

NORE SUIR RIVER TRUST

NEWSLETTER

www.noresuirrivertrust.org

Spring 2010

SUMMARY

Another year has ended but this time the Trust has achieved some credible successes in pivotal areas. Chief amongst those are the two new fish passes on the Kings River.

We have begun to do some stream enhancement work and expect that we will extend this greatly in 2010. Also we have learned some new skills in invertebrate surveys and want to bring this also to a greater audience. We are committed to a stream audit on the Lower Breagh river in association with Kilkenny Tidy Towns committee.

Unfortunately there is bad news. The amount of salmon returning to spawn this winter has been extremely disappointing. The news from those of us who walk the streams is indicative of a collapse of spawners this season. The 2009 angling season was very poor also so perhaps we should not be surprised. Reports for rivers all over Ireland and beyond suggest a similar pattern.

There are no obvious reason for the drop in returning spawners. Perhaps climate change, effects of El Nino, cyclical patterns, salmon farms, reduced feeding all play a part. The scientists are busy trying to find out. Meanwhile all we can do is to improve the habitat and send more strong healthy salmon smolts back to sea.

KINGS RIVER PROJECT

A survey of the Nore by Dr. Martin O'Grady and Tom Sullivan published in 1994 identified the barriers on the Kings River as a primary limiting factor to the production of salmon and trout in the entire catchment. The Trust engaged Alan Sullivan BSc MIFM to produce plans for fish passage on Boland's and Bradley's weirs and to oversee the project.

We engaged with the owners of these weirs, Ken and Sheila Boland and Hugh Hutchinson, and received unstinting support from them. The angling clubs and communities on the Kings River also came on board with support and financial pledges. Both the National Parks and Wildlife and the Fishery Board also gave their blessing to the projects.

The total cost of almost €40,000 came from the angling community with Kilkenny Anglers Association covering the entire cost of the fish pass at Boland's Weir. In their centenary year this was a fitting way to celebrate their interaction with the Nore. Mount Juliet and Thomastown Anglers Association were also major contributors with

the balance coming from other clubs, personal donations from anglers and business people and our own resources.

Boland's Weir August 2009.



Work commenced on **Boland's Weir** in August 2009 and proceeded without any major problems except for a few unseasonal floods. We had great support from adjacent farmers for access and must have annoyed many road users when transporting the large glacial boulders slowly from north Co. Kilkenny.



Boland's Weir Fish Pass September, 2009.
You can see a short video of the construction on our website www.noresuirrivertrust.org.

Continued on page 2

N O R E S U I R R I V E R T R U S T

Bradley's Weir was a different proposition. The natural position for the rock ramp unfortunately proved unworkable for a number of reasons, not least financial. Therefore Alan choose a point on the left hand side of the weir which then meant we had to provide access to fish from each side of the fish pass as well as up the middle.

Access was also a problem for machinery as we had to cross a bog to get to the site. Luckily the Roadbridge people (building that section of the M9) gave us free access to all the rock we needed to construct a road across the bog which cut the cost down considerably. Of course we had to remove this road at the end of construction and return the site to its original position, all adding greatly to the cost.

Nonetheless the fish pass was completed in early October. While not as elegant as Bradley's, the pass works very well in virtually all flows. Dozens of visits to both sites in the months since then have failed to spot a single fish, trout or salmon, jumping at either of these weirs. Also the fish passes withstood all of the floods this winter without any damage. Job done, as they say!



Bradleys Weir August 2009



Bradley's Weir Fish Pass September 2009

INVERTEBRATE SURVEYS

Some of us completed a course in Invertebrate Surveys with Jimi Conroy of National Parks & Wildlife. The point of these surveys is to gauge the water quality of our spawning and nursery streams. The presence or indeed absence of specific types of insects can give a good understanding of the quality of water and the need to do further investigation if the results are not good.

These surveys can be included in the stream restoration program and the Trust is interested in rolling these out in the coming years. These surveys are also a good way to introduce our youngsters to marine life in a useful and fun way.



Interesting critters.....

HABITAT WORK

The process of removing barriers to fish migration takes time – planning, meeting owners and community, sourcing materials, getting permissions, funding and the actual work.

Meanwhile we can begin to do some habitat improvement work. The photos below are pretty dramatic but there are thousands of locations in the catchment like this where we can let in a little light and kick-start the process.

Most work is concerned with clearing vegetation from the streamy parts of the habitat. Pools and slow water are excellent cover and can be left as they are to a large extent. Bank erosion can also be a problem, particularly with the recent big flood events and these can also be dealt with during the work.

We need to spread this work throughout the catchments and ideally a local group taking ownership of their piece of catchment would be ideal. The Trust will be happy to support the learning process involved and to assist in getting the necessary permissions from the landowners.



Where to start



Nice ending

N O R E S U I R R I V E R T R U S T

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

We have set out below a draft summary of our income and outlay for the financial year to 31st. October, 2009. As you can see, we are in overdraft territory which was necessary to complete the Kings River project.

This overdraft has been guaranteed by three directors. We need to clear this overdraft as soon as possible so that we can continue the good work into the future. We will continue to ask for contributions from anglers, our friends in business and perhaps we can get some sponsorship.

We need to recruit more members to the Trust (see application attached) to increase our voluntary effort

and also to raise funds – **membership is €25.00 per annum.**

We are also asking the angling clubs to see if they can raise some funding for us from their members. Perhaps a small levy might be possible or a recruitment drive or a fund-raising event.

As salmon stocks are seriously declining, our only recourse is to improve the spawning and nursery habitat. Trout stocks and habitat also need serious investigation. An investment in the Trust is an investment in the future of angling in the catchments.

1st. November 2008 to 31st. October 2009

Opening Balance		€6,210.95
Total Income		€28,725.42
Expenditure		
Projects	€40,565.56	
Auditor	€400.00	
Companies Office	€40.00	
Meetings	€30.00	
Postage	€210.39	
Office Rent	€200.00	
Telephone	€118.51	
Bank Charges	€21.36	€41,585.82
Balance in the Trust at 31/10/2009		- €6,649.45

NORE SUIR RIVER TRUST LIMITED
Mr. Bob Wemyss, Secretary
Jerpoint Hill, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny.

Phone: 087 2512562
Email wemyss.bob@gmail.com
www.noresuirrivertrust.org