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

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## Press Release

6<sup>th</sup> March 2013

### The Shannon Sold In Dublin

The Story and the Success of MulkearLIFE’s work on the Lower Shannon SAC was sold with great vigour to an appreciative audience in Dublin’s city centre on Tuesday (5 March 2013). The event was the annual Water Framework Directive (WFD) Eastern River Basin District (ERBD) Protected Areas Biodiversity Workshop. This year the workshop focused on ‘Ecological Status and Soft Engineering’. The full day event in the Gresham Hotel on Dublin’s O’Connell Street was attended by a large audience predominately of professionals working in the field. MulkearLIFE was delighted to be afforded the opportunity to attend and present at the event.

A great many of the presentations were of direct relevance to MulkearLIFE and our project partners Inland Fisheries Ireland, the Office of Public Works, Limerick County Council and the National Parks & Wildlife Service. The morning session focused on approaches to assessing ecological status and including interesting presentations on the implementing of river basin management plans and specific measures. Of particular interest to MulkearLIFE was a presentation by Kate Ruddock of the Irish Wildlife Trust on ‘Community involvement in Assessment of Protected Species and their Habitats’ and in particular their work with otter. The second session focused on innovation and research and included a presentation by Dr. Joe Caffrey, Inland Fisheries Ireland on the control and management of invasive species with a case study of the CAISIE LIFE + project.

Another presentation of particular interest from this section was given by Dr Taly Hunter-Williams of the Geological Survey of Ireland on Tools for Groundwater Assessment and Modelling.

The afternoon sessions focused on soft engineering tools and techniques and included an extremely interesting presentation by Dr. Louise Firth, Ryan Institute for Environmental, Marine and Energy Research, Galway (NUIG) on artificial coastal defences and how such defences could be enhanced from a biodiversity perspective through the use of simple design modifications.

Dr Martin O’Grady, Inland Fisheries Ireland, gave a wonderful presentation on the use of micro-satellite DNA analysis as a fisheries management tool. Dr. O’Grady, who has greatly helped the development of MulkearLIFE’s instream restoration plans, gave an overview of work with trout on several river and lake systems in Ireland.

MulkearLIFE presented in the final session of the day which focused on demonstration projects and case studies. The project’s presentation outlined the value of LIFE funding but was primarily focused on the work of Inland Fisheries Ireland, as coordinating beneficiary, and the work of the two main associated beneficiaries (or project partners), namely the Office of Public Works and Limerick County Council. The project’s instream restoration work throughout the Mulkear catchment and its work on non-native invasives was outlined in considerable detail as was the nature of the project’s work to achieve sea lamprey passage.

The project work with local farmers to improve water quality was also presented. The presentation also focused on the importance of information dissemination activities and the need to engage local communities and schoolchildren in particular. It was noted, MulkearLIFE has engaged over 1,700 local schoolchildren in its environmental education programme involving classroom presentations and river based school fieldtrips. The final session also included a

presentation by our sister LIFE project, IRD DuhallowLIFE, where Eileen Lenihan gave an interesting presentation on the work of the project.

MulkearLIFE is extremely grateful to the Maryann Harris of Dublin City Council and Mr. Ray Earle of the ERBD for giving MulkearLIFE the opportunity to present at this important networking and information-sharing event.

#### 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](http://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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