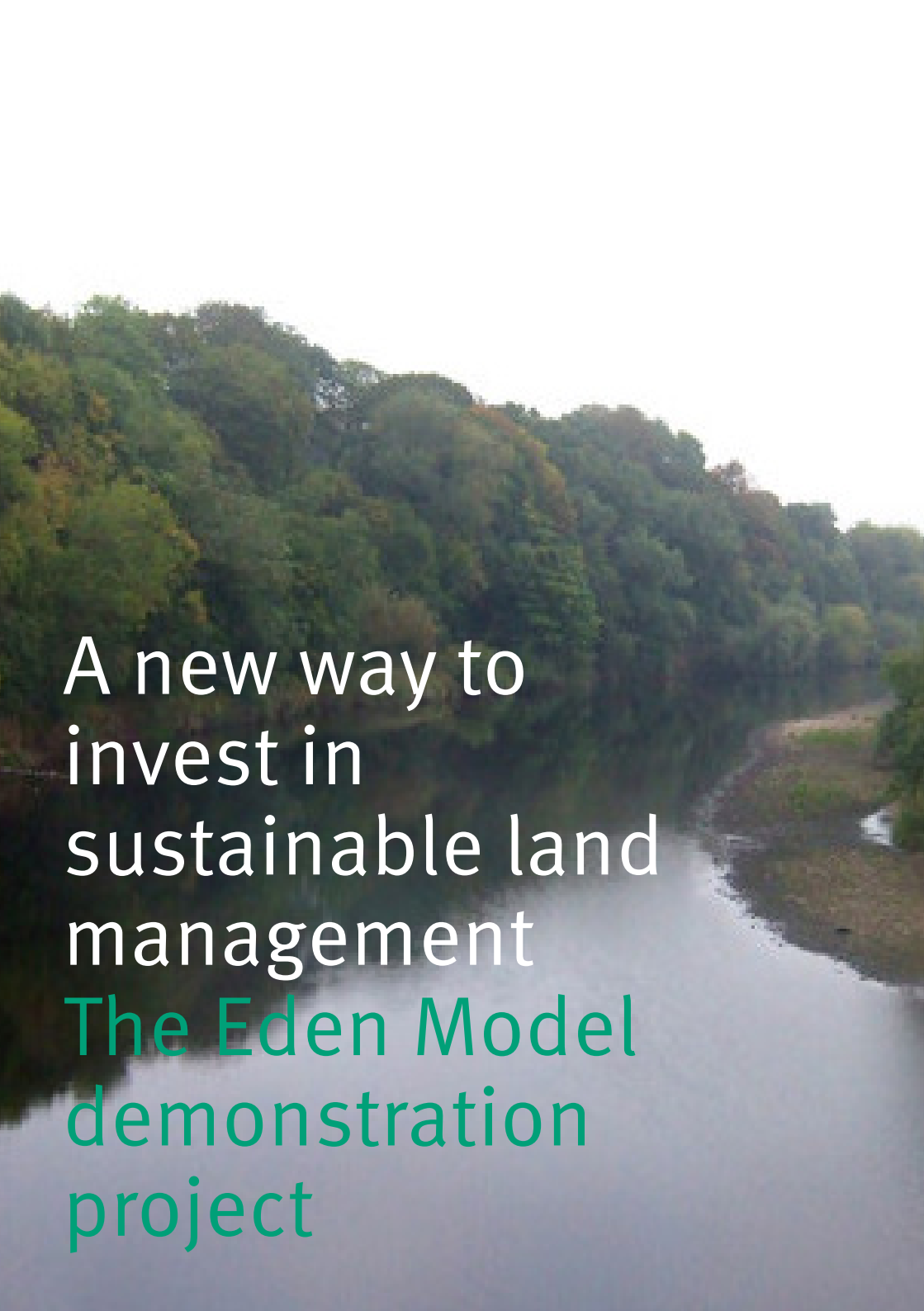


A new way to invest in sustainable land management

The Eden Model demonstration project

Mauldy CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

The ambition of the Eden Model demonstration project is to develop a system that works for private sector investment in sustainable land management, that can operate at catchment scale and be replicated elsewhere.

Managing land well is good for everyone

Good management of land benefits people and organisations in a number of ways, including by reducing flood risk, improving water quality, developing healthier soils, more resilient food chains and more valued local landscapes.

Creating markets for these benefits can provide new sources of income and profit for farmers.

Private payments for ecosystem services already exist, but as one-off bespoke deals, usually between a water company and farmers to achieve better water quality.

What is different about the Eden Model?

The new model we are demonstrating in the Eden Valley, Cumbria will expand on payments for ecosystem services. It is showcasing a replicable system that enables multiple buyers to work together to purchase a variety of environmental benefits.

With support from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), we are exploring how private payments and public funding together can be used effectively under the government's new Environmental Land Management system, which is supporting landowners to manage land in line with environmental priorities.

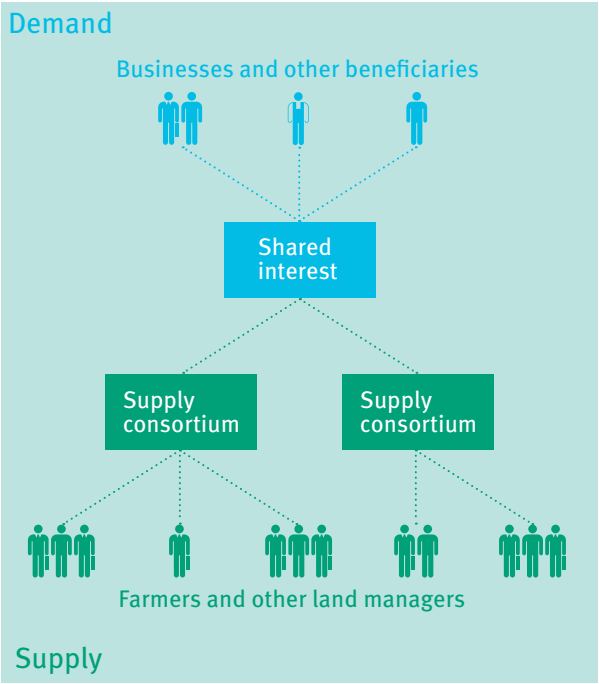
“The farmers who supply us are keen to improve their sustainability, so joining up with other interested businesses to provide funding is a no brainer for us.”
Robin Sundaram, responsible sourcing manager, Nestlé

Stephen Craven, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

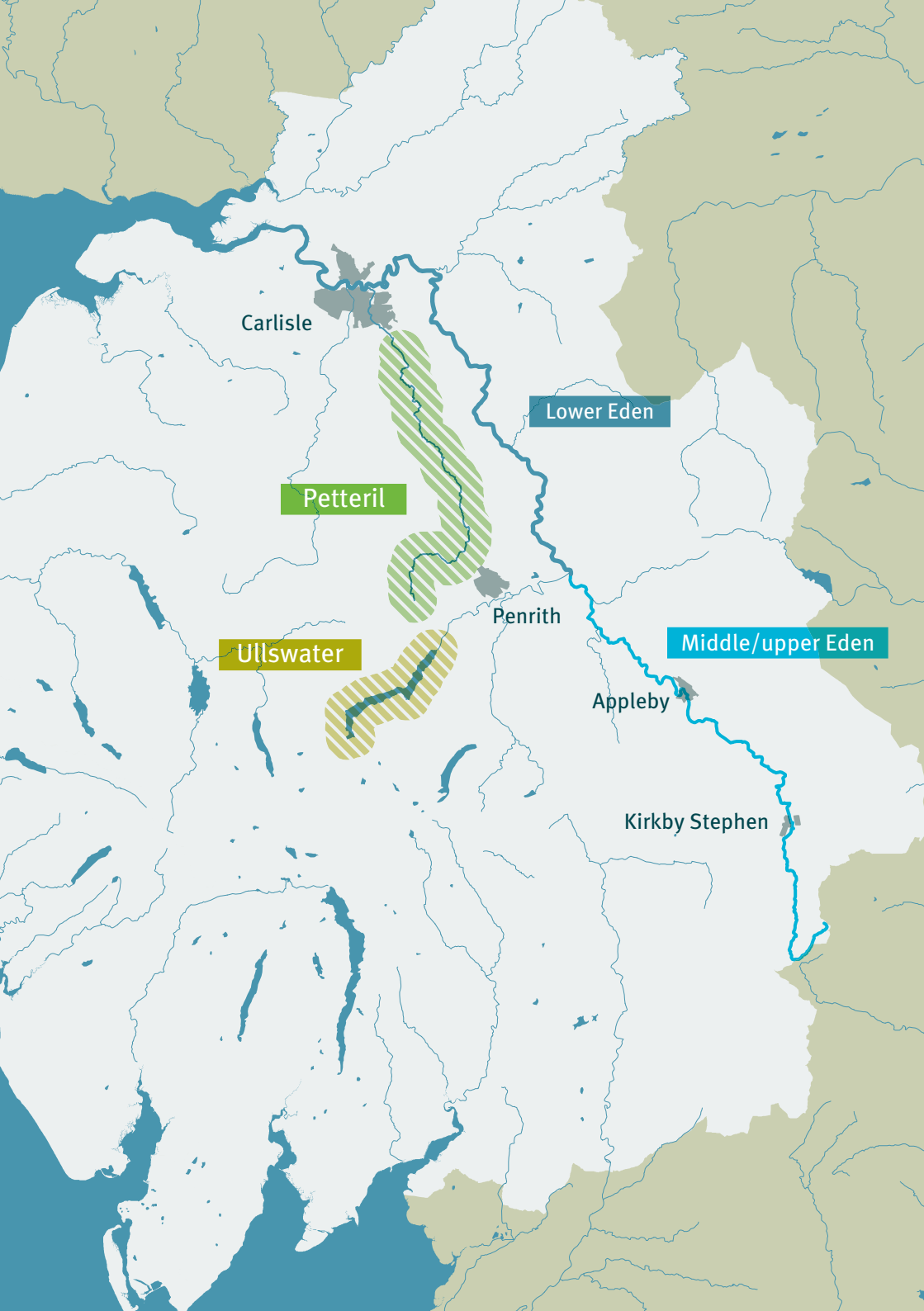
The Eden Model

This model builds on previous work by the core partners in the project, including the Landscape Enterprise Networks (LENs)[1] approach developed by 3Keel, the Natural Infrastructure Scheme (NIS)[2] concept, created by National Trust and Green Alliance, and EnTrade's experience of facilitating private trades between water companies and farmers[3].

We are combining our experience in the Eden Model project to test a system that brings together consortia of buyers and sellers to jointly develop opportunities for private sector investment in sustainable land management.



1 www.3keel.com/landscape-innovation
2 www.green-alliance.org.uk/natural_markets
3 entrade.co.uk


Carlisle
Lower Eden
Petteril
Penrith
Ullswater
Middle/upper Eden
Appleby
Kirkby Stephen

Our plan

Our trial project, focused on the Eden river catchment in Cumbria, has both upland and lowland areas. It is an area that has some water quality challenges and has experienced severe flooding in the past.

Trading multiple services

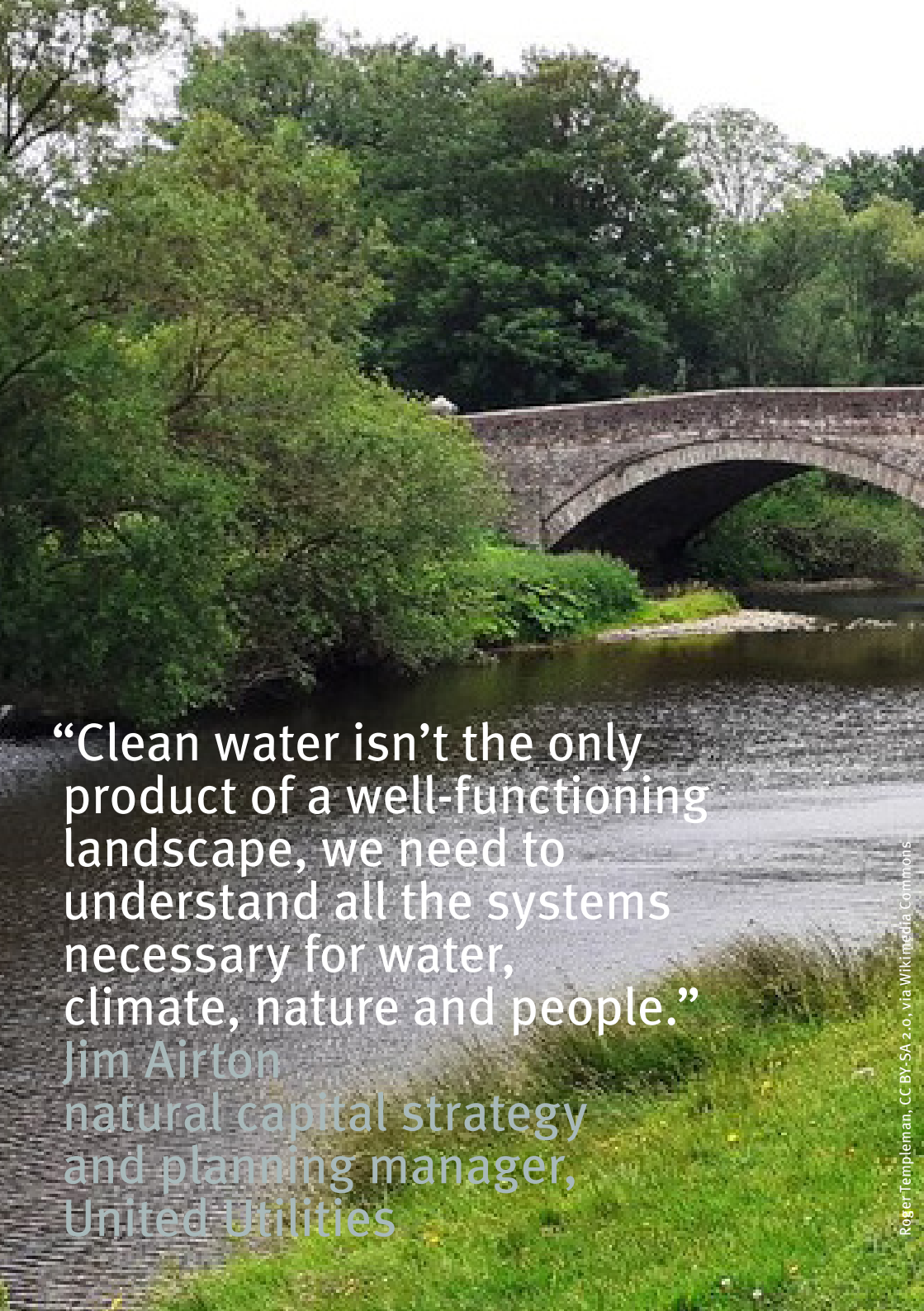
The initial trade, involving two buyers, will take place in 2020. This will be based on measurable environmental benefits delivered by better soil management, principally a reduction in phosphate pollution and increased resilience and productivity of food production.

It will concentrate on the area around the Petteril River in the Eden catchment in Cumbria, where sheep and dairy farming are the dominant land use.

Adapting the model for different benefits

At the same time, we will be developing and adapting the model so that it can also be used to deliver natural flood management and other environmental benefits across a wider area of the catchment. This will build on existing flood mitigation activity already implemented in the catchment, such as in Ullswater.

We are modelling how flood risks can be managed by specific land management interventions and, importantly, where this translates into quantifiable cost savings across a number of services for organisations downstream.



“Clean water isn’t the only product of a well-functioning landscape, we need to understand all the systems necessary for water, climate, nature and people.”

Jim Airton
natural capital strategy and planning manager, United Utilities

Roger Templeman, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Testing approaches

We are testing different approaches to a number of practical issues, including how best to combine the interests of multiple beneficiaries and suppliers, the best ways to carry out transactions and make payments, and how to structure the agreements and relationships between buyers and sellers.

The project will:

trial how multiple beneficiaries can buy different outcomes from one project, to save them money, maximise impact and create a new market opportunity for farmers and land managers;

show how catchment scale water quality and natural flood management schemes could be funded on the basis of avoided costs for businesses and other organisations in a real context;

collaborate with the government through an Environmental Land Management test project to show how public and private funding for farmers and land managers can be combined effectively to improve outcomes.

This work will inform an ‘Eden Model’ for private payments that can be replicated elsewhere.

Who we are

The Eden Model project is a collaboration between a group of organisations with interests and experience in different aspects of sustainable land management.

The principal partners are:

National Trust

The National Trust is Europe's largest conservation charity, with six million members. It is the UK's largest private landowner and farmer, with a total of 250,000 hectares of land and 775 miles of coast across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Under our ten year strategy, we are committed to developing innovative ways of managing land which are good for farmers, the economy and the environment.

United Utilities

United Utilities delivers essential water and wastewater services for household and business customers across the North West of England. We work with leading academic institutions, customers and stakeholders as part of our integrated approach to managing our catchment land, where man-made and natural assets work together more effectively to improve the water environment.

Nestlé

Nestlé is the world's largest food and beverage company, with more than 2,000 brands and a presence in 189 countries. The company's purpose is enhancing quality of life and contributing to a healthier future. Three overarching ambitions for 2030 guide Nestlé's work: help 50 million children live healthier lives; help to improve 30 million livelihoods in communities directly tied to Nestlé's business activities; strive for zero environmental impact in its operations.

3Keel

3Keel is an Oxford-based sustainability consultancy committed to making food systems, supply chains and landscapes fit for the future. We are a mission-driven organisation, working with businesses and NGOs to create a better future for people and the environment through ideas, evidence, and by bringing people together. Our work themes cover Climate Change, Commodities, Agriculture, Circular Economy and Landscape Innovations.

Green Alliance

Green Alliance is a charity and independent think tank focused on ambitious leadership for the environment. Since 1979, we have been working with the most influential leaders in business, NGOs, academia and politics to build political support for a vision of a green and prosperous UK, based on the highest environmental and social standards.

EnTrade

Entrade is a digital marketplace which connects buyers and suppliers of landscape management. Incorporating market mechanisms such as auctions along with spatial targeting, crediting and verification services EnTrade facilitates secure trades in ecosystem services.

We are also working with First Milk, the Eden Rivers Trust, the Environment Agency and the N8 group of Universities

Get in touch

If you would like to know more about the Eden Model project, receive updates on its progress, share your experiences or get involved, please contact us:

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