



“Restoration of the Lower Shannon SAC (Mulkear River) for Sea Lamprey, Atlantic Salmon and the European Otter”

Press Release

26th February 2014

A Great Day Volunteering

A great day was had last Saturday (22nd February 2014) when the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers undertook a major river clean-up and habitat enhancement work on the Mulkear River above and below Annacotty weir.



Mulkear Conservation Volunteers in action (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)

The work involved a major clean-up of rubbish and a large volume of plastics which had been deposited at the site below Annacotty weir during recent flood events. More importantly the build-up of trees, branches and other debris which had accumulated at the site was dislodged and the main river channel and side channel were allowed to perform their natural functions once more.



Some of the debris and plastics removed (Image: Kevin O Gorman)



With debris removed river perform the rest of the clean up (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)

The outing was focused on general riparian management and a large number of native Irish broadleaf trees, both mature and saplings, were planted. Given the extent of damage caused in recent storms and the very large number of trees blown down, it was fitting that the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers should play their part in planting trees to begin to address the damage caused.

Trees within riparian corridors are extremely important places and act as the interface between river and the adjacent land. They provide a vital conduit for the transfer of nutrients between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and play a vital role in capturing nutrients and silt which run off from adjacent lands. They supply shelter and food for many aquatic animals and shade that is an important part of stream temperature regulation.

Such areas play prominent role in supporting biodiversity and mature woodlands, like those found on the eastern river bank of the Mulkear River, are of critical importance in supporting mammal and bird species in addition to providing a range of ecosystem services.



Tree planting by Mulkear Conservation Volunteers (Image: Cian Ó Conchúir)

The Mulkear Conservation Volunteers were also very fortunate to find very clear evidence of otter activity several hundred meters upstream from the site. The evidence, which included clear prints and spraints together with a slide and possible resting holts, was investigated and confirmed as other optimal site for otters on the Lower Mulkear River.



Otter activity evident on Lower Mulkear River (Image: John Murphy)

The initial planned work related to the installation of dipper boxes but this work could not proceed on Saturday due to the elevated water levels. For safety reasons it was impossible to proceed with

this work given the present high water levels. It is hoped that this will form part of the next MCV outing once water levels return to normal levels.

MulkearLIFE would like to most sincerely thank all volunteers who continue to support this work and make a real difference to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the Mulkear Catchment.



A Big Thank You To All MCV Members (Image: Ruairí Ó Conchúir)

Notes for Editors

1. High Resolution Digital Images are available to accompany this Press Release.
2. Interviews can be arranged with the Project Manager by using the contact details below.
3. MulkearLIFE is a new €1.75 million European Commission funded LIFE Nature project working on the restoration of the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation (with a focus on the Mulkear River catchment) for Atlantic Salmon, Sea Lamprey and European Otter. Further details may be viewed on the project website www.mulkearlifeproject.com
4. Inland Fisheries Ireland (Limerick) is lead partner together with the OPW and Limerick County Council. Additional funding support comes from National Parks and Wildlife Service. Other supporters include Teagasc, IFA, ICMSA, and local angling groups.
5. The project is one of the first and most important integrated catchment management projects in Ireland. It is a flagship EU LIFE Nature project –covering some 650 sq km which contain a variety of habitats and protected species. Much of the area is designated as a Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the EU Habitats Directive and forms part of the Natura 2000 Network.

Issued by:

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