

Saving the shores of Lough Carra

As part of a major enhancement plan for Lough Carra, the Lough Carra Catchment Association (LCCA) was awarded over €27,000 in LEADER funding for a feasibility study into a lake protection plan.

The association, which was established in 2018, was formed with the goal of conserving and restoring the ecological integrity of Lough Carra and its lakeshore habitats, which are designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Lough Carra is what is known as a marl lake; a shallow limestone lake. Over time, the quality of the water has declined, and the ecological status of the lake has gradually degraded.

“The water used to be so clear here that you could see an eel swimming on the bottom,” says Chris Huxley of the LCCA. “The marl used to be white, which is what it should be, but now you’ll find it's green. In some places it's brown, or even black.”

The feasibility study, made possible through LEADER funding, looked at ways of arresting the decline in the water quality. The project resulted in a 152-page document which set out a compelling case for the investment needed to improve the environment of the lake and surrounding areas.

Sabina Trench, CEO of South West Mayo Development Company which delivers LEADER programmes said: “Like so many LEADER projects, this grant was a stepping store for the Lough Carra Catchment Association (LCCA). With Mayo County Council as the lead agency, the group has secured €5million in Life project funding over a five-year period to ‘restore, protect and conserve the ecological integrity of Lough Carra’. That is a 185% return on the initial LEADER investment which is incredible value for money.”

For more information on this project, please see: <https://loughcarra.org/>