



GeoparkLIFE
ACTION B3 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT
 Date October 2016

The scope of Action B3:

The Aim of B3 is to develop the skills base of all stakeholders in the understanding, management and conservation of natural and cultural heritage and to reinforce the Actions B1 and B2. It will strengthen community support of active conservation and also analyse the current policies that impact on these actions as well as making recommendations for the future.

Supporting Action B1:	
Adopt a Hedgerow	<p>This Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN) conservation and advocacy group continue to run Adopt a Hedgerow with Bi-annual clean-ups scheduled around the start and end of the peak tourist season.</p> <p>The Adopt a Hedgerow autumn clean up took place between 14-23 October, with rubbish/recycling collection on 24/25 October where required by Janet Cavanagh of E-Whizz. Participants were also encouraged to report on the existence of Japanese/Himalayan knotweed on their stretches of hedgerow, as this should be very evident at this time of year with it in flower. Any instances will be input into the Burrenbeo database of invasive species.</p> <p>After much discussion with the council about the proposed signage for the scheme, it was concluded that the process of acquiring signage for all of the participants individually would be very cumbersome and only a short term solution, as at best only get temporary signage would be granted. What the scheme is now working on is getting a dedicated page on the Clare County Council website, where they can show all the work being done on the scheme, and can be used as a marketing tool for the businesses. All those who are taking part in the Adopt a Hedgerow Scheme will qualify to be included on this page.</p> <p>A map is being prepared for the scheme which will provide a visual basis to demonstrate the extent of Adopt a Hedgerow.</p>
Meitheal	<p>The third Meitheal event has yet to be announced.</p> <p>The BEN group are still working on addressing the issue around sustainability of the event into the future, particularly from a financial point of view.</p>
Community Engagement	
Tidy Towns	<p>The Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns group continues to do well and this year improved their overall score by 6 points (now at 316 points), with 'Wildlife, Habitats and Natural Amenities' scoring one additional point compared to last year. This places Ballyvaughan at joint first place for</p>

	<p>their category in County Clare, something which they are very proud of. They received a Bronze Medal this year and attended the awards ceremony in the Helix, Dublin in September 2016. The adjudicators report comments that it is looking to see how Bally Vaughan will raise awareness among the community of the wonderful wildlife assets in the town. This is perhaps something which GeoparkLIFE can work with them on in the coming year.</p> <p>Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns are currently undergoing a self-valuation to measure their progress in this area from the outset to now and set out projections for the future.</p> <p>Additional work on this case study will see a desktop study of biodiversity among tidy towns completed in Spring 2017 with students and experts from NUIG. It will look at the impact wildlife surveys have in general on the competition when they are undertaken and also see how the wider local biodiversity plans influence community groups.</p>
Kilinaboy/An Cabhail Mor	<p>The KHHG Cabhail Mór project has not been active since the last progress report. The GeoparkLIFE have met with them and continue to look for ways in which we can help this group to move towards or achieve some active conservation work.</p> <p>The GeoparkLIFE will meet with National Monuments Service who are currently developing guidelines for community groups undertaking conservation projects to discuss and try to resolve issues that community groups may face in the future, especially in relation to LEADER funded projects. Our experience from An Cabhail Mór will inform this meeting.</p>
Lisdoonvarna Failte	<p>There has been no active work on this case study since the last progress report.</p>
Lisdoonvarna Secondary School – Integrated Catchment Management	<p>Dr. Tiernan Henry and Dr. Gesche Kindermann (NUIG), together with Grainne Barron (MSc Research Student) have designed and are implementing a participatory educational programme for TY students which centres on the idea of integrated catchment management, educating young people on their local water resources and encouraging community participation in knowledge building and a better understanding and management of the water resource in the Burren.</p> <p>So far Grainne has done a lot of background preparation for this programme including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Review of literature of best Practice in ICM including review of case studies in Ireland and UK ◇ Took part in Burren Beo Teacher Training Course and the Burren Beo Wild Child Experience ◇ ICM School Curriculum Preparation ◇ Lesson preparation and gathering materials and timetable established ◇ ICM baseline assessment with students ◇ Established Social Media accounts <p>Weekly classes are scheduled with the transition year students between September 2016 and March 2017 will include QGIS training (free and easy-to-use software) and field work with TY</p>

	<p>students which will work towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gathering data ▪ Catchment walks and site visits ▪ UNESCO YEA application ▪ Make contact with local groups to disseminate results ▪ Produce Catchment map for the area showing places of interest, pressure points etc. ▪ Project presentation to local groups in Spring 2017 <p>The Geopark geologist visited the students on 11/10/16 for a 45 min class presentation on the basics of the geology of the Burren and this was followed up on the same day with a 45 min field visit to the 'Twin Wells' in Lisdoonvarna town for discussion of the significance of geology on groundwater and the limestone-shale contact in particular. The significance of the springs to the economic development of the town of Lisdoonvarna was highlighted.</p> <p>The Geopark geologist also participated in a day field trip (24/10/16) led by Dr. Tiernan Henry (NUIG) on a nearby catchment (Gort-Kinvarra) which offers excellent teaching for students to gain an understanding of a catchment from source to sea.</p>
Other Work	<p>JG will work with the coordinators of other components (B1 and B2) of the project to assist in the reporting and dissemination of other programmes which are broader than the case studies detailed above. These programmes contain aspects that are relevant to B1, B2 and B3. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave No Trace • Adopt a Monument as piloted by the Heritage Council • ETIS - The European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) framework as it explores the partnership model for sustainable destination management
Policy Review	<p>The work on policy is on-going and although it is reported under B3, is now very much the umbrella for which we look at all aspects of the programme. And underpins much of what we do in GeoparkLIFE.</p> <p>Some final interviews are taking place with more senior members of our partner agencies as we interrogate the perceived policy conflicts that have been identified in the first phase of our work.</p> <p>UCD also made a submission on the amendments of the Draft Clare County Development Plan and we look forward to seeing the final Plan in 2017.</p>