

Interdependence of groundwater and surface water in lowland karst areas of western Ireland: management issues arising from water and contaminant transfers

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Abstract:

In lowland karsts, both surface and groundwater systems are often present. This is the case over large areas of limestone in the west of Ireland where gaining and losing streams and seasonal lakes (turloughs) are common and where much of the surface river system consists of artificial channels. A case study from County Clare illustrates the problems involved in delineating catchment areas for springs which have partially contributing surface stream sources. Case studies from counties Galway and Clare, with complex surface water-groundwater interactions, exemplify problems that may arise with water quality and quantity. Difficulties in defining realistic protection areas for groundwater resources and sources are discussed.