

STRANGFORD Local Management Area

UPDATE October 2011



LMA Action	Progress Update
Organise two CSG meetings per year to provide an open forum for discussion on water issues and encourage involvement in developing and implementing the Strangford Management Area Plan	Spring Meeting held 13 May 2011, Autumn meeting held 13 October 2011. Presentations and Note of meetings can be found on http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/strangford_and_lecale.htm
Promote and encourage local projects through WATER Environment Community awards	Awards promoted through CSG meeting, NIEA website and e-mail. Environment Minister Alex Attwood presented 2 winning entries from Strangford LMA each receiving £1000 for their environmental improvement projects on 26 th May 2011. The winners were Cloughey and District Community Association for their Cloughey Bay Beach Project and Dibney River Conservation Trust for Inspire Mayfly Classroom Project
Highlight external funding opportunities for water management projects to local partners	Water Environment Community Awards promoted through CSG meeting, NIEA website and e-mail
Promote NIEA Water Pollution Hotline through advertising, promotion and signage	Official launch of new signage took place on 18 th April by NIEA Chief Executive John McMillan. In attendance was Ian Kittle from Inler Anglers and Tracey Connelly the Countryside Access Officer at Castlereagh Borough Council. 4 signs erected at Killyleagh Community Centre and along the Comber Greenway. Also NIEA pollution hotline number to added to SLALP interpretation boards - to be rolled out with signage replacements Hotline number to be inserted in updated Lecale Waymarked Way Guide published by Countryside Access and Activities Network in March 2012 Hotline number is promoted frequently on NIEA facebook page and NIEA Twitter website.
Develop leaflets and articles to promote effective farm nutrient and waste management	'Water Quality Plans in Action' article published in Farming Life October 2010.
Collate existing information on location of aquatic (including river bank) invasive alien species	During the course of river walks and undertaken by NIEA any sightings or suspected sightings of invasive alien species are collated and reported to Invasive Species Ireland.

<p>Raise awareness of catchment management issues by release of relevant press articles and web publication of Strangford LMA e-zine. Support local community events.</p>	<p>3 issues of the Strangford LMA E-zine mailed to Strangford & Lecale CSG contacts. Attendance at Balmoral Show demonstrating the use of the River Basin Planning Web-mapper. NIEA staff took part in the 'Celebrate Strangford' event on the banks of Strangford Lough which was organised by the Strangford and Lecale Partnership. Staff from NIEA Water Management Unit participated in seaweed workshops. The aim of these workshops was to educate and inform the public on the importance of seaweed on our shores Staff from NIEA Marine Conservation Team provided information and a short video of our underwater world. Staff from NIEA helped facilitate the River School at the Dibney International Fly Fairl by providing examples of 'good bugs' and 'bad bugs' to allow children to assess the water quality of their river.</p>
<p>Promote the control of invasive alien species on farmland</p>	<p>Promoted through the DARD Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS). Funding is available to progress around 1000 applications for admission to the scheme in January 2012 with a further 1300 joining in January 2013.</p>
<p>Raise awareness and promote the benefits of effective farm nutrient and waste management</p>	<p>All applicants to DARD agri-environment schemes receive farm waste management advice as part of their application to the scheme. DARD has produced a Code of Good Agricultural Practice which contains practical management advice on how farm wastes such as silage effluent, slurry and manure can be collected, stored and spread with minimum risk to the environment. DARD has developed an agri-environment training course for farmers dealing with farm wastes and nutrient management planning. Water Framework Directive awareness talk given to CAFRE students in April 2011</p>
<p>Continue to monitor to confirm evidence of trophic status of coastal waters</p>	<p>Chapter 6 of the 'State of the Seas' report was published in January 2011 contains the latest information on the trophic status of coastal waters around Northern Ireland. Trophic status is assessed by measuring the elements linked to enrichment by nutrients accompanied by an undesirable disturbance to plant or animal life. The report can be accessed at: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/state_of_the_seas_ni_report.htm .</p>

Investigate Bathing Water Guideline Standards compliance problems at Ballywalter	Sample sites have been selected for microbial analysis. Sampling and analysis to be fitted into Water Quality Inspector and laboratory work programme. In addition there have been 2 'Good Beach' Summits held in June and September 2011 with a third to be held in December 2011 convened by the Environment Minister to draw up an action plan to address problems with beach standards including water quality.
Develop Bathing Water profiles for Millisle and Ballywalter	Bathing Water Profiles published March 2011. The profiles accessed at http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/waterhome/quality/bathingqualityni/bathing_water_profiles.htm
Highlight location of <i>Spartina anglica</i> to Spartina Control Group and promote education and awareness leaflets dealing with Invasive species	During the course of river walks and field work undertaken by NIEA any sightings or suspected sightings of <i>Spartina</i> are reported to the <i>Spartina</i> Control Group. NIEA will issue a press release and erect signs before spraying will begin in 2012.
Targeted education, advice and regulatory action to prevent pollution and protect the water environment	Ballystockart River – Agricultural Regulations visited landowner regarding storage of silage bales near to waterway. Blackstaff River - Problem Farm visited by Water Quality Inspector and Agricultural Regulations. Further Action - Farm to be revisited.
Encourage riparian zone management with an aim to improve biodiversity and minimise sedimentation through practical management measures on farms	A measure within the Nitrates Action Programme is that all farms must carry out crop and soil management to minimise soil erosion and nutrient runoff. This is verified during cross-compliance visits.
Complete the phosphorus nutrient budget work for Northern Ireland	A project is ongoing to identify nitrate, ammonium and phosphorus loadings in all the major river catchments in Northern Ireland. This includes quantification of inputs from point and diffuse sources. Estimates of the contribution from agriculture and wastewater treatment works to the overall N and P loadings in each catchment will be provided. The project is due to complete early 2012.

Investigate downstream impacts of discharges from industrial premises where problems have been identified to establish potential sources of pollution	Enler River - Point survey of 7 sites carried out. River walk carried out in heavy rain. River running brown due to building sites on the Ballyregan Rd and Dundonald hospital. Weather conditions made it impossible to locate source - likely to have been multiple sources. Further action - Pollution Prevention Team have been advised - more river walks required
Investigate Dissolved Oxygen suppressions	<p>Blackcauseway Strangford - Point survey carried out at 13 sites. River walk carried out – Discussions have been held with Rivers Agency into the possibility of habitat enhancement work. A site visit has been planned for November 2011</p> <p>Blackstaff River (Ards) - Point survey of 21 sites - River walk undertaken - sewage fungus found in tributary - source found to be blocked pipe causing silage effluent to enter waterway. Farm was visited by Water Quality Inspector and Agricultural Regulations Team. Further Action - Farm to be revisited and other tributaries of Blackstaff to be walked.</p> <p>Ganaway Burn - Point survey carried out at 7 sites. River walk carried out - no visable impacts found. Further investigations to be undertaken</p>
Investigate ammonia elevations	Blackstaff River (Ards) - Point survey of 21 sites - River walk undertaken - sewage fungus found in tributary - source found to be blocked pipe causing silage effluent to enter waterway. Farm was visited by Water Quality Inspector and Agricultural Regulations Team. Further Action - Farm to be revisited and other tributaries of Blackstaff to be walked.
Develop targeted ecological modeling tools for lake management.	The 2nd Quarter Progress report has been received from the project group. A detailed work plan is being drawn up to be discussed with NIEA and the Environmental Protection Agency in the Republic of Ireland. The outcome of this project will be used to inform management actions for Clea Lakes.
Create an inventory of physical structures within the river channel and bank structures	A pilot will be carried out by The Ulster Anglers Federation in the River Bush. This will be reviewed and a decision will be taken as to whether or not this should be rolled out in the Comber River or River Blackwater (Ards).

<p>Investigate agricultural practices in the catchment through river walks and analysis of agricultural pollution incidents and cross compliance data and carry out site visits where necessary</p>	<p>Ballymorrán Burn - Point survey of 6 sites carried out resulting in river walk to further investigate potential sources of pollution. One river walk has been carried out with no adverse impacts observed. Further investigations to be undertaken.</p> <p>Ballystockart River - Point survey of 9 sites carried out. Rivers Agency carried out Flood Defence work in Jan / Feb 2010. NIEA worked with Rivers Agency to ensure remedial work was carried out. This included stone re-invention work including 4 kingfisher nest boxes and lowering of one bank to allow winter inundation onto a secondary channel which was sown out with wildflower mix. In-channel features included installation of nursery stone in non-riffle areas. This water body will be resurveyed in early 2012.</p> <p>Ganaway Burn - Point survey carried out at 7 sites. One river walk has been carried out with no adverse impacts observed. Further investigations to be undertaken.</p> <p>Mill Burn - Point survey of 6 sites. River walk to be carried out upstream of monitoring point</p> <p>Mill Quarter Stream – Point survey of 13 sites. No adverse impacts observed. Further investigations to be undertaken.</p> <p>Enler River -Point survey of 7 sites carried out. River walk carried out in heavy rain. River running brown due to building sites on the Ballyregan Rd and Dundonald hospital. Weather conditions made it impossible to locate source - likely to have been multiple sources. Further action - Pollution Prevention Team advised, more river walks required</p> <p>Dibney River – Point survey of 14 sites. No adverse impacts observed. Further investigations to be undertaken.</p> <p>Blackcauseway Strangford - Point survey carried out at 13 sites. River walk carried out – further investigations in association with Rivers Agency have been planned for November 2011.</p> <p>Cunning Burn - Point survey carried out at 7 sites. 3 tributaries have been identified for river walks.</p> <p>Blackstaff River (Ards) - Point survey of 21 sites - River walk undertaken - sewage fungus found in tributary - source found to be blocked pipe causing silage effluent to enter waterway. Farm was visited by Water Quality Inspector and Agricultural Regulations Team. Further Action - Farm to be revisited and other tributaries of Blackstaff to be walked.</p> <p>Comber River - Point survey of 16 sites carried out. River walk identified to further investigate unknown pressures</p> <p>River Blackwater - Point survey carried out at 18 sites. Further Investigations required</p>
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Carryout Rapid Hydro morphology Assessment Technique (RHAT) survey to ground truth heavily modified designation	Enler River - survey carried out - conclusion is 'Poor Ecological Potential' Further investigation into reasons for poor status is required.
Raise awareness of the impact of misconnections where they have been identified to be causing deterioration in water quality.	Household Awareness Leaflets have been developed to raise awareness among householders of misconnections. 600 have been distributed by the Cloughey and District Community Association.
Work with and support Dibney River Conservation Trust in raising awareness of environmental issues and projects. Seek to identify solutions to water management problems and develop and promote the Strangford LMA Action Plan.	Staff from NIEA helped facilitate the River School at the Dibney International Fly Fishing Festival by providing examples of 'good bugs' and 'bad bugs' to allow children to assess the water quality of their river. Liaised with Down District Council on behalf of Dibney River Conservation Trust to obtain the council's procedure on litter picks to enable the Trust to organise a river clean up.
Investigate the feasibility for in-channel fishery habitat enhancement	A scheme to enhance the habitat of a section of the River Enler has been designed but it is unlikely to progress due to budgetary constraints.
Monitor fish population at Ballymartin Road Bridge	The fish population of the Blackwater was monitored in 2010. The status of fish population was classified as Poor. Further investigation into reasons for poor status is required. The investigation will look into the quality of habitat within the river.
Work with and support Strangford and Lecale Partnership in raising awareness of environmental issues and projects. Seek to identify solutions to water management problems and develop and promote the Strangford LMA Action Plan.	Working with the Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership to raise awareness. An article highlighting Water Quality issues around Strangford Lough has been written for inclusion in a Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership supplement in local newspapers. Investigating the possibility of including NIEA pollution hotline number on interpretation boards. Contributing to Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership management plan.

<p>Assess sources of organic pollution including agriculture, Northern Ireland Water Limited intermittent Discharges and septic tanks (domestic and private)</p>	<p>Ballymorrán Burn - Point survey of 6 sites carried out resulting in river walk to further investigate potential sources of pollution. One river walk has been carried out with no adverse impacts observed. Further investigations to be undertaken.</p> <p>Ganaway Burn - Point survey carried out at 7 sites. River walk carried out - no visible impacts found. Further investigations to be undertaken.</p> <p>Mill Burn - Point survey of 6 sites. River walk to be carried out upstream of monitoring point</p> <p>Mill Quarter Stream – Point survey of 13 sites. No adverse impacts observed. Further investigations to be undertaken.</p> <p>Enler River -Point survey of 7 sites carried out. River walk carried out in heavy rain. River running brown due to building sites on the Ballyregan Rd and Dundonald hospital. Weather conditions made it impossible to locate source - likely to have been multiple sources. Further action - Pollution prevention to be involved, more river walks required</p> <p>Dibney River – Point survey of 14 sites. No adverse impacts observed. Further investigations to be undertaken.</p> <p>Blackcauseway Strangford - Point survey carried out at 13 sites. River walk carried out – further investigations in association with Rivers Agency have been planned for November 2011.</p> <p>Cunning Burn - Point survey carried out at 7 sites. 3 tributaries have been identified for river walks.</p> <p>Blackstaff River (Ards) - Point survey of 21 sites - River walk undertaken - sewage fungus found in tributary - source found to be blocked pipe causing silage effluent to enter waterway. Farm was visited by Water Quality Inspector and Agricultural Regulations Team. Further Action - Farm to be revisited and other tributaries of Blackstaff to be walked.</p> <p>Comber River - Point survey of 16 sites carried out. River walk identified to further investigate unknown pressures</p> <p>River Blackwater - Point survey carried out at 18 sites. Further Investigations required</p>
<p>Carry out compliance assessment of Kirkubbin WWTW to form future upgrades</p>	<p>An inspection has been carried out on Kirkubbin Waste Water Treatment Works in 2010. The Works were found to be compliant with their Water Order Consent.</p>
<p>Observation of nitrate trends and liaison with research partners for further investigation into recovery time</p>	<p>Nitrates are part of the surveillance and operational monitoring carried out by NIEA. As NIEA does not fund any research directly it can only encourage research institutions in certain topics. To date this topic has not been adopted and progressed</p>

Further investigation of water balance for the groundwater body, taking into account abstraction volumes and review of recharge estimation	Review of recharge: There was an MSc project last year at Queens and some of the work has just been finished off by the GSNI hydrogeologists working on behalf of NIEA. For accurate abstraction volumes we depend on the AIL team, but it is difficult to obtain up-to-date number - hence any investigation into water balance is restricted.
Review of groundwater abstraction and relevant planning applications where necessary	The groundwater team is a regular consultee on groundwater abstractions and planning applications for all of Northern Ireland. However, our statistics are not broken down by groundwater bodies

If you are running a project or carrying out work that will assist in protecting the water environment or restoring natural waters let us know by contacting Aideen Kelly, Catchment Management Officer for Strangford & Lecale by e-mailing Aideen.kelly@doeni.gov.uk or by telephone 9263 3438

If you become aware of a water pollution incident **you** can call the Water Pollution Freephone Hotline in confidence with the location of the pollution incident and the nature of the pollution

