



Life R4EVER KENT

Event Summary – Green Careers Day



Date: 02/07/2026

Location: Grasmere

Led by: Lake District National Park

Number in attendance: c.220 students from The Lakes School, John Ruskin School, Ullswater Community College, Whitehaven Academy and Keswick School.

Purpose:

We attended the careers event in Grasmere designed up to give Year 9 students and above meaningful encounters with employers and organisations working across the environmental, heritage, land management and education sectors, helping them gain a better understanding of the different career opportunities available to them.

Held across Grasmere Village Hall and Broadgate Meadow, the event welcomed approximately 220 students from schools across Cumbria. Around 30 organisations were represented, covering everything from conservation and river restoration to farming, planning, education, heritage skills, local regulators and utility companies. This gave students a fantastic opportunity to see just how diverse the environmental sector is and how many different routes there are into it.

We ran a joint Natural England and South Cumbria Rivers Trust stand focused on the LIFE R4ever Kent project and the partnership work taking place across the River Kent catchment. Throughout the day we spoke to students about the work of both organisations, how partnership projects operate in practice, and the different skills and roles involved in delivering river restoration and conservation projects.



A partnership project. Co-funded by the European Union.



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To make the experience more interactive, students took part in a freshwater invertebrate identification activity using specimens collected through river dipping. This gave them a practical insight into how river health is monitored and how ecologists use biological indicators to assess water quality. We also demonstrated electrofishing equipment and digital mapping technology, giving students a flavour of some of the tools and techniques used in our day-to-day work.

Outcomes:

The event was a really positive experience and provided an excellent opportunity to engage directly with young people who may one day become the next generation of environmental professionals.



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Student engagement was consistently high throughout the day. Many students were keen to get involved with the activities, and some were genuinely enthusiastic about rivers, wildlife and conservation. It was particularly encouraging to speak with students who were already considering environmental careers and who came prepared with thoughtful questions about habitats, species monitoring, river restoration and the different pathways into the sector. It was wonderful to discover how many keen young anglers are out there and the popularity of river and pond dipping!

The invertebrate identification activity worked particularly well as a way of starting conversations. Students enjoyed getting hands-on and were often surprised by the variety of species found within freshwater environments. It was rewarding to see them begin linking what they were observing under the trays to wider topics such as water quality, biodiversity and ecosystem health. The electrofishing and mapping demonstrations also attracted a lot of interest and helped show that environmental careers can involve a wide range of practical, technical and scientific skills.



From a project perspective, the event was a valuable opportunity to promote LIFE R4ever Kent and raise awareness of the work being carried out across the catchment. Being able to talk about real projects and share examples of partnership working helped bring the project to life and demonstrate how organisations can work together to deliver benefits for rivers, wildlife and local communities.

Written by:

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