

Press release: Environment Agency calls for action on water efficiency

The first major report on water resources in England states that climate change and demand from a growing population are the biggest pressures on the availability of water. Without action to increase supply, reduce demand and cut down on wastage, many areas in England could see significant supply deficits by 2050 – particularly in the south east.

The State of the Environment: Water Resources report highlights unsustainable levels of water abstraction, leakage from water companies – currently estimated at 3 billion litres per day – and demand from industry and the public as three of the issues to tackle in order to protect the water environment.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency said:

We need to change our attitudes to water use. It is the most fundamental thing needed to ensure a healthy environment but we are taking too much of it and have to work together to manage this precious resource.

Industry must innovate and change behaviours in order to reduce demand and cut down on wastage – and we all have a duty to use water more wisely at home.

With demand on the rise, water companies must invest more in infrastructure to address leakage instead of relying on abstraction and the natural environment to make up this shortfall.

The report shows that current levels of water abstraction are unsustainable in more than a quarter of groundwaters and one fifth of rivers, leading to reduced flows which could damage local ecology and wildlife.

Previously, unsustainable abstraction has prevented up to 15% of rivers meeting good ecological status – including globally important chalk streams. Summer river flows and groundwater levels may decrease further in the future.

Last year the government announced a plan for abstraction reform which will review existing licences and introduce more controls to protect water resources. The Environment Agency has started work in four priority catchments to test out new licensing approaches to help meet local demand.

Of the water taken from freshwater sources over half (55%) is abstracted by water companies for public water supply and more than a third (36%) is used for electricity supply and other industries. The Environment Agency has urged water companies to pursue ambitious water resource management plans and called on industry to play its part to find ways to use water more

efficiently.

The government's 25 year environment plan sets out an ambition to reduce individual water use – on average 140 litres per person each day – by working with industry to set a personal consumption target. The Environment Agency will work with the government to set this target and cost-effective measures to meet it.

The Environment Agency plays a key role in protecting water for people's lives and livelihoods – by responding to pollution incidents, prosecuting offenders, regulating abstraction and improving water quality along rivers and beaches.

Press release: Leeds natural flood management plans on show in Skipton

A team from the Environment Agency, who are leading the pilot as part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme, will be at the Upper Aire Land Management Project event at Skipton Auction Mart on Wednesday 23 May, looking to meet local farmers and landowners to seek out potential new pilot sites to trial the techniques.

Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk, known as natural flood management (NFM), is an important part of managing and reducing flood risk in a sustainable way alongside more traditional engineering solutions.

The team is hoping to build on the existing work done in the catchment by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and others, working with farmers to seek further potential sites in the upper Aire catchment to test natural flood management techniques like tree and hedgerow planting, leaky barriers and brash dams to help slow down the flow of water during a flood.

The interventions also create habitat for wildlife and help regenerate rural and urban areas through tourism.

Catchment wide approach

The natural flood management pilots form part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme, led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency, which has a catchment wide approach to reducing flood risk to Leeds.

This £500,000 pilot programme forms part of plans to plant hundreds of thousands of trees that will support second phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Leader of Leeds City Council Councillor Judith Blake said:

Having started the Upper Aire tree planting in March, it is vital we work with as many farmers, landowners and stakeholders as possible as only through a partnership approach will we be able to achieve our united goal of protecting all our communities along the River Aire catchment from the risk of flooding. A lot has been achieved already through the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme, but we know much more needs to be done requiring significant investment in a range of measures to put in place everything we can to avoid a repeat of the devastation of the Christmas floods of 2015 to our city and region.

Adrian Gill, Area Flood Risk Manager at the Environment Agency said:

The Environment Agency is committed to reducing flood risk and improving the environment for people and wildlife. The natural flood management pilot we are leading in the Aire catchment provides us with a fantastic opportunity to work with farmers and landowners to secure potential sites to trial new techniques and develop future plans for the catchment.

The pilot sites will enable the team to test a range of monitoring techniques and start to build and gather an evidence base to increase their understanding on the benefits of NFM in reducing flood risk. The pilot programme is being used by the Environment Agency and Leeds City Council to develop a co-design approach to working with landowners, tenants, local authorities and other key partners such as the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the White Rose Forest. This will help to then develop future plans for the catchment.

Pilot launch

The first of thousands of trees to be planted across the upper River Aire catchment took place on the 20th March, as part of the pilot natural flood management project. Cllr Judith Blake CBE, leader of Leeds City Council, planted the first tree on site at Eshton Beck, Gargrave, witnessed by volunteers, landowners, local authorities and partners. The site now has 450 trees planted, and will play an important role in seeing how natural techniques can slow the flow of water and reduce the risk of flooding downstream.

Following the successful opening of the £50million first phase of the scheme serving the city centre, Holbeck and Woodlesford in October last year, phase two identifies measures further upstream including the Kirkstall corridor which was badly hit by the 2015 Christmas floods. It also looks at areas beyond the city boundary to further reduce the possibility of the river flooding in Leeds, as well as additional measures to offer protection for the South Bank area of the city centre which is a key future economic driver for Leeds.

Phase two is taking a catchment wide approach to reducing flood risk to Leeds through the implementation of natural flood management measures, proposals to create new woodland areas could more than double the canopy coverage throughout the River Aire catchment. Proposals also include a flood storage areas and the removal of existing obstructions along the river to improve capacity in the river. Hard flood defences will also be used and will take the form of walls, embankments, landscaping and terracing.

An outline business case for phase 2 has been completed, which was submitted at the end of January 2018. Outline design for engineered options is being progressed, which will be followed by a tender process with an aim to awarding the construction contract award in autumn 2018.

Farmers or landowners interested in finding out more about the natural flood management pilot can contact the project team by emailing LeedsFAS.nfm@environment-agency.gov.uk

Press release: Tipping the scales – Fish farm generating future fisheries

The Environment Agency's National Coarse Fish Farm near Calverton, Nottinghamshire, is continuing to break records for producing healthy fish for re-stocking.

These fish play an important role in the work of the Environment Agency and its partners to restore, improve and develop sustainable fisheries in England.

In 2017 the fish farm produced 9 tonnes of strong healthy fish, an increase from the 6 tonnes produced in 2016.

Over the 12 months the farm bred more than 350,000 fish, with the average size and quality of each fish increasing on previous years.

In 2017, Calverton Fish Farm also stocked out over 6,000,000 advanced reared larvae back into the wild. Some of these larvae were introduced into waters where natural reproduction has previously been poor. They help to give the resident fish populations a boost to become self-sustainable in the future.

The main reasons for stocking Calverton-bred fish and larvae are: replacing stocks lost to pollution or following habitat or water quality improvements; improving stocks where natural reproduction is low; and helping to create fisheries in areas where there is a shortage of angling opportunities.

Kevin Austin, Environment Agency Deputy Director Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment said:

The work of Calverton fish farm is funded by income from fishing licence fees so it's great to see it continuing its work producing the healthy fish needed for recovery and re-stocking.

Alan Henshaw, Calverton Fish Farm Team Leader said:

We've achieved increases in weight by improving the growing conditions for the fish and by mixing the species up more to find groups that grow well together. Having a highly dedicated and professional team that are producing fish of such high quality is also key to the success of Calverton.

Our annual production of fish by overall weight has more than doubled since 2013. This is a huge increase and a great achievement on the part of the team. Production of these bigger, stronger, fitter, disease-free fish means that they are better able to cope with life in the wild when we release them.

When they reached 18 months old, the 358,552 fish produced in 2017 were restocked into rivers, lakes and ponds as part of re-stocking programmes across England.

The fish breeding process is complex and involves the team at Calverton removing the sperm and eggs by hand from the fish. The eggs are laid out in specialist trays and placed inside troughs, where they receive a fresh, temperature controlled water supply. The eggs are incubated for between three and 30 days depending on species and when the eggs have hatched, the larvae are fed with tiny shrimp.

Notes to editors

In 2017, the number of each species of fish released was:

- Barbel – 10,020
- Bream – 46,910
- Chub – 57,359
- Roach – 70,525
- Dace – 47,818
- Rudd – 12,280
- Tench – 23,080

- Crucian carp -16,560
 - Grayling – 74,000
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Press release: Sanglier Limited agree to pay charity in Enforcement Undertaking

Sanglier Limited, a Kirkby in Ashfield based Company specialising in the manufacture and distribution of adhesives and paints, has paid £37,000 to a charity for not meeting the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2007.

The Company paid £37,450 to an environmental charity to compensate for not meeting their obligations under the Producer Responsibility (Packaging Waste) Regulations for the years 2005 – 2015.

The company made a pro active Enforcement Undertaking offer after it became aware that it was obligated under the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulation 2007. The Environment Agency investigated further and found that the company had failed to register as a producer of packaging, and failed to meet its requirements to recover and recycle packaging waste between 2005 and 2015. The Company registered for the first time in September 2016 with a compliance Scheme after it realised that it was obligated under the regulations.

The Enforcement Undertaking offer included payment to an environmental charity of £37,450 plus payment of the Environment Agency's costs It has also put in place robust measures to ensure that non-compliance does not happen again.

Joanne Weston, Regulated Industry Officer said:

Sanglier Ltd acknowledged they had failed to comply with the legislation and it is good to see that the costs they avoided by not complying are going directly to a charity for environmental improvement.

In any enforcement undertaking, the person or company's offer should restore or remediate the harm caused by the incident where possible. For producer responsibility offences this is achieved by making a financial contribution to a recognised environmental charity or project to achieve environmental

benefit. The offender must also demonstrate they will change their behaviour and ensure future compliance with environmental legislation.

Sanglier Limited donated £37,450 to the Campaign to Protect Rural England. The donation will be used to fund an initiative designed to motivate and support volunteers across the UK to take action against litter. It was also fund litter picking equipment for use by its volunteers and maintenance costs for the charity's new website.

In addition to other enforcement tools the Environment Agency can choose to accept an offer of a civil sanction in appropriate cases as an alternative to prosecutions.

Civil sanction include Enforcement Undertakings which can be a cost-effective way for some businesses to mitigate for less serious environmental offences, rectifying the harm caused by way of a financial donation designed to improve the environment. Failure to comply with the enforcement undertaking may result in the person or company being prosecuted for the original offence/s.

Details of Enforcement Undertakings accepted by the Environment Agency can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Press release: A crushing end for seized waste crime vehicle

The vehicle was detained by officers last year after months of surveillance and intelligence gathering as part of Operation Poppy, a joint operation between the Environment Agency and local police into 28 incidents of large scale illegal dumping of commercial waste in North Staffordshire, Shropshire, South Staffordshire and North Worcestershire. The DVLA also issued a prohibition notice and immediately removed the vehicle off the road after the vehicle was found to be using trade plates illegally and deemed unsafe to drive.

The driver and passenger were questioned by the police and remain a line of enquiry.

The vehicle was used to transport and dump large quantities of shredded household commercial waste, varying between 30 and 500 tonnes, on farmland, private wooded estates, secluded public footpath areas and business compounds. Secured areas were broken into and locks replaced by the offenders.

Environment Agency officers working on the case have since reported a reduction in illegal waste activity in the area since the lorry was seized.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

We are determined to make life hard for waste criminals by preventing and disrupting illegal activity. Today's vehicle crushing highlights the lengths we will go to make criminals pay for their unlawful deeds.

Thanks to the recent £30 million funding from the government and new powers to tackle problematic sites including authority to lock up sites and force rogue operators out of business, we are in a better position to safeguard the environment, local communities and the economy from the effects of waste crime.

In the financial year 16/17, the Environment Agency brought 138 prosecutions against businesses or individuals for waste crime offences, yielding more than £2m in fines.

As the fight against waste crime ramps up, the Environment Agency has recently introduced body worn cameras for waste enforcement officers. The move follows a growing number of abusive incidents during site inspections.

Environment Agency, West Midlands Area Director, Mike Grimes said:

This is the second vehicle destroyed this week, that has been taken as part of Environment Agency enforcement action. The seizure of these vehicles give a clear message that the Environment Agency takes waste crime seriously and will persistently pursue those suspected of illegally dumping waste.

We're making good progress to tackle waste crime. Our enforcement action is resulting in higher fines and custodial sentences. In the past 2 weeks, prosecutions in West Midlands have resulted in a 26-month jail term for one waste criminal and a 200 hour community service order for another.

Last year, the Environment Agency closed down 2 illegal waste sites every day and we have already seized another vehicle connected with waste crime across the Midlands. With our new waste powers, we can take tougher action to reduce illegal waste activity, which will make a real difference to the local communities.

Gill Heath, Staffordshire County Council's Cabinet member for Communities, said:

It took us 3 days to remove approximately 175 tonnes of rubbish from the car park and footpath at Madeley Heath, so I'm delighted that a vehicle involved in that crime is being taken off the road permanently.

Dumping commercial waste has the potential to harm people and the environment, causes a great deal of trouble for the victims and it's extremely frustrating that public bodies have to spend taxpayers' money cleaning up a crime.

Members of the public can report illegal waste activity anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via the [online form](#)