

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

Project Case Study: Source to Tap—Project update

THEME:

Environment

FUNDING (ERDF+MATCH):

€4,909,921.26

MATCH FUNDING:

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

LEAD PARTNER:

Northern Ireland Water

PROJECT PARTNERS:

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), Rivers Trust, East Border Region Ltd, Ulster University, Irish Water

Start Date: 01/10/2016

End Date: 31/03/2022

PROJECT CONTACT:

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Forests for Water

The Source to Tap Forestry Pilot has continued in 2020 despite the difficulties of the Covid-19 restrictions. The fitting of mechanisms was initially delayed due to lock-down and some mechanisms could not be fitted until after the sites were harvested. However, despite this, there are now seven sites, which have been fitted with various measures to reduce sediment run-off from clear fell forestry sites. The aim of the forestry pilot is to trial various sediment reduction measures constructed using easily available, inexpensive materials, which could be used in addition to current forestry best practice to reduce sediment getting into watercourses.

Measures fitted as part of the 2020 pilot include:

- Two sets of longitudinal log dams – one in a large stream and one in a large forestry drain. These types of dams are regularly used by forestry contractors to prevent erosion when plant is crossing rivers and the same approach is being tested to see how well it works in slowing the flow and allowing sediment to settle out in larger forest drains and rivers next to felled sites.

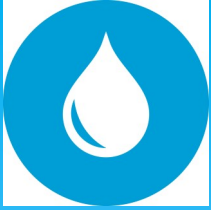


Log dam on a stream draining a Forest Service NI compartment.

- Brush dams and timber dams– in smaller drains that collect drainage from felled compartments.



Brush dam in a small drain, draining a Forest Service NI compartment.



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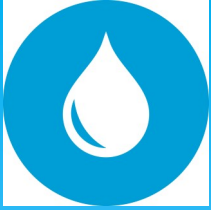


Timber dam in a small drain, draining a Forest Service NI compartment.

- Geotextile dams placed in a series of 2 dams along a small watercourse draining a forestry compartment, to slow the flow and allow the sediment to settle out. This follows on from the excellent results obtained at the pilot site in 2019 where four geotextile dams were installed in series along a watercourse.



A geotextile dam installed along a watercourse draining a Coillte site.



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- Cover crop to prevent the loss of soil from the freshly harvested compartment by binding the soil together. The photographs below show a cover crop installed at a Coillte site in 2020. This is a follow on from the learning in the 2019 cover crop pilot planted at a Forest Service site. This differs slightly because both sides of the stream running through the felled compartment have been planted with a cover crop, which is a mixture of native grasses (Yorkshire Fog, Highland Bent and Hard Fescue).



Area where no cover crop has been sown.



Area where cover crop has been sown showing growth 7 weeks later.

All measures were fitted by September 2020 and will be monitored on a monthly basis until March 2021 when results will be collated and analysed for reporting.