

Project Proposals for University of East Anglia Students

Essex and Suffolk Rivers Trust (ESRT) are involved in a Project called Topsoil. This is funded by [Interreg](#), which is European Union initiative.

ESRT is only a small part of a much larger project across many countries and organisations within Northern Europe to preserve Topsoil and come up with innovative ways to do this and to help landowners to preserve this invaluable growing medium without affecting productivity.

The countries involved are Germany, Denmark, Netherlands and Belgium. More information on all the Topsoil Projects can be found on the [Topsoil website](#).

Essex – Layer Brook/Abberton Reservoir.

Site and Project Information

This project is addressing the build-up of sediment in Abberton Reservoir (which is a large public water supply as well as being an important wetland habitat), which is impacting on the macrophyte growth in parts of this SSSI. The aims are to identify where the sources of sediment are coming from and ultimately to put in place measure to reduce the amount entering Layer Brook and Abberton Reservoir (Layer Brook flows into the reservoir- see attached maps). This is a 3-year project and we are currently in year one. The current focus is to identify the sediment sources.

Project Proposal 1

To use sediment fingerprinting to identify the sources of sediment entering the reservoir. This would involve taking samples from the central and western sections of the reservoir and comparing these to soil/sediment samples taken from various points throughout the Layer Brook catchment. It is hoped this will help to pinpoint the sediment sources so we can concentrate our efforts in address the issues in these areas.

Project Proposal 2

Determine the presence or absence of Signal Crayfish in the central section of the reservoir and to determine the population size of invasive crayfish in Layer Brook and both the western and central sections of the reservoir. In addition, we would like to determine what impact the crayfish are having on the sediment load within the central section of the reservoir.

Future projects

As this is a 3-year project there are research opportunities within the 2 and/or 3 years.

These would include involvement in implementing and surveying any interventions made to reduce sediment entering the brook/reservoir. The 3rd year would offer opportunities to monitor the sediment reducing interventions to determine their effectiveness.

Other Opportunities

We are working closely with the Environment Agency and Essex and Suffolk Water (E&SW) so there may be opportunities to join Environment Agency staff installing turbidity meters and analysing the data collected and involvement in surveys carried out by the Catchment Adviser for E&SW may be possible. There would also be some support available from the Project Manager from ESRT who would be able to offer some help, advice, and data for these research projects.

Contact

If you are an undergraduate or masters student at UEA and are interested in being involved in one of these projects for your dissertation, then please get in touch with either Kevin Hiscock (k.hiscock@uea.ac.uk) or Richard Cooper (richard.j.cooper@uea.ac.uk).