



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

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## Press Release

14<sup>th</sup> April 2011

### School Field Trips Recommence

Following classroom engagements with a large number of schools (both primary and secondary) over the past 4 months, river based field trips have started in earnest this week.

The river based field trips are designed to give the school children involved a heightened sense of “environmental ownership” by helping them recognise the importance of the river catchment as an critical natural resource. In particular the field trips promote awareness the Mulkear, its habitats and various species in the river and within the riparian zone.

The field trips develop a greater understanding and respect through the principles of ‘Leave No Trace’ for the flora, fauna and physical habitats of the Mulkear Catchment. The river based field trips put theory into practice as the children learn about the wonderful natural heritage of the Mulkear, including indicators of water pollution, electro-fishing, the life cycle of the Atlantic salmon, Sea lamprey and the preferred habitats of otter and conservation issues which arise in the Mulkear Catchment.

The field trips are to risk assessed designated sites on designated rivers (Mulkear, Newport, Bilboa or Dead Rivers) and examine many of the aspects discussed in the classroom engagement. The field trips are essentially designed to be a student led voyage of discovery where the staff of MulkearLIFE and Inland Fisheries Ireland play a facilitating role.

The key areas of focus is the group work where students undertake group work on the following themes: What’s Living on the River, Biodiversity on the river / river banks; Indicators of otter life along the river; Water Quality Indicators; Fish species and invertebrates; Other indicators of water quality and pollution; Life Cycles of Atlantic Salmon / Sea Lamprey and finally; How we can enjoying the Mulkear River catchment but lessen our impact through the steps of Leave No Trace.

#### 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](http://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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