Environment Bill

Many of you will be aware that 12 months ago we consulted on a White Paper setting out proposals for an Environment Bill. We published a summary report on the outcome of the consultation last March.

Since then, we’ve been continuing to develop and draft the Bill, taking into account the views raised during the consultation and through discussions of the Natural Resources Reference Group. The Bill is in the process of being finalised and preparations are being made for introduction into the National Assembly for Wales this spring.

We’ll be providing more information over the next couple of months prior to and alongside the Bill being introduced. This will include some factsheets, FAQs and slide packs. We’re also intending to produce an easy-read version of the Bill.

Look out for more information in these monthly bulletins and via our website at: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/environment-bill/?lang=en

Nature Fund

The majority of the twenty Nature Fund projects are now underway and action is starting to gear up for delivering for biodiversity, our communities and local economies. The map on our Nature Fund website provides indicative information on the location of all the Nature Fund projects. http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/natural-resources-management/nature-fund/?lang=en

Many of these projects are working directly with farmers and community groups. For instance, the Long Forest initiative which in based in the Brecon Beacons Nature Action Zone would like to work with farmers and land owners to help improve habitats by managing hedgerows, woodland and ancient trees. The project will:

- Provide free fencing materials, advice and subsidised trees to plant, replant, widen or lengthen a hedge or belt of woodland
- Provide opportunity to attend or host a farm open day or training event
- Help develop opportunities to work with a local community group or school
For further details please contact the Woodland Creation Team of the Woodland Trust (Coed Cadw) on 0845 2935689 or plant@woodlandtrust.org.uk.

Communities from across Wales groups can also get involved in the Nature Fund. The Natural Buzz project led by Keep Wales Tidy is helping communities make the most of their green spaces with £55,000 worth of garden centre vouchers.

Community groups, schools, charitable organisations and local authorities in Wales can apply for up to £500 of vouchers to help create wildflower havens to help create new habitat and food sources for pollinators in Wales. For further information please contact Keep Wales Tidy http://www.keepwalestidy.org/home.

Nature Action Zone Focus – Pembrokeshire Coast

Over the next few months our NRM E-Bulletin we will feature a summary of the action taking place in the seven Nature Action Zones. This month we’re focusing on the Pembrokeshire Coast.

The Castlemartin Peninsula project aims to build resilience in the local environment by connecting protected nature sites with the sites that surround them thereby improving resilience of nature across the landscape. This will also improve access for the local community and provide tourism opportunities. The project will involve the local community and work with volunteers offering training on a range of practical skills.

A few miles away the Ecobank Project will pilot a nutrient offsetting scheme to help improve ecological status of the catchment. The scheme will work land managers businesses and industry to explore the use of markets for environment improvements thereby enhancing ecosystem resilience. Meanwhile the Natural Buzz project will be demonstrating how to make the most out of green space for the benefit of nature and communities at Neyland Primary School. Community groups, schools, charitable organisations will also be able to apply for garden centre vouchers to transform their own green spaces. The Nature Fund also extends to the marine environment; based in Cardigan Bay the Living Seas Project will work with local fishermen and local businesses to develop a sustainable fishing model whilst also connecting communities with their environment.

Contact details for each of the projects can be found on the Nature Fund website (link above). Also watch out on our website for the Nature Fund project fact sheets coming shortly.

Welsh Government Climate Change Annual Report 2014

In December, we published the third annual report covering implementation of the Climate Change Strategy for Wales (Welsh Government | 2014 Climate Change Annual Report). The report sets out progress made in tackling the causes and consequences of climate change.

This year’s report shows that we have once again met our 3% annual emissions reduction target. However, further action is required to ensure long term emission reduction commitments are achieved including the 40% reduction target for total emissions by 2020.
The report breaks down our progress against our emissions targets and adaptation activity by sectors in Wales and includes updates on activity across Welsh Government. In terms of progress the Resource Efficiency and Waste sector in particular is a demonstration of what can be done. Our record in Wales on waste is now on a par with the best in Europe and in parallel we have reduced emissions by over 20%. Even more significantly, this progress is a demonstration of how delivering on this agenda can also support sustainable economic growth.

The report concludes by summarising the next steps that we will be taking, building upon our key legislation and delivering in line with the priorities set out in the recent Ministerial Statement on the Climate Change Policy Refresh. Alongside the Report, we have published a Technical Annex, which includes the performance indicators developed to indicate progress for each sector.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

In December the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held its Conference of Parties (COP20) in Lima, Peru. Welsh Government was represented at these talks, which continue the negotiations towards a new global deal to address climate change ahead of the conference in Paris 2015.

The innovation and leadership being shown by subnational governments is crucial in demonstrating that it is possible to tackle the challenge of climate change and in building momentum to an ambitious global agreement in Paris in 2015. As a Government, we continue to actively play our part on an international level and work with partners – in particular through the Network for Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD) and the Climate Group, where we have recently signed the Compact of States and Regions and in September at the New York Climate conference also wrote to formally express our support for the World Bank statement ‘Putting a Price on Carbon’.

To find out more information on the conference visit the UN Framework for Climate Change website: [http://unfccc.int/meetings/lima_dec_2014/meeting/8141.php](http://unfccc.int/meetings/lima_dec_2014/meeting/8141.php)

Other areas of interest

Planning (Wales) Bill

The Planning (Wales) Bill was introduced last October by the Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant AM. The Planning (Wales) Bill introduces a series of legislative changes informed by a comprehensive evidence base and extensive consultation. The Planning (Wales) Bill aims to deliver reform of the Welsh planning system to ensure that it is fair, resilient and enables development. Taken together with proposed changes to secondary legislation, policy and guidance, the Bill will support delivery of the homes, jobs and infrastructure that Wales requires, whilst providing opportunities to protect and enhance our most important built and natural environments and support the use of the Welsh language.

The Planning (Wales) Bill is currently at Stage 1 of the Assembly’s legislative process. This involves consideration by the Responsible Committee, in this case the Environment and Sustainability Committee, of the general principles of the Bill. The Minister for Natural Resources along with other key stakeholders has appeared before the Committee to provide evidence. The
Minister for Natural Resources has also appeared before the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee and the Finance Committee to give evidence in relation to the Bill. You can view these sessions and read the transcripts on the National Assembly for Wales Website. The Environment and Sustainability Committee will issue a written report on its consideration of the Bill at the end of January 2015. The National Assembly for Wales will then vote on the General Principles of the Bill in February before it can progress to Stage 2.

For more information visit the Welsh Government website: www.wales.gov.uk/planning

Follow us on Twitter: #planningbillwales #positiveplanning

**An update from the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management team**

**NRW Delivery Plan**

The phase 2 report published in April 2014 by Natural Resources Wales reviewed the coastal flooding of December 2013 and January 2014 and contained 47 recommendations. These recommendations are set out to identify how we can improve our resilience to such future events.

Since the phase 2 report was published, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has worked on a Delivery Plan for progressing the recommendations.

The Delivery Plan was published on 5th January 2015 and includes:
- How the recommendations can be taken forward
- Who will lead on taking these recommendations going forward
- What will be delivered in progressing these recommendations
- Indicative timescales for completion of the recommendations.

The recommendations are a positive reflection of the ambition and aspiration of the Welsh Government and the flood and coastal risk management partners in Wales. They set out a shared framework of practical activities, which over time will deliver increased resilience to communities at risk from coastal flooding and/or coastal erosion in Wales.

Below are the links to the Delivery Plan published on the Natural Resources Wales website:


**Flood and Coast Investment Programme Consultation (FaCIP)**

We are currently consulting on the way that Welsh Government allocates funding for flood and coastal erosion risk management in Wales and ensuring it focuses on those places with the greatest risk.

The Flood and Coast Investment Programme (FaCIP) will use a national Flood Risk Index to combine different sources of flood and erosion risk to make it simpler to compare risk in different places. This will then be used to direct investment to the most appropriate areas and create a
clear, objective way of directing funds to places at risk from all sources of flooding and coastal erosion.

The intention is that this will create a clear, objective way of directing our funds to places at risk from all sources of flooding and coastal erosion.

Understanding flood and coastal erosion risk and prioritising investment is a fundamental principle of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and our National Strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in Wales.

The consultation on the Flood and Coast Investment Programme was launched in December 2014 and will close on 6th March 2015. The consultation can be found at: http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/flood-and-coast-investment-programme-facip/?status=open&lang=en

**Shoreline Management Plans**

A Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) is a non-statutory policy document for coastal flood and erosion risk management planning. It takes account of other existing planning initiatives and legislative requirements, and is intended to inform wider strategic planning. There are 4 Plans covering Wales.

The Minister for Natural Resources has recently signed off all four Shoreline Management Plans (SMP) covering the Welsh coastline. An SMP is a non-statutory policy document for coastal flood and erosion risk management planning which take account of other existing planning initiatives and legislative requirements, and is intended to inform wider strategic planning. Whilst these remain non-statutory plans they play an important planning role. Planning Policy Guidance in TAN 15 states that Local Development Plan policies and planning decisions should take the SMP preferred management option into account.

The SMPs are important in helping direct our future investment and will influence how we prepare our coastal communities against the effects of sea level rise and climate change.

In signing off these plans, this does not signal the end of the process, SMPs are “living documents” and effective communication with local residents remains crucial.

**Welsh Government announces £150 million for Flood and Coastal Risk Management**

The Minister for Natural Resources and the Minister for Finance and Government Business, Jane Hutt jointly announced £150 million of new investment in priority coastal erosion and flood risk management schemes across Wales. The programme will deliver key coastal erosion and flood risk management schemes in partnership with local authorities from 2018.

Funding for flood risk management is a major priority for the Welsh Government, with over £245 million invested over this term of Government, supported by an additional £50 million from Europe.
West Rhyl Coastal Defence Scheme

On 5th January 2015, the Minister for Natural Resources announced additional funding to complete the third phase of the West Rhyl Coastal Defence scheme. The third phase of this £4.4 million scheme is funded by Welsh Government (£1.9m), European Regional Development Fund (£2m) and Denbighshire County Council (£0.5m). This funding allows for the third and final phase of this scheme to commence.

The three phases of the West Rhyl Coastal Defence scheme will cost over £12 million, of which £5.2m will be funded through the European Regional Development Fund and once complete will provide a reduced flood risk to over 2100 residential and 560 commercial properties. Phases 1 and 2 were completed in July 2012 with the final third phase due for completion by summer 2015.

Wales works with UK to develop a Marine Strategy as part of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) is part of a European initiative to help us look after our seas for future generations. Its goal is to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) in our waters by 2020.

The Welsh Government has been taking steps for a number of years to make sure our seas are clean, healthy, productive and biologically diverse. In order to meet the requirement of the Directive we’re building on these foundations with a new Marine Strategy.

Our strategy is about protecting and enhancing our marine environment and coastal areas in a sustainable manner, whilst also supporting economic growth and creating new jobs. Similar marine strategies are being developed across the European Union to collectively look after our marine environment for future generations.

Achieving Good Environmental Status means meeting eleven separate standards - or descriptors - that cover the major challenges we face in managing our seas. Such as:

- Biological challenges, like managing food webs, sea floors and biodiversity.
- Social challenges, like controlling waste and litter.
- And industrial challenges, like reducing contaminants in our waters and seafood, or controlling underwater noise during energy production.

The Welsh Government has been working closely with the UK Government and devolved administrations to develop a UK Marine Strategy that addresses these challenges and meet the requirements of the Directive. The MSFD is being rolled out in different stages:

Part One – covers the initial assessment of our seas, the characteristics of GES and sets targets and indicators that will take us towards GES. See external link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-strategy-part-one-uk-initial-assessment-and-good-environmental-status

We are now working on the third stage which is to develop a Programme of Measures that are designed to help us achieve or maintain GES. The proposals have been developed by UK policy makers in consultation with experts and key stakeholders. There are already many measures in place to deliver the requirements of the directive but there is still more work to do. In some cases more information and monitoring needs to be carried out before new measures can be introduced.

The proposed programme will be going out for a 12 week public consultation in January 2015. This will be your opportunity provide us with your comments.

There is more information available regarding the consultation and how you can get involved on our website
http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/fisheries/marine/europeandirectives/marinestra
tegy/?skip=1&lang=en

The Welsh Government has produced a short animation video which gives an overview of the Directive and our vision for our marine environment, which can be viewed on the Welsh Government YouTube channel
http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/fisheries/marine/europeandirectives/marinestra
tegy/marine-strategy-framework-directive-animation/?lang=en

If you would like more information please contact us at marine@wales.gsi.gov.uk

**Sound Advice on Noise**

The Welsh Government has updated its on-line public information booklet “Sound Advice on Noise”, which explains how members of the public can raise concerns about excessive noise with the appropriate authorities, and what powers are available to those authorities to take action to improve the situation. This follows a commitment arising out of the Welsh Government’s 2014 noise action plan consultation to make clearer the process by which members of the public can have their noise concerns looked at and followed up.

The main changes in this edition relate to the new powers introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and the approach to managing transport noise taken by the Noise Action Plan for Wales. The contact details section has also been updated to include Natural Resources Wales as the regulator for major industrial noise sources. Information has also been added on shift workers and noisy vehicles.

Sound Advice on Noise can be downloaded at:
http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epg/noiseandnuisance/soundadvice/

**Consultation on Environmental Permitting Fees & Charges for Local Authorities 2014-2015**

The Department for Natural Resources has launched a consultation on changes to the fees and charges payable to Welsh local authority regulators by businesses for the environmental permits that enable them to operate, ensuring that their emissions of pollutants to the environment are kept to acceptable levels. Welsh Government policy is that these fees and charges should be sufficient to cover the costs incurred by the regulator, and the proposal is to increase them by 1.5% in 2015 in line with inflation. The Welsh Government also proposes to expand the list of
business sectors eligible for reduced fees where they are issued with “simplified permits” that require less effort to administer on the part of the regulator.


**Consultation - Strengthening Enforcement Authorities Powers to Seize Vehicles for Certain Waste Offences**

Defra and the Welsh Government are seeking comments on proposals for new Regulations to help the Governments in England and Wales reduce illegal waste activity, including fly tipping, by giving enforcement authorities more effective tools to use in their investigation and prosecution of suspected offences.

Enforcement authorities currently have powers to seize vehicles but the cost and bureaucracy of the process discourages their use. The policy aim is to strengthen existing powers, reduce costs and complexity to enable authorities to react quickly to suspected offences.

Responses to the consultation should be received by 3 February 2015. For further information and to view the consultation document, please visit: http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/141215-150203-strengthening-enforcement-authorities-powers-to-seize-vehicles-for-certain-waste-offences/?lang=en

**Glastir: New EU Regulations**

All Glastir contract holders should have received a notification letter explaining the change in EU Regulations came into effect 1 January 2015.

This includes:

- A new requirement for all Glastir Contract holders to submit an annual Single Application Form (SAF) and claim payment. SAF must be submitted by 15 May to avoid any late claim penalties. SAF received between 16 May and 9 June will incur financial penalties. SAF received after Tuesday 9 June will be completely rejected.

- There are new Glastir crop and land use codes to enable you to declare specific crops being used to support certain Glastir Management Options.

Please note: that it is important to use the appropriate Glastir crop/land use code to ensure that you receive the appropriate Glastir payment.

If you have not received this letter please contact the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 062 5004 or through your RPW Online Account.

**Glastir Advanced Expression of Interest 2016**

The Online Expression of interest for Glastir Advanced will be re-opened from 9 February to 6 March 2015.
If you wish to submit an Expression of Interest please ensure you are enrolled onto RPW Online. October 2014 and February 2015 Expressions of Interests will be processed during 2015 and selected for a contract starting on 1 January 2016.

Glastir and Greening

The Welsh Government has ensured as many Glastir options remain open to farmers to qualify for EFA including hedgerow and wildlife corridors up to 3 metres wide, created, restored and maintained under Glastir. These options do not now contain any double funding elements as the additional activities go beyond the minimum requirements for BPS. You can therefore use these hedgerows and corridors as EFA hedges with no effect to your Glastir payment. There are 5 arable Glastir Entry options and 2 Glastir Advanced Options which potentially constitute double funding with Greening EFA. Double funding only arises if the EFA, declared on the SAF, is placed in the same location as the Glastir option(s). Those farmers affected will be written to individually.

Glastir Organic 2015

If a contract has been offered and accepted by you, you must submit your original Organic Control Body (OCB) certificate and land schedule by the 30th April 2015 for this first year under contract. OCB Certificates and land schedules received after this date will be rejected and the offer of a Glastir Organic contract 2015 will be withdrawn.

Badger Found Dead Survey

As part of the Welsh Government’s drive to tackle the problem of bovine tuberculosis (TB), individuals are being asked to report sightings of dead badgers to help with an extensive survey. The survey aims to improve understanding of the distribution of TB infection across Wales and will be carried out for at least the whole of 2015.

If you find a dead badger please contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) on 0300 303 8268. The line is open from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. APHA will, wherever possible, collect all carcasses reported.

The Badger Found Dead Survey within the Intensive Action Area (IAA) in north Pembrokeshire is continuing as normal. Any badgers found dead in the IAA should be reported to Welsh Government on 0800 4961439.

Badger Vaccination Grant open for applications

A grant to support privately delivered badger vaccination projects in Wales is open for applications for the second year.

The Badger Vaccination Grant provides farmers, landowners and others who wish to vaccinate badgers against TB with the opportunity to benefit from financial support. Successful applicants will receive up to 50% of the eligible costs of badger vaccination. Up to £250,000 a year will be available for five years.
The application window runs until March. For more information please visit the badger vaccination pages of the Welsh Government’s website at the following link: www.wales.gov.uk/bovintb

**Ways to keep updated**

To learn more about the Natural Resource Management Programme please visit: www.wales.gov.uk\\/naturalresourcemanagement

The web pages include *frequently asked questions (FAQs)*, an *information pack* and some *case studies*.

You can also keep up to date with developments on Facebook and Twitter by following @WG_NatResMin and liking the Welsh Government’s Facebook page.

If you have any questions or if you want to join the mailing list, please email us at naturalresourcemanagement@wales.gsi.gov.uk