

EULIFE14 NAT/IE/000032 Raised Bog Restoration Project

Unit 40 Loughsheever Corporate Park, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

MEMO TO: File

DATE: 21st of January 2020

SUBJECT: Raised Bog Restoration Workshop

ACTION: E4

The project hosted two onsite training days for prospective peat damming plant hire contractors in 2018. The sites were chosen to demonstrate the most variety in terms of the potential work involved in project contracts and to offer an opportunity to view completed works as well as work in action. For this reason one site day was held on Mongan Bog SAC which is a project site where no work had been completed at the time and the other was held at Killeglan Bog which is a site being restored by Bord na Mona where works were ongoing.

Both events were very well attended and were timed to coincide with procurement competitions being conducted by the project in relation to drain blocking plant hire works. The competitions benefited greatly from the demonstration days in that contractors had an opportunity to evaluate high quality work first hand which allowed them to put together tender proposals that reflected the requisite standards at deliverable cost rates.

Having implemented the first round of drain blocking contracts, the project team planned a Raised Bog Restoration Workshop. The purpose of this event was to discuss experiences to date and demonstrate the methodologies developed by the project with contractors and other interest groups so as to disseminate learnings for future projects. The workshop was widely advertised using the project contractors contact list, lists of attendees of previous open days and through inclusion on a live Request For Tenders (Ref. 163354) on www.etenders.gov.ie being conducted at the time by the DCHG for non-LIFE project sites.

As a project site where a variety of works including new methods have been completed, Carrownagappul Bog SAC was the chosen venue for the workshop held on 20/01/20 to include information talks, powerpoint presentations and open discussions followed by on-site demonstrations and work inspection.

The project team have been working closely with the local community in the nearby town of Mountbellew on the delivery of amenity provisions at Carrownagappul Bog SAC. The workshop dovetailed in with this community liaison work and the morning session was hosted in conjunction with a local employment scheme that provided a meeting hall, IT facilities for presentations, seating, refreshments etc.

The project team welcomed attendees, provided some background information, conducted presentations and then opened to the floor for questions and observations. This format allowed for an open discussion to develop around the following main topics which were deliberated at length providing both novice and experienced attendees with a range of learnings, tips, advice and food for thought:

- **Machinery considerations** – make, model, dimensions, weight, power, fuel consumption, adaptability, modifications, bucket type, haulage/ mobilisation, refuelling, spill kits, servicing, parts, reliability, H&S, site specific insurance, engulfment, recovery, depreciation.
- **Work planning** – site access, site preparation, staff welfare, on-site communication, accident response planning, practicalities of implementation of standard NPWS methodologies, marking out dams, timing of works, pre-works walkover surveys (eg ground nesting birds, dangerous areas, swallow holes etc) high water levels, refuelling, start and finish zones, daylight planning, overnight storage.
- **Methodologies** – dealing with areas of poor vegetation cover, shallow peat, poor peat quality, deep drains, wide drains, high water flow, excessive tree cover, number of dams completed per day, single vs double dams, keying in dams, retention and reuse of vegetation sod, plastic damming, plastic piling specifications, timber reinforcement structures, peat backfilling, linear barrier damming.
- **Administration** – quantifying and pricing work, tenders submissions, completing standard government procurement competition forms, drafting company profiles / tender proposals, dealing with taxes (VAT, RCT), invoicing, certification of works completed and dispute resolution.

Following the presentations and talks, the group of attendees then reconvened at Carrownagappul Bog SAC to inspect the recently completed works. The contractor who carried out the work was in attendance to answer queries along with project team members. The main topics of discussion in terms of works implementation on this specific site centred on the following:

- Working in winter conditions (high water levels, short daylight hours, tree and scrub removal)
- Machinery specifications (2 types were used on this site, one suited to dryer cutover for tree removal, one suited to wetter high bog peat damming)
- Damming wide drains and historic peat harvesting trenches with peat
- Developing a methodology for damming exceptionally wide and deep drains with a high flow using plastic piling and timber support structures
- Communication with stakeholders throughout planning and implementation phases and repair of access roads post works.

Overall the workshop provided and excellent opportunity for members of the public, local interest groups, contractors, LIFE project team members and other DCHG staff to learn, network and provide a platform for future restoration work planning. It is anticipated that the benefits of conducting this workshop will be felt in the short-term with regard to the ongoing raised bog restoration programme being rolled out by the DCHG throughout 2020 / 2021. The following annexes accompany this memo:

- I. **Irish Wildlife Manuals Series Volume 99 – Best practice in raised bog restoration in Ireland.** This document sets out the primary methodologies deployed by the DCHG in raised bog restoration and is provided to tenderers and contractors as standard practice.
- II. **Event notification** – this open invitation was publicised as part of an RFT (Ref. 163354) competition conducted by DCHG for non-LIFE project sites.

- III. **Powerpoint presentation** – this presentation was used to introduce attendees to the various methods of raised bog restoration deployed on both LIFE sites and other similar projects across Ireland and the UK.
- IV. **Sample restoration plan** – this restoration prescription plan and tenderers pricing schedule was used as a demonstration plan for discussion purposes to tease out the issues that may arise in tendering for and implementing raised bog restoration works.
- V. **Site maps** – this series of working site maps set out the restoration works completed at Carrownagappul Bog SAC
- VI. **Cell bunding** – this diagram outlines a sample area at Carrownagappul Bog SAC used for site discussion regarding novel cutover cell bunding restoration methodologies.

Regards,



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The Living Bog Restoration Project

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