

RiverView

The latest news from the Inishowen Rivers Trust

In This Issue

New staff at the IRT

**Glenalla Landscape
Discovery**

CRiBZ Scheme ends

Tree Planting season

ACRES & Water Quality

Citizens' Assembly

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Seasons Greetings!

Wintertime brings lots of celebrations for many but it is also the tree planting season! Over the next 2 months there will be tree planting volunteer events & we'd love to see you out and about with us in your wellies and woollies! In this issue we discuss more on the importance of trees and our efforts to learn about what to plant and where.

It's been a busy year for us here at the Trust and as this is only our second issue of *RiverView* for 2022, we have made it a bumper issue and hope you enjoy reading about some of the activities we have been involved with.

We have welcomed John Duffy to the team, and having a 2nd staff member brings new perspectives and opportunities - exciting times! Our volunteers continue to be hugely important to us helping achieve our vision of improved waterbodies for Inishowen and connecting communities through our local rivers. Thank you to all who have supported us this year so far, it really is appreciated.

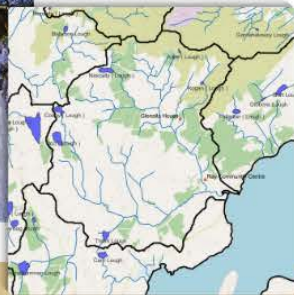
Wishing you all Peace, Joy and Happiness at this time and hope to see you all very soon!



Glenalla Landscape Discovery

This summer the Trust were involved in a lovely community engagement project with the Ray community on the Fanad peninsula. This project, known as the Glenalla Landscape Discovery project, brought the local community together to discuss the Glenalla River, what it means to them and how they can protect it for the future.

On a project like this it's important to collaborate with a wide range of organisations and the Trust were delighted to be joined again by Aengus Kennedy of Nature North West to take a deeper look at the local biodiversity and get us out walking along the river. We also spent a morning fishing with the team at Inland Fisheries Ireland and found 3 species of fish (trout, flounder and eel). With support and funding from LAWPRO, we learned more about the current status of the river (moderate) and took a look at the kind of projects that could happen on the river in the future, how these could be funded and what benefits they could bring to the area. A visioning event in the community centre was filmed by An Fóram Uisce (The Water Forum) and we were also lucky to get drone footage of the river taken by MacRuari Audio & Film Services. A truly collaborative project!



You can find out more and get involved by contacting Declan Meehan at the Ray Community Centre.

New staff at the IRT

In August, the Trust were delighted to welcome on board our newest staff member John Duffy who hails from Churchill, Letterkenny. John has a background in engineering and over the last 8 years has worked in the regenerative agriculture sector helping farmers to work with nature. This work emphasises the importance of good soil health, the strategic use of trees and conservation grazing techniques.

At his introductory talk on 29th September in Market House, Clonmany, John outlined his vision for Inishowen and how by working with nature we can help improve water quality and restore our rivers to good health. On 26th November John gave an excellent overview of how we could use nature based solutions for flood and drought resilience at the **Communities Caring for Water** conference in Dublin. Well done John and great to have you on board!



John engaging with the Greencastle Climate Kids in November, who were learning more about the water cycle and climate change.

CRiBZ Scheme ends



The Culdaff Riparian Buffer Zone Scheme is an EIP (European Innovation Partnership) funded project that began in July 2021. Funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine under the Rural Development Programme. The project aims to promote farmland biodiversity and improve the water quality of the Culdaff river. Improving water quality ensures we have good clean drinking water for ourselves and our livestock, allowing biodiversity to flourish on the farm and preventing issues such as bank erosion during winter. During the project the participants installed fencing along river banks, created wide buffer zones, installed solar and pasture pumps, gates, beehives and trees. Our ecologist, Jessica Devlin, audited the biodiversity along each section of riverbank where buffers were created and future monitoring will assess the benefits of fencing off these banks. As part of the project we aim to plant 6,000 trees on Culdaff farms in the coming months.

Fencing	4.3km
Water pumps	10
Beehives	10
Buffer zone	11,500sq m



If you are interested in obtaining trees or would like to get involved with planting this winter please see our post below.

A special thank you to all our farmers for their hard work!



Solar pumps for watering livestock after fencing off the river

Tree Planting Season

This year we have been fortunate to work with Ross Buchanan of Inish Forestry and Mark Donnelly of Trees on the Land as part of our CRiBZ scheme. It's been great learning more about putting the right tree in the right place but also learning about how things like climate change and ash dieback disease are affecting trees here in Inishowen. We noted a lot of dying ash on the riverbanks and it's important to start planting now to replace the trees that will be lost in the coming years. Ash is a large tree and a suitable replacement could be sycamore or lime.

The final part of our CRiBZ project is to plant native trees in areas along the Culdaff River. It is important to get the right balance of trees - too many and they can cause tunneling over a river channel, too few and the river is exposed to high temperatures in summer, with less food for the animals that live in the water and with the risk of bank erosion after a flood event. We'll be helping the farmers to plant the buffer that they created this year. If you can help let us know!

But we haven't stopped in Culdaff! We're delighted to be able to assist local landowners to get sponsored trees from Trees on the Land for planting next February. Over 1,000 trees will be delivered ready to plant and our volunteers ready and willing to get them in for the landowners. Thanks folks!



CONTACT US



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED WITH TREE PLANTING THIS WINTER

ECO Carn Action Against Invasives



On a wet and blustery day in July, a hardy team of volunteers turned up in Carndonagh to help tackle the ever growing problem of Himalayan balsam. This action was part of a wider project run by the ECO Carn group on learning more about the invasive species found in Carndonagh and how the local community can help tackle certain species.

This work came about as a result of the Biodiversity Action Plan which the Trust and Nature North West developed with ECO Carn in 2021. The group sourced further funding from the Community Foundation for Ireland to carry out this recommendation of the plan and the Trust were delighted to engage with the community once again.



Himalayan balsam can be tackled by pulling the plant before it sets seed.

Himalayan balsam is an annual plant that grows rapidly in damp areas and produces large pink flower heads. In July/August the plant produces hundreds of seed which explode from droplet shaped pods. This helps the plant to spread widely in an area. Although an attractive plant to pollinators, Himalayan balsam can take over an area and out-compete native flowers. It can cover large areas of river bank making the area more prone to erosion in the winter. It can be tackled by pulling the plant before it flowers but it requires many hands and a return to the site for 3 years to eradicate.

The project also saw a number of workshops to the local community and a treatment of Japanese knotweed on the Movable Road, using an novel organic approach from Inishowen based KPM Soils. You can read all about that below!

KNOT project finalised

Throughout 2022, we have been involved in an exciting collaborative project looking at a new way of dealing with Japanese knotweed. This persistent and determined plant is spreading along our roads and rivers and is usually controlled using glyphosate which has a big impact on water quality and biodiversity.

JK tends to thrive in areas where the ground is disturbed and the soil is lacking in diversity of microorganisms. It is hoped that by altering the soil biology we can create conditions that prevent JK from growing. Six trial sites were chosen across Donegal and local company KPM Soils assessed the soil at these sites using microscopy and manufactured a mulch and foliar spray full of beneficial microbes which was then applied. Native trees and ground cover plants will be planted using the Myawaki method (dense planting) to feed the new microbial life and create shade (JK prefers plenty of light).

So far the results of this experiment have been promising and the KPM Soils team are now working with the Trust to tackle JK on the Culdaff River.

This project was funded by the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform through the Public Service Innovation Fund with additional support from the Donegal County Council Flood Relief Unit and LAWPRO.



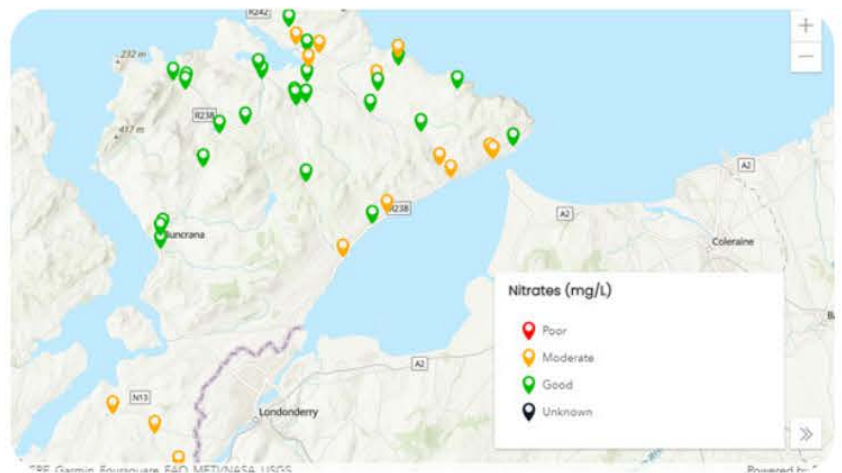
If you want to get in touch with KPM Soils you can email them: info@kpmsoils.ie or follow on social media channels



Citizen Science - WaterBlitz

Recently our River Guardians joined the Dublin City University WaterBlitz citizen science event which looks at water chemistry in rivers. Held between Oct 7th -10th, this initiative aims to collect data to help determine the status of waterbodies nationwide, celebrating the cleanest waterbodies and identifying pollution hotspots. On Saturday 8th Oct we held a training session on Ballywilly Brook in Carndonagh where volunteers were shown how to use the kits to test for nitrates and phosphates. Over the next couple of days the volunteers took 48 records and submitted the results via an online form. In the map below you can see the sampling points and nitrate results for Inishowen. The weekend had particularly rainy weather but the results show some moderate nitrate levels in a few of our rivers. Nitrates cause **eutrophication** which results in excess growth of plants and algae that can eventually lead to reduced oxygen levels which in turn stresses the animals living in the water. A primary goal in water quality is to reduce nitrates entering our rivers. This information helps to identify the extent of the problem but is also an excellent way for people to learn more about water chemistry.

You can find out more on www.freshwaterwatch.org/pages/irish-waterblitz-2022. To learn more about water chemistry you can check out our training videos on our YouTube channel.



What's Happening on Inishowen Rivers?

We are very excited about our big event coming up in February 2023. Some of you may remember our **Who's Who on Inishowen Rivers** that happened in February 2017. This was an event that brought together all the different stakeholders that were involved in the care and protection of our rivers. Over 25 different stalls were manned by many of the agencies and some local community groups.

The idea behind this new event is to find out what's happened on Inishowen rivers in the 6 years since 2017. And we'd like to think a lot! For starters the flood of August 2017 kick started a whole conversation about flooding and how we could use natural flood management techniques in Inishowen. But there has also been a number of really exciting projects started, new groups formed, a range of EIPs and the new ACRES scheme. We will be inviting the new groups to tell us what they are up to and inspire others to get involved. The science of river management is changing and we'll catch up too on what the agencies are doing.

Sponsored by the EPA and LAWPRO.

Inishowen Rivers Trust
Connecting Communities, Valuing Our Waters & Wildlife

WHAT'S HAPPENING on Inishowen rivers

Thursday 23rd February 2023 @ 6pm-9pm
An Grianán Hotel, Burt, Inishowen, Co. Donegal

Meet the groups, individuals and agencies working to protect, monitor and restore our local rivers.

- Short presentations
- Stalls
- Discussion
- Light Refreshments

Register for free on <https://irt-whats-happening.eventbrite.ie>

TO FIND OUT MORE
email: inishowenrivertrust@gmail.com
or call 083 150 5680 or 087 647 8183

Community and Science working for our rivers

Logos for EPA, Local Authority Waters, An Bóthair Clár, and The Rivers Trust.



Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss

In May 2019 the Irish government declared both a National Climate and Biodiversity Emergency. This declaration called on the state to examine how biodiversity loss is addressed by the government and to use the Citizens' Assembly to make recommendations on how this can be achieved through policy change. In April 2022 the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss was convened and by the end of December will have made its recommendations to the government. The Assembly is made up of 99 randomly selected citizens who gather to hear from experts across many different principles and consider the threats to biodiversity as well as what can be done to reverse this decline. The Inishowen Rivers Trust were delighted to be invited to present to the Assembly on our work using nature based solutions and to discuss our observations on the loss of biodiversity in freshwater systems. It was a fascinating day in Malahide in November and an honour to meet the citizens who have committed so much of their time to this important task. The younger generation also had the chance to speak and eloquently presented their thoughts to a packed audience. Already the Assembly have called on the government for a referendum on an amendment to the Constitution to protect biodiversity. We're looking forward to hearing more soon!



Read more on www.citizensassembly.ie



ACRES & Water Quality

As many of you are aware, the new agri environmental scheme offered by the Dept of Agriculture, Food and the Marine begins in January 2023 and will run for 5 years. Water quality is a key element of the programme and the Inishowen Rivers Trust are delighted to play a part in delivering the scheme in the Co-operation Zone in Donegal. Our Project Officer Trish Murphy is now working with the ACRES Donegal team to help deliver measures in the programme that will help to improve water quality.

This scheme differs from most previous schemes as it is **Results Based** scoring. Farmers who enter into the scheme will have their land scored in year 1 and following on from this will have the opportunity to carry out measures that will help to improve their scores. The higher the score, the higher the payment. Water measures will concentrate on breaking the pathway of pollutants that have the potential to enter watercourses. This will be done using the Pollution Impact Potential (PIP) maps developed by the EPA and advisors will be able to recommend mitigation measures such as buffer zones or sediment traps.

We hope that these measures will bring wider benefits to local farms, to wildlife and to our communities.

Thanks to our funders

The IRT is a charity and relies fully on funding and donations from the public. Staff funding is provided through the Resilience Pilot Project funded through the Local Authority Waters Programme by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage and managed by The Rivers Trust. If you are interested in supporting the Trust, you can donate via iDonate  or through our website.

