

Living Waters for Wales Update

Welcome to the second Water Framework Directive (WFD) update from Natural Resources Wales, filled with examples of projects which are delivering a better water environment for the people and wildlife of Wales. Be inspired and tell us your story.

Contact [Jill Brown](#)

Challenges & Choices

Thank you for taking the time to have your say on the issues affecting Wales' water environment. We received more than a 100 responses to the consultation, including land management organisations, water companies, navigation authorities, national parks, local river and wildlife groups, recreational groups as well as individuals.

We were encouraged to receive responses from those that haven't responded to previous consultations such as recreational and sporting groups. More responses were received from individuals. The responses raised a wide range of issues; including pollution from waste water, river flows, bathing water quality, litter and invasive non native species. The document summarising the responses is available on our website.

What's been going on

The Working Together Consultation was the first step in planning our engagement to help us develop the river basin management plans for 2015-2021. These plans outline what will be done to protect and improve Wales' water environment.

We have listened to your feedback and have held a series of 15 catchment workshop across Wales to help develop our approach at a local scale. We now want to engage with partners and communities to explore how we can work together locally.

The workshops are part of our ongoing engagement work to support the development of the second River Basin Management Plans. The workshops have helped us to fill the gaps by providing local knowledge about Wales' waters and those areas that are important to you.

The workshops revealed that everyone was keen to make connections and get involved. We are currently analysing the information provided and considering what happens next. We welcome your views on how to move forward tackling the issues raised so that real improvements can be delivered in the catchments. The outputs from the workshops will be available on our website soon.

Changes to the timetable

The draft update River Basin Management Plan (2015-2021) will be published on 22 September 2014. We will continue to work closely with the Environment Agency because of our cross-border connections with the Dee and Severn River Basin Districts. The draft Flood Risk Management Plan will also be published on 22 September 2014. The consultation for both plans will be launched at the same time in September 2014.

2013 Water Framework Directive Classification Update

Across Wales, based on 2013 building blocks statistics, 36% of surface water bodies (rivers, lakes estuaries and coastal waters) achieve good or better ecological status.

The 2013 update Water Framework Classification is available through the [Environment Agency](#) or contact [Dave Johnston](#) for more information.



Review of the Water Framework Directive risk assessment for acidification

We have reviewed the Water Framework Directive risk assessment for acidification in Wales. The review was completed by JBA consulting in

partnership with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. It uses many datasets to identify where the risk of acidification will still be significant in 2027 – after three cycles of river basin planning. This knowledge will be used to set objectives for our rivers and lakes, to ensure that appropriate monitoring is in place but most importantly to ensure we take action to manage the pressure. You can access the results of our review by downloading them from the Natural Resources Wales website.

Risk assessments for other significant pressures have been completed by the Environment Agency for England and Wales and you can access them through the Environment Agency website.

Quantifying costs and benefits

Simon Kyte has recently joined Natural Resources Wales as our Economist. Simon is quantifying the costs and benefits of WFD solutions required to deliver Good Ecological Status/Potential.

As part of the development of the draft updated River Basin Management Plans, Natural Resources Wales will present economic information on the costs and benefits of meeting 'No Deterioration', Protected Areas and WFD objectives by 2021. This information will be available as part of the consultation, and is likely to be done at the Wales scale.

We are taking a phased approach to economic analysis, having developed a screening process to identify where we believe WFD objectives are most likely to be disproportionately costly at the water body scale. We have already identified the reasons for failure and the measures that are required to achieve 'Good' status by 2021 and are now applying indicative costs to those measures. Where more specific and detailed costs are available (for example, for water company schemes) we aim to use this information.

Costs and benefits will be 'sense-checked' by local area teams. We will use this sense-checking to verify our Benefit-to-Costs Ratio (BCR) conclusions and to focus on putting together a cost-effective Programme of Measures. This will provide for some deviation from the 'averaged-out' indicative values. Monetary values are being discounted over a 40

year period in accordance with the HM Treasury Green Book framework. We will propose a draft alternative objective only where we believe it is probable that costs *appreciably* exceed benefits. For more information contact [Simon Kyte](#)

Repeal of the Shellfish Waters Directive

The Shellfish Waters Directive is aimed at providing good water quality for the growth of shellfish. It is being repealed at the end of 2013 and the 'same level of protection' has to be provided under the Water Framework Directive. We have been discussing and progressing this change with Welsh Government. The water based standards in the Shellfish Waters Directive are covered by the WFD but the bacteriological standard in shellfish flesh is not.

The WFD Regulations are being revised to reflect that we should 'endeavour to meet the guideline' standard for flesh as part of the Water Framework Directive. From 2014, data for bacteria in flesh collected under the Shellfish Hygiene Directive from the Food Standards Agency will be used for WFD assessment. The strategy for monitoring of water based parameters will be based upon the risk at which Shellfish Waters will fail water based standards. For further information, contact [Mark Charlesworth](#)

What our partners have been up to

Salmonid Habitat Restoration - Curbing cattle in the Cerdin, West Wales

Afonydd Cymru received funding to deliver 5 Habitat Restoration schemes along the Cerdin, a tributary of the Teifi river in the Llandysul area.

The Cerdin was identified as having a moderate classification under WFD due to having low densities of salmonoids and issues with diffuse agricultural pollution. Along this stretch cattle were accessing the river causing poaching and increased sedimentation. To keep the cattle to a defined area and reduce time spent in the river, the project aimed to fence along identified sections, adding in crossing points, drinking bays and swing gates.

All of this was achieved with the help of Dr Ian Thomas and considerable effort from the Teifi Rivers Trust volunteers. Since the fencing was installed, the river bank has had an opportunity to naturally regenerate. This will reduce bank erosion during high flows and increase salmonid spawning by reducing sedimentation. For further information go contact: info@afonyddcymru.org



Fencing work on the Cerdin
Photo credit: John Morris

The Welsh Dee Trust Tackling the Alien Invasion

Tackling invasive plants is a key activity under the WFD as invasive plants have the potential to negatively impact on biodiversity. Invasive plants leave river banks exposed when they die back in winter which can lead to erosion and build up of sediment that takes away the habitat for fish.

The three invasive plants that pose the greatest threat to the Dee catchment are Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and Giant Hogweed. Invasive plants, once introduced, spread rapidly at the expense of other plants and destroy vital habitats that wildlife depends on.

Welsh Dee River Trust have trained volunteers and purchased cutting equipment to undertake Himalayan Balsam strimming in the Dee catchment. This work has totalled a 1000 hours of volunteer time on invasives last year. The Trust loans out the equipment to angling clubs that have trained volunteers, so it can be used on their Balsam management work parties. The Welsh Dee Trust have bought more equipment through the Keep Wales Tidy Towns funding, to extend the scope of the project. Current clubs involved stretch from Corwen to Bangor and also involve activity on the Alyn and Cerrig tributaries. If you would like to get involved: contact: Richard Lucas rmlukas@msn.com at the Welsh Dee Trust.



Volunteers at work

Offenders helping to improve the environment

A pioneering new way of working with the Wales Probation Trust (WPT) has helped restore the environment in South East Wales. This follows a number of successful pilot projects where we have worked with WPT on a variety of sites and tasks. This ranged from fencing a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), clearing scrub in an eco-park to litter picking in a built up area.

Some of the work was carried out on land owned by Gwent Wildlife Trust. Annette Murray, Reserves Officer at Gwent Wildlife Trust said: "The community payback work provided by the Wales Probation has contributed significantly towards habitat restoration at Gwent Wildlife Trust's Pentwyn Farm Reserve in Penallt. To maintain the area, offenders carefully removed brambles, to make sure meadow species like the Green-winged Orchid, the Yellow-rattle and the Bird's Foot Trefoil has an optimum environment to grow this spring".



Before Dan y Graig Quarry SSSI near Risca



After Dan y Graig SSSI near Risca

As a result of this pilot, the Wildlife Trust are planning to set up similar projects with the WPT across South Wales. We hope that similar projects can be set up across Wales, both directly by Natural Resources Wales and through our partners, so we

can achieve more for the environment and people of Wales.

For more information, contact loan.williams@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

Llangorse Primary School learn bugs & fish

Llangorse Lake and the River Llynfi, which runs from the lake to the River Wye, are currently failing to meet their Water Framework Directive targets.

Biologist Bruce Pyott and Environment Officer Fen Turner delivered a "River Life" session which involved kick sampling the Nant Cwy, adjacent to the school. The session was planned as part of the community engagement strategy for the Llynfi catchment.

Pupils looked at bugs and fish and were shown how different pollutants can impact on the environment. The session also focused on raising awareness of what pollution looks like, what harm it can have on our rivers and what we can all do to improve our own local environments.

Bruce and Fen are working with other partners to deliver similar "River Life" sessions in other WFD failing catchments for 2014/15 in South East Wales.

Contact [Fen Turner](#) for more information.



Kick Sampling at Nant Cwy

Water Watch Wales

Water Watch Wales is a collection of maps providing information on catchments. We are making improvements to Water Watch Wales, which includes an interactive map that external partners can use to upload details of projects at a water body/catchment scale. Further enhancements are planned to support the draft RBMP consultation in September 2014 that will include details of water body status, objectives, actions and measures.

www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Find out more: Contact [Lynda Bigland](#) go to

<http://sparkmap.comxa.com/waterwatchwales/>

New Rivers Trust: a new rivers trust has been set up for Glamorgan - more information to follow soon or contact Colin Chapman cjchapman@ntlworld.com

Draft updated ministerial guidance

The draft updated ministerial guidance on river basin planning including the use of new and updated standards is available for comment. The consultation closes on 30 May 2014. Comments for Welsh Government should be sent to water@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Forward Look

Lakes Conference: 16 October 2014

All Wales Liaison Panel Workshop: 15 July 2014

Liaison Panel meetings:

Dee: 15 October 2014

Western Wales: 22 October 2014

Severn: (To be confirmed)

For more information contact: Ceri Jones, River Basin Programme Manager. Email Ceri Jones

Visit the Natural Resources Wales website for more information.

<http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/splash?orig=/>

Help your local environment by reporting pollution incidents, illegal waste tipping, poaching, fish in distress, or danger to the natural environment to Natural Resources Wales via the 24 hour free phone number **0800 80 70 60**.

We're looking to promote stories of delivering improvements to the water environment. Make us aware of any activities that you or your organisation is doing to help improve Wales' waters.

If you want to contribute to or receive future newsletters - contact [Jill Brown](#)



