



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

Press Release

13th May 2011

MulkearLIFE Host Swedish Visitors

MulkearLIFE was delighted to have an opportunity to host a large contingent of Swedish visitors to the Mulkear catchment this week together with the staff of a new Irish LIFE+ project ‘BLACKWATER SAMOK’, which is focused on the restoration of the Upper River Blackwater SAC for the freshwater pearl mussel, Atlantic salmon, European otter and kingfisher.

MulkearLIFE facilitated the visiting Swedish delegates and the staff of ‘BLACKWATER SAMOK’ LIFE+ project in a workshop designed to share the experiences of fisheries management and sustainable angling tourism in both Ireland and Sweden. MulkearLIFE gave a detailed presentation on the objectives and programme of work of MulkearLIFE and outlined the considerable achievements of the project to date. An overview of European Commission LIFE+ funding, and the options for funding that exist under LIFE+ programme, was also presented. The Swedish delegates found the presentation of great interest and relevance to their country. They were particularly interested in MulkearLIFE’s approach to addressing sea lamprey passage at Annacotty weir and elsewhere to help the rare sea lamprey on their upstream migration to their spawning beds in the upper reaches of the Mulkear catchment.

The Swedish delegates were also very interested in the project’s programme of work with the local farming community. This is focused on a sustainable water scheme which is presently being rolled out in the catchment in co-operation with the farming community.

Following the presentation, the delegates, who come from the North East of Sweden, Swedish Lapland, paid a visit to the weir at Annacotty. The work of the project in addressing sea lamprey passage was discussed, as was the project’s work in addressing the ongoing problem of invasives weeds. The work of the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers on the control of Himalayan Balsam below Annacotty weir was outlined. The use of the site in MulkearLIFE’s Environmental Education Work with local schools was also discussed, as was the great importance the project attaches to this work.

While the river was in partial flood and the weather unkind, this did not deter the visitors and very interesting discussions took place on site. The visitors later had a meeting with Colum Walsh, Fisheries Officer, with Inland Fisheries Ireland (Limerick) on site at Ballyclough and were given a demonstration of the fish counter on the Mulkear River.

The meetings was organised by the Lough Derg Native Fish Biodiversity Project in conjunction with North Tipperary Leader and Spira Fyrkanten Leader (area in the county of Norrbotten, Sweden).

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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