

Upper Foyle Catchment Stakeholder Group

Minutes

Wednesday 13 October 2010

Venue: Owenkillew Community Centre, Gortin

Present:

Peter Archdale (Chairman)
Diane Black (NIEA)
Sam McCracken (NIEA)
Stephen Annesley (NIEA)
Nicole McArthur (NIEA)
Angela Halpenny (NIW)
Paddy McCrudden (DARD Rivers Agency)
Robbie Marshall (UAF)
Alvin Wilson (NIEA)
Julie Corry (Omagh DC)
Dick Blakiston Houston (Beltrim Estate)
Cllr Bert Wilson (Omagh DC)
Alan Morrow (DARD)
Bob Davidson (NIEA NH)
John McCartney (LA)
Denise Turner (NIEA)
Robert Bailie (NIEA)
Margaret Gourley (NIEA)
Art Niven (Loughs Agency (LA))
Michael McAlary (NIW)
Norman Henderson (NIEA)
Ted Barker (NIEA)
Pat Conway (Loughmacrory & Murrins Angling Association)
Kevin McElduff (Loughmacrory & Murrins Angling Association)

Apologies

Jim Haughey (UAF)
Robert Scott (Abercorn Estates)
John Kane (DCAL)
Seamus Cullinan (LA)
Lucinda Blakiston Houston (Beltrim Estate)
Mary T Conway (Omagh Forum for Rural Development)

ITEM 1. WELCOME AND REVIEW OF ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

1.1 Peter Archdale (PA) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The group were then asked to give their names and organisation. The group were asked to look to the minutes of the previous meeting and one point of accuracy and one of clarification were highlighted. John McCartney (JMCC) explained to the group that there was a validation process of fish counters in 2007/2008. This review was carried out independently by a consultant and recommendations for improvements taken on. The Salmon and Inland Fisheries Forum are continually reviewing issues arising within a working group. The

amendment was accepted and the minutes agreed to be an accurate account and are available on NIEA website.

1.2 Matters arising - Action points

Action 1 - DB to advise the group when the review of HMWB is complete and circulate for the group to consider.

Diane Black (DB) told the group there was an ongoing review of waterbodies on an LMA basis. 'Introduction to identification and classification of Heavily Modified Waterbodies (HMWB) and Artificial Waterbodies' remains as is, any updates will be circulated.

Robbie Marshall (RM) asked for an explanation as to how the HMWBs had been arrived at and indicated that some waterbodies designated as HMWB were, on examination, not modified. AW explained that the team were looking at areas of concern and where groups had concerns these should be forwarded to NIEA and they could be looked at by the relevant team.

JMcC asked for clarification and a clear definition as to how waterbodies have been designated as heavily modified. Alvin Wilson (AW) explained that the paper describing each HMWB in the North West and reasons for designation are available on the website. JMcC gave an example in the Faughan system where confusion had arisen. PA encouraged the group to feedback areas of concern to NIEA.

PA asked was the definition of HMWB agreed. AW advised the group that UKTAG guidance had been used for NI and a RHAT tool is being used to now review the HMWBs.

DB drew attention to a paper on a possible new Heavily Modified Waterbody (HMWB) in Upper Foyle area and asked for group comment and feedback.

Action 1 – DB - Send RM details of HMWB in Derg & Mourne CSG.

Action 2 – ALL – Forward details of those HMWB designations which are challenged to NIEA for examination

Action 3 - DB - Circulate proposed new Upper Foyle HMWB paper to the group.

Action 4 - All – Forward comments on proposed new Upper Foyle HMWB paper to DB.

Action 5 – PA – Discuss further to find a way ahead

Action 6 – RM – Encourage angling clubs to feed into the local CSGs

Action 2 – All - Forward the location of other known landfill sites to NIEA

No additional comments received. Action recorded as complete.

Action 3 - DB - Consider how data can be requested from local councils regarding historic landfill sites. DB to keep this as an agenda item.

DB explained to the group that emails were sent for attention of Environmental officers in Omagh and Strabane Councils. Omagh DC has confirmed they will investigate this further with their old Licensing department. No response yet from Strabane. Seven sites have been recorded. Action ongoing.

Action 7 – DB – Follow up list of landfill sites with Omagh and Strabane DC

Action 4 – ALL - Group to identify any gaps in the draft paper 'Information and Assessment Requirements for Inclusion in an Environmental Statement for Major

Road Schemes To Ensure Impacts on the Aquatic Environment are Adequately Assessed' and return comments to DB by Monday 7th June 2010.

DB informed the group that comments have been received from UAF, FWTF, Loughs Agency and DRD Strategic Road Improvement Team. WMU is currently reviewing the comments received and will be redrafting the paper in light of those comments. The document is currently still draft and will be reissued in due course. DB thanked those for time and effort in responding.

RM stressed the need for a date for completion of this paper and as there were other road schemes pending this is a priority.

Action 8 – DB – Request date for reissue of paper on 'Information and Assessment Requirements for Inclusion in an Environmental Statement for Major Road Schemes'

JMcC asked if the lessons learned from previous schemes and what went wrong had been recorded. AW explained that there had been more consultation on the next scheme and lessons learned had been noted. PA thanked everyone for their input.

Action 5 – FS – Include the Group's participation in Forest Service felling plan consultations

PA recorded disappointment that no representatives from DARD Forest Service were present at the meeting. DB provided the update from FS that this is due for a full planning review next year (September 2011) and the Upper Foyle CSG will be included in the stakeholder list for consultation. In addition bodies such as NIEA, Rivers Agency and Water Service will be included in consultation. PA had concern that Co. Tyrone stakeholders had been poorly consulted over the current felling plan. Cllr Bert Wilson was concerned over the lack of replanting following felling.

Action 9 – DB – Request more detail on timescale for Forest Service felling plan consultations in September 2011.

Action 10 – PA – Raise issue of FS felling plan consultations at Stakeholder Forum.

Action 6 – JK, AN – Further discuss past fish monitoring data and results to build picture for the area.

Action recorded as complete.

Action 7 – AW – Discuss further the impact of site development and the potential impact with Planning Service (PS).

Due to restructuring of PS this action is to be carried over. PA highlighted the need for this issue to be raised at the Implementation Board. JMcC indicated that, in particular, large scale sites are of concern. Also, it was noted that there was potential for contamination of waterways from re-development of brownfield sites. These factors should be considered in the consultation process and the nature and extent of the investment required identified at early stages of planning.

Action 11 – PA/GN – Raise the issue of impact from site development on waterways with the Implementation Board.

Action 8 – GG to discuss with WMU the potential for mapping sediment loading after a flooding episode in order to establish the points of impact.

DB provided an update from Rivers Agency that suggested that WMU investigate tributary rivers following flood episode to locate major sources of sediment sources in the catchment. RA will raise this for discussion at the next liaison meeting with NIEA.

Action 9 – All – Feedback to DB on meeting format and future topics for discussion.

Comments are still welcomed – Action carried

Action Point 12 - All – Feedback to DB on meeting format and future topics for discussion.

Action 10 – AW to initiate contact with Ulster Farmers Union to discuss potential for awareness raising presentation for UFU members.

AW told the group he had made contact with UFU and waited a response. AW informed the group NIEA are now looking to resumed interest and participation in a workshop to discuss issues including pesticides, water quality and good agricultural practice. The LMA action plans could be included as a possible agenda item.

Action Point 13 – AW - Provide update on details of workshop and correspondence with UFU.

ITEM 2. WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR AREA – THE FRESHWATER PEARL MUSSEL – JOHN EARLY (NIEA)

2.1 John Early (JE) gave a presentation on the Freshwater Pearl Mussel history, lifecycle, concerns and research. The presentation is available at the link:

http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/upper_foyle.htm

2.2 RM asked what measures are in place with regard to felling plans to avoid potential damage. JE explained that work had been done by National Parks and Wildlife and Fermanagh District Council regional managers. PA noted that this would be discussed further with Forest Service (FS) and referred to the ROI guidelines for forest operations in FWPM locations. PA indicated that given the transboundary nature of WFD and implementation it would be useful to invite FS to comment on this guidance. A brief discussion followed on Habitat Regulation requirements and responsibility with FS. JMcC pointed out that sub contracted felling is an issue; as a result strict contract management and an onus to carry out water quality monitoring during felling operations is required. AW described how appropriate controls to ensure felling operations do not impact waterways are crucial.

2.3 JMcC highlighted other factors such as weed growth preventing juveniles reaching the riverbed, sheep dip and copper levels.

2.4 JE explained that Donegal County Council and NIEA are setting up a steering group for the Interreg project.

Action Point 14 – FS - Provide comment on the ROI guidelines for forest operations in FWPM locations

ITEM 3. NIEA REGIONAL MANAGERS UPDATE – SAM MCCRACKEN (NIEA)

3.1 Sam McCracken (SMcC) gave a presentation detailing the number, source and severity of pollution incidents in the Upper Foyle area. The presentation is available at the link:

http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/upper_foyle.htm

ITEM 4. UPDATE ON PROGRESS ON DEVELOPING LOCAL PLANS TO IMPROVE THE WATER ENVIRONMENT – DIANE BLACK (NIEA)

4.1 DB gave a presentation on how developing local plans was progressing. The presentation is available at the link:

http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water-home/wfd/public_partic_3/catchment_stakeholder_groups/upper_foyle.htm

4.2 RM asked which angling groups NIEA had met with. DB told the group that FASTA, Omagh Anglers and GAFF anglers had fully participated in implementation meetings. RM noted their absence from the meeting.

4.3 RM raised the issue of septic tanks and asked what was being done. AW described ongoing changes in the septic tank policy and emphasised the difficulties and resource requirement for identifying location of problem tanks. RM stated that anglers and local people on the ground can identify these on maps. AW welcomed this and indicated that maps had been provided at the earlier implementation meetings.

4.4 Feedback on the action plans indicated a need for more specific detail and need to include angling clubs and other organisation e.g. Septic tanks – angling clubs could carry forward related actions

4.5 JMcC questioned the status of the Glenlark waterbody. Its status is given as good however LA data would suggest it is less than good. DB explained that unfortunately NIEA have only one monitoring point on the waterbody.

4.6 PA asked how the LMA Action Plans affect the NIW programme of works and improvements. Michael McAlary (MMcA) explained that resources are agreed for the rural works improvements however he had been lobbying in this area for extra works that are considered in need of improvement. PA asked about the situation where developers leave new developments without adequate sewage treatment. MMcA declared that, particularly in the North West through Planning Service, NIW do not support development where a works cannot support the extra sewage.

Action Point 15 – DB – Discuss further good status of Glenlark waterbody with Loughs Agency.

ITEM 5. ARRANGEMENTS FOR WORK ON LOCAL PLANS TO BE CARRIED OUT NEXT YEAR

Covered under item 4

ITEM 6. ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

None offered.

PA drew the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for attending. The next meeting date is suggested as 4th May 2011.

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