

Ref: 2015S40/161

Sent: 12 January 2015 10:09

To: Nature Conservation

Cc: Ciaran.Byrne@fisheriesireland.ie

Subject: Mountain burning. Ripartian zones etc..

Hi,

Two point I wish to make re. your call for submissions re. hedge cutting times, mountain burning etc..

1. I am an owner of mountain land down in Tipperary and indeed have been brought to court by the fire brigade which cost me €2000 because I tried to put out an illegally set fire on our family property at the Vee. The judge declared that because I had tried to put out the fire, I must have had a motive for doing so, therefore the fire brigade were entitled to charge me for a night on the hill. I did have a motive, namely I didn't want the few remaining grouse burned off their nests.

On the matter of mountain burning the solution is quite simple. Any mountain type land which draws area aid should have to have 20% burned off legally each year. The system of burning off vast areas by candle settings in late April and May has to be stopped. Each 20% tranche should be signed off by a wildlife officer. Instead of doing the job like a thief in the night, it should be done in a fully organized manner with everyone involved taking part.

2. Of massive importance is the issue of riparian zones. In particular the thousands of kilometers of spawning / nursery streams now completely tunnelled over with Alder and Willow, making them virtually sterile as regards bioproductivity. This is a consequence of rural electrification the advent of the bottled gas in the mid fifties. Before then every possible "stick" was cut for firing and heating and the riparian zones were considered public domain for this purpose. Unfortunately no one can cut the river banks during the time of year when it is practical to do so, because they are blocked by "Wildlife". Failure to come to grips with this issue is having a massive negative effect on our fisheries, especially salmon and trout. What is vital is that there should be a dispensation on river / stream bank cutting, when approval has been granted by the IFI for the purpose.

I written long essays on these subjects. If you wish to gain a deeper insight into my thoughts on the matter, get back to me.