



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

Press Release

2nd February 2010

Launch of 4 Year Environmental Education Programme

Mulkear LIFE, a partnership-based project which aims to restore degraded habitats along stretches of the Mulkear River, today announces the launch of its Environmental Education Programme. This four year programme will target primary and secondary schools and the wider local community within the Mulkear catchment in counties Limerick and Tipperary. The Environmental Education Programme will involve the delivery of educational events of the highest quality, both imaginative and informative and will include the provision of a programme of environmental educational events and initiatives linked to the work of Mulkear LIFE. The events will have a strong emphasis on information of practical application and on field studies of general public interest.

The Mulkear LIFE project considers environmental and heritage education as being of the utmost importance. The staff of the Shannon Regional Fisheries Board, lead partner in Mulkear LIFE, have been working closely with the Project Team – Mr. Ruairí Ó Conchúir (Project Manager) and Mr Glen Wightman (Project Officer) over the past number of weeks to roll-out the Environmental Education Programme.

Work, which commenced in January 2010, will focus this academic year on 15 primary and five secondary schools. Schools throughout the Mulkear River catchment have been included in the initial batch of schools for the first year of the Environmental Education Programme. The work with primary schools involves a classroom presentation, games and a quiz to be followed by a river based field trip later in the year. The focus at a national school level will primarily be on pupils in 5th and 6th class. At post primary level a similar more advanced programme, to include a classroom presentation, experimental work and field trip, will focus on transition year students. Field trips will focus on river habitats, fish species, scientific research and the work of Mulkear LIFE on the Mulkear River and its main tributaries – the Dead, Newport and Bilboa rivers.

Within the wider community work is well underway on a programme of illustrated talks and field excursions for local communities (evenings and weekends) and a series of summer illustrated talks for visitors. All wider community events will be open to the public and will be free of charge. The first series of talks is planned for late February 2010 and will, amongst other issues, focus on the work of Mulkear LIFE, catchment management, bird life along the Mulkear and general biodiversity. All events will be publicly advertised and full details will be posted on www.mulkearlifecom.com.

Anyone wishing to get further information on the Environmental Education Programme or to participate in the programme can make contact with the Mulkear LIFE project on www.mulkearLIFE.com or info@mulkearlifecom.com or telephone 061 300 238.

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.mulkearlifec.com
4. Shannon Regional Fisheries Board 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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