Quarterly review

Since our last Quarterly review (Newsletter 17-Jan '08) there has been good progress in a number of areas of the study. Several hydraulic computer models have been completed and calibrated using available information from gauging stations and previous flood events.

Using the results from the hydraulic computer models, flood maps showing flood extent, flood risk, and flood hazard are currently being prepared. These maps will be developed for the areas within the catchment at risk of flooding.

Work is also beginning on the identification and assessment of possible flood risk management options.

Lough Allua

Next issue

In the next issue of the newsletter we will be looking at damage assessment and benefit cost analysis which will be available at the end of May.

Cork Harbour

Contact details

If you have any questions or require any further information relating to this study or if you would like to be included on a distribution list for future issues of this newsletter please email LeeCFRAMStudy@opw.ie

Further information is also available on our project website at www.leecframs.ie

Halcrow

Lee CFRAMS

St. Patricks Bridge in Cork City

LEE CATCHMENT FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT STUDY

Newsletter - 20
April 2008

OPW

Introduction

Welcome to the 20th edition of the Lee CFRAMS newsletter. This month we will be looking at Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) in the Lee Catchment. As always, more information is available on the progress of the study on the project website (www.leecframs.ie).

Focus On

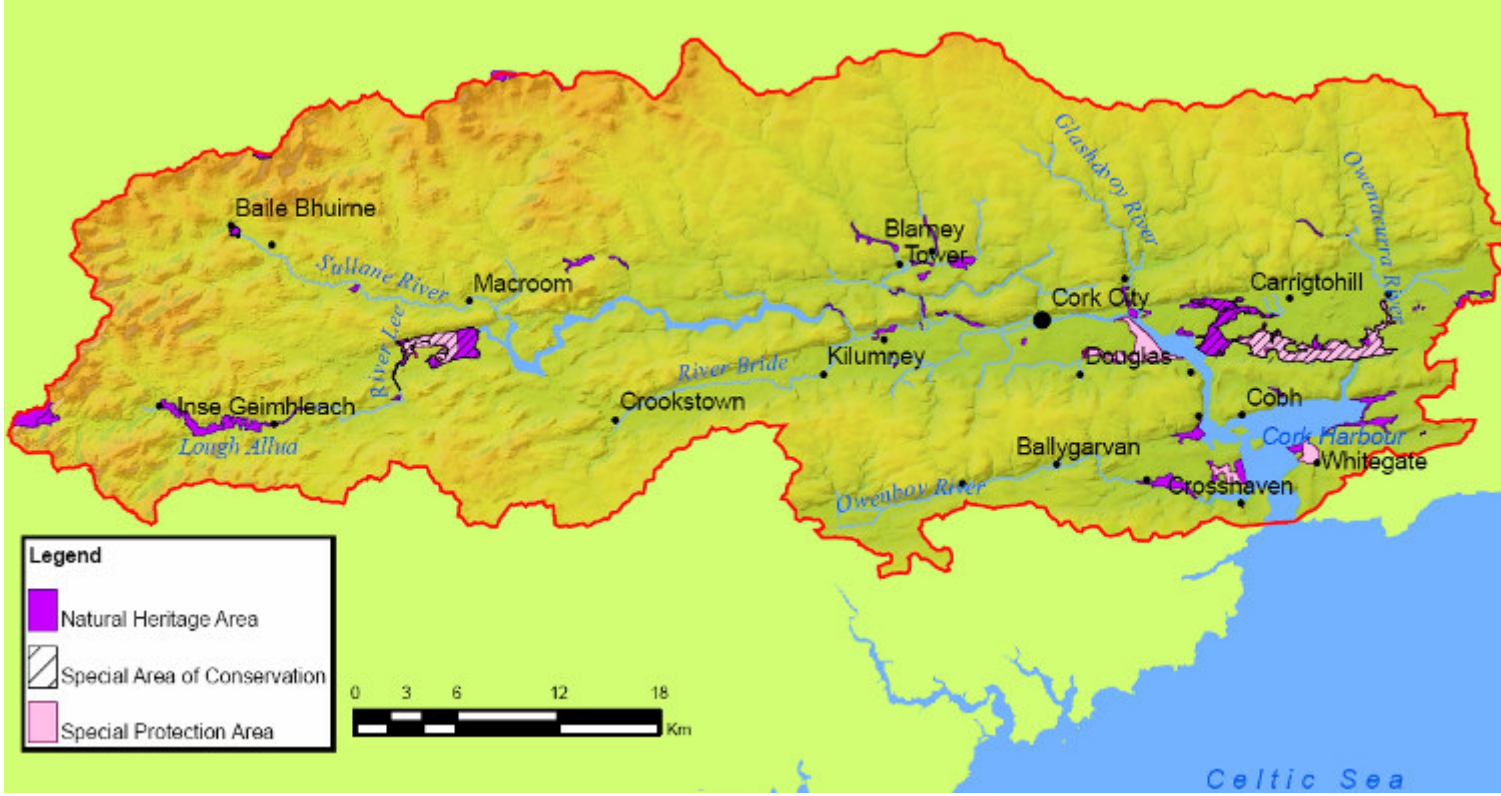
SACs, SPAs and NHAs in the Lee Catchment

As part of the Lee CFRAMS a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is being undertaken (see Nov '06 Newsletter). One of the first tasks of the SEA was to produce an Environmental Scoping Report (ESR) (see April '07 Newsletter) in which the key environmental considerations within the catchment were highlighted.

There are a variety of habitats within the Lee catchment (including wetlands and coastal habitats) and the range of species supported by these habitats include some of special conservation interest like the freshwater pearl mussel, otters, and roosting bats. The catchment also contains a diverse range of birds, including dippers and kingfishers.

The above map indicates SACs, SPAs and NHAs within the catchment. Two areas within the catchment are designated SPAs – the Gearagh near Macroom and Cork Harbour. These are also designated nature conservation areas of international importance.

The Gearagh consists of a shallow lake surrounded by the most extensive alluvial woodland in Western Europe.



The surrounding scrub and grassland supports important wetland species such as otter and mudwort. Internationally important populations of wintering waterfowl also frequent the area.

Various parts of Cork Harbour are designated as SPAs. The harbour provides both feeding and roosting habitats for numerous bird species including a population of redshank. It is an internationally important wetland site and regularly supports a large number of wintering waterfowl.

A designated Wildfowl Sanctuary exists within Cork Harbour. The western part of Lough Mahon is a designated SPA of international importance due to its sheltered tidal sand, mudflats and salt marsh habitats.

There are important nature habitats in the upland area of the catchment including Mullaghanish Bog which is protected as a SAC.

There are 64 existing and proposed NHAs within the catchment area (highlighted in purple on the above map). These sites consist of a number of habitats supporting a diverse range of flora and fauna.

After identifying the important environmental factors to be taken into account in the catchment the Environmental Scoping Report (ESR) also identified environmental objectives for the Lee Catchment Flood Risk Management Plan. These objectives included the protection of the flora and fauna and, where possible, enhancing biodiversity within the catchment.

The next stage of the SEA is now in progress and will involve the use of the environmental objectives defined in the Scoping Report, along with other key factors, in the assessment of possible flood risk management options for the Lee catchment.