

# **Erne Melvin Catchment Stakeholder Group**

## **Minutes**

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

**Venue: Castle Archdale County Park, Irvinestown,  
Co.Fermanagh**

### **ATTENDEES**

Jack Spratt (Chairman) JS  
Deirdre Spillane (NIEA WMU) DS  
Alvin Wilson (NIEA WMU) A Wilson  
Norman Henderson (NIEA WMU) NH  
Michael Spillane (NIEA WMU) MS  
John Gilmore (NIEA WMU) JG  
Alan Murphy (Local Stakeholder) A Murphy  
Alan Morrow (DARD, Agriculture) A Morrow  
Ailish Keane (Inland Fisheries Ireland) AK  
Henry Robinson (DRD, Road Service) HR  
Rose Cremin (FDC, Biodiversity Officer) RC  
Noel Melanaphy (DARD, Forest Service)  
Rodney Mc Crea (N.I. Water) RMcC  
Jim Mc Elrath (N.I. Water) JMCE  
Mike Kingston (Inland Waterways Association, Lough Erne Branch) MK  
Gareth Greer (DARD, Rivers Agency) GG  
Alastair Woods (Fermanagh Angler) A Wood  
Robbie Marshall (UAF) RM  
Paul Kearney (Erne & Melvin Enhancement Company) PK  
Haide Chamberlain (NIEA NH) HC

### **Apologies**

Bert Johnston (FDC)  
John Kane (DCAL, Fisheries)  
Michael Martin (Fermanagh Anglers)

#### **1. Welcome & Introduction**

Jack Spratt welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Deirdre Spillane as the newly appointed Erne & Melvin Catchment Management Officer.

#### **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes from the last meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010, were agreed as an accurate account of the meeting. JS thanked Diane Black for accurately recording the minutes. The minutes are made available on the NIEA webpage

### 3. Matters Arising

**Table 1: Summary of the action points.**

**Action points from meeting 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<b>AP1</b>	<b>DS to follow up report of discolouration/pollution near Kesh WWTW</b>	DS has indentified some problems in the area and is working with the local Regional Operations team to rectify these issues. This is an ongoing project.

**Action points from meeting 16<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
<b>AP1</b>	<b>MS to collate figures for low severity incidents for the Spring Catchment Stakeholder Group meeting</b>	Noted-Figures will be provided at the next CSG meeting.
<b>AP2</b>	<b>MS will investigate the incident at the yacht Erne club and report back to MK.</b>	Pollution investigation carried out- November 2010.
<b>AP3</b>	<b>DS to send out a hard copy of the action plan to the UAF.</b>	Hard copy of the action plan given to UAF- April 2011.
<b>AP4</b>	<b>RM requested that a hard copy of the next E-Newsletter is sent out to all the angling groups in Fermanagh.</b>	Hard copy of the next E-letter will be sent out to the angling groups in Fermanagh.
<b>AP5</b>	<b>A Wilson to check with the River Basin Planning Team to see if a similar registration system as Loughs Agency have could be used as a future communication channel for information.</b>	A Wilson has spoken to the Data Management Team about the possibility of adding in a registration tick box so that stakeholder's can request to receive updates of the E-Newsletter for specific or all the Local Management Areas when issued. The team will assess the programming and capacity issues associated with providing such a facility.

<b>AP6</b>	<b>DS to provide feedback to RM regarding Natural Heritage's response to the breach of planning regulations for the above development.</b>	DS provided feedback to RM as requested.
<b>AP7</b>	<b>DS will contact Mr Trotter to discuss the Colebrooke River as a possible River Trust Scheme at Lord Brookborough's estate.</b>	DS contacted Mr Trotter – April 2011. A meeting will be arranged to discuss the Colebrooke River & the River Trust scheme.
<b>AP8</b>	<b>DS to contact John Kane to discuss possible sites for the river restoration project.</b>	Funding for the river restoration project was not made available.

#### **4. Paul Kearney (PK) – Erne & Melvin Enhancement Company.**

PK gave a presentation on the Erne & Melvin Enhancement Company, outlining the company's structure and role. PK was appointed as the manager of the company in 2010 and replaced Mr Richard Turner. PK explained that the Erne and Melvin Enhancement Company is a non-profit taking fisheries enhancement company. Their premises have a modern brown trout fish hatchery combined with a recirculation coarse fish hatchery located at their premises in Florencecourt, Co. Fermanagh. PK explained that all the fish in the hatchery are local stock and 100% indigenous. PK explained that there are two different hatching projects on site at Florencecourt: Brown Trout outdoor hatchery and coarse fish indoor hatchery. The Brown Trout hatchery has a capacity to produce up to 2 million fry per annum. The coarse fish indoor hatchery has a constant water temperature c. 8-9 degree throughout the year

allowing control over growth rates and spawning times and avoiding high temperature related fish diseases.

The company's primary objectives are to restock the Lough Erne catchment with native brown trout and restock inland loughs in the catchment area with coarse fish. The company is funded through a range of organisations Fermanagh District Council, DCAL; Fisheries, direct sales and volunteers.

PK noted that the increase flow in waterways' due to heavy rainfall may be effecting fish migration.

RM believes that there is not enough information on direct stocking levels on Lough Erne. PK said that DCAL has carried out a fish population study but the results have not been published. Richard Kennedy; DCAL, is involved in the project. PK commented that the overall picture was 'healthy'.

RM asked what effect will the government cuts have on the companies funding position? PK said that DCAL provide 50% of the companies funding. The company would explore the possibility of increasing private fishery sales e.g. Carp.

AW stated that Lough Melvin has a very unique aquatic ecosystem, if restocking occurs what measures are put in place to match the native species? PK replied that Queen's University, Belfast carry out genetic fingerprinting of fish populations.

AMorrow asked does the hatchery contain salmon? PK replied that there were no salmon at present but the company had a salmon enhancement programme c. 7/8 years ago.

AW asked how does climatic change effect spawning' PK replied that due to heavy rainfall which is causing flooding, fish are not behaving normally. Spawning is a very delicate stage in the fish's life cycle. MK asked is the problem relating to climatic change or land management issues such as deforestation. PK said that it is necessary to look at the bigger issues regarding flooding. JS asked does the high flow in rivers effect small fish migration? PK replied that small fish will be able to survive but it does put some stress on them.

**5- Michael Spillane, Regional Manager Co. Fermanagh,  
NIEA Regional Operations Team.**

MS gave a presentation on the local water management issues and activities of NIEA water quality field staff, since the previous meeting in June 2010. MS detailed the

number and severity of pollution incidents and gave an update on specific incidents such as; the milk tanker accident in Bellanaleck & removal of illegal waste at Garrison.

RM requested that more detail is given at the next meeting regarding the low severity water pollution incidents; this would give a better understanding to the local stakeholders. MS explained that the low severity incidents relate to incidents such as: localised pollution from domestic WWTW or oil spillage from domestic oil tanks etc. NH explained that the department use a set of criteria in determining the severity of water pollution incidents throughout Northern Ireland.

**AP1: MS to collate figures for low severity water pollution incidents for the Spring Catchment Stakeholder Group meeting**

MK reported a large amount of foam in the Lower Lough Erne at the Yacht Club, Kiladeas. MS explained that foam can be caused by high water levels and wind dynamics and is not necessarily water pollution.

**AP 2 MS will investigate the incident and report back to MK.**

The presentation is available on the NIEA webpage [http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/wfd/public\\_partic\\_3/catchment\\_stakeholder\\_groups/erne\\_and\\_melvin.htm](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/erne_and_melvin.htm)

**6- Deirdre Spillane, Erne & Melvin Catchment Management Officer**

DS gave a presentation on the Lower Lough Erne Local Management Area (LMA) and the development of the Action Plan. DS explained that the draft action plan is near completion and will be available on the web for the public to make comment. RM asked if a hard copy of the action plan could be sent out by post to the UAF.

**AP3- DS to send out a hard copy of the action plan to the UAF.**

DS explained about on going projects such as the DARD Press Articles to raise awareness amongst the agricultural sector and provide examples of good agri-environmental practice. AMorrow explained that DARD is raising awareness through local newspapers and the local advisors are also promoting the campaign. There was also discussion about proposed river restoration projects and the pollution hotline signage project. DS discussed the promotion of the LMA work project :E-Newsletters. It was noted that approx. 70% of angling clubs have email addresses but sometimes the secretary of the club does not circulate the emails around the members.

**AP4- RM requested that a hard copy of the next E-Newsletter is sent out to all the angling groups in Fermanagh.**

A Wood said that Lough Agency have a registration procedure whereby members register with Loughs' Agency and then are included in relevant emails etc.

**AP5- A Wilson to check with the River Basin Planning Team to see if a similar system could be used as a future communication channel.**

DS also highlighted the CSG Community Project Award Scheme. This award is for £1,000 to be given to a local group in the Erne & Melvin CSG area that encourages interest in protecting the water environment. The awards scheme opens on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010 & the deadline for submission of entries is 12noon on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

### **AOB**

**7-** RM spoke about the proposed floating breakwater at Crevenish, Kesh. RM stated that Natural Heritage is to follow up on a breach of planning regulations. RM asked for feedback from Natural Heritage for the next CSG meeting.

**AP6- DS to provide feedback to RM regarding Natural Heritage's response to the breach of planning regulations for the above development.**

**8-** JS discussed the River Trust Scheme, which is been set up by the Association of River Trusts ([email- info@associationofriverstruct.org.uk](mailto:info@associationofriverstruct.org.uk)). JS felt that it would not be popular in the Lower Lough Erne LMA as there are a number of public access walks already in place such as Castle Archdale & Castle Caldwell. There was a discussion with the group about other areas that have been involved in similar projects throughout Northern Ireland such as the Upstream/Downstream Sixmilewater project and the Ballinderry enhancement project which to date has been highly promoted and has been able to find funding from other sources.

JS suggested the Colebrooke River as a possible River Trust Scheme at Lord Brookborough's estate. JS suggested contacting Mr Packie Trotter, Colebroke Angling Club as a point of contact for the scheme.

**AP 7- DS will make contact with Mr Trotter to discuss the proposal.**

Regarding the river restoration project, JS suggested a waterway at Roscor for consideration. JS highlighted that the Fermanagh Anglers' club have been involved in the stocking the waterway felt that it would be an ideal stretches for restoration.

**AP 8- DS to contact John Kane, DCAL- Inland Fisheries to discuss the proposal.**

## **9- Close**

JS drew the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for attending, for their valuable input and looked forward to the next meeting (date to be confirmed).