

River Basin Management Planning

Forth update

July 2016

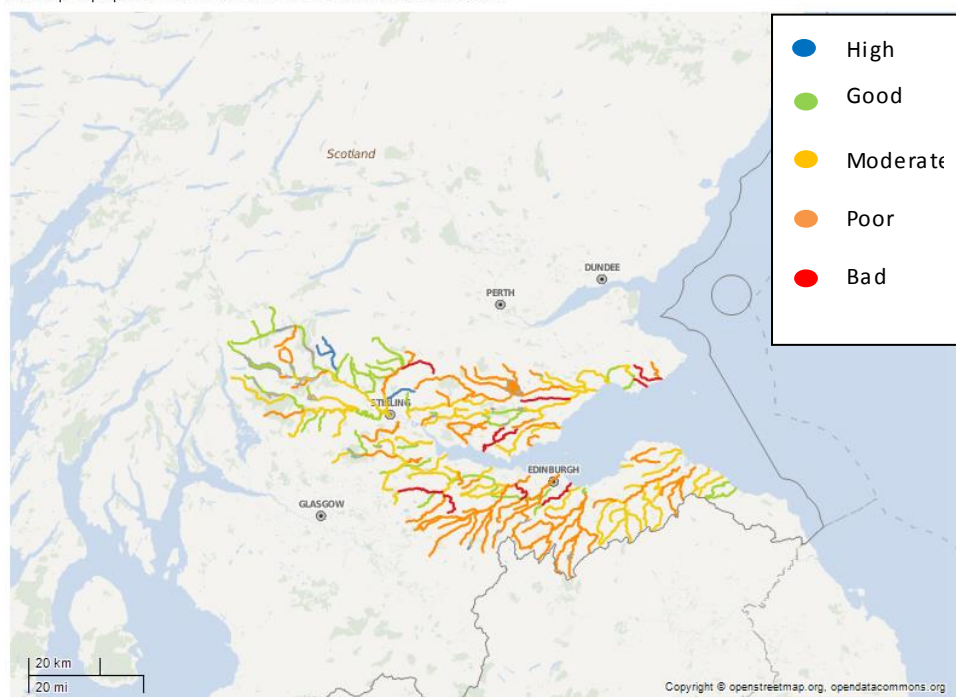
The river basin management plan – what does it say about the Forth area?

The river basin management plan (RBMP) for the Scotland river basin district was published in December 2015. It is made up of the [plan document](#), [technical appendices](#) and an online data tool, the [Water environment hub](#), which provides information on current condition and future targets for rivers, lochs, coastal waters and groundwaters. The tool has easy filtering options and the ability to export data, maps and charts.

The RBMP data shows that 54 of the Forth's 216 surface water bodies are at good or high ecological status. For the remaining waterbodies, 69 are at moderate status, 84 at poor and 10 at bad status. The main pressures are barriers to fish migration, rural diffuse pollution and changes to physical condition (morphological impacts). There are also some water quality issues and a handful of water quantity pressures.

The map below shows the current condition of surface water bodies, there is more information on these waterbodies, and protected areas on the [Water environment hub](#).

This map displays the overall condition of bodies of surface waters in 2014



Please contact us if you have any questions or queries about how to use the application, or to arrange a training session, via forthAAG@sepa.org.uk.

Engagement to support delivery of the river basin management plans

The publication of the RBMPs provides the opportunity to review the role of the Area Advisory Groups and refocus them on delivery. Our engagement will focus on:

- Raising awareness of the second river basin management plan – how to find information and where to take action to improve the water environment.
- Supporting the delivery of actions through partnership working – either by creating new structures with delivery partners or working with existing partnerships.
- Coordinating with other strategic planning processes and funding mechanisms – for example, flood risk management, land use planning, marine planning and the land use strategy.

To achieve this we intend to create a wider communication network through the area advisory group. We also hope to move away from large formal meetings to having smaller meetings that are focused on projects to improve the water environment.

Please contact ForthAAG@sepa.org.uk for further information about how this approach could work most effectively in the Forth.

Delivery of objectives for river basin management planning

SEPA and responsible authorities are currently assessing the objectives set within the plans to create a properly managed, effective plan to deliver measures. Lessons learned from the first cycle have informed the approach, and will help us to expand and achieve the “step change” in delivery needed to meet the ambition objectives set in the RBMP.

Some theme specific updates relevant to the Forth are included below. Further information about the delivery mechanisms are available on the SEPA web pages;

<http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/actions-to-deliver-rbmp/>

Rural Diffuse Pollution

The strategy to address rural diffuse pollution is co-ordinated nationally by a multi-agency advisory group – Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group - [DPMAG](#).

Work on diffuse pollution will involve a national awareness raising campaign, including land manager workshops, promotion of ‘[Farming and Water Scotland](#)’ messages; training courses, best practice guides, and engagement and inspection by partner organisations on land outwith our targeted areas.

We will also expand upon the first cycle targeted catchment approach for [Priority catchments](#), using awareness raising and farm visits. Finally, in smaller areas affected by diffuse pollution, we will use a ‘focus area’ approach, involving evidence gathering and monitoring, local awareness raising and land manager visits.

More information on the catchments to be covered in the Forth will be available in the next update.

Pilot Catchments

Over the last year the agreed work plan for the South Esk, Dee, Nith, Glazert Water and Leven [pilot catchments](#) has continued to be delivered with the objectives of improving physical condition and contributing to natural flood management. At present we are working on 15 water bodies across the catchments: three are at the landowner engagement stage; five at options appraisal; six at the point where third parties are engaged and leading on design; and one where we have taken on the design role.

For the Leven (Fife), catchment scoping has been completed and the catchment plan agreed. We are about to start engaging with local authorities, Scottish Natural Heritage, fisheries trusts and others on the outputs from the scoping and potential next steps.

Further information is available from your RBMP co-ordinator, or the [Pilot catchment web pages](#).

Funding opportunities

Water Environment Fund

The Water Environment Fund (WEF) supports delivery of projects to improve the water environment, including channel restoration and removing barriers to migratory fish. This year funding was awarded in the Forth for the Forth Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) project.

The fund is temporarily closed to new applications, as it is currently being reviewed to ensure funds are prioritised to deliver the targets of the river basin management plan, through an ambitious programme of improvements. We are hoping to re-open the Fund in late summer 2016. Please see www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/water-environment-fund/ for more information.

The Environmental Co-operation Action Fund (ECAF)

The [Environmental Co-operation Action Fund \(ECAF\)](#) is a new Scottish Government Scheme set up to fund the delivery of landscape-scale environmental projects by groups of farmer, foresters and other land managers, including Local Authorities and Fishery Trusts. ECAF supports the costs of planning, facilitating and overseeing cooperative projects, principally by the funding the activities of a facilitator.

There are eight environmental priorities that applicants can apply for; the most relevant for RBMP being control of INNS, catchment management for water quality and physical restoration of water bodies. The next application round will open in autumn 2016, date to be confirmed and your RBMP co-ordinator will notify you once this is known. Full details of the scheme can be found [here](#).

Next update

The next update paper will be out in the autumn. If you would like to see a specific topic covered or add a feature please contact ForthAAG@sepa.org.uk with the details.