



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

Press Release

21st May 2012

Minister of Finance Helps Celebrate LIFE @ 20

Today Monday, 21st May 2012, was party-time in Annacotty, Co. Limerick as upwards of 200 people helped to mark the 20th Anniversary of the EU LIFE Programme in parallel with similar celebrations across Europe. Today also marks the 20th Anniversary of the Habitats Directive and the establishment of the Natura 2000 Network.

To mark this key milestone in Ireland, MulkearLIFE hosted a big celebration on the banks of the Mulkear River. The highlight event was the official launch of the ‘Mural of LIFE’ under Annacotty Bridge and the unveiling of related habitat work on site by the Minister of Finance, Mr. Michael Noonan TD. The work on this important High Nature Value (HNV) river site in Annacotty is a partnership between MulkearLIFE through Inland Fisheries Ireland, Limerick County Council, the Office of Public Works and Annacotty Tidy Towns with significant funding support from National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Minister Noonan stated MulkearLIFE was a great example of a project that has built an effective local partnership with a wide range of role players. He praised MulkearLIFE’s work in local primary and secondary schools. He noted those of us of an older generation ‘were converts to conservation and environmental protection but that the local school children present had a great passion for the environment’. He noted the project’s Environmental Education Programme with local schools was of great importance in this regard and thanked all involved.

Mr. Ruairí Ó Conchúir, MulkearLIFE Manager, noted that LIFE projects owe their success to their embedded partnerships and support within local communities. He noted, that LIFE projects, like MulkearLIFE help create an awareness for all stakeholders to take informed decisions on how to care for the environment, the habitats and the species that live within it.

MulkearLIFE would like to sincerely thank all who helped make such a success of today’s celebrations. In particular, we would like to thank the two ministers for giving so generously of their time, Ms. Jan O’Sullivan TD, Minister of State, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and Mr. Michael Noonan TD, Minister of Finance, Oireachtas members, members of Limerick County Council, including An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Mary Harty. MulkearLIFE would also like to thank Ms. Amanda Mooney, Director, Shannon River Basin District, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Mr. John Sheehan, Limerick County Council, Mr. Noel Fitzpatrick, Office of Public Works and Ms. Suzanne Campion, Head of Business Development, Inland Fisheries Ireland.

Most of all however, MulkearLIFE would like to thank the people of Annacotty who made the day such a great celebration. Great credit is due to all members of Annacotty Tidy Town Committee and in particular, the Committee Chairperson, Ms. Yvonne Ryan. Most sincere thanks are also due the staff and students of St. Vincent’s Special School, the members of the Mulkear Conservation Volunteer who undertook most of the habitat improvement work on site and to Mr. Flan Ryan and Mr. Noel Sheehan (Inland Fisheries Ireland) who worked tirelessly on the site.

Lastly, a Big Thank You to the pupils of Lisnagry National School, their teachers and parents who helped make the ‘Mural of LIFE’ in co-operation with the wonderful mural artists Neil O’Dwyer who, together with the students, was on hand to show the minister the art work.

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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