

## **Water Environment Fund Annual Report to Scottish Government April 2016 – March 2017**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report summarises the outcomes of the Water Environment Fund programme of improvements to Scotland's water environment delivered by Scottish Government grant funding in 2016/17.
- 1.2 The Scottish Government granted £3,902,989 in 2016/17 for projects to improve the physical condition of Scotland's water environment. This report describes the environmental improvements resulting from this funding and delivered through grants to third parties or through SEPA directly commissioned projects.
- 1.3 Water Environment Fund grants enabled progress on twenty-one projects across Scotland. The projects (detailed in Annex 1) will ultimately provide access to 158km of river length for fish, improve 4.4km of river length for morphology, and enable control across 2736km of river length of Invasive Non Native Species. Funding has also been provided for the development of options and designs to provide access to 360km of river length for fish migration and improve morphology in future years.

### **2. Environmental Improvements**

#### **2.1 Improving physical condition of urban rivers**

- Funding provided to West Lothian and Fife Councils for urban ground works projects in Bathgate and on the Lyne Burn. When complete, these partnership projects will significantly increase, improve 2.8km of river length and contribute to improving two waterbodies to good status. In addition, they will significantly increase local amenity value.
- Funding provided to East Renfrewshire council for design and works on the White Cart Tributaries project, which, in addition to upgrading one waterbody from moderate to good and improving 1.2km of urban river length, contributes to Local Authority development plans, and biodiversity action plans for the area around Barrhead. Part-funded by contributions from developers in the area.
- Funding provided to North Lanarkshire Council for scoping an urban river restoration project on the Garrel Burn, Kilsyth, with the aim of improving ecological status to good for morphology and fish passage as well as enhancing amenity and biodiversity.
- Landowner engagement and options appraisal tasks were completed for the Glazert project. This project is part of the EU EcoCo Life+ project.

### 3.2 Improving rivers for fish migration

- The removal of Tarff Creamery Weir has restored fish access to 10km of river length and improved one water body to overall good status.
- A barrier to fish passage has been removed at Morsgail on the Isle of Lewis. This has opened 3km of habitat to migratory fish and one water body will improve to overall good status.
- Fish passes have been constructed on the Millheugh and Fernegair Weirs on the Avon Water. These installations will provide access to 100km of river habitat for migratory fish species and will improve the overall status of six water bodies; five will improve to high status and one to moderate.
- Works have been started on a fish pass at Sevenacres Weir which, when complete, will improve the ecological status of one water body to good for fish passage.
- Designs have been completed for three projects, on four weirs (Diebidale Dam, Fair-A-Far Weir, Dowies Weir and Sevenacres Weir) and funding has been provided for fish barrier design on the Garrel Burn, which will be completed in the financial year 2017/'18.
- Outline designs were completed for barriers on the River Almond, Mid Calder Weir, Rugby Club Weir and Howden Bridge Weir.
- Scoping and options appraisal have been completed on three barriers on the River Tyne.

### 3.3 Improving physical condition of rural rivers

- Ground works were completed for phase one of the Pow Burn project directly improving 400m of river length. Phase 2 will improve a further 3km and is planned for 2017.
- Landowner engagement and options appraisal tasks were completed in the Nith catchment for the Scar water and River Nith. Detailed design work will commence in 2017 and will improve 6.3km of river length, resulting in overall status upgrades from bad to poor (Scar) and moderate to good (Nith).
- Funding was provided for landowner engagement and design tasks on the Dee and Lemno Burn. These projects have now been paused following a re-prioritisation exercise.

### 3.4 Control and eradication of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS).

- Removal, control or survey of INNS was undertaken by 12 fishery trusts on 2736 km of river bank across 178 water bodies.

## 3. State Aid

4.1 In 2016/17, the Water Environment Fund provided £71,354.72 of funding to third parties that could be considered state aid, *industrial de minimis* funding. Funding awarded as state aid *industrial de minimis* was notified to the applicant in the award offer letter using wording recommended by Scottish Government State Aid web page. SEPA records are kept; this funding does not require reporting to Europe.

4.2 The Agricultural Block exemption for the Water Environment Fund (SA41329) was notified on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016, and the river restoration compensation scheme was approved on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017. No funding was awarded under the Agricultural Block exemption; this was reported to the European Union through the Scottish Government State Aid team.

**Annex 1.**

**Table 1: Detail of projects and environmental improvements supported by the Water Environment Fund in 2016/17**

Project name	Applicant	Costs – WEF contribution	Type – scope/design/works	Summary of project/environmental improvement
<i>Improving urban rivers</i>				
Lyne Burn	Fife Council	£240,000	Works – Morphology improvements	Scoping of entire River body completed in 2015/16. Funding has been advanced via a Memorandum of Understanding agreement for works in 2018-19. Project will ultimately result in status upgrades for 1 water body, and the restoration of approximately 1.2km of urban watercourse.
Bathgate	River Forth Fisheries Trust	£315,046	Works – morphology improvements	A detailed design has been produced for 1.6km of channel in a heavily modified section of river in central Bathgate. This is the most significant work required to achieve good condition on the water body and will provide significant amenity improvements, as well as helping to reduce flood risk locally. Funding has been advanced via a Memorandum of Understanding agreement for works in 2018-19
White Cart Tributaries	East Renfrewshire Council	£1,264,000	Design & Works – morphology improvements	Funding has been advanced via a Memorandum of Understanding agreement for design & works stage for one tributary on the water body. Project will ultimately result in status upgrades for 1 water body, and the restoration of approximately 1.2km of urban watercourse.
Garrel Burn	North Lanarkshire Council	£45,000	Scoping & Options development – morphology improvements	Scoping and options development into ground conditions around the burn in advance of design for an urban river and wetland restoration project. This is a partnership project between the council and SEPA, facilitated by a joint MoU. Restoring the burn will improve 1.5 km over river channel condition from poor to good ecological potential.
Glazert – Upper Glazert	SEPA	£1,995	Landowner engagement – morphology improvements	Funding was provided for landowner engagement and options development. This project is part of the EU EcoCo Life+ project (2014-2018) and the Scottish Government funded Glazert Water pilot catchment project. The restoration site covers part of two failing water bodies: Glazert Water/ Finglen Burn and Kirk Burn.
Glazert – Pow/Finglen	SEPA	£27,600	Options development – morphology improvements	
<i>Improving rivers for fish migration</i>				
Sevenacres Weir	Ayrshire River Trust	£50,972	Works – fish barriers	Site investigations and ground preparations for a two flight Larinier fish pass at Sevenacres weir that will open up over 45km of river including 18km of good habitat to salmonids. Together with actions at Garden

				weir, ecological status for fish barriers will be raised to good.
Morsgail	RAFTS	£27,657	Works – fish barriers	Works completed on fish barrier removal. 3km of channel has been opened up to migratory fish and the water body will achieve high status.
Tarff Creamery Weir	RAFTS	£226,617	Works – fish barriers	Works complete to remove a barrier to allowing fish to access 10km of river and this will achieve the WFD objective of reaching good ecological potential.
Avon Water Barriers – Phase 3	RAFTS	£1,284,273	Works – fish barriers	Works now complete for this project, it has opened up 100km of river habitat to migratory fish species and will improve the overall status of 6 water bodies, with 5 going to high status and 1 going to moderate status.
Garden Weir	North Ayrshire Council	£42,700	Design & Works – fish barriers	Installation of a Larinier fish pass and an eel pass at this site will restore fish passage and create a visitor feature within Eglington Country Park. Combined with actions at Sevenacres weir this will open up over 45km of river and ecological status for fish barriers will be raised to good.
Diebidale Dam Easement	Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust	£13,838	Design – fish barriers	Completion of surveys and outline designs in preparation for full dam removal. Removal of the dam would allow access for fish into 5km of high quality habitat upstream. The waterbody would improve from poor to good Ecological Status because of this work.
River Almond	River Forth Fishery Trust	£5,140	Design – fish barriers	This project produced visualisations of the fish passage designs at 2 redundant weirs, to enable future engagement with local communities and communications materials. The almond project is an ongoing catchment approach to multiple fish barriers in West Lothian. Easement or removal of 7 fish barriers will allow over 100Km of access to upstream rivers and could improve 12 water bodies to good for fish passage status. Overall, the project will improve 3 water bodies to good ecological status, and 7 to moderate ecological status.
Lower Tyne barriers	SEPA	£60,384	Options development – fish barriers	Review of constraints and development of options for three historic barriers on the River Tyne. Eventual easement at these structures combined with regulatory action on additional 2 barriers will restore migratory access to over 225km of river across 12 waterbodies which would improve from moderate to good for fish passage, 4 of which would also move to good overall ecological status.

<i>Improving physical condition of rural rivers</i>				
Pow Burn	Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust	£89,136	Works – morphology improvements	Phase one of works on the Pow Burn directly improved 400m of river with and additional 3km planned for Phase 2 in 2017. This will move the water body from bad to poor status.
River Peffery	Highland Council	£50,000	Scoping, optioneering & outline design – morphology improvements	This project is part of the Highland Council integrated Peffery Flood Protection, Natural Flood Management and Morphology Study. It is a catchment scale project (1 waterbody, 16km) to reduce flood risk for Dingwall whilst improving the morphology and utilising natural flood Management techniques. It will achieve good status for morphology and moderate status overall.
Lemno - Bogindollo	SEPA	£21,233	Design – morphology improvements	The project was part of SEPA's pilot catchment project, which is a strategic catchment scale approach to restore watercourses bringing about improvements for morphology and natural flood management.
Lemno - Melgund	Esk Rivers and Fisheries trust	£3,500	Design – morphology improvements	The project was in its final design phase focussing on a 1.1km reach between Colinshaugh and Netherton farms. This project is now on hold.
Dee - Bo Burn	Dee District Salmon Fishery Board	£1,169	Landowner engagement – morphology improvements	A 4km restoration design project, part of the pilot catchment approach to restore morphology and improve natural flood management. This landowner engagement is the final stage of creating a detailed restoration design, which is expected to improve the waterbody from bad to at least poor status if taken forward.
Dee – Dess/Lumphanan	SEPA	£405	Landowner engagement – morphology improvements	As part of the pilot catchment approach, this project delivered engagement with 10 landowners on 14.5km of these waterbodies to ascertain their willingness to undertake morphological restoration and NFM measures. The project is currently paused.
Nith – Upper Nith	SEPA	£3,222	Landowner engagement – morphology improvements	The 6.1 km restoration project is part of SEPA's pilot catchment project, which is a strategic catchment scale approach to restore watercourses bringing about improvements for morphology and natural flood management. Future works are expected to improve the water body from poor to good.
Nith – Upper Nith	SEPA	£16,009	Design – morphology improvements	
Nith – Scar Water	SEPA	£13,093	Options development – morphology improvements	The restoration project is part of SEPA's pilot catchment project, which is a strategic catchment scale approach to restore watercourses bringing about improvements for morphology and natural flood management.  Options development was done on two failing waterbodies – Scar

				<p>Water and River Nith (Dumfries to Sanquhar). It identified restoration options for a 2.3 km reach of the Scar Water and 4.1 km reach of the River Nith, which would lead to improvements from bad to poor and from moderate towards good, but still moderate, respectively.</p> <p>These options are being progressed to detailed design in 2017/18.</p>
<b>Other works</b>				
RAFTS strategic INNS control	RAFTS	£81,156	INNS control	<p>Invasive non-native species (INNS) (Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Himalayan balsam) were surveyed and controlled on around 100 waterbodies across 33 catchments in the southwest and north of Scotland. The work was done by 10 fisheries trusts using volunteers and contractors. INNS awareness raising and training was also done.</p> <p>1177 km were surveyed on both banks. 1088 km were controlled on both banks.</p> <p>86 km were surveyed on one bank. 8 km were controlled on one bank.</p>
Tweed INNS	Tweed Forum	£9,422	INNS control	<p>14<sup>th</sup> year of targeted control of Invasive non-native species (INNS) (Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam and American skunk cabbage) in the Tweed catchment. INNS species were treated across 105km of river on 27 water bodies. The work was done by using volunteers and contractors, and involved integrated working relationships with landowners, managers and communities. INNS awareness raising and training was also done.</p>
Forth INNS	River Forth Fisheries Trust	£9,422	INNS control	<p>Invasive non-native species (INNS) (Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam) were surveyed and controlled on 51 waterbodies across 8 catchments in the Forth Fisheries Trust area. The work was done by using volunteers and contractors. INNS awareness raising and training was also done.</p> <p>173 km were surveyed on both banks. 72 km were controlled on both banks.</p> <p>20 km were surveyed on one bank. 7 km were controlled on one bank.</p>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£3,902,989</b>		

