



Putting the water into waterways

Water Resources Strategy 2015–2020

2016 Annual Update

Delivering a long-term security of water supply will help the Canal & River Trust (the Trust) achieve its vision of, “living waterways that transform places and enrich lives”. In October 2015 we published our Water Resources Strategy, ‘Putting the water into Waterways’. It set out our aspirations for the next five years as well as looking as far ahead as 2050 to understand the longer-term pressures and challenges on water supply and use. This document provides an update of our progress over the past year against the strategic actions outlined within the strategy, noting that some of these are not planned to take place in the first year.



Canal &
River Trust

November 2016



Our definition of navigational drought

In the Water Resources Strategy, we defined a navigational drought as, “a period of time where a shortage of water resources in a hydrological unit leads to restrictions or navigational closure”. Within **strategic action 1**, we committed to work with others to improve this definition. Since then, we have spoken to a variety of our internal colleagues (e.g. Executive Team and Board of Trustees) and our external partners (e.g. Partnerships and Centre for Ecology and Hydrology) to improve understanding of this and how we manage canal water resources.

Consent to new marinas

Since November 2015 we have assessed 19 new boating trade proposals and 13 new marina proposals to ensure that the additional water demands can be met without reducing the level of service below 1 in 20 years. As such, we have successfully met **strategic action 3** for this year that new marinas should not reduce the level of service and will continue to take this approach in future years. We recommended and subsequently undertook three detailed water resource studies to look more closely at the hydrological and hydraulic impacts and to provide advice to the marina developers.

Water resources assessments for restorations or new canal developments

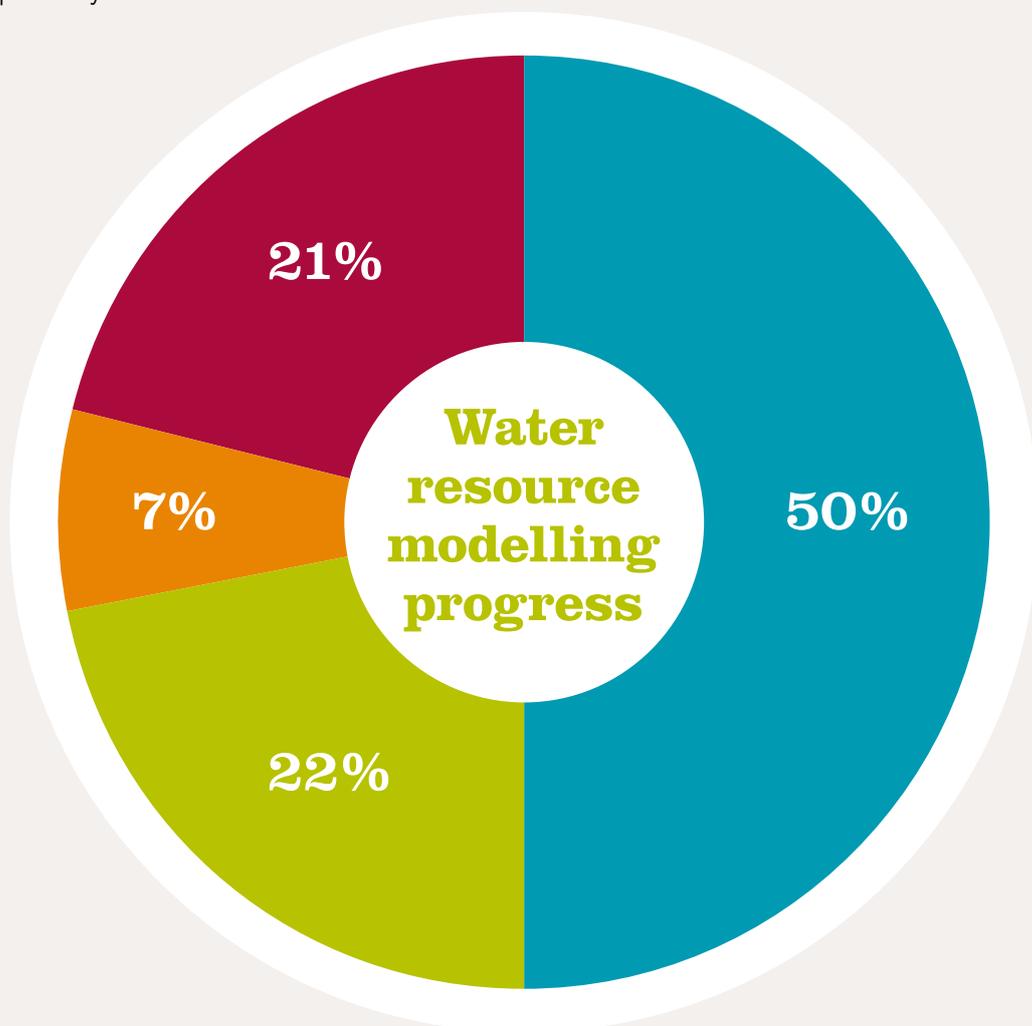
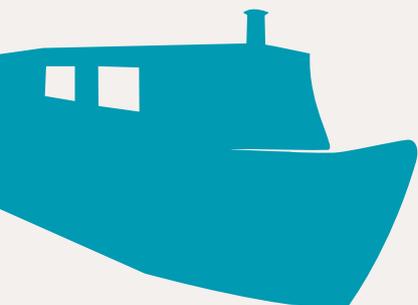
We have contributed to the recently published document ‘Environmental Framework for Waterway Restoration Projects in England and Wales’ (refer to links) which was jointly produced for the Trust and the Inland Waterways Association. In this document, we state that water resource assessments should be undertaken for any proposed restoration or new canal development and the proposal should not have a net impact on the level of service, reinforcing the position we set out in **strategic action 4** of the Water Resources Strategy.

We have continued to provide water management advice on the restoration of the Pocklington Canal, Wiltshire & Berkshire Canal (Melksham Link), Wendover Arm, Hatherton & Lichfield Canal and the Lapal Canal. We have also informed water resource assessments for a new canal arm in Daventry.

Modelling our canal network

This year we have been working on developing new Aquator models (specialised software) under **strategic action 5** to replace the hydrological units in our current water resources model as this is now reaching the end of its functional life. We are aiming to complete the development of 18 of the 53 hydrological units using Aquator by 2018.

Our progress so far is shown below. We have finished a model for the Llangollen and have nearly completed models on the Monmouthshire & Brecon, Grand Union Tring and the Trent & Mersey hydrological units.



- In Progress
- Near Completion
- Completed
- Not Started



Environment Agency and Defra water company planning guidelines

We have continued to monitor water company planning guidelines as we proposed to do under **strategic action 6**. Presently, we are reviewing the Final Water Resources Planning Guidelines 2016 that were published by the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales in May this year to assess whether it is beneficial to integrate any new techniques into our existing practices.

We have been involved in numerous water company liaison meetings and technical stakeholder groups (e.g. Thames Water and Bristol Water) and contributed to the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management Water Resources Panel.

We are continually using the most up to date information available to assess the following future pressures on our water resources: climate change, funding, environmental legislation (likely reduction in abstraction volumes) and increased network usage.

During Spring 2016, Defra and the Welsh Government consulted on the Water Act 2003. We provided a detailed response to the proposals and have worked with other organisations who will also be impacted by the changes in the legislation. We have also continued to communicate with Defra and the Welsh Government to influence the policy direction so that the impact on our water resources are minimised.

We are also continuing to follow the latest climate change assessment techniques, particularly those being used by water companies and are considering whether to develop a bespoke approach for our future pressures.

Water transfer feasibility study

We have developed support from several water companies for an extended water transfer feasibility study which forms part of **strategic action 7**, assessing the future pressures on our water resources. In May 2016 consultants Black & Veatch completed an assessment of a range of water inputs and canal transfers that would benefit United Utilities, Severn Trent, Anglian Water, Affinity Water and Thames Water. The objective of the feasibility study was to scope the engineering works required and to develop high-level estimates of associated capital and running costs for schemes to transfer up to 200 million litres per day of water. It is hoped that the study will lead to one or more water companies taking forward canal transfer schemes into their subsequent Water Resource Management Plans as 'preferred options' for more detailed investigation.

What are we planning to do in the next year of the Strategy?

We are going to continue our focus on modelling all of our hydrological units. In parallel we will begin to identify potential schemes to help address the deficits in water resources against the agreed level of service. We will produce and publish our next annual progress report against our Water Resource Strategy (2015 to 2020) actions in October 2017. We hope to progress our work with a number of water companies as they develop options for the next round of their Water Resources Management Plans.



Links

For more information about the water management of our canals please visit our website <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-work/water-management> and read our *Water resources strategy: putting the water into waterways*.

Or, email your comments to water.information@canalrivertrust.org.uk.

For further details and advice regarding canal restorations please read the *Environmental framework for waterway restoration projects in England and Wales*.