

Group Water Scheme Source Protection Pilot Project Phase 11

Roscommon County Council in partnership with the National Federation of Group Water Schemes and other stakeholders are working on a Group Water Scheme Source Protection Pilot Project in the County. This involves developing full source protection plans including specific actions to improve the safety and security of Group Water Schemes drinking water. The planning for this project has already taken place.

- Catchments have been delineated.
- A 'Framework for Drinking Water Source Protection' and
- A 'Handbook of Source Protection and Mitigation Actions for Farming' have been prepared.

<https://nfgws.ie/nfgws-source-protection-publications/>

The farming community will play a significant role in this project, however everyone has a part to play. There will be an emphasis on raising awareness, education, and inclusion. One of the aims of the project is to work towards sustainable farming practices that lead to improved water sources, increased biodiversity and enhancement of climate awareness. The project will focus on farming benefits with environmental outcomes. We are now progressing well with the implementation stage.

8 GWSs were identified in County Roscommon that were representative of the scale and size of groundwater-sourced group water schemes. These include technically challenging karstified (fractured limestone) landscapes with a high risk of pollution through sinking streams, dolines etc.

RURAL WATER WEEK

The NFGWS launched a National Rural Water Week 7th to 11th September, 2020 to raise public awareness of key issues affecting the sector. Part of the week's activities aimed to focus attention on the Source Protection Pilot Project in County Roscommon, in which Group Water Schemes are working closely with householders and farmers to prevent contamination of vulnerable springs and the catchments that feed into them.

A media campaign to raise public awareness on source protection and incorporating Biodiversity was developed with many initiatives

- Live 1 hour Broadcast from Polecat Springs GWS on Mary Clare Greally Show on Shannonside Radio on 7th Sept interviewing participants from Roscommon County Council, The National Federation of Group Water Schemes, the Group Water Scheme managers and local community participants.

<https://www.shannonside.ie/podcast/podcast-importance-minimising-use-pestici>

- Publication in both the Roscommon Herald and the Roscommon People week commencing 7th Sept –promotional editorial along with brochure identifying and promoting good practice for Source Protection.
- Promotional Videos.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BijH8U5Z_DLl4Tuz7M7twQFjlBAPgyj/view?usp=sharing

[I've Planted a Tree and My Garden is Pesticide Free](#)

'I've Planted a Tree and My Garden is Pesticide Free'

- A campaign to encourage the community to go pesticide free in their gardens and to educate and create awareness in schools with the initiative 'I've Planted a Tree and my Garden is Pesticide Free'. Primary Schoolchildren (age 5 -12) across the county of Roscommon will plant 7,500 trees this autumn in an eco-initiative that will play a vital part in

helping to protect local water sources, enhance biodiversity and capture carbon. They will also receive an online education programme and certificates of involvement. Concerns at the damaging impacts of pesticides on water sources and biodiversity lie behind the initiative and is developed as part of this project in Roscommon County Council with the support of developer Sean Mulryan Ballymore Homes and Irish children's charity Variety Ireland funding the trees.

A main objective is to also educate the wider community on the damage that pesticides can do in their domestic gardens. This is an important part of the overall project, and is linked to the 'Let it Bee' initiative.

'Let It Bee'

The 'Let It Bee' initiative-Farmers working together to protect their local water source and enhance biodiversity as part of the GWS Source Protection Pilot Project.

- Bees, hives, equipment and mentoring are being supplied to selected members of the community. In return the farmers are looking at changing their practices, putting in biodiversity measures and informing the wider community about the dangers of pesticides. The project is called 'Let it Bee'.
- Informative bill boards on Agricultural practices that can impact on water quality, both positively and negatively, were erected at Marts in Roscommon, Elphin and Castlerea. By engaging with the farming community on the critical issue of source protection we can ensure that our farming activities do not pose a threat to this vital resource.
- Mitigation measures with an initiative to encourage farmers to fence off specific vulnerable areas on their lands are underway.
- Farmers and contractors are also being reminded of the importance of proper and effective nutrient management to help protect water sources from pollution.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EW4EjXtHdVj9k_3vQtXyFfnCbIDwaZeM?usp=sharing