

Upstream Thinking — South West Water Catchment Management Programme (UK)

PES & Nature-Based Solutions · Good practice · United Kingdom

Quality score: 53/100

Evidence strength: Observational / pre–post

Summary

Since 2010, South West Water has paid 2,000+ Devon and Cornwall farmers to cut diffuse pollution across 144,120 ha, investing over £20m because preventing runoff is cheaper than treating it — independently monitored by the University of Exeter and now expanding to Bristol Water.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Carbon — sequestration / storage, evidenced	1/3
Biodiversity — conservation / improvement, evidenced	1/3
Water & soil — retention, infiltration, erosion control	3/3
Fire resilience — risk reduction, evidenced	0/3
Governance, certification & transferability	3/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-07-04

[South West Water, with Westcountry Rivers Trust, Devon Wildlife Trust & Cornwall Wildlife Trust](#) — accessed 2026-07-04

[South West Water — 15 years of Upstream Thinking](#) — accessed 2026-07-04

[University of Exeter CREWW — Upstream Thinking research](#) — accessed 2026-07-04

[Westcountry Rivers Trust — Upstream Thinking 2](#) — accessed 2026-07-04

[Catchment Based Approach — Upstream Thinking](#) — accessed 2026-07-04

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