

NI Angling Forum

Microsoft Teams Meeting – 13 December 2023 – 2 pm

Attendance

Seamus Connor (**DAERA Inland Fisheries Inspectorate**) Chair
Damian McCann (**DAERA Inland Fisheries Policy & Legislation**)
Paul Caldwell (**DAERA Inland Fisheries Business Support**) Minutes
Kelsie Geddis (**Loughs Agency**)
Ciaran McGonigle (**Loughs Agency**)
Mike McClure (**Sport NI**)
Jack Tisdall (**Ulster Coarse Fishing Federation**)
Mark Tierney (**Director, UAF**)
Stephen Douglas (**Waterways Ireland**)

No.	Item	Action
1	Apologies	
1.1	Mary Toland (DAERA Inland Fisheries Business Support) Gary Houston (UAF) Stephen Douglas (Waterways Ireland) Graeme Blair (Ulster Council of Sea Angling)	
2	Previous Minutes	
2.1	Previous minutes discussed and agreed.	
3	Update on Action Points	
3.1	An update on SRA was completed by MMC and issued to members.	
4	AOB.	
4.1	DMC gave a brief update on the Licence and Permit review - currently with Grade 5 and discussions ongoing. Pressures and prioritising other areas of work have had a start/stop impact on the review. Members had a general discussion on the various topics contained within the review including pricing; stocking and Movanager situation; adult/juvenile/concessionary licences; game/coarse split; and the complexity of the analysis. DMC also made members aware that he is currently undertaking an internal review of Public Angling Estate (PAE).	

	<p>DMC informed that ultimately, both reviews will need to be put before any new Minister before going out for public consultation – current Assembly situation will have a bearing on timescales.</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p>PART 2 – Inland Fisheries Business</p> <p>ZM update PAE.</p> <p>SC provided the latest position at Movanager – staff continue to look after stock, with no decision regarding stocking PAE in 2024. All information is provided to Permanent Secretary who will consider a number of options going forward in relation to fish production and stocking into the PAE for IF.</p> <p>Members asked if DAERA IF has considered various scenarios such as sourcing private companies for stocking and what seems to be little impact on the eel industry – SC provided background on the differing impacts ZM had on stocking waters using R Bann water as opposed to the movement of live eels for food consumption using tap ice. SC confirmed that DAERA IF was aware of the recent list of queries sent in by the UAF and that they would respond in due course to these.</p>	
<p>6</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>Blue/Green Algae update.</p> <p>SC provided a brief update on the latest position of blue/green algae at L Neagh. Members discussed with reference to policy differential in DAERA regarding agriculture and fisheries. Members further discussed potential issues with NIW (sewerage; dishwasher tablets; treatment works) and that preferably action rather than words (meetings) would generally benefit the situation at the lough. MT and JT reminded the forum of the need to not forget L Erne to ensure the same impact doesn't happen there also given its importance for angling.</p> <p>SC indicated work is ongoing with AFBI scientists and indicated IF the latest information for the public can be found on the following link:</p> <p>Blue-Green Algae Sample Results Published Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)</p> <p>SC outlined that the Department was reviewing all its policies and actions in relation to the blue/green issue and the working group would be recommending actions that need to be taken. In addition, these working groups had members outside of DAERA to help with this review.</p>	

7	AOB.	
7.1	<p>MMC informed that this will be his last meeting as he is moving on – all members thanked MMC for the dedication he always displayed to his role in the forum and his positive contributions to all discussions.</p> <p>MMC indicated that Sport NI have not yet advertised his post for replacement, but that he would provide the forum with contact details at Sport NI in the interim.</p>	
7.2	CMG gave an update on Loughs Agency’s work throughout 2023, delivering over 40 projects, and LA’s outlook for 2024.	
8	Dates of next meetings.	
8.1	Dates for 2024 to be decided – PC will supply 4 dates to SC similar to 2023 (March; June; September; and December) – members can then be informed.	
ACTION POINTS	<p>ACTION – MMC to provide contact details at Sport NI for the forum (7.1 above) – COMPLETED.</p> <p>ACTION – PC to suggest meeting dates for 2024 (8.1 above) – COMPLETED.</p>	<p>Mike</p> <p>Paul</p>