

Case Record

Wom Brook Water Vole Project



Date November
2002

Location Wombourne,
Staffordshire

Staffordshire
Wildlife
Trust

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust won a £4,496 grant from the Carillion Natural Habitats Fund to help endangered water voles living on the Wom Brook in Wombourne, South Staffordshire.

Conservation day to bring the water vole population of Wom Brook out of decline. A combined effort between Staffordshire Wildlife Trust with Carillion funding and volunteers.

Mutual Benefits

- **Environmental contribution via Carillion Habitats Fund**
- **Cash and in-kind support approx £6000**
- **12 volunteers helped deliver the project, gaining team working skills**
- **Environmental / Biodiversity training for Carillion staff**

The number of known water vole breeding sites in Staffordshire has declined by 73% since 1996 to around 30 colonies. The Water Vole is a priority species in the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan and with the help of the Carillion Natural Habitats Fund, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust now has a project in place to aid their survival.

Kate Dewey, co-ordinator of the project explains..." Water Voles have suffered serious decline and Wom Brook is one of only 3 other breeding sites in South Staffordshire. We hope this project helps survival of this endearing mammal and raises awareness among the public about wildlife".

The project includes restoring two ponds beside Wom Brook, utilizing willow weaving to protect eroding banks and erecting an information board on the area's wildlife, all with the objective of conserving and increasing the existing Water Vole population.

Carillion staff volunteers were on hand on a cold November day, to assist with the practical aspect of the project. The team spent the day digging and clearing silt from the sites of two previous ponds, which had long since disappeared. Some willow coppicing was also undertaken to help protect the banks of the ponds, ensuring the right environment for the vole population to flourish. The team spent the day up their ears in mud...and had a great time! They thought the day to be "thoroughly enjoyable and hopefully one that will make a difference, however small". It was a good chance to get involved with some of Carillion's environmental activities.

The project will now run well into 2003, with The Wildlife Trust team monitoring the progress of the ponds and the water vole population, with hopefully more volunteer days to help encourage the water voles back to their natural habitat.