

HYDROCHEMICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SMALL STREAM NETWORK IN IRELAND

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Recent publications have drawn further attention to the need to refocus research and management attention on the small water bodies, in particular the small stream network, to address catchment water quality and biodiversity concerns as well as the sustainable management of ecosystem services. The Small Stream Network project (SSNet) funded by the EPA is seeking to advance knowledge on the role of small streams in water quality, biodiversity and ecosystem services protection so as to inform policy, measures and management options to meet the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives and other regulatory targets. The research has, to date, assigned small streams (1st and 2nd order) to putative types based on physical descriptors; geology, soil and physiography. We are concentrating on the top 12 types, representing 76% of the small stream network. Water chemistry has been analysed from potential reference and non-reference sites together with available EPA data to characterise the sites and examine nutrient conditions.