

# SLANEY RIVER TRUST LIMITED

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

JULY 2, 2012

Dear Member

Since I last wrote to you in June 2011 the Board of Slaney River Trust has been very active on a number of projects which I will briefly describe here. There will be a more detailed presentation at our AGM due to be held on Friday, July 27. Notice of the AGM and Accounts are included with this letter. I hope you will be able to come to the AGM. Dr. Willie Roche of Inland Fisheries Ireland will be presenting on two topics of great interest to Slaney anglers: findings to date from the Celtic Sea Trout Project; proposal for scientific work in the Slaney catchment in 2013.

I would like to appeal to all members who have not yet paid their subscription to do so now by sending a cheque for € 35 to David Dobbs at Sundial House, Manor Ave., Greystones, Co. Wicklow. It should be made out to Slaney Rodfishers Association. Or you can use the Paypal facility on our website [www.slaneyrivertrust.ie](http://www.slaneyrivertrust.ie)

Subscriptions are the lifeblood of Slaney River Trust. If we are to carry out the work Dr. Willie Roche is recommending for 2013 we need financial support from our members.

Turning now to the projects we have been involved in during the last year:

1. Alan Sullivan submitted his final report on the potential for a rocky ramp pass at Clohamon last January. Since then we have been progressing certain operational aspects. An important meeting is due to take place with senior executives of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) this month at which we hope to gain their support for the project. Our Director, Richard Burgess, has committed a major amount of time to this project over the last year.
2. We have been monitoring several potential hydro schemes on the Slaney and certain tributaries to ensure they pose no threat to fish passage and that they comply with SAC regulations.
3. IFI have been actively pursuing installation of a rocky ramp pass at Baltinglass weir. It is hoped the project will go ahead within the next year. Richard Burgess is also investigating whether there is scope for a rocky ramp pass at Tullow weir where substantial flood relief work is underway.
4. Our Director, Thomas Mernagh, submitted a proposal to IFI under their Conservation Stamp Scheme for funding to improve spawning on the Clody R. above Bunclody by cutting back laurel and raking spawning gravels. Conditional approval has been received for funding of €10,000. The work is scheduled to take place next September.
5. A successful trip to the spawning redds in the Upper Slaney and the Glen of Imaal was organized last November by our Director, Brian Stephens, in conjunction with the Defence Forces and IFI. Fifteen people took part. A number of spawning salmon were seen. Anecdotally this was the best spawning season for a number of years. This was later confirmed by IFI's redd count – at 1182 redds it was the second best result since 2001.
6. Brian Stephens is also webmaster of our website. He has made a number of improvements to the site over the last year which have attracted a lot of praise. Particularly popular with members are: the webcam giving readings of a water height gauge and water colour ( updated every five minutes ); regular updates on fishing conditions and catches; items of general interest to anglers; a listing of fishing availability on the Slaney.

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Registered Office: 7 Appian Way, Dublin 6, Ireland.

Directors: R. Burgess, J. Carroll, D. Dobbs, K. Dodd, V. Duigan, S. Feeney, D. Hanley, T. Mernagh, D. Page, N. Scott, B. Stephens

Incorporated in Ireland – Registration number 353361.

Slaney River Trust Limited has received funding from the ERDF through the Ireland/Wales Interreg 111A programme .

7. Slaney River Trust continually monitors the environmental condition of the river. Generally the river was in good health in 2011 / 2012. However we received a report in mid March of a major discharge of effluent from the new treatment plant at Bunclody. Our Director, Ken Dodd who is Chairman of the Board's Environmental Sub – Committee was quickly on the case. He has been in regular contact with Wexford Co. Council on the matter. EPA and the operator of the plant are preparing reports for the Co. Council on the cause/s of the discharge and remedial measures to ensure it does not recur.
8. Richard Burgess and I met with Carlow Co. Council regarding modifications proposed to the operation of the water abstraction plant at Rathvilly. Since then I have been informed that they are sampling the water involved and that nothing will progress without Slaney River Trust's involvement. They also plan to rebuild the weir at the plant.
9. On October 6 last year a group of Carnew scouts conducted a kick sample exercise on the Slaney to investigate micro invertebrate life – a key indicator of water quality. The exercise was organized by Thomas Mernagh with technical expertise provided by Tom Hoyne. Six sites were surveyed. Generally water quality was good. However in and below Tullow poor water quality was detected. It is feared that at times raw sewage is discharged into the river from the treatment plant there. Thomas Mernagh also participated, on behalf of Slaney River Trust, in IFI's Fisheries Awareness week in May.
10. Regrettably we had to cancel a casting class led by Mark Corps, IFI's Angling Adviser, which was due to have been held at Clohamon fishery on June 23 because of the high water. It is hoped to reschedule the class on Saturday September 8. When this is confirmed all those who had booked places will be notified.
11. We hope to publish a newsletter later in the year. To conserve costs this will be sent to all members for whom we have email addresses and will also be placed on our website.
12. We maintain close contact with IFI and have regular communication with David McInerney, IFI's local Director who is based in Clonmel. We continue to press for a full counter for the Slaney. We urged IFI to open the river on a catch and release basis in 2012 and we believe our arguments were influential in the decision to do so. We particularly noted the growing threat from poaching and the positive impact of an angler presence on the river in this regard.

Finally, I would like to briefly comment on the level of salmon catches in 2012. We estimate around 80 to 90 salmon were caught to date. The average weight was greater than normal – at least two fish of just under 20 lbs. were recorded. Condition was generally excellent. While the number caught might seem a bit disappointing it should be noted that many salmon hooked were lost. A factor here may be the use of single barbless hooks. On one fishery for every fish caught one was lost. Sea trout stocks appear very healthy. We hope the authorities will reopen the river again in March 2013 on a catch and release basis and we will be lobbying them intensively to achieve this outcome.

Yours sincerely,  
Vincent Duigan  
Chairman