

Minutes of Meeting of the Salmon, Inland Fisheries and Environmental Focus Group

Thursday 23 February 2016 at 7pm

Loughs Agency Headquarters, Prehen

Present

Forum Members

Robbie Marshall
Peter Archdale
Brian Thompson

Non Attendance

Frank McGurk
Robert Kevitt
Francis O'Donnell
Ian Gamble
David Friel
Breffni Martin

In Attendance

John McCartney	Director of Conservation and Protection
Shane Colgan	FASTA Representative
Siobhan Wilson	Minutes

1. Apologies

Peadar MacRory
Jim Haughey
Michael Stinson
Declan Little
Brendan McSherry
Alec Rolston
Tony French
Eamon Mullan
Enda Craig

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

As there were no members present who attended at the last meeting the minutes could not be proposed or seconded as a true record of the meeting but they were accepted by those in attendance.

3. Matters Arising

Smolt Farm

Robbie Marshall asked for an update in relation to the Smolt Farm. John McCartney advised the meeting that an application for expansion had been submitted but was not yet resolved. John agreed to write to Marine Harvest and will provide an update at the next meeting.

Ballyarton Hydroelectric Application

Robbie Marshall asked for an update from the last meeting on the Ballyarton Hydro Application. John McCartney advised the meeting that the application had been retained by the Minister but was not yet approved. He added that Loughs Agency, the Ulster Angling Federation and Faughan Anglers have concerns about the proposal.

4. Science Strategy

John McCartney advised the meeting that Paddy Boylan could not attend the meeting but that he would be presenting the Science Strategy at the Forum Meeting on 8th March. He added that the strategy was presented at the recent Board Meeting and that the Board unanimously endorsed the strategy and complimented Paddy Boylan on area of work for the Loughs Agency.

A discussion developed regarding the content of the strategy and Peter Archdale added that he has discussed this with Paddy Boylan. Peter added that he would prefer if this strategy was more holistic to include the overall mission of the Agency in that it would contain information on the social, economic and environmental elements. The members present were in agreement with Peter's opinion.

5. Biodiversity Strategy

John McCartney discussed the Loughs Agency's new Biodiversity Strategy currently in early draft version. John added that he would send the draft copy for review and confirmed that he would welcome feedback by email. Siobhan Wilson to send this to members.

6. 2015 Summary of Fish Counts

John McCartney presented the findings within the document Fish Counts Summaries 2015. John gave an in-depth account of all the figures and data collected from the counter sites on the Rivers Finn, Mourne, Faughan, Corrick, Strule and Clanrye. This information was welcomed by all in attendance and a discussion developed in relation to the content of the report.

7. DCAL Licence Changes

John McCartney gave an update to the meeting in relation to the recent changes with DCAL licences and permits and informed all that this would be effective from 16th April 2016. John added that the process for purchasing DCAL licences and permits is now done online and that a small paper receipt is issued which anglers should carry on their person whilst they are fishing on the river bank or lake. John added that he would be writing to DCAL and if any member wished to add to this please correspond with him directly.

A brief discussion developed in relation to the effectiveness of this new procedure and the difficulties in policing this would raise for inspectors and fishing officers.

8. Donegal Irish Water Ltd – Proposed Waste Water Plant Compliance – Enda Craig

As Enda Craig was not in attendance at the meeting this item was not fully addressed. John McCartney advised that a press release on the European ruling would be included in the minutes from the meeting.

Please access full information using the following link:-

<http://www.fliuch.org/donegal-irish-water-ltd-proposed-waste-water-plant-compliance-insisted-upon-by-european-commission/>

9. A.O.B

Regulatory Review

John McCartney advised that this was brought to the recent Board Meeting and it was unanimously endorsed by the members. He added that he would include a copy of the regulations to the minutes (see appendix 1). Robbie Marshall asked if the amount of tags would change and John confirmed that these would be reduced from 25 to 10 for the season. There was a discussion in relation to the catch and release angling on some rivers and the benefits of this and how most anglers are responsible and now return fish to the river. Information on the returns for 2015 was requested and John agreed to make this information available at the next meeting in June 2016.

Status Report

A copy of the status report by Art Niven was requested. John agreed to instruct Art to forward reports on all rivers in the Foyle area to all members.

A5

Peter Archdale commended the Loughs Agency staff on their robust process relating to the developments of the A5 Road. Shane Colgan agreed with this. Peter suggested a visit from Art Niven and Declan Lawlor to view the box culverts at the A8 road site.

10. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 14th June 2016 at Loughs Agency Headquarters in Prehen at 7:00 pm sharp.

Appendix 1

	Name of Regulation(s)	Brief Explanation of Regulations	Year Target	Status
1	The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Permits for the Removal of River Bed Material) Regulations 2016	Regulations to alter the application for consent under Articles 46/47 of the Foyle Fisheries Acts	2016	
2	Foyle Area (Control of Netting) Regulations 2016	Consolidation of amendments to date and addition of wording change to “capable of taking”	2016	
3	Carlingford Area (Control of Netting) Regulations 2016	New Regulation to clearly ban netting in Carlingford to include “capable of taking”	2016	
4	The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Designation of Fisheries) Regulations 2016	Regulations to designate certain fisheries as rainbow trout fisheries	2016	
5	The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Management of Sea Trout) Regulations 2016	Regulations to allow for the management of stocks of sea trout	2016	

6	The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Introduction of Alien Fish Species) Regulations 2016	Regulations to prevent the introduction of non-native alien fish species into the waters of the Foyle and Carlingford areas	2016	
7	The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Introduction of Administrative Charging) Regulations 2016	Regulations to allow the Loughs Agency to make charges for administration. Also prescribes Business Hours and Holidays	2016	
8	The Foyle Area (Control of Fishing) (Amendment) Regulations 2016	Amendment to the Control of Fishing Regulations which lists a number of waters where catch and release angling does not apply	2016	
9	The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Obstruction to the Passage of Fish) Regulations 2017	Regulations to prevent obstructions to fish passage	2017	
10	The Foyle Area (Control of Fishing) (Amendment) Regulations 2017	Regulations to amend drought provisions, expanding them to other rivers	2017	
11	The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Licensing of Fishing Engines)	Regulations which will include provisions necessary for the	2017	

	Regulations 2017	introduction of E-Licensing		
12	Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Licensing of Fishing Engines) (Amendment) Regulations 2017	Amendment which will allow for the introduction of a 3-day coarse fishing licence.	2017	
13	The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Angling) (Amendment) Regulations 2017	Regulations to remove the prohibition of angling with shrimp and prawn. Also to expand prohibited areas to include certain specified sections of the rivers Roe, Strule and Faughan.	2017	
14	The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Wild Trout Protection Zones) Regulations 2017*	Regulations to create areas when it is prohibited to fish for wild brown trout	2017	
15	The Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Fixed Penalty Notice) Regulations 2017	Regulations to set out which offences shall be subject to fixed penalty notices	2017	

*Currently connected with Designation of Fisheries Regulations 2016.