



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

Press Release

29th November 2013

MulkearLIFE Presented with CIWEM 'Environment Award 2013

The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) presented its Irish '2013 Environment Award' to MulkearLIFE in the Lower River Shannon Catchment. MulkearLIFE is a European Commission LIFE+ Nature project working to restore degraded habitats through the Mulkear Catchment which forms part of the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation.

The €1.75 million project, which has been active since late 2009, is spear-headed by Inland Fisheries Ireland who act as coordinating beneficiary and work with key project partners in the Office of Public Works and Limerick County Council. The National Parks and Wildlife act as project co-financiers. A range of other stakeholders support the project including local authorities (North & South Tipperary County Councils) as well as other state bodies (ESB Fisheries, Teagasc, Coillte, EPA) and most especially the local community (IFA, ICMSA, Mulkear & District Angling Association, local schools and school children, farmers and volunteers).

In granting its Environment Award for 2013, the Republic of Ireland Branch of the CIWEM noted that MulkearLIFE is one of the most exciting and important river restoration and nature conservation projects ever undertaken on a catchment basis in Ireland. It noted that its work is providing a 'conservation blueprint' for future integrated catchment management. The project, which is centred on the Mulkear catchment, covering an area of approximately 650 sq. kms across counties Limerick and Tipperary, is focused on the rehabilitation of degraded river habitats. This work has focused on the conservation and enhancement of habitat for Atlantic Salmon, Sea Lamprey and European Otter. Other work has concentrated on the control and treatment of non-native invasive riparian plant species and work to enhance local biodiversity. Significant efforts have focussed on creating an enhanced environmental awareness of the importance of Mulkear catchment as a resource for all. The local farming community has played a key role in this regard.

MulkearLIFE's manager, Mr. Ruairí Ó Conchúir, noted that the success of MulkearLIFE has been highly dependent on an active catchment management partnership process and on extensive outreach work to enhance environmental awareness for those living within or near the catchment. He noted that the project has worked hard to promote the importance of the Mulkear catchment on a regional, national scale and at an international level. Mr. Ó Conchúir stated that a major objective has been the development of strong community links through a comprehensive environmental educational programme within local schools, in addition to actively managed practical conservation outings undertaken by the Mulkear Conservation Volunteers.

Ms. Suzanne Dempsey, Chairperson of the Republic of Ireland Branch of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, stated that she was delighted to acknowledge the contribution of MulkearLIFE in bringing community and government together to plan, manage and enhance the conservation status of the Lower Shannon SAC. She congratulated all involved in MulkearLIFE especially the lead partners in Inland Fisheries Ireland, the OPW and Limerick County Council and wished the project every success.

Dr. Ciaran Byrne, CEO of Inland Fisheries Ireland thanked CIWEM for the award and the acknowledgement of the work of IFI and its project partners. He thanked all involved in the success of the project to date and especially those involved in MulkearLIFE's catchment management grouping and local farmers on the ground.

Minister for State Fergus O' Dowd, TD commended the efforts of the MulkearLIFE team and the funding support of the European Commission LIFE+ Programme. He noted that the funding support was of critical importance in allowing the project to undertake much of its work over the last 4 years and he expressed his hope that the work would continue into 2014.

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.mulkearlifecom
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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