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## Media release

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### Are You Pennywort Alert?

Collaboration encourages everyone to play a role in caring for local rivers.



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A new volunteer project has been established to track and control Floating Pennywort, an invasive non-native species that seriously damages freshwater habitats.

Thought to have escaped from ornamental garden ponds, Floating Pennywort can grow up to 20cm per day, forming large thick rafts in the slower sections of rivers and canals. These rafts have many negative impacts on waterways, including increasing flood risk, limiting access for anglers and boats, and decreasing the health of freshwater habitats, causing a decline in biodiversity.

Focusing on the River Great Ouse in Beds and Cambs and the River Witham in Lincolnshire plus their tributaries, the Pennywort Alert project aims to survey and control the abundance distribution of Floating Pennywort.

Floating Pennywort is a difficult plant to control, due to the rapidity of its growth; tiny break-away fragments easily regrow and quickly form new rafts. Therefore Pennywort Alert is calling on local residents and the wider river community to help provide eyes and ears on the ground to provide up to date information about its spread and locations. The more people and organisations that are actively engaged in Floating Pennywort surveillance, the higher our chances of success.

***Residents and river users who want to find out more about Floating Pennywort and how to be active in helping to protect beautiful local rivers, are welcome to join our free webinar which will include experts from Lincs Rivers Trust, Cam Valley Forum and the Environment Agency. Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 19.00.***

Email [RiverCare@KeepBritainTidy.org](mailto:RiverCare@KeepBritainTidy.org) or follow @RiverCare on Facebook for more information. Pennywort Alert is being led by RiverCare, a programme delivered by Keep Britain Tidy.

**- ENDS -**

**Photographs:**

Free images of Floating Pennywort can be found here: <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/gallery/index.cfm?query=Hydrocotyle%20ranunculoides&start=1&searchtype=s>

**Notes to Editors:**

RiverCare and BeachCare groups also raise awareness of locally important wildlife species (such as the white-clawed crayfish, otter and the water vole), carry out wildlife surveys, remove invasive plants and carry out restoration work.

For more information about RiverCare and BeachCare and how to get involved please visit [www.rivercare.org.uk](http://www.rivercare.org.uk)

**For more information please contact Lynsey Stafford on 07501 728 240.**