

From: Cadman, Carolyn
Sent: 26 September 2022 13:48:06
To: Turk, Graham
Subject: ACTION and INFO: Potential application for drought permit order in the Restormel area catchment
Attachments: Restormel - Consultation Letter.pdf

Dear All,

I hope this email finds you well.

In the attached letter, my colleague Graham Turk, explains that South West Water are likely to apply for a drought permit order to adapt how we manage water in the Restormel area, following the period of prolonged dry weather.

You and/or organisation has been identified as one which has an interest in the Restormel catchment area and so I wanted to make sure you were aware and in case you wanted to respond to the consultation process should the application go ahead.

In addition to the explanation in the letter, I will be hosting an online briefing session on Thursday 29 September, 10:00-11:00am. I will be joined by colleagues from South West Water, including Graham, who will explain why we are likely to make the application, followed by a Q&A session.

Please register for the session [here on Eventbrite](#) and a link to the online session will be emailed to all those who have registered by 9:45am on Thursday morning.

Please also send through any specific questions that you may have which we can cover at the briefing.

Best wishes,

Carolyn

Carolyn Cadman, Director of Natural Resources



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26 September

Dear Stakeholder,

RIVER FOWEY - RESTORMEL

PROPOSED DROUGHT PERMIT

Why we are writing to you

We have identified your organisation as having an interest in the River Fowey catchment and write on an early basis to invite your comments on a proposed drought permit application which concerns the River Fowey catchment. The application is urgent, and as such we would welcome your early engagement with us, so that we may understand any concerns you may have.

Background

You will be aware that the continuing dry weather has resulted in supply challenges for all water companies. The conditions have been particularly challenging across Cornwall, with rainfall in the region for 2022 so far ranking the 4th driest since 1891 and classed as "Exceptionally Low" using the Environment Agency's probability ranking tool. Abstraction on the River Fowey at Restormel Weir feeds our largest treatment works as part of the Colliford water resource zone; this provides public water supply to around 277,027 homes and businesses across Cornwall. During winter months this abstraction is also used to help refill the strategic Colliford Lake Reservoir.

We rely upon the winter refilling of strategic reservoirs to support daily abstraction throughout the coming year. SWW has been carefully monitoring the status of the strategic Colliford Lake Reservoir throughout the drought, and whilst, there is no immediate threat to public water supplies our modelled projections suggest that because of the exceptional weather during 2022 this reservoir's natural refill will significantly fall below its usual levels. This creates the risk of supply difficulties in 2023.

During 2022 SWW has made operational changes to maximise supply options and minimise demand, it has prioritised leak responses in the area and delivered water efficiency campaigns as well as imposing a Temporary Use Ban which applies to the affected area.

These measures have not been sufficient to reduce the risks outlined above, and as such SWW now wishes to apply to the Environment Agency for a Drought Permit on the terms outlined below, under section 76A and Schedule 8 of the Water Resources Act 1991.

SWW Permit Proposal

The current abstraction licence held by SWW allows SWW to take 110 megalitres per day and 28,900 megalitres per year from the River Fowey at Restormel Weir. In a normal year this would be adequate to meet demand and allow some winter recharge of Colliford Lake.

SWW require to increase levels in Colliford Reservoir over the winter 2022/2023. To be able to do this, SWW will need to abstract the full licenced daily volume from the River Fowey at Restormel, so that any water not required for public water supply will be pumped to Colliford Reservoir. This process would mean that SWW would require an additional allowance (permit) to pump more water than usual to the reservoir to balance out some of the shortage created by the drought. For this reason, SWW need to apply for a drought permit.

The permit would not increase the maximum amount of water that is abstracted from the river on any one day but will rather allow a greater annual abstraction than we would usually make. We are planning to take the extra water during the winter months when the river is usually at its fullest.

Environmental impact

A key consideration in obtaining a Drought Permit is the effect on the environment of the proposals, environmental reports are currently being compiled, and the Environment Agency is being consulted.

SWW have commissioned an Environmental Assessment Report, which includes a monitoring plan and mitigation measures, to support the drought permit application. This details the baseline conditions, assesses impacts of potential changes to the hydrological regime due to implementation of the drought permit, and provides an Environmental Management Plan to support the requirement for baseline, during and post drought permit monitoring.

The drought permit is predicted to have Moderate impacts on the Lower River Fowey water body (GB108048001420) for:

- 1) fish passage for Atlantic salmon and brown/sea trout in September/October (adults) and March (smolts),
- 2) fish passage for adult eels (September to November inclusive) and for
- 3) habitat availability for ammocoete life stage of lamprey (September to March inclusive) in comparison with the baseline scenario.

Our planned pumping is likely to run from November to March.

The effect of the drought permit is predicted to be minor on all other receptors in comparison with the baseline.

SWW intend to implement the recommendations of the Environmental Management Plan and includes frequent monitoring to check for signs of ecological stress including potential effects on habitat availability and the passability of barrier for fish.

The Drought Permit process

It is expected that to support the winter refill of Colliford Reservoir, to preserve public water supply in 2023, we will make a formal application to the Environment Agency for a Drought Permit by Tuesday 11th October 2022. The application will also be publicised on that day, with a formal 7-day consultation period running from then.

If objections are received during the consultation period and not withdrawn, there is expected to be a hearing very shortly afterward, at which an Inspector will hear submissions and make a recommendation to the Environment Agency.

Where no objections are received, or they are not maintained, the Environment Agency will make the decision within 12 days of the application.

Next steps

SWW would welcome your comments on the proposed application as soon as possible, and ideally before 12:00 3rd October 2022. If you are unable to respond within that timeframe, SWW would also be pleased to consider objections on an informal basis during the 7-day statutory period.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Turk', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Graham Turk

Interim Drought Director

South West Water

From: Cadman, Carolyn
Sent: 07 October 2022 16:43:13
To: Turk, Graham;Goodchild, Colum
Subject: FOLLOW UP BRIEFING: Potential application for drought permit order in the Restormel area catchment
Attachments: Restormel - Consultation Letter.pdf

Dear All,

A follow up briefing has been arranged to share information about a potential application for a drought permit order in the Restormel area catchment. The information shared with invitees for the first briefing is attached.

The briefing will be held on Monday 10 October at 4pm. Please register for the briefing on Eventbrite [here](#).

A link to join the briefing on MS Teams will be sent to everyone who has registered by 3pm on Monday.

Thanks and have a good weekend,

Carolyn

Carolyn Cadman, Director of Natural Resources



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