vision	Achieve WFD Good Status for all water bodies in sub-catchment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EA WFD review 3-yearly 	If the six aims are achieved, is this enough to deliver WFD Good?
Aims	<p>Good water quality and healthy soils</p> <p>Connected, healthy habitats with rich biodiversity</p> <p>Increased resilience to peak flows and flooding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW data - WQ sampling, Rivers & Seas Watch, & soil project data River Guardians – monthly WQ sampling, Riverfly & annual scorecards EA fish surveys – annual Riverfly, MoRPH, environmental surveys – site / project specific No. of barriers modified or removed / km river impacted Species reintroduced Area of INNS mapped & removed Area of land / km of river connected to floodplain No. of NFM measures delivered 	<p>Will the individual projects be enough to achieve the Aim?</p> <p>Will the individual projects be enough to achieve the Aim?</p> <p>Will the individual projects be enough to achieve the Aim?</p>

Measures <i>(how we will know if we are succeeding)</i>	Sources of verification <i>(what datasets and who will provide)</i>	Assumptions <i>(will progress at one level deliver results at the higher level?)</i>
Increased resilience to drought and over-abstraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EA abstraction data No. of reservoirs & ponds 	Will the individual projects be enough to achieve the Aim?
Effective engagement and robust monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Adopt-a-stretch' - km mapped Schools / Parishes involved Events / engagement achieved Citizen science programme Research projects 	Will the individual projects be enough to achieve the Aim?
Visible river routes connecting publicly accessible places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Km river routes created / cleared Range of schemes in accessible places 	
Projects	Current project list	Each will have its own measures of success and should be asked to report against the six aims
		Will the basket of projects in the plan be enough to achieve the six aims?

Chloe Clarke
Rother Partnership Coordinator
Western Sussex Rivers Trust
07421129105
chloe@wsrt.org.uk

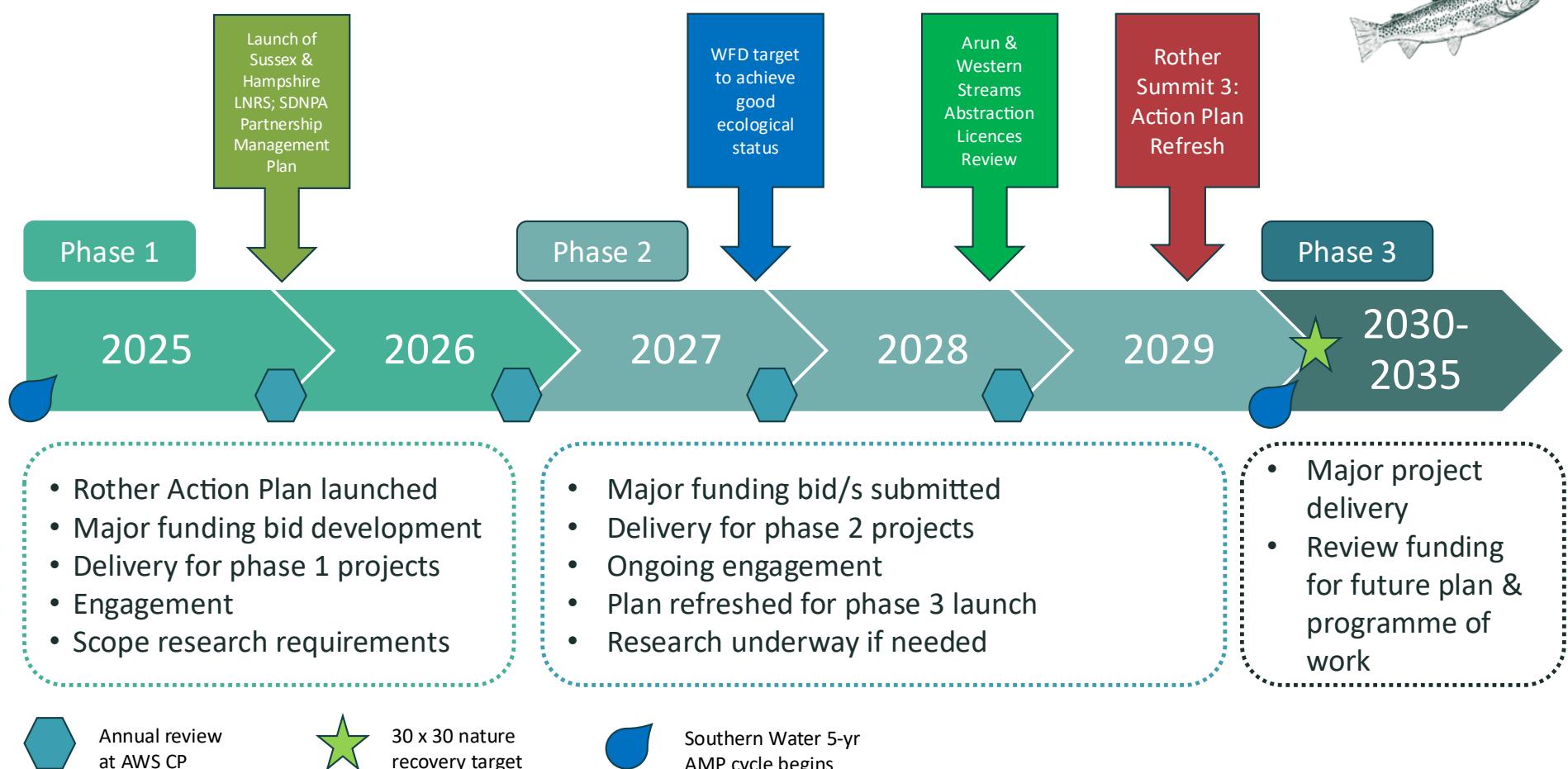
Appendices

Rother Partnership Governance



The Rother Action Plan is a sub-catchment plan for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment. It is overseen by the Rother Partnership which was established and funded by South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, Southern Water, Chichester District Council and is coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.

Rother Action Plan Timeline



The Rother Action Plan is a sub-catchment plan for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment. It is overseen by the Rother Partnership which was established and funded by South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, Southern Water, Chichester District Council and is coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.

Rother Western Operational Catchment

Water bodies

There are 11 water bodies in this operational catchment.

[Burton Mill Pond](#)

[Elsted Stream](#)

[Hammer Stream \(W. Sussex\)](#)

[Harting Stream](#)

[Haslingbourne Stream](#)

[Lod](#)

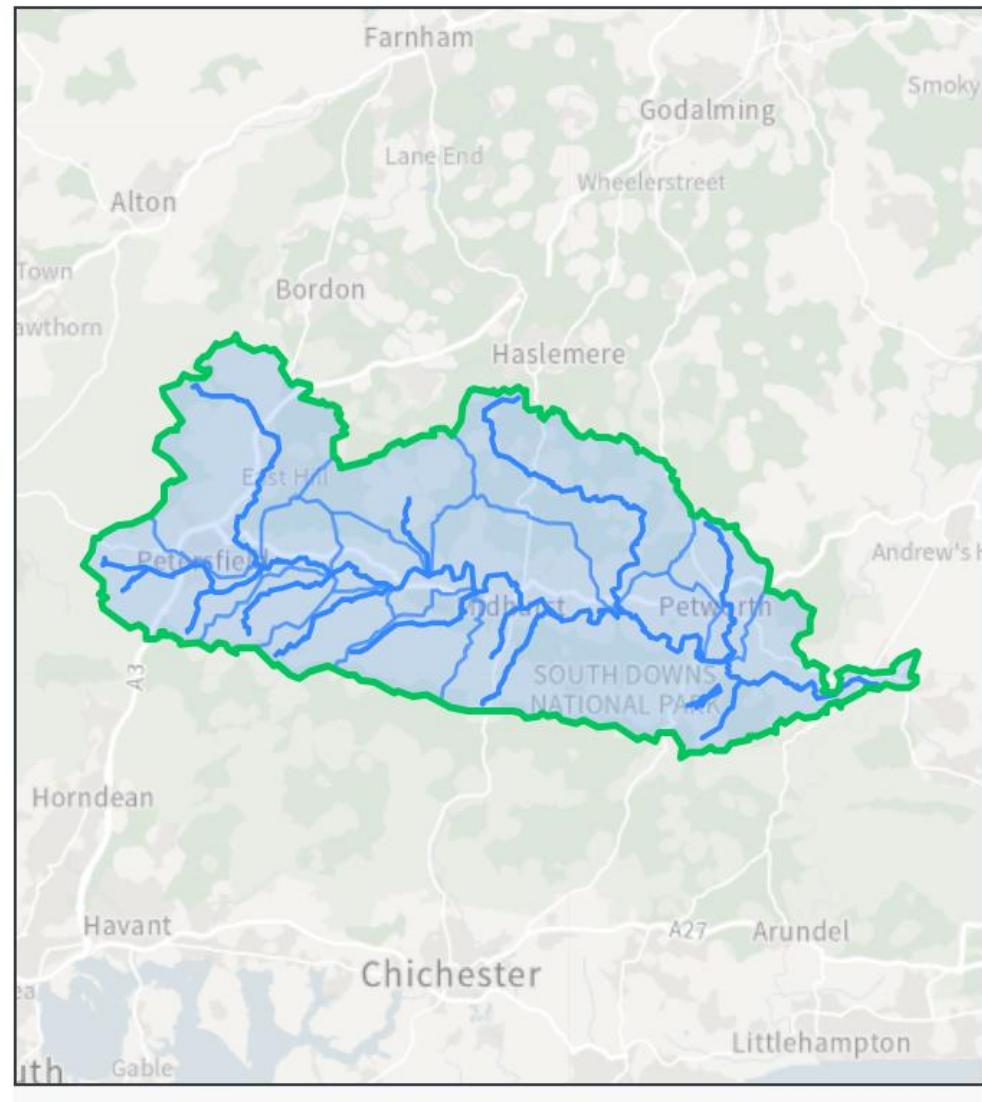
[Minsted Stream](#)

[Stanbridge Stream](#)

[Western Rother](#)

[Western Rother \(Upstream Petersfield\)](#)

[Western Rother Durford](#)



The Rother Action Plan is a sub-catchment plan for the Arun & Western Streams Catchment. It is overseen by the Rother Partnership which was established and funded by South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, Southern Water, Chichester District Council and is coordinated by the Western Sussex Rivers Trust.