

Erne Melvin Catchment Stakeholder Group

Minutes

Wednesday 1st June 2011

Venue: Castle Park Centre, Lisnaskea

Present

Alvin Wilson (Chairman NIEA) AW

Gerry Blake (NIEA) GB

Deirdre Spillane (NIEA) DS

Norman Henderson (NIEA) NH

Sam Mc Cracken (NIEA) SMC

Paul Kearney (Erne and Melvin Enhancement Ltd) PK

Greg Hood (DCAL) GH

Gareth Greer (Rivers Agency) GG

Alan Morrow (DARD) AM

John Kane (DCAL) JK

Ian Cooke (Kesh Angling Club) IC

Stewart Moore (Lisnaskea Angler) SW

Jim Mc Elrath (NIW) JME

Robbie Marshall (UAF) RM

Robert Mc Cabe (Maguiresbridge Angling Club) RMC

Phil Cargill (Waterways Ireland) PC

Derek Evans (AFBI) DE

Noel Melanaphy (Forest Service)

Apologies

Jack Spratt

Michael Martin

Grainne O' Connor

Rose Cremin

Welcome and Introduction

AW apologised for JS being unable to attend. Best wishes and a speedy recovery were extended to JS from AW and the attendees.

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 16/11/10 were agreed and are available on the NIEA webpage- http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/erne_and_melvin.htm

Action Points from previous meeting

Action Point 1

Details of Low Severity Pollution incidents in the area to be provided at the Catchment Stakeholder Meeting.

GB to give details in Regional Mangers' presentation to follow.

Action Point 2

Erne Yacht Club pollution incident.

The incident was investigated by Water Management Unit (WMU) officers, there was no visible foam present. A Water Order (NI) Consent to discharge is due to be processed by the WMU for this premises.

Action Point 3

A hard copy of the Lower Lough Erne, LMA Action Plan was requested by UAF.

RM confirmed that UAF had received a hard copy of the LMA action plan.

Action Point 4

A request for hard copies of the Lower Lough Erne LMA E-newsletter to be sent to local angling groups.

DS confirmed E-newsletter will be sent to angling groups.

Action Point 5

It was suggested should adopt using a registration for receiving E-newsletter material similar to that used by the Loughs Agency.

AW thought it was a good idea and is investigating possibility of usage.

Action Point 6

DS provided update on retrospective planning permission regarding the Edgewater Caravan Park, Drumrush.

Action Point 7

Adoption of River Trust on Colebrook River: DS said initial contact has been made with Mr Trotter regarding the Colebrook River. DS is open to suggestions from other interested groups.

Deirdre Spillane Presentation on the Lower Lough Erne Action Plan.

DS gave an update on the Lower Lough Erne Action Plan. RM said he would like to see more detailed localised actions in the plan and an implementation update for the next meeting. DS replied the action plan is a starting point requiring a multi-agency approach to identify and address problems. AM said the Nitrates Action programme was delivering already and AW said information would be provided to show monitoring data and trends.

Action Point 1: DS to provide an implementation update for the autumn CSG meeting.

RM asked could phosphorus reduction at Kesh WWTW not be incorporated into the Action Plan. AW said this would be a cost issue and JME from NIW said it would be investigated.

Action Point 2: DS to contact NIW and see what facilities are currently present at the Kesh WWTW site?

DS discussed the new proforma produced to record information regarding obstacles/ fish passability issues in the field.

Action Point 3: DS gave information sheets and asked the stakeholders to record information regarding obstacles they think may affect fish passability in the water column. DS asked for the information to be return to her for consideration.

RM raised the issue of the overall nutrient budget status in Lough Erne. He asked had the nutrient budget report been produced by AFBI? AW explained that AFBI was collating information regarding nutrient levels for the Lough Erne system. When this information was available it will be discussed at the CSG meeting.

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

Gerry Blake presentation update on local water quality issue.

GB gave an update on the number of pollution incidents since the last meeting. Local issues such as the disposal of sludge at the proposed Crevenish breakwater near Rabbit Island were raised by IC. GB said the issue was investigated and the pollution prevention team will visit the site.

GB gave a breakdown of the sources/severity of pollution incidents in the area over the previous 6 months.

AM requested more details on specific agricultural issues to raise awareness with farmers. GB stated that the majority of agricultural incidents were classified as low severity. For most of the incidents the investigating officer was able to work with the farmer to resolve the issue. RM asked what enforcement tools were used by the department in the event of a low severity incident. GB explained that it was specific to the incident. Different types of enforcement tools such as advisory letters and warning letter were discussed.

JME said NIW were increasingly having problems with sewer blockages due to misuse of the sewerage system by the public. NIW have been promoting an advertising campaign called 'Bin it & Bag it' which is trying to raise awareness that blockages caused by objects that the sewerage system has not been designed for can create huge damage to the exiting system.

JME also mentioned that rogue discharges such as oil & grease are entering the sewerage system in certain parts of the county and are causing increasing problems for the receiving WWTW's.

The presentation is available on the NIEA webpage:

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John Kane DCAL/Gareth Greer RA presentation on Ballinamallard Enhancement Scheme

JK gave a presentation on the background to the river restoration project on the Ballinamallard River. JK highlighted that DCAL-Inland Fisheries in partnership with the

Rivers Agency were installing spawning areas and repairing fallen banks.

JK stated that from his experience there appears to be an increase in salmon & trout populations in the area. There appears to be a decrease in water pollution which has led to an increase in fishery populations.

AM asked how easy can fish travel through Catherine Falls, Hydro electric power station at Ballyshannon?

JK said that the ESB had recently carried out work to the fish pass at the site.

GG explained the Ballinamallard River enhancement project in detail. Some of the work has been carried out in 2010 with the remaining work due to be completed in the summer 2011.

RM asked what the previous and current fish monitoring programme is for the Lough Erne system. JK explained what fish monitoring work DCAL has been involved with in the county. DE explained that AFBI has been involved in fish monitoring and he will provide DS with the details ASAP.

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

Action point 4- DE to contact DS with details of recent fish monitoring work carried out in the Erne system.

AOB

Action Point 5- River restoration projects. JK said funding for restoration projects was possible through the £50,000 NASCO budget some of which is available to the Erne/Melvin catchment. JK asked the stakeholders to contact him if they had suggestions as to potential sites which would benefit from habitat river restoration work.

Discussion

Planning and pollution issues were raised by RM and IC regarding a caravan park extension located on Lower Lough Erne. DS said planning and public access issues would have to be investigated by NIEA. DS stated that planning permission had been granted for a number of proposals at the site. DS has asked the Pollution Prevention team, Lisburn, to visit the site and provide appropriate advice to reduce the risk of causing water pollution. RM queried the capacity of the WWTW currently serving the caravan site. He mentioned that there had been an increase in the number of caravans on site over the past few years and asked was the current WWTW system working effectively?

Action Point 6- DS will contact the Industrial Licensing Team, NIEA, and check the consent conditions and sampling compliance.

RM mentioned that work had been carried out at the caravan site recently and the public right of way had been blocked from the caravan park to Muckcross Bay.

Action Point 7- DS will contact Grainne O' Connor, Environmental Officer, Fermanagh District Council and ask for a site visit to be carried out to investigate the any blockage of the

public right of way as at the above location.

Close

AW 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).