



Living Waters for Wales

Welcome to the first Newsletter for the Western Wales River Basin District - an insight into what's happening

What is River Basin Planning?

The waters of Wales are a precious resource that must be protected. This includes our rivers, lakes, groundwaters and coastal waters. The European Water Framework Directive (2000) (WFD) provides the starting point for the river basin planning process.

In Wales, there are three River Basin Districts (RBD): Western Wales, Dee and the Severn, each has its own River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). The first River Basin Management Plans for England and Wales (RBMP) (2009-2015) were published on the 22 December 2009. These can be viewed at;

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfd



Figure 1 shows the geographical area for the Western Wales Plan. This RBD has been divided into 5 catchments details of these are given in the main document.



Figure 1 – Western Wales RBD

Who We are?

The Environment Agency Wales is the publicly funded Government Body responsible for the development of the RBMPs for Welsh Assembly Government. Delivery of the actions in the plan to improve our water environment will include everyone with an involvement or interest in water.



If you have particular ideas, concerns or comments to make on the Western Wales RBMP you can contact us at; <mailto:westernwalesrbd@environment-agency.gov.uk>

What We are Doing? What can you do?

As part of the development of the RBMP we ran a 6-month consultation between December and June 2008 to publicise and encourage responses to the plans. The results of this process were published and can be found at <http://wfdconsultation.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfdcms/en/westernwales/Intro.aspx>

A series of workshops were held to discuss the RBMP. Of the many comments raised access to information was highlighted. Many felt that the RBMP was too big and it was difficult to find local information within the Plan.

It is intended that this Newsletter will provide informative updates on progress with implementation of the RBMP and be a vehicle to share information on what's happening across the Western Wales RBD. It will be produced biannually and each Newsletter will include a 'Catchment Focus' to provide detail on what's happening at a more local level.

For this Newsletter, the first, the North West Wales Catchment is included.

Do you have any comments to raise on this catchment or have projects that you are involved with that are improving the waters of the North West Wales Catchment? If so please let us know at :

<mailto:westernwalesrbd@environment-agency.gov.uk>

We will also be producing an easy to use guide to help everyone navigate through the detail of the RBMP, this will be included with the next Newsletter in July.



We have been following up many issues that were raised during the consultation. One issue raised at all workshops was that of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) in Wales. Prevention and where possible eradication of INNS is important to protect and improve our habitats and river quality.

Because of the feedback we had, in December, we discussed these issues with the Wales Biodiversity Partnership Group – Wales Invasive Non- Native Species group. We will continue to work with this group to link the actions in the RBMP with the work that the group is delivering for INNS here in Wales. Further information is available at;

http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/sq_meetings-130.aspx#TaskGroupsEng

And the INNS group actions audit can be seen at; <http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/content/uploads/documents/SG%20Meeting%20TaskFinish/INNS/INNS%20Actions%20Audit%2008%20Jan%202010%20clean.pdf>



Catchment Focus – North West Wales

North West Wales (Fig 2) stretches west and south from the Conwy covering the island of Anglesey, the Lleyn Peninsula and land draining to Cardigan Bay as far south as Borth. There are many separate river systems including, from north to south, the Ogwen, Seiont, Dwyryd, Mawddach, Dyfi and on Anglesey the Cefni, Alaw and Braint. Away from Anglesey and the Lleyn Peninsula, much of the catchment lies within Snowdonia National Park.

Land use is dominated by agriculture, predominantly sheep farming in the uplands and Anglesey, mixed sheep and beef in the valleys and dairy on the Lleyn Peninsula. There are extensive areas of forestry plantation including the Dyfi valley and Coed-Y-Brenin north of Dolgellau.

Diffuse inputs such as sediments from both agriculture and forestry affect the

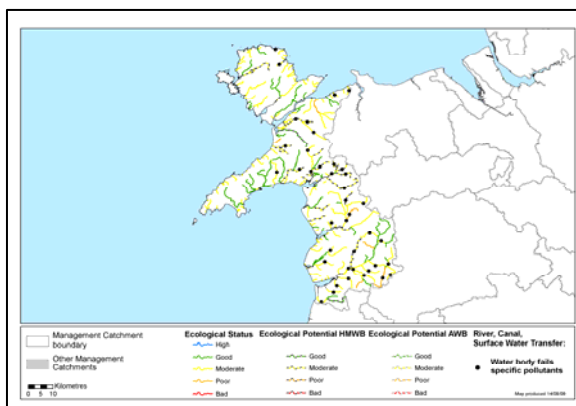


Figure 2 – North West Wales Catchment

biological quality of the catchment. Many of the rivers support important salmon and sea trout fisheries.

There are many important conservation sites in North West Wales, including two riverine Special Areas of Conservation, the Afon Eden and the Afon Gwyrfa. Many lakes have been modified for public water supply, though a number of these are also Special Areas of Conservation.

The Mawddach

The Afon Mawddach is in Mid Wales and many of the main tributaries are not meeting good status due to a combination of pH, metals, invertebrate and fish failures.

The Environment Agency Wales metal mines project is assessing metal loadings from abandoned mines in the Mawddach catchment including Gwynfynydd goldmine and Glasdir copper mine. Future work is proposed to assess remediation options for the sites that are having most impact.

We are also working with:

The Ministry of Defence, Defence Estates, who are looking at sources of metals on the former military range known as the Trawsfynydd Practical Training Area.

The Forestry Commission to promote best practice and ensure that forestry activity does not contribute to the water quality issues.

The Countryside Council for Wales and other partners to safeguard the freshwater pearl mussels on the Afon Eden. This includes catchment investigations to understand the pressures and a captive rearing project for freshwater pearl mussels at the



Mawddach fish culture centre in Dolgellau.



Photo – Mawddach Estuary (Rob Thomas)

Parys Mountain - Anglesey

The Parys Mountain metal mine is recognised as being the worst polluting metal mine in Wales. Estimates by Manchester University suggest that the Afon Goch contributes at least four times the combined loading from the six largest rivers which flow into the Irish Sea from North Wales and the North West of England.

In 2008/09 we commenced a programme to reduce heavy metal input to water courses from the mine. A successful pilot treatment plant run by Unipure demonstrated that in-situ active treatment is feasible for the highly acidic mine drainage. Currently Environment Agency Wales is undertaking a monitoring programme looking at water quality, flow and ecological impacts. This information will be used in 2010 to assess options for treatment.

Photo of the Metal Mines Strategy Delivery Group in November 2009 where the Afon Goch reaches the sea



Next Newsletter July 2010

Our second Newsletter will feature more 'Local Initiatives' so please feedback any actions/activities you have been involved in or will be involved in over the coming months.

The Ogmere to Tawe Catchment will be featured in the next Newsletter.

In addition, as mentioned above we will produce a RBMP Navigational Guide and a guide to navigate around the 'what's in your backyard' page on our website.

Contacts

For more information contact;

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