

# DEVON ENVIRONMENT FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REVIEW  
2023



CONSERVATION  
COLLECTIVE

**Devon Environment Foundation is a member of the Conservation Collective, a global network of local foundations funding effective grassroots initiatives that protect and restore nature, and mitigate the effects of climate change.**

## OUR VISION

Given the scale of the climate and ecological emergency, our ambition is to expand and accelerate nature protection and restoration across Devon.

Nature-based solutions provide uplifting and cost-effective ways to tackle the climate and nature crises.

They sequester carbon; increase biodiversity; prevent flooding, droughts, and soil erosion; reduce and clean up pollution; and offer opportunities for people to connect with nature.

We are excited by the power of channelling funds to inspiring grassroots nature-based solutions in Devon.

## OUR STRATEGY

DEF specialises in identifying the most innovative and impactful grassroots nature-based solutions in Devon, providing vital kick-start or scale-up support.

We fill a funding gap for smaller, pioneering projects requiring flexible funding and mentoring support.

We are independent and agile, directing funds where they are needed quickly to deliver the greatest benefits for nature.

Our Advisory Board of leading local nature experts helps to optimise our grant-making process.

We love showcasing project successes to ignite hope and wider action.

In our first three years, we supported 50 brilliant grassroots projects tackling the climate and nature crises, awarding more than £670,000.



# 2020-2023

AT A GLANCE



PROJECTS

50



PARTNERS

33



GRANTS AWARDED

£670,000



PROTECTING & RESTORING NATURAL HABITATS



HELPING NATIVE SPECIES TO THRIVE



SLOWING DOWN & ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE



REDUCING POLLUTION



# OUR WORK



## 1 Peatland Restoration

Experimenting with ways to regenerate peatlands with the communities who live nearby, such as growing sphagnum moss and transplanting it onto the moor to discover whether this practical approach can deliver results at significant scale.



## 2 Crayfish Hatchery

Establishing a new hatchery and nursery for white-clawed crayfish to increase their population and prevent extinction. Helping this crucial native species will increase biodiversity, improve water quality, and restore freshwater ecosystems.



## 3 Regenerative Agriculture

Kick-starting a new School of Regenerative Land-Based Studies that offers practical training to fill a skills gap and grow the next generation of regenerative farmers - sequestering carbon and mitigating the effects of climate change.



## 4 Mycelium & Biochar

Trialling mycelium and biochar recipes to sequester carbon, enhance soil quality, and clean up river pollution via mycofiltration; identifying replicable low-cost, low-tech solutions that empower landowners and communities.



# OUR WORK



## 1 Wild About Devon

Providing a small grants fund to empower communities to take action for wildlife: creating new wildlife sites or changing the management of parks, gardens, churchyards, orchards, ponds, ditches, and buildings to benefit a range of wildlife species.



## 2 Beaver Reintroductions

Exploring different landowner incentives to enable nature's engineers to re-populate Devon's waterways where they increase biodiversity and carbon sequestration, reduce flooding and soil erosion, and enhance water quality.



## 3 Seaweed Farming

Enabling a pioneering pilot to prove the economic, social, and environmental benefits of seaweed farming in the region. Benefits include carbon capture, bioremediation, and increasing marine biodiversity.



## 4 Plastic Clean Up

Supporting adventure beach cleans using ribs and kayaks to reach parts of the coast that other cleaners can't reach, engaging the community, and having fun connecting with nature, while cleaning up plastic pollution.



# OUR WORK

## Protecting & Restoring Natural Habitats and Reducing Pollution

**Flete Field Lab** is an experimental project that aims to restore soil and water habitat using mycelium and biochar developed from local materials to discover low-cost, low-tech, nature-based solutions that empower landowners and communities to enhance their local ecosystems. Findings will be open source and shared widely.

### Mycelium

In 2022, Flete Field Lab delivered the only successful mycofiltration trial in the UK, using mycelium-infused sacks placed in a leaky dam to clean toxins downstream of a sewage treatment plant. They saw a reduction in E. Coli of 47% as well as falls in the levels of chemical pollutants.



**47%**

Reduction in E.Coli thanks to mycofiltration



In 2023 we are targeting phosphates and other agricultural pollutants in our rivers, hoping to discover new ways to remove nutrients from waterways to benefit wildlife and restore healthy and biodiverse ecosystems.

**SHELLEY CASTLE, PROJECT LEAD, FLETE FIELD LAB**



### Biochar

Can increase crop yield & soil health, replacing chemical fertilisers, thereby reducing agricultural run-off.

### Carbon sequestration

Flete Field Lab is currently processing 400kg of charcoal into biochar, equivalent to approx. 1,200kg CO2 removed from the atmosphere.



# OUR TEAM

Being part of the Conservation Collective allows us to share world-class knowledge and expertise across the network.



Amanda Keetley  
Executive Director



Amber Veacock  
Project Coordinator



Ben Goldsmith  
Founder



Simon Nicholls  
Chair



Jade Brudenell  
Conservation Collective

## Steering Committee

Simon Nicholls (Chair)

Mitch Tonks

Ben Goldsmith

Wynne Griffiths

Andreas Kodell

Galahad Clark

Laura Maxwell Stuart

Robin Bowman

John Tiner

Chris Sowerbutts

Keld van Schreven

Jade Brudenell

## Advisory Board

Kevin Bishop, Dartmoor National Park

Thomas Bourne, Greenheart Business

Jane Brady, Bioregional Learning Centre

Kendra Walsh, Conservation Collective

Laurence Couldrick, West Country Rivers Trust

Kevin Cox, RSPB

Sarah Jennings, Devon Local Nature Partnership

Naomi Oakley, Dartmoor Regenerative Farmer

Libby Woodhatch, Marin Trust.

## Supporters



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## We are very grateful to all our supporters, including:

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**Nature-based solutions are the biggest source of hope in this era of climate and nature emergencies. If we learn to share space better with nature and recognise its true value, we will be rewarded by seeing it recover and thrive."**

**AMANDA KEETLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
DEVON ENVIRONMENT FOUNDATION**

## WHAT'S NEXT

Our priority is to increase the amount of funding available for local, tangible, nature-based solutions in Devon by inspiring more people and organisations to get involved.

We encourage more grassroots regenerative projects to start up or scale up, by providing mentoring, expertise, connections, and funding.

Your support would enable us to seed even more nature-based solutions; while showcasing project successes to ignite hope and wider action, and accelerate systemic change.





# THANK YOU

to all our donors for your support. We couldn't do our work without you.

## SUPPORT US



### DEVON ENVIRONMENT FOUNDATION

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