

World Fish Migration Day- 16th May 2020**Project background:**

[Unlocking the Severn](#) is a conservation and river-engagement project for people and wildlife on the UK's longest river. For more than 170 years twaite shad have been unable to reach their traditional spawning grounds and this 'May Fish' migration, once a celebrated spring phenomenon on the river, has all but disappeared. We are using modern engineering to provide fish passages or modifications at 6 weirs on the Rivers Severn and Teme, allowing twaite shad to reach their natural spawning grounds once again.

Shad are endangered in the UK; like so many native fish, they are facing significant challenges such as climate change, pollution and barriers to migration. We need to restore the critical part of their lifecycle that takes place on our rivers.

The overarching interpretive theme that underpins our work is that our project helps UK fish, including the rare twaite shad, to pass human-made barriers and to thrive in the mighty River Severn.

More information on the project is included in the Appendix: Unlocking the Severn Briefing

World Fish Migration Day:

[World Fish Migration Day](#) is a one-day global celebration, raising awareness about open rivers and migratory fish. On 16th May 2020, organisations from around the world will run events around the common theme of connecting fish, rivers and people.

World Fish Migration Day will be one of the biggest events in Unlocking the Severn's calendar and will have huge potential to raise awareness about the Unlocking the Severn project. We are celebrating fish migration on the Severn through a series of events along the river, including a marathon shad count in Tewkesbury and tours of our fish pass construction site at Diglis Weir.

Artist brief:

We are looking for an artist or group of artists to deliver an exciting and interruptive community art event for World Fish Migration Day that will make local people stop and think about the river, it's wildlife and their connection to it in a new way, based on the following creative concept:

Unlocking the River

- Most people never think about the hidden water-world beneath the surface of our River Severn.
- Epic journeys are made by migratory fish through this underwater landscape.
- A healthy river is more than clean flowing water, there should be fish swimming up and down its course. Living creatures seeking their spawning grounds to complete natural lifecycles and restore ecosystems.
- When humans build a wall across the river, we break this natural process.
- We can unlock the river for nature and also reconnect something fundamental to our human experience, remembering that we are also creatures of a natural world.
- We can break down barriers for people too and make the river an inclusive place where all are welcomed and valued.

Delivery information:

- We are interested to receive applications to involve **different art forms and mediums**, whether it is a physical artwork or performance piece but it must be **impactful** and create a real **moment of connection** for a broad audience (including those who do not typically interact with art exhibitions)
- We would like the art event to be **interactive**, allowing members of the public to contribute towards a larger piece
- The event should be **inclusive**, engaging with people of different ages, abilities, and diverse cultural backgrounds, potentially working with established community groups, charities and trusts
- The event should be **eye-catching and thought-provoking**, arousing curiosity and thus raising awareness about Unlocking the Severn
- It should also be designed to be **captured on film**, creating an intriguing short film clip (the key edit would be less than one minute in length) that will take the artwork to a much larger audience online and have real viral potential
- We are keen for a number of these community art events to be run simultaneously in different locations along the Severn (specifically to achieve the diversity of audiences mentioned above). One event should take place in a central location in Worcester, and any others should be run in the project's focal area between Gloucester and Shrewsbury

Preparation for the event can take place in the weeks leading up to the 16th May, but part of the event should occur on World Fish Migration Day as part of our wider celebrations.

Event learning outcomes:

- People will become aware of Unlocking the Severn and World Fish Migration Day
- People will feel positive about the return of the shad
- Participants will have fun taking part in activities and be **surprised** by memorable and unusual learning experience around the river
- Participants will enjoy opportunities for creativity and collaboration
- Participants' motivation to take part in other project activities will be increased

Next steps:

Budget information available on expression of interest.

Your proposal to be considered for this commission should include:

- Background portfolio information, including details of relevant community art projects you have worked on
- A creative concept that meets the brief
- An outline of how and where you plan to deliver the event
- A quote that gives day rates of those involved and details the time you have budgeted to deliver the events on 16th May 2020, time for preparation and post-production work, plus all material costs and any additional expenses (travel etc).
- Please provide costs that would apply for running this event simultaneously in other locations, if appropriate
- If you have a preferred videographer you would like to document the event, please include a quote for their work too

Your proposal will be judged on your artistic ideas as well as value for money.

Send your proposal to Steph Wheeler, Events Officer by **Monday 17th February**.

Email: stephanie.wheeler@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Phone: 07789178506



Please get in touch if questions or wish to further.



UNLOCKING THE SEVERN

you have any
discuss your ideas

Unlocking the Severn is a project being delivered by: Canal & River Trust, Severn Rivers Trust, Environment Agency and Natural England.

Appendix: Unlocking the Severn Briefing

Our project is unlocking the River Severn for people and wildlife. Our conservation and river-engagement project made possible through modern engineering and the support of volunteers.

- This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to restore connectivity on the UK's longest river
- The project is funded the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the European Union LIFE programme.
- **Unlocking the Severn is being delivered by Canal & River Trust, Severn Rivers Trust, Environment Agency and Natural England.**
- We will restore **158 miles** of river for rare and endangered fish.
- The project is inspired by one of the UK's rarest fish – the **twaité shad**.
- Before weirs were built across the river in the mid 1800's, hundreds of thousands of twaité shad used to migrate up the river reach their natural spawning grounds.
- Improving fish access to the upper reaches of the River Severn (and River Teme) will also crucially benefit other important and endangered fish species on the River Severn such as salmon, eel and lamprey.
- Our exciting events and exhibitions, schools programme and volunteering opportunities are encouraging people of all ages, interests and backgrounds to be inspired and learn from the Severn.
- Our project relies on modern engineering solutions to provide fish passage around weirs on the river.

What are we doing?

- **Monitoring** twaité shad populations and their behaviour in the Rivers Severn and Teme.
- **Providing ecological connectivity** through creating **fish passage** for twaité shad (and therefore, also other river fish) at two weirs on the River Teme and four weirs on the River Severn thus re-opening over 150 miles of historic spawning habitat.
- We are proactively **sharing knowledge, insights and best practice internationally** so that what we have learned in this project can be applied elsewhere to benefit similar projects in Europe and across the world.



- Our exciting **events and exhibitions, schools programme, and volunteering** opportunities are engaging local communities and encouraging people of all ages, interests and backgrounds to be **inspired and learn from the Severn**

How will we do it?

- Our monitoring programme will use the expertise of fish scientists, a range of high-tech monitoring techniques, PhD student research, and the power of citizen science.
- Our fish passes will be designed and built utilising modern engineering solutions.
- Our website, attendance at international conferences, visits and end-of-project scientific symposium will share our growing knowledge.
- Our ambitious activity plan will engage communities through these key elements (these are the HLF approved purposes):
 - Converting an historic Victorian workshop located at Diglis Island into a learning facility and creating an underwater observation window in the fish pass next to Diglis weir.
 - A comprehensive programme of activities, events, and education for a range of audiences to learn and be inspired by the natural and social heritage of the River Severn. Highlights will include: an immersive travelling exhibition, a schools' programme, and thoughtfully designed interpretive signage at key riverside locations.
 - A volunteering programme including Citizen Science
 - Communications (including the website) to raise awareness of the project nationally and internationally
 - Installing a River Severn themed play park and at Severn Valley Country Park
 - Offering River Trainee apprenticeships

Why are we doing this?

1. **To bring back the shad.** This important rare fish will reach its former freshwater habitats and all fish will have improved access to the upper reaches of the River Severn.
2. So that **more people and a wider range of people will care about, visit and enjoy Our Severn** making it a vibrant and exciting place to be.
3. Because we believe that **deepening people's connections with the River Severn** can enrich lives, providing a unique environment to boost wellbeing, to gain new insights into the natural world and our relationship to it, and to feel inspired.
4. To bring the huge potential of **volunteers at the heart of heritage and science**; so that we can discover, share and celebrate the stories of the River Severn, and create an amazing legacy for the future.

Why is this project important?

Connectivity is essential for wildlife in a healthy river ecosystem. We now have the chance to redress a historical wrong to wildlife on the river when weirs were installed 170 years ago. Local people also have much to benefit from reconnecting to this mighty and important river that brings amazing wildlife, a chance to enjoy time-out in nature, and a sense of awe and wonder – flowing right through our communities.



When?

The project is running until autumn 2021. A key highlight towards the end of the project will be the Shadfest in May 2021.

Where?

Our project activity programme is focused on the area between Gloucester and Ironbridge. Our engineering works are on 4 weirs on the River Severn, at and North of Worcester, and 2 weirs on the River Teme, which is a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and an ecologically important tributary of the River Severn.

Summary

Unlocking the Severn is the conservation and river-engagement project for people and wildlife on the UK's longest river.

Since the industrial revolution, human barriers have impacted on wildlife in the UK's longest river and people have become increasingly disconnected with the river ecosystem. For more than 170 years twaite shad have been unable to reach their traditional spawning grounds and this 'May Fish' migration, once a celebrated spring phenomenon on the river has all but disappeared.

Unlocking the Severn will deliver an ambitious conservation & natural heritage project to unlock the river for people & wildlife. We will use modern engineering to provide fish passages or modifications at 6 weirs on the Rivers Severn and Teme, allowing twaite shad to reach their natural spawning grounds once again

The River Severn brings nature through our countryside and cities; 6 million people live close to the River Severn. Rivers provide the connection between water, terrestrial and oceanic ecosystems. We need to understand, value and act to restore and protect healthy rivers. The hero species for this project – twaite shad - are endangered in the UK. Like so many native fish, they are facing significant challenges such as climate change, pollution and barriers to migration. We need to restore the critical part of their lifecycle that takes place on our rivers. Their annual migration also brings an important pulse of nutrients from the sea that cascades throughout the river ecosystem.

What can interested people do next?

- Find out more on our website: www.unlockingthesevern.co.uk
- Follow us on social media @SevernUnlocked
- Sign up to our email newsletter (see footer on any page of the website)
- Join us at on World Fish Migration Day – 16th May 2020
- Volunteer – in person or online
- Spend time by the River Severn to reconnect to the river, it's wildlife, and perhaps yourself too!

