



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

Press Release

8th July 2011

Launch of Duhallow LIFE project in Co. Cork

The MulkearLIFE project team and IFI colleagues from Limerick had the opportunity today to attend the official launch of the European Commission ‘Duhallow LIFE Project’ in Newmarket, Co. Cork.

IRD Duhallow is a community based rural development company established in 1989 to promote Rural Development. IRD Duhallow implements and delivers a wide range of programmes and initiatives and secured funding support from the EC’s LIFE+ programme for the restoration of the Upper River Blackwater SAC (Special Area of Conservation) for the freshwater pearl mussel, Atlantic salmon, European otter and kingfisher. Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr. Phil Hogan TD, performed the official launch and MulkearLIFE were delighted to be in a position to meet with the key stakeholders involved in the Duhallow LIFE Project.

During the launch Minister Hogan, noted that “that protection of our biodiversity is not a luxury, it is a necessity. The stated aim of this project is ‘to physically restore the River Allow closer to “good ecological status” from its current degraded state. This has national, European and global resonance. The development of projects to tackle such biodiversity loss is an important element in responding to the problem. The provision of funding from the EU through LIFE+ and other programmes is a great opportunity to see such projects realised, especially in a time of scarce resources. If we are to put things right we must start now. People must be made aware of the risks and threats posed by biodiversity loss. We must get the message across that this is everyone’s problem that has potentially devastating impacts on our environment, health and economy”.

The Minister also noted that the “economic value of ecosystem goods and services is also an area of growing interest. For example, a study on the economic and social aspects of biodiversity put a conservative value of €2.6 billion per annum on the contribution of biodiversity to the Irish economy. As Ireland hopefully begins the climb out of recession, this is a good time to bring the message to people that biodiversity is a tremendously valuable economic resource”.

Project Manager Mr. Pat Fitzpatrick outlined the scope of the work of the LIFE project which will focus on the conservation of Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Atlantic Salmon, Otter, Kingfisher and Dipper on the River Allow, a tributary of the River Blackwater. He noted that these species are integral to the river and require high quality water to survive.

Project Scientist, Dr. Fran Igoe noted in recent times the conservation status of the site has become increasingly under pressure leading to increased nutrient enrichment, channel degradation and siltation caused by years of decline of riparian areas of the river. He noted that the main purpose of the project will be to bring about a sustained enhancement of the river bed and the riparian zone. To achieve this, it is essential that all stakeholders in the river work together, highlighting the importance of the river to all parties and the role that they will play in its future conservation

MulkearLIFE wish our colleagues in our sister LIFE project every best wish. We greatly look forward to working closely with Duhallow LIFE over the next number of years.

The two LIFE projects, together with the CAISIE LIFE project, are in a position to build bridges and share practical experience on how best to stop and reverse the damage caused by the invasive exotic plant Himalayan Balsam and share approaches on how best to work alongside local farmers to restore the natural riparian zone to prevent erosion and create habitat for otter.

Anyone wishing to get further information on the work of the Duhallow LIFE Project can visit the project website www.duhallowlife.com.

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

