*Cotswold Catchment Pilot NFU proposal*

*Call for WFD Farmer River Representatives*

Background to the Defra pilots can be found at [www.enviroment-agency.gov.uk/catchments](http://www.enviroment-agency.gov.uk/catchments).  FWAG SW are the lead organisation in the Cotswold Catchment with Jenny Phelps ( Gloucestershire FWAG) as pilot lead, with Chris Short from the Countryside and Community Research Institute as a support partner.  The aim of the pilot is to further test the Integrated Local Delivery (ILD) framework that has been developed in Gloucestershire by FWAG (with ILD partners CCRI and NE) which values farmers and communities in the role of environmental delivery with an all inclusive partnership of organisations working together in support.  The full CCRI report ‘Inspiring and Enabling Local Communities – A delivery model for Localism and the Environment’ can be found at the following link: <http://www.ccri.ac.uk/Projects/HeritageandLandscape/Images/IntegratedLocalDelivery.pdf>  An Executive summary and Tool Kit version are also available on request.  The Cotswold Catchment Pilot aims to use the ILD delivery framework to deliver Good Ecological Status (GES) in surface and ground waters in line with the EU Water Framework Directive.  Many of the national GES failures  (and those in the Cotswolds Pilot area particularly in ground water) are seen to be from Diffuse Water Pollution from Agriculture (DWPA).

Proposal:

The Upper Thames catchment is comprised of 55 parishes and 4 market towns, and the pilot would like the NFU to nominate a Farmer River Representative in each parish (or group of parishes) for in each water body. The pilot is already working with the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council that has links into every parish for community led planning. Each parish already has a resilience plan to show actions for what to do if it floods, but not why it floods.  Flooding and drought are key issues for the farming industry and local resilience is something that needs to be further developed. Flooding and drought are also a key threat to delivery water GES under WFD. The aim is to piece the landscape together working individually farm by farm (while maintaining individual confidentiality as required) to look at opportunities for landscape scale ecosystem solutions and infrastructure.

The Farmer River Representative would act to support all other farmers in each individual water body, in each parish. Actions would be developed specifically in relation to GES failures in that water body.  To complement this, all organisation would come together to signpost and promote all opportunities to  support Cross Compliance and uptake of Catchment Sensitive Farming grants, Axis 1 opportunities ( FISS,REG S4P,R4F) and  Environmental Stewardship, FATI and ETIP.  The farmer river representatives would report to a District NFU representative  (which would enable better linkages to opportunities with Local Authorities) who would then be feed back to the County Chair, and all opportunities at a county level, such as LNPs and LEPs, and possible future Axis 4 funding from RDPE to compliment and facilitate local action and the join up of Axis 1, 2 and 3 in delivery. The aim is that the pilot could build on the success of Campaign for the Farmed Environment and the Voluntary Initiative.  The pilot aims to demonstrate that by integrating local land management knowledge with that of the specialist from partner organisations that there is greater opportunity for shared problem solving.  It also aims to demonstrate greater delivery by valuing and supporting farmers rather than through increased enforcement and regulation.

The wider aim will be to join  the initiatives across government departments (DEFRA,DCLG,BIS, DECC, DCMS) by working to a spatial strategy in line with local authority structure (parish/ward, town, district ,county) to: reconnect communities with the farmed environment for resilience;  benefit the farm business by promoting environmentally sustainable productive farming; deliver Local Plans for the District and County Council; achieve multi objective delivery of strategic frameworks and EU Directives for government agencies and NGOs and by working together with farmers and communities, enable cross cutting delivery for all to a shared ILD framework. For further information contact Jenny Phelps on Jenny.phelps@gloucestershirefwag.org.uk 07876687272.

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| Jenny PhelpsFarm Conservation Adviser, Gloucestershire FWAG, FWAG SW Associate |
| C/o Unit 9 Cirencester Business Park, Gloucestershire GL7 6JJ M: 07876 687272 E:jenny.phelps@gloucestershirefwag.org.uk W: [www.gloucestershirefwag.org.uk](http://www.gloucestershirefwag.org.uk) TW: [Deliverymodel](http://twitter.com/deliverymodel) |