

## Recreation and tourism

### What action for water means for you

### South East



#### Action for water

Everyone benefits from clean water, and a healthy water environment.

The end of 2009 marks the beginning of a new journey for the south east's water environment. The Environment Agency will publish the South East River Basin Management Plan, a long term programme of environmental improvements to make the south east a better place.

The environment of the south east is very special, and water quality has improved significantly in recent decades. However, it will take more time, effort and resources to deal with the pressures that still remain – as well as the future challenges of climate change and development.

Everyone can take action for water, to create an environment we are all proud of and can enjoy.

#### What are the challenges?

The south east's large population puts pressure on the environment through discharges from sewage works. Many urban and rural rivers have been modified for flood defence or navigation, often at the expense of ecological quality. Also, the way land is managed has given rise to a host of complex pollution issues in rural as well as urban areas.

There are also concerns over maintaining the water resources available for people and the environment. The south east is a water scarce region and we must reduce household and non-household consumption. We need to balance our needs with the resources we have by using less, providing new resources and preparing for the impacts of climate change.



#### The river basin management plan

The South East River Basin Management Plan is a statutory plan, required under the European Water Framework Directive. One of 11 plans in England and Wales it covers the South East River Basin District, which extends from the Thames estuary in the east and almost as far west as Salisbury, and taking in the four county councils of Kent, East and West Sussex and Hampshire.

The plan introduces new ways of measuring the health of our waters based on the Water Framework Directive's tougher environmental standards. It describes the pressures on the whole water environment, its status and our targets for 2015, and the action required.



The South East River Basin District

A range of actions are set out in the plan. They will require everyone to be involved – water companies, farmers, environmental organisations, local authorities, industry, individuals, communities and others. We need your help.

We are aiming for a 4 per cent improvement in the number of waters at 'good status' by 2015. By 2021, we expect this to increase to 60%. By 2027, we will work to improve this further – and as close to 100% as possible.

#### Recreation and tourism has a major role to play

There are great opportunities to enjoy water in the South East River Basin District. Kent has the second longest coastline of any English county, the Solent is an international centre for boating, and the rivers Test and

Itchen offer some of the best fishing in the country for example.

As well as many people boating, canoeing and sailing, there are a large number of people who enjoy bathing in clean coastal waters. In addition, an excess of 120,000 rod licences are annually sold to anglers in Southern Region and the availability of high quality fishing also attracts considerable numbers of visiting anglers to the Region.

There need to be see more people from more backgrounds enjoying water-related recreation and tourism. We want an environment that encourages local communities to live a more active life – an important aim when you consider that the health costs of physical inactivity amount to £8.24 billion a year.

An improved water environment will benefit the businesses who depend on it, and the people who visit or live here.

### Actions for recreation and tourism

Many of the actions identified in the plan will benefit recreation and tourism. Some examples are given below.

#### Example actions

**Run campaign to educate boat users** regarding disposal of toilet waste, oil, solvent, paint and cleaning products in waters at risk from diffuse pollution.

- **Where:** Specific waters

**Promote land management best practice** within parks and golf courses to improve water quality impacted by diffuse pollution – or where there are a high number of horse related waste and pollution incidents.

- **Where:** Across the river basin district

**Promote the 'River Fly Partnership'** monitoring programme, involving anglers to assess the status of river health.

- **Where:** Across the river basin district

Produce a **code of conduct for commercial fisheries and sea anglers** to protect marine sites of nature conservation importance.

- **Where:** Sussex and Isle of Wight East coastal waters

**Report pollution or fly-tipping** to the Environment Agency

- 0800 807060.



### Case Study: Enjoying water

Creating more recreational opportunities on rivers and coastal waters is full of challenges: Just how do we utilise new growth areas? How do we minimise the impact of increased participation on the environment? How will climate change alter our landscape and what will the knock on effects be for outdoor activities?

In order to answer such questions and put the environment firmly at the heart of all future plans to develop water-related sport and leisure, the Environment Agency is leading the Enjoying Water project supported by a range of partners with expertise in sport, leisure or tourism, including Sport England, Natural England, Tourism South East and SEEDA.

The results will help decision makers assess and shape provision for water-related sport and recreation needs in the South East. It will help them for example, to assess how facilities built for the London Olympics can benefit the nation well beyond the closing ceremony and help funding bodies decide where money is needed most.

To find out more visit

[www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation)

or contact us.

### Contact us

The River Basin Liaison Panel steers this work in the South East River Basin District. You can contact your sector representative via the Environment Agency, or get in touch with us directly as shown below.

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