

Press release: Environment Agency uncovers landscape with laser mapping

The Environment Agency has announced plans to map England's entire landscape by 2020, using the data to assess flood risk and inform conservation work.

Using aircraft equipped with laser scanners, the Environment Agency will map all 130,000km² of the country, including rivers, fields and national parks – equivalent to 32 million football pitches.

As well as being used to understand flood risk, the data will also be made available for free to the public and industry to be used by archaeologists, environmental and urban planners, and even gamers to make accurate 3D models of the landscape.

Currently about 75 per cent of the country is mapped but with only sporadic coverage of upland areas. The new project, beginning over winter, will cover all of England's national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs) and sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) such as the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

This ambitious project will enhance our understanding of England's unique natural features and landscape, helping us to better understand flood risk, plan effective defences and fight waste crime.

I'm pleased we are able to gather, use and share such valuable data to contribute to environmental improvements and conservation. It's just one of the many ways the Environment Agency is using technology to help people and wildlife.

The Environment Agency has been using lidar – light detection and ranging – technology for 20 years to better understand flood risk. Maps are created by aircraft equipped with laser scanners, which measure the distance between the aeroplane and the ground. The data collected can then be used to plan flood defences across whole river catchments. It also helps environment officers spot sudden changes in the landscape that could indicate illegal waste dumping – in 2014 eight people in Cornwall were fined for [dumping 4,500m³ of waste](#), which was discovered using lidar data.

Other organisations across the Defra group also use the data to help improve the environment – Natural England uses it to assess wildlife habitat and Forestry Commission use it to understand more about the country's tree cover.

In 2015, the Environment Agency made 11 terabytes of lidar data – equivalent to 3 million MP3 songs – available for free to the public as open data. Since

then, the data has been downloaded more than 500,000 times. The data has even [helped archaeologists uncover lost Roman roads](#) in the north of the country.

The new data will also be better quality than ever before, as the Environment Agency will map the whole country at 1m resolution by 2020. This means using the most up-to-date laser technology to reveal the features and details of the terrain more clearly.

For more information on how the Environment Agency collects and uses Lidar data, check out our [blog](#).

You can also follow the Environment Agency's Geomatics team on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

[Press release: Work underway to refurbish River Nene's Wadenhoe Lock](#)

Wadenhoe Lock is getting a complete overhaul, including repairs to the structure, replacement of its mechanism, and a thorough paint job. This will help the lock stay in good, safe working order for decades to come.

The first phase of the work, which took place in November, required the lock to be drained of water, so that the parts usually beneath the surface could be fully inspected and repaired.

The lock is scheduled to close again between 3 January and 12 February for work to continue on the gates, mechanism and paintwork. These dates are subject to change.

Sign up for latest updates

Boaters can get the latest information by [signing up for email updates](#) or calling the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 and asking for Anglian Waterways.

Andy Bennison, Anglian Waterways assets senior specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

Our precious waterways are an important part of our nation's rich heritage and beauty. They are a national treasure, valued for their contribution to our environment, our health and wellbeing, and our economy. We're proud to play a part in caring for them, and we take that responsibility very seriously.

Maintaining them to a good, safe working standard is our number-one

priority. We invest money very carefully to ensure the best value for every pound we spend. This means our waterways will continue to offer outstanding value to the many, many people who enjoy them every year.

Part of £1.4m waterways investment

The refurbishment to Wadenhoe Lock is part of the Environment Agency's [£1.4m investment into Anglian Waterways](#). The annual Capital Investment Programme sets out the repairs and upgrades being made across the 353-mile navigable network.

Wadenhoe Lock, which bypasses a Grade II-listed watermill with medieval origins, is located in one of the most picturesque areas of the River Nene. Its electrically-operated guillotine gates give access to around 7,000 boaters every year.

The Environment Agency looks after the lock, along with more than [353 miles of navigable waterways](#) in the Anglian region, as well as a vast network of associated facilities such as bridges, locks, moorings and toilets. The agency's work enables thousands of boaters and more than a million other visitors to enjoy these waterways every year.

Complete refurbishment

The work on Wadenhoe Lock includes an engineering inspection of its chamber, replacement of the mitre gate pintle pins, cups and paddle gates, replacement of the vertical shaft and top bevel gears, replacement of the bearings on the horizontal shaft, repairs to the ladders and guillotine gate wheel tracks, an overhaul of the guillotine gate drive gear, and re-painting.

[Press release: Rural crime crackdown in north east](#)

The Environment Agency has joined forces with Durham Constabulary in a Christmas crackdown on rural crime.

Fisheries enforcement officers supported police on patrols in the operation in Weardale on Wednesday night, 20 December.

It follows previous joint partnership operations in the north east to disrupt travelling criminals and gather intelligence about rural crime, including illegal fishing.

Also joining police and the Environment Agency was Weardale and Teesdale

Mountain Rescue team and local Weardale farmers.

During the operation police used Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology to target vehicles suspected of being linked to crime, as well as checking vehicles in suspicious circumstances and focusing on key locations.

The operation resulted in a number of suspected lamping activities in relation to game poaching – where a light is used to hunt animals. And intelligence was passed between police and fisheries officers about suspicious activity and vehicles.

‘We always act on intelligence’

Kevin Summerson, Fisheries Enforcement Specialist for the Environment Agency in the north east, said:

This operation is another example of the close relationship that has developed over a number of years with Durham Constabulary.

We work together every day to tackle many aspects of rural, environmental and wildlife crime. It’s a co-ordinated effort to disrupt potential illegal activity, identify offenders and gather intelligence.

Illegal fishing damages fish stocks and the environment and is unfair on anglers who abide by the law and buy their rod licences – the income from which is used to improve fisheries and habitats.

We always act on intelligence we receive and I’d urge anyone with information about suspected illegal fishing to contact us.

Sergeant Simon Rogers, from Durham Constabulary, added:

We regularly work with partners such as the Environment Agency on operations to tackle rural crime. Wednesday’s operation was part of our ongoing commitment to tackle and disrupt those who choose to commit crime in rural areas.

Anyone who believes they have been a victim of crime should contact us on 101, or dial 999 in an emergency.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing is asked to contact the Environment Agency’s 24-hour Incident Hotline on 0800 807060 or the police on 101. In an emergency or to report a crime ongoing always dial 999.

Press release: Custodial sentence for rogue waste operator

David Shrigley was described as a 'willful and persistent' offender who flouted the law for financial gain over a lengthy period of time.

Shrigley and his former wife, Donna, were directors of DRS Demolition National Ltd and operated a waste transfer station at Domellick Manor, St Dennis, Cornwall. Magistrates accepted that David Shrigley, 68, was largely to blame for the offences and that his ex-wife, Donna Shrigley, 47, had a far lower culpability.

In 2015 the company went into liquidation and its operating licence was disclaimed. Prior to liquidation, the Environment Agency had become increasingly concerned at the growing quantity of waste being stored at the site.

The operator continued to accept waste which generated income, but failed to process and transfer it off site. The build-up of material, that included mixed landfill waste, posed a serious fire risk and could have caused environmental harm. The company saved money by failing to transfer processed waste off site.

Despite repeated requests from the Environment Agency, the company failed to remove excess waste and improve its management of the site before going into liquidation. This culminated in the directors being served with an Enforcement Notice.

In April 2016 David and Donna Shrigley were jointly convicted, at Bodmin magistrates court, with failing to comply with an Enforcement Notice, breaching permit conditions and operating without a permit. Sentencing included the issuing of a court order for all the controlled waste at Domellick Manor to be cleared and taken to a licensed site for safe disposal within 18 months.

On 12 October 2017, an Environment Agency officer visited the site and saw the court order hadn't been complied with. He found evidence of fresh waste deposits and signs that tracked vehicles had been operating at the site.

Richard Cloke for the Environment Agency said:

It is essential waste is managed properly. Failure to do so poses a real threat to people living nearby and to the environment, from pollution, odours and fire risk, and can result in expensive clean-up costs. It also undermines the business and reputation of legitimate operators who are doing the right thing. This case demonstrates that courts are increasingly taking illegal waste activity very seriously. We hope this sentence acts as a deterrent to those that might be tempted to flout the law.

David Shrigley, 68, was sentenced to 40 days in prison and ordered to pay £1,039 costs for failing to comply with a court order made under Regulation 44 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Magistrates accepted Donna Shrigley had been unable to clear the site without the co-operation of her ex-husband following their divorce. Crucially, he had failed to transfer ownership of the site away from her as promised; placing her at risk of prosecution. As a result, the court imposed a minimal fine of £1.00 with £259 costs.

The court order is still in place and legal responsibility for the removal of waste from Domellick Manor remains with David Shrigley.

Press release: Nottingham man fined for carrying waste without a licence

A 43-year old Nottingham man has been sentenced to pay a fine of £880.00 plus £1,989 costs and a £88 victim surcharge for an offence committed under s1(1) of the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989.

Darren Pike from Betts Avenue, Hucknall, NG15 6UP was sentenced at Nottingham Magistrates Court on Wednesday 20 December in relation to a charge of carrying waste without the requisite upper tier Waste Carriers' Licence. Mr Pike failed to attend Court and the case was proven in his absence.

The charges were brought by the Environment Agency. The court heard how during a multi-agency operation on 11 May 2017, in conjunction with Nottinghamshire Police and Nottingham City Council, a Ford Transit Tipper truck driven by Mr Pike was found to be fully laden with waste, including plastic, furniture, toys, a fridge and a soiled mattress.

A number of waste transfer notes and weighbridge tickets were also found in the vehicle, which suggested that Mr Pike had previously taken waste (scrap metal) to two separate sites, one in Nottingham and the other in Mansfield. A public register search confirmed Mr Pike did not hold a Waste Carriers' licence.

Sinead Chamberlain, Environment Officer at the Environment Agency said:

On carrying out an interview under caution with Mr Pike in May this year, he admitted he was not a registered waste carrier. A letter was given to him containing advice and guidance in relation to registering as a waste carrier however, a subsequent check in August showed he had failed to register.

By not having the necessary licence, which costs just £154 and is easy to apply for, Mr Pike has incurred a total penalty of £2957.

The Environment Agency is working hard to make sure all businesses carrying waste have the correct authorisations to allow them to transport waste – a waste carrier's registration from the Environment Agency.

This case demonstrates we will take action against those who do not operate within the confines of relevant regulations and we hope it will serve as an example for other waste carriers to make sure they have the relevant licence in place.

Mr Pike has 28 days to pay. When sentencing, the Court took into account the aggravating feature of the offence being committed for financial gain, as well the defendant's previous "unblemished" record for environmental offences.

Charge

- On 11 May 2017, Darren Pike, being a person who is not a registered carrier of controlled waste, did, in the course of his business or otherwise with a view to profit, transport controlled waste, namely wood, plastics, a mattress and a refrigerator, from Betts Avenue, Hucknall, NG15 6UP, being a place in Great Britain contrary to section 1(1) of the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989
- The Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989 makes it a criminal offence for a person to transport controlled waste to or from any place in the United Kingdom, with a view for profit, if they do not possess the requisite Waste Carriers' Licence.