

Welcome to the Maigue Rivers Trust's first newsletter. The MRT, which is a registered charity, was established in 2016 and officially launched in May 2017. The trust consists of 9 Directors representing social, economic and environmental interests. In this MRT newsletter we would like to inform you about the work of the trust since 2016, which aims to raise awareness and realise the potential of our majestic River Maigue.

Maigue River Trust Directors

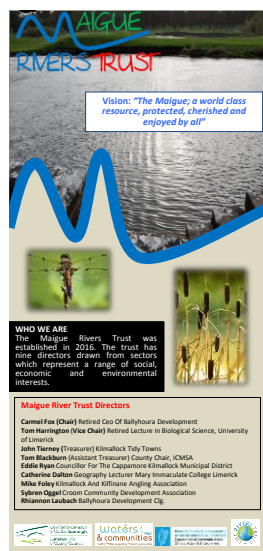
Launch of Maigue Rivers Trust



The Maigue Rivers Trust was officially launched on 26th May 2017 in Croom with Minister of State for Public Procurement Patrick O'Donovan. Shown here with trust directors Carmel Fox (chair) and Eddie Ryan.

Find out more about the Maigue River Trust

The Trust has developed a website: www.maigueriverstrust.ie and is active on Twitter and Facebook. Information leaflets have also been produced to raise awareness of the work of the trust and of how you can get more involved.



Maigue River Trust Aims & Objectives

A workshop to develop the MRT mission, vision, aims and objectives was held on 3rd December 2016 in Kilmallock.

Mission "To protect, enhance and cherish the rivers and lakes of the Maigue catchment for the benefit and enjoyment of all"

Vision: "The Maigue; a world class resource, protected, cherished and enjoyed by all"

The trust aims to work with local communities to ensure that the rivers and lakes of the Maigue catchment can achieve their full potential both environmentally and recreationally and contribution to the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the local communities. The trust will endeavour to achieve our aims by:

- Creating awareness
- Encouraging community participation
- Improving water quality
- Improve fish habitat and fish numbers
- Protect biodiversity
- Controlling invasive plants
- Encourage the local angling tradition
- Develop amenity access to the river

Maigue River Communities

A consultation evening with individual, groups and organisations was held in The Old Church of Ireland in Bruff on 31st January 2017. The purpose of the evening was to introduce the Maigue Rivers Trust to community groups in the catchment, to get feedback on the trust's aims and objectives and to get a better understanding of the needs and priorities of people in the catchment.

Over 60 people attended the evening from a range of interest groups, including Tidy Towns, Community

Council's, angling groups, sports clubs, Bird Watch Ireland, Local Council, farmers and farming organisations. The group was given brief presentations on the background of the trust, the works done to date and the major aims and objectives of the trust. The attendees were split into a number of groups who were asked to consider three questions:

- *What do you think of the trust so far?*
- *What should the trust prioritise?*
- *What other actions would you like to see?*

The output from this event helped to refine the trust's aims and objectives and shape its action plan.



Community Networks

Currently the MRT is working to establish community networks which will feed into the trust activities and enable on-going sectoral representation. The trust aims to have 11 directors, one representing each of the following sectors: Agriculture, Angling, Business, Finance, Wildlife/Conservation, Local Development, Education, Biology/Research, Outdoor/Tourism Leisure and a Community Elected representative.



Future nominations of directors to the board of the trust will come through networks established in each of these sectors. Facilitators are currently engaging with groups in the catchment to establish these networks. Directorships for re-election in 2018 are

Community and Angling, and there will be two new directors in Finance and Education.

Fishing the Maigue



Meetings were held with Maigue River Angling Clubs to introduce the MRT, and outline how the trust plans to foster co-operation amongst the clubs, enable associate membership and future representation by anglers on the trust. If the river improves as a result of the work of the trust, the angling community as a whole will benefit and more local and visiting anglers will potentially foster greater environmental stewardship. A presentation of a report on the status of fish stocks was made to Angling clubs on the 28th March 2017, at Croom Enterprise Centre and a second meeting to discuss trust membership was held in June 2018.

Report produced by MRT:

Harrington, T. (2017) Status of Fish Stocks in the River Maigue Catchment. Report to the Maigue Rivers Trust, pp.15.

An application to establish the fishing rights on the River Maigue and tributaries has recently been awarded. Once fisheries rights are established, they can potentially be revived and become established fisheries and reinvigorate the Maigue River fisheries.

Funding has also been sought to train groups of anglers in the Small Streams Characterisation Score which assesses the health of the river system from a biological and physical point of view

Farmers in the Maigue Catchment

Presentations about the MRT in meetings with farmer networks IFA and ICMSA took place in 2017. The agricultural sector is currently represented by Thomas

Blackburn who is the county chair of the ICMSA. Representation from the agricultural sector will rotate between the IFA and the ICMSA going forward.

An outline and full application for funding was submitted under the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) administered by the Dept. Agriculture Food & Marine. The project entitled 'Water and Agriculture' proposed to enable farmers to grow or maintain output and also achieve good water quality. The outline application was successful, however the project was not funded. The Ballyhoura/MRT/Farmer network established is now looking at how the project might be taken forward through other funding mechanisms, for example EU LIFE.



Recreation & Amenity on the Maigue

MRT directors have been exploring developing Greenway/Blue Way options, for example a kayaking route from Croom to Adare



With funding from the Heritage Council, the trust held a kayaking event on the River Maigue on 23rd June 2018. The event took a total of fifty participants along a beautiful 3.5 km stretch of the river from near Tullovin downstream to Croom. Before the event, participants were given short presentations on the biodiversity of the river and its banks and on what flora and fauna they should look out for on the trip. This

event was a huge success and it is hoped it will become an annual event.



A project to erect signage in various communities along the river and its tributaries is currently nearing completion and this will draw further attention to the amazing natural and built heritage of the river and its catchment.

Geography and History of the Maigue

Funds for two research projects on the Maigue and its catchment were obtained from Mary Immaculate College. Researchers Catherine Dalton and Niall Walsh completed a report entitled *Maigue River Catchment Characterisation*, which details the physical geography setting of the Maigue river and outlines the sub-catchments and water quality.

Historian Paul O'Brien is currently completing a project entitled *Characterisation of the environmental and social history of the Maigue river catchment* through collation of historical sources including maps, newspapers, government commissions and local historical societies.

Report produced by MRT:

Dalton C. & Walsh N. (2017). Characterisation of water quality in the Maigue river catchment. Report to the Maigue Rivers Trust, pp.23.

Biodiversity and the Maigue

LEADER funding has been obtained for two biodiversity related projects on the Maigue: one is a study of the in stream biodiversity and the other is a project to encourage community involvement in controlling invasive plants such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed in the catchment. Interested communities will be invited to get involved in this project in Autumn

2018.

A third project to study the bankside biodiversity is current at application state.

Mink are a particularly destructive species from a wildlife point of view. Mink traps were distributed to the various fishing clubs in the catchment and two members from each club are responsible for their maintenance. Each trap is numbered and records of the catch rate are being noted. The mink trapped are humanly euthanized.

Education

The MRT aims to work with schools and community groups to raise awareness of the wonderful array of wildlife (not just fish) that inhabit our rivers and lakes and what these can tell us about the health of our waterways. The next such events will be held in Kilmallock, Hospital and Lough Gur on 25th and 26th August 2018. For details and to register please go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/discover-the-amazing-world-of-your-local-stream-tickets-47991762654>



National Water Forum

The National Water Forum was established in 2018 to provide a platform for public engagement in water as an environmental, social and economic resource and to contribute to the drafting and implementation of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland (2018 – 2021). MRT Vice-Chair and Director Tom Harrington is the Rivers Trusts representative on the forum along with 25 other stakeholder representatives.

The Mague River Trust made a response to the Public Consultation on the River Basin Management Plan For Ireland (2018-2021) and advocated for more resourcing and supports to ensure sustainability of water and community initiatives.

Current Mague River Trust Directors

Business (Chair) CARMEL FOX: Director of multiple social enterprises.	
Conservation & Wildlife (Vice-Chair) TOM HARRINGTON: Retired lecturer in Biology University of Limerick	
Research & Education CATHERINE DALTON Lecturer in Geography Mary Immaculate College and University of Limerick	
Local Development RHIANNON LAUBACH Ballyhoura Development CLG	
Elected Representative EDDIE RYAN: Limerick City and County Council and farmer.	
Outdoor Leisure & Tourism SYBREN OGGE Croom Development Association	
Farming THOMAS BLACKBURN: Dairy farmer and County Chairperson of the ICMSA	
Community JOHN TIERNEY	
Angling MIKEY FOLEY	



Local Authority Liaison
ANNE GOGGIN
Limerick City and Co. Council