

River Detectives



Investigating healthy rivers in a working landscape

What the hard words mean!

The River Detectives know a lot about rivers. They have spent time exploring and investigating the rivers and farms in their local area. When you watch the film you'll probably hear some new words, so we've put together this little glossary to help you understand what the 'hard words' mean, so you can become a River Detective too!

Buffer Strip – an area of land (that may or may not be fenced off) that is not used for farming animals or growing crops. It is left to be natural, with native plants and trees growing.

Cows and Sheep – farm animals. Not naturally creatures that would be found living in the Eden Landscape. Kept in large numbers by farmers.

Invertebrate – an animal without a backbone, like a butterfly, worm or snail. In the river this is things like mayflies, caddisflies, white-clawed crayfish.

Meander – a natural bend in a river. These bends vary the speed of water as it travels downstream and create shallow fast-flowing and deeper slower-flowing areas.

Muck – the word 'muck' is often used to describe farm animal manure (usually cows), but could also be manure mixed with straw or other bedding used in sheds.

Re-meander – putting back the bends in a river that has been straightened in the past.

Run-off – run-off is water running off the land into becks, rivers and lakes. This water can contain soil and chemicals such as pesticides and fertilisers.

Silage – silage is farm animal food, made from grass that has been cut in spring / summer and stored in an air-tight container or wrapped in a plastic bale to keep it wet and edible until winter, kind of pickling it, so the nutrients are still in it.

Slurry - a liquid manure made up from cow manure and water, it is used by farmers as a natural fertiliser for their fields. Manure from animals is collected and stored in slurry pits/ lagoons, or in underground tanks ready to be spread on fields in spring (as a natural fertiliser).

Straightened river – a river which has been modified (changed) by farmers in the past - often moved to one side of a field and straightened to try and free up more land for farming. Straight rivers are usually have steep river banks, and are one depth and one speed all the way along their length.

Pesticides – a pesticide is a chemical that is used to kill or prevent the multiplication of small animals such as insects and other invertebrates that are unwanted. On a farm they are most often used when farmers are growing crops.

Toxic – the word toxic means very harmful, poisonous and deadly.

Weir – a dam-like structure built across a river by people. Weirs were built to raise the level of the water upstream of them, sometimes to power water mills. Unfortunately, they create a barrier in the river that makes it difficult for fish to swim over, affecting their migration; and in some cases they increase flood-risk upstream of them as they hold the water at a higher level than is natural.

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