



RIPPLE

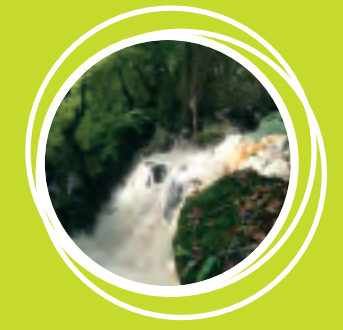
A river action plan
for the Ballinderry

Ripple





INTRO



The Ballinderry River and its tributaries wind through rural farmland, majestic glens, quiet villages and bustling towns. It is a river of international importance because of the rare, precious plants and animals that live in the river and on its banks. It is also locally renowned for its beauty and history, which have been the inspiration of many stories passed down through generations. However, in recent times, parts of our river have been polluted, neglected, littered with rubbish and scarred by our attempts to control the flow of the Ballinderry River.

The RIPPLE project is helping us, the community of the Ballinderry River, to formulate and put into action a plan to protect and celebrate the river's natural and cultural heritage. It is helping to bring the river back to life by reconnecting us with the river, embracing its past and planning for its future.

Through RIPPLE, over 300 people living in or near the Ballinderry River catchment contributed to the creation of Visions for the River. We want to see better access along the river; we want people to have a better understanding of the river environment; we want a cleaner river; and we want more wildlife in and along the river.

As a next step, we have built upon our diverse knowledge, skills, hobbies and interests to put together a River Action Plan. The full plan lists 115 different actions which we have identified as necessary to turn our Visions for the river into a reality. This document presents the actions which we have prioritised as most important and most achievable.

Each action has been adopted by a member of the community, known as a RIPPLE Champion. The Champion makes sure that their adopted action is

developed, promoted and implemented with the help of other community volunteers. This means that the River Action Plan is community driven and ensures that the plan for managing our river is sustainable beyond the lifespan of the funded project.

We know that if the River Action Plan is to be effective, we need to engage others who can provide us with vital information and support so that we can make sound, informed decisions about how our river should be managed. Therefore, an Advisory Network, made up of Government Departments, our local council and Non-Governmental Organisations, is helping us put our plan into action.

We want to show everyone that, as a community, we can plan for a healthy river that provides opportunities for recreation, learning and a safe haven for our rare plants and animals. We are working together to protect the Ballinderry River and to leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

This is our River Action Plan for our Ballinderry River.

Our river and us

*“As I gaze down from Slieve Gallion
to the famous Lough Neagh Shore,
And when I’m feeling lonely many
miles away from home,
I think back to happy days
spent by a river in Tyrone.”*
Joey O’Neill, Magherafelt



Slieve Gallion
△ 528m
above sea level

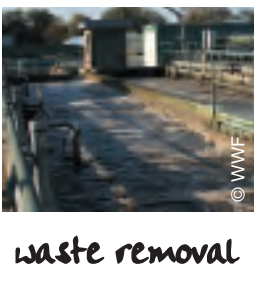
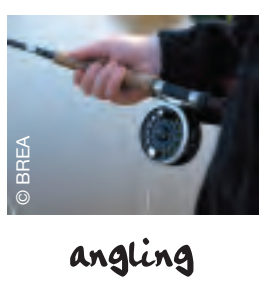


MONEYMORE



BAR MOUTH

COAGH



STEWARTSTOWN



COOKSTOWN



GORTIN WATER



POMEROY

CLAGGAN RIVER

ROCK RIVER

KILLYMOON RIVER

KINGSMILL RIVER

BALLINDERRY RIVER

BALLINDERRY RIVER (UPPER)

LISSAN WATER

BALLYMULLY (MONEYMORE) RIVER



Evishanoran Mountain
△ 275m
above sea level

CAMLOUGH





1 VISION

Ripple



‘We want better access along the river’

The first Vision for the Ballinderry River is for more paths or user-friendly amenities along the river to provide facilities for the local community and to promote tourism. This will encourage people to experience the beauty of the river for themselves.

It is recognised that access to the river is a complicated subject because of the issues of liability and land ownership. Any new facilities must be agreed by all members of the community and be sensitively located, designed, managed and promoted.

Actions include:

Carry out a scoping study for new river access opportunities

Aim: to produce a scoping report and map outlining feasible new access opportunities.

This will include identification of the potential areas with features of interest cross referenced against areas where development should be avoided due to the occurrence of rare flora, for example. Associated land ownership will also be identified.

Timeframe: June – December 2009

Promote angling tourism on the Ballinderry River both nationally and internationally

Aim: to increase interest in angling on the Ballinderry River both locally and further afield measured through enquiries, tourist figures and/or ticket sales.

This will require engagement with local angling clubs to identify facilities and services to be promoted. A website linking local angling clubs and services will be created, along with producing and promoting a map and guide.

Timeframe: January – December 2009

Work with local landowners to agree new access

Aim: to agree one new access point or route.

Training requirements will be identified and provided in order to equip the RIPPLE Catchment Group with appropriate skills. An Access Champion who has already allowed access on their land will be engaged to assist the group in opening discussion with landowners at sites of proposed new access.

Timeframe: May – December 2009



VISION 2

Ripple



‘We want better understanding of the river environment’

The second Vision is for more people and businesses to understand the cycle of water from tap to river and how they have an impact on this water cycle.

More information about the river and its special plants and animals needs to be available. To distribute this information, better educational links need to be created between schools, businesses and environmental organisations. We, the community, would like to see river skills such as biological water quality testing promoted and passed on.

The Ballinderry River should be used as an ‘outdoor classroom.’

Actions include:

Add information boards to access routes on themes such as wildlife, local history and river facts

Aim: to ensure that informative signage is included in the design and creation of any new access points

This will require identification of sites where signage would be appropriate. Relevant images and information about wildlife, local history or facts about the river will be gathered for each site. When funding has been secured, the signs will be designed, constructed and installed.

Timeframe: June 2009 - ongoing

Provide training days for local community on how to spot pollution

Aim: to have members of the public from the local community attend training days which raise public awareness of pollution

Firstly, the training needs of volunteers who will facilitate training days must be identified and met. The training event itself must be planned, organised and promoted before training events can be held.

Timeframe: January – June 2009

Encourage schools in the river system to use the river as an outdoor classroom

Aim: to have a number of schools adopting river based schools projects as part of National Curriculum teaching

This will involve meeting with local school Principals to promote the potential links between the National Curriculum and the river. An exemplar school will be identified to demonstrate how the river can be used as an outdoor classroom. Safe and suitable access points for schools activities will be identified and educational resource packs will be created to highlight education facilities around the river.

Timeframe: January 2009 – December 2010



VISION 3



‘We want a cleaner river’

The third Vision is for less pollution and less litter going into the Ballinderry River and its tributaries.

Pollution entering the river comes from many sources, so cleaning it up needs the co-operation of government departments, businesses, land owners, households and visitors to the area.

We want to be more involved in monitoring water quality in the river and to work with Government to enforce pollution controls. In addition, we would also like to have a River Stewardship scheme to encourage more water-friendly practices and to reward those who help to protect the river.

Actions include:

Promote the safe use and disposal of household chemicals and cleaning products

Aim: to increase the use of water friendly household products

This will include the creation of an education campaign to help the public make the link between water quality and the use of household chemicals. The media will be used to deliver key messages. Local supermarkets will be encouraged to promote water friendly products and incentivise their use. Government and businesses will also be targeted.

Timeframe: January 2009 – December 2010

Create river task groups to carry out tidy up days along the river

Aim: to hold at least two action days by mid-2009 with plans for more

Using existing survey information and local knowledge, areas along the river that require attention will be identified. Volunteers will be signed up to task groups and action days will be arranged.

Timeframe: January 2009 ongoing

Establish a River Stewardship Award for Community, Agriculture, Business and Industry

Aim: to obtain submitted applications for awards and to host the first awards ceremony in 2009

Award categories will be established and supporters will be sought to sponsor each category. Competition procedures will be established and the awards ceremony will be promoted. The first awards ceremony, with invited guests, will be held by the end of 2009.

Timeframe: January - June 2009



VISION 4

Ripple



‘We want more wildlife in and along the river’

The final Vision is to see wildlife corridors where there are healthy habitats and better protection for plants and animals.

Invasive species, like Giant Hogweed, need to be eradicated from our river banks to make room for our native plants and make the river safe for us to use.

Managing flooding in a more natural way, such as creating wet meadows and planting trees which will be good for increasing biodiversity. Allowing the land to flood naturally will bring the benefit of rich river nutrients.

Actions include:

Establish a community based non-native invasive plant eradication programme

Aim: to establish a community-led Invasive Plant Management Group which will implement agreed management plans

This will require the identification of champions to help establish and train an Invasive Plant Management Group. Building on outcomes from related actions, management plans will be composed. Once funding has been secured, the plans can be implemented by the group. Ongoing monitoring of the eradication success will take place.

Timeframe: January 2009 – December 2010

Extend the range of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel into parts of the river where they are historically known to have lived

Aim: to successfully introduce juvenile mussels to parts of the Ballinderry river where they have declined in number, and make the public aware of the project

This action will draw on the expertise of the Ballinderry Fish Hatchery who breed juvenile mussels, and the results of a Queen's University research project to identify where and how mussels can be introduced to the river. The public, local landowners and statutory agencies will be engaged to ensure that reintroduction is not jeopardised.

Timeframe: ongoing

Collect all known information on river wildlife and habitats in the Ballinderry River System

Aim: to collate information on Ballinderry River wildlife and habitats and make it accessible for the general public in the form of a ‘River's Atlas’

This will require obtaining information from existing sources, including local knowledge on wildlife and habitats. A system for storing this information will be devised and made accessible for the general public. *Note: the location of sensitive species will be restricted to ensure protection.*

Timeframe: January 2009 – December 2010



Ballinderry River Action Plan – Phase 1

Over 115 actions have been identified by the community to help achieve our Visions for the Ballinderry River. In October 2008, the community prioritised these actions in order of those which were considered to be most important and most achievable. The actions classed as top priority, for each of the four visions, are presented below. In all, 29 of the 115 actions are listed. Further actions from the original list will be added once these actions are firmly underway. This action plan is to be used as a guide in order that the community can implement the actions in a coordinated way.



VISION Better access along the river	Action No	Action	Timeframe	The Aim
	A1	Remove all Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed from access routes to make them safe for use	Jan 2009 – Dec 2014	Non-native invasive Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed are being controlled or no longer growing along existing or newly created access routes
	A2	Audit existing river access routes, facilities and uses	Jan – Jun 2009	Production of a report on existing access facilities
	A3	Clarify liability and access rights issues for landowners providing access and access users	Jan – Dec 2009	Clear and concise information about access liability, access providers rights and access users rights is made available
	A4	Carry out a scoping study for new river access opportunities (Including linking existing access)	Jun – Dec 2009	A scoping report/map outlining feasible new access opportunities
	A5	Work with landowners to agree new access	May – Dec 2009	One new access route or point agreed
	A6	Promote angling tourism on the Ballinderry River both nationally and internationally	Jan-Dec 2009	Increased interest in angling on the Ballinderry River both locally and further afield (Possibly measured through web hits, TIC figures and ticket sales)
	A7	Encourage more young people to use the river	Jan 2009 – Dec 2009	Youth Panel making decisions on activities for young people along the river

VISION Better understanding of the river environment	Action No	Action	Timeframe	The Aim
	E1	Create a river newsletter providing people with information on events and points of interest	Jan 2009 - onward	Regular newsletters are produced featuring stories and articles from local community
	E2	Educate business and farmers on how to avoid polluting rivers and the impact pollution can have on water quality and wildlife	Jan 2009 – Dec 2010	Number of business and farms requesting and receiving information of river protection and pollution prevention
	E3	Provide training days for local community on how to spot pollution	Jan – Jun 2009	Public attend training days which are raising public awareness of pollution
	E4	Organise and promote River Days to raise awareness of the river	Jan – Dec 2009	The public have been invited to at least two River Days in 2009 and more are planned for future years
	E5	Add information boards to access routes on themes such as wildlife, local history and river facts	Jun 2009 - ongoing	Interpretive signage is included in the design and creation of any new access
	E6	Update and promote the River School at Ballinderry Fish Hatchery	Jan – Dec 2009	The River School facilities are updates to support the national curriculum and local community educational needs
	E7	Develop a website which educates people about the plants, animals, geology and history of the river	Jan 2009 - onward	A website that is well promoted and receives an increasing number of hits
	E8	Encourage schools in the river system to use the river as an outdoor classroom	Jan 2009 – Dec 2010	Number of schools adopting river based schools projects as part of National Curriculum teaching.



VISION	Action No	Action	Timeframe	The Aim
	C1	Identify the septic tank discharge carrying capacity of each watercourse in the river system	Jan 2009 – Dec 2010	At least one significant tributary of the Ballinderry has had its carrying capacity calculated
	C2	Promote the good maintenance of septic tanks	Jan – Jul 2009	A public awareness campaign is up and running. Longer-term: Increased requests for septic tank emptying
	C3	Establish a local point of contact for water pollution reporting	Jan 2009 – Jul 2010	Info signs placed at key points (e.g. Bridges) throughout the river system Better reporting of pollution incidents
	C4	Clarify responsibility issues for removing fallen animals from watercourses	Jan – Dec 2009	Clear information on what should happen if fallen animals are discovered in watercourses
	C5	Promote the safe use and disposal of household chemicals and cleaning products	Jan 2009 – Dec 2010	Increased sales of water friendly household products
A Cleaner River	C6	Raise awareness of the impact that dangerous industrial chemicals can have on water quality and wildlife	Jan 2009 – Jul 2010	Inventory of chemicals used by industry in the river system and a reduced number of pollution incidents relating to industrial chemicals
	C7	Create river task groups to carry out tidy up days along the river (Litter picking, bush cutting etc)	Jan 2009 - ongoing	At least two action days have taken place by mid-2009 and more are planned
	C8	Establish a River Stewardship Award for Community, Agriculture, Business and Industry	Jan-Jun 2009	Applications are submitted for awards and the first awards ceremony is held in 2009

VISION	Action No	Action	Timeframe	The Aim
	W1	Report the locations of all known non-native invasive plants and animals in the River system	Jan 2009 – Dec 2010	Increased number of reports made on the locations of invasive plants and animals
	W2	Provide training on non-native invasive plant and animal identification	Jan - Dec 2009	Numbers of people receiving training on invasive plant and animal identification
	W3	Establish a community based non-native invasive plant eradication programme	Jan 2009 – Dec 2010	A community lead Invasive Plant Management Group is established and management plans are being implemented.
More Wildlife	W4	Extend the range of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel into parts of the river where they are historically known to have lived	(2006 – Ongoing)	Juvenile mussels from Ballinderry Fish Hatchery are successfully reintroduced to part of the Ballinderry River
	W5	Select iconic river species to represent the river and help to raise awareness	Jan – Dec 2009	Iconic species selected and used to promote the river
	W6	Collect all known information on river wildlife and habitats in the Ballinderry River system	Jan 2009 – Dec 2010	Data is collated and available for people to access



CONCLUSION

The RIPPLE project is helping our community to shape how our river is managed. Although we have different interests and hobbies or use the river in different ways, our Visions show that, ultimately, we all want the same thing – a healthy river at the heart of our community. Over the next few years, we will work through the actions set out in this plan to make our Visions for the Ballinderry River a reality. We are aware that a good plan is one which can evolve and adapt to the changing needs of our community and status of our river. Therefore, we will review our plan on a regular basis and will identify new actions as necessary.

The RIPPLE Project is demonstrating that even though we may not all be river experts, we can play an important part in creating and protecting our local river environment. Through innovative engagement techniques, shared thinking and by allowing the local community to be part of the decision making process, both our rivers and the wider community will benefit. We are keen to share our

experiences with others so that they might learn from the great things that are being achieved in the Ballinderry River system using our approach.

In addition, our plan has further implications in terms of helping to achieve the environmental targets required by legislation. Our plan for the Ballinderry River will contribute to meeting local environmental objectives, such as those required by Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Our plan will also contribute to meeting national and EU objectives, such as those set by the Water Framework Directive which aims to achieve ‘Good Ecological Status’ in all water bodies across Europe by 2015. Therefore, we also want to create strong, lasting partnerships with those in Government and Non-Governmental Organisations to encourage public participation in river basin management

WWF’s RIPPLE Project is changing the future of the Ballinderry River, for its people, its wildlife, and its waters – for the better.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The WWF RIPPLE project would not be possible without the dedicated help and support from the local community in the Ballinderry River system and those in Government departments and Non-Governmental Organisations who are assisting the community in the delivery of their River Action Plan.

The RIPPLE Advisory Network

Ballinderry River Enhancement Association

Cookstown District Council:

- Department of Economic Development
- Department of Environmental Health
- Operational Services

Cookstown & Western Shore Area Network
Council for Nature Conservation
& the Countryside

Countryside Access & Activities Network

Department of Agriculture &

Rural Development:

- Countryside Management Branch
- Rivers Agency

Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure:

- Inland Fisheries

Department of the Environment:

- Planning & Environmental Policy Group
Division

- Planning Service

Lough Neagh and Lower Bann Advisory
Committee

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

(an agency within the Department of the Environment):

- Biodiversity Unit
- Conservation, Designation & Protection
- River Basin Planning
- Water Management Unit

Northern Ireland Water

Rural Community Network

The mission of WWF is to stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by

- conserving the world’s biodiversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- reducing pollution and wasteful consumption



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