



Action for the River Kennet

1 July 2014

Victory for the River Kennet

Campaigners to protect the River Kennet are celebrating a major milestone in protecting it from abstraction. In an advert in the Gazette and Herald last week, the Environment Agency formally announced their intention to reduce abstraction from Axford Pumping Station and to stop abstracting water from the River Og to protect the River Kennet Site of Special Scientific Interest as part of a programme to help restore sustainable abstraction. The reductions will start from April 2017.

ARK's chairman, Geoffrey Findlay said 'this is the first concrete evidence of real progress to reduce water abstraction from the River Kennet, and represents a very important milestone.'

The agreement to leave more water in the river was reached in 2013 and was due to come in to effect in 2015, but has been beset by delays as the Environment Agency and Thames Water resolved complex issues around how the alternative supply to Swindon could be funded. Those issues have been resolved and Thames Water is planning to construct a north-south Swindon pipeline, which will supply Swindon with water from Farmoor Reservoir instead of from the River Kennet.

Charlotte Hitchmough, ARK's Director said 'ARK has campaigned vociferously for over 20 years to reduce the amount of water exported from the Kennet to Swindon, and this is the first important step to that wish becoming a reality. We congratulate both the Environment Agency and Thames Water for reaching this stage, and we look forward to hearing positive news about the progress of the new pipeline. Most importantly we look forward to seeing a healthier river from 2017.'

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