International Women’s Day 2023: Women at the heart of the plight to Rescue Britain’s Rivers

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On International Women’s Day, we’re celebrating some of the women who are playing a critical role in fighting the destruction of our rivers and pushing for change that prioritises our precious waterways and wildlife and people over profit and greed.

Angela Jones: Wild Woman of the Wye

Angela Jones – known as the ‘Wild Woman of the Wye’ – is an outdoor adventurer, wild swim specialist and kayaking guide who has a deep connection with the River Wye – one of Britain’s longest and most famous rivers.

Angela plays a critical role in raising awareness of the declining state of the Wye, tirelessly gathering data and information on the river’s deteriorating condition to hold those to account who continue to pollute and exploit it.

In 2021, Angela bought a coffin, marked it with the words “Death of the Wye”, and towed it down stretches of the Wye to bring attention to the dire state of the river. And last summer, she entered the waters of the Wye towing a large model egg box to highlight the horrific impact that phosphates from intensive poultry units littered along the catchment are having on the Wye’s delicate ecosystem.

Angela has also appeared on BBC ONE’s Panorama programme about how pollution is killing our waterways; she helped both George Monbiot with his film Rivercide and the BBC with their documentary: “Our Troubled Rivers”, and we will soon see her and the Wye appearing on BBC’s Countryfile.

Find out more about Angela’s exceptional work here**.**

Rachel Salvidge and Leana Hosea: Watershed Investigations

Rachael Salvidge and Leana Holsea are the founders of Watershed Investigations, – independent, not-for-profit investigative journalism that partners with national and international media to shine light on all aspects of the water crisis.

Since its launch in 2022, Rachael and Leana have played a key role in uncovering high-impact stories in the UK and abroad. They focus on evidence-based stories that “hold the powerful to account, uncover abuses, illuminate overlooked stories and champion solutions”.

A recent example includes their investigation that revealed a terrifying scale of ‘forever chemical’ pollution in UK waterways. It launched on the front page of the Guardian on the 27th February and included seven extraordinary stories that stretched over three days.

Becky Malby: Ilkley Clean River Group

Becky Malby is the co-founder of the Ilkley Clean River Group – a campaign set up three years ago by residents who were shocked at the way the River Warfe was being treated as an open sewer.

As a group, they were successful at getting the first ever Bathing Water designation on a UK river in 2020. This ensured Environmental Agency are testing of the quality of the river Warfe, instillation of signage so that the public knows how polluted the river is, and placed increasing pressure on the regulators and water company to do their duty to clean up the river.

Becky has been a driving force for exposing the failure of the water industry and regulator at both a local and national level. Her work with the Ilkley Clean Rivers group has resulted in huge investments from Yorkshire Water in upgrading sewerage works around Ilkley.

Find out more about the Clean Ilkley Rivers Group here**.**

Morgan Schofield, Patricia Ronan, and Jennie Hewitt: The '3 Wyes Women'

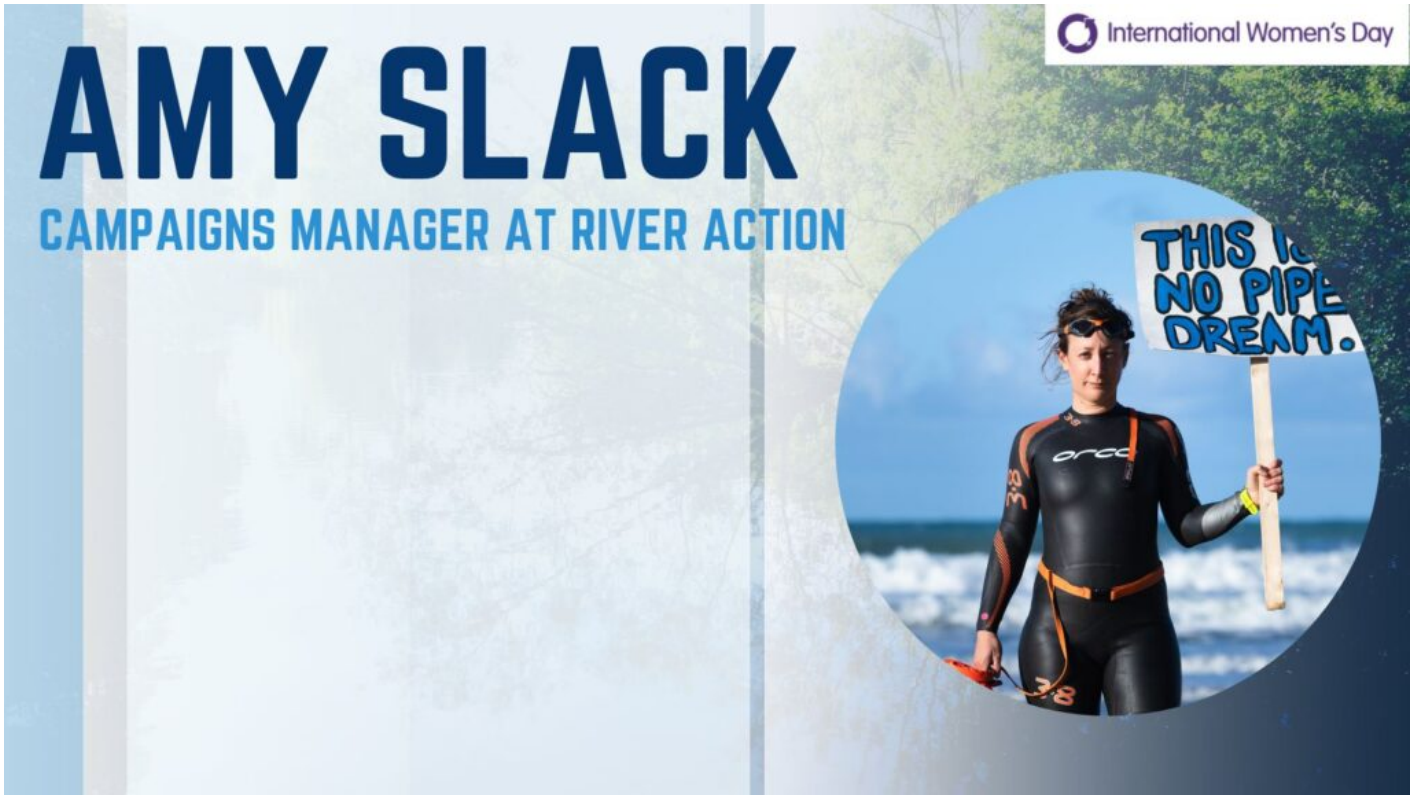
In August 2020, Jennie, Morgan and Patricia kayaked and walked the length of the river Wye,nearly 250 km in length, to raise awareness of the river's depleted ecosystem and the biodiversity that is under threat.

They chronicled their trip on social media, and their campaign was followed closely by our founder, Charles Watson. It was their tales of degradation that prompted Charles to launch River Action in February 2021.

Today they continue to raise awareness and are all involved in regularly monitoring the river's condition.

You can read more about the brilliant 3 Wyes Women here

Amy Slack: Campaigns Manager at River Action



Last, but certainly not least, is our very own Campaigns Manager, Amy Slack.

Amy has worked in the environmental sector for over 15 years, and in that time has become a leading voice for better water quality.

As Head of Campaigns & Policy at Surfers Against Sewage, Amy played a key role exposing the true extent of the UK's sewage scandal – calling out polluters on their destructive habits, demanding urgent government action, and leading SAS's public protests.

Having recently joined the River Action team Amy's knowledge and experience will play an integral part in our mission to rescue Brittons rivers, helping ensure that clean rivers are at the top of every politician, voter, business leader and consumer's priorities.

Find out more about the role Amy will play in rescuing Britain's rivers here**.**