



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

Press Release

1st March 2013

Work on the Bilboa River above Bilboa Bridge

MulkearLIFE with the support of IFI colleagues Mr. Noel Sheehan and Mr. Flan Ryan returned to the Bilboa River yesterday (28 February 2013) to complete work started in September and October 2012. With all appropriate consents in place, the work focused on this important High Nature Value (HNV) site which forms part of the Lower Shannon SAC, and specifically on riparian management upstream from Bilboa Bridge.

The work was a follow-up to the path clearance work and the removal of invasive species undertaken on the site last year. The site was the focus of considerable work in the Autumn of 2012 which included practical conservation work removing a major problem invasive on site namely Pheasant Berry (*Leycesteria Formosa*) which is also known as Himalayan Honeysuckle or Elisha Tears. This emerging non-native invasive plant species had taken over large areas of the site. It had formed dense thickets outcompeting native Irish riparian plants. Unfortunately, the materials removed late last year could not be burned on site up until this week. Last year's work also focused on opening and widening of existing pathways which had closed in due to scrub encroachment. The brushings from this work were also burnt on site this yesterday.

MulkearLIFE was also delighted that the landowner, local farmer, Mr. John Ryan, was on site to inspect the initial fencing work completed on Bilboa River from Bilboa Bridge up stream.

Mr. Ryan had an opportunity to inspect the work and more importantly to meet the work party consisting of the MulkearLIFE Team and colleagues Mr. Noel Sheehan and Mr. Flan Ryan. Mr. Ryan expressed his delight at the quality of the work carried out. He noted that the work added greatly to the ease of his livestock management on the site.

He also expressed his gratitude to the work party and to the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers for all the work undertaken to remove non-native invasives from the site.

MulkearLIFE is extremely grateful to Mr. John Ryan for his kindness and co-operation in allowing the project undertaking this important conservation work on this beautiful site.

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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