

Eden Catchment

Water Quality Update – Autumn 2024



Hello from SES Water

At SES Water we are working in the catchment to help protect drinking water quality at source. Drinking water in England is tightly regulated and pollution from various sources, including agricultural pesticides and fertilisers, can prove a significant challenge for water companies. Preventing contamination at source rather than relying on 'end of pipe' solutions, such as additional energy intensive treatment processes, offers a more sustainable and cost-effective way of tackling water quality issues and can have many wider benefits for farmers, the environment and local communities too.

This biannual newsletter is designed to provide an update on the latest water quality data in the Eden Catchment, alongside news from the SES Water Catchment Team.

Visit our [SES catchment management](#) webpage or email catchment@seswater.co.uk for more information.

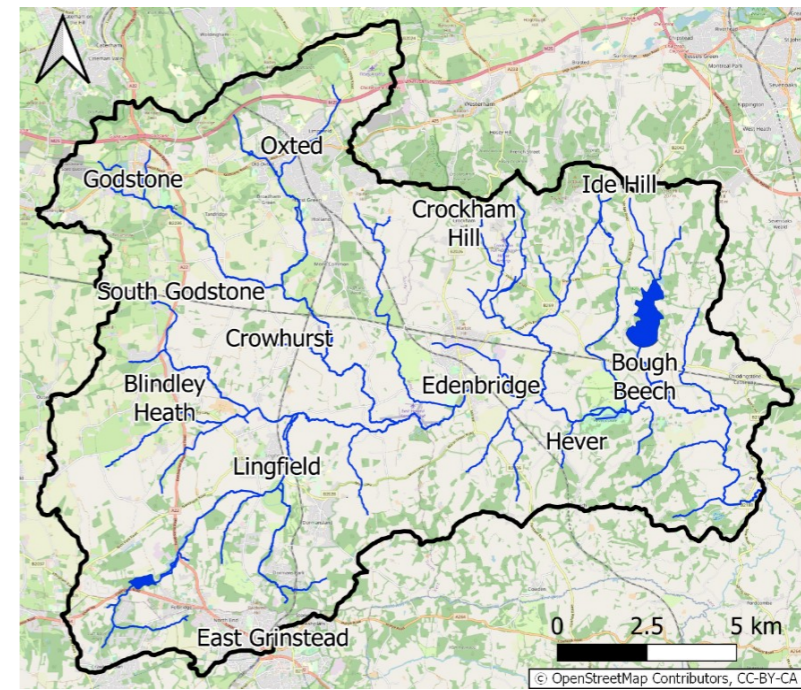


Figure 1: The Eden catchment - more information on the catchment can be found [here](#)

Water Quality

SES Water is permitted to fill Bough Beech Reservoir with water from the River Eden from September to the end of April (flow dependent). This period is rapidly approaching and coincides with winter crop pesticide applications, as well as higher rainfall rates, increasing the risk of pesticide runoff into the river which in turn may be abstracted into the reservoir. We monitor water quality in the river all year round and the most up-to-date data on the key pesticides and nutrients that we monitor can be found [here](#).

Propyzamide, the main active in products such as Kerb, is used on oilseed rape (OSR) and winter beans to control grasses and broad-leaved weeds. We are anticipating a potential propyzamide challenge this abstraction period, given catchment intel on what people are growing. Thank you to all the farmers who have let us know what they're planning to grow this season. This enables us to predict the challenges we may see and manage abstraction accordingly. If you are happy to share this information with us, please get in touch at catchment@seswater.co.uk.

Propyzamide is detected every winter period in the river, usually November to January, at concentrations well above the drinking water standard (figure 2). This coincides with when we are allowed to abstract from the river to fill Bough Beech Reservoir. Concentrations in the reservoir are not fully recovered after last season and are currently at the drinking water standard. Fortunately, propyzamide is relatively well-removed by treatment processes at Bough Beech Water Treatment Works, however care needs to be taken to avoid overwhelming these processes.

By applying propyzamide responsibly, the impact on water quality can be managed. Application advice can be found in the Voluntary Initiative's [Propyzamide Water Protection Advice Sheet](#).

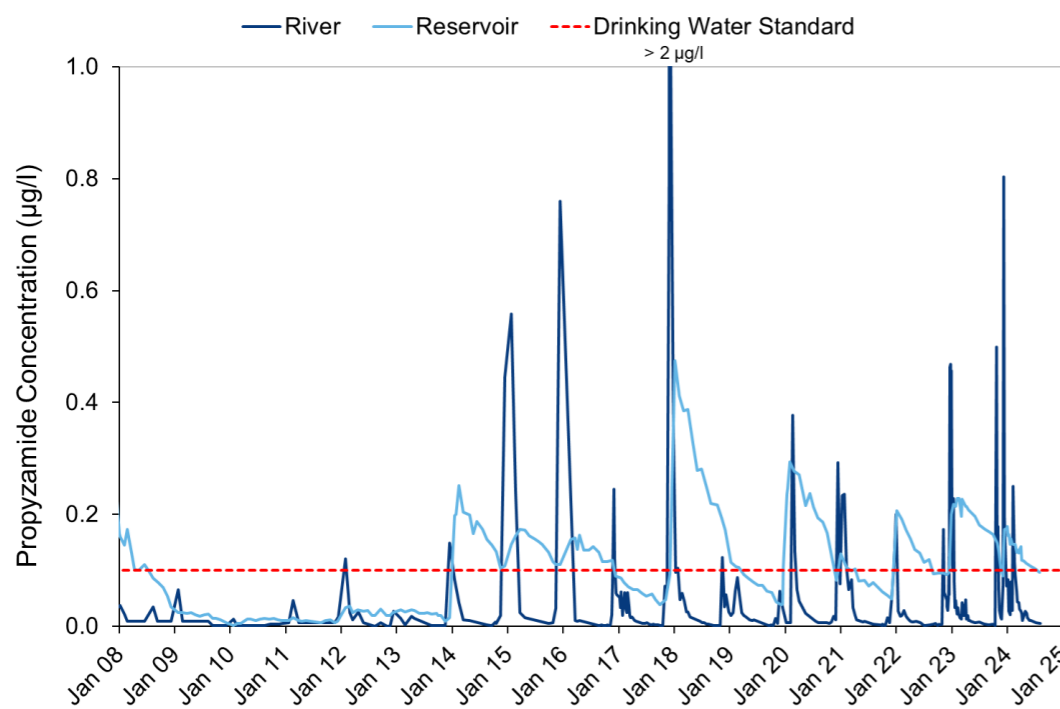


Figure 2: Long-term propyzamide trend in the River Eden at Chiddingstone Bridge and in Bough Beech Reservoir, with the drinking water standard (0.1 µg/l) shown for reference

Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) Update

The water industry works in five-year cycles – we are coming to the end of our current WINEP scheme that focused on addressing four herbicides (metolaldehyde, propyzamide, carbetamide and mecoprop) and phosphate in the River Eden and Bough Beech Reservoir.

Our next programme of work, running 2025-2035, plans to continue focussing on reducing the impact of pesticides in the River Eden and Bough Beech Reservoir. The project will specifically target the herbicide flufenacet, which is commonly used to control grass weeds in winter wheat and winter barley. Over the past 20 years, there has been an upward trend in use of flufenacet within the catchment (figure 3), this increasing trend is also apparent in our water quality monitoring results (included in the previous section). From 2025, we will also have a scheme to address nitrate in our groundwater catchment surrounding Brewer Street, Bletchingley (which falls partly within the Eden surface water catchment).

Listening to feedback from farmers, we aim to launch a brochure in the New Year clearly setting out SES Water funding available to support 'water friendly' initiatives in the catchment – more details to follow next year.

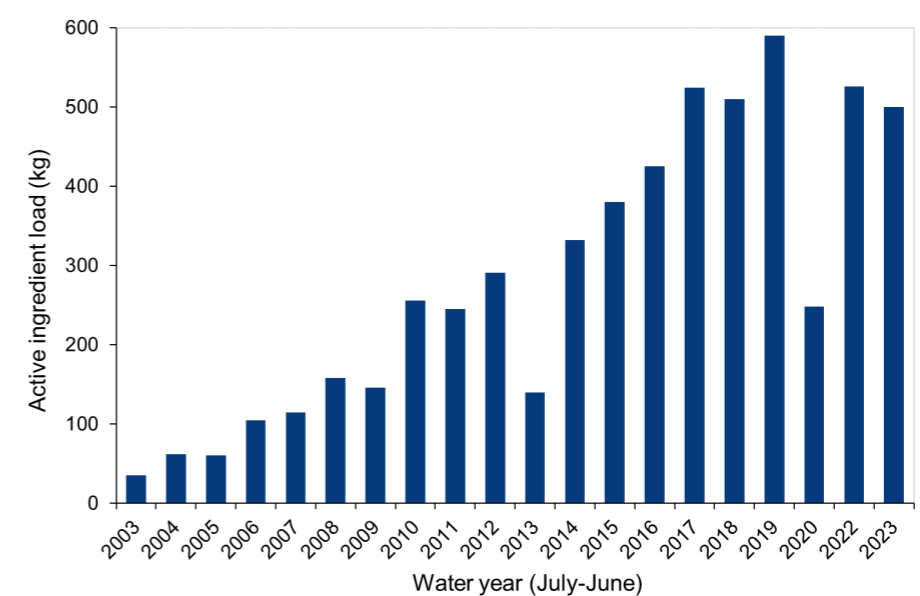


Figure 3: Modelled load of flufenacet (kg) applied in the Eden Catchment



Eden for Nature Cluster Workshop (5 September 2024)

Surrey Wildlife Trust is working with the Eden for Nature cluster group, and is hosting an event for all landowners in the Eden Catchment to discuss the impact, value and opportunities of waterways for landowners. SES Water will be presenting on water quality in the Eden, with Daniel Creech of Natural England Catchment Sensitive Farming providing an up-to-date insight into the Environment Land Management offering and how this can be used for options to help improve soil health, as well as water and air quality.

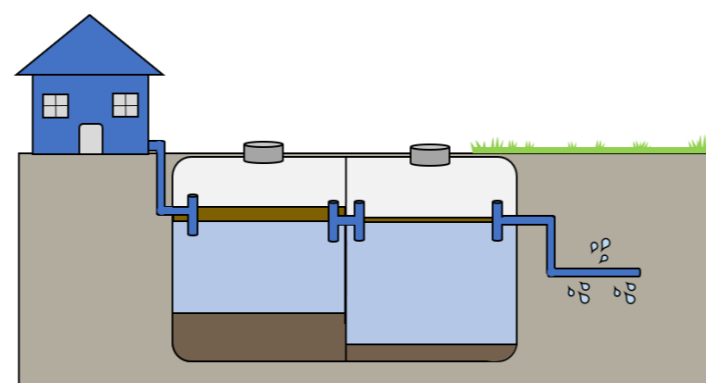
The workshop will be held at Crowhurst Village Hall, arrival at 13:15 for a 13:30 start, and finished by 15:30. To sign up to this free event, click [here](#).

What we're up to in the catchment



Edenbridge and Oxted Agricultural Show

SES Water will be at the Edenbridge & Oxted Agricultural Show this bank holiday weekend. Come and chat to us to find out more about the work SES Water is doing in the catchment, support and funding we offer for 'water friendly' farming, plus you can find out if we may be able to save you money on your water bills.



Unsewered property awareness campaign

A 2021 investigation revealed that approximately 6% of the phosphate in the River Eden comes from properties not on mains drainage (relying on cesspools, septic tanks or small sewage treatment plants to deal with their wastewater). Recent work suggests 3000 properties in the Eden catchment are not connected to Southern Water's mains sewers. Good management by anyone responsible for these systems is important for the health of the river. Our [leaflet](#) offers advice on how to look after your system, in turn looking after water quality and the environment.



Static tanks

We're pleased to announce that, following our last newsletter in spring, we've successfully rehomed around 100 of our large static tanks, donating them to be repurposed by local land users in our supply area and the Eden catchment. Currently there are no static tanks available, however we may have more to give away in the coming years. These will be advertised in future newsletters, when available.

In other news...

Lower Eden Farm Cluster

We are pleased to announce that Maya Wren has taken over from Sara as the new Farmer Cluster Officer for the Lower Eden Farm Cluster. The role, funded for an initial 18 months by SES Water, the Swire Trust (via South East Rivers Trust) and Farming in Protected Landscapes (via Bore Place), will support the development of the cluster. The cluster aims to be a forum to facilitate joined-up dialogue and action between farmers and other key partners, enabling farmers to navigate potential support available and access collective funding to help achieve shared aims across the catchment. Please contact eden@southeastriverstrust.org for more information or if you are interested in getting involved.

Thank you for your interest in helping protect water quality in the Eden catchment. If you have any questions, feedback or ideas on how we might be able to work together to protect water quality, we'd love to hear from you.



catchment@seswater.co.uk