Invertebrate investigation in the Connors Burn, Connor, Co Antrim

1. Background

On the 19th of December 2025, [redacted], Water Quality inspector (WQI), investigated reports of pollution in the Connor Burn. [redacted] identified pollution flowing into the Connor Burn from a small tributary. On the 24th of December 2025, a local angling club also reported seeing pollution in the main Connor Burn. Statutory water samples were collected from [redacted] upstream of the small tributary on the 26th of December 2025. On the 28th of December 2025, the Water Pollution Response & Enforcement Team (WPRET) requested an invertebrate survey on the Connor Burn to assess any impact on the invertebrate community.

2. Method

On the 30th of December 2025, FI Team Ecologists [redacted] and [redacted] met [redacted], Kells RMI group coordinator. [redacted] accompanied the FI team to the River Monitoring Initiative (RMI) site on the Connor Burn and to the location where the feeder stream entered the Connor Burn.

Invertebrate samples were collected at two locations in the Connor Burn, upstream and downstream of the small tributary, to confirm the source of pollution. Both samples were preserved onsite for potential future analysis. The first site was located at [redacted]. The second site is an [redacted]. The two sites (Figure 1) were sampled for invertebrates in line with procedure M0056 by [redacted]. The samples were analysed on site using the RMI rapid assessment method. This method is a paired back metric which allows for a quick bankside assessment which can effectively quantify the potential impact of pollution on invertebrate communities.

Sites (see Figure 1):

[redacted]

[redacted]

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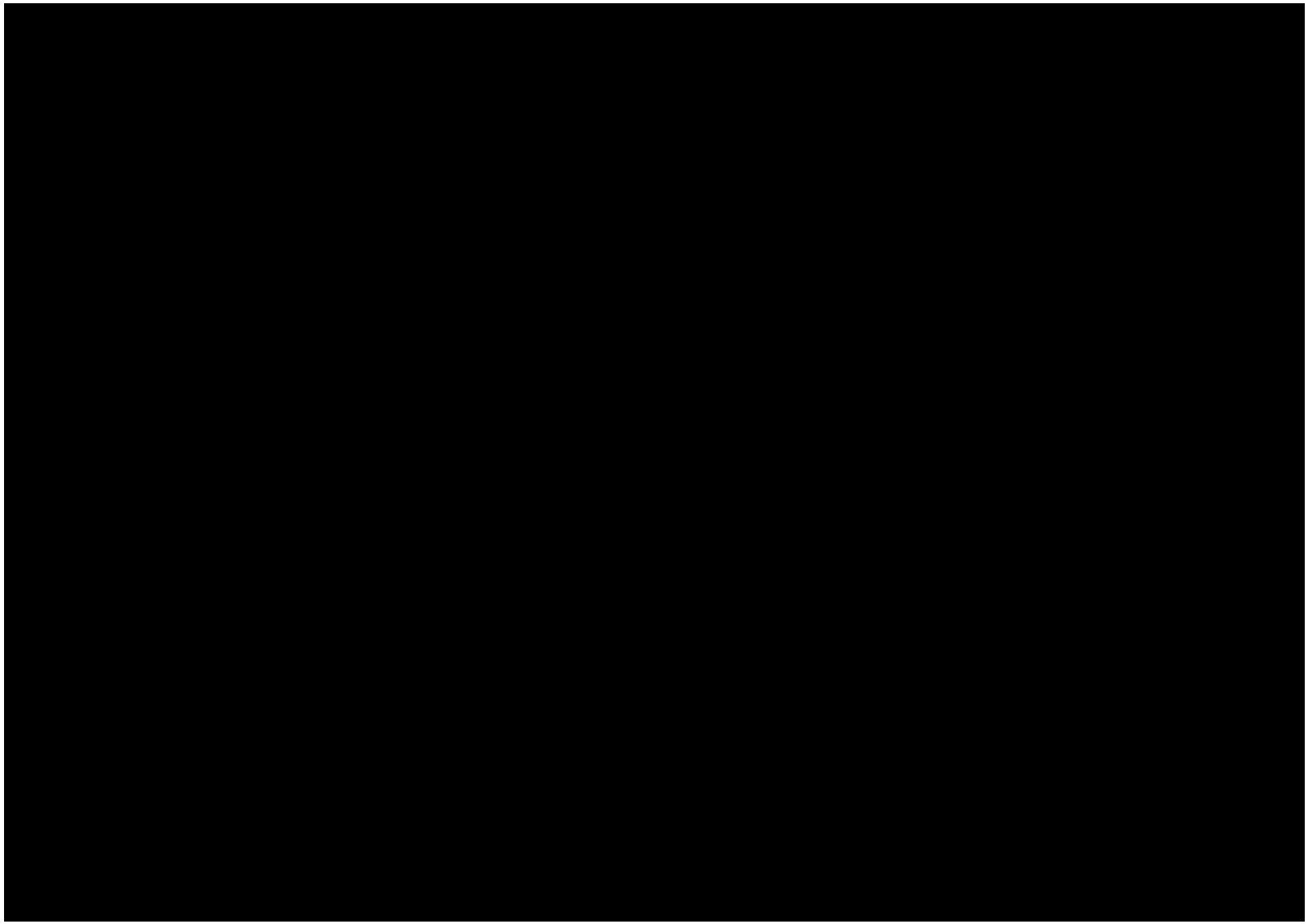

Figure 1: Map showing the location of the two Investigative sites visited on the 30th of December 2025 in the Connor Burn.

Table of results

Site No.	Location	IGR	Field Notes	ARMI Score
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Feeder burn had foam, odour, dead worms and leeches	11
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Spoil heaps along right hand bank	11

Table 1: Table showing RMI scores and field notes for invertebrate investigation on the Connor Burn, December 2025.

3. Discussion

On the 19th of December 2025, [redacted], Water Quality inspector (WQI), investigated reports of pollution in the Connor Burn. [redacted] identified the pollution to be digestate flowing from [redacted] into the Connor Burn from a small tributary. The FI team conducted RMI sampling at two sites on the 30th of December 2026 on the Connor burn.

[redacted] was selected to represent upstream conditions and will serve as a control for comparing invertebrate score and pollution indicators downstream of the tributary. The site is located [redacted] (Figure 1). This site displayed a healthy assemblage of invertebrates with sensitive species (stoneflies) present and scored 11 for RMI. No major pollution indicators were recorded at this site and no dead invertebrates observed.

Site 2 is an [redacted] site and is located [redacted] of the effected tributary. This site also had a healthy assemblage of invertebrates. Again, it had sensitive species (stoneflies) present, almost identical abundances and similarly scored 11 for RMI. The local RMI group sampled this location a month before and achieved a similar score. A live fish was possibly observed at this site, and no major pollution indicators recorded.

The feeder stream (Figure 1, red dash line) did not meet the requirements for the RMI procedure so only observations were recorded. An inspection of the stream revealed dead worms and leeches along with foam and an organic smell. No other invertebrates were found on site.

4. Conclusion

The evidence from this investigation of the Connor Burn would suggest that the recent pollution event has had little or no impact on the invertebrate community downstream of the feeder on the main channel. Evidence from the feeder stream under investigation suggest that this was the source of the pollution.

5. Recommendations

- WQIs should keep FMA FI and local stakeholders updated on the progress and remediation efforts. Any remediation will help prevent further damage and loss to the ecological environment.