

Living Waters for Wales

Third Water Framework Directive Newsletter

January 2011

We're looking to promote success stories of delivering improvements to the water environment. Make us aware of any activities or events that your organisation is taking part in to help improve Wales' waters. Please send your details with a brief description of how you've helped deliver an environmental benefit under the River Basin Management Plans.

This is your opportunity to let us know what is happening in your River Basin District. Please keep forwarding your feedback and contributions [to jill.brown@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:jill.brown@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Environment Agency Wales has a Twitter account that is linked to our Facebook page. We have the option on Facebook to include updates, photos and film footage. Please send details of your activities and photos to facebook and follow us on twitter.

We all have a role in tackling pollution and obstructions that prevent wildlife returning to some parts of our country.

What's been going on

In the latest assessment of Wales' surface waters 33 per cent were found to be classed as good or better compared to 27 per cent in England. The target we need to reach is 41 per cent of water bodies achieving good or better status by 2015.

Wales Wide Approach

We are continuing to identify and resolve the issues that are causing 67% of Wales' water bodies to fail WFD Good status. By December 2012, for failing water bodies, we will:

1. ensure we are confident of where there is a failure
2. identify the reason for failure

3. identify the most effective solutions to address the failures

See our [website](#) for more information.

We are working with our partner organisations and other groups, to use resources efficiently to deliver improvements

Otters Returning

The otter survey by Environment Agency Wales has shown that otters are now present at around 1000 sites in Wales.



The survey findings, that track the presence of otters – not the numbers, has shown that the otter population in Wales have increased considerably since the last survey in 2002.

To find out more, visit the following links:

[Wales Biodiversity Partnership:](#)
[Environment Agency:](#)

What is happening in your river basin district?

Water quality improvements at Blaenau Ffestiniog, Western Wales River Basin District



Settlement Ponds at Llechwedd Quarry

Historic mining activity has left parts of the Goedol catchment heavily impacted by silt and runoff from the quarries above Blaenau Ffestiniog, and this is adversely affecting WFD classification and compliance.

Work is continuing with Llechwedd Quarry and others to improve water environment of the Afon Barlwyd. The work includes refurbishment of settlement ponds and improvements to operational recirculation systems. This remediation work will greatly enhance the natural environment in the area, with potential for migratory and native salmonid fish species to return to the river.

Those involved in the Partnership include Environment Agency Wales, Countryside Council for Wales, local angling groups, Gwynedd County Council and Communities First.

Bangor University are currently funding 4 MSc projects on the Barlwyd catchment. Through

regular liaison with the University, we have secured access to the project data, without any funding implication for ourselves. This collaborative working arrangement will help us to plan future work and target effort where the key impacts on the water environment are being measured.

The Afon Barlwyd Partnership has won an award at Keep Wales Tidy's annual Tidy Wales Awards. Go to: <http://www.keepwalestidy.org/6859>

Opening up barriers for fish in the Severn River Basin District

Anglers are delivering local improvements by opening up barriers for fish. Since the fish pass was built at Osbaston in 2008, juvenile salmon have been found in the River Monnow for the first time. These results show that, although it is early days, there is every chance that the Monnow catchment will become recolonised. This will be a significant boost to the currently endangered Wye salmon population.

Forestry Surveys in the Western Wales River Basin District

Forestry Commission Wales's first year's survey of the riparian zones at Coed y Cymoedd Forest District, Resolven, South Wales is now complete. A total of 190km of watercourses were surveyed during the first year and a large volume of data has been collected. A preliminary look at the results shows that there are a number of different factors to consider when deciding future management. Some sites display operational constraints, due to the steep slopes and rough terrain surrounding the watercourse, making work difficult.

Some watercourses, like many across South Wales contain a high level of invasive species, which will need to be managed. Further analysis is required so that the results can be assessed and watercourses prioritised according to the level of threat posed and the current condition of the

riparian area itself. Once this work is completed, work programmes can be set up targeting the most threatened watercourses first. This will allow Forestry Commission Wales to be more effective in managing watercourses to improve the overall water quality of both the watercourse and its surrounding area.

For more information on Forestry Commission Wales activities across Wales go to:

[Forestry Commission Wales](#)
[Forest Research - Forest hydrology](#)



Tackling the spread of invasive plants in the Western Wales and Dee River Basin Districts



Japanese Knotweed

Invasive plants, once introduced, spread rapidly at the expense of other plants and destroy vital habitats that wildlife depends on. Tackling invasive plants is a key activity under WFD.

Five local authorities and Environment Agency Wales have been attempting to tackle the spread of Japanese Knotweed. The Caerphilly County

Borough Council led project, focuses on the Heads of the Valleys area of the Valleys Regional Park which includes Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Torfaen County Borough Councils.

Digital maps have been developed that will help quantify the size of the task and help manage control methods more effectively.

Himalayan Balsam is another invasive species that saw continued action by Denbighshire and Flintshire County Councils during 2010 along the Alyn Valley. Himalayan balsam has to be dealt with during the pulling season in June. There is an overall reduction in Himalayan balsam in the valley, although some pockets have been identified. Another Himalayan Balsam “pulling” event will be held during Wales Biodiversity Week 2011 on 8 June 2011.



Himalayan Balsam (photo by Ruth Calcraft)

For more information about the project contact Sarah Brown. Sarah.Brown@flintshire.gov.uk

Pollution from wrong drainage connections

Wrong connections happen when toilets, washing machines, dishwashers, baths and showers are connected by mistake to surface water drains. Foul water in a river causes unpleasant smells and unhealthy conditions for plants and waterlife.

The Nedern Brook, Caldicot has suffered long term pollution. The problem has been traced to 'misconnected' houses in the Caldicot area. Efforts have been stepped up to help protect the Nedern Brook, by Environment Agency Wales staff asking residents to make sure their homes are connected to the correct drains.

Teifi Rivers Trust Walkover Survey

The Teifi Rivers Trust have carried out a walkover survey of the Afon Cerdin, tributary of the River Teifi. The survey has revealed evidence of scouring around large trees that have caused erosion problems. This may reduce the potential of spawning gravels downstream as a result of increased sedimentation. In addition, many fences had fallen into disrepair close to the bankside edge resulting in overgrazing of bankside vegetation and little regeneration of scrub and trees.

A landowner agreed to a habitat improvement scheme. This will reduce run-off and improve the habitat for fish and wildlife, meaning the waterbody is better able to achieve a good status for fisheries. For more information on the Teifi Rivers Trust go to: [Teifi Rivers Trust » Home](#)

Cleaner Coasts & Healthier Seas

A coastline initiative project led by Aberystwyth University has been launched. Working with Aberystwyth University are the City and County of Swansea, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Environment Agency Wales. The stakeholders in Ireland are Environment Protection Agency Ireland and Wicklow County Council.

Environment Agency Wales are particularly interested in the source apportionment element of the project. This will give more information about where the pollution that impacts on Swansea's bathing waters is coming from. It will also help to meet challenging Bathing Water, Shellfish and Water Framework Directive objectives by determining where future pollution prevention investment is targeted.

Flood Protection supporting habitats and wildlife

Work is continuing on the flood protection project at Ynys Hir Nature Reserve, Dyfi Estuary. The project is being delivered at the RSPB owned nature reserve adjacent to a protected salt marsh. Countryside Council for Wales, Ceredigion County Council, Network Rail and the Archaeological Trust have been involved in the project work that will help wildlife and re-create lost salt marsh.

Working with Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust

Informal discussions have begun with Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust to look at remediation work at Nant y Mwyn Mine, near Llandovery. Heavy metal pollution (especially zinc) is currently preventing the receiving water body (Tywi upstream Llandovery, Nant y Bai and Nant y Mwyn) from achieving Good ecological status. It is hoped that there will be opportunities to work with Cardiff University, Carmarthenshire County Council and Forestry Commission Wales. For more information on the Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust go to: [Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust ~ Home](#)

Changing farming practices can help the environment and double maize yields

An event was held featuring specialist advice from the Maize Growers Association, the Dairy Development Centre and Environment Agency Wales on the importance of soil structure. Farmers

can make simple changes that can help make a big difference to profitability as well as reducing soil and nutrient run-off.

As a result of managing soil structure, a farm that grows 45 acres of maize has seen crop yields increase from 11 tonnes/acre on compacted soil to 26 tonnes/acre as a result of this work we have done with him. For more information go to:

[Environment Agency - Soils](#)

FORWARD LOOK

Western Wales Liaison Panel – 16 March and 27 September 2011

Dee Liaison Panel – 9 March and 13 September 2011.

For the next newsletter, please feedback the activities you have been involved in. Any suggestions for improvements

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Some useful links:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfd

On-line presentation on what the River Basin Management Plans are all about

<http://www.informsystem.com/livingwaters/livingwaters.htm>

WIYBY 'What's in My Back Yard' access to data/information http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?ep=maptopics&lang=_e

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