



*Putting people at the heart of conservation since 1989.*

## **Submission by Just Forests to Waterways IRELAND re: Waterways Ireland Heritage & Biodiversity Plan Consultation**

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12 January 2015

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Just Forests welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to Waterways IRELAND on Waterways Ireland Heritage & Biodiversity Plan Consultation

Through our membership of the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA), we assist the development education sector in Ireland to make a significant contribution to the delivery, reception and public understanding of Ireland's foreign policy, in particular with regard to issues of international trade and development and human rights. We also help to bring and encourage a development education perspective through our membership of the Irish Environmental Network (IEN).

The development education sector in Ireland plays a leading role nationally and in European development education. IDEA members represent a spectrum of civil society and NGO actors. The sector has been recognized by European colleagues as a strong example of good practice in development education<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/ge/DE\\_Watch.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/ge/DE_Watch.pdf) Accessed 29/01/14

## **1. Which of the following waterways are you most interested in?**

In a personal capacity I have a particular interest in the heritage and biodiversity of the Grand Canal. My father, grand-father and all my paternal uncles were boatsmen on the Grand Canal for decades transporting bricks, porter and whiskey just to mention a few of the products they transported. My maternal uncles –the Russells from Rhode in Co Offaly were ‘Canal Rangers’ on the Grand Canal for many years and were responsible for keeping the canal bank and tributaries in good repair from overgrowth of flora and so on.

The main way that I experience the heritage and biodiversity of the Grand Canal is by walking and my interest in the abundant biological diversity along its banks.

## **2. What is your vision for the heritage of the waterways as a whole?**

Ireland's waterways are a great source of recreation for all sorts of outdoor activities including walking and wildlife investigation. We wish to see a major campaign to get people walking and exploring our waterways as a means of appreciating the wonderful biological diversity we have at our doorstep.

## **10. The proposed themes of the Plan are listed below. Please rank them according to importance (1 for the least important and 6 for the most important)**

We are living in a world where so many people have become alienated from the natural world. The natural world provided all the goods and services society needs to survive. We urgently need to get back to nature and re-discover the awesomeness of nature.

6 most important has to be Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

## **\*11. Which type of project or projects would you most like to see included in the Heritage Plan?**

- Awareness Raising -YES
- Community Engagement - YES
- Promoting conservation best practice - YES
- Research and Survey Work - YES
- Biodiversity Restoration Projects - YES
- Heritage Restoration Project - YES

Heritage & Biodiversity as drivers for sustainable tourism development - YES

Using new technologies to communicate the heritage value of the waterways YES

**Other (please specify – see the following)**

Waterways IRELAND are major users of tropical timber in the construction of lock gates, ramps and other construction operations.

**Just Forests calls on Waterways IRELAND to insist on FSC certified timber and wood-based products immediately in an attempt to:**

- stimulate economic activity in the Irish forestry sector by using Irish-grown timber
- reduce dependence on imported tropical timber which has very serious and questionable issues surrounding it such as, human right, illegal logging and biodiversity decline
- reduce the significant carbon footprint of imported timber, panel board and other wood-based product
- ensure the world's forests are managed to the highest possible standards by becoming independently certified to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards without delay and in your own name (Waterways IRELAND) as a significant user of timber

Alan Kelly T.D., Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government on Thursday 11th September, 2014, launched Green Procurement Guidance for the public sector at the Environment Ireland conference. The guidance was prepared by the EPA in collaboration with a number of State Agencies and Government Departments. It is a practical resource tool designed to assist procurers to build green criteria into public tenders and a deliverable under the Government's National Action Plan for Jobs.

Procurement across all Government Departments and Agencies accounts for 10-12 per cent of Ireland's GDP (approx. €14 billion in 2011). Including sustainable and green practices in public procurement can drive significant behavioural change as well as the expansion of markets for green products and services. Green procurement allows public bodies to influence the marketplace in a positive way, driving demand for secondary resources and incentivising job creation in the green economy.

**In the EPA press release of 11-09-2014 - Buying green is good for business and good for the environment: Speaking at the launch, Dara Lynott, EPA Deputy Director General said:**

“Through its purchasing activities, the public sector can take the lead in sustainable consumption and production. Green Public Procurement is an essential tool in

incentivising Irish businesses to adopt more sustainable business practices and in doing so differentiating themselves in the marketplace.”

**\*14. Are you (or the organisation that you represent) willing to assist in the implementation of the Heritage & Biodiversity Plan?**

YES - YES

No

Maybe

**15. If yes, what type of action or project do you think you could contribute to?**

We could write a responsible timber procurement policy for Waterways IRELAND that will ensure all timber and wood-based product used by waterways IRELAND is both legal and sustainable.

We could also write a dedicated episode in our [Eco-stories for Kids](#) series focussing on waterways biodiversity