



Southern Regional Fisheries Board

Bord Iascaigh Réigiúnach an Deiscirt



Fisheries Ireland

Our Natural Heritage

Press Statement

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL PROSECUTED FOLLOWING FISH KILL

At a sitting of the District Court held at Portlaoise on the 22nd of October 2007, Laois County Council, were prosecuted by the Southern Regional Fisheries Board following investigations into a fish kill on the Owenass River as a result of discharges from the Council's Sewage Treatment Works at Mountmellick. Mr David Mc Inerney, Senior Fisheries Environmental Officer with the Board told Judge Houghton that he had carried out an investigation on the 3rd of July 2007 on the Owenass River in Mountmellick, following receipt of a report concerning a fish kill. In reply to questions Mr. Mc Inerney said he was satisfied having undertaken a detailed investigation that the offending discharge was from the Council's sewage works.

Mr. Mc Inerney said that there was several hundred dead trout in the river downstream of the Council's treatment plant. Mr. Mc Inerney described that there was sewage fungus on the bed of the river downstream of the treatment plant, indicating an organic source of pollution often associated with poor quality effluent. The quality of the effluent discharging from the Council's treatment plant appeared to reduce dramatically in the later evening (post 8:00 pm) probably due to the increased flow to the plant from the town in the evening. Peak flows typically occur following people's return to their homes in the evening time, particularly in commuter towns. Mr. Mc Inerney said that the plant was operating well in excess of its design capacity although he understood consultants were working on behalf of the Council to draw up expansion plans. He acknowledged that Laois County Council staff were very co-operative throughout the course of the Board's investigation.

Laois County Council pleaded guilty to the charge. Judge Houghton convicted Laois County Council and fined them €750 for a breach of Section 171 of the Fisheries Consolidation Act, 1959. The Board was awarded costs of €1340 and expenses of €1213.59.

Ends.

For further information contact Mr. David Mc Inerney, Senior Fisheries Environmental Officer

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