

Dr. Eibhlin Doyle
Principal Geologist
Geological Survey of Ireland
Department of Communications,
Energy and Natural Resources
Beggars Bush
Haddington Road
Dublin 4

30th April 2008

Dear Dr. Doyle,

Re: Integrated feasibility study at Avoca, Co. Wicklow

I write to you regarding the proposed integrated feasibility study for Avoca, at which the findings to date were presented at a public meeting in Avoca on April 8th last and at a subsequent meeting with GSI and Eastern Regional Fisheries Board (ERFB) on 29th April.

The Board welcomes the findings to date of the proposed study, in particular the proposed environmental enhancement of the Avoca river. As you are aware, the Board has been at the forefront of this river's rehabilitation as it will bring enormous environmental, social and economic benefits to the community.

In 2001 ERFB embarked on a catchment management approach for the Avoca catchment. It commissioned a desktop study entitled '*Restoring the Avoca River*' which was published by the University of Newcastle in 2003. It recommended an active treatment system to treat the acid mine drainage from the old mining complex.

Following a successful Ireland/Wales Interreg application in 2005, a pilot active treatment plant was installed, the findings of which were successful and published in a subsequent report '*Avoca Mines Pilot Plant Treatment Trials*' by Unipure Europe Ltd in 2007. This proved that an active treatment system could treat the acid mine drainage and achieve environmental quality standards for most metals, thereby achieving a dramatic improvement in water quality in the Avoca river, for relatively minimal financial investment.

One of the findings of both of these studies was that a full year of contemporaneous set of flows and water quality data for the river and mine discharges is required. To this end two dataloggers have been installed to date by Wicklow County Council. As discussed at your meeting with ERFB and CFB staff any assistance that the GSI can provide in installing the third datalogger in the main river channel would be gratefully appreciated. The benefits of this data for all parties involved in the Avoca project would be significant.

Restoration of the Avoca river will bring many environmental, social and economic benefits to Wicklow and to the State. In terms of angling tourism alone the Avoca river has the potential to generate up to €750,000 per annum from salmon and sea trout angling. Adequate financial investment and the co-operation of all stakeholders is required to ensure the restoration of the Avoca river becomes a reality and to meet our obligations under the Water Framework Directive.

The Board welcomes the findings to date of the proposed study and looks forward to its final publication and presentation to Government as the definitive management plan for Avoca.

Yours Sincerely,

Pat Doherty
Chief Executive Officer