

# A CIWEM Conference

## The Water Framework Directive Series

### Integrated Catchment Management Lessons for River Basin Management

July 13, 2004 SOAS, London

## POST CONFERENCE NOTES

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**Notes edited by Bob Earll**

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**The CIWEM Water Framework Directive Series  
Integrated Catchment Management  
July 13, 2004, SOAS, London**

**Introduction**

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is a wide ranging and challenging European Environmental Directive setting out for the first time a detailed and integrated framework for the improved protection and management of all of Europe's water resources and aquatic environments from each catchment to the sea.

The Water Framework Directive has clear commitments to River Basin Management which include:

- By 2006 publish details of how each river basin management plan will be produced.
- By 2008 each River Basin will have a draft management plan (RBMP) to be finished in 2009
- This will include a Programme of Measures (POM) designed to enable each river basin to meet good ecological status. (CHANGE IN BULLETS HERE)
- The process of producing the river basin plan must involve public participation

The river basin management planning process has been informed by European Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) documents and pilot studies are now underway in each member state from which lessons will be drawn.

This meeting is very timely because the Environment Agency will produce a consultation on river basin management planning in the Autumn of 2004. **The aim** of the conference is to directly help this process by drawing together a wide range of perspectives that address some long standing issues that arise from catchment management in the UK.

Catchment management is an idea that has a long history in the management of water in the UK, legislation in the 70's, catchment management plans in the early 1990s and later LEAPS. It is widely understood that it was the UK that argued successfully that the concept of river basin management should be embodied in the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Despite this long track record all is clearly not as it should be with catchment management in the UK - potential has not been realised and there are serious failings of the current approach.

This meeting will look to provide perspectives and lessons covering a number of important issues which will include:

- Potential models for catchment management – what are the alternatives? – how will functions be integrated?
- The link between plan production and implementation – we have rather too many plans gathering dust - effective implementation and delivery is essential – how and who will deliver this?
- The need for integrated – multi-functional – solutions – how will these be managed?
- The need for delivery on the ground through effective advice and action will require different types of officers happy with multi-functional roles; partnerships have also been particularly effective on the larger estuaries.
- Participation – real engagement - in planning and delivery is essential if this process is to succeed - how will major stakeholders be integrated for planning and delivery?

This aim of this conference will be to review the background to catchment management in order to learn the lessons that could help to make the WFD-driven round of catchment management rather more successful than its predecessors. The objectives of the conference will be to:

- Identify the key principles and paradigms that should drive catchment management.
- Identify the *practical* lessons derived from river restoration, partnership working and stakeholder engagement that need to be incorporated into the way River Basin Plans are prepared and implemented.
- Look at the lessons emerging from the pilot programmes including the Ribble pilot and across Europe
- Provide delegates with a CD from this and previous conferences that will enable them to access a wide range of information in a structured way including material from two previous events.

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**Contents**

	Page numbers
Conference Summary	4
River Basin Planning consultation issues	5
Discussion points	6
Key points	9
<b>A vision for catchment management: principles and practice for delivery</b> James Marsden Head of Policy, English Nature	11
<b>The Environment Agency consultation on River Basin Planning Strategy: the key questions</b> Dave Martin Environment Agency	12
<b>The RSPB view on how to manage catchments</b> Sarah Oppenheimer RSBP	15
<b>A water company perspective of catchment management</b> [No text see CD Version 2] Dr Chris Spray Environment Director, Northumbrian Water	
<b>Participation: an essential ingredient to integrated management</b> Rob Oates WWF-UK	16
<b>Public participation strategy for River Basin Management</b> Paula Orr, Environment Agency	17
<b>The Partnership approach to integrated action programmes</b> Mark Lloyd Thames21	18
<b>Integrating catchment management in practice: lessons from river restoration</b> Dylan Bright Westcountry Rivers Trust	19
<b>Land use management and advice in practice: lessons for catchment management</b> Ben Thorne FWAG	20

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## Conference Summary

The Environment Agency are, by the end of 2004, going to commence a consultation on River Basin Management. This meeting was planned with that in mind. As pointed out in the introduction to the event the idea behind catchment management has been well understood in the UK for well over 30+ years and is ingrained into many of the ways we manage our resources. The WFD takes this idea supported by principles of sustainability, public participation, and the ecosystem approach and emphasises the need for greater integration and holism in the way we tackle major issues. Whilst we have a long track record in catchment management there are still many challenges posed by the issues and also trying to solve these in a more integrated way. **The aim** of the conference is to directly help this process by drawing together a wide range of perspectives that address some long standing issues that arise from catchment management in the UK.

The first four presentations described different perspectives on how catchment management could develop. Dave Martin of the Agency described the basics of the Water Framework Directive, how that linked into the planning cycle that was being used to co-ordinate Directive activities and what that meant for River Basin Planning.

### **The Environment Agency consultation on River Basin Planning Strategy: the key questions**

**Dave Martin** Environment Agency

The presentations by James Marsden, Sarah Oppenheimer and Chris Spray looked at challenge of developing catchment management and planning from different perspectives illustrating both the urgent nature of current challenges and priorities and how these might be addressed by greater, imagination and practical engagement of parties working together through issues and solutions (steps towards integration); clearly the River Basin planning process and the recognition of the need for greater stakeholder dialogue.

- **A vision for catchment management: principles and practice for delivery**  
**James Marsden** Head of Policy, English Nature
- **The RSPB view on how to manage catchments**  
**Sarah Oppenheimer** RSBP
- **A water company perspective of catchment management**  
**Dr Chris Spray** Environment Director, Northumbrian Water

High level recognition and policy commitments to greater stakeholder participation are embodied in conventions and Directives. In connection to WFD the Directive makes it clear that stakeholder participation is an integral part of the way that River Basin Planning will be undertaken. Two presentations by Rob Oates and Paul Orr developed this participation theme. Rob Oates put forward ways of assessing the success of engagement and Paula Orr described the work that the Environment Agency had undertaken so far to explore options for participation.

- **Participation: an essential ingredient to integrated management**  
**Rob Oates** WWF-UK
- **Public participation strategy for River Basin management**  
**Paula Orr**, Environment Agency

Whilst the WFD describes the planning process it is clearly the delivery of River Basin Plans upon which a great deal will hang. Three presentations by Mark Lloyd, Dylan Bright and Ben Thorne described three different approaches to delivery. In practice, all of the speakers at the meeting, and many others represent organisations that are responsible for putting plans into action.

- **The Partnership approach to integrated action programmes**  
**Mark Lloyd** Thames21
- **Integrating catchment management in practice: lessons from river restoration**  
**Dylan Bright** Westcountry Rivers Trust

- **Land use management and advice in practice: lessons for catchment management**  
Ben Thorne FWAG

## River Basin Planning Consultation

This text describes the key issues that will need to be discussed and resolved by the EA consultation document on River Basin Planning. On the CD the papers by Dave Martin and Paula Orr develop some of these points.

The Water Framework Directive is being implemented by a series of planning/management cycles – River Basin Plans - which are in effect exactly the same cycle as any **management system**. As with the implementation of any new management system a good deal of ground work is being done to support development of this management cycle. Large bodies of work will be made available at key points in the developing timetable e.g. outcomes of the river basin characterisation [late 2004] to be incorporated into the planning process.

### The timetable of River Basin Planning

- External 5 workshops - June/July 2004
- Outputs collated and used to inform draft RBP Strategy 2004
- Draft Strategy published in December 2004
- Formal consultation - January to March 2005
- Final draft Strategy prepared summer 2005
- Agency/Defra/WAG 'sign-off'
- Publish final Strategy December 2005

The remaining timetable looks like this:

- 2006 Consult who, how and when the planning will be done for what particular planning units
- 2007 Consult on the significant water management issues that are required and need to go in the plans
- 2008 Draft plans prepared for consultation
- 2009 The first cycle of the 'River Basin Plans' for England & Wales completed and published [to EU]

Further stages are described by Paula Orr (CD V2.)

### **BUT ..... What is a River Basin? What scale will planning and delivery be undertaken?**

It is still not clear at what scale planning and delivery will take place. For **reporting** the progress of the delivery of the WFD a number (9 + 2 cross border) of River Basin Districts have been identified and agreed by Government, the Agency and EU [see Martin]. There is a real problem that the River Basin Districts are very large, they are often comprised of multiple 'catchments' and don't often have clear resonance with the geographic alignment of stakeholders. It could be that at the River Basin District level a more strategic approach might need to be taken.

Sub-regions / administrative areas / planning unit (40 – 50 in number) will be put forward by the Agency in their consultation (ie similar to Ribble scale). But It was not clear from the conference whether the planning processes developed by projects such as the Ribble Basin Pilot will be used fully for these 'units'.

Presumably the consultation will pose questions concerning at what scale planning and delivery would be undertaken?

### **Involving stakeholders in planning and DELIVERY**

In looking at the implementation of the WFD one can ask a range of questions which would arise in the management system context. The balance between the time spent *planning* and

implementation – delivery will be important. The planning stage of the WFD River Basin Planning must involve an effective participatory process, and this has been recognised by the Agency and others and was described by a number of the speakers.

The challenges faced with pollution control, biodiversity, water resources and drainage require a much greater range of integrated solutions. The WFD recognises this need, as do many practitioners. The WFD provides for this process through participatory planning but apparently little thought seems to have been given to how this stakeholder engagement will be maintained *to help deliver* the plans.

The key point emphasised by many of the speakers was that a *very large range of organisations are involved in implementation and delivery*. In Ribble Pilot Environment Agency staff recognised this very early in the process and understanding this helped to make real progress quickly with the pilot. The Environment Agency are simply in no position to actually do all the work required under the WFD. It will presumably fall to Environment Agency *to facilitate* the River Basin Planning process and the work of others?

## Resources

Concern is clearly being expressed within the Environment Agency about the scale of such commitments to process at sub-regional level, although it is not clear whether any assessment which harmonised existing planning (LEAPS, CAMs etc) processes could actually lead to economies of scale. The scope of the WFD is all-embracing across many of the EA's land-water functions and perhaps the first challenge is see some recognition of this.

## Discussion points

Once again the discussion didn't follow directly the four headings we used as a prompt – participation – planning – delivery and policy issues but there are a wide range of useful points.

### Participation

Hampshire Wildlife Trusts – we take part in a plethora of river based consultations/groups. Does the WFD provide an opportunity to rationalise some of this? [Consultation fatigue]

Dylan Bright Stakeholder time is finite. It is important that engagement leads somewhere, otherwise you get the comment – 'what was the purpose of that?' Equitable Engagement is important for delivery.

Jan Brooke International Navigation PIANC The WFD applies to coastal (out to 1 nm) and transitional waters and yet much of the debate / presentation today has focussed on land based catchments. In the estuarine and coastal there are quite a different range of regulators users and pressures. There are different ways of viewing issues e.g. sediments; this is a pollutant at the top of the catchment but an essential ingredient of mud ecosystems further down. We in the port community are calling for the early and effective engagement with the Agency and others in the planning process.

Christopher Hancock Wildlife Trusts We see 'process' coming to dominate this area and are concerned by this and the loss of direction that might result.

Adrian Armstrong ENTEC Several talks have explored – looked for the holy grail of ideal size for participation and planning. Often the function dictates scale within river basins. The cost to the public of participation is a phrase used as an excuse for inactivity or doing it poorly? What we are looking for is a commitment to make this work. For the Agency to *listen*. For action on stakeholder views so that the process moves from just being seen as talking shops.

Andy Warren – The stakeholders will often be delivery focussed.

Sarah Oppenheimer - the WFD is focussed on delivery of Good Ecological Status.

Dylan Bright: Who came up with the RBDistrict Areas since they don't seem to have relevance to anything? Answer: Defra/EA in one of the consultation rounds; it was for UK to decide.

James Marsden EN – With GIS technology is relatively easy to aggregate area based approaches on a range of scales for reporting for landscape, designations, POMs etc. [using GIS layers]

Simon Bailey Jacobs Gibb We are undertaking work currently on this internationally and various countries are using the River Basin Council model as a way of managing catchments. This provides a clarity of high level stakeholder engagement.

### **Development and the fixed – six year nature of RB District plans**

Graham Newman British Waterways The WFD sets out that River Basin DISTRICT Catchment Plans are completed every six years. What happens in between especially with regard to development? The case that concerns me is restoration of canals where there is considerable potential for conflict between recreation, wildlife and water quality – will it be possible to apply derogations (Article 4 of WFD) – how will the test of sustainable development be measured?

DM EA – We may see RBDistrict plans as a mark in the sand for the six year period [they need to be signed off by the Secretary of State] – there are lots of issues around this.

James Marsden EN Monitoring will be a driver for review – action will then follow in the next round. The process will be ongoing.

Also the Habitats Directive has a mechanism – *Appropriate Assessment* – which appears to work in this development situation.

Rob Oats WWF One would hope that the development of a common vision through participation and stakeholder engagement would help alleviate development surprises [perhaps not at the RBDistrict scale?]

Jan Brookes Long lead in development might work like this but often in a port context commercial decisions require development at a much shorter time scale to ensure financial viability.

James Marsden EN We should not forget that all the existing powers and duties are still in force – an overarching portfolio of measures are already available through the BAP, SSSI and Habitats Directive. Hopefully WFD will lead to better integration of these measures.

When will we know what *Good Ecological Status* means since upon this much depends?

Answer: Inter-calibration takes place in 2004-2006 – but this is currently limited to one quality factor – chlorophyll and eutrophication – upon which standards will be set. The whole process of determining this for a range of attributes will be over by 2009.

Good ecological potential has been mentioned by several speakers – how will this be defined and will owners (e.g. for canals) be involved with this? [Canals as artificial water bodies]

Answer DM EA – UK TAG have devoted some Research & Development money to this.

James Montgomery With public participation and engagement and good ecological status – isn't there a contradiction – the public might not want GES – but they have no choice.

## Process

Collins Open University We have seen two types of process:

1. The approach direct to stakeholders – farmers to get them engaged [eg West Country Rivers Trust]
2. Then the approach of bringing stakeholders in to meetings, forums etc.

Rob Oates WWF What was interesting about the Ribble pilot which picks up on this is that the process did bring people together and enabled links to be made between the Ribble Catchment Trust and the farming community which enabled them to work together. This was both processes.

Ben Thorne FWAG It is so crucial to get key stakeholders – especially farmers – to meeting that we have paid people £20/an hour to attend meetings. This is very important. Often CLA and NFU simply don't represent the farming community adequately.

Mark Lloyd – In our context (Thames 21 ) we don't have funds to pay for bringing people in we have discovered that if events are seen as useful (fun) and can deliver a range of outcomes they will attract people.

Jan Brooke The point is that stakeholder groups will be the people who both own the problem and carry out the delivery – they are very important any process should facilitate their engagement.

Paula Orr One of the things we have discovered from our pilot work is the importance of existing networks and making use of these. It is particularly important to understand who these groups are to understand their perspectives but also to help deliver improvements.

David Kay – Good progress is being made in Scotland with River Basin Planning and they are nearing the end of their consultation. The concept of good agricultural and ecological environmental condition GAEC has been particularly important.

The SEPA RBMP consultation process is just closing – Scotland are ahead on this – and should provide some useful pointers to how it might be done.

## Policy and other points

James Marsden EN Cross compliance It is currently proving very difficult to get even a 2m buffer zone between agriculture and water margins – a huge battle. As I said in my talk there is an enormous shortfall in funds to help deliver CAP reform – the picture is very gloomy. Short termism in financial planning is proving to be problematic.

Sarah Oppenheimer RSPB There is recognition at an European level that there is significant interaction between the WFD and CAP and recently a joint committee between the Agriculture and Environment DGs has been set up to explore this issue.

David Crawshaw United Utilities: We have tried to get the sustainable catchment project through this round of AMP and even though this has been agreed by Ministers it is still being actively opposed by OFWAT. We see this as delivering a wide range of improvements of the sort outlined by Chris Spray and feel this is an important step to test and demonstrate this concept because of the potential benefit to water customers.

The problem of catchment management *hurting your head*..... well yes it suggests that too many issues have never been properly resolved. We have complex messy set of issues which need greater clarity of thought. There is still too much 'silo' thinking and not enough systemic analysis of the issues and their resolution.

Dave Martin EA

- The River Basin Characterisation will be finalised at the end of this year
- This will be published on the web in draft form.
- Defra have then to report this to the EU
- Then a final version will be published in 2005
- Once again the issue of the EA business plan and funding come into play.

ODPM is looking at spatial planning – and sustainable development – not clear how ICM ties in with this but there is a significant opportunity currently with this.

David Kay Rural environmental and land use management ESRC has just started a 5 year project on this – very much from the social science perspective (RELU Rural Environment and Land Use).

## KEY ISSUES

**These issues were identified by speakers *before* the event**

### **Ecosystem based approach**

To achieve catchment management we need to adopt an **ecosystem based approach**

Recognition of ecosystem function in planning.

There should be an aspirational bioregional plan for every catchment which protects ecosystem integrity and underpins any subsidy payments, conservation activities and resource management.

Achieving the ecosystem approach requires that we recognize and target drivers currently preventing this from happening, these are:

- How far should a river basin plan meet a stakeholder vision
- Who should measure that stakeholder involvement had been sufficiently 'active'
- What proportion of a river basin planning budget should reasonably be allocated to public participation

### **Participation - stakeholder engagement, at what scale - how**

Process – good practice How can the worst consultation of the past (telling people what you're going to do and getting them to agree that it's a good idea) develop into genuine participation and community ownership of the future?

How do we make Integrated River Basin Management Planning interesting to normal people?  
What opportunities are there to use existing community networks and events to disseminate information and campaign messages?

What kind of stakeholder / advisory / management groups should be set up for river basin management plans? Will there be **partnerships** of stakeholders and agency?

#### *Scale*

How should river basin districts be sub-divided for meaningful engagement?

How to involve stakeholders at a river basin DISTRICT scale.

Are c.120 river basins the right scale for public participation in England?

### **Catchment planning - River Basin Management Planning**

The interpretation of the concept and process of river basin planning and management.

Less stringent objectives and the sign-off of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) by the Secretary of State and the National Assembly for Wales.

Programmes of measures – the use of basic and supplementary measures in RBMPs.

How should RBMPs be integrated with spatial planning?

What are the links between WFD and Flood Management?

How should the Environment Agency streamline its land and water plans? Should they all come under a RBMP umbrella?

Farming

Should farmers be paid for performing a flood management function and holding water on their land – if so, through which mechanism?

How can we bring agricultural subsidies, agri-environment payments and flood management funds together to encourage a more integrated and multi-functional approach to land use and management?

Will farming – land management be adequately represented in planning and management – by whom?

### **Policy issues - current**

Whilst it is possible to state these goals in general terms there are a number of quite specific **policy issues** that need to be resolved now to help achieve them. These include:

establishing common understanding of how the WFD will be implemented and, in particular, the consequences for waters which are not identified as 'water bodies';

agreeing the scope, process and timescale for a second stage of 'characterisation';

setting 'good ecological status' at a meaningful level;

securing improvements in the quality of the water environment through catchment-wide application of WFD programmes of measures (e.g. ensuring that the objectives for water-dependent Natura 2000 sites and measures to achieve favourable condition of SSSIs and BAP targets are included);

enabling integration between WFD measures and other plans and targets for the water environment, including CAP schemes and policies, and the development planning system.

It is essential that Defra gives a clear policy direction that programmes of measures under WFD should include measures aimed at achieving the water related elements of favourable condition for SSSIs and to achieve BAP targets (otherwise a parallel regulatory regime will apply for waters not identified as 'water bodies' and so much for integration!). Where new powers are required (e.g. to control diffuse pollution and achieve river restoration), it is again essential that these are drafted in such a way that they are exercisable to help achieve favourable condition of SSSIs and BAP targets.

## A vision for catchment management: principles and practice for delivery

### James Marsden

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Catchment management has been fundamental to the way we have managed water resources for over 30 years. During the last decade ideas like sustainable development and the ecosystem approach have provoked a paradigm shift in how we think about delivery of integrated catchment management in practice. There is a need for less sectoral and more integrated approaches to management. We also need a strong vision to help direct investment wisely to meet multiple objections. The underlying reality is that we still have major challenges ahead – the goals that we should be looking to achieve include:-

- Delivery of *integrated* catchment management, including integration of wetlands in river basin planning;
- Overall improvement in the quality of the water environment, including river restoration and tackling diffuse pollution;
- Making gains for biodiversity through 'good ecological status', and safeguarding the favourable condition of statutory wildlife sites;
- Meeting the challenges of climate change and land use;
- Cost effective implementation through integration of policies, major programmes of work and investment.

Whilst it is possible to state these goals in general terms there are a number of quite specific policy issues that need to be resolved now to help achieve them. These include:

- establishing common understanding of how the WFD will be implemented and, in particular, the consequences for waters which are not identified as 'water bodies';
- agreeing the scope, process and timescale for a second stage of 'characterisation';
- setting 'good ecological status' at a meaningful level;
- securing improvements in the quality of the water environment through catchment-wide application of WFD programmes of measures (e.g. ensuring that the objectives for water-dependent Natura 2000 sites and measures to achieve favourable condition of SSSIs and BAP targets are included);
- enabling integration between WFD measures and other plans and targets for the water environment, including CAP schemes and policies, and the development planning system.

It is essential that Defra gives a clear policy direction that programmes of measures under WFD should include measures aimed at achieving the water related elements of favourable condition for SSSIs and to achieve BAP targets (otherwise a parallel regulatory regime will apply for waters not identified as 'water bodies' and so much for integration!). Where new powers are required (e.g. to control diffuse pollution and achieve river restoration), it is again essential that these are drafted in such a way that they are exercisable to help achieve favourable condition of SSSIs and BAP targets.

## River Basin Planning and the Water Framework Directive

### Dave Martin

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The Water Framework Directive (WFD) operates through a process of river basin planning and management. This note gives the Environment Agency's current understanding and position on some of the key issues of the river basin planning and management process

#### Key issues

- The interpretation of the concept and process of river basin planning and management.
- Less stringent objectives and the sign-off of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) by the Secretary of State and the National Assembly for Wales.
- Programmes of measures – the use of basic and supplementary measures in RBMPs.
- The Agency's developing River Basin Planning Strategy.

#### Background

The WFD operates through a system of river basin planning and management. As part of this process the WFD requires the production of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for each River Basin District (RBD) by December 2009 (draft plans by December 2008). These plans will be strategic management documents developed through an integrated planning process for the achievement of the objective of good ecological status as required by the WFD. It is expected that more detailed plans will underpin the summary RBMPs.

The planning process includes describing the characteristics of the RBD, analysing the pressures and impacts on water bodies, monitoring, objective setting, and consideration of the measures to maintain or improve water status. RBMPs will have a number of functions, but are primarily intended to record the current status of water bodies within RBDs, set out (in broad terms) what measures are planned to meet the objectives, and act as the main reporting mechanism to the European Commission.

In order to deliver this integrated approach to river basin management the Agency will need to co-operate extensively with organisations both within and outside the sphere of water management. The WFD stipulates a cyclical planning and management process, where RBMPs are prepared, implemented and then reviewed every six years in order to revise objectives and management activities.

#### The concept and process of river basin planning and management

While the general concept of river basin planning and management is well understood, how this should best be implemented in practice is yet to be determined. The WFD Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) guidance helpfully defines the meaning of and relationships between 'river basin planning', 'river basin management' and 'River Basin Management Plans':

**River basin planning** is the process of collecting and analysing river basin data and evaluating management measures (i.e. 'appraisal' of options etc...) in order to achieve the objectives of the WFD within prescribed timescales.

The river basin planning process is followed by implementation of the programme of measures. The planning process together with the implementation of the programme of measures is often referred to as **river basin management**.

The WFD (Article 13 & 15) requires Member States to produce a management plan for each River Basin District. **The River Basin Management Plan** (RBMP) is a key outcome of the process of river

basin planning. It will record the current status of water bodies within the River Basin District, summarise what measures are planned to meet objectives and act as the main reporting mechanism to the Commission and the public.

River Basin Management Plans, which are to be approved by the Secretary of State and/or the National Assembly for Wales and then submitted to the European Commission, are likely to be summary plans. More detailed operational management plans or 'supplementary plans' can be developed to contain more detail or deal with catchments or sub-basins, industry sectors or particular issues.

### **Less Stringent Objectives and sign-offs**

The Secretary of State and the National Assembly for Wales (the Assembly) have an explicit role in approving RBMPs, with powers to require modifications, or to reject them. This is particularly relevant in the identification of less stringent objectives (derogations), which are exceptions to the need to reach the good status requirements of the WFD. The use of less stringent objectives extends the timescale for achieving good status – their use does not remove the obligation all together.

A case for the use of a less stringent objective can be made on the basis of the technical infeasibility or disproportionate cost of measures required to bring water bodies to good status. They can also be applied where new modifications to the physical characteristics of surface water bodies or alterations to groundwater levels prevent good status objectives from being achieved, or where deterioration from high to good status is the result of new sustainable development activities, subject to certain criteria being met. New modifications and developments could be approved on the basis of overriding social or business needs, but would have to be approved by Defra/Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Secretaries of State for modifications in England and the Assembly for modifications in Wales.

### **Programmes of measures**

If a water body is considered to be at risk of not achieving the ecological and chemical status objectives set by the WFD by 2015 then a 'programme of measures' (PoM) must be established to bring that water body up to the required status. The PoM will be presented in summary form in the RBMP.

The PoM can be a mix of basic and supplementary measures. Basic measures are obligatory and include existing EU legislation and controls on major pressures. The WFD will, in some cases, replace some of the existing water directives while others will be used as statutory measures within the PoM.

Supplementary measures in the WFD include optional measures such as economic/fiscal instruments, negotiated environmental agreements, codes of good practice, strategies (e.g. for soil management), efficiency/reuse measures and citizenship, partnership and social learning projects.

In developing PoMs, it will be particularly important to maintain a close dialogue with regional and local spatial planning organisations. Emerging regional spatial strategies and local development documents may include WFD supplementary measures, but may also raise the need for the use of less stringent objectives.

### **Developing a River Basin Planning Strategy**

The Agency is currently developing a River Basin Planning Strategy. An extensive process of internal and external engagement is informing the development of the strategy. In December 2004, the draft strategy will be published for formal consultation. The final strategy will be published in the autumn of 2005.

The Strategy will contain six key elements:

Integrated Catchment Management: Lessons for River Basin Management  
A CIWEM Conference July 13<sup>th</sup> 2004

1. Vision, Principles and Success Measures for River Basin Planning,
2. The strategic nature of the River Basin Management Plan,
  
3. The streamlining (integration) of existing Agency planning processes,
4. Working effectively with stakeholders, and
5. Defining the appropriate geographical areas (groupings of basins and sub-basins) to enable 3 and 4 above to be delivered.
6. River Basin Planning as a process of adaptive management.

These six elements are some of the building block that will be used to deliver integrated River Basin Planning. However, they are not fixed. To enable fully integrated River Basin Planning, there is be a need for a phased programme of change. Over the next 20 years, the Agency and all those involved in the implementation of the WFD will need to work together to develop efficient processes to align thinking and adapt to new ways of planning.

For further information, please contact:

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## Making Catchment Management Work in the UK

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#### Summary of talk

We do not yet have integrated catchment management in the UK, and our wetland wildlife is undergoing severe declines, due to activities such as nutrient enrichment, land drainage, river modification, inappropriate developments etc. Current un-integrated systems also mean that the public pays for farming subsidies, and then for water treatment, and suffers the impoverishment of the natural environment. The WFD is not a proxy for integrated catchment management but is driving positive change in the way we manage our river basins. It's administrative structures must allow for full stakeholder participation into RBMPs and the river basin districts must be further sub-divided at a scale appropriate for meaningful engagement. The Environment Agency must resource this process adequately with dedicated staff time, and Defra must ensure the EA are properly funded. Integration of RBMPs with land use planning and other planning processes, such as agriculture, biodiversity, and water industry investment, is crucial if they are to achieve WFD objectives. The Environment Agency must also converge the many existing water and land related plans that they produce, and ensure that all work to the same overall vision for the catchment. When we see systems recovering from eutrophication, have physical restoration of rivers and floodplains, and secure long-term sustainable water supply for people and wildlife, we will be managing our catchments in a more integrated way.

#### Discussion points:

1. What kind of stakeholder / advisory / management groups should be set up for river basin management plans?
2. How should river basin districts be sub-divided for meaningful engagement?
3. How should RBMPs be integrated with spatial planning?
4. What are the links between WFD and Flood Management?
5. How should the Environment Agency streamline its land and water plans? Should they all come under a RBMP umbrella?

## Participation: an essential ingredient to integrated management

### **Rob Oates,**

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This presentation will set out WWF's 7 Principles for integrated river basin management. It will then explore how far those principles were met in the UK's Ribble Pilot River basin for the WFD CIS testing process. Key points for discussion will be presented.

The Ribble Pilot Project tested WFD CIS guidance documents on 'Public participation' and 'River basin planning' between March 2003 and May 2004. The audience is expected to be familiar with the contents of those guidance documents. They are available on the website of the European Commission.

The report of the Ribble Pilot project is available on the website of the Environment agency, under North-West region/Ribble pilot.

Key issues to be resolved, which will form points for discussion are:

- How far should a river basin plan meet a stakeholder vision
- Who should measure that stakeholder involvement had been sufficiently 'active'
- How to involve stakeholders at a river basin DISTRICT scale
- What proportion of a river basin planning budget should reasonably be allocated to public participation
- Are c.120 river basins the right scale for public participation in England

## Public Participation Strategy for River Basin Management

**Paula Orr, John Colvin & Peter Fox**

Environment Agency

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Stakeholders have been given a major role in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, reflecting an on-going initiative in recent European legislation to increase the involvement of stakeholders in governance. As Competent Authority for the WFD in England and Wales, the Environment Agency is responsible for ensuring that stakeholders and the public have access to background information and are consulted on three steps of the planning process; the Agency must also encourage active involvement in all aspects of implementation. Public involvement is needed to generate better understanding of river management, to find solutions to complex problems through collaboration, to build partnerships and to ensure widespread buy-in. The results of a three-stage process for developing a public participation strategy in the WFD emphasize the importance of horizontal links, reaching out to a wide range of stakeholders, to enable them to input into river basin planning and management and to influence the shaping of their own plans. Another important issue is to provide effective linkages between levels of participation and decision-making, from national right down to local stakeholders. The public participation strategy that emerges will be consulted on, as part of a consultation on the Agency's River Basin Planning Strategy.

## The partnership approach to integrated action programmes

### Mark Lloyd

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Thames21 is an environmental charity which has developed from a project to tackle litter in the tidal Thames. It has developed into a London-wide community network of voluntary groups and businesses who take action to improve the quality of their local environment. Over 4,000 volunteers are involved each year. This network could be the basis for community participation in River Basin Management. Such participation is essential if we are to tackle thorny issues such as diffuse pollution and excessive water consumption.

Other local and regional NGO-led networks exist throughout the UK, and links to some of them are listed below. Much more needs to be done to connect urban dwellers with their rural catchments and these networks should collaborate more and be better integrated with the functions of statutory agencies. The Association of Rivers Trusts is an exciting new movement that might provide a mechanism for this.

Involvement of local people in planning processes should be made much more accessible, relevant to people's lives and fun than it is at present.

Key issues for discussion:

- How do we make Integrated River Basin Management Planning interesting to normal people?
- What opportunities are there to use existing community networks and events to disseminate information and campaign messages?
- How can the worst consultation of the past (telling people what you're going to do and getting them to agree that it's a good idea) develop into genuine participation and community ownership of the future?

Other useful links:

Mersey Basin Campaign: [www.merseybasin.org.uk](http://www.merseybasin.org.uk)

UK Rivers Network: [www.ukrivers.net](http://www.ukrivers.net)

Association of Rivers Trusts: c/o West Country Rivers Trust: [www.wrt.org.uk](http://www.wrt.org.uk)

Rivercare project: [www.rivercare.org.uk](http://www.rivercare.org.uk)

Lea Rivers Trust: [www.leariverstrust.co.uk](http://www.leariverstrust.co.uk)

## Integrated River Basin Management - Theory and Practice

### Dr Dylan Bright CBIol MIBiol

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The Westcountry Rivers Trust was established in 1995 and its objectives are:  
to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of watercourses in the Westcountry and to advance the education of the public in water management.

To achieve its objectives the trust employs several approaches.

The Trust is co-supervising a PhD student studying the population genetics of wild trout and the implications for stock management; the Trust also delivers practical advice to farmers looking to streamline their operations or diversify; the Trust gives educational courses in pond, lake and river conservation and trains land-management advisors, the Trust has established several demonstration sites where the advice given to land managers is physically demonstrated on working farms and active fisheries. As well as carrying out our work on an ad-hoc basis the trust has executed several multi-million pound, catchment scale projects. The trust has collaborated with many organisations during these projects and has worked closely with the Environment Agency to secure their successful delivery.

The aim of these catchment scale projects is to tackle diffuse pollution and improve biodiversity on a catchment scale whilst maintaining active farming on a more profitable basis. The sources of the problems are catchment wide, diffuse and largely untraceable. It is difficult for environmental regulation to address the issues and small piecemeal projects will have little success. The consequences are social, economic and environmental. The trusts approach is to achieve catchment scale proactive engagement of land managers and promote/fund/undertake practices that improve diffuse pollution issues and protect the water resource. The work is executed on a priority basis which is defined using a risk based bioregional plan.

### Vision

Management should be decentralized to the lowest level *i.e.* letting farmers farm and achieve all our ambitions for good food, biodiversity and resource protection. Thus creating living working landscapes managed by farmers not wardens, at a much lower cost to the public purse.

To achieve this we need to adopt an ecosystem based approach:

- Catchment by catchment planning.
- Recognition of ecosystem function in planning.
- An aspirational bioregional plan for every catchment which protects ecosystem integrity and underpins any subsidy payments, conservation activities and resource management.

Achieving this requires that we recognize and target drivers currently preventing this from happening, these are:

- CAP
- Market Forces

## Land use management and advice in practice: lessons from the Parrett Catchment Project

**Ben Thorne**

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Outline – The Parrett Catchment Project (PCP) is an innovative project that takes a truly integrated approach to catchment management. One particular feature of the PCP is the 'Farming Water' initiative in the upper reaches of the catchment. This work involves land use and land management that aims to reduce run-off and slow the discharge to the floodplain in the lower catchment. A number of approaches are being employed to achieve this, including: interception ponds, temporary flood water storage on farmland, wet woodland development and improved soil management practices to reduce run-off and increase soil water retention.

The talk will outline the different approaches being taken on land use and land management, the rationale behind these approaches, the monitoring mechanisms that are in place and the lessons that have been learnt so far.

Key points:

Should farmers be paid for performing a flood management function and holding water on their land – if so, through which mechanism?

How can we bring agricultural subsidies, agri-environment payments and flood management funds together to encourage a more integrated and multi-functional approach to land use and management?