

From: [REDACTED]
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To: _WEB_Canals Strategy
Subject: Response to Proposed Canal Strategy

Categories: Canal Strategy 2022 response

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I have lived and worked in Chalford for 19 years, raising my children here in this beautiful valley. It is a privilege that has informed all our lives. I read (or tried to, it is impossible to see on a laptop and the terminology is designed to confuse and obfuscate), the Proposed Canal Strategy. While I could not understand much of what was written, I could understand enough to know that the proposals for the eastern canal areas 9 & 10 will destroy this important, and increasingly rare, wild stretch of the countryside.

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, - 41% of UK species have been in decline since the 1970s. Unmanaged areas such as the stretch of canal from Brimscombe to Sapperton are rare and precious. Restoration will involve the removal of aquatic vegetation and deadwood (an increasingly rare habitat type) in the channel which provide a refuging and foraging habitat to numerous fish, amphibian and invertebrate species. These in turn provide food for birds and bats associated with the canal, and for otters which are now a regular sight along the waterway. The removal of aquatic vegetation would also impact on water voles and other small herbivorous mammals which may be present. And then there is the cost and the vital role tranquil, properly rural spaces play in our sense of wellbeing and mental health. We do not need the countryside to become an outdoor leisure centre. The world needs wild spaces more than ever.

I hope you will first make the Strategy properly available to all and then listen with open minds to the voices of dissent. .

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]