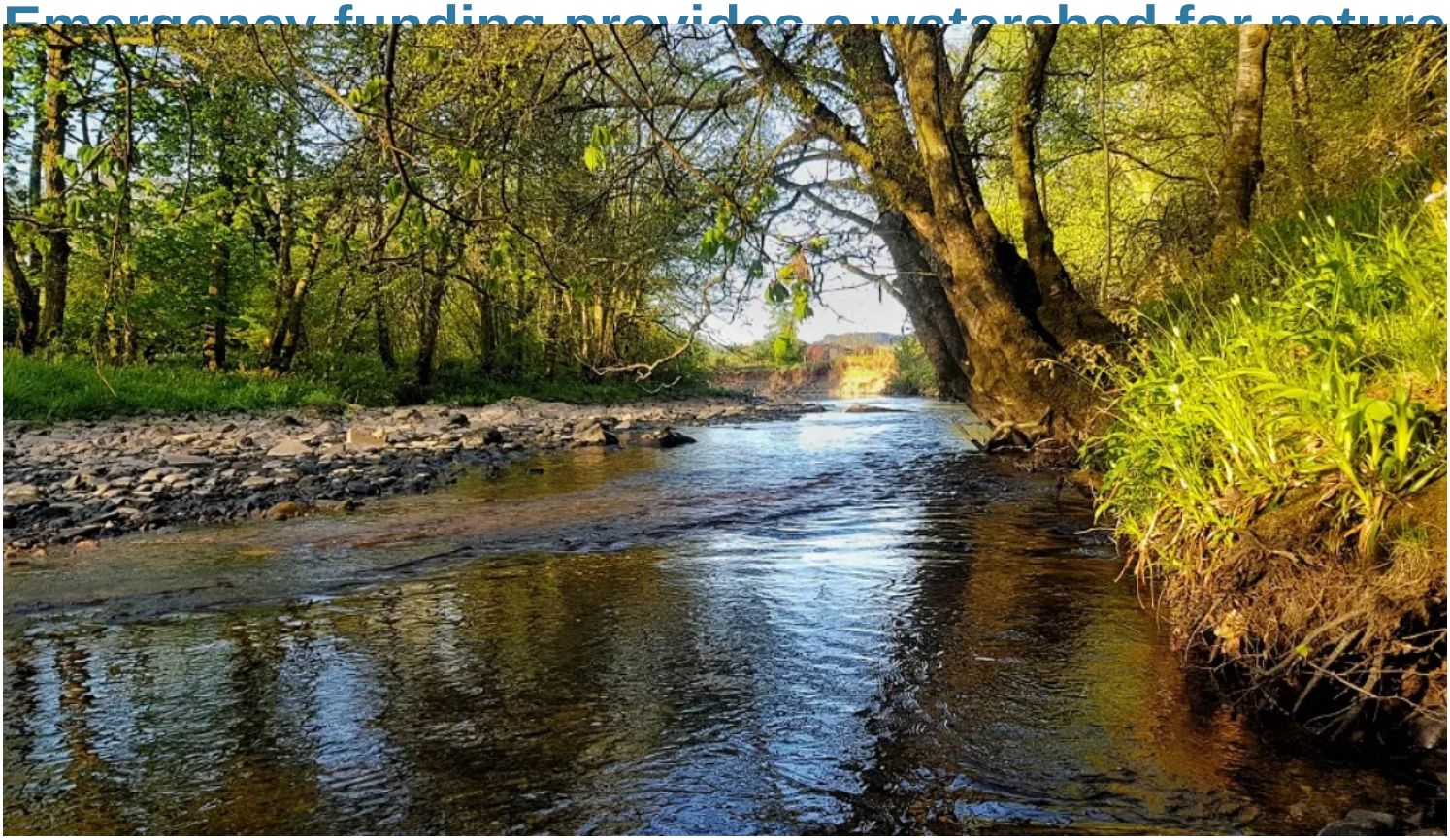
Emergency funding provides a watershed for nature



After five months away, volunteers along the banks of the rivers of Scotland’s Forth basin are getting back to work safely thanks to funding from our Heritage Emergency Fund.

The volunteers are tree-planting, managing invasive species, keeping paths maintained and monitoring fish and other species to protect and improve the rivers for wildlife and for community use.

> “We have missed our volunteers whilst we have been in lockdown. They do fantastic work to help us protect and improve our rivers, which we cannot achieve without their help.”
>
> *Alison Baker, Director of the Forth Rivers Trust*



Forth Rivers Trust volunteers carrying out important maintenance tasks

Safe volunteering practices

With a grant of £49,200 from our Heritage Emergency Fund, The Forth Rivers Trust has been able to support its volunteers by introducing new working practices and precautions to keep everyone safe. There are now more work parties with smaller groups, volunteers are provided with extra protection, and additional tools have been bought so they are not handled by more than one person.

And there’s work going on behind the scenes too with out-of-date IT equipment replaced so that staff can work from home, making the office safer for those who need to come in.

Supporting wellbeing

For many volunteers the opportunity to get outdoors in nature and improve their local rivers at the same time was a key part of their routine before lockdown. They have welcomed the ability to return, safe in the knowledge that they can continue to make a positive impact on the environment and their local community whilst maintaining social distancing.



"Getting out and meeting new people is really important to me. I have missed the camaraderie of volunteering and the feeling that I am doing something to help nature."

Alan Brooks (85) who helped to plant 400 trees along the Killandean a tributary of the River Almond

Director of the Forth Rivers Trust, Alison Baker, recognises how important it is to get volunteers back doing what they love: "We have missed our volunteers whilst we have been in lockdown. We have kept in touch with many of them but it's not the same as enjoying working together on projects and the sense of achievement. Our volunteers do fantastic work to help us protect and improve our rivers – for wildlife and communities – which we cannot achieve without their help. Thanks to the National Lottery players for making this funding possible."



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Full steam ahead for Merseyside ship following emergency grant