



BY EMAIL: water.resources@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Water Resources Management Plan Consultation
3rd floor,
Nobel House,
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

24th June 2013.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thames Water Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2015 - 2040

Background to comments.

The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is covered by three water companies. By far the largest part of the AONB lies within the area of Thames Water and includes the principal Thames tributaries of the Evenlode, Windrush, Leach, Coln and Churn as well as the source of the Thames and the key oolitic limestone aquifer.

Response to consultation

The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2013 -18 identifies water supply as one of the special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB. Both the Cotswold rivers and Oolitic limestone aquifer are important sources of water, principally for large areas outside the AONB. Thames Water, in particular, relies on water from the Cotswolds.

The two main issues affecting water in the Cotswolds are natural low flows during periods of drought and diffuse water pollution. Consequently the Board is looking to Thames Water through the Water Resources Management Plan to:

- Avoid exacerbating low flows through water abstraction
- Work with land managers and farmers to reduce diffuse water pollution to improve water quality. The benefit to Thames Water is the reduction of water treatment costs.

With a statutory duty to supply drinking water against a background of climate change and increasing population, Thames Water faces a tough challenge particularly with water deficits already predicted for 2015 and 2040. Reducing leakage, promoting water use efficiency and improving links between supply zones are priorities supported by the Board.

Looking to develop ground water schemes within the Cotswolds would be a concern for the Board. The Oolitic limestone of the Cotswolds in the west of the Thames Water area is an important aquifer already relied upon for water abstraction. Cotswold rivers such as the

Conserving, enhancing, understanding and enjoying the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Windrush, Coln, Leach and Churn are largely fed by the Oolitic limestone aquifer and are prone to low flows during periods of low rainfall leading to the concentration of pollutants and loss of habitat and wildlife. All these rivers are already classed as 'No water Available' in the last round of Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies. Further ground water abstraction from the Oolitic limestone could exacerbate low flows. Consequently the Board would consider objecting to further abstraction from within the Cotswolds AONB.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the above responses, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. A. Connelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Mark Connelly
Land Management Officer