



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

Press Release

1st November 2013

Successful Conservation Volunteer Outing at Ballyclogh

The October outing of the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers took place on a gorgeous autumn day on the banks of Mulkear River at Ballyclogh Weir. The highly successful outing, undertaking practical conservation work, was focused on riparian management at this beautiful site. The primary task was to plant a large number of native Irish trees. Tree species included common oak, mountain ash, birch and hawthorn. Many of the trees were over two meters in height and had to be staked to protect them from wind damage.

The morning outing also involved a discussion regarding the history of Ballyclogh weir and mill and other mills and associated weirs both on the lower Mulkear River and on other rivers in the Mulkear catchment. The discussion focused on the historic use of these weirs and mills – the majority of which are now gone. The discussion also focused on the legacy issue and problems created by these historic structures in terms of fish passage. The discussion also outlined how the partial removal of Ballyclogh Weir restored habitat connectivity within this section of Mulkear River.

At the same time as improving fish passage and upstream habitat very considerable conservation work was undertaken on site. This has included the strengthening of the retained section of the weir but it has also included the replacement of stone on the face and cap, addressing undercutting, erosion and scour and replacing the severely damaged trash guard with a new guard and generally improving the wonderful stone cut features of the weir and side channel.

This discussion tied in nicely with the practical conservation work of the MCV and how their tree planting activities over the past three years, at this site and a great many other sites, have helped improve riparian habitat connectivity.

Riparian corridors are extremely important places for a large number of plants and animals. The riparian zone is the interface between land and a river or stream. 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. They play prominent role in supporting a diversity of species and providing the above mentioned ecosystem services.

Both sides of the river where MulkearLIFE's work upon during the summer had impacted on have now been planted to a significant extent. Further work on site is planned in the coming months.

MulkearLIFE would like to thank all the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers, including new members, who gave so generously of their time to make the outing such a success. Their work to help improve the functioning of the riparian zone at Ballyclogh is greatly appreciated.

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.mulkearlife.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.

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