

# **South Solway Area Management Plan**

## **2010 to 2015**



## **Working Draft**

**Produced by the South Solway Area Management Plan Partnership  
July 2010**

## Introduction

We all rely on the water environment in some way: it supports industries such as farming and tourism, provides our drinking water and opportunities for leisure and recreation. It is in everyone's interest to ensure that it is kept in good condition. This plan is a summary of the current health of the water environment in the South Solway, and the work being planned to further improve it.

This plan is for all those who have an interest in our water environment. It is particularly relevant to those who influence, manage or use the water environment.

The Eden and South Solway area covers the whole of the River Eden, River Waver and River Wampool catchments, the groundwater bodies underlying the Eden valley and Carlisle basin, and the parts of the Border Esk that lie south of the English / Scottish border (see Map 1 on page 4).

## Aims of this Area Management Plan

This plan looks at the health of the South Solway area's water environment, the targets for maintaining or improving the water environment, what current actions can achieve, and priorities for future action. It takes into account catchment plans and initiatives that are already successfully underway in this area. These projects are important, not only because they are actively improving the water environment, but because the advice and maintenance they provide ensures that it does not deteriorate.

This plan focuses on local actions and sets out a way forward for organisations to work together to achieve real improvements. To maintain good status and improve some water bodies, measures will need to be in place by 2013 or earlier, to allow enough time for the improvements to manifest by the 2015 reporting cycle.

This plan has been written by the members of the South Solway Area Management Plan Partnership; see Box 1 below for more information about the group's role and its members. It is designed to complement the River Basin Management Plan that has been prepared for the whole of the Solway Tweed river basin district as part of the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. This plan focuses on the first cycle for river basin delivery to 2015.

Please see [http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river\\_basin\\_planning.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx) for more information on the Solway Tweed and <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/default.aspx> for more information on the river basin management plans for England and Wales.

### Box 1: The South Solway Area Management Plan Partnership

The South Solway Area Management Plan Partnership is made up of the English members of the Solway Area Advisory Group (AAG), which was formed under local implementation of the Water Framework Directive. For more information on the roles and duties of the member organisations, see Appendix 1.

The group's main roles are:

- to identify, prioritise and co-ordinate activities contributing to Water Framework Directive objectives for the water environment in the South Solway area
- to identify partnership and funding opportunities, to deliver actions in partnership, and to seek collaborative projects and share resources where appropriate
- to keep track of the actions contributing to improvement of preventing deterioration of the water environment in the South Solway area
- to inform others about the group's purpose and vision.

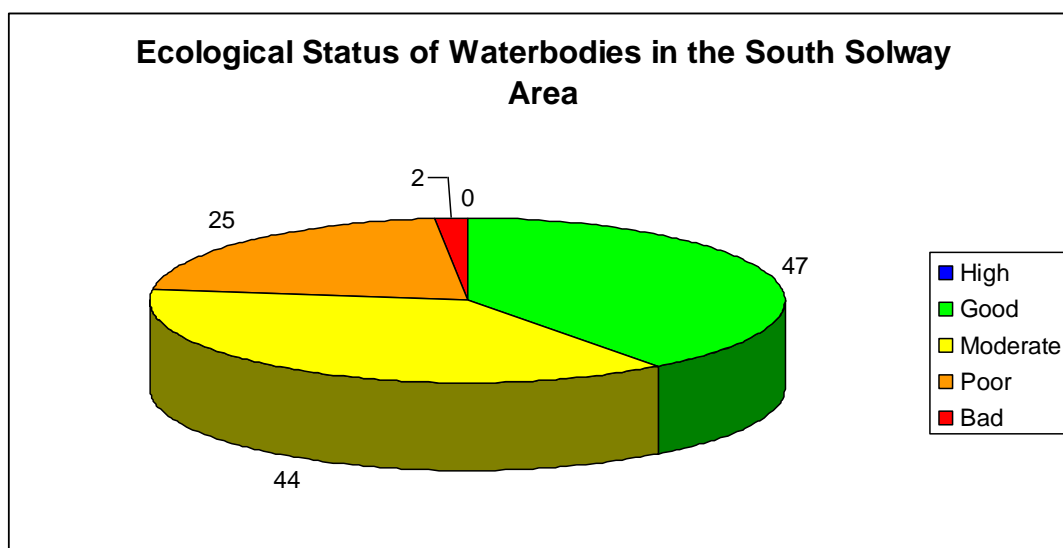
The group is currently reviewing its membership to make sure that the key organisations that are interested in / influence the water environment of the South Solway area are represented. **If your organisation would like to be a part of the group, or if you would like to receive updates on the group's work, please contact Andrew Seward, Senior Environmental Planning Officer, at the Environment Agency's Penrith office (tel: 01768 215858, email: [andrew.seward@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.seward@environment-agency.gov.uk)).**

### The current health of the South Solway's water environment

The health of the water environment is assessed each year and its condition, or ecological status, is split into five classes; high, good, moderate, poor and bad. Groundwater is classified as either good or poor. These classes and the standards that they represent apply across all of the UK. A waterbody that is at high status is considered to be in almost natural condition\*. Map 1 below shows the current status of lakes and rivers.

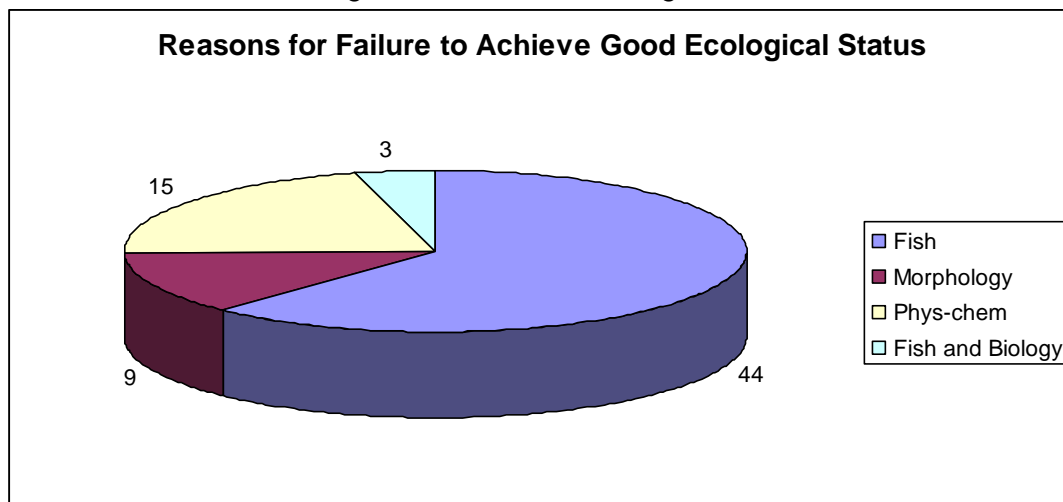
Some surface waters are also classified as 'Heavily Modified' or 'Artificial' where they have been physically modified, eg for drainage or water supply purposes. Of the 118 waterbodies in the Area, 27 are designated artificial or heavily modified.

The ecological status of the 118 waterbodies in the South Solway area is shown in the chart below. There are currently no waterbodies achieving High ecological status.



\* Water body health is assessed according to the Water Framework Directive classification system; see <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33362.aspx> for more information

The main reasons for failing to achieve Good ecological status are shown below:



### The future health of the South Solway's water environment

Water bodies in the South Solway area which are currently at good or better status have an objective of not deteriorating. All other water bodies have an objective of achieving good status, most by 2027 and some by 2015. Meeting this target is a big challenge. Even maintaining the current condition may be difficult in the face of pressure from future development, climate change and increased agricultural production.

Many parts of the South Solway area are protected under other European legislation. This gives them Protected Area Status under the Water Framework Directive and means that they must meet both good status under the Water Framework Directive and the standards for the other European legislation.

The South Solway area contains sites designated under:

- the Habitats and Birds Directive (11 Special Areas of Conservation and 2 Special Protection Areas)
- the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (1 site on the River Eden)
- the Freshwater Fish Directive (236 sites)
- the Bathing Waters Directive (2 sites on the Solway coast)
- the Shellfish Directive (1 site in the Solway estuary)
- the Nitrates Directive (5 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones).

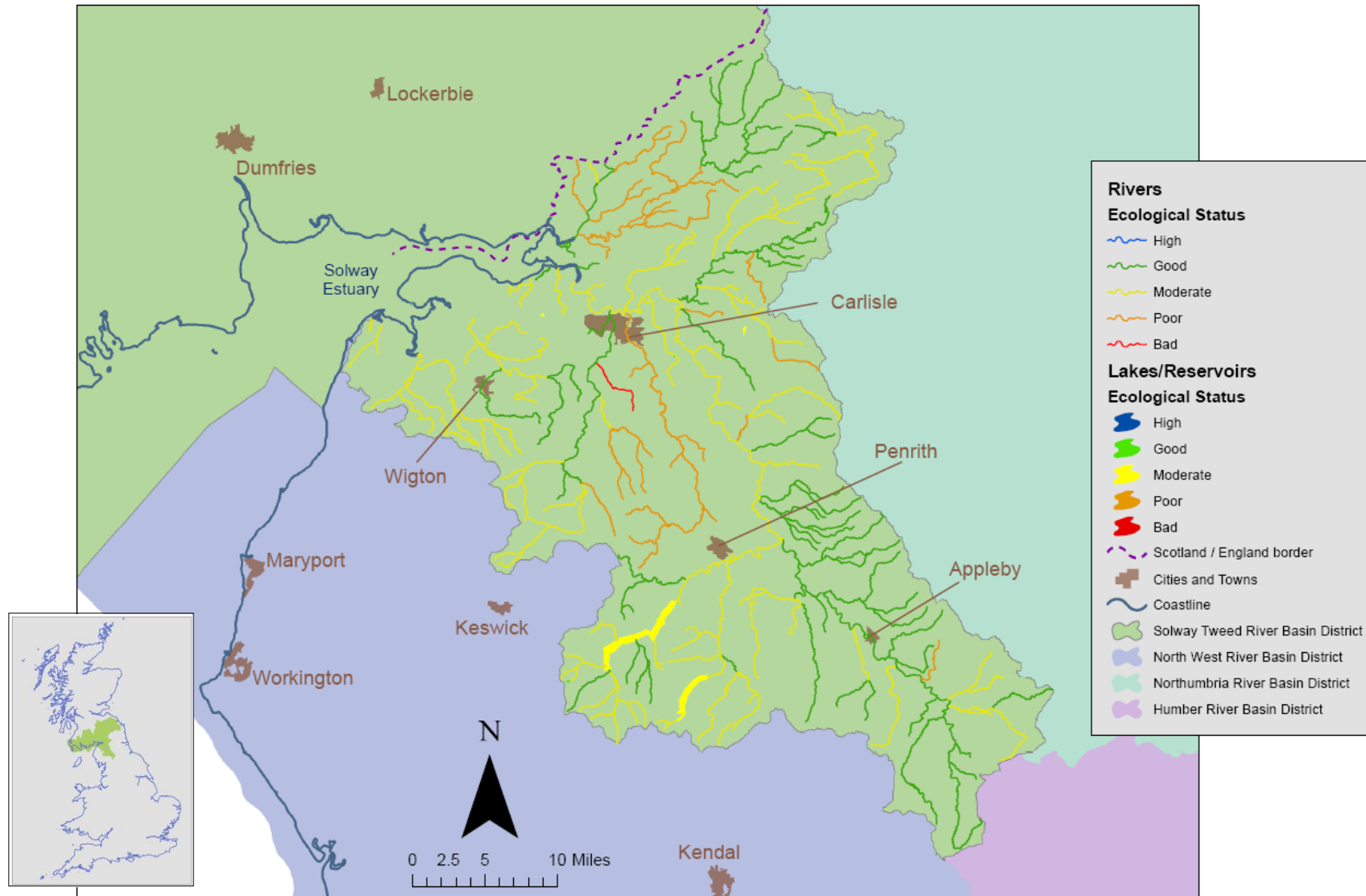


Sandford Mire – Upper Eden



## Map 1 Map of the South Solway area showing current (2008) classification of rivers and lakes

“Ecological Status” refers to the Water Framework Directive classification system, see <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33362.aspx> for more information



## **Actions to improve the water environment**

Many of the reasons why our rivers and groundwater are at less than good status are linked to the way we have used our environment in the past. A number of projects and initiatives to tackle historical problems have started or are planned for the area. For example, significant investment in water industry infrastructure and initiatives such as Catchment Sensitive Farming have already started. These will have a positive impact on the quality of our water environment, but may not be enough for all water bodies to meet good status, so we need to find ways to deal with the remaining problems.

A number of sectors and industries will need to work together to achieve the high quality water environment we want to see throughout the area, including statutory bodies, charitable conservation organisations, industry, land managers, recreational water users and volunteer groups. See the Case Study below for a real example from the South Solway.

The South Solway Area Management Plan Partnership is collating all the actions currently being undertaken for each water body and in the area as a whole. The spreadsheet will support this Area Management Plan, and be used to identify priority water bodies, water bodies where joint actions can be undertaken and be used when seeking additional funding/projects in the South Solway Area.

When completed, this Area Management Plan and the associated spreadsheet of actions will be placed on the SEPA website, **at xxx website address, to be confirmed**. Please note that this is a working document which will change over time.

This summary of actions underpins the Area Management Plan and helps identify:

- where action is already being carried out and which pressures are being targeted
- where investigations are needed to better understand the problem
- which water bodies need more actions to bring them up to good status
- which water bodies are at risk of deteriorating from good status.

We welcome help in developing this record. If you know of work being done which will help to improve the water environment in the South Solway area that we may not know about, please contact Andrew Seward, Senior Environmental Planning Officer, at the Environment Agency's Penrith office (tel: 01768 215858, email: [andrew.seward@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.seward@environment-agency.gov.uk)).

During summer 2010 the group will develop an action plan by:

- prioritising water bodies for action
- identifying gaps and appropriate actions to fill those gaps
- developing costed projects for which resources need to be found
- identifying opportunities for partnership working.

The group will meet regularly to review progress and update the action plan.

This plan is the first step in identifying and prioritising the actions needed to further improve the South Solway water environment to help meet Water Framework Directive objectives. A lot more work and resource is needed, and actions are needed now to deliver improvements in later planning cycles.

## Case Study: Working together on the River Leith

The River Leith is an important tributary of the Lyvennet which flows into the River Eden downstream of Appleby. The River Leith is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

### Key facts

<b>Area:</b>	53km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Land use:</b>	mainly agriculture
<b>Classification:</b>	moderate status
<b>Objective:</b>	good status by 2015, but as a Protected Area must achieve SAC Conservation Objectives

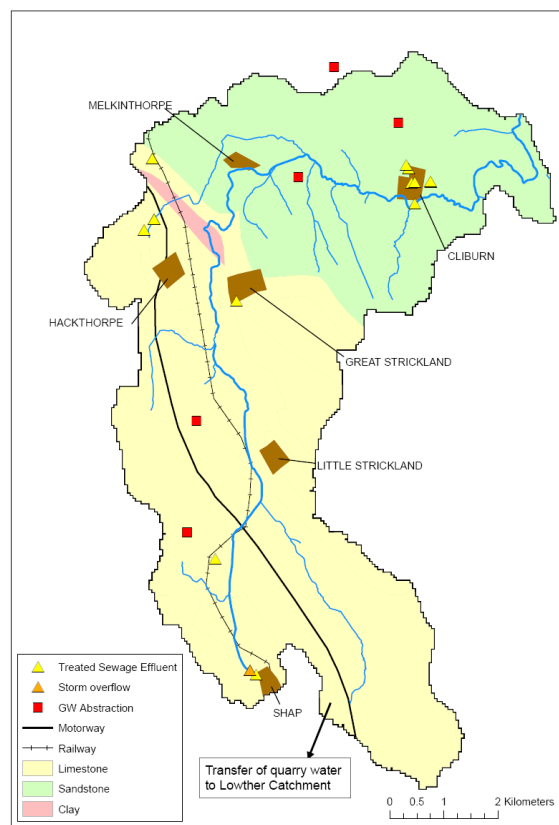
### Key pressures:

- Discharge from Shap waste water treatment works
- Discharges from septic tanks and village sewers
- Diffuse pollution from agriculture
- Groundwater abstraction and quarry dewatering
- Run-off from motorway and railway
- Invasive non-native species

### What is being done to improve the River Leith? A

number of actions and initiatives have already been identified and implemented for the River Leith catchment. These include:

- Targeting of Catchment Sensitive Farming to the area
- Gathering more information to better understand the reasons for failure
- Upgrade to Shap waste water treatment works to improve discharge quality
- First Time Rural Sewerage schemes for Cliburn, Hackthorpe and Great Strickland to improve sewage discharge quality
- Review of abstraction licences
- Licensing of quarry dewatering under the *Water Resources Act*
- Improving fish passage by removing or modifying in-stream barriers
- Developing a Diffuse Water Pollution from Agriculture Plan
- Eden Rivers Trust Sub-catchment Conservation Plan (targeting habitat & diffuse pollution / protected species issues) Commenced 2000



**How will we know if these actions work?** The effects of improvements to waste water treatment works on river quality can be modelled, but it is more difficult to forecast the effect of initiatives like catchment sensitive farming because they depend on how well they are adopted. But the continued monitoring of the water in the catchment will help us to measure improvements in the future.

**Will these actions be enough?** It is possible that this will not be enough to make the River Leith meet its conservation objectives. We do not know, for example, how much run-off from the motorway and railway affect the water quality in the river. There are a number of further actions which could be done, including:

- Local campaigns to promote water efficiency, low phosphorous detergents and septic tank best practice
- Local authority intervention to stop/limit quarry dewatering and prevent/limit local development
- Targeting of local groups/volunteers actions to deal with invasive non-native species
- Further uptake of on-farm conservation measures and habitat improvement schemes

**Current and future actions are the responsibility of a wide range of organisations and people – real success will only happen if everyone does their bit**

## Appendix 1

### **The Consumer Council for Water**

CCW represents the customers of water and sewerage customers, calling for affordability, even-handedness in where cost of schemes fall, together with promoting understanding and willingness to accept a fair level of cost on the part of customers. See <http://www.ccwater.org.uk/> for more information.

### **Cumbria Wildlife Trust**

Cumbria Wildlife Trust is the only voluntary organisation devoted solely to the conservation of the wildlife and wild places of Cumbria. The Trust stands up for wildlife, creates wildlife havens, and seeks to raise environmental awareness.

Formed in 1962 and supported by over 15,000 members, the Trust cares for over 40 nature reserves, campaigns for the protection of endangered habitats and species such as limestone pavements and red squirrels, and works with adults and children to discover the importance of the natural world. See <http://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/> for more information.

### **Eden Rivers Trust**

The Eden Rivers Trust is a charity dedicated to the conservation and protection of the River Eden, its tributaries and its surrounding landscapes. Our work is supported through fundraising and we receive no direct core funding from central government. We work in partnership with others to deliver a wide range of projects throughout the catchment which are underpinned by research, education and community participation initiatives. See <http://trust.edenriverstrust.org.uk/> for more information or contact Director, Simon Johnson [director@edenriverstrust.org.uk](mailto:director@edenriverstrust.org.uk)

### **Environment Agency**

The Environment Agency plays a key role in delivering the environmental priorities of central government and the Welsh Assembly Government through our functions and roles, including flood risk management, working with industry and farmers, promoting resource efficiency, enforcing environmental laws, looking after wildlife and restoring rivers and lakes, promoting recreational use of the environment, working with farmers, and influencing and working with government, industry and local authorities to make the environment a priority. See <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/> for more information.

### **National Farmers Union**

The NFU champions British farming and provides professional representation and services to its Farmer and Grower members. It was founded in 1908 and is financed by members' subscriptions. Today, our trade association is the largest farming organisation in the UK, providing a strong and respected voice for the industry and employing a team of 500 staff to support the needs of its members locally, nationally and internationally. See <http://www.nfuonline.com/> for more information.

### **Natural England**

Natural England is the government's advisor on the natural environment. It provides practical advice, grounded in science, for sustainable stewardship of the land and sea so that people and nature can thrive. Our responsibilities across England include managing environmental farming schemes; increasing opportunities for access to the natural world; reducing the decline of biodiversity; licensing of protected species; designating National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; notifying, advising on and regulation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Natura 2000 sites. See <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/> for more information.

### **River Eden & District Fisheries Association (REDFA)**

REDFA was formed following the demise of the Cumberland River Board in 1951 to represent and proclaim the interests of the River Eden's anglers, clubs and riparian owners. See <http://www.edenfishing.co.uk/> for more information.

### **The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (the RSPB)**

The RSPB is Europe's largest wildlife charity with over one million members, working to secure a healthy environment for birds and wildlife. We manage one of the largest conservation estates in the UK, covering more than 140,000 hectares, where we protect and enhance habitats such as wet grassland, estuaries, reedbeds, lowland farmland and heather moorland. We undertake extensive land use policy and planning work with government, both nationally and regionally, and we underpin this with sound science based on our own and shared research. The RSPB works with local, regional and national partners to deliver conservation gains in the wider countryside. See <http://www.rspb.org.uk> for more information, or contact [tim.youngs@rspb.org.uk](mailto:tim.youngs@rspb.org.uk)

### **United Utilities**

United Utilities is the UK's largest listed water company. We own, operate and maintain utility assets, including water, wastewater, electricity and gas. Not only do we provide water to seven million people across



*the North West of England, we also share our knowledge and expertise, helping other organisations to develop practical and sustainable solutions which make their operations more efficient. We see ourselves as stewards of the natural resources of water and energy, using our rich legacy of engineering and planning skills to build the essential backbone of thriving communities in the North West of England, in the UK and across the world. Some 20 million people worldwide benefit from our expertise in operating and managing water, wastewater, electricity and gas networks. See <http://www.unitedutilities.com/> for more information.*