

Neagh Bann Draft River Basin Management Plan

Moyola

December 2008



An Agency within the Department of the
Environment
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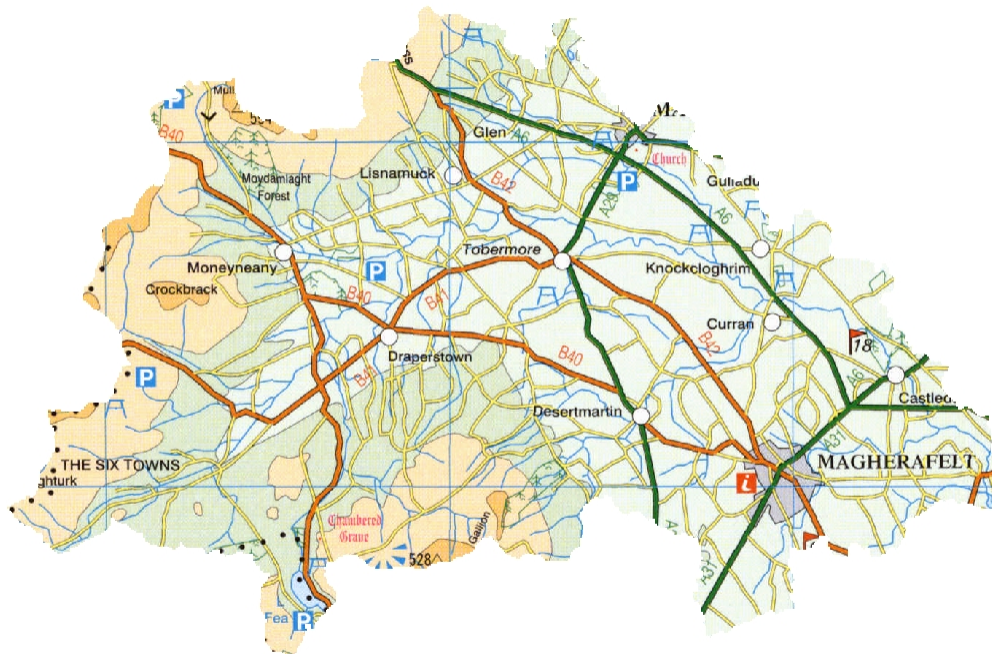
Northern Ireland
Environment
Agency

**Neagh Bann River Basin District
Lower Neagh Bann Catchment Stakeholder Group
Moyola River Basin Management Area**

The Moyola management area covers an area of approximately 313 km². The main town in the area is Magherafelt, while significant urban developments are in Tobermore, Draperstown and Desertmartin.

The area borders the Sperrin Mountains in the west and drains to Lough Neagh in the east. The main land cover utilisation in the area is Improved grassland with 46% of the area. Acid grass and arable horticulture are significant landcover utilisations with 13% and 8% coverage respectively.

Map of Moyola management area



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Protected Areas

A number of water features within the area have been designated under various European Directives and require special protection. The Douglas River and Grange River within the area are designated as Salmonid under the Freshwater Fish Directive and both were compliant in 2007. Lough Neagh and Lough Fea are designated as cyprinid under the Freshwater Fish Directive.

The Lough Neagh and Lough Beg protected area is designated under the Birds directive as well as being a Specially Protected Area.

There are four areas intersecting the Moyola management area that are designated under the Habitats Directive, these are; Curran Bog, Ballynahone Bog, Teal Lough and Carn / Glenshane Pass. These areas are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation.

Carn / Glenshane Pass represents a large area of intact blanket bog within the Sperrin Mountains in Northern Ireland. The area is characterised by undulating topography and includes a large, well-developed hummock and pool system and extensive eroding hagg complexes within a thick mantle of blanket peat. The peatland vegetation generally supports a high dwarf-shrub cover of heather and cross-leaved heath together with a mixture of sedges. Areas of flushed peat are more species-rich and include a variety of additional plants.

There is one Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the management area located in the Sperrin area.

Seven Areas of Special Scientific Interest are within the management area and include Crockaghole wood, Teal Lough and Curran bog.

Curran Bog is an active raised bog and occurs in the flood-plain of the Moyola River. Despite extensive turf-cutting around its edge, the remaining intact surface retains a high cover of Sphagnum bog-mosses (indicating active peat growth) and well-developed surface patterning (i.e. pool, hummock and hollow complexes). The pool system is a particularly important feature, as these are generally very rare in Northern Irish lowland raised bogs. The pools vary in shape and size, but are generally linear with a carpet of aquatic bog-mosses.

Ballynahone bog is a nature reserve and lies within the Moyola management area. It is also a RAMSAR site along with Lough Neagh and Lough Beg.

The Moyola area lies within the Neagh Bann area which has been designated as a sensitive area under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive in relation to phosphorous.

	Further information is available on the Protected Areas section of the website.
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River Waterbodies

At present, there are 44% of river water bodies in the Moyola management area at good category status. This is proposed to rise to 89% by 2015 and to 100% from 2021 onwards. These waterbodies include the Altagoan Burn, the Moyola River, Coppies Burn and Glengomna Water.

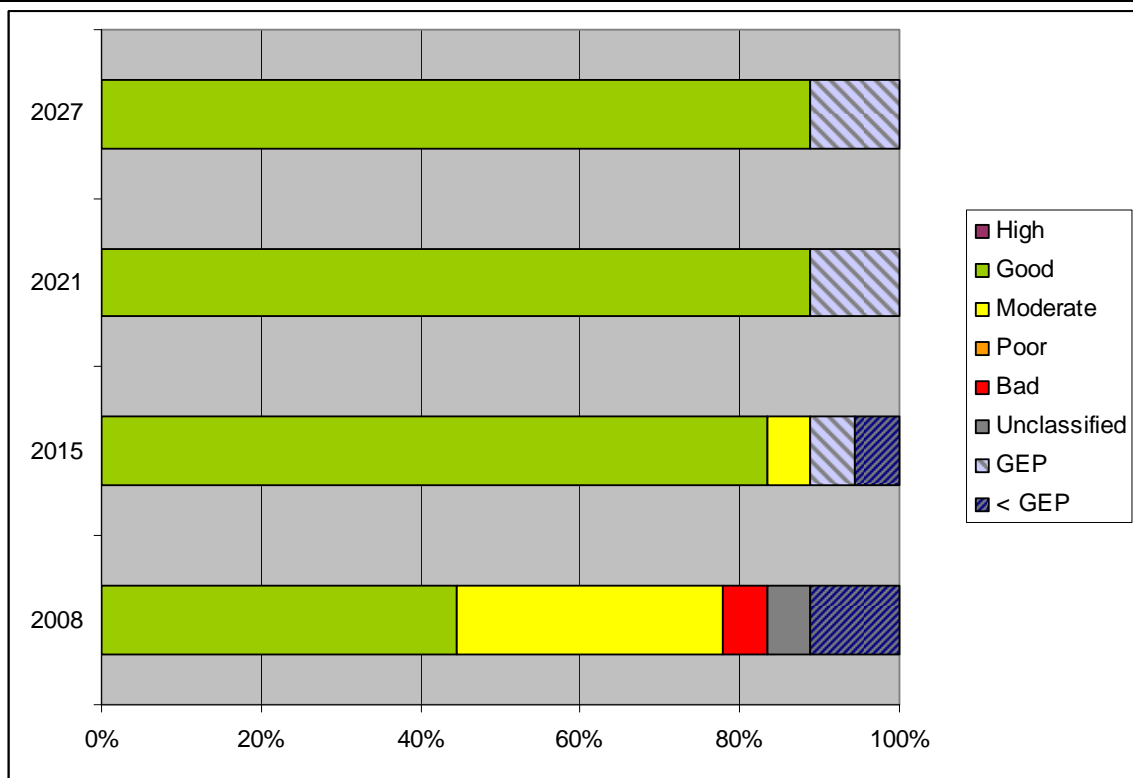
The Moyola Water management Area fall within the Lower Neagh Bann Catchment Stakeholders Group area. Analysis of the status for this area has shown a large percentage of water bodies failing to achieve good status due to benthic invertebrates 76% and this is accompanied by a significant level of downgrading due to other elements that may be indicative of a high level of enrichment within the catchment. These are DO 21%, BOD 15%, Macrophytes 26% and phosphorus 9%. The range of elements emphasises the numerous pressures influencing water quality in this catchment.

Morphology also has a large influence on quality in the catchment with 21% of river water bodies affected by morphological changes. There was a minor influence by pH affecting 4 % of water bodies.

The White Water and Coppies Burn are designated as heavily modified. The Coppies burn is modified for reasons of flood risk management and the white water is modified due to the wider environment.

The White water is proposed to reach good ecological status by 2015 and the Coppies Burn is proposed to reach Good Ecological Status by 2021.

Current status and proposed objectives for river water bodies in the Moyola management area 2008-2027



Lake Waterbodies	
Lough Fea is located west of Slieve Gullion and is 0.5 km ² in area. It is currently moderate for classification status and is regarded as a heavily modified waterbody, although not artificial. Lough Fea is proposed to reach good ecological potential by 2015.	
Groundwater bodies	
The Moyola management area contains the Cookstown Groundwater Body. This groundwater body is currently classified as good for chemical and quantitative classification.	
i	Further information on how water bodies were classified can be read in the Assessing the Quality of Our Water Environment section of the website. The quality of individual water bodies and their objectives can be viewed on the interactive web map .
<p>The improvements in water quality proposed above will be delivered through a programme of measures coordinated by the Department of the Environment, some of which are already being carried out in the Braid Maine management area.</p> <p>Supporting the programme of measures are a number of projects and initiatives run, for example, by local communities, angling groups and voluntary environmental organisations that will contribute to achieving the objectives we have set for our waters. Some of those happening in the Moyola area are provided below.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Bann Advisory Committee • Lough Neagh advisory Committee • Friends of the River Bann • Moyola Angling Club 	
<p>Friends of the River Bann</p> <p>The Friends of the River Bann is a local initiative aimed at increasing the sense of river awareness, ownership and responsibility for the River Bann at local level. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency Catchment officer provides information and support to the group.</p>	
i	Further information is available in the Programme of Measures section of the website. The key pressures and associated sectors impacting on water bodies can be viewed on the interactive web map .