

[Helvetica, Black, 100cm wide]

Bristol Channel as a renewable-energy source

“As this chart of the Bristol Channel demonstrates, large amounts of sediment flow into the channel and accumulate there. They settle. They could be somewhat, not totally, but sustainably, removed. The sediment beds (seen as the yellow areas in the diagram) could be stirred up, to be absorbed by large populations of macro-algae, such as Laminaria, tethered onto rope rigs. The Laminaria can be grown from spores released by natural beds. When they are tethered, they resist waterflows, and so can absorb nutrients from the water.

This practice is being tested now just off Teesmouth by Catherine Griffiths of Ocean Earth. Her video shows how this is done, particularly with the now-critical trial of spore-uptake above natural beds during their spore-release season.

Such an aim of sediment uptake was proposed for Bristol Channel in 2004, but nearly all of the Channel was declared by various governmental bodies, such as English Nature, to be off limits to any such action. The reason being: most of the area shown here is of ‘special scientific interest’.

The area is actually in a state of ecological distress.

Now, there are plans to build a barrage and several new nuclear power stations, all with their own heat release and fish-bird effects. Such projects could be queried vis-à-vis these areas of ‘special scientific interest’. A biomass industry could also be trialled, with zero-emissions gas as a result. The size of the yields has yet to be discovered.”

-Ocean Earth