
From: Redacted Email Address>

Sent: 07 December 2022 23:23

To: Strategic Environmental Consultation <sea@opw.ie>

Subject: Arterial Drainage Maintenance 2022-2027

Dear sirs,

It is with regret that I find myself inputting into this consultation paper around the proposed arterial drainage works to be carried out by the OPW over the next five years.

I simply cannot see the good that is carried out by stripping back all the vegetation and mature trees bordering the banks of rivers, in this case the river Gweestion on the Main N5 between Swinford and Bohola

In the case above which I refer to, I have rarely, if ever noticed the river breach the high water mark and flood regularly the surrounding fields. This against the extent of the tree removal on this section of the river and the loss of both species protection and feeding offered by these overhanging trees. Why not as your method statement references just cut the lower branches back. (See bottom of this email)

Furthermore, the timing of this work has largely coincided with the natural trout spawning period, historically October into November.

In this day and age there are better ways to confront these issues of flood relief. Has history not shown us that simply relieving the flood waters upstream quicker just piles pressure on the water levels, lands and properties further downstream. Numerous studies have shown that slowing down the flow by re-wilding and creating wetlands, alongside agricultural land will sponge the water and slow down the flows. Not forgetting the reinstatement of some of our once plentiful but now rare fauna and wildlife.

In my opinion the OPW should be consulting alongside Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and all coming up with a joint plan to tackle the areas of concern. Against this it appears to me that we have one agency in one hand carrying out works to enhance spawning and focusing on protection of the waterways and their surrounding environment. Then against this on the other hand we have OPW carrying out works which inevitably wreck the good work done by way of either abstracting natural protection and feeding or wrecking spawning gravels and redds by use of heavy machinery and manpower in the wrong way and at the wrong times.

From reading your Arterial Drainage Maintenance Activities 2022 – 2027 draft it sets out some of your perceived procedures when carrying out works but in reality and on the ground much of what is in the guide seems to be disregarded.

I appreciate that this report has been put together with the help, assistance and input of many experts within their respective fields of study. However, on the ground policy may well be overlooked by procedure.

I do look forward to hearing back from the respective department.

Regards,

Redacted Name

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Sent from my iPad

2.1 Channel Maintenance Activities

*Channel maintenance operations normally involves removing the build up of foreign or natural material that impedes the free flow of water. Predominately this consists of the removal of water-entrained silt and associated vegetation from the bed of the channel by suitably rigged hydraulic excavators. Restrictions in channels due to bank slippage or damage would be re-graded to the original profile. Channel breaches due to bank erosion would be resolved by re-profiling the bank in-situ or in some cases by importing protection material such as rock armour or log poles. **In addition, other larger vegetation such as trees, which impinge on channel capacity are either removed in whole or impingement is reduced by selective removal of lower branches.** The material removed in the maintenance operations is normally spread along the bank, or on top of existing spoil heaps where present. In most cases, no alterations to the bank are required and in some cases the channel is not disturbed at all if no build up of material is present.*