CREW CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR WATERS

NEWS

Spring 2026

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba


Photo credit: Nikki Dodd

In this edition:

CREW Letter: Welcome to our Spring Newsletter.

As we move through spring – a season that naturally reflects renewal and growth – I'm pleased to share this latest update from CREW. Having recently taken up my role as a CREW Project Manager, it has been a rewarding start, building on strong foundations and working closely with colleagues, partners, and our wider network to continue delivering impactful, evidence-led work.

This Spring edition comes to you slightly later than usual, as we have been mindful of the pre-election period, but we are delighted to now be able to share a number of key updates. It has been a busy and productive time in CREW. We recently brought together our Steering Group to help shape priorities and strengthen collective direction, alongside investing in our own team development through training and participating in a wider water science away day.

We were pleased to launch the *Planning for Water Scarcity* guidance at Arable Futures, helping to inform more resilient approaches within the agricultural sector. Alongside this, our latest publications on *Natural Capital and River Basin Management Planning*, and *Transitioning Surface Water Collection to Surface Water Reuse Systems* contribute to strenghening their respective evidence bases. We have also launched a new call for proposals on *The use of large wood structures in river restoration in Scotland*.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition. As always, we welcome your thoughts, so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes,

Anishka

Anishka Cameron, Crew Project Manager

CREW Updates

The **Planning for Water Scarcity: Practical Guidance for Scottish Farmers and Growers** provides practical, farmer-focused guidance to help businesses by bringing together the latest information on how water availability is changing across Scotland, alongside options for alternative and supplementary water supplies to support agricultural production. The guidance was launched at the Arable Futures event.

Image: CREW Project Manager, Rebekah Burman, launching the practical guidance for Scottish farmers and growers at Arable Futures.

The Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture: Code of Practice was published in March 2026 and aims to provide clear guidance on which actions will help farmers and crofters to contribute to sustainable and regenerative farming whilst maintaining production of high-quality food.

The Code of Practice highlights several CREW projects:

- Planning for Water Scarcity: Practical guidance for Scottish farmers and growers
- Better Buffer Design, Placement and Management
- Moving to more sustainable methods of slurry application: implications for water quality of waterbodies and water protected areas
- A state of knowledge overview of identified pathways of diffuse pollutants to the water environment

At the official launch of the Hutton Hub at the James Hutton Institute's Craigiebuckler campus CREW had the opportunity to speak with the First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney. John Swinney talked about the issues of water scarcity in Scotland during his speech and we were able to share outputs from the Planning for Water Scarcity: Practical Guidance for Scottish Farmers and Growers and Future Predictions of Water Scarcity in Scotland: Impacts to Distilleries and Agricultural Abstractors with him. He noted the importance of our approach which uses different outputs to communicate with different groups.

Image (L–R): Prof Colin Campbell, Chief Executive James Hutton Institute; John Swinney, First Minister; Rinki Kanakraj, NESCAN Community Development Officer; Amy Cooper, CREW Communications and Impact Officer; and Nikki Dodd, CREW Manager.

New Call for Proposals

CRW2025_09 The use of large wood structures in river restoration in Scotland

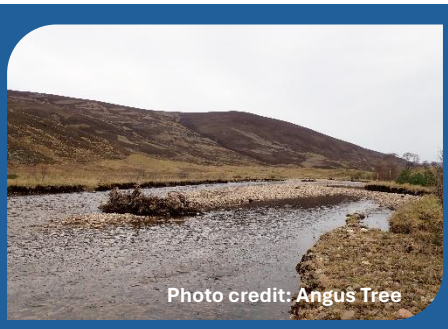


Photo credit: Angus Tree

Overview: CREW invites proposals for a c. 6-month capacity building project to develop an interim decision-support framework to inform decision-making about using large wood structures in river restoration projects in different environmental settings.

Budget: Funding available: **£97,000 exclusive of VAT** (where applicable).

Deadline: Thursday 18th June, 15:00

For more information and to read the full specification, please visit the project page.

Latest Publications

Natural Capital and River Basin Management Planning - Protecting and Improving Scotland's Water Environment

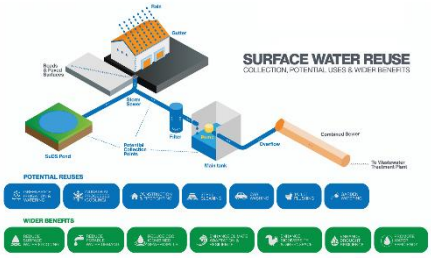
Publication page


Photo credit: Lorna Cole

Scotland is renowned for its clean rivers, rich wildlife and iconic landscapes. Protecting, enhancing and restoring these natural resources is vital for our environment, wellbeing and economy. River Basin Management Planning (RBMP) helps reduce pressures on the water environment but has traditionally focused on actions close to rivers. This project explored how a natural capital approach can better capture the value of whole catchments, informing future policy and helping to prioritise actions to protect, enhance and restore these resources.

Transitioning Surface Water Collection to Surface Water Reuse Systems

Publication page



Infographic courtesy of Abertay University

This project explored the potential in Scotland to capture and reuse surface water in urban areas for non-portable purposes. The research focused on improving understanding of aspects such as potential sources and place-based solutions, current regulatory requirements, and environmental and socio-economic drivers as important factors to enable a transition to widespread surface water reuse in Scotland.

Training and development

Supporting Early Career Researchers

Nikki Dodd (Centre Manager) and Amy Cooper (Impact and Communications Officer) were invited to run a session on Communicating Impact at the Science-Policy Interface and give a barstool talk on their career journeys at the MASTS 16th Graduate School Annual Student Retreat.

"Session from Amy and Nikki was great."

"I thought Nikki and Amy's barstool talks were fantastic. Both of their stories were very interesting and re-assuring that you can balance life with a successful career."

Exploring science-policy impact

CREW team members recently took part in impact-focused workshops hosted by the Plant Health Centre and EPIC. Sessions delivered by Dr Laura Meagher and Dr Jamie Gallagher explored planning for research impact, evaluation and evidencing change. The workshops provided valuable opportunities to share experiences across the Centres of Expertise and with researchers from across universities and institutes, and reflect on how impact planning can support science-policy engagement.

Plant Health Centre
Scotland's Centre of Expertise

epic Centre of Expertise on Animal Disease Outbreaks

Moving evidence into active use

The CREW team undertook an '**appreciating your knowledge mobilisation practice**' workshop with Dave Blackwell from Scottish Policy and Research Exchange (SPRE).

The session provided space to reflect on how we translate evidence into impact, drawing on practical frameworks and shared experiences. It encouraged greater awareness of our strengths, helped articulate the value of our work, and identified opportunities to further develop our knowledge mobilisation practice.

SPRE
SCOTTISH POLICY & RESEARCH EXCHANGE

Wastewater monitoring: an early-warning system for Scotland's public health

The Scottish Government recently invited CREW to submit a case study demonstrating the Centre's impact. We chose to highlight our portfolio of wastewater monitoring work. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this case study.

From detecting COVID-19 to tackling Scotland's drug crisis, wastewater monitoring has rapidly evolved into a powerful tool for public health.

Wastewater monitoring can detect health risks early, capture trends missed by clinical testing, and support faster, more informed public-health responses.

Since 2019, CREW's wastewater monitoring portfolio has strengthened Scotland's ability to use wastewater as an early-warning tool for public health protection. Developed rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic, CREW-commissioned research demonstrated that SARS-CoV-2 could be reliably detected in wastewater, helping to accelerate the creation of Scotland's National Wastewater Surveillance Programme. This provided policymakers with population-level intelligence that complemented clinical testing and modelling, supporting timely, evidence-based decisions.

CREW played a central coordination role, bringing together partners including SEPA, Scottish Water, Public Health Scotland, the Scottish Government, and academic researchers. Through co-developed research, structured engagement and targeted dissemination, CREW helped establish robust sampling, analytical and governance frameworks, ensuring wastewater data were timely, credible and policy-relevant.

As the programme matured, CREW projects expanded beyond COVID-19 to include variant detection, emerging and re-emerging pathogens, and the feasibility of monitoring psychoactive substances in wastewater. This marked an important shift from emergency response towards longer-term public health planning and preparedness. The work has informed parliamentary engagement, contributed to national strategies, and supported Public Health Scotland's longer-term vision for wastewater-based epidemiology.

Beyond immediate public health benefits, the portfolio has strengthened research capacity, supported early-career researchers, and positioned Scotland as an international leader in wastewater surveillance. Together, these projects demonstrate the value of sustained collaboration across environment, water and health sectors.

Register of Expertise

Connecting opportunities and expertise in water science and policy, the Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW) fosters collaboration between research and decision-making. Our Register of Expertise plays a key role in this effort. Please consider adding your skills and knowledge to the network.

Why should I register

Connect to opportunities

Reach out to colleagues and share your work

Explore skills and find solutions

Widen your network

Register

CREW - Scotland's centre of expertise for waters: Overview | LinkedIn

CREW CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR WATERS www.crew.ac.uk

For general enquiries and feedback please contact us here: enquiries@crew.ac.uk

The James Hutton Institute

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