

River View

The latest news from the Inishowen Rivers Trust

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What do you get when you cross World Book Day with National Tree Planting Week? The best volunteer day ever!



Green Sod Ireland, in collaboration with Inishowen Rivers Trust and the third-class pupils and teachers from Scoil Eoghain National School, Moville, gathered at Meenletterbale near Kinnagoe Bay to help to restore Green Sod Ireland's plot of land.

The pupils (some in full costume), rolled up their sleeves, fixed their curlers, grabbed a shovel or spade and got straight to work.

Whilst planting, the importance of stream rehabilitation and the heritage of hazel trees along the Long Glen Valley, was shared with the children.

Later that evening, Green Sod Ireland held an information event for the local community to learn more about their conservation management plans for their land in Meenletterbale, Lecamey.



The next day more volunteers arrived to continue the tree planting. We had less costumes but equal interest!

Thank you to everyone who made this event so special, the staff at Green Sod Ireland, the volunteers, the teachers and pupils from Scoil Eoghain.

National River Guardians Knowledge Network

The Inishowen Rivers Trust has been recognised for its valuable work in natural heritage through funding from the Heritage Council's **Heritage Organisation Support Fund**. This funding opportunity serves as a foundation for the Trust's ambitious plans to expand its reach and impact. This year will build further upon the successes of the Inishowen River Guardians programme where the Trust pioneered a river education programme and local capacity building. In 2023 the Heritage Council supported this training with new groups within and beyond the Inishowen peninsula.



Between April 2024 and November 2024, the National River Guardians Knowledge Network will take shape, serving as a platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange. IRT's contribution to this network will draw from its experience in natural flood management, buffer zones, river restoration projects employing nature-based solutions, and the promotion of sustainable drainage practices.



Harnessing the collective experience of Rivers Trusts, EIPs, and environmental groups, the **National River Guardians Knowledge Network** will establish an online repository of knowledge. This repository will feature a diverse range of resources, including informative videos, insightful case studies, and innovative methodologies. Furthermore, the Trust is committed to elevating the expertise of its River Guardians through advanced training opportunities, fostering a culture of continuous learning and skill development.



As part of August's Heritage Week festivities, the IRT will play a role in supporting and inspiring other groups to organise events around Water Heritage. The support and confidence of the Heritage Council, evidenced through funding for our work for a second year will give us the opportunity to continue creating knowledge and skills around protection, improvement, and restoration of our rivers.

**Areas of expertise within IRT -
Leaky dams in Clonmany, restoration of the banks of the Glennagannon River, freedom hive and buffer zone fencing on the Culfaduff River.**

LAMA Award Shortlist for IRT



The Inishowen Rivers Trust were proud to be shortlisted in the category of Best Green Sustainable Initiative at the Local Authorities Members Association Awards 2024. We were also delighted that the winners of our category were the Roscommon Water Source Protection Project. Their work on community education and awareness raising on improving water quality and measures at a farm level is fully aligned with the work of the Inishowen Rivers Trust.

Our nominator, LAWPRO, commented on the encouraging number of water quality related shortlisted projects that were highlighted in the awards. Plenty of project ideas to bring back to Inishowen.

WATER WE DOING? Buncrana students tackle water quality



The Young Social Innovators (YSI) project "WATER WE DOING?" by Scoil Mhuire Secondary School in Buncrana, was supported by the IRT to address water quality issues at Lady's Bay. Led by teacher Sophia Gourney, the students collaborated with local river group the Mill River Conservation Group to investigate factors contributing to the decline in water quality. With guidance from the IRT, the students explored practical solutions, including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), to tackle pollution from urban sources.

Through actions including community education, beach clean-ups, and partnerships with local authorities and businesses, the project won the YSI's national award for the **Planet Protectors Challenge**. Comhghairdeas Scoil Mhuire!

With the help of their Leaving Certificate Applied group and woodwork teacher they built rain garden planters to install on the school grounds. Advocating for SuDS integration and responsible consumption, they aligned their efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals, aiming for cleaner waterways and flood mitigation.

World Wetlands Day - 2nd February

On February 2nd, every year we take the opportunity to celebrate the value and benefits of wetlands for biodiversity, natural flood management and water quality.

This year, on Saturday 3rd February, we were treated to a fantastic visit to **Sharagore Wetlands in Desertegney** hosted by **Wild Inishowen** who have been working to restore this wetland and create a recreational trail.

During the visit we heard about their work to catalogue the species present on the 11 acre site - 120 species of moth(!), garden birds, hawks, warblers, and even passing mallards. We visited the new pond, tree planting and the new access path. An amazing project from an amazing group of dedicated volunteers.



Many thanks to all of the landowners for accommodating these visits and for their continued support.

A Summer of River Restoration

Summer is finally here and we've even seen a little bit of sun. Here at Inishowen Rivers Trust we are excited to once again get outside and help our rivers heal. The upcoming summer season is going to be a busy one, with many events planned. This is an important time for river conservation and our efforts that can shape the health of our aquatic ecosystems for years to come.

One key project for Summer 2024 is the restoration of eroded river banks on the Culdaff River. Working with the **Culdaff Development Association** and **LAWPRO** we have an ambitious schedule of opportunities for volunteers to get outdoors, learn new skills, and make a positive difference to the health of our rivers.

River Bank Restoration using Brash and Willow

Nature-based solutions (NbS) use nature to solve challenges that effect our environment. By understanding how river process work we can implement simple nature based solutions that work with the river to help it heal. One very effective way of repairing eroded banks is through the use of brash revetments.

Brash collection - Woody debris, such as fallen trees, branches, and other plant materials, is an important resource for protecting and stabilising riverbanks from erosion and for natural flood management. During a brash collection event, volunteers bundle brash, from a local forest for use (on another day) in a river revetment project.

Revetment - With a volunteer team we secure the brash to the bank. The brash traps sediment and helps to re-establish natural processes and features on sections of the river, increasing resilience of the repaired banks during future flooding events



DATES FOR VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITES



Wednesday 22nd May

Brash collection

Glentogher NS

Saturday 15th June

Riverbank Restoration

Culdaff Village

Wednesday 17th July

Brash collection

Glentogher NS

Saturday 7th September

Riverbank Restoration

Culdaff Village

Sign up to all our volunteering and education events through Eventbrite
<https://www.eventbrite.ie/o/inishowen-rivers-trust-11266878913>

Buffer +

by Barry Mc Laughlin

The Buffer+ project continues to grow in its collaboration between The Rivers Trust and the Inishowen Rivers Trust, and is progressing well. Barry McLaughlin, Peatland Restoration Project Officer, has been travelling throughout Inishowen and Donegal, assessing potential sites for the project to be based in. Barry recently attended a Buffer+ partner conference in Belgium with The Rivers Trust and gained some valuable insights into the Buffer+ project in partner regions.

Barry is a native of Inch Island, with a BSc in Environmental Sciences and a Masters in Development Engineering from Berkeley, and has worked on several environmental projects at EU level and in the USA. Barry enjoys all things outdoors from biodiversity monitoring to fishing, and is excited to be working on the Buffer+ project in the wild uplands of Donegal.

Any peatland landowners interested in peatland restoration, please feel free to reach out to Barry by email on barry.mclaughlin@theriverstrust.org, or by phone at +353 (87) 721 9803.



Dry heath

Found on flat to steeply sloping ground in upland and lowland areas. The underlying soils are relatively dry or free-draining but are acid and poor in nutrients. Typical vegetation includes heathers, bilberries, bent grass, green-ribbed sedge and heath bedstraw. Not a lot of sphagnum moss.

Wet heath

Widespread on the lower slopes of hills. At least 25% cover of dwarf shrubs on peaty soils and shallow wet peats that typically have an average depth of 15-50 cm. Typical vegetation includes ling, cross-leaved heath, sedges, purple moor grass, deergrass.

Peat Explainer

Do you know the difference between wet heath and dry heath, raised bog and blanket bog?

You can find out more about Ireland's different habitats by looking up Fossitt's Classification



Blanket bog

Inishowen has large areas of both upland (above 150m) and lowland (below 150m) blanket bog. Peat depth is at least 0.5m but can be as deep as 7m. Lowland blanket bog is very wet, often featuring pools and difficult to walk across. Typical vegetation includes deer grass, heathers, sundews, lousewort

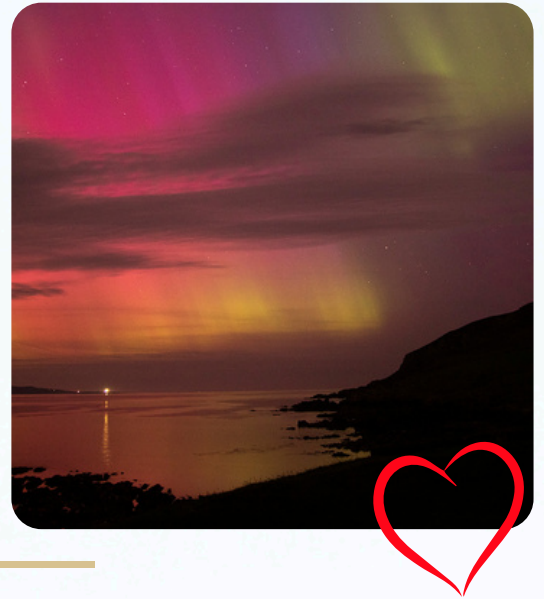
Raised bog

Accumulations of deep acid peat (3-12 m) that originated in shallow lake basins or topographic depressions. Dome like appearance in the centre with sphagnum moss dominating. Very wet and very little intact raised bog left in Ireland.

Cuckoos and Swallows have arrived - a Summer is made

We have reached the start of the summer after a pretty wet springtime - the Violets and Primroses bedeck the hedgerows and the Hawthorn is beginning to flush white. The month of Bealtaine is truly beautiful - longer and hopefully drier, sunnier days with plenty of opportunity to get out and about by the river.

In days past, you would have seen large runs of Salmon smolts heading for sea along with big hatches of March Browns and other fly life. Sadly, the insects and other fish have had dramatic declines alongside big drops in water quality. Aquatic insects are a vital part of the foundation of the food chain, consuming algae and then later on becoming food for fish, dragonflies, bats and wading birds. Insects and fish fare badly in our polluted waterways.



Here at the Inishowen Rivers Trust, we remain committed in our efforts to improve water quality. We can't do this without your help. All of us need to educate ourselves and each other on ways we can improve water quality.

1. Be mindful that there is no 'away' when you use cleaning chemicals, household detergents, body washes and sun creams.
2. Buy local and support organic food production wherever and if at all possible.
3. If you are lucky enough to have a garden, avoid garden 'chemicals', improve your soil, plant lots of native trees, shrubs and allow wild patches. The garden will not only attract pollinators but will also help soak up the rain whereas with hard surfaces the water just runs off quickly putting pressure on the drainage systems.
4. If you have pets, do not routinely treat them for fleas etc as these treatments contribute to water pollution.
5. **VOLUNTEER** with us! It's great craic! (We need board members too). Email info@inishowenriverstrust.com for more info! We have volunteer events regularly throughout the year- keep an eye on the socials and the website or if you sign up you'll be kept updated with all that is going on.

Enjoy your summer folks and may we all get to appreciate the many gifts of our waterways and remember, **'Rivers are integral to all Life' - Mark Angelo** (River Conservationist) **Claire the Chair!**

Thanks to our funders

The IRT is a charity and relies on grant aid and donations to support staff and projects. The Trust are very grateful for the funding received through grants and for the support of the various agencies through projects. If you would like to support the work of the Trust in 2024, please get in touch about sponsorship or how we can help you with your environmental projects. Find out more about us through our website.



IRT's Volunteers - Unsung Heros



To all our Volunteers, old and new, young and younger, from near or far, a huge thank you. You turn up when you have just finished work, when it's still raining, when it's cold out, when it's blowing a gale, you are still there with a helping hand. Thank you for choosing Inishowen Rivers Trust.

