

## The Aire Rivers Trust

### Biosecurity Policy

#### Introduction

The Aire Rivers Trust is dedicated to safeguarding the UK's natural environment by preventing the introduction and spread of harmful pests, diseases and invasive species. This biosecurity policy outlines our commitment to maintaining ecological integrity through proactive measures and responsible practices.

Biosecurity refers to practical precautions that can be taken to reduce spread or introduction of pests, diseases and INNS. Effective biosecurity means taking steps to make sure that good practices are in place to reduce and minimise the risk of spread.

#### Policy Statement

The Aire Rivers Trust is committed to:

- Minimising the risk of transferring INNS or pathogens through its activities.
- Promoting best practice in biosecurity within the wider conservation and river management community.
- Ensuring compliance with all relevant UK legislation and regulatory guidance.
- Regularly reviewing procedures in light of new scientific or legislative developments.

#### Purpose and Scope

This Biosecurity Policy sets out The Aire Rivers Trust's commitment to preventing the introduction and spread of invasive non-native species (INNS), pests, and pathogens across river catchments and freshwater ecosystems in which we operate. It applies to all staff, trustees, contractors, volunteers, and partner organisations engaged in fieldwork or water-based activities under the charity's direction.

This policy, in conjunction with the procedure will ensure that staff, volunteers and contractors are:

- Made aware of the detrimental impacts that pests, diseases and INNS have on the environment, economy and human health
- Considering the threat of spreading harmful pests, diseases and INNS in planning and decision-making processes and embedding better biosecurity practices in day-to-day activities.
- Trained in best practice biosecurity measures that reduce the risk of spreading pests, diseases and INNS.
- Know where to find the relevant material and information to carry out fieldwork in a responsible way that does not increase the risk of spreading pests, diseases and INNS.

#### Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy supports compliance with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended):** Prohibits the release and spread of listed invasive non-native species into the wild.
- **Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019:** Implements the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation (1143/2014), retained in UK law post-Brexit.
- **Environmental Protection Act 1990:** Duty of care regarding waste that may include invasive material.
- **The Aquatic Animal Health (England and Wales) Regulations 2009:** Requires the control of fish pathogens and certain aquatic diseases.
- **The Water Framework Directive (Retained EU Law):** Requires maintenance or improvement of the ecological status of water bodies.
- **Biosecurity Plan and Risk Management Guidelines (Defra, Environment Agency, APHA):** Provides best practice standards to which this policy aligns.

### Responsibilities

- **Board of Trustees:** Approve and monitor implementation of this policy.
- **Chief Executive / Director:** Oversee operational delivery and ensure resourcing for biosecurity measures.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** Comply with procedures and report biosecurity risks or incidents.
- **Project Managers:** Ensure biosecurity measures are included in risk assessments, work plans, and contractor briefings.

### Key Principles

All staff, volunteers and contractors will be expected to carry out their tasks/operations following an agreed biosecurity procedure and protocol.

### Prevention First

- The Trust will take a *precautionary approach* to all field activities.
- Equipment, clothing, and vehicles will be cleaned and dried in accordance with the **Check, Clean, Dry** protocol before and after visiting sites.

### Risk-Based Planning

- Biosecurity risk assessments will be integrated into all project planning, especially where:
  - Multiple catchments are visited.
  - Work is carried out in or near protected sites.

- Activities involve entering a watercourse, use of watercraft or aquatic sampling.

### **Decontamination Procedures**

- All field kits, PPE, boots, and aquatic survey equipment will be subject to cleaning and drying protocols.
- Disinfectants (e.g. Virkon Aquatic) will be provided where drying is not possible.

### **Containment and Disposal**

- Any materials suspected of containing INNS (e.g. plant cuttings, contaminated soil) will be securely contained and disposed of in accordance with Environment Agency guidance.

### **Training and Awareness**

All field staff and volunteers will be required to undertake suitable biosecurity training. The following programmes are recommended:

#### **Mandatory Internal Training**

- Annual Biosecurity Awareness refresher (in-house or online).
- Site-specific toolbox talks.

#### **External Training Providers**

- **Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS)** – Free online modules:
  - *Biosecurity and INNS*
  - *Check, Clean, Dry Protocol*
- **Environment Agency / APHA** – Relevant workshops and updates.
- **Institute of Fisheries Management / CIEEM** – Professional CPD courses.

Records of completed training will be maintained as part of staff competency records.

### **Monitoring and Review**

- Biosecurity compliance will be monitored through internal audits and field inspections.
- Non-compliance incidents will be reported to management and, if necessary, regulatory bodies.
- This policy will be reviewed every 36 months or in response to significant changes in legislation or operational scope.

## Supporting Documents

- Risk Assessment Template (includes Biosecurity section)
- Equipment Cleaning Log
- Check, Clean, Dry Posters (for field kit)
- Incident Report Form

## Partnership Working

The Trust will aim to collaborate with other organisations in the region to ensure a joined-up approach to tackling pests, diseases and INNS, where efforts can be co-ordinated, and support is given across organisations. Participation in the Yorkshire Dales Invasive Non-native Species Steering Group can facilitate this.

The Trust will promote awareness raising amongst visitors and stakeholders, by providing them with accessible information via the website and other off-line platforms (eg leaflets, posters, flyers etc).

## Summary

All employees	<p>All employees must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be open to new ways of implementing good practice on biosecurity.</li> <li>● Not practice activities/behaviours that risk spreading pests, diseases and INNS without taking due precautions.</li> <li>● Carry out appropriate training and ensure they have all the relevant equipment to carry out biosecurity procedures.</li> <li>● Follow best practice protocols.</li> <li>● Ensure volunteers are inducted to follow the Trust's biosecurity policy (only for staff working with volunteers).</li> </ul>
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Volunteers must undertake appropriate training to ensure biosecurity procedures are being followed.</li> <li>● Volunteers must abide by this policy and take all appropriate actions to help stop the spread of invasive species.</li> </ul>
Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contractors must be equipped with appropriate training to ensure appropriate biosecurity is being followed.</li> <li>● Contractors must abide by this policy and take all appropriate actions to help stop the spread of invasive species.</li> <li>● Contractors must factor in biosecurity planning and implementation in their quotes and tenders.</li> </ul>

Approved by the Board of Trustees 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025