

# NRA CORPORATE STRATEGY



NRA

*National Rivers Authority*

Guardians of  
the Water Environment

## ANGLIAN REGION

- 1 Ancholme
- 2 Grimsby Area
- 3 Upper Witham
- 4 Louth Coastal
- 5 Lower Witham
- 6 Welland
- 7 Lower Nene
- 8 North Norfolk rivers
- 9 Stiffkey, Burn & Glaven
- 10 Upper Nene
- 11 Old Bedford River
- 12 Ely Ouse
- 13 Yare
- 14 Upper Ouse
- 15 Bedford Ouse
- 16 Cam
- 17 Gipping & Stour
- 18 Alde, Blyth & Deben
- 19 Blackwater including Colne & Chelmer
- 20 Crouch & Thameside

## NORTHUMBRIA & YORKSHIRE REGION

- 1 Till
- 2 Aln
- 3 Coquet
- 4 Wansbeck including Lyne
- 5 Blyth
- 6 Tyne including Ouseburn
- 7 Wear
- 8 Northumbria Area Coast
- 9 Tees, Leven & Skerne
- 10 Esk & Coastal streams
- 11 Swale, Ure & Ouse
- 12 Nidd & Wharfe
- 13 Aire
- 14 Calder
- 15 Don, Rother & Dearne
- 16 Derwent
- 17 Hull & Coast

## NORTH WEST REGION

- 1 Eden & Estuary
- 2 Derwent & Cumbrian Coast
- 3 Leven & Morecombe Bay
- 4 Lune
- 5 Wyre
- 6 Ribble
- 7 Douglas
- 8 Alt & Crossens
- 9 Irwell
- 10 Mersey Estuary
- 11 Mersey Basin
- 12 Weaver

## SEVERN-TRENT REGION

- 1 Idle, Maun & Torne
- 2 Trent - Dove to Humber
- 3 Severn - Upstream of Perry
- 4 Severn - Perry to Teme
- 5 Upper Trent, Sow & Penk

- 6 Dove & Churnet
- 7 Derwent
- 8 Erewash
- 9 Teme
- 10 Stour
- 11 Tame & Anker
- 12 Soar
- 13 Blyth, Cole & Bourne
- 14 Warwickshire Avon
- 15 Severnside

## SOUTHERN REGION

- 1 Test
- 2 West Hampshire
- 3 Isle of Wight
- 4 Itchen
- 5 Meon & East Hampshire
- 6 Arun
- 7 Adur & Ouse
- 8 Darent
- 9 Medway
- 10 North Kent
- 11 Stour
- 12 Eastern Rother
- 13 Cuckmere

## SOUTH WESTERN REGION

- 1 Hayle & Red River
- 2 Cober & South Cornwall
- 3 Fal
- 4 Gannel & Camel
- 5 Parr, Crinnis & St Austell
- 6 Seaton, Looe & Fowey
- 7 North Cornwall Coast, Strat & Neet
- 8 Upper Tamar & tributaries
- 9 Tamar Estuary, Tavey, Lynher, Plym & Yealm
- 10 Erme
- 11 Avon
- 12 Dart
- 13 Torridge
- 14 Abbey River & Clovelly Stream
- 15 Taw & Torridge Estuary
- 16 Taw
- 17 Teign
- 18 Exe
- 19 North Devon Coastal & Lyn
- 20 West Somerset Rivers
- 21 Tone
- 22 Sid & Otter
- 23 North Somerset Rivers
- 24 Brue, Sheppey & Hartlake
- 25 Isle, Yeo, Cary & Parrett
- 26 Lim & Axe
- 27 West Dorset Streams
- 28 Frome & Piddle
- 29 Dorset Stour
- 30 Lower Bristol Avon
- 31 Upper Bristol Avon
- 32 Hampshire Avon
- 33 Poole Harbour

## THAMES REGION

- 1 Cherwell
- 2 Thames - Buscot to Eynsham
- 3 Upper Thames to Buscot
- 4 Thames - Eynsham to Benson
- 5 Thame
- 6 Colne
- 7 Upper Lee
- 8 Middle Lee
- 9 Kennet
- 10 Thames - Benson to Hurley
- 11 Thames - Hurley to Teddington
- 12 Brent & Crane
- 13 Lower Lee
- 14 Roding
- 15 Thames Tideway & Estuary
- 16 Loddon
- 17 Blackwater
- 18 Wey
- 19 Mole
- 20 Wandle, Beverley Brook & Hogsmill
- 21 Ravensbourne

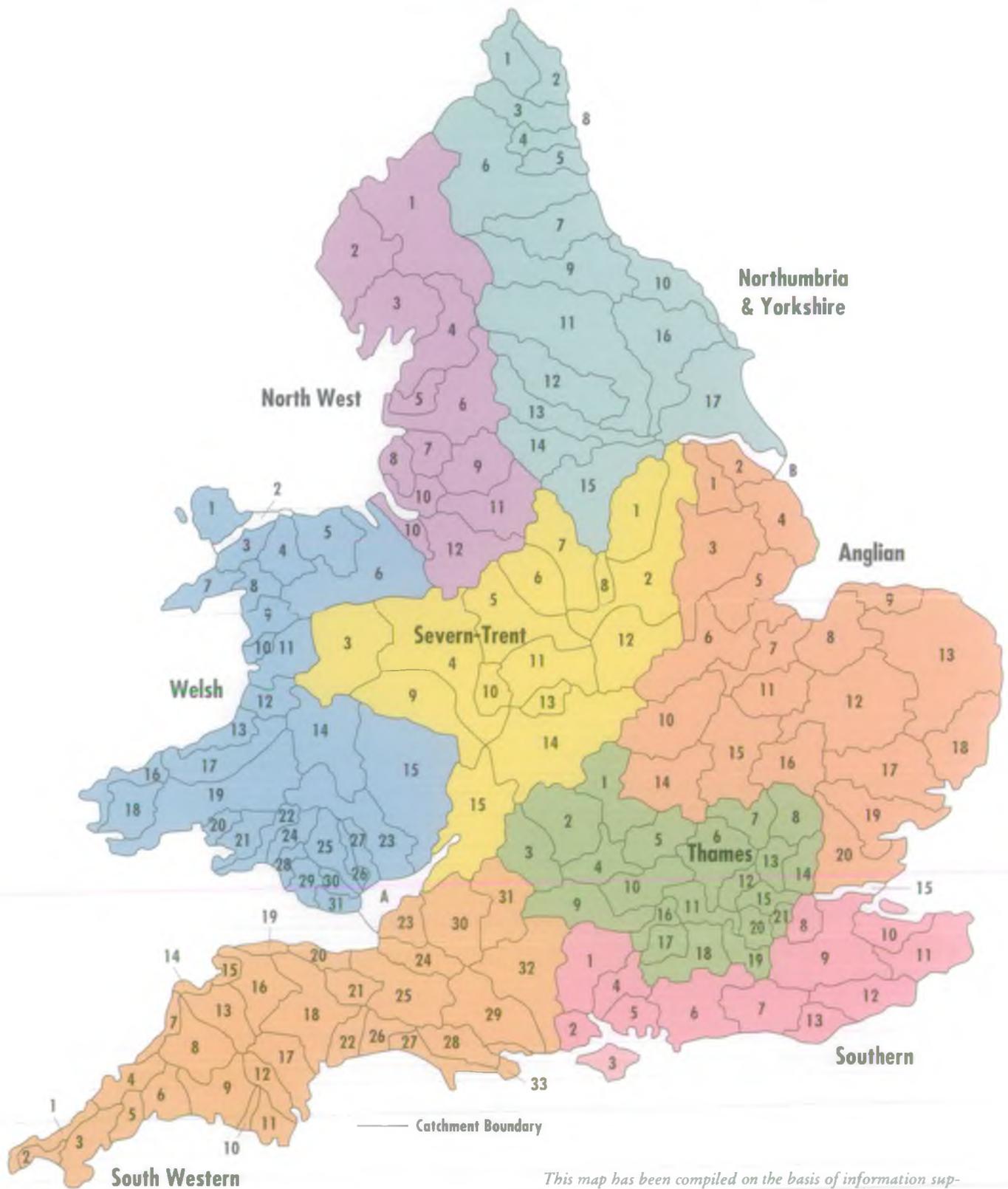
## WELSH REGION

- 1 Cefn & Braint
- 2 Menai Straits
- 3 Gwrfai, Seiont, Ogwen & Llynfi
- 4 Conwy
- 5 Clwyd
- 6 Dee
- 7 Dwyfor & Erch
- 8 Glaslyn, Dwyryd & Artro
- 9 Mawddach & Wnion
- 10 Dysynni
- 11 Dyfi & Leri
- 12 Rheidol, Ystwyth & Clarach
- 13 Aeron, Arth & Wyre
- 14 Upper Wye
- 15 Lower Wye
- 16 Nevern, Gwaun, Solva & Pembroke Coastal Rivers
- 17 Teifi
- 18 Cleddau
- 19 Tywi & Taf
- 20 Gwendraeth, Fach & Fawr
- 21 Llŵchwr & North Gower Rivers
- 22 Tawe & South Gower rivers
- 23 Usk
- 24 Neath
- 25 Taff
- 26 Rhydney
- 27 Ebbw
- 28 Afan & Kenfig
- 29 Ogmere
- 30 Ely
- 31 Thaw

## JOINT

- A Severn Estuary
- B Humber Estuary

## CATCHMENT BOUNDARIES



*This map has been compiled on the basis of information supplied by NRA regions to the Northumbria & Yorkshire Drawing Office. When preparing detailed catchment management plans for a few locations, the precise boundaries may show some minor variations when plotted on a larger scale.*

## PUBLISHING INFORMATION

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This document and the NRA Function Strategies, published 1993, can be obtained from the above address.

## NRA Function Strategies:

Water Quality, Water Resources, Flood Defence, Fisheries, Conservation, Navigation, Recreation, R&D

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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

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## MISSION AND AIMS

The National Rivers Authority, NRA, was created in 1989 as an independent environmental watchdog. Our prime purpose is to protect and improve the aquatic environment throughout England and Wales. We have Head Offices in Bristol and London. We operate through 8 regions and 26 areas based on natural river catchment boundaries. These are illustrated on the map which folds out to the left.

### OUR MISSION

We will protect and improve the water environment by the effective management of water resources and by substantial reductions in pollution. We will aim to provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea. In discharging our duties we will operate openly and balance the interests of all who benefit from and use rivers, groundwaters, estuaries and coastal waters. We will be businesslike, efficient and caring towards our employees.

### OUR AIMS

- Achieve a continuing overall improvement in the quality of rivers, estuaries and coastal waters through the control of pollution.
- Manage water resources to achieve the right balance between the needs of the environment and those of the abstractors.

- Provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea.
- Provide adequate arrangements for flood forecasting and warning.
- Maintain, improve and develop fisheries.
- Develop the amenity and recreational potential of inland and coastal waters and associated lands.
- Conserve and enhance wildlife, landscape and archaeological features associated with inland and coastal waters of England and Wales.
- Improve and maintain inland waters and their facilities for use by the public where the NRA is the navigation authority.
- Ensure that dischargers pay the costs of the consequences of their discharges, and, as far as possible, to recover the costs of water environment improvements from those who benefit.
- Improve public understanding of the water environment and the NRA's work.
- Improve efficiency in the exercise of the NRA's functions and to provide challenge and opportunity for employees and show concern for their welfare.

### CONTENTS

■ Introduction	1	■ Our Strategy	11
■ Summary	2	■ Cross-functional issues	19
■ The NRA today	5	■ Organisation and resourcing	22
■ The environment - influences and pressure points	7	■ Glossary of terms and acronyms	25

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



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## INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the NRA's Corporate Strategy. It explains the principles that we have developed and operated since our establishment and how we will apply them in the period leading up to the creation of the proposed Environment Agency. The Strategy complements our Core Function and R&D Strategies, published autumn 1993, by defining corporate objectives and addressing cross-functional issues, providing a strategic policy framework for all that we do. It is designed to be equally relevant for those same functions in the new organisation.

The Strategy explains the NRA's approach to the integrated management of the water environment for the many organisations and individuals who take an interest in our work. It also provides an important statement of direction for our employees.

The consultation that we undertook on our Function Strategies with our Regional Committees,

and through them the wide range of interest groups they represent, is reflected in this document. Their knowledge and expertise continues to be a much valued resource.

Our Mission and Aims have directed the NRA's policy development since our establishment in 1989. Publication of our Corporate Strategy at this point reinforces the need for an integrated approach to the management of the environment as preparations for the Environment Agency continue.

The overriding aim directing the NRA's work is the protection and improvement of the water environment. We are determined to make a real and positive difference to the rivers, estuaries and underground and coastal waters of England and Wales and, through this, an essential contribution to the health and sustainability of our wider environment for current and future generations.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Crickhowell".

Lord Crickhowell  
Chairman  
June 1994



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ed Gallagher".

Ed Gallagher  
Chief Executive

## SUMMARY

### THE NRA VISION

Our vision is of a healthy and diverse water environment, managed in an environmentally sustainable way, balancing the needs of all users.

### THE NEED FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable development is at the heart of international and UK policy on the environment. The most widely accepted definition of sustainable development is that of the 1987 Brundtland Report: "...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This has been further developed through Agenda 21, the action plan for the next century, endorsed at the 1992 UN conference on environment and development held in Rio de Janeiro (the 'Earth Summit').

Sustainable development must embrace environmental, social and economic concerns for it to be a workable concept; our challenge is to apply it to the water environment. The NRA Corporate Strategy relates the principles of sustainability, precaution and economic efficiency to our Mission to protect and improve rivers and coastal waters.

### OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To achieve our Mission we apply three principles:

- making real improvements to the water environment through effective local operations;
- integrating our services to balance the needs of water users with those of the environment;
- providing value for money through economic efficiency and effective use of our resources.

### OUR VALUES

We are guided by three core values which we use as a template by which we can judge our actions:

- achievement of results;
- teamwork;
- trust.

### OUR CUSTOMERS

We have a wide range of customers due to our many responsibilities. We define our customers as all those with whom we have contact or to whom we provide a service. These include the private water companies, industry, government, local authorities, farmers, anglers, boaters, conservationists and the general public.

### OUR STRATEGY

Our strategic objectives express how we achieve our Mission and Aims. They follow a logical cycle of planning, action and subsequent review.

#### Plan

- To plan for environmental sustainability and improvement through an integrated approach to river catchment management.

#### Act

- To protect and regulate the water environment and its various uses by achieving agreed standards and objectives.
- To identify and ensure implementation of balanced, lasting and cost-effective solutions to environmental problems.
- To provide customers with advice, information and incentive to influence behaviour and mitigate or prevent environmental damage.
- To use collaboration, partnership and consultation with others to further NRA objectives and make best use of available resource.

#### Review

- To assess and report on the state of the water environment and our success in ensuring its sustainable use.

## CROSS-FUNCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Cross-functional objectives in support of our Strategy are set out below. They complement the specific objectives already published in the strategies for our seven core functions - water quality, water resources, flood defence, fisheries, recreation, conservation and navigation - and our research and development (R&D). Short to medium-term targets and associated resources needed to implement these objectives are published annually in our Corporate Plan.

Our Strategy relies on work in three key areas:

### INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

#### Catchment management and strategic planning:

- assess catchment resources, uses and activities;
- balance conflicting uses and identify actions needed by NRA and others;
- consult with customers on issues to be tackled within catchment management plans;
- establish a long-term vision for individual catchments;
- ensure that use-related environmental objectives are identified, agreed and met;
- use effective and proactive planning to prevent future environmental damage and to provide lasting solutions to environmental problems.

#### Environmental standards and objectives:

- develop appropriate environmental objectives and standards through a combination of operationally proven standards and practices, and R&D;
- press for the adoption of NRA policy through statutory objectives and standards;
- use agreed objectives and standards to direct our regulatory work.

#### Environmental regulator and operator:

- respond to environmental emergencies as a priority;
- ensure no conflicts of interest arise between our regulatory and operational roles;
- demonstrate value for money in the services we provide.

#### Economic investment:

- implement environmental standards in a cost-effective manner;
- develop sound project management and capital programmes for our functions, based on needs and economic justification;
- influence investment by central and local government, water companies, industry, the public sector, developers and agriculture to include economically efficient schemes that benefit the environment.

### WORKING WITH OTHERS

#### Customers:

- provide a responsive, high quality service for all of our customers;
- comply with our Customer Charter standards;
- communicate with our customers and provide information and impartial advice in an open way;
- maximise environmental benefit by consultation, collaboration and partnership;
- work with our partners to pre-empt regulation and encourage voluntary action.

#### Influence:

- exert an influence on draft policy programmes and EC Directives with environmental implications;
- contribute to both international environmental policy development and action in our areas of expertise.

### MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

The success of our strategy will be determined by the achievement of a few critical measures. These include:

- successful implementation of catchment management plans;
- availability of water resources;
- achievement of environmental standards and objectives, for example water quality and river flow objectives and flood defence standards of service;
- investment by others in the environment;
- health and quality of fisheries;

- conservation of the water environment;
- enjoyment of public amenities;
- customer satisfaction.

These all require considerable investment over a number of years and action by others to the same timescale. We will monitor their achievement and report on our success to our customers, Government and the public through our Annual Report and other means.

## SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES

To ensure an efficient and effective delivery of our services, we have the following supporting objectives:

### Cultural values:

- be guided by the values of achievement of results, teamwork and trust and use them to judge our actions;
- remove unnecessary bureaucracy whilst retaining good financial controls and accountability;
- aspire to best practice in all that we do.

### Human resources:

- develop professional, well-informed employees, capable of delivering our mission;
- take all reasonably practicable measures to safeguard the health and safety and welfare of our employees.

### Finance and charges:

- deliver value for money environmental services in return for Government grant-in-aid;
- ensure the "polluter pays" principle is adhered to;

- fairly attribute costs and recover costs of our services from customers;
- where legally possible, provide elements of incentive within existing cost recovery schemes;
- once legislation allows, complement regulation with economic instruments where shown to be beneficial;
- seek continuous improvements in efficiency to minimise our costs and pass on the benefits to customers and taxpayers;
- secure alternative sources of funding, for example by exploiting intellectual property rights of our R&D.

### Business process and management issues:

- develop National Services and Centres in support of policy decisions, using them to enhance scientific and managerial competence;
- adopt systems to improve our business focus, for example project management to ensure good planning, tight financial management and the development of service level agreements for internal customers;
- provide information and communication technology infrastructure to support our business;
- continue to develop our Water Archive and Monitoring System (WAMS), Integrated Accounting System (IAS) and Human Resource System (HRS).

### Improved service delivery:

- identify and prioritise activities to be market tested to result in maximum overall efficiencies;
- ensure all employees affected by market testing are treated fairly and considerately;
- communicate NRA policy clearly and regularly throughout the organisation;
- develop expertise of our own employees in contract specification and management of contractors.

### STATUS

The NRA was created in 1989 as an independent environmental watchdog. We are, at present, the strongest environmental protection agency in Europe. Our prime purpose is to protect and improve the water environment in England and Wales and regulate the use of water by industry, agriculture and the private water and sewerage companies.

We look after inland waters including rivers, lakes and canals (surface waters) as well as underground waters (normally called groundwaters). We have statutory responsibilities for water quality, water resources, flood defence, salmon and freshwater fisheries, conservation, navigation and recreation. We also protect people and property from flooding caused by rivers and the sea. Our water quality and fisheries responsibilities extend three and six miles respectively into coastal waters.

In addition, we act as the UK competent authority for some 20 European environmental Directives and contribute to a number of international commitments. We are a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), sponsored by the Department of the Environment (DoE). The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and the Welsh Office (WO) also have important policy responsibilities, MAFF in relation to flood defence and fisheries, and the WO in relation to all our activities in Wales.

We are principally a science, technology and engineering based organisation with a high proportion of professionally trained employees. Our core activities cover environmental regulatory and operational work. We have an important role in environmental emergencies and in influencing land use through development control and the Town and Country Planning process.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To achieve our Mission to protect and improve the water environment, we apply three principles to all that we do:

- making real improvements to the water environment through effective local operations;
- integrating our services to balance the needs of water users with those of the environment;
- providing value for money through economic efficiency and effective use of our resources.

We work with a wide range of organisations and individuals, all of whom we regard as our customers. We are committed to being an open organisation, offering professional advice and a responsive service to these customers.

### NEED FOR OUR STRATEGY

The NRA, in common with any other large, complex organisation, is subject to a great many influences. External influences include:

- international and UK policy on sustainability as agreed at the Earth Summit and set out in Agenda 21;
- changes to European and UK legislation that alter the duties and powers that we have at our disposal;
- the state of the UK economy, that affects the financial resource that we have to protect and improve the water environment;
- proposals for a new Environment Agency, that will protect and improve the environment as a whole.

Our published strategy to date has been defined by our Mission and Aims, complemented by our Function Strategies. It has already prompted changes in the way we are organised and given rise to new working practices and systems. The influences that affect us and the relationship between them, require a corporate framework that must be flexible enough to take account of further developments up to the creation of the Environment Agency and beyond.

## OUR STRATEGIES AND PLANS

Our Corporate Strategy supports our Mission and Aims. It defines the corporate framework for our policies, programmes and plans and sets out cross-functional objectives. Our Function Strategies specify the policy framework for our seven core functions and our research and development work. Our Corporate Plan (updated and published annually) sets out detailed targets for the implementation of our strategic and functional objectives. We publish these documents as part of our remit to report to both Government and the public on our work, in accordance with the Citizen's Charter.

### CORPORATE STRATEGY

Sets out our Mission and Aims and overall strategic policy objectives for the NRA and the water environment across England and Wales.

### FUNCTION STRATEGIES

Set out our national policy objectives for each NRA core function and associated research and development for the next 2-3 years.

### CORPORATE PLAN

Rolls forward our Corporate and Function Strategies in an annual Corporate Plan. It reviews last year's performance and presents our future priorities and spending plans for the next 3 years.

### REGIONAL PLANS

Roll forward our national Corporate Strategies and Plans and individual Catchment Management Plans into an annual operational business plan. They set out targets and resource plans for our functions and services in each region for the budget year and future years.

### CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PLANS

Set out our vision for individual river catchments that take account of both national policy and local community views. Each one presents an action plan for the NRA, landowners and other interests for the next 3-5 years.

*Corporate planning framework.*



*Working with others is an important element of our Strategy. We are working closely with English Nature, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the Suffolk Water Company to restore Redgrave and Lopham Fen in Suffolk and preserve a number of rare invertebrates living in the fen, such as the great raft spider (pictured left). The £3M restoration scheme benefits from EC funding.*

## THE ENVIRONMENT - INFLUENCES AND PRESSURE POINTS

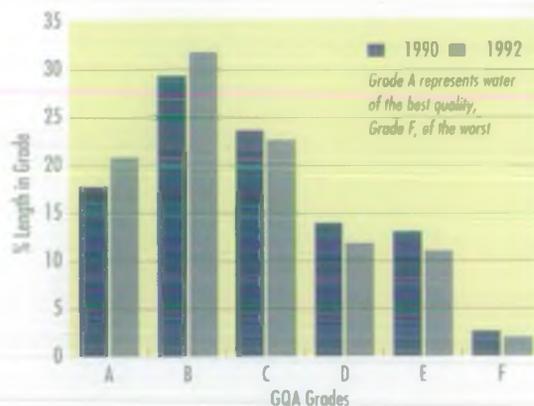
### THE NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The well-being of the human species and the environment that we inhabit are inseparable. Conservation of our environment - our natural capital - is necessary to protect the potential for wealth creation. To maintain a high quality of life, both now and in the future, for us and the other species that share this planet, we must recognise that our economy is dependant on its ecological foundations.

Economic development on a global scale has contributed to, if not caused, many of the environmental problems we face. Global warming, ozone depletion, acid rain, deforestation, species extinction, land degradation, water depletion and toxic pollution are all evidence of this. In some areas we are pushing natural systems to the limits of their capacity to self-replenish and assimilate the waste we produce. Unless we make our wealth creation sustainable, we will live with an increasing degree of environmental degradation and risk.

Following the United Nations Earth Summit in 1992, the need for sustainable development - defined by the 1987 Brundtland Commission as "...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" - is now widely accepted. This has been further developed through Agenda 21. The Government's publication of UK strategies on sustainability and biodiversity in 1994 demonstrates their commitment to these policies.

*River Quality is improving overall.*



*River Quality under new classification scheme 1990-1992.*

### THE PRESENT STATE OF THE WATER ENVIRONMENT

The current demands and pressures on our water environment are heavy. Many of these pressures are predicted to increase and careful management will be essential if the water environment is to be maintained and improved. An assessment of the water environment in England and Wales shows that:

- In 1992, 87% of surface freshwater was of good or fair quality;
- In 1992, 98.7% of drinking water complied with relevant standards (although we are not responsible for drinking water at the tap, we are responsible for raw water for public supply from surface and groundwaters);
- total reported pollution incidents are increasing, but in 1992 confirmed pollution incidents from agriculture showed a decrease;
- water resources are sufficient for current usage but future demand for water resources will result in the need for new developments, which could be significant unless demand is managed;



*Hydrologists Sarah Douglas and Sean Key measure underground water levels at Fishbourne, West Sussex.*

- a reasonable degree of demand management could delay the need for major strategic water resource development until 2021;
- over 2 million people are protected by NRA flood defences - predictions of rises in global mean sea-level and possible changes in weather patterns may mean more people require protection;



*NRA forecasts for future water demand are the basis for our resources development strategy.*

#### Water Resources Demand Scenario.

- while declared catches of salmon and sea trout have been poor in many rivers in recent years, their distributions have been expanding in a number of rehabilitated rivers;
- the number of river-based Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is increasing, but by their very nature, many rivers of high conservation interest are easily damaged;
- participation in watersports and outdoor leisure pursuits is increasing and is forecast to rise further;
- navigation demand is predicted to increase;
- waste management strategies increasingly need to consider combined impacts on water, land and air to ensure that protection of one medium does not cause overloading of another;
- changes in population density and distribution are resulting in increasing pressure on land use in some areas.

In Europe, issues such as toxic pollutants in our seas and major river systems and acid deposition are openly discussed. Waste and preservation of important natural capital require national management strategies, while urban pollution and land use planning are of more concern locally. While no firm boundaries can be drawn between one level and the next, this hierarchy helps to define appropriate action and partners to secure environmental protection and improvement.

In addition to the principle of sustainability, responses to these pressures are influenced by two other principles. Firstly, the proximity principle states that waste should be disposed of within national boundaries ie. within the UK rather than selling waste to other nations. Secondly, the waste management hierarchy encourages minimising, re-using and recycling of materials before finally disposing of them. The application of these environmental principles must be guided by the considerations of economic efficiency.

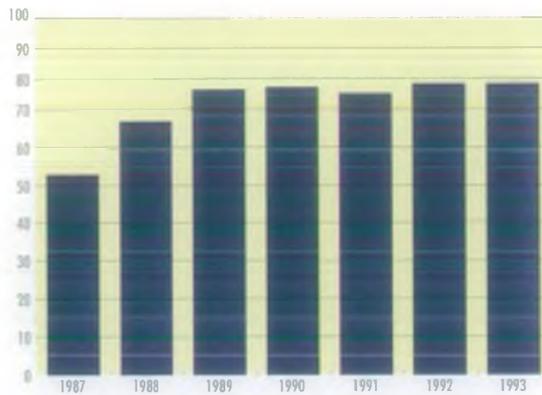
#### ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURE POINTS

Environmental pressures are exerted at global, regional (in our case European), national and local level; they require action and co-operation at each level to relieve them. Frameworks for addressing sustainability, biodiversity and climate change are initiated at the global level but are implemented locally. An example of this is the Hadley Centre for climate change which is working on European climate change scenarios, now that the global framework is established.

#### The NRA - Guardian of the Water Environment

As a national environmental organisation we have a role to play at global and European level in support of our national government, by providing environmental advice and influencing policy development. Action is taken primarily at national, and - through our regions and areas - local level.

*Bathing Water Quality is improving. Compliance with EC standards was 79% in 1993.*



% Compliance with Mandatory ("I") Coliform Parameters.

### SOCIAL FORCES

Any organisation must recognise the social context in which it operates. Increasingly, the public is aware of the need for an acceptable quality of life that does not compromise the quality of our environment. People act on this through their purchasing and lobbying power. Lobbying in relation to bathing waters is an example of this. This growing awareness makes it vital that the NRA has the support and confidence of the individuals and organisations we work with. We recognise the importance of public input to debate on environmental well-being and reflect this in our mechanisms for partnership, consensus and prevention of environmental damage.

Environmental pressure and lobby groups have played an important part in bringing environmental issues to the fore and keeping them there. Their increasing professionalism, credibility and public support makes them a key audience.

*Since 1967 there has been a steady increase in the number of EC environmental laws. Pieces of environmental legislation adopted, excluding that relating to radioactivity, totalled 385 in 1993.*

### LEGISLATION

Legislation provides an essential framework for environmental protection. The European Commission's commitment to the environment is clear in its Fifth Environmental Action Programme, "Towards Sustainability".

It is essential that the science underlying EC Directives is sound. This requires early input to

legislative proposals. Implementation of EC legislation will be given more emphasis by the establishment of the Copenhagen-based European Environmental Protection Agency. This will highlight the state of the UK environment in relation to our neighbours.

The impact of European legislation is arguably more significant than UK legislation; the NRA is a competent authority for over 20 EC Directives. However, UK legislation translates EC legislation and applies it to the UK.

The primary legislation enforced by the NRA and to which we are subject is contained in three Acts of Parliament: Water Resources Act 1991, Land Drainage Act 1991 and Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975. The main duties and powers from these Acts are summarised in our Function Strategies. In addition to this there is a great deal of secondary legislation in the form of regulations.

Key legislative influences on the NRA, both now and in the future, include the following:

- planned revisions to EC Directives on bathing and drinking water quality, and new Directives on the ecological quality of water and integrated pollution prevention and control.
- De-regulation Bill and associated initiatives, intended to ensure regulations are soundly based, easily understood and fairly enforced;
- Coal Privatisation Bill - important because of the polluting potential of closed mines;
- bills to establish the proposed Environment Agency;

### EC DIRECTIVES

**76/160 EEC**  
Quality of Bathing Waters

**76/659 EEC**  
The quality of fresh waters needing protection or improvements in order to support fish life

**76/464 EEC**  
Dangerous Substances and related "daughter" directives

**91/271 EEC**  
Urban waste water treatment

**84/156 EEC**

**91/676 EEC**  
The use of nitrates in agriculture

**83/513 EEC**

**84/491 EEC**

**86/280 EEC**

**88/347 EEC**

**90/415 EEC**

*The NRA has a wide-ranging role as Competent Authority for EC Directives, some of which are illustrated here.*

## ECONOMIC FORCES

### The ESP balance

The overall aim of any government in relation to the environment should be the efficient use of scarce resources and sustainable development - in both qualitative and quantitative terms. This aim can be achieved by balancing three principles: economic efficiency, sustainability and precaution (ESP). To achieve this balance some new tools will be required to complement our existing methods.

### Economic instruments

Regulation is effective and need not be expensive. Economic instruments, for example effluent permits and incentive charging, offer a complementary approach to that of regulation which may bring about improvements more quickly. However, they can only operate to the benefit of the environment by being clearly established within a framework of regulation and are, at present, outside the NRA's remit.

### Economic value of the environmental resource

Our society relies on wealth creation. Wealth creation in turn relies on a natural resource base. Therefore it is essential that we place appropriate value on environmental resource and use it in both an efficient and sustainable manner.

Valuing the environment has other benefits too. By restoring degraded habitat we can encourage further investment in these areas. The large and expanding market in environmental technology is further evidence of these benefits. Any nation slow to adopt this approach will find itself doubly disadvantaged - by a loss in competitive advantage and growing environmental liabilities.

Placing the right value on our environment relies on activity in two spheres:

- we need tools to carry out sound cost/benefit analysis for individual projects;
- we need environmental accounting techniques to ensure that company accounts reflect the real environmental costs of their activities.

## INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Co-operation between public institutions is necessary to achieve effective management of the environment. The ability of the public sector to work co-operatively and respond to these influences is necessarily governed by the standards and expectations that accompany responsibility for spending public money. As a result there is a need for the following:

- the wise management of finite public money;
- the provision of efficient services which must be able to hold their own when compared to those in the private sector;
- organisations which are responsive to their customers' needs and are open and accountable to both Parliament and the public.

Some of these imperatives appear to be in conflict - for example responsiveness and flexibility can sometimes suffer at the hands of complex financial controls and consequent delays in project approvals. The new type of public sector organisation that Government is seeking to forge will require them to have more strategic control and a clear arm's length relationship on executive matters.

## THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

To deliver the new imperatives of economic efficiency, sustainability and precaution requires corresponding institutional arrangements. The Government's plans to establish an integrated Environment Agency are entirely appropriate. By combining the functions of the NRA, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution (HMIP) - responsible for authorising the most polluting industrial processes - and local authority Waste Regulation Authorities, the agency will bring together water, integrated pollution control and waste.

Of critical importance to the success of these plans is the corporate strategy and base unit on which the new organisation will be structured. Integrated environmental management requires a structure based on natural, environmental boundaries which override political and administrative ones. The river catchment is a universal unit, large enough for strategic environmental management principles to be applied, small enough for local accountability and ownership.

## OUR STRATEGY

### INTRODUCTION

#### Strategic objectives

We have framed six strategic objectives that express how we will achieve our Mission and Aims. Taken together, these objectives describe a logical cycle of planning, action and subsequent review to ensure plans are achieved.

#### Policy framework

In addition to our guiding principles, we operate a number of policies that apply to all our functions. These key policies are:

- balancing solutions that benefit the environment and users;
- consultation with customers;
- fair attribution of costs to those who use the environment;
- enforcement of the law where offences have been committed;
- openness in all that we do.

### INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

#### *Strategic Objective 1:*

*To plan for environmental sustainability and improvement through an integrated approach to river catchment management.*

#### Why integrate?

Complex interactions operate in both the water environment and the ecosystems within it. The changes we impose through our use of this environment can sometimes upset a delicate natural balance and compromise our own future needs.

The complexity of these interactions requires a holistic approach to balance them and the right legal powers, skills and resource to manage them.

#### Striking the balance

Integrated environmental management requires a cross-functional approach and often involves several organisations, working to shared objectives. The NRA's principal tool to achieve this is catchment management planning. This treats a river, together with the land, tributaries and underground water connected with it, as a discrete unit or catchment. The catchment management plan sets out a common vision for a river catchment, reached through consultation. It identifies objectives for catchment water quality, water quantity and physical features and actions for the NRA and others to achieve them.

#### The NRA will:

- assess catchment resources, uses and activities;
- balance conflicting uses and identify actions needed by NRA and others;
- consult with customers on issues to be tackled within catchment management plans;
- establish a long-term vision for individual catchments;
- ensure that use-related environmental objectives are identified, agreed and met.

However, catchment management is not the whole answer. Some environmental demands affect areas covering several catchments. Major developments such as the Channel Rail Link require a co-ordinated input on a wider geographic basis. Our national, regional and area structure is flexible enough to provide the appropriate response both locally and strategically.

#### The importance of planning

Strategic planning is key to the achievement of our aims. Through careful consideration at the planning stage, we can prevent future environmental damage and provide lasting solutions for existing environmental problems. Examples of our contribution to ensuring sustainable development through effective planning include the following:

- publication of our *Water Resources Development Strategy for England and Wales*;



*The NRA's approach to integrated environmental management relies on Catchment Management Planning.*

- publication of our *Guidance Notes for Local Planning Authorities on Ways to Protect the Water Environment through Development Plans*;
- our role as a statutory consultee in the local planning process.

Integrated planning will be an important aspect in fulfilling the UK's commitments on biodiversity. We will use our catchment management plans to take full account of priorities and targets highlighted by the UK Biodiversity Action Plan in 1995. As a steering group member we will contribute fully to preparing the plan.

#### The NRA will:

- use effective and proactive planning to prevent future environmental damage and to provide lasting solutions to environmental problems.

#### Environmental standards and objectives

Clear environmental standards and objectives are a pre-requisite for ensuring sustainability. They provide a framework within which a variety of specific measures can be used to ensure the standards and objectives are met. Examples of this include the setting of consent and licence conditions and carrying out maintenance and capital works.

Some standards are set by EC legislation; others are set by international commitments such as the Paris Commission (PARCOM) and the London Dumping Convention agreements. The NRA's approach in setting objectives is to take into account international, national and local (or use-related) objectives. The following examples give the principal areas in which this approach is being developed.

*Water Quality Objectives:* these define chemical, biological and aesthetic parameters that must be met to guarantee the environmental quality for a variety of uses, for example water abstraction for public water supply or industry, to support fisheries and for recreational use. The current system uses informal River Quality Objectives (RQOs). Existing legislation allows the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Wales to set statutory Water Quality Objectives (WQOs), acting on NRA advice.

*River flow objectives:* these define the flows which need to be protected to ensure the river can support the abstraction requirements placed on it without compromising important ecosystems. Existing legislation allows for statutory minimum acceptable river flows to be set.

*Flood defence standards of service:* these define the level of protection from flooding afforded to people and property where economically justified. The standards take into account land use within the floodplain, for example agricultural or urban use. An appropriate flood return period is then identified, for example flooding should occur no more than once every fifty years. Where the standard is not being met, the need for remedial works is assessed. We also take a proactive role in protecting the flood plain by deterring development.

The above standards and objectives are at different stages of development. More detail on the above approaches is given in the relevant Function Strategy.

#### The NRA will:

- develop appropriate environmental objectives and standards through a combination of operationally proven standards and practices, and R&D;
- press for the adoption of NRA policy through statutory objectives and standards;
- use agreed objectives and standards to direct our regulatory work.

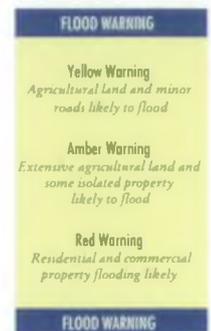
#### *Strategic Objective 2:*

*To protect and regulate the water environment and its various uses by achieving agreed standards and objectives.*

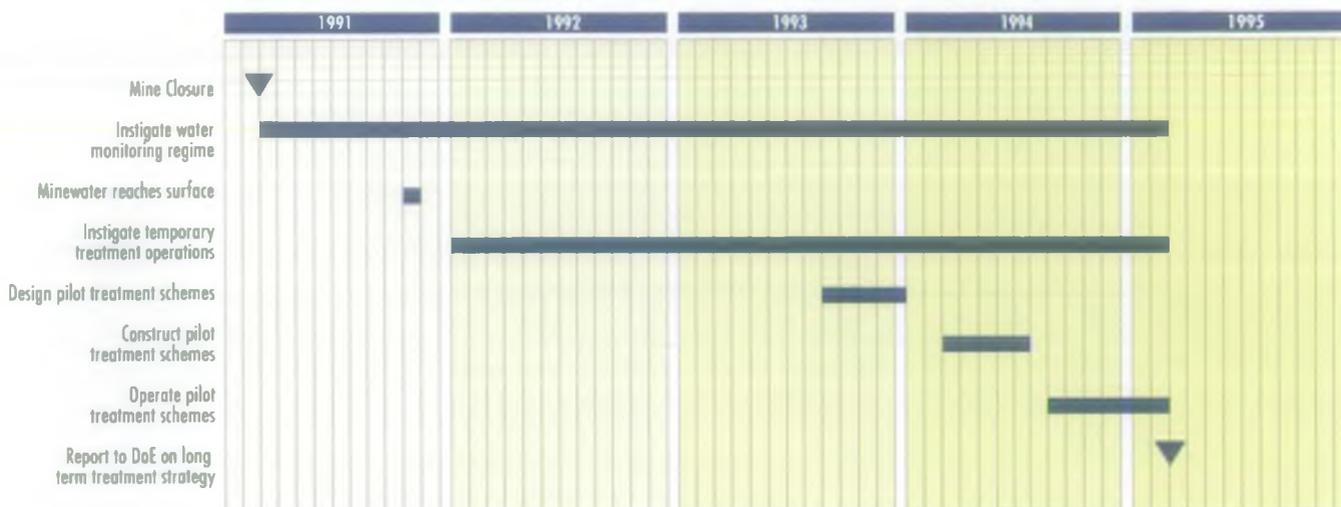
#### Environmental regulator and operator

We have a range of regulatory tools and the ability to enforce them. These include:

- discharge, land drainage and fish introduction consents;
- abstraction, angling and navigation licences;
- recreation permits.



*The NRA has established a national three tier flood warning system for use with the emergency services.*



*Environmental problems can take years to solve. The Wheal Jane Minewater Treatment Programme illustrates this.*

These tools provide an essential framework to protect the water environment when it is at risk from damage or overuse.

We also have extensive operations. These include:

- a 24-hour, 365 days-a-year emergency service for environmental emergencies including pollution incident response, flood forecasting and warning and fish or wildlife mortalities;
- sampling and analysis to assess the status of the water environment;
- providing customers with advice on pollution prevention and general information about rivers, coastal waters and groundwaters;
- operating flood defences and structures in response to flooding emergencies involving main rivers and the sea;

- maintaining, improving and constructing new flood defences;
- involvement in the management and operation of some major water resource schemes in England and Wales;
- rearing and stocking fish;
- conserving aquatic wildlife and restoring archaeological sites;
- operating locks and maintaining navigation channels;
- providing water recreation facilities and promoting participation.

These operations prevent and mitigate environmental damage (whether caused by humans or natural forces) and enhance and improve the water environment.

Our regulatory work and operations are complementary and closely interwoven. They rely on:

- sound legal duties and powers;
- agreed objectives and standards of service;
- partnership with others;
- technical expertise;
- local knowledge;
- adequate resourcing;
- R&D in support of all our functions.

The combined effect of our operational and regulatory work is to ensure both our water and the surrounding environment are protected and, where necessary, improved so that they can be passed on to future generations.



*NRA Resources Officer Ross Mackintosh measuring river levels knee deep on the new A27 bypass, near Chichester.*

**The NRA will:**

- respond to environmental emergencies as a priority;
- ensure no conflicts of interest arise between our regulatory and operational roles;
- demonstrate value for money in the services we provide.

**Strategic Objective 3:**  
*To identify and ensure implementation of balanced, lasting and cost-effective solutions to environmental problems.*

Once clear environmental objectives and standards have been defined, specific regulatory and operational measures to achieve them must be identified.

Operational measures might include capital works to improve flood defences, to alleviate low river flows or to improve the performance of sewage treatment plants. Only some of this work is carried out by the NRA. Much environmental benefit is secured by influencing the expenditure of others.

**The NRA will:**

- implement environmental standards in a cost-effective manner;
- develop sound project management and capital programmes for our functions, based on needs and economic justification;
- influence investment by central and local government, water companies, industry, the public sector, developers and agriculture to include economically efficient schemes that benefit the environment.

**Tools that facilitate this include:**

- clear policies for authorising and reviewing consents and licences;
- our consultee status within the planning process;
- environmental impact assessment and related techniques;
- economic cost/benefit appraisal;
- risk management.



*Location of Top 40 Low Flow Rivers*

*Through negotiation, we have played a major role in influencing the future investment of the Water Companies. This is vital to ensure EC statutory standards are met and to provide funding for solutions to other environmental problems, such as low flows.*

**WORKING WITH OTHERS**

**Strategic Objective 4:**  
*To provide customers with advice, information and incentive to influence behaviour and mitigate or prevent environmental damage.*

**Strategic Objective 5:**  
*To use collaboration, partnership and consultation with others to further NRA objectives and make best use of available resources.*

**Our customers**

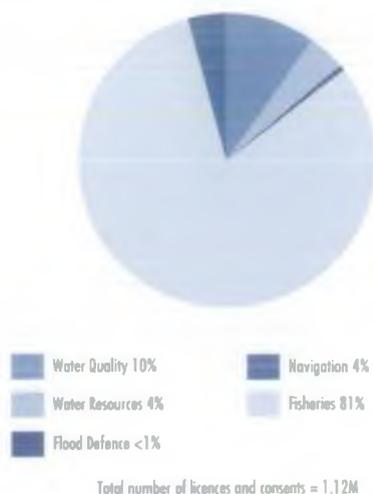
As a result of our many responsibilities we have a wide range of customers. Our customers are all those with whom we have contact or to whom we provide a service. This includes those who pay us directly for our services via licence fees and other charges, as well as those who receive services paid for indirectly through Government grants and taxation. This latter category incorporates the general public and many representative groups and businesses that form part of our community. Some examples include farmers, conservationists and water sport enthusiasts. We also regard government at local, national and European level as a customer.



*The River Misbourne, Buckinghamshire before remedial work has been carried out and in a 'restored' condition.*



Our consents and licences range from simple rod fishing licences to complex discharge consents.



#### NRA Consents and Licences.

With such a wide range of interests represented by our customers there are invariably conflicts between them. As an independent organisation we must assess and balance their demands and establish clear guidance on the best overall solution for the benefit of the environment and users.

#### Our customer standards

Our Customer Charter sets out a series of standards so that we can provide an efficient, friendly and helpful service to all our customers.

#### The NRA will:

- provide a responsive, high quality service for all of our customers;
- comply with our Customer Charter standards.

To facilitate this we can develop and draw on a series of tools, examples of which follow:

- development of an independent element to our complaints procedure;
- customer care training for our staff;
- customer surveys to measure and improve our performance;
- provision of improved information for specific customer needs.

#### Openness

We are strongly committed to openness as an essential component of policy development. A great deal of what we do relies on close liaison and partnership with other organisations and individuals. We welcome the opportunity to

provide our customers with independent advice and receive valuable feedback on our work. Information on water quality, discharge consents and abstraction licences are open for inspection through our Public Registers.

#### The NRA will:

- communicate with our customers and provide information and impartial advice in an open way.

#### Consultation and Regional Committees

We consult widely with all our customers. Our Regional Committees are key to this consultation process and are an effective means of ensuring local accountability. In each of our regions there are three statutory Regional Committees covering rivers, flood defence and fisheries. The committees for rivers and fisheries are advisory; those for flood defence are executive. The interests represented on our committees are independent and reflect all of our main customer groups. Furthermore, all committee meetings are open to both the public and the media. Our committee members can voice local concerns and influence national policy development.

#### The NRA will:

- maximise environmental benefit by consultation particularly through catchment management plans.

Effective use of our committees can be enhanced using various tools:

- using effective recruitment procedures and training opportunities to ensure members have the right skills and experience;
- ensuring cycles of committee meetings align with the NRA corporate planning cycle;
- where appropriate, using committee members in a consultative capacity on specialist sub-groups.

#### Collaboration and partnership

It would be impossible for us to achieve all of our aims without the collaboration and partnership of others. Partnerships involve all users of the environment adopting mutually supportive working practices. An example of this is the Aire



and Calder waste minimisation scheme which has resulted in savings in raw materials used and effluent generated for all the participating companies. Our partners are key to the success of both our catchment management planning and strategic planning processes.

We collaborate in many areas of our work, for example for the protection of species such as the otter and natterjack toad, for the benefit of habitats like the Somerset Levels or the Norfolk Broads and on many of our R&D projects. There are numerous other organisations and individuals who share common goals. By pooling our resource, in terms of both technical expertise and funding, we can make a real difference to the water environment in an integrated, cost - effective way.

We need to work closely with others to achieve a common goal and to keep environmental matters high on the political agenda. By doing this we increase the likelihood of securing funding and support for the work that we do. Our participation in the policy making process, through responding to consultations and participating in government debate, is fundamental to this, for example through planning policy guidance. We will be more influential if we are seen to be working with others and this will enable us to retain our strong public support.

#### The NRA will:

- **maximise environmental benefit through collaboration and partnership;**
- **work with partners to pre-empt regulation and encourage voluntary action.**

To help us achieve this we can draw on various procedures and tools:

- liaison with key organisations and user groups;
- consultation in our policy making process;
- responding to consultation documents from the government and others;
- participation in government debate;
- sponsorship and joint projects;
- forming partnerships to increase funding opportunities;
- involvement in developing management strategies for specific sites.

#### Environmental education and interpretation

Education in itself is a long-term investment in changing people's attitudes to caring for the environment; this is key to our work. Changes in lifestyle and working practices may have a significant impact on the state of the environment. Therefore it is important that we inform our customers of actions they can take which will result in long-term benefits. While changes in working practices may cost money, it will almost certainly cost less than repairing the damage in years to come.

To avoid public confusion, there is a need to clarify precisely our areas of responsibility. In the past confusion has arisen over our flood defence role in respect of non-main rivers, our responsibility for clean-up operations and our role in managing water resources but not supplying potable water. We must continue to develop our community understanding and interface to ensure that we are aware of these issues as and when they arise and act to clarify misunderstanding.

#### The NRA will:

- **provide relevant information and advice to our customers.**

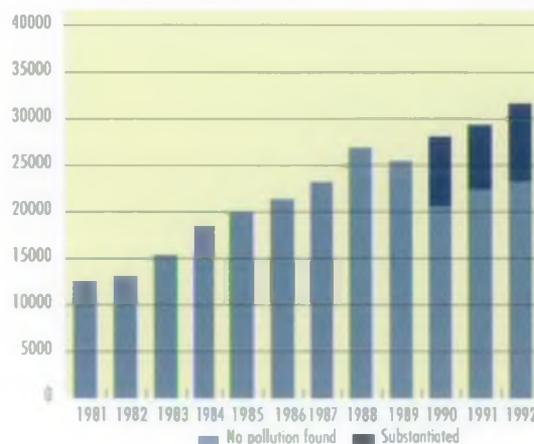
Tools for this include:

- catchment management plans;
- information leaflets and videos;
- advisory handbooks;
- best practice guidance eg groundwater protection;
- data held on our public register;



*The Aire and Calder project has saved participating companies £2M in operating costs. The following reductions were achieved:*

water usage	18.8%
effluent	32.3%
raw materials	21.9%
energy	12.0%



*Although the number of substantiated pollution incidents is rising, greater public awareness has resulted in increased reporting of unsubstantiated incidents.*

*Pollution Incidents 1981-1992*

*Examples of External Organisations Consulted by the NRA*

- English Nature
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Broads Authority
- National Parks Authorities
- Countryside Commission
- English Heritage
  - Cadw
- Department of the Environment
  - Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
  - Royal Society for Nature Conservation (The Wildlife Trusts Partnership)
- Local Authorities
  - County Sites and Monuments Records Office
  - National Trust
  - Council for the Protection of Rural England
  - Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Council for British Archaeology
- Sports Council
- Other local amenity conservation organisations

- farm and other site visits;
- pollution prevention guidelines;
- information stands at exhibitions and shows;
- public meetings and roadshows;
- school education packs.

### Influencing outside national boundaries

#### European involvement

Much of our work is directed by European legislation; it is therefore imperative that we work closely with our European partners to ensure adequate input to the legislative process. This can be achieved through liaison with key contacts in the European Commission and other European environmental organisations such as our liaison with the Dutch over flood defence projects in East Anglia.

#### The NRA will:

- exert an influence on draft policy programmes and EC Directives with environmental implications.

#### International involvement

As one of Europe's leading environmental agencies, we also have an opportunity to contribute to environmental debate at an international level. This must be carefully targeted to ensure maximum environmental benefit through shared resources and technologies. Through our National Centres we can develop our participation in major international bodies. Examples of this include our involvement with PARCOM through our National Centre for toxic and persistent substances and our international involvement through our groundwater centre.

#### The NRA will:

- contribute to both international environmental policy development and action in our areas of expertise.

### MEASURING ENVIRONMENTAL AND NRA ACHIEVEMENTS

#### **Strategic Objective 6:**

*To assess and report on the state of the water environment and our success in ensuring its sustainable use.*

The success of the work of the NRA, and in due course, of the Environment Agency, will be most clearly shown by real improvements in environmental quality. To achieve this we need to assess our performance and report on it.

#### Monitoring and assessment

We monitor the state of the water environment and structures within it as well as customer satisfaction. This provides us with essential data to identify trends and information on which to base decisions. It also provides us with feedback on the impact of our policies on both users and the environment. The types of monitoring and assessment we undertake include:

- environmental water quality monitoring to assess the overall quality of surface waters such as airborne remote sensing of coastal waters;
- samples to assess the impact of pollution incidents and monitor recovery after the event;
- rainfall, groundwater level and river flow monitoring to assess the quantities of water present - this helps water resource planning and management and also provides essential data for flood forecasting;
- availability and demands on water resources;
- checks on the status and condition of flood defences and navigations to assess the need for maintenance work;
- surveys of floodplains to identify areas of flood risk;
- river corridor and habitat surveys to identify conservation interest and aid environmentally sensitive maintenance work;
- health and status of fisheries;
- customer surveys such as those for navigation users and canoeists to assess customer satisfaction.

#### Reporting on the state of the environment

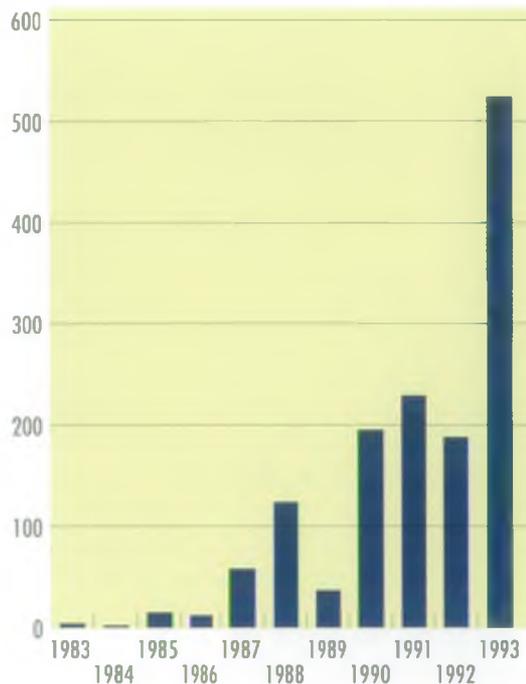
We report on a wide range of environmental matters in a variety of formats:

- annual reports laid in the Houses of Parliament that cover all operational and financial aspects of our work;
- reports on compliance with EC Directives such as reports on bathing water quality;
- reports on the overall state of the water environment such as river and estuary water quality and rivers affected by low flows;

- reports on the state of our flood defences such as the sea defence survey;
- reports on the state of the water environment within catchment management plans;
- periodic reports on specific environmental issues such as farm pollution, contaminated land and abandoned mines;
- reports on future demands for water resources;
- fisheries catch statistics;
- reports on the Code of Practice for conservation access and recreation.

### Critical success factors

We have identified a small number of measures that are critical to our success. The table below shows how these relate to our strategic objectives. These and other measures will be monitored and published regularly, as an important part of our remit to report to Government and the public on the state of the environment. More specific functional measures of success can be found in our Function Strategies.



*This graph demonstrates the substantial increase in the numbers of adult salmon entering the River Taff. This increase is due, in part, to a stocking programme carried out by the NRA and also to the improvement in water quality over this period.*

Strategic Objective	Examples of Success Measures
To plan for environmental sustainability and improvement through an integrated approach to river catchment management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of catchment management plans successfully implemented;</li> <li>- completion of specific catchment actions within the planned time frame;</li> <li>- proportion of structure plans and planning applications where NRA advice and policy lines have been incorporated.</li> </ul>
To protect and regulate the water environment and its various uses by achieving agreed standards and objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- emergency response times;</li> <li>- achievement of WQOs (once agreed), river flow objectives and flood defence standards of service;</li> <li>- compliance with licence and consent conditions.</li> </ul>
To implement balanced, lasting and affordable solutions to environmental problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- number of flooding and low flow problems alleviated;</li> <li>- water company investment in improvement schemes;</li> <li>- spending our capital and revenue budget to ensure our aims and objectives are met.</li> </ul>
To provide customers with advice, information and incentive to influence behaviour and mitigate or prevent environmental damage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reductions in confirmed pollution incidents;</li> <li>- customer satisfaction;</li> <li>- compliance with our Customer Charter standards;</li> <li>- use of our public registers.</li> </ul>
To use collaboration, partnership and consultation with others to further NRA objectives and make best use of available resource.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional Committee satisfaction;</li> <li>- number of collaborative schemes and proportion of total funding secured by them.</li> </ul>
To assess and report on the state of the water environment and our success in ensuring its sustainable use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- available water resource;</li> <li>- river, estuary and bathing water quality in various classes and compliance with EC Directives;</li> <li>- reductions in loads of dangerous substances discharged to water;</li> <li>- fisheries catch statistics.</li> </ul>

## CROSS-FUNCTIONAL ISSUES

The achievement of our strategic objectives relies on the development of appropriate responses and tools. This section sets out specific cross-functional issues that require action.

The key tool that we can draw upon to address these issues is our extensive R&D programme. This programme is designed to provide our staff with information, outputs and techniques necessary to address the problems, opportunities and needs involved in managing the water environment. R&D is undertaken by the NRA for one or more of the following primary purposes:

- to improve our ability to carry out statutory duties;
- to improve our efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out our business;
- to support our policy development;
- to increase our general knowledge and understanding, particularly of the aquatic environment.

**The NRA will:**

- undertake R&D in support of our work and apply the results where appropriate.

### RESPONDING TO GLOBAL AND LOCAL IMPACTS

#### Climate change

The accuracy of prediction of the impact of climate change is dependent on both better climate change scenarios and the understanding of response mechanisms and interactions.

**The NRA will:**

- take account of the best available climate change predictions;
- contribute to the funding of, and take an active role in developing impact assessment models to assess secondary parameters such as river run-off generation, recharge and water chemistry;
- develop appropriate response strategies where models indicate action may be required.

#### NRA emergency response

This is an essential part of our work to mitigate environmental damage. Emergencies that we respond to require a co-ordinated response from our functions.

**The NRA will:**

- keep our procedures for emergency response under continual review in light of operational experiences.

### UNDERSTANDING OUR INTERACTIONS WITH THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

#### River and coastal management

Effective and environmentally sensitive management of our coast and rivers requires adequate research and information to understand the processes at work. Coastal management in particular requires new, "softer" approaches in some areas and close collaboration between those responsible for it.

**The NRA will:**

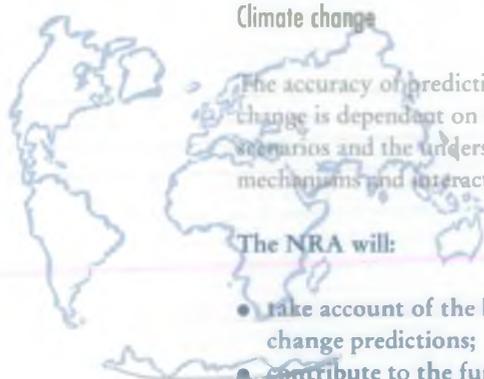
- contribute to coastal zone management as a natural extension of catchment management planning;
- participate in pilot schemes to develop and assess approaches to managed retreat as one of the options to be considered.

#### Wetlands

Many of our wetlands are under threat from exploitation and development. Those that remain, particularly those of international importance - RAMSAR sites - require sound management and close co-operation with conservation partners.

**The NRA will:**

- contribute to the development of water level management plans to safeguard sites of high conservation interest.



## Groundwater

Many of our water resources, particularly in the South East, rely on groundwater being adequately protected from diffuse pollution.

### The NRA will:

- continue to apply our groundwater protection policy.

## Land use

Land use for development or agriculture often has significant implications for the environment. We have statutory consultee status in the planning process carried out by local authorities and it is important that we continue to exert pressure to ensure our views are taken on board. EC agricultural policy is also a significant influence on crop patterns and related fertiliser or pesticide use.

### The NRA will:

- work with planners and developers to ensure the NRA's objectives are taken into account in the Town and Country planning process at both strategic and tactical level;
- keep abreast of EC agricultural policy and its implications for the environment.

## ASSESSING STATUS AND MINIMISING IMPACTS

### Classification and monitoring

We need sound methods to assess environmental status and will carry out R&D to develop them. The General Quality Assessment developed to produce periodic statements of water quality is an example of this.

### The NRA will:

- continue to develop methods for assessing the quality of the water environment as a whole, including aesthetics, nutrient levels and habitat quality.

## Environmental impact and risk assessment

Strategic environmental assessment followed by scheme evaluation prior to implementation is an essential part of any development, whether carried out by the NRA or others. In addition to this, the precautionary approach requires environmental work to be based on a sound assessment of environmental risk.

### The NRA will:

- develop and pilot an environmental appraisal manual for use by NRA and others;
- develop techniques for assessing environmental risk and apply them to our work.

## Environmental economics

Valuing our natural resource as part of any impact assessment requires the right tools. Economic instruments offer a complementary approach to regulation by providing additional incentive to change behaviour and minimise environmental impacts.

### The NRA will:

- develop tools for economic cost/benefit analysis of individual projects;
- develop our environmental economics capacity in line with the need for expertise in this area;
- press for changes to legislation to allow for the introduction of economic instruments.

## OUR OWN STANDARDS

### NRA internal environmental policy

We must apply the same principles to our own activities as we demand of others. Our internal environmental policy takes this approach further, and states that we are "... committed to the environmental principles of stewardship and sustainability. In addition to vigorously pursuing our statutory responsibilities as *Guardian of the Water Environment* we will aim to establish and demonstrate wise environmental practice throughout all our functions."



**The NRA will:**

- minimise resource use and waste;
- minimise, and wherever possible, eliminate practices known to be harmful to the environment;
- establish effective systems and procedures to support implementation of our environmental policy.

Examples of the steps that we are taking to achieve our aims in this area follow:

- improving our energy and water efficiency;
- phasing out the use of ozone depleters and minimising our use of toxic substances;
- developing a policy relating to our use of tropical hardwood;

- developing and implementing recycling initiatives;
- introducing an environmental audit programme;
- integrating environmental considerations into our procurement programme; and
- improving our environmental policy monitoring arrangements.

**Standards of service**

We have been developing standards of service to ensure business-like and competent services. We still need to build on this approach to maximise our efficiency.

**The NRA will:**

- develop and implement a cross-functional standards of service rationale.

## ORGANISATION AND RESOURCING

To deliver our strategy we need the right resources, and the systems and structures to deploy them in the most effective way according to clear objectives.

### CULTURAL VALUES

Our values have been developed by our senior managers. Our training programmes cascade these through the organisation.

#### The NRA will:

- be guided by the values of achievement of results, teamwork and trust and use them to judge our actions;
- remove unnecessary bureaucracy whilst retaining good financial controls and accountability;
- aspire to best practice in all that we do.

### HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES

Our staff are a valuable resource. Without them we could not continue to protect the environment. We employ many highly skilled technical experts - some of them leading authorities in their field - as well as committed managers and support staff and experienced operational employees. We must develop and nurture them.

#### The NRA will:

- develop professional, well-informed employees, capable of delivering our mission.
- take all reasonably practicable measures to safeguard the health and safety and welfare of our employees.

In addition to extensive programmes of technical, professional and management training we will use performance appraisal and performance related pay to:

- focus employees on the delivery of key national and regional priorities;
- assess training needs;
- develop a strategic approach to succession planning;



Staffing by function.

- encourage self development among employees;
- reward employees for their results and commitment.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCE AND CHARGING ISSUES

Our total operating costs in 1993 were some £450M per annum. Of this, 25% came directly from government grants (DoE and MAFF) and 75% was raised from our own charging schemes and income sources. The contribution we receive from public funds for the work we do has been declining steadily since 1989 (from an initial figure of 35%). This trend is set to continue as a result of our continued emphasis on improved cost attribution



Expenditure by function as % of total for 1992-93.

and efficiency. In general, our income must be spent on those activities for which it has been collected. This "ring fencing" sometimes constrains our ability to spend money where it is most needed.

Some of our work is carried out on behalf of the Government. Examples include our monitoring and reporting of toxic substances discharged into the North Sea and our role as the competent authority for EC Directives. The general public also benefit from our work. This means that unless we find an alternative means of income generation, other than simple cost recovery, we will continue to require Government grant. Alternative sources of funding include economic instruments such as incentive charging and the exploitation of commercial opportunities presented by our R&D outputs and technical expertise.

**The NRA will:**

- deliver value for money environmental services in return for Government grant-in-aid;
- ensure the "polluter pays" principle is adhered to;
- fairly attribute costs and recover costs of our services from customers;
- where legally possible, provide elements of incentive within existing cost recovery schemes;
- once legislation allows, complement regulation with economic instruments where shown to be beneficial;

Grant in Aid (GIA) as % Total Operating Costs (TOC) shows a downward trend.



- seek continuous improvements in efficiency to minimise our costs and pass on the benefits to customers and taxpayers;
- secure alternative sources of funding, for example by exploiting intellectual property rights of our R&D.

**BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

Our aim is to manage our business efficiently, retaining corporate consistency in key areas but being flexible enough to adapt to local needs. To achieve this we manage the organisation through our regional and area structure; our Head Office acts as a co-ordinating, national policy making and performance monitoring unit. National Services and Centres concentrate technical expertise and provide a high level of NRA-wide support.

**The NRA will:**

- develop National Services and Centres in support of policy decisions, using them to enhance scientific and managerial competence and improve efficiency;
- adopt systems to improve our business focus, for example project management to ensure good planning and tight financial management and the development of service level agreements for internal customers.

Our business direction, constraints and priorities have required a rationalisation of our existing management information systems. Our overall goal is to implement effective resource management and improved monitoring systems that meet customer needs and support our objectives.

**The NRA will:**

- provide information and communication technology infrastructure to support our business;
- continue to develop our Water Archive and Monitoring System (WAMS), Integrated Accounting System (IAS) and Human Resource System (HRS).

## IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY

To improve service delivery and business discipline we have embarked on a comprehensive market testing programme. This is designed to improve our efficiency and effectiveness, thus ensuring that we focus maximum resources on improving the water environment.

### The NRA will:

- identify and prioritise activities to be market tested to result in maximum overall efficiencies;
- ensure all employees affected by market testing are treated fairly and considerately;
- communicate NRA policy clearly and regularly throughout the organisation;
- develop expertise of our own employees in contract specification and management of contractors.

## DELIVERY OF OUR STRATEGY

The above actions will provide us with the organisation and resourcing to implement our Strategy of:

- environmental management through integration;
- working with others;
- measuring and reporting on environmental and NRA achievements.



*Our National Services and Centres will concentrate scientific and managerial expertise for key policy areas.*

*“We are determined to make an essential contribution to the health and sustainability of our wider environment for current and future generations.”*

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

CCW	Countryside Council for Wales	PARCOM	Paris Commission
DoE	Department of the Environment	R&D	Research and Development
EC	European Community	RAMSAR sites	Internationally important wetlands
ESP	Economic efficiency, sustainability and precaution	RQO	River Quality Objective
GQA	General Quality Assessment	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
HMIP	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
IAS	Integrated Accounting System	S105	Section 105 of Water Resources Act 1991
HRS	Human Resource System	WAMS	Water Archive Monitoring System
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	WO	Welsh Office
MI/d	Megalitres per day	WQO	Water Quality Objectives
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body		

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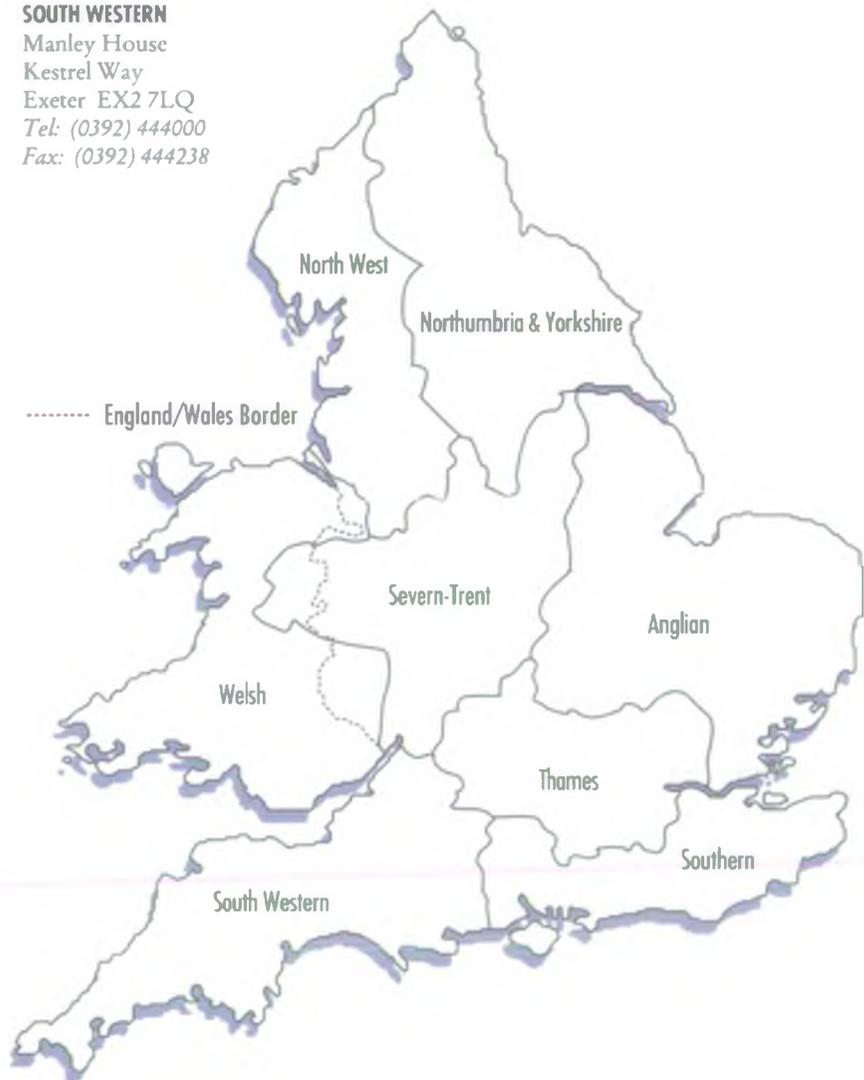
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*The NRA is committed to the principles of stewardship and sustainability. In addition to pursuing its statutory responsibilities as Guardians of the Water Environment, the NRA will aim to establish and demonstrate wise environmental practice throughout all its functions.*

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