

Mourne Carlingford Catchment Stakeholder Meeting
12th May 2011, Area 6 Notes.

Pollution incidents

Since the last meeting we have investigated 73 pollution incidents within this catchment. We had 1 high severity incident, 11 medium severity incidents and 61 low severity.

These can be broken into source as follows:-

Domestic 11 All Low.

Agriculture 6 Medium 11 Low.

Industrial 1 High 2 Medium 5 Low.

NIWL 3 Medium 6 Low.

NPF 25

Un-sourced 3 All Low.

We have collected 2 tripartite statutory samples with view to prosecution, collated evidence for cost recovery for a number of incidents and breached approximately 12 farmers under The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (NI) 2006. These breaches usually result in a financial penalty for the farmer as a loss of a percentage of their single farm payment.

Court Cases

We had a recent case in Newry Court against Lagan Ferrovia. The Company was fined £350 plus court costs.

We have a case against NIWL in Newry Court on 15th July for a discharge of sewage from Carran Road sewage pumping station in Crossmaglen.

We have a contest against NIWL on 3rd October for a discharge from Burren Sewage Pumping Station in May 2010. The case is also up for review on 19th May. One of the Department's witnesses is a member of the Shimna Angling Club.

We have a contest against a Company on 1st August with a review on 19th May for a discharge of high suspended solids into the Moneycarragh River.

There are several cases at various stages of completion, some with our Area staff collating evidence, some which have been passed to our headquarters staff for checking and some with the Public Prosecution Service.

Newcastle Sewerage System

Work is ongoing on the sewage retention tank in Castle Park in the vicinity of the bowling greens.

I have been monitoring the Burren River at Burren Sewage Pumping Station where a retention tank was commissioned recently. On every inspection the River has looked in good order.

I have also been monitoring the Burren River at the site of the old Castlewellan WWTW, which is now a transfer sewage pumping station with all of the sewage being pumped to the new works in Annsborough. This river has visually improved remarkably since the cessation of the discharge from the old WWTW and on every inspection there has been no evidence of any pollution or recent discharges. I also observed a trout close to the discharge point from the old WWTW. I have checked the results with our Biologists and in Spring 2009 the Biotic Score at Bailey's Bridge downstream of the Works was 77 and in the Spring of 2011 it was 109, showing an improvement by 32 points or 41.5%.

Work has been recently completed on the sewer adjacent to the Burren River in the vicinity of the Burrendale Hotel. This will hopefully result in a decrease in the frequency of combined sewer overflows to the Burren River.

Not related to sewage in Newcastle or to Newcastle Beach is a recent inspection of the Carrigs River just downstream of the new Annsborough WWTW. Here I found a healthy population of Heptageniid Mayfly nymphs which score the maximum score of 10 on the Biological monitoring score list.

Notable Incidents.

- 1. We had a nasty spill of waste black engine oil into the Bessbrook River near Camlough in early April. Quite some time and resources including the employ of a clean up company and vacuum tanker were used. The source was established and we will endeavour to recover the costs incurred in the investigation and clean up.**
- 2. We had another much larger spill of Biodiesel into the Clanrye River in late April. This was as a result of a spill of 25,000 litres of biodiesel caused by a road traffic accident. The river was boomed and all of the oil removed by vacuum tanker. We will again endeavour to recover any costs incurred in the investigation and clean up and the Company involved have indicated that they will pay for the contractors costs.**