

Water Environment Fund Annual Report to Scottish Government April 2015 – March 2016

1. Introduction

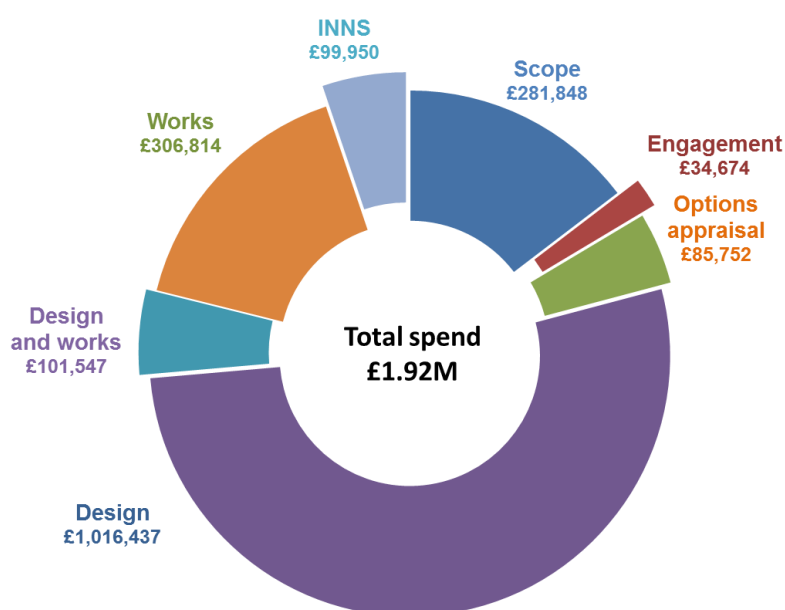
1.1 In compliance with the terms agreed in the Scottish Government offer of grant letter 2015/16, this report outlines progress against the programme of improvements to the physical water environment delivered by the funding provided by the Scottish Government in 2015/16.

2. Background

2.1 The Scottish Government granted £1,832,270 in 2015/16 for projects to improve the physical condition of Scotland's water environment. This was supplemented by SEPA bringing the total funding to £1,927,021.94. This report describes the environmental improvements enabled by this funding through £1,531,818.67 grants to third parties by the Water Environment Fund and £395,203.27 to progress the pilot catchment project.

2.2 Restoration projects can take several years to progress. Figure 1 illustrates that projects are moving through the stages of scoping to options appraisal, design and then works. The majority of projects were at the design stage this year.

Figure 1.



2.3 Water Environment Fund grants enabled third parties to progress twenty five projects across Scotland. The projects, detailed in Annex 1 directly improved 3.45 km of river for morphology, 10 km for fish migration and 1,600km of rivers for Invasive Non Native Species. Funding has also been provided for restoration plans and designs to improve 602 km of river for fish migration and morphology in future years.

3. WEF Improvements

3.1 Improving urban rivers

- Ground works at Stane Gardens in Shotts are improving one water body to good condition, restoring 650m of river channel and creating valuable greenspace for the local community.
- Designs for restoration of the Lyne Burn in Dunfermline and Bog Burn in Bathgate are preparing to improve 2 water bodies to GEP through restoration of 4 km of river and community greenspace.
- Scoping studies are underway for the White Cart tributaries and the Gogar Burn which, if progressed would bring four water bodies to GES or GEP and over 50 km of channel with associated greenspace.

3.2 Improving rivers for fish migration

- A fish pass installed at Preston Mill Weir has restored fish access to 10km of the Bearford Burn, improving one water body to good status and improving access to a further 11 water bodies.
- Designs have been completed for six barriers on the River Almond, two barriers in the Midlothian Esks, one each on the Rivers Tarff, Lugton Water and Tullynessle. Eventual ground works will improve the status/potential of 17 water bodies for fish, enabling fish migration up a further 280km of habitat.
- Studies have been carried out that scope removal or easement of potential improvements of 16 barriers on the Allan Water, Water of Glencalvie and Abhainn Cleit Duastal and the River Gryffe and the Avon Water. Together, if progressed, this would improve 12 water bodies to good status/potential and a further two to moderate. 4 water bodies and open up 248km of river to migratory fish.

3.3 Improving physical condition of rural rivers

- Ground works were funded on 300m of rural water course on the Fisherie Burn on the Burn of King Edward.
- Designs have been produced for the Pow Burn and the River Nairn that, if progressed, will improve 9 km of river and make a significant contribution towards good status/potential for two water bodies.
- Two studies have been completed that scope 22.3km of engineered channels at Insh Marshes and the River Nairn. If progressed two water bodies would be improved.

3.4 Control and eradication of INNS

- Removal, control or survey of INNS was undertaken on the banks of 1,600km of river across 161 water bodies.

4. Pilot catchment project

4.1 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 objective of improving physical condition and natural flood management potential in downgraded water bodies. At present we are working on 15 water bodies across the catchments: three 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, catchment scoping has been completed and the catchment plan agreed in December. This will result in the inclusion of a further three water bodies within the pilot catchment work.

- Detailed design was commissioned and is currently ongoing for projects on the Lemno Burn, Melgund Burn, Bo Burn and Upper Nith water bodies.
- Pre-procurement preparations to commence detailed design for the Laggan Burn water body was completed, and is underway for the Tarland Burn and Crichton Linn.
- Options appraisal was completed for the Leuchar and Gormack Burns and is currently ongoing for the Scar, Cample Water and Nith water bodies.
- Landowner engagement was completed for the Upper Dess, Dess/Lumphanan, and Pow/Finglen water bodies.
- Catchment-scale scoping has been completed for the Leven and the catchment plan approved to commence engagement on the Gairney Water, South Queich and North Queich water bodies.

4.2 If all the projects in development progress to construction in future years then five are expected to improve to good, four will improve by two status classes and five by one status class. One water body is a non-baseline and not classified but has been included for natural flood management benefits. All will deliver localised natural flood management benefits, with two potentially delivering benefits to downstream potentially vulnerable areas. Details on the pilot catchment projects can be found in Annex 2, Table 2.

5. State Aid

6.1 In 2015/16, the Water Environment Fund provided £91,648.70 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 on the Scottish Government State Aid pages. SEPA records are kept; this funding does not require reporting to Europe.

The Agricultural Block exemption for the Water Environment Fund was notified on 23rd March 2015. No funding was awarded under the Agricultural Block exemption; this was reported to Europe through the Scottish Government State Aid team.

Rachel Harding-Hill
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May 20th 2016

Annex 1.

Table 1: Detail of projects and environmental improvements supported by the Water Environment Fund in 2015/16

Project name	Applicant	Costs – WEF contribution	Type – scope/design/works	Summary of project/environmental improvement
<i>Improving urban rivers</i>				
Stane Gardens	North Lanarkshire Council	£240,000.00	Works – Morphology improvements	Project in final stages of works. Due to complete June 2016. 650m of channel improved for morphology. Will result in 1 water body going to good for Morphology.
Lyne Burn	Fife Council	£80,000.00	Design & Works – Morphology improvements	Scoping of entire River body completed in 2015/16. Project now moving into design stage. Project will ultimately result in status upgrades for 2 water bodies, the removal of one barrier to fish passage and the restoration of approximately 2.5km of urban water course.
Bathgate	River Forth Fisheries Trust	£235,551.08	Design – 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.
Leven Water & Capelrig Burn (White Cart Tributaries)	East Renfrewshire Council	£35,000.00	Scoping-morphology improvements	Project beginning the scoping of three tributaries of the White Cart water. Total length approximately 45km. Project aims to identify opportunities to link improvements in morphology with improvements to green space and natural flood management.
Gogar Burn	River Forth Fisheries Trust	£27,007.80	Scoping-morphology improvements	Scoping report for the physical restoration of a 1.3 km of a heavily modified and culverted river. The site under consideration links to several environmental matters including strategic development planning by City of Edinburgh Council and flood risk issues. SEPA colleagues have coordinated their approach for liaison with the council to promote joined up thinking. The project could achieve GEP for this waterbody.

<i>Improving rivers for fish migration</i>				
Preston Mill	National Trust	£21,547.08	Design & works – fish barriers	A Larinier fish pass was successfully installed at Preston Mill Weir restoring access to 10km of the Bearford Burn and improving access to a further 11 water bodies.
Midlothian Esk Barriers 1 - Scoping	River Forth Fisheries Trust	£73,672.04	Scoping – fish barriers	135km of river (13 water bodies) surveyed to check fish barrier classification and habitat quality. The survey showed SEPA's fish barrier classification was incorrect: there are 15 barriers to fish migration in the catchment, not 8 as originally thought. Scoping studies have been completed for 13 barriers. At each one, a preferred option has been identified and costed. A programme of barrier easements has been produced. The first two detailed designs were taken forward (see Midlothian Esks Barriers design 1).
Midlothian Esk Barriers 1 - Design	River Forth Fisheries Trust	£170,756.40	Design – fish barriers	Detailed designs produced for two barriers. Easement will allow fish to access 24km of river. One water body will move to good status. A second water body will move from poor to moderate status. A third will improve within the poor status class.
Sevenacres Weir	Ayrshire River Trust	£43,624.40	Design– fish barriers	Designs have been produced 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.
Allan Water 1	River Forth Fisheries Trust	£17,652.00	Scoping – fish barriers	Scoping was completed for fish passage restoration opportunities across the Allan Water catchment. A number of opportunities have been identified that would restore access to around 20km. The amount of suitable habitat within these reaches is still being investigated and appropriate funding is being explored. Actions are being co-ordinated with Transport Scotland who manage a number of structures in the catchment.
Diebidale Dam Easement	Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust	£24,438.59	Scoping and design – fish barriers	Scoping and Options report for a large barrier to fish in the Water of Glencalvie. Successful installation of fish passage would bring the waterbody to Good Ecological Status. Fish would gain access to 5.7 km of river and 4 km of high quality spawning habitat.
Morsgail	RAFTS	£8,860.00	Scoping and design – fish barriers	Detailed design produced for a barrier easement. 3km of channel will be opened up to migratory fish and the water body will achieve good status.

Gottar Water Weir	RAFTS	£47,318.23	Scoping – fish barriers	A scoping study was produced. Options were appraised and a preferred option identified. 9km of habitat will be opened up.
Avon Water Barriers – Phase 1	RAFTS	£2,940.54	Scoping – fish barriers	A scoping study was produced to identify the opportunities to secure fish passage across two barriers on the Avon Water in order to release 200km of river habitat for migratory fish species and improve the status of 8 water bodies, 6 of which improve to high status and 2 to moderate status as a result.
Tarff Creamery Weir	RAFTS	£51,997.60	Design – fish barriers	A detailed design was produced for the barrier, allowing statutory permissions to be sought. Easement will allow fish to access 10km of river and will achieve the WFD objective of reaching good ecological potential.
Avon Water Barriers – Phase 2	RAFTS	£46,671.80	Design – fish barriers	Detailed designs for this project were completed in 2015/16 and the project is now progressing to works. As noted in phase one project will open up 200km of river habitat to migratory fish species and will improve the overall status of 8 water bodies, with 6 going to high status and 2 going to moderate status.
River Almond	RAFTS	£109,136.10	Design – fish barriers	Designs for 6 fish barrier weirs. Provision of fish passage could allow fish to access nearly 200km of catchment rivers (with 12 waterbodies improving to good for fish passage). Two of the designs are of engineering detail for installation works in 2017-'18, the others are at outline design stage in preparation for design/build projects in future years (e.g. 2018 onwards).
Tullynessle	RAFTS	£12,516.00	Design – fish barriers	Detailed design produced for this barrier, allowing statutory permissions to be sought. Easement will allow fish to access at least 6km of river and will improve the WFD status from poor to good.
<i>Improving physical condition of rural rivers</i>				
Fisherie Burn	Deveron, Isla and Bogie Rivers Trust	£20,751.33	Works – Morphology improvements	300m of channel was improved for morphology. This provides a local benefit but will not affect WFD status. This funding was approved because it was part of an agreement made by SEPA before the WEF Unit was set up.
Pow Burn	Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust	£35,920.80	Design – morphology improvements	Designs have been produced that will improve the ecological condition of 3.7km of river corridor through in channel measures, removal of flood embankments and reprofiling the river bank. The proposals will raise ecological status from bad to poor. The initial plan for a first

				phase of works was moved to 2016 because of time constraints. Works expected in 2016.
Insh Marshes – Phase 1	RSPB	£5,250.00	Scoping-morphology improvements	Scoping report covering 8.3km of the River Spey at Insh Marshes has been produced. In addition to defining future management, this has been used to inform and shape the A9 dualling project.
River Nairn	Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Fishery Trust	£12,878.00	Scoping-morphology improvements	Scoping report covering 14km of river has been produced. This outlines options for improving the water body to good status.
Aberarder, River Nairn	Aberarder Estate	£62,316.00	Design – morphology improvements	Data collection has begun in order to identify measures across 5.5km of river. In combination with the upper river Nairn project the work here will improve the water body to good status. There will be benefits for local flood risk reduction, as well as sustainable future channel management.
Other works				
RAFTS strategic INNS control	RAFTS	£99,950.00	INNS control	1,600km of river across 161 water bodies has been either surveyed for invasive species, or had control measures put in place. 9 different rivers trusts have been involved, coordinated strategically by RAFTS.
East Ayrshire Bogs	East Ayrshire Coalfield Environment Initiative	£30,000.00	Works - Other	Legacy project for the fund and focused on improving upland peat bogs in Ayrshire. No impact on WFD classification for water bodies in the area but has secured significant environmental improvements to a priority area for Scotland.
Migdale Track Repairs		£16,062.88	Works - Other	Legacy project for the fund. This project has now been completed and signed off by all involved parties.
TOTAL		£1,531,818.67		

Annex 2

Table 2: Overview of pilot catchment progress and spend in 2015-16

Catchment	Water body	Progress	Lead	Spend	Morphological improvement expected if constructed	NFM benefits expected if constructed
Nith	River Nith (Sanquhar – New Cumnock) <i>Castle Mains + Afton Water sediment study</i>	Detailed design – contract complete	SEPA	£19,530.00	Poor – Good	Localised benefits to farmland and potential benefits to downstream PVA
	River Nith (Sanquhar – New Cumnock) <i>Wider reach</i>	Detailed design – contract ongoing	Nith DSFB	£49,900.57	Poor - Good	Localised benefits to farmland and potential benefits to downstream PVA £9477 of this amount came from SEPA Strategic Flood Risk budget.
	Scar Water (River Nith to Shinnel Water)	Landowner engagement completed and options appraisal – contract ongoing	SEPA	£18,327.00	Bad - Moderate Work on a further 2km is required to reach Good. Landowners currently not interested.	Localised benefits to very high profile farm that has been previously flooded and downstream properties
	Cample Water (River Nith to Crichope Linn)	Options appraisal – contract ongoing	SEPA	Included with Scar Water	Bad - Poor Work on a further 1km is required to reach Good. Landowners currently not interested.	Localised benefits to very high profile farm that has been previously flooded and downstream properties

	Crichope Linn	Detailed design – funding awarded but contract not started	Nith DSFB	£15,000.00	Moderate – Good	Likely limited, but site in upland area and measures will help slow run-off.
	Laggan Burn	Options appraisal / detailed design – funding awarded but contract not started	SEPA / Nith DSFB	£45,088.00	Poor - Good	Localised benefits to adjacent farmland and properties
Dee	Bo Burn	Detailed design – contract ongoing	Dee DSFB	£54,536.49	Bad - Poor 4-6km further restoration required to achieve Good	Localised benefits to adjacent farmland and properties
	Tarland Burn	Options appraisal completed Detailed design – funding awarded but contract not started	Dee DSFB	£7,602.00	Bad - Good	Scale of works likely to benefit Tarland PVA
	Leuchar Burn	Options development and appraisal completed	SEPA	£33,061.80	Poor - Good	Localised benefits to adjacent farmland and properties
	Gormack Burn	Options	SEPA	Included with	Bad - Moderate based on	Localised benefits to adjacent

		development and appraisal completed		Gormack	current level of land owner interest	farmland and properties
	Dess/Lumphanan Burn	Landowner engagement completed	SEPA	£3,042.00	Won't know until end of options appraisal	Localised benefits to adjacent farmland and properties
	Upper Dess Burn	Landowner engagement completed	SEPA	Included with Dess/Lumphanan	Won't know until end of options appraisal	Localised benefits to adjacent farmland and properties
South Esk	Lemno Burn	Detailed design contract ongoing	SEPA	£49,600.28	Likely to Poor (once all high constraint land stripped out – currently Bad) Further 3.4km requires restoration to achieve Good	Localised benefits to adjacent farmland and properties
	Melgund Burn	Detailed design contract ongoing	Esk RFT	£23,542.80	Likely to Moderate (once all high constraint land stripped out – currently Bad) Rural HMWB: further 1.5km requires restoration to achieve GEP	Localised benefits to adjacent farmland and properties
Glazert Water	Glazert Water / Finglen Burn	Landowner engagement in upper catchment completed	SEPA	£13,304.75	Currently being reassessed following HMWB de-designation	Localised and potential PVA benefits

		Outline design in lower catchment (Birdston)				
	Pow/Finglen Burn	Landowner engagement completed	SEPA	£2,538.00	Non-baseline water body (included for NFM reasons)	Localised benefits to adjacent farmland and properties
Leven (Fife)	All	Catchment scoping completed	SEPA	£60,129.58	Catchment scale scoping to identify all morphology and NFM improvements	Numerous opportunities ID throughout catchment
	South Queich	Landowner engagement	SEPA	£0 – placed on hold until discussions held with local authority	Ambition is Poor – Good; dependent on engagement though	Highest priority site for NFM in catchment
	North Queich	ECAF bid submitted for Trust to lead landowner engagement	River Forth FT	£0 – awaiting outcome of ECAF bid	Ambition is Poor - Good; dependent on engagement though	Localised benefits to adjacent farmland and properties
	Gairney Water	ECAF bid submitted for Trust to lead landowner engagement	River Forth FT	£0 – awaiting outcome of ECAF bid	Ambition is Poor - Good; dependent on engagement though	Localised benefits to adjacent farmland and properties
			Total	£395,203.27		

