

SEVERN-TRENT
REGION
PLAN SUMMARY

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NRA

National Rivers Authority

Guardians of
the Water Environment

Introduction

Established on 1st September 1989, the National Rivers Authority (NRA) came into being as a result of the 1989 Water Act and was created as a public body whose main task it is to protect and improve the water environment in England and Wales and provide protection against flooding from rivers and the sea. The first full year of independent operation was completed on 31st March 1991.

Head Office functions of the Authority are split between London and Bristol, but its operational activities devolve on ten Regions based on the former Water Authority areas.

This document, one of a set of ten, seeks to explain a little of Severn-Trent Region NRA's background and shows how the Authority's national aims as set out in its 1991/92 *Corporate Plan* will be translated into Regional action.

Mission Statement

The National Rivers Authority will protect and improve the water environment. This will be achieved through effective management of water resources and by substantial reductions in pollution. The Authority aims to provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea. In discharging its duties it will operate openly and balance the interests of all who benefit from and use rivers, ground waters, estuaries and coastal waters. The Authority will be businesslike, efficient and caring towards its employees.

Aims:

- to achieve a continuing improvement in the quality of rivers, estuaries and coastal waters, through the control of water pollution;
- to assess, manage, plan and conserve water resources and to maintain and improve the quality of water for all those who use it;
- to provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea;
- to provide adequate arrangements for flood forecasting and warning;
- to maintain, improve and develop fisheries;
- to develop the amenity and recreation potential of waters and lands under NRA control;
- to conserve and enhance wildlife, landscape and archaeological features associated with water under NRA control;
- to improve and maintain inland waterways and their facilities for use by the public where the NRA is the navigation authority;
- to ensure that dischargers pay the cost of the consequences of their discharges and, as far as possible, to recover the cost of water environment improvements from those who benefit;
- to improve public understanding of the water environment and the NRA's work;
- to improve efficiency in the exercise of the NRA's functions and to provide challenge and opportunity for employees and show concern for their welfare.

Regional Organisation

Each Region of the NRA is managed by a Regional General Manager who reports to the Operations Director and whose management team has responsibility for managing the main functions and support services in the Region. Severn-Trent Region employs a total of some 980 people.

There are three statutory Committees per Region through which the NRA achieves a wide base of consultation. These are a Regional Flood Defence Committee (through which the NRA discharges its flood defence and land drainage duties), a Regional Rivers Advisory Committee and a Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee (these two committees being composed of members from a wide range of relevant backgrounds who advise the NRA on river basin management and fisheries policy respectively).

In addition, each Region has a Regional Advisory Board, on which the RGM and the three statutory Committee Chairmen sit. This is chaired by the NRA Board Member with responsibility for that Region.

Regional General Manager
Dr Geoff Mance
Regional Board Member
John Wheatley
Regional Flood Defence Committee Chairman
Guy Hawthorne

Regional Rivers Advisory Committee Chairman
Dr Hugh Tebbutt
Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee Chairman
Fred Jennings

Activities Requiring NRA Consent

Certain activities require the NRA's consent. The list is too long to include here, but the following are examples:

- abstract or impound water;
- make a discharge to any river, lake or tidal water or onto land for a soakaway, or to specific underground waters;
- clean or desludge a dam, weir or sluice;
- culvert any watercourse;
- interfere with land drainage by building or modifying any structures within or adjacent to a main river;
- build or plant within eight metres of a main river;
- introduce or transfer fish into any waters or use a net or trap to catch fish;
- use a rod and line to catch fish;
- interfere with a sea defence.

Public Register Access

The formal Register of Environmental Information is held at our Regional Headquarters and may be examined during normal working hours.

Where to contact us: Regional Headquarters

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Fax: 021-722 5824

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Copies of the full Corporate Plan are available @ £12 per copy from:
Advertising Services
Unit 13
Lancaster Way Business Park
Ely, Cambs CB6 3NP
Cheques should be made payable to 'National Rivers Authority'.

Foreword

The last year has been hectic as we have responded to floods, drought, blue-green algae and pollution incidents. We have also spent time consolidating after the upheaval of 1989/90.

The year has brought additional resources, most of which only appeared as extra staff in the autumn. Notwithstanding this, it has been a successful year with the vast majority of our targets met or on schedule for completion on a longer timetable.

This has created forward impetus, building on the high morale and commitment of our staff. The injection of new young blood has been very beneficial.

In 1991/92 and subsequent years we are seeking to build on this platform. The additional resources in 1990/91 secured our ability to do the basic tasks adequately. The resources bid for in this Plan will enable new initiatives to be undertaken within the context of agreed national guidelines. Throughout we are seeking to ensure that maximum environmental benefit is gained from the resources used within the Region.

Dr Geoff Mance
Regional General Manager

Key Achievements 1990/91

The first full year of operation as the Severn-Trent Region of the NRA has seen solid performance in all departments, despite difficulties in some disciplines in the recruitment and retention of staff. During the year the region has:

- made good progress in achieving the targets in the first Corporate Plan and consolidating the new organisation;
- responded to the additional demands arising from widespread drought and significant flooding;
- dealt with a large upturn in reports of pollution, planning consultations, enquiries, consent determinations, and monitoring of blue-green algae;
- contributed significantly to national initiatives and development of strategies;
- begun a survey of the condition of flood defence assets and completed a review of flooding problems in the Region;
- revised the fisheries bye-laws;
- commenced a habitat survey and video record of main river;
- developed methodology for conservation and enhancement plans for flood defence works;
- completed new offices at Lichfield, Tewkesbury and Warwick, and occupied an annex for the Regional Office;
- raised the enforcement profile of the NRA in both pollution and abstraction control.

Regional Priorities 1991/92

For 1991/92 and subsequent years, the objective is to provide sufficient resources to maintain the momentum of achievement, particularly providing for forward planning, renewal of assets and assimilation of national initiatives. The Regional targets summarised below have been structured in the context of clearly identified corporate priorities and to ensure maximum environmental benefit from the resources used in the Region.

Water Resources:

- revise River Severn control rules;
- progress River Derwent operational model;
- design final phase of Shropshire Groundwater Scheme;
- review abstraction licensing issues;
- prepare and initiate a programme to remedy low flows;
- implement phase II of nitrate-sensitive areas, aquifer protection surveys, and contaminated land prioritisation programme;
- secure and reinforce hydrometric network;
- develop tidal and snowmelt flow forecasting.

Pollution Control:

- implement charging for discharges;
- review inherited temporary consents;
- develop statutory quality objectives and consult;
- rationalise sampling programme to national guidelines;
- increase enforcement of effluent standards.

Flood Defence:

- continue survey of existing flood defence assets;
- introduce cost benefit analysis to prioritise maintenance work;
- revise emergency plans;
- rationalise depot facilities;
- start to renew or refurbish existing assets.

Fisheries:

- establish database for S28 purposes;
- review fishing licences;
- develop anti-poaching strategy;
- increase fish production.

Recreation and Conservation:

- implement site management plans for main NRA sites;
- develop cost recovery/charges scheme;
- survey 600km of river corridor.



Severn-Trent Region

Severn-Trent is the second largest (in both area and population) of the NRA Regions, covering the middle of England from the Humber Estuary to the Bristol Channel and extending into mid-Wales.

The Region is diverse, with major industrial zones, extensive agricultural plains and upland headwater areas with major multipurpose reservoirs. There are contrasts in climate and geology; the Welsh mountains and the Pennine Hills have high rainfall, whereas the lower Trent Valley and the Vale of Evesham are among the driest areas in Britain. Large urban and industrial conurbations are at the headwaters of major rivers in the centre and east of the Region. Consequently, environmental and quality regulation is particularly important.

Agricultural land use ranges from exclusively arable in the east through mixed farming to upland sheep farming and forestry.

Some Key Statistics

- Area: 21,600sqkm
- Population: 8.3m
- Length of main river: 3,579km
- Length of estuary: 139km
- Flood defence works maintained: 916km
- Average annual rainfall: 775mm
- Number of abstraction licences: 7,544
- Volume of authorised water abstraction: 11,087Ml/d
- Number of consented discharges: 10,272
- Number of industrial discharges: 2,406
- Length of EC designated fisheries: 2,790km