

Cork Environmental Forum

Position Paper 10 - River Catchment Management



River Catchment Management should be based on the principles of Sustainable Development, with a particular emphasis on protecting and enhancing ordinary as well as special habitats. Current 'State of the Environment' information is essential to ensure accurate prioritising and resource deployment.

Any Plans should be presented to the public in a format that is easily understood, including:

- 🌿 Illustrated and detailed maps of the region, showing all watercourses of significance within the County.
- 🌿 Catchment areas shown superimposed over 1:50,000 Discovery Maps / contours.
- 🌿 Locations of significant industries, developments, forestry plantations impacting on watercourses clearly shown.
- 🌿 Descriptions of species present, and general habitat quality for each watercourse.

For the public, graphic illustration of the hydrological cycle, and how topographical, physical influences interact on catchment areas and watercourse ecology is essential. This basic understanding will bring on board the parties to any Plan more than anything else.

Ecosystem health and function must underpin all Sustainable Development

Catchment Management Planning must be based on a sound ecological analysis of catchment system function - soils, bedrock geology, hydrology, etc.; i.e. what the system needs to function in a healthy, productive manner. Social needs, i.e. what users need to derive from the system, then overlay - where system needs and human needs coincide, exploitation or utilisation is possible - where there is no match, the system cannot meet the human needs, which must be adjusted or restrained accordingly.

Sea Angling

- 🌿 The development of sea and shore angling is threatened by the continual reduction in public shore access, an issue which needs addressing in the County Development Plan as it has been in the Bantry Bay Charter Project.
- 🌿 The development potential of inshore angling is huge, e.g. small boats on the major estuarine areas of the County's rivers, and should be recognised in the County Development Plan. Angling accommodation needs support and funding from Cork / Kerry Tourism and Cork Leader.

Shellfish

- 🌿 The Fisheries Boards are responsible for protecting fisheries i.e. physical habitats and their species, for example wild shellfish, such as fresh-water mussels. However, there is as yet no environmental audit of species within the Bays of the County, particularly West Cork, to establish the capacity for resource use or the threats posed.

Environmental Protection Programme

- 🌿 Cork County Council does not carry out routine water sampling on rivers where discharge licences have been issued. Regular monitoring is essential for environmental protection.
- 🌿 Those villages which are discharging sewage from County Council mains directly to rivers should be listed and a programme for discontinuing or ameliorating this practice drawn up.
- 🌿 The opportunity to increase the number of salmonid designated rivers in Cork County should be taken and to include Fisheries Protection and Development in the County Development Plan, through the newly designated fisheries conservation areas.
- 🌿 Certain oligotrophic lakes and rivers need special protection status.
- 🌿 Riverbank clearance is substantial throughout the County and needs careful review and guidance.
- 🌿 Current Forestry Guidelines on buffer zones / drainage works / species selection are seriously inadequate. Riparian zones need new standards of protection / management.

PP10/06/01

To foster, promote & implement sustainable development within the Cork region