

Pupils hope to encourage a flood of volunteers to sign up with SEPA to measure rainfall

✘16 September 2019

SEPA is looking for volunteer rainfall observers to collect data daily at around 9am and submit the information online. There are currently 134 rainfall observers across Scotland who play an important part in collecting this valuable data for SEPA.

The information helps SEPA and the Met Office capture Scotland's complex rainfall patterns in addition to the figures collated from SEPA's 300 automated gauges. This data helps SEPA make informed decisions on water management, flood risk management, long term climate research as well as informing industry, agriculture and infrastructure development.

Grant Kennedy, Senior Specialist Scientist in Hydrology, at SEPA said: "Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment and this is a great opportunity for any budding citizen scientists to get involved and make a valued contribution to our data research.

"We help Scotland prepare more powerfully for future increased flooding and the impacts of climate change. The data collected from rainfall observing contributes to our work around flood risk management so volunteers are playing an important role in that process.

"We would welcome new observers from anywhere across Scotland. We are particularly keen to get gauges located in area such as Dumfries and Galloway, The Western Isles, and all across the Highlands particularly in Lochaber and Caithness. Having two gauges close to each other is useful to verify unusual events and as our rainfall is so fickle, there can never be enough gauges to capture the patterns.

"Being a rainfall observer is a rewarding and interesting hobby for people of all ages with an interest in environmental science and there is a great potential for teachers to engage their students in maths, geography and science in a practical way."

Pupils in Primary 6 at Bridge of Allan Primary School, near Stirling, have signed up to join in the data collection and are excited to start their role as citizen scientists.

Lyndsay Macnair, Headteacher at Bridge of Allan Primary School, said: "We are delighted to be supporting SEPA with this project. It is an excellent opportunity for our pupils to develop skills in STEM whilst supporting SEPA. Primary 6 are looking forward to the challenge ahead."

Convener of Stirling Council's Children and Young People, Cllr Susan McGill said: "It's fantastic that our children and young people at Bridge of Allan Primary School are participating in this important project with SEPA. Not only will it help pupils develop key skills for the future, they will have the opportunity to learn about protecting and improving their local environment."

Vice Convener of the Committee, Margaret Brisley said: "This is a really fun and interesting way to engage pupils at the school in an important area of the curriculum and to learn about the environment and sustainability.

"I'm sure the work of our budding scientists at Bridge of Allan PS will encourage others across Scotland to get involved in this vital initiative."

For further information on how to become a rainfall observer visit www.envscot-csportal.org.uk/rainfallobs/about/ or to sign up please visit www.envscot-csportal.org.uk/rainfallobs/

ENDS

Notes to editor

Pictured left to right: Bridge of Allan Primary School P6 pupils Freya Huntly, Broden Daly, Lewis Wilson and Isla McKay with SEPA Hydrologist Grant Kennedy.

Rainfall Observing

- Rainfall observers took extra sampling to monitor valuable data of the volcanic ash fallout after Icelandic eruptions in 2011 and 2014.
- A number of rainfall observers have received awards for providing over 30 years of service with one clocking in their data since 1963. One observer at Doonholm in Ayrshire is continuing a family hobby that started in 1898.
- The most northern rainfall gauge is in Shetland and the highest (279 metres) is at Gladhouse Reservoir in Mid Lothian.

Some examples of the ways the rainfall data is used includes:

- Allows river flow modelling so SEPA can assess flood risk and inform development. River flow modelling helps inform the licensing of water abstraction for industry such as whisky distilling, crop irrigation, public supply and hydro-electric generation.
 - Helps detect changing trends from climate change.
 - Feeds into weather forecasting by calibrating weather prediction models and ground proofing rainfall radar.
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SEPA publishes strategic vision for environmental regulation of the finfish aquaculture sector

03 September 2019

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has today (3 September 2019) published its strategic vision for environmental regulation of the Finfish Aquaculture sector.

The focus of a seven week consultation in November 2018, including SEPA's most extensive public engagement programme across Scotland, [The Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan](#) has been informed by feedback from local communities, NGOs, industry and partner agencies with an interest in shaping SEPA's new regulatory approach.

The sector plan is ambitious in its aspirations for an industry where in the future:

- The Scottish finfish aquaculture sector recognises that protecting the environment is fundamental to its success and is foremost in all its plans and operations.
- The sector is a world-leading innovator of ways to minimise the environmental footprint of food production and supply.
- The sector has a strong and positive relationship with neighbouring users of the environment and the communities in which it operates. It is valued nationally for its contribution to achieving global food security.

A key focus of the sector plan is to ensure that all operators in the sector will reach and maintain full compliance with Scotland's environmental protection laws, while working to help as many operators as possible to move beyond compliance.

The sector plan accompanies the launch of [a new firm, evidence-based regulatory framework](#) on 1 June 2019 which strengthens the protection of the marine environment for the people of Scotland.

Terry A'Hearn, Chief Executive of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, said:

"As one of a number of organisations regulating finfish aquaculture, SEPA is clear that our job is to make sure environmental standards protect the marine environment for the people of Scotland and we make sure the industry meets those standards.

"Sector plans are at the heart of everything we do and will shape our

interactions with the businesses we regulate, the communities we serve and crucially, benefit the environment which we protect.

“Across the last two years, we’ve undertaken more science, more analysis and more listening than ever before to ensure we get this right. Alongside our new regulatory framework, which we launched on 1 June 2019, SEPA will not only secure environmental compliance, but seek to enable as many operators as possible to move beyond compliance and develop innovative ways to protect Scotland’s marine environment.”

SEPA’s Scotland-wide consultation received 117 responses and was supported by nine community drop-in events and 28 one-to-one meetings between SEPA specialists and stakeholder groups. A short summary of the consultation feedback has been published alongside the sector plan.

ENDS

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SECTOR PLAN AND CONSULTATION RESPONSE

SEPA’S AQUACULTURE HUB

FINFISH AQUACULTURE CONSULTATION EVENTS

- Approximately 275 people attended across the nine community drop-in events.
- A total of 28 one to one meetings were facilitated between SEPA specialists and stakeholder groups including, community groups, local fisheries, NGOs and industry representatives.
- Specific round table discussions were also arranged for NGOs, fish farming environmental managers and partner public agencies in addition to the nine community events.
- 117 responses to the consultation received.

[Commitment of companies at the forefront of Scottish environmental change recognised](#)

 29 July 2019

The hard work and commitment of companies at the forefront of environmental change in Scotland has today (29 July 2019) been recognised by the VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards.

A total of 36 businesses from across Scotland have been included in the

shortlist for the prestigious awards which are focused on inspiring companies to play their part in meeting Scotland's ambition to be a world leader on tackling climate change.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the awards and the finalists include: Wood, Cycling Scotland, Vegware, Diageo (Leven) and The James Hutton Institute *(Full list in notes to editors). The finalists have been selected across eleven award categories which recognise the different ways that sustainable best practice can be implemented.

They include examples of good practice in the following categories: Leadership Scotland, Innovating Scotland, Product Scotland, Service Scotland, Hydro Nation Scotland, Circular Scotland, Moving Scotland, Adapting Scotland, Engaging Scotland, Partnership Scotland and Small Business Scotland.

As part of this year's anniversary celebrations, a special Best of VIBES Award will also be presented to a past winner that has demonstrated an ongoing contribution to sustainable development by embracing new practices and constantly reviewing its systems so that it remains environmentally focused.

Bob Downes, chair of SEPA and head of the VIBES judging panel, said: "The scale of environmental challenges facing humanity is enormous, with a real urgency to act. The successful businesses of tomorrow will be those who embrace the economic opportunity of sustainable solutions to environmental challenges.

"VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards, linked to SEPA's ambitious 'One Planet Prosperity' strategy, recognise Scotland's leading businesses who show a real commitment to sustainable goods, products and services through leadership, innovation and ambition.

"I would like to congratulate all the finalists who have been recognised by the VIBES Awards and I look forward to announcing the winners in due course."

Environment Secretary, Roseanna Cunningham, said: "My congratulations go to the businesses who have been shortlisted for this year's VIBES awards. We are all aware of the urgent environmental issues affecting our planet and business has a vital role to play in Scotland's continuing journey to a net-zero society.

"It is important that we recognise those who are leading on action to develop sustainable solutions and environmental practices while seizing the economic benefits of embracing a vibrant and innovation circular economy."

Award sponsors include Adaptation Scotland, Chivas Brothers-Pernod Ricard, Farne Salmon and Trout, Mabbett, ScottishPower, Glenmorangie, The Scottish Government, Travel Know How Scotland, University of Stirling Management School, Wave Utilities.

The winners will be announced at a ceremony on 14 November at the Doubletree by Hilton hotel in Glasgow.

For more information on VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards please visit www.vibes.org.uk

– Ends –

Notes to editors:

About VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards

VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards is a strategic partnership between Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Government, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, Highland and Islands Enterprise, Zero Waste Scotland, Energy Saving Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

The Awards are further supported by CBI Scotland, the Institute of Directors, the Federation of Small Businesses, Bright Green Business, Quality Scotland, Scotch Whisky Association and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry.

The full list of VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards 2019 categories and finalists are as follows:

Adapting Scotland Award: Biomatrix Water Solutions Ltd, EGG lighting, Intelligent Growth Solutions, uFraction8 Ltd

Circular Scotland Award: ACS Clothing Limited, Renewable Parts Ltd, Re-tek UK Ltd, Total Homes Co-operative, Vegware

Engaging Scotland Award: Aberdeen Performing Arts, ACS Clothing Limited, Edinburgh Leisure, Leith Community Crops in Pots, Sea The Change

Hydro Nation Scotland Award: Biomatrix Water Solutions LTD, Diageo – Leven, Ecoanolytes Limited, The James Hutton Institute, TownRock Energy

Innovating Scotland Award: Diageo – Leven, Intelligent Growth Solutions, TCP, uFraction8 Ltd, Wester Ross Fisheries Ltd

Leadership Scotland Award: ACS Clothing Limited, Mercat Tours Ltd, Paterson Arran Ltd, RPC BPI INDUPAC, TechnipFMC

[2030 vision for River Leven Catchment outlined as Scottish Environment Protection Agency partnership ‘locks](#)

in' sustainable, inclusive growth ahead of Earth Overshoot Day

26 July 2019

A 2030 vision for the River Leven Catchment was outlined today (26 July 2019) as a Scottish Environment Protection Agency partnership 'locks in' sustainable, inclusive growth to the Leven Programme Partnership.

- 2030 vision for River Leven Catchment outlined as Scottish Environment Protection Agency partnership 'locks in' sustainable, inclusive growth to the Leven Programme Partnership.
- Partners sign a 'Sustainable Growth Agreement' focused on six strategic outcomes for a "living, breathing example of inclusive growth."
- First in Scotland partnership signed ahead of Earth Overshoot Day on 29 July – the day humanity will have used nature's resource budget for the entire year.

Fife Council, Sustrans, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, Fife College, Forth Rivers Trust, Diageo, Central Scotland Green Network Trust and Keep Scotland Beautiful backed a 'Sustainable Growth Agreement' with SEPA focused on six strategic outcomes for a "living, breathing example of inclusive growth."

The ambitious first in Scotland partnership, signed at a launch event held in the former Tullis Russell Environment Education Centre, Glenrothes, seeks to deliver a series of 2030 objectives:

- The area will support a network of paths and sustainable travel routes that will connect people, communities and business to each other and the environment.
- The area will become a 'go to' destination and sustainable tourism will become one of the area's key economic attractions, whilst not increasing carbon emissions or negatively impacting on biodiversity of the area.
- The area will be a dynamic hub for social enterprise, youth and education.
- The area will be able to attract and support business and industry and become a hub between the cities of Dundee and Edinburgh.
- Registered vacant and derelict land, the equivalent of around 12 football pitches, in the Leven catchment, will be made productive for the benefit of communities in the region and in support of inclusive economic regeneration.
- The area will have a natural environment that will support a diverse ecology and celebrate its social history.

Sustainable Growth Agreements are voluntary, non-legally binding, formal agreements through which an organisation (or organisations) and the Scottish

Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) can explore new and innovative ways to improve environmental performance and focus on practical actions that deliver environmental, social and economic success.

This Sustainable Growth Agreement is the first in Scotland involving multiple organisations working in partnership to achieve shared outcomes across a river catchment. It takes an innovative partnership approach to realise ambitions that go beyond the scope of the individual organisations involved.

The vision, shared by partners, is that by 2030, the Leven catchment will be a living, breathing example of inclusive growth, achieving environmental excellence in ways that create social and economic opportunities

Historically the catchment was the engine of mid-Fife sustaining several hundred mills and factories and was home to miners and workers in the manufacturing industries. Since then serious environmental challenges have arisen in the catchment with multiple pressures and environmental impacts including barriers to fish migration, water quality issues and physical modifications to the rivers.

The agreement was signed ahead of Earth Overshoot Day on 29 July – the day the Global Footprint Network calculates humanity will have used nature's resource budget for the entire year and was backed by Fellow at Cambridge University Institute for Sustainability Leadership and Former CEO Greenpeace International Paul Gilding.

Speaking at the event, SEPA Chief Executive, Terry A'Hearn, said:

"I'm excited to be signing this River Leven Partnership today. I've worked as an environmental professional for thirty years in four different nations. I've heard lots of speeches and read lots of strategies about sustainability. Too much of this has been about generalities; not enough has been about action.

"This River Leven Partnership is different. Eleven organisations are signing up today to take actions, not to simply speak fine words. All of us are determined to create environmental improvements in ways that drive economic and social success for the people living in this part of Scotland."

Dr. Martin Valenti, Head of Climate Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, added:

"Sustainable and inclusive economic growth is at the heart of Scotland's bold new economic vision, 'Building Scotland's Future Today. As a small nation with huge potential, we need to be ready to face the challenges ahead while being in the best position possible to exploit the new opportunities that these changes present. We'll achieve more when we work in partnership which is why we're standing with public and private sector partners to back this important initiative."

Paul Gilding, Fellow at Cambridge University Institute for Sustainability Leadership and Former CEO Greenpeace International, who spoke at the event, welcomed the initiative, stating:

“With Scotland’s globally ambitious climate strategy, leadership and innovation in response to the climate emergency, it’s great to see progressive partners such as SEPA and others work together in new ways to transform communities for the people who live and work there.”

Andy Keba, Head of Strategic Partnerships, Sustrans Scotland, added:

“Sustrans is pleased to be able to support the delivery of new walking, cycling and wheeling routes as part of the Leven Project, overcoming a legacy of poor active travel links in the area. As a partner in the project, we hope to help create new places along the routes for people to visit, rest and relax, and we look forward to working with the local community to shape these new spaces. At the same time, we will be working to make it easier for everyone to travel between the local communities, business and workplaces on foot, bike or by wheel, helping to boost the local economy and the health of people in the local area.”

Cllr Ross Vettraino, Convener – Environment, Protective Services & Community Safety Committee, said:

“Fife Council is delighted to be a partner on ‘The Leven Programme’, which is set to revitalise the River Leven by making environmental improvements and promoting biodiversity, as well as boosting business, tourism, heritage and active travel. This project is all about developing connections between communities, the river and the coast.”

“The Connectivity Project is the first of a series of programmes under the programme and will focus on a 5km stretch of the River Leven at Levenmouth. It seeks to deliver environmental river improvements, develop a series of paths to connect the communities to and along the river, and unlock opportunities on the vacant and derelict land.

“This new Sustainable Growth Agreement (SGA) formalises our strong partnership approach to creating new opportunities for everyone in the area. Working together and with local communities, we will pool resources and skills to ensure this project puts local people and the environment at its heart.

“Mid-Fife is a key focus for Fife Council, and we are already working hard and taking action to reinvigorate and regenerate this important area.”

Hugh Hall, Fife College Principal, said:

“Fife College is committed to working with its partners to deliver the ambitions set out in the Leven Sustainable Growth Agreement. The project has already enabled our talented students to make use of their creative skills in designing a brand image and logo which will be used on everything associated with the Leven Catchment programme – from the website and publicity materials to t-shirts and recycled pencils. We aim to give many more Fife College students opportunities to get excited and educated about sustainability and to contribute to achieving successful outcomes for the River Leven catchment.”

Steve Blake, Operations Director, Cameronbridge Distillery, said:

“Diageo’s deepest roots are here in Fife dating back to 1627 when the Haig family first started distilling. Today we are a global business and everywhere we operate around the world we are committed to reducing our environmental impact and building thriving communities. As a major employer in Fife the local environment and community are hugely important to us and that is why we are delighted to be part of the Leven Programme Partnership.

“At Cameronbridge Distillery we’ve made significant investments in renewable energy and water treatment directly aimed at minimising our environmental impact, and alongside our Leven Packaging Plant we are working every day to achieve the highest standards of sustainability.

“We look forward to collaborating with our partners in this initiative to drive further environmental and community benefits for the Leven area.”

Ross Johnston, Scottish Natural Heritage Head of Sustainable Development, said:

“We are delighted to be involved in this exciting project and look forward to working with partners and local communities to enhance the fabulous natural assets of the River Leven and surrounding area for the benefit of all.”

Ends

Notes to editor

RIVER LEVEN:

The River Leven catchment runs largely through the Mid-Fife area. The main stem of the river originates from tributaries around Loch Leven (with Loch Leven itself being situated in the Perth and Kinross Council area) and flows to the Firth of Forth through several towns and communities.

Historically the catchment sustained several hundred mills and factories and was home to a proud population of miners and workers in manufacturing industries; it was the engine of Mid-Fife, towns and communities grew around and along it.

SEPA has a responsibility to tackle and improve or remove these pressures, which include barriers to fish migration, water quality issues and physical modifications to the rivers.

The area has pockets of severe deprivation and much of it is economically stagnant. With a population often disconnected from the natural environment there are serious problems associated with poor health and well-being.

The vision of the Leven Programme includes creating a network of paths and sustainable travel routes, attracting and supporting business and industry, being a dynamic hub for social enterprise, youth and education and making productive use of vacant and derelict land.

Reconnecting people and place is a key focus of the initiative and plans start with the connectivity project, which will focus on a 5km stretch of the River Leven at Levenmouth.

EARTH OVERSHOOT DAY:

On July 29, humanity will have used nature's resource budget for the entire year, according to [Global Footprint Network](#), an international sustainability organization that has pioneered the Ecological Footprint. The [Ecological Footprint](#) adds up all of people's competing demands for biologically productive areas – food, timber, fibers, carbon sequestration, and accommodation of infrastructure. Currently, carbon emissions from burning fossil fuel comprise 60% of humanity's Ecological Footprint.

Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity's annual demand on nature exceeds what Earth's ecosystems can regenerate in that year.

Over the past 20 years, it has moved up two months to July 29, the earliest ever. This means that humanity is currently using nature 1.75 times faster than our planet's ecosystems can regenerate, equivalent to 1.75 Earths. Humanity first saw ecological deficit in the early 1970s. Overshoot is possible because we are depleting our natural capital, compromising the planet's future regenerative capacity.

[Exceptional board leaders required for Scotland's environment protection agency as Chair, Bob Downes, reappointed](#)

 19 June 2019

Exceptional board leaders are required to help transform Scotland's environment protection agency (SEPA) as a recruitment campaign for four new board members is launched. The recruitment comes as the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham MSP, today announced the reappointment of Bob Downes as Chair of the Board.

- Recruitment opens for four new board members to join Scotland's Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).
- SEPA Chair, Bob Downes, Reappointed to role.

The new board members will both help create a world-class EPA fit for the challenges of tomorrow and ensure the delivery of the agency's ambitious strategy, One Planet Prosperity. The strategy focuses on helping businesses

and communities thrive within the resources of our planet.

“The scale of environmental challenge facing humanity is enormous, with a real urgency to act”, said Chair Bob Downes. “Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland’s environment, helping communities and businesses thrive within the resources of our planet. We call this One Planet Prosperity.

“We’re firmly focused on building on the significant progress made and to further supporting Scotland’s globally ambitious sustainability objectives. That’s why just like progressive businesses, SEPA is changing today.

Mr Downes added “in addition to being delighted to be reappointed as Chair, SEPA is looking forward to being joined by four new board members who are both passionate about the potential of our strategy and represent the diversity of the communities we serve. The right candidates will be agents of positive change who can also face the challenges of working in and influencing a forward-thinking, progressive organisation as we work to achieve more for Scotland.”

Scotland’s principal environmental regulator and national authority for flood forecasting and warning, SEPA’s four new board members will join the agency in January 2020.

Candidates from diverse backgrounds with varying experiences and skills are being invited to apply for the four board appointments, which have become available as four existing candidates come to the end of their time as members.

SEPA currently has 10 Board members, who come from a variety of private, private and voluntary sector backgrounds as well as NGOs and bring with them a wealth of knowledge and expertise, as well as passion for environmental issues.

“Applicants don’t have to be an expert on the environment or science to join the SEPA Board,” Downes says. “Experience in finance, marketing, business or community leadership or working in non-profit are all skills that could support your role as Board member.”

SEPA’s board is responsible for the organisation’s overall direction and performance, including its efficiency and effectiveness as a public body. It also enables the agency to deliver its statutory purpose of delivering environmental protection and improvement, while contributing to health and well-being benefits, and sustainable economic growth.

SEPA’s One Planet Prosperity strategy involves working with businesses to help them meet – and go beyond – environmental compliance, for example by reducing their use of water, carbon-based energy and raw materials and by cutting or designing-out waste.

Appointments to SEPA’s Board are made by Scottish Ministers and are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland. Appointments are normally for a four-year term with the possibility of a further term, subject

to evidence of effective performance and satisfying the skills, knowledge and personal qualities required on the Board at the time of re-appointment.

The appointments are remunerated for a time commitment of a maximum of 30 days per year.

On the Chair's reappointment, Ms. Cunningham said:

"In his role to date, Bob has supported an ambitious agenda for the development of SEPA and the implementation of a new approach to regulation. I look forward to Bob continuing to play an important role in ensuring that the environment and human health are protected; and that Scotland's natural resources are used as sustainably as possible and contribute to inclusive, sustainable economic growth"

SEPA is headquartered in Stirling and employs around 1,300 staff at 24 offices across Scotland including Lerwick, Kirkwall, Fort William, Aberdeen, Perth, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dumfries, Ayr and Balloch.

Candidates are invited to find out more and apply at sepa.org.uk/boardrecruitment

The closing date for applications is 15th July 2019 at midnight.

Ends