

Symonds Yat In-River Works River Wye

Non Technical Summary



BACKGROUND TO THE SCHEME

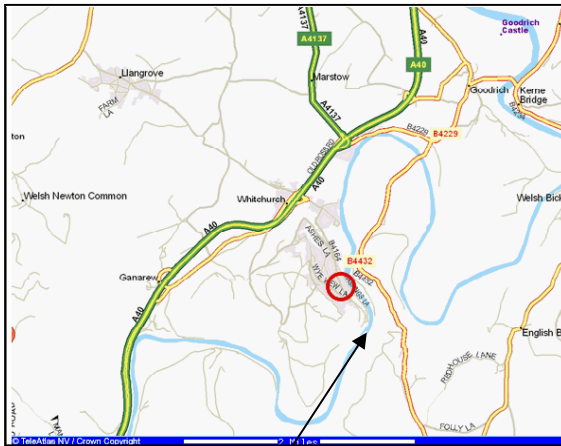
Symonds Yat Rapids, located on the River Wye near Monmouth, are owned by the British Canoe Union for the benefit of all water users. The rapids themselves are on the site of an old weir that was broken up and an island was subsequently formed immediately downstream. The island, now heavily vegetated, narrows the river and increases the speed of the river forming a number of small rapids. The island was historically longer but is steadily being eroded away.

The rapids are enhanced by a number of small groynes perennially constructed of cobbles and small boulders along either side of the left hand channel of the river alongside the island.

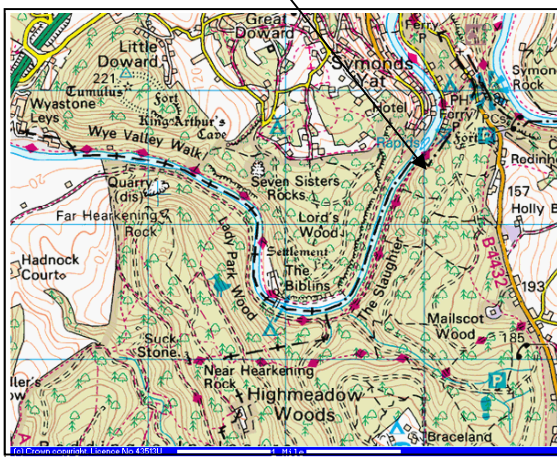
Canoeists and other water users flock to the rapids year round as a regionally important site, as well as providing a highlight to the many journeys undertaken by canoe along the River Wye.



LOCATION PLAN



Symonds Yat Rapids



DETAILS OF THE SCHEME

The works are intended to:

- Provide stability to the island and reduce the erosion to the nose of the island.
- Provide year round, stable and **permanent** groynes to improve the rapids for canoeing.
- Enhance & protect the habitat for rare and protected species for which the River Wye is recognised.
- Improve access to the rapids for any emergencies and also allow the safe portaging of the rapids.

Along the area of the rapids a number of boulders up to 5 tonnes are to be placed. The current 12 groynes are to be replaced by a total of 10 new slightly smaller groynes. In addition, the nose of the island is to be protected with rock placement.

The island will be further stabilised by the placement of live willow around its perimeter and either side of the higher flow channels that currently cross the island in higher flows. The mature trees will also be coppiced (bat surveys permitting) to increase their lifespan and their ability to bind the island together with their roots.

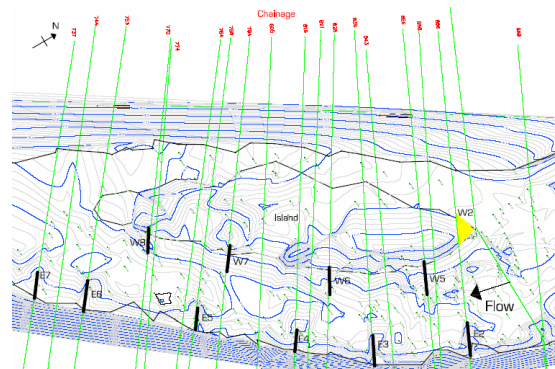
ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE SCHEME

Planning

The scheme has been developed to agree with the principles set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 17 (Sport and Recreation) and Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas), having particular regard to its sensitive location within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There would be a number of policy benefits in terms of encouraging sustainable and appropriate recreation in the AONB. Moreover, PPS25 notes that amenity open space, nature conservation and biodiversity, outdoor sports and recreational and recreation and essential facilities are all water-compatible development.

Flooding Effects

A Flood Risk Assessment was required by the Environment Agency to identify the level of flood risk from the River Wye and to determine the impact of groyne placement and other in-channel works necessary to maintain and enhance the rapids.



Their effect has been evaluated as negligible.

Landscape and Visual Effects

The proposed groynes will look very much like the current arrangements but with their more substantial and permanent structure will over time, become less intrusive than the existing.

Typical Current Groyne Arrangement



Typical Proposed Groyne Arrangement



Typical Anticipated Groyne Arrangement after 3 years



The proposed access steps downstream of the rapids will be heavily screened by natural vegetation and will not be visible from Symonds Yat village given the bend in the river.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

The site lies entirely within the River Wye Special Area for Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

A detailed Ecological Assessment of the rapids and the impact of the proposals has been undertaken in consultation with Hereford Biological Records Centre, the Environment Agency, Natural England, and NBN Gateway.

Following initial survey work and consultation with appropriate bodies the proposals were modified slightly to the current plans. The consultees also recommended that further confirming survey work/investigations be undertaken shortly before construction.

Overall an independent, comprehensive ecological screening assessment has been made.

This concluded that the proposals would have No Significant Effects on the River Wye SAC and on any species of animal or plant.

Indeed, the proposals overall were deemed likely to have a beneficial effect on the SAC qualifying features.

Archaeological

An archaeological investigation has been undertaken with regard to the potential impact of the works and it concluded that there would no impact on any known item of archaeological importance.

Construction Access, Rights of Way & Navigation

Plant, materials and equipment will access the site via forestry access currently used for logging trucks with no construction traffic passing through Symonds Yat village.

The preferred route involves the use of the public footpath / cycleway alongside the river. Consultation with both Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Councils rights of way officers has produced an acceptable temporary diversion to a short length of track running parallel to the current cycleway for the duration of the works.

The works will not adversely alter the passage of navigation from the current arrangement and for the duration of the works a portage alternative will be provided.

Further copies of this Non-Technical Summary are available and on display at:

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