



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

Press Release

11th February 2011

CAISIE - Exchange Visit to Sister Project

MulkearLIFE, together with our main project partners in Limerick County Council and the Office of Public Works, were delighted to avail of the opportunity to visit our sister project, CAISIE on the 10 February in Moycullen, Co. Galway.

The CAISIE LIFE+ project, which is an acronym for the ‘Control of Aquatic Invasive Species and Restoration of Natural Communities in Ireland’, commenced in September 2009 and has just completed 14 months of its programme of work. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity in Irish freshwater ecosystems by preventing further impact on native biodiversity from high impact aquatic invasive species. This is being done through the development and demonstration of effective control methods, stakeholder engagement and awareness-raising and also through policy development and information dissemination. Site-specific objectives are the eradication of *Lagarosiphon major* from Lough Corrib and the prevention of further spread of three aquatic invasive species by implementing control measures in a key dispersal corridor of the Grand Canal and Barrow Line.

MulkearLIFE was hosted by the CAISIE project Manager Ms. Shireen Sayed, Dr. Joe Caffery, Ms. Helen Moran, Dr. Michael Millane and Dr. Stephanie Evers.

Shireen Sayed and Joe Caffery gave a fascinating overview on the history of the CAISIE project and the background to the work CAISIE is undertaking in controlling *Lagarosiphon major* in Lough Corrib. This included an overview of the multifaceted approach which CAISIE has developed and is employing on a year round basis to combat the invasive weed in the lake.

Michael Millane gave an extremely interesting presentation highlighting the work of the CAISIE team and the great success of this work to date on Lough Corrib. Of particular interest was the work using mechanical cutting to clear areas (including entire bays) of the weed and the use of jute matting which was shown not only to block re-growth of *Lagarosiphon major* but facilitated the natural regeneration of the keystone native charophyte plant habitat in Lough Corrib.

Stephanie Evers outlined the work of CAISIE in other parts of Ireland and more especially on the Grand Canal and Barrow Navigation systems. Of particular interest to MulkearLIFE were the Jute trials which seem to have been very successful to date. She also outlined with on the Asian Clam.

CAISIE’s work to control Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam is similar to MulkearLIFE’s work in the Mulkear Catchment with respect to these species. This aspect of the CAISIE work programme was therefore of particular interest to Limerick County Council and the Office of Public Works.

While the foggy conditions did not clear the upper section of Lough Corrib to allow for the planned boat trip to view the various locations where site work was ongoing, MulkearLIFE did have an opportunity to spend time on the shores of Lough Corrib to discuss the work.

The work being undertaken by CAISIE is a great inspiration to us all in MulkearLIFE and to our main project partners in the Office of Public Works and Limerick County Council. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to network with our Inland Fisheries Ireland colleagues in CAISIE and to learn so much about the ground-breaking nature of their work.

Our sincere thanks to the CAISIE team for giving so generously of their valuable time. We look forward to hosting the CAISIE team on a visit to the Mulkear Catchment in the near future to reciprocate a very enjoyable and valuable networking opportunity.

To learn more about CAISIE please visit their project website: www.caisie.ie

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.

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