



Association of Rivers Trusts Autumn Seminar  
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## The Ballinderry RIPPLE Project

*The ultimate river basin plan*

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## What is RIPPLE?

- Rivers Involving People, Places and Leading by Example
- Community led River Basin Management Plan
- Getting people involved in rivers through their own interests
- Realising the capacity of our own community
  - Sharing ideas
  - Seeing rivers from others points of view
  - Empowering people to make a difference



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RIPPLE

## THE AIMS



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### The Community

*RIPPLE will encourage local people to reconnect with their river and act as a community to preserve and celebrate the heritage of the Ballinderry*

### The Decision Makers

*RIPPLE will act as a demonstration to decision makers and government showing that, if given the opportunity, local people can make the right decisions about local issues and contribute to national objectives*









## How RIPPLE has developed

- BFH – River Trust
  - Improve water quality & habitat
  - Dollaghan, brown trout and salmon
  - Freshwater Pearl Mussels
  - White-clawed Crayfish
- WWF Freshwater programme
- Ballinderry River Enhancement Project 2004-2006
- Identified need for a more focused public participation in WFD River Basin Management Planning
- RIPPLE focuses on Ballinderry River system
- Three years funding from HLF in addition to WWF funds









Supported by



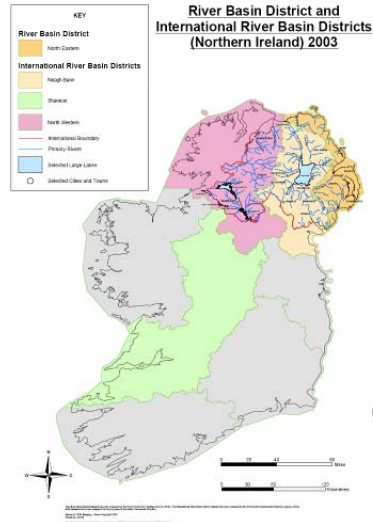
through the Heritage Lottery Fund






## Why has RIPPLE developed?

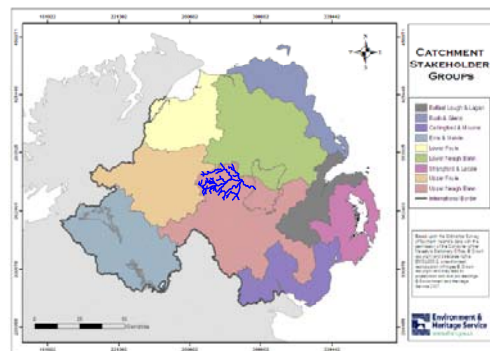
- Northern Ireland – administratively part of the UK but shares a boarder with another EU country
- Water Framework Directive – Shared responsibilities with the Republic of Ireland
- 1 River Basin District
- 3 International River Basin Districts – NS SHARE
- In 2004 - 97% of rivers and 98% of standing waters characterised as 'at risk' of failing to meet the standard of good ecological status



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## Public Participation?

- NI Government commitment of public participation (Article 14 of WFD)
- 3 catchment groups
- Conclusion – TOO BIG
- 9 Sub-catchment stakeholder groups
- Ballinderry part of the Upper Neagh Bann IRBD CSG
- Public representation poor
- 2007 World Wetlands Day-Freshwater Task Force Survey
  - 56% didn't know which catchment they lived in
  - Only 10% aware of WFD



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## The Ballinderry River

**County**  
Tyrone/Londonderry

**IRBD**  
Neagh-Bann

**Catchment Area**  
430 km<sup>2</sup>

**Length**  
47 km (Main channel)

**Source**  
Camlough – Sperrin Mountains

**Mouth**  
Lough Neagh

**Urban Centre**  
Cookstown

**Catchment Population**  
~33,000

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## A River of International Importance

**2000**  
Upper Ballinderry River  
**Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)**


**2004**  
Upper Ballinderry River  
**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**  
*Natura 2000 site*

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RIPPLE

# THE PROCESS





## WHO IS BACKING RIPPLE?

### The Advisory Network –

**Not steering the project...servicing the community!**

Cookstown District Council	NIEA – Catchment Planning Group
CWSAN	NIEA – Catchment Officer
CNCC	NIEA – Conservation, Designation and Protection
DARD – Countryside Management Branch	NIEA – Water Management Unit
DARD - Rivers Agency	LNLB Advisory Group
DCAL - Inland Fisheries	NI Water
DoE - Planning Service	Rural Community Network



## How we contacted the community

- Used existing networks
  - BREA & Fisheries Owners
  - Rural Community Network
  - UFU/NIAPA
  - Industry and Business Networks
  - Local Council
  - Education etc etc
- Newspaper advert
- Radio interviews
- Posters in public places
- Word of mouth – a powerful tool in Northern Ireland!



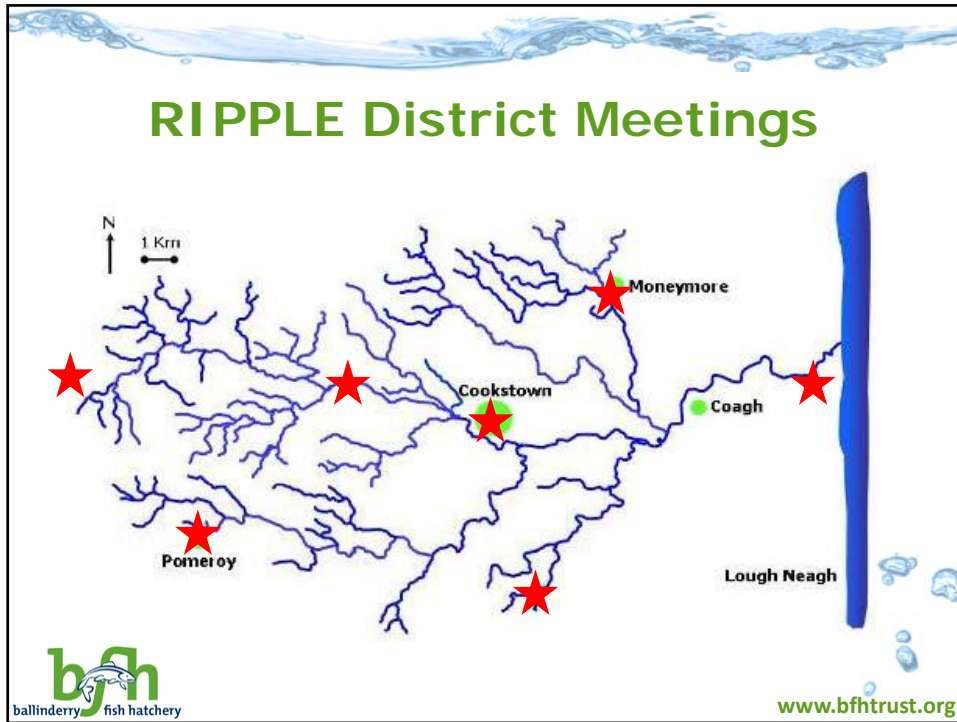
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## Stepping stones to...RIPPLE

- 2007 – RIPPLE feasibility year
- Contacting the community
- Building awareness of the project
- Christmas event at Lissan House
- Whistle stop tour of the Ballinderry
- 'From bankside to fireside'
- The Ballinderry Poem
- The Ballinderry Song
- A message that everyone can get involved in RIPPLE – no matter what your interests



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**What is your Vision for the river?**  
*What the community's aim is for the river!*





## Turning the vision into a plan

- *What needs to be done to **achieve** the vision?*
- *Who needs to be **involved**?*
- *What is **your** role?*







RIPPLE  
**THE OUTCOMES**



**The Community's Vision**

*We want better access  
along the river*

*We want a better  
understanding of the  
river environment*

*We want a clean river*

*We want more wildlife  
in and along the river*



**“We want better access along the river”**

Access to **enjoy** the river and be able to **experience** its features

Access that is **user friendly**

Access that provides **facilities** for local people

Access that promotes **tourism**

Access that is **agreed by all**

Access that is **sensitively located, designed, managed and promoted**





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**“We want better understanding of the river environment”**

**Better understanding** of our **impact** on the water cycle through our businesses and practices

**More information** about special plants and animals along the river

**Better educational links** between schools, businesses and environmental organisations

Promote **river skills** such as biological water testing

Use the Ballinderry as an **outdoor classroom**






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**“We want a clean river”**

**Less pollution** and **less litter** going into the river

**Co-operation** between local and national government, businesses, landowners, households and visitors to the area

Local community involved in **river monitoring**

**River Stewardship Awards** to encourage water friendly practices



**“We want more wildlife in and along the river”**

**Wildlife corridors** providing **healthy habitats** and creating **better protection** for plants and animals

**Eradicate non-native plants** along the river, such as giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed

Encourage **natural flood management** by reinstating wet meadows and flood storage areas

**Increase biodiversity** through habitat creation and species reintroduction



## Adding detail to the plan

- Spatial Mental Mapping
- Looking at our collective knowledge about:
  - Access
  - Educational resources
  - Water pressures – Pollution hotspots
  - Wildlife - Native and Non-native
- Clarifying what we know
- Understanding what we don't know
- Identifying how to fill the gaps



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## Prioritising the Actions


- Visioning events and spatial mapping exercise resulted in **115 actions**
- Prioritise **most important** and **most achievable**
- Community now planning the first steps for the top 7 - 8 actions for each vision.
  - Who will lead
  - Who else needs to be involved
  - What are the first steps
  - Timeframe
  - How will we know we have achieved our action



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## Planning for Action

- Access audit
- Clarifying liability and access rights
- Identifying new access opportunities and working with associated landowners
- Establishing community based invasive plant eradication programme
- Creating a wildlife atlas for the river
- Using the river as an outdoor classroom
- Promote good maintenance of septic tanks
- Awareness programme on the impact of household chemicals on water quality
- Community water quality monitoring
- Establishing a water friendly focus farm
- Creating River Task Groups
- Creation of a River Stewardship award for community, business and agriculture
- Newsletter and events programme



**Ripple News**  
Welcome to RIPPLE...  
ON THE RIVER THIS SEASON  
A CHRISTMAS GIFT TO YOUR RIVER  
**River Event**

**bfh**  
ballinderry fish hatchery

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## What next...

### The Community

- Approval of the draft river management plan
- The big meeting!
- The launch of the Ballinderry River Basin Management Plan – rolling plan that can evolve
- Funding
- Capacity building and sharing

### The Decision Makers

- Promote RIPPLE as a case example of public participation – Catchment Stakeholder Meetings
- Comparison of process – Top-down and Bottom-up
- Use RIPPLE Action Plan (local) to ground truth the River Basin Management Plans (national)
- Provide support, information and expertise to the community

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## Summary

- RIPPLE is *engaging people* in the development of an *action plan*
- Not just feeling involved....*being involved*
- That action plan will help achieve both *local and national objectives* – not least contribute to '*good ecological status*'
- RIPPLE is demonstrating that local people can get *involved*, be *inspired* and make *decisions* about their local water resources
- Realising the *value* of these resources is what helps people see the importance of *healthy river systems* and how this can benefit the community
- Never underestimate the *knowledge and will* of the community
- No-one knows the river better than the people who live and work next to it – see the *potential*, realise the *value* and act together to *achieve* the objectives



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### If you want to learn more about RIPPLE...

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