



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

Press Release

27th June 2011

Successful Conservation Outing - Bilboa River

Following the deluge of Friday 24 June 2011, which left rivers throughout the catchment in flood, the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers (MCV) took to the Bilboa on Saturday morning, 25 June, to embark on another conservation outing. The outing allowed MCV members to see at first hand the significant problem that Himalayan balsam has become as an invasive weed in the catchment.

The outing focused on riparian management upstream from Bilboa Bridge on the Bilboa River. The field based practical conservation work undertaken by the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers included the manual removal of a large stretch of Himalayan balsam. The team of volunteers worked hard to ensure the site was cleared of all of the localised Himalayan balsam infestation on this important site. The area concerned is a High Nature Value (HNV) site in terms of its floristic diversity and is an important site for the variety of habitat for fish species, birds and mammals.

The outing also included a discussion on habitat creation, dipper breeding sites and general riparian management. Most interestingly an extremely informative discussion took place on the local history associated with Bilboa Bridge, the adjacent creamery and the general area.

At a second site (Blackboy Bridge), which was visited downstream, a discussion took place on the work of Mulkear Conservation Volunteer member, Ms. Catherine Daly, to investigate the impact of Himalayan balsam on native biodiversity. Monitoring sites were visited where Himalayan balsam is out-competing native vegetation along river banks. It was outlined that the monitoring work was being undertaken to see what effect Himalayan balsam is having on species richness in the riparian zone and to assess the effectiveness of manual clearance.

A Big Thank You to all Mulkear Conservation Volunteers Members who gave of their time to support another highly successful practical conservation outing.

The next planned outing of the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers is on Saturday 23 July 2011. Full details to follow. An evening outing may take place between now and then – the details of which will be announced. The full schedule of this year's programme of outings is available on this website under the 'Reports and Resources' section. The Mulkear Conservation Volunteers is open to all and membership is entirely free.

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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