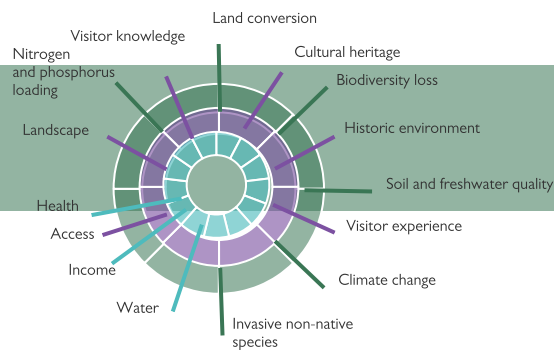
An aerial photograph of a river winding through a lush green landscape. The water is a deep, vibrant green, and the surrounding banks are covered in dense, bright green trees and vegetation. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the upper portion of the image, containing white text.

Across the National Park we will restore healthy naturally functioning catchments floodplains and rivers - providing clean water, recreation opportunities, mitigating flooding and alive with wildlife.

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a lush green landscape. The water is a deep, vibrant green, and the surrounding banks are covered in dense, bright green trees and vegetation. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the lower portion of the image, containing white text.

We want riverine and lake Special Areas of Conservation (Rivers Wye, Usk and Llangors Lake) and the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal to be proud and joyous examples of healthy ecosystems in the National Park.



Why is this important

The Park’s rivers and their associated wetlands require ecological restoration

The Brecon Beacons Mega-catchment is a strategic resource for Dwr Cymru’s water supply. Some of the upper catchments are heavily modified by reservoirs.

Land use change and land management, as well as human inputs from built development, have caused declines in water quality and associated algal blooms with devastating impacts on freshwater ecology, people and local communities across the Park.

A whole system approach is needed to reduce and eliminate the adverse impacts of land management, abstraction, soil erosion, pollution, habitat fragmentation, urbanisation and INNS, and help mitigate and adapt to the consequences of climate change. We need peatland, woodland, trees, farmland soils, and our built environments to help store and slow the flow of water during extreme weather events.

Healthy rivers, streams and lakes contain more oxygen, more life, and thus more carbon, which is absolutely vital if we are to mitigate and adapt to global warming – restoring freshwater ecosystems to good ecological condition would be a nature-based solution for climate change.

In 1957, when the National Park was designated, the Rivers Usk and Wye and Llangors Lake were iconic, having national reputations for the recreational opportunities afforded by their clean waters, wildlife and natural beauty.

Restoring the rivers and lake to their former glory is a clear priority for us. Floodplain meadows and woodland fringes, new valley side woodlands, restored ffridd, upland heaths and peatlands, and appropriate infrastructure protecting the river from point source and diffuse pollution will support thriving wildlife populations and provide vital public goods by improving water quality, and reducing flood risk to people and built environments.

How will the policy be implemented

The policy requires partnership working between the main stakeholders and sectors influencing these habitats including the National Park Authority, Welsh Government, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, Natural Resources Wales, Local Authorities and Public Service Boards, the National Trust Wales, the Canal and Rivers Trust, the Wye and Usk Foundation, private riparian and upland landowners, farmers, and other land managers.

The actions to bring about this objective require whole system change - this consultation is an opportunity for all the sectors to come together with suggestions to meet the challenge. We will champion the development of innovative nature based solutions within the National Park.

What does success look like

Reduce and, as soon as possible, bring to an end critical load exceedances of phosphates and related algal blooms in the Wye, Usk and Llangors Lake SACs. Clearer river water, with less ‘flashy’ peaks in times of heavy rainfall at key monitoring stations.

Through the implementation of the strategy we will also have safeguarded the historic environment of rivers and lakes.

How will we measure progress

We will monitor progress through appropriate indicators in the SoPR, having regard to actions undertaken and reported in the NPMP Annual Monitoring Report. Success would be demonstrated in the review of NRW Evidence Report 489 (expected in 2024), and by eliminating any future occurrence of algal blooms.