



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

Press Release

23rd May 2011

'Best of the Best' Awards to the presented to two Irish LIFE projects

Two recently completed Irish LIFE projects will this week receive a “Best of the Best” award in a European Commission ceremony in Brussels. The projects in question are the Department of the Environment’s ‘BurrenLIFE – Farming For Conservation’ project and Coillte’s ‘Restoring Priority Woodland Habitats in Ireland’ project.

Both projects have been selected by the Member States of the European Union as among the top six “Best of Best” LIFE Nature projects out of 59 projects assessed in 2010. This is an amazing achievement for Ireland given the fact that there are so few LIFE projects running in the country at any one time. In fact both projects were the only LIFE Nature projects in Ireland to be assessed in 2010. The “Best of Best” LIFE award is the highest level of international recognition that it is possible for a LIFE Nature project to achieve within the EU LIFE Programme.

Referring to BurrenLIFE, Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, noted it is a “great credit to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of my Department, who initiated the Project, the Project partners – Teagasc and the Burren IFA – and the BurrenLIFE team who so successfully steered the five year Project. It is also recognition of the involvement, help, assistance and enthusiasm provided by the Burren farmers who participated in the Project.”

The methods developed on the 20 farms participating in BurrenLIFE are now being implemented on over 100 farms in a new partnership – the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme – with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. As a result, nearly 13,000ha of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in the Burren are being managed to improve their conservation status.

The Coillte LIFE project ‘Restoring Priority Woodland Habitats in Ireland’ targeted the restoration of 550.8 hectares of four priority woodland types in Ireland, all within the Coillte estate. The project worked to put into place conditions that would allow priority woodland to re-emerge and become a viable self-regenerating habitat. Specifically, the project worked to restore and enhance habitat quality across the four priority woodland types targeted by the project, develop and promote woodland restoration techniques and demonstrate the relevance and value of priority woodland and raise public awareness.

Referring to the Coillte LIFE project, Minister Deenihan noted “that another LIFE Project, administered by Coillte with contributions from NPWS, is also listed among the top six. This Project has led to the restoration of priority native woodland SACs across nine separate sites.”

MulkearLIFE has strong linkages with both LIFE projects and shared project partners and supporters (NPWS, Irish Farmers Association, Teagasc and Coillte). The MulkearLIFE project team takes this opportunity to congratulate all involved in our two highly successful sister projects. It is indeed a great week for Irish LIFE projects to be honoured in such a manner. It sets the standard which MulkearLIFE and its shared project partners and supporters will have to work extremely hard to achieve.

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:

Ruairí Ó Conchúir, Project Manager – MulkearLIFE
Inland Fisheries Ireland (Limerick Office)
Ashbourne Business Park, Dock Road, Limerick
Tel: 061 300 238 / Fax: 061 300 308 / Mob: 087 062 5582
E-mail: info@mulkearlifeproject.com
Web: www.mulkearlifeproject.com / www.inlandfisheries.ie

