

TAW TORRIDGE ESTUARY FORUM

NEWSLETTER UPDATE – 16th. JULY, 2007



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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY BATHING BEACH MONITORING; SAUNTON, INSTOW AND WESTWARD HO!

As reported in the 7th. June 2007 Update, Instow Beach failed to meet the Imperative Bathing Water Directive Standard on 15th. May, 2007.

Instow appears to have been influenced by the wet weather from the 13th May. The sample collected from the beach on May 15th has been confirmed as exceeding the imperative standards for both total and faecal coliforms.

The salinity of the sample was very low, i.e. 3.9 mg/l; checking back over the past 11 years has revealed that the lowest salinity recorded for Instow Beach was just over 5 mg/l.

Following an investigation with the area Environment Protection officer, the area hydrologist was asked to compile local rainfall data to see if a wet weather waiver could be applied for. However, the data show only a 1-in-1 year storm in the preceding 72 hours, and a storm with a return period greater than 1 in 5 would be required to consider a wet-weather application.

So far the investigations have not yielded much. The investigating officer reported that discharges from the pumping station to the beach were not operating at the time of the follow-up sample / investigation.

Another investigation into the two streams on either side of the beach area was conducted at the time, and the results of this analysis are still awaited. However, the streams did not show signs of pollution – one stream even had thousands of tadpoles and fish present!

Investigations are continuing, and the Environment Agency will keep us up to date. It is now possible to extract DNA from the frozen data sample and 'Bacti Type' it to establish its origin – bovine, ruminant or human!

Subsequent tests have met the Imperative Standard, and the results to date for this bathing season for Saunton, Instow and Westward Ho! are available upon request.

There has also been a reported pollution incident at Goosey Pool on Northam Burrows. I have written to the Environment Agency asking for information, and will pass on this information when I receive it.

ATLANTIC ARRAY: PROPOSAL FOR AN OFFSHORE WINDFARM SCHEME IN THE BRISTOL CHANNEL:

Following the report in the Newsletter dated 24th. June, 2007, Michael Huntingford of Farm Energy Ltd. has been invited to make a presentation to the TTEF at our meeting in October or January.

Copies of the Atlantic Array brochure are available upon request.

TAW TORRIDGE ESTUARY FORESHORE LEASES:

Following NDDC's decision not to renew many Taw Torridge Estuary foreshore leases within its district, there is now uncertainty as to who holds many of these leases.

In discussion with interested TTEF members, it was felt that it would be in everyone's interest to clarify the position. So far, I have written to MOD Defence Estates, who would like to take over those foreshore leases which would enable the boundaries between the Christie Estate and the Crown Estate to touch. This would allow the MOD to:

- legitimately carry out amphibious landings on Saunton Sands
- train across Braunton Burrows
- link ATTURM Zeta Berth and Braunton with Chivenor and Fremington
- regularise activities like the landing of Hercules, the use of rubber-tracked BV206 or its successor Viking and also
- carry out the trials and activities that emanate from the Royal Marine bases in and around the Estuary

It has been agreed with Natural England that the MOD Defence Estates will carry out an appropriate assessment of all of the various activities so that, from the point of view of conservation, they enhance, manage and do no harm. Having achieved this, the MOD Defence Estates will provide the public with all of the information needed to understand and support the military activities.

The rights negotiated with the Crown Estate merely give the MOD Defence Estates permission to train.

When a map of the leases has been drawn up, a copy will be forwarded to the TTEF, together with a synopsis of the agreement.

I have also spoken to Ray Webster of Torridge District Council, and he has promised to let the TTEF have details of all foreshore leases held by TDC.

EXPLORE BRAUNTON PROJECT:

Richard Dyer (Braunton Marsh Internal Drainage Board), Richard Butler (UK MAB and ND AONB Partnership Chairman) and myself (TTEF Chairman and ND AONB Partnership Vice Chairman) have been invited to join the Advisory Group for this project.

The £93,000 Project, submitted by the ND AONB and by the Northern Devon Coast & Countryside Service, and funded by Devon Renaissance, by the Heritage Lottery Fund and by the ND AONB Sustainable Development Fund, will promote the environment and history of Braunton. The Project will set up a dedicated website, establish guided walks around Braunton led both by volunteer guides and by hand-held GPS systems, support local businesses, and commissioning a feasibility study for an environmental education/visitor centre on the site of the old BP Handygaz distribution centre on the edge of Braunton Burrows.

It is proposed that a Project Officer will be recruited for 12 months to organise and co-ordinate input from the local community, including working with landowners, school groups and tourist-related businesses.

Having obtained the necessary permissions, much of the interview material recorded during the research for the Management Study for Braunton Marsh will be available for the use of this project.

The report of Richard Butler, Chairman of the ND AONB Partnership, on the work of the Partnership during the past four months is available upon request.

MSC NAPOLI: SEMINAR ON RESPONSE 12th. JULY, 2007 – COUNTY HALL, EXETER:

I was invited through the Devon Maritime Forum to attend a seminar and information day hosted by the EROCIPS Project, following the grounding the MSC Napoli in Lyme Bay in January 2007.

The day presented the experiences of some of the agencies and people directly involved in the response, and brought together responders from Devon and Dorset, as well as members of organisations across the South West, so that the experience gained so far from the Napoli incident could be put into good practice across the region and help to strengthen existing contingency plans for maritime pollution incidents.

The presentations covered:

- the at-sea response – the role of the Secretary of State's representative (SoSREP) and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, the Environment Group that was set up involving the authorities and agencies involved, and the role of the salvors, etc.
- the on-shore response – County Council Emergency Planning Services, the Receiver of Wrecks, waste handling, etc.,
- the wider issues involved – local community perspective, the environment and wildlife.

My notes from the day can be copied for any TTEF members with an interest in this matter. EROCIPS will also be holding a Beachmaster's course in Lymouth in the Autumn.

NORTHAM BURROWS DISUSED LANDFILL SITE:

Following the launch of the draft Taw Torridge Estuary Geomorphology and Management Study by Professor Pethick, I have received information from Mr. Ben Jennings, County Waste Manager, concerning material landfilled at Northam Burrows.

The tip was opened up in the early 1940s, and Mr. Jennings confirms that he is not aware of any record of materials tipped.

The site licence approved in 1977 covered the period when DCC was responsible for tipping at the site. Prior to 1974, the site was managed by the local Rural District Council.

The Site Disposal Licence issued in 1977 allowed for the disposal of household, commercial and industrial waste. The industrial waste was restricted to builders' rubble, excavation material and other inert waste. The following difficult wastes were considered suitable for disposal in controlled quantities: alkalis, non-toxic metal compounds, inorganic compounds, organic compounds, polymeric materials and precursors, fuel, oils and greases, fine chemicals and biocides, filter materials, treatment sludge and contaminated rubbish, miscellaneous wastes, animal and food wastes.

Waste excluded from the list of acceptable materials were: cyanides, chromates or phenols, any waste from metal finishing processes, which contain, or may contain, lead, mercury, cadmium or manganese residues, insecticides, weedkillers, acids in bulk, untreated sewage sludge or cesspool contents, any noxious liquid or radioactive wastes, oil and petroleum products in liquid form, gas liquors and tarry waste, surgical waste and other waste listed under the DoE's Difficult Waste Classification in Waste Management Paper No. 4 (except those listed in the schedule contained in the consent)

The concept of the 'dilute and disperse' basis of this landfill site was expected to render the waste benign over a period of between 30 and 100 years.

Mr. Jennings quotes a figure of £150,000,000 to dig out the tip site and to transfer the material to Deepmoor, the nearest licensed landfill site, and maintains that: "the preferred solution would in my view be to protect the tip face against erosion as and when required". The full text of Mr. Jennings' e-mail is available upon request.

I have also spoken to Cllr. Humphrey Temperley who is working hard to achieve a programme of site investigation, site evaluation and sampling on Northam Burrows, to be undertaken by reputable outside people.

BRAUNTON MARSH: REQUEST FOR AONB BOUNDARY CHANGE

You will remember that we have written to Natural England to request that the AONB boundary at Braunton Burrows should be extended to include Braunton Marsh and Braunton Great Field. A reply has now been received.

Natural England will be undertaking a review of all of its designations over the next few years, but any AONB or National Park boundary review will be considered in terms of its national priorities and available staff and financial

resources. We are now included on the list of potential AONB boundary variations but, as the current priorities are the South Downs and the North West area between the Lake District and the Dales, there is no guarantee of success in the near future.

TTEF VISIT TO BRAUNTON MARSH SATURDAY, 15th. SEPTEMBER

Following the completion of the TTEF Management Study for Braunton Marsh 2007, all TTEF representatives are to be invited by the Braunton Marsh Internal Drainage Board and by Braunton Marsh Inspectors to take part in a guided visit to Braunton Marsh on:

Saturday, 15th. September 2007 at 2.00 p.m.

Please put this date in your diaries.

Richard Dyer (Braunton Marsh IDB) will be arranging the visit for us, and I will send out all of the details as soon as I receive them from Richard.

It will be a very interesting afternoon, and we do hope for some fine weather! We are very grateful to the Internal Drainage Board and to the Marsh Inspectors for their invitation and hospitality.

MARITIME VOLUNTEER SERVICE: NEW TTEF MEMBER ORGANISATION

Following a discussion on membership at the previous TTEF meeting, the Taw Torridge Unit of the Maritime Volunteer Service has accepted our invitation to join the TTEF, and is now the 40th. TTEF member organisation. The representative appointed by the MVS to represent them is Captain Paul Fronteras, their Port Officer, who will have dual responsibility for the MVS and for Westleigh Parish Council. Paul is also our webmaster for the TTEF website.

As agreed, I have also written to the Appledore Pilot Gig Club and to the Sea Cadets, inviting them to join the TTEF.

NEW TTEF REPRESENTATIVES:

Following the local government elections in May, we have some changes in TTEF representation:

- **Northam Town Council** – Cllr. Peter Hames
- **Bideford Town Council** – Cllr. Johns
- **Fremington Parish Council** – Cllr. David Harris (together with Cllr. Brian Hockins)
- **Ashford Parish Council** – Cllr. G.C. Holder
- **North Devon AONB Partnership** - Richard Butler (also UK MAB representative)
- **Maritime Volunteer Service** – Captain Paul Fronteras (also Westleigh Parish Council)

VARIOUS REPORTS:

Written reports, submitted for the TTEF meeting, are now available on the TTEF website:

- **Braunton Burrows Core Area:** John Breeds' report and a copy of the list of Illustrated Talks at the Braunton Countryside Centre 2007
- **North Devon AONB Partnership:** Richard Butler
- **Maritime Volunteer Service:** Captain Paul Fronteras, including a report on the MVS activities at Appledore Churchfield Slip.
- **Bideford Harbour Master's Report:** Captain Roger Hoad

NOTE:

All information on the Estuary Code of Conduct, the Moorings Code of Practice, the Boat Registration Scheme, the Estuary Zoning Scheme and Speed Limits, and the Regulations for Appledore Churchfields Slip can be found on the TTEF website:

www.ttef.org.uk

DATES OF FORTHCOMING TTEF MEETINGS:

Monday, 15th October 2007 at Barnstaple Civic Centre
Monday, 21st January 2008 at Bideford Town Hall

All meetings to commence at 7.00 p.m



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