

Eden News update Dec 2015

Skitwath Beck pollution incident 8th September

This incident was the most significant farm related pollution, since the major Ploughlands fertilizer incident that affected 20 miles of the mainstem Eden back in the 1990s. The Skitwath incident itself was first witnessed and reported to the EA by a Riverfly volunteer and its immediate impact spread from a point half a mile from its source, downstream a further 3 miles to its confluence with Dacre Beck. Several thousands of fish were estimated to have been killed from what is known to be a farm slurry leakage.

The EA are in *Due Process* and proceeding with a case for prosecution and so further details cannot be released. Fish Legal (Legal arm of the Angling Trust) are advising two Clubs holding waters downstream on Dacre and Eamont as to whether there is a case for damages or compensation.

EA fisheries teams collected dead fish and deployed oxygenation equipment in an attempt to minimise the impact but it is evident that all fish – salmon & trout fry/parr and adult trout up to 10" have been wiped out. There was concern that Dacre would be affected with high levels of contamination present 30 hours after the report.

REDFA carried out its own investigations following the incident. Reports, statements and evidence have been taken and are held pending the EA prosecution.

A Freedom of Information request was made to the EA by a third party asking for a log of reported pollution incidents in the area and this highlighted a significant number of farm related events over a number of years.

A number of recommendations have been made by REDFA to the EA concerning improvements that need to be put in place to improve failings in communications and speed of response.

Judicial Review of EA over Agricultural pollution

The following statement was released by the Angling Trust on 19th November, the eve of the case concerning Agricultural pollution in areas like the River Eden which is a Special Area of Conservation. A link to the outcome of this case can be accessed below the statement.

Why we are taking the government to court

The Angling Trust, Fish Legal and WWF-UK are in the High Court today fighting a judicial review of the government's failure to stop agricultural pollution degrading 44 rivers, lakes and estuaries which are specially protected areas in England.

We believe that the government was required by the EU's Water Framework Directive to stop this ongoing pollution in these sites by 2015. They haven't done this and so we're taking them to court

<http://anglingtrust.net/news.asp?itemid=2830&itemTitle=Court+victory+shows+protecting+our+precious+rivers+and+wetlands+is+no+longer+a+%91last+resort%92§ion=29§ionTitle=Angling+Trust+News>

Salmon Summit developments – as some members will know REDFA pressed and lobbied the Angling Trust hard (AT represented angling interests at the Summit) for a number of concerns and initiatives to be heard. These were communicated to Defra (EA/NE) who regulate and assess migratory stocks and the national conservation bodies (NGO`s) who were present at the Summit. The introductory paragraph of the EA`s press release is below with a link to the full communiqué at the bottom of the paragraph

Communiqué: England Salmon Summit, 19 November 2015

1. Purpose of the Salmon Summit

In 2014, England's 42 principal salmon rivers were assessed to be at the lowest levels on record with no rivers classified as 'not at risk'. In response, the Environment Agency hosted the Salmon Summit in Defra's offices in London on 19 November 2015, to raise awareness about the state of England's salmon stocks and to bring together influential leaders, policy makers, delivery bodies and NGOs to discuss and agree how we can collectively protect and enhance England's salmon stocks.

This communiqué is a summary record of the different sessions at the summit for delegates to share within their organisations and/or the interest groups they represent. At this stage it does not constitute any commitments to action. They will come from the Environment Agency's five point approach :- relaunch in the New Year once funded commitments have been secured from all parties.

Insert link to PDF file of EA Salmon Summit Communiqué

2017 brought forward Net Limitation Order and Migratory Byelaw changes

REDFFA representing Eden fisheries has been engaged at the invitation of the EA in a number of recent preliminary meetings between stakeholders in the Eden & Esk catchments to consider recommendations for changes to management of migratory stocks.

This is a brought forward review process that would have taken place in Nov 2017 to review the re-licensing of Haaf nets in the Solway (The current Order permits 105 licences of which 55 were actively renewed in 2015) and also any relevant and appropriate recommendations for changes to Rod & Net Byelaws.

The earlier review has been precipitated by reduced rod catches of 2013 & 14 requiring the EA and NE to undertake a full review of the failed status of stocks which are now deemed to be *At Risk*.

REDFFA is representing Eden Fisheries, Esk & Liddle FA representing the Esk, Solway Net representatives for netting interests and Natural England, ERT and the Dumfries & Dumfries Galloway Council (Annan Stake Nets) will be present also.

Stewart Mounsey, EA Chairman of the Solway Steering Group explained at the last meeting on the 5th November that the review is likely to be delayed by developments and outcomes from the Salmon Summit discussions and that their own proposals for the Eden & Esk will be reviewed in the light of this.