PRESS RELEASE: 21 January 2021

Funding up for grabs for ‘shovel ready’ biodiversity projects

The impact of COVID-19 on communities in the Midlands has led Severn Trent to release a one-off, limited-time-only, funding pot of £250,000 to support anyone wanting to improve biodiversity in the region, no matter how ambitious their ideas.

Zara Frankton, Severn Trent senior biodiversity coordinator, says that individuals, groups, and businesses in the region can apply for funding, so long as their project is over 0.5ha or 0.5km and must be completed by 31 March 2021.

“We’re open to any ideas, on any scale, but the more creative the better – the sky’s the limit. Previous projects have included wetland restoration, hedgerow planting, wildflower meadow creation and habitat management for native birds and mammals,” she says.

“Given the tight deadline, applicants need to make sure any proposed work can be started right away. We’ll also consider projects that have already started but remain unfinished, perhaps because they ran into financial difficulty. We need these to be up and running by the spring to give habitat and other wildlife the best chance to thrive.”

This funding is a part of Severn Trent’s major commitment to preserving its region’s natural environment and tackling climate change, known as the Great Big Nature Boost. This ongoing project has ambitious plans to work with the community to enhance nature over 5,000ha, plant 1.3 million trees and restore 2,000km of rivers by 2027.

To apply for funding, please email ecologymatters@severntrent.co.uk to express your interest, as soon as possible.

For more information, please visit [www.stwater.co.uk/about-us/environment/great-big-nature-boost/](http://www.stwater.co.uk/about-us/environment/great-big-nature-boost/).

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**Notes to editor:**

**A selection of images and videos can be downloaded from the** [**Media Toolkit.**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/cbjs677sm2mqkhc/AABl3oq6n4ndSi5XkSFlD2rMa?dl=0)

***Severn Trent*** *is the UK’s second biggest water company.  It serves 4.1m homes and business customers in and around the Midlands. Its region stretches from the Welsh borders to Rutland and from the outskirts of Sheffield south to the Bristol Channel and east to the Humber.*

*Catchment management is a key part of Severn Trent’s environmental work and involves working with farmers, landowners, businesses and charities to use and influence water in an environmentally friendly way to protect water quality at the source, rather than rely on treatment measures later in the process to becoming drinking water.*

*In addition, the company has an ambitious target to increase biodiversity across an area of 5,000ha within the region by 2027. This will deliver 1% of the Nature Recovery Network’s 500,000ha, within the Government’s 25 year Environment Plan.*

***How will we do it?***

*We’re already partnering with some, but looking to partner with more conservation organisations, farmers, estate managers and other landowners in a joined-up approach by:*

* *Planting over 1.3 million trees*
* *Establishing wildflower meadows, beetle banks and creating wetlands*
* *Restoring moorland*
* *Bog and peatland restoration*

*As part of our catchment management and biodiversity work, we also offer the following environmental funding schemes:*

* ***STEPS*** *– match funding of up to £5,000 per farm, to address water quality issues, focusing on infrastructure and land management changes. Additional option for improving farm biodiversity*
* ***Farm to Tap*** *– payments of up to £5/ha to reward farmers for improving water quality by reducing metaldehyde slug pellet use*
* ***Boost for Biodiversity*** *– an opportunity for organisations to pitch for a share of £200,000 to fund biodiversity projects*

*Organisations can also contact Severn Trent to discuss other biodiversity collaboration opportunities within the region, enquiries can be sent to* *ecologymatters@severntrent.co.uk**. Projects must be a minimum of 0.5ha*

*For every £1 the Severn Trent spends on catchment management, up to £20 is saved on treatment and around £4 is returned in environmental benefits.*

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