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Community
Wetlands
Forum

*Inspiring Communities to Enjoy, Manage and Protect Their Wetlands
for the Present and Future Generations*

March 2026 Newsletter

Community Wetlands Forum Receives Charity Status

Exciting news: Community Wetlands Forum has officially been granted charity status in Ireland! Our RCN is 20207016.

This is a major milestone for Community Wetlands Forum. Thank you for being part of this journey!

On behalf of the Board and members of CWF we would like to thank Laurence Fullam, Company Secretary, for all his work over the past eighteen months on this successful approval. We are sincerely grateful.

UPCOMING CWF EVENTS:

14.04.26 (7.30pm)

Training Webinar:

Recruiting & Empowering Your Team and Your New Safety Officer

16.04.26 (7.30pm)

Training Webinar:

Health & Safety Planning for Your Group

29.04.26

Community Wetlands Forum CLG

AGM

The Launch of *A Guide for Wetland Communities Engaging in Creative Projects*

On March 3rd, we were delighted to gather with an inspiring array of guests, artists, and members at the Irish Museum of Modern Art for the launch of The Community Wetland Forum: *A Guide for Wetland Communities Engaging in Creative Projects*.

This first-of-its-kind publication showcases the work of nineteen artists and creatives whose practices are rooted in Ireland's rich necklace of wetlands. Their diverse and deeply connected approaches highlight the vital relationship between creativity, community, and these precious natural landscapes.

Launching the guide, Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Biodiversity, Christopher O'Sullivan TD, said:

"I am delighted to launch 'A Guide for Wetland Communities Engaging in Creative Projects'. We know that wetlands are some of the most valuable ecosystems for biodiversity. For those who appreciate the wonders of nature, this guide will create

connections and collaboration with communities and artists, helping to bring the beauty, fragility and significance of wetlands to life. I'd like to congratulate the Community Wetlands Forum, and all involved in the creation of this important resource."

To explore the guide and access further information, please visit our website:

👉 <https://communitywetlandsforum.ie/a-guide-for-wetland-communities-engaging-in-creative-projects/>



RTÉ Radio 1 - CountryWide, Saturday March 7 2026

The launch of the Community Wetlands Forum Creative Guide, as well as Carbury Bog, and the work of Annie Holland in Abbeyleix were featured in a recent episode of COUNTRYWIDE.

[CLICK TO LISTEN: CountryWide March 7, 2026](#)

INSURANCE SEMINAR Community Wetlands Forum



In November 2025, the Community Wetlands Forum hosted an Insurance Seminar focusing on the specific needs of community groups involved in the restoration and protection of wetlands across Ireland. The session was designed to support groups undertaking restoration works, public walks, and other community events.

The seminar featured expert speakers who provided practical guidance and clear insights into navigating **Insurance requirements** for community-led environmental work in Ireland.

Speakers included Colm Croffy, Chairperson of Association of Irish Festivals and Events, Dr Francis Mackin, Sector Director RPS Group, and Duncan Gawthorpe, Trails & Insurance Manager at Sport Ireland.



Attendees gained a stronger understanding of the **types of insurance cover needed, key risks to consider, and how to ensure their activities are properly protected.**

The seminar delivered invaluable information for community groups, with particularly important guidance on the role of a designated **Safety Officer** within a committee. This was highlighted as a crucial step in strengthening good practice around risk management and ensuring compliance with health and safety obligations.

Below are some of the outcomes and learnings from the Seminar.



INSURANCE

TOP TIPS FOR COMMUNITY WETLAND PROJECTS

1. INSURANCE BASICS

- ✔ Organisers have a **duty of care** to those who attend events.
- ✔ **Safety first**: the goal is no harm to visitors or volunteers.
- ✔ A **Safety policy** and risk management, including proper planning, protects people physically.
- ✔ Insurance protects the group financially against claims. Always have **Public Liability Insurance** to protect the group in case if someone is injured or property is damaged.
- ✔ Check if your activities require **Employer's Liability** (including staff and volunteers), **Equipment, Cash on the Premises**, or **Event Cancellation** insurance.
- ✔ **Contractors Insurance**: always verify contractors' own insurance covers their activities for your group. Ask for a copy of their insurance 3 weeks prior to event and show it to your group's Insurance underwriter.

2. SAFETY POLICY

- ✔ Develop a "living" **Safety Policy**, put it in practice, review and revise it annually.
- ✔ Appoint a **Safety Officer**, make sure s/he is involved in planning and is empowered to halt unsafe activities prior to and on the day of the event.
- ✔ Conduct **pre-event Health & Safety briefings** and **Risk Management meetings** for all volunteers, organisers, & subcontractors
- ✔ Keep clear records of these meetings including a list of agreed responsibilities. Keep records of meetings with subcontractors.
- ✔ Keep **incident reports** and records of activities.
- ✔ **Conduct Review meetings** after each event & ensure the Safety Officer provides a report. Record any lessons learned.

3. PRACTICAL TIPS

- ✔ Look for 3 quotes. Cheaper policies often exclude key activities or carry higher excesses. Make sure you understand exactly what is and isn't covered.
- ✔ Avoid bundling multiple activities under one policy to prevent premium spikes in the event of a claim.
- ✔ Groups that register their trail with **Sport Ireland Trails Register** by attaining and maintaining the standards set by Sport Ireland, can qualify for **FREE Public Liability Insurance** that covers the trail as well as adjoining privately owned lands.
- ✔ Always engage with landowners early, get their permission and maintain good communication.
- ✔ Identify safety issues early; fix immediately or use signage, diversion or closure. *Sport Ireland Outdoors: Walking Trail Criteria for Ireland.*

4. WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECTS

- ✔ Engage with landowners early, map boundary drains and agree on maintenance responsibilities.
- ✔ Hire a **qualified consultant** for restoration or Water Table Management projects.
- ✔ Assessing topography including boundary drains is critical for restoration. Investment in detailed data and planning reduces risks and reassures landowners.
- ✔ Drainage Management Plans (DMPs) and LiDAR derived Digital Terrain Models (DTMs) are essential to assess and mitigate risks of restoration including for surrounding lands, addressing landowners' concerns.
- ✔ Prepare to defend restoration projects legally by maintaining robust data, plans and insurance coverage to counteract strategic litigation risks.

We plan to publish a detailed document based on the Insurance Seminar learnings, in the near future.

Building on the outcomes of the Insurance Seminar, this year CWF will host two follow-up webinars led by Colm Croffy. These sessions will focus on recruiting a Safety Officer and on key health and safety considerations for wetland community groups.

UPCOMING TRAINING WEBINARS for Community Groups

**Recruiting and Empowering Your Team
and Your New Safety Officer:
Tuesday, April 14th, 7.30 -8.30 pm**

Health and Safety Planning for Your Group:

Thursday, April 16th, 7.30-8.30 pm

Facilitator:

**Colm Croffy, Chairperson of Association of Irish Festivals and Events
(AOIFE)**

We invite 2 members from each group to attend these invaluable webinars.

**TO SECURE YOUR SPOT PLEASE REGISTER BY TUESDAY, APRIL 10th,
BY SENDING AN EMAIL TO: development@communitywetlandsforum.ie**

Once registered, you will receive an email with the Zoom link.

We look forward to seeing you then

Colm Croffy has spent over 30 years working in events and festival management crossing the educational, arts, business and cultural sectors. He is Chairperson with the Association of Irish Festivals & Events (AOIFE) and a freelance Festival and Events Consultant, he was formerly Co-ordinator for Ballinasloe Fair and Festival – one of the largest festival and heritage events in the West of Ireland, and was a part time Producer with The Rose of Tralee.

Furthermore, Colm has been engaged in Community Development throughout much of his career and brings a unique understanding and insight of the issues facing groups such as ours.

In the past five seasons he has piloted and delivered the A.O.I.F.E Festival and Event Pop up Advice Clinics to over 800 volunteers. He has trained, mentored and consulted with numerous festivals and cultural events

for Cork, Kerry, Carlow, Roscommon, Mayo, Waterford, Derry/ Strabane, and Limerick Local Authorities with considerable success.

He was involved with the Irish Government 's Task Force on the Tourism Industry and has been key in championing the role of the Festival and Cultural Events Sector within Irish Tourism, Arts and Community policies

He is currently working with Longford County Council as a Just Transition Tourism Activator. Colm recently made a presentation at the Insurance Conference run by Community Wetlands Forum earlier this year.

DOES YOUR GROUP HAVE A SAFETY OFFICER, FOR BEST PRACTICE?

Here is an outline of a Volunteer Safety Officer's role description and responsibilities, based on the advice of one of the Insurance Seminar speakers, Colm Croffy.

Summary Role Description & Responsibilities

Role Purpose

The Safety Officer supports the event organizers by helping ensure that the event is planned and delivered in a safe manner for volunteers, participants, spectators, and the public. The role involves identifying potential hazards, implementing safety measures, and responding appropriately to incidents during the event.

Key Responsibilities

1 Pre-Event Planning

- Assist the organizing committee with basic event risk assessments.
- Identify potential hazards relating to:
 - Crowd movement
 - Weather conditions
 - Traffic management
 - Temporary structures
 - Electrical equipment
 - Slips, trips and falls
- Ensure appropriate control measures are in place to reduce risks.
- Confirm that first aid arrangements are available.
- Help develop an emergency plan for situations such as:
 - Medical incidents
 - Severe weather
 - Fire
 - Crowd safety issues
- Ensure volunteers are aware of basic safety procedures.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate Insurances and Indemnities are place for activities and sites

2 Event Setup

- Check that the site is safe before the public arrives.
- Ensure:
 - Walkways and exits are clear.
 - Trip hazards are removed or marked.
 - Cables are secured.
 - Barriers and signage are correctly positioned.
- Confirm that first aid points and emergency access routes are accessible.

3 During the Event

- Act as the point of contact for safety concerns.
- Monitor the event site for hazards such as:
 - Overcrowding
 - Unsafe behaviour
 - Blocked exits
 - Weather-related risks
- Ensure safety measures are being followed.
- Coordinate with:
 - First aid providers
 - Event stewards
 - Event organizers

4 Incident Response

- Ensure that any accidents or near misses are recorded.
- Assist with basic incident management until professional services arrive if required.
- Support communication with emergency services if needed.

5 Post-Event Review

- Report any safety issues or incidents to the organising committee.
- Help identify improvements for future events.
- Ensure that the site is left safe and clear after the event.

Key Skills and Attributes

- Good awareness of health and safety principles.
- Calm and practical in emergencies.
- Good communication skills.
- Ability to identify hazards and act proactively.
- Ability to work collaboratively with volunteers.

Important Notes

- The Safety Officer does not replace professional emergency services.
- The role is to support safe event organisation and highlight risks.
- Duties should be proportionate to the size and scale of the event.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HOLD THE DATE :

April 29, 2026

LIVING LEGACY



Build & Live Your Legacy

- Accountability Coaching & Mentoring
- Advance Preparedness
- End of Life Planning
- Future Proofing for Organisations
- Succession Planning
- Workshops & Tailored Programmes

LIVING LEGACY

 [@livinglegacyie](https://www.instagram.com/livinglegacyie)  info@livinglegacy.ie  www.livinglegacy.ie

Since January, several of our groups from across Ireland came together for something that rarely happens in the voluntary sector: an honest conversation about what happens when the people holding everything together eventually move on. As part of the first cohort of the CWF's Succession Planning Programme, run by Jennifer McConnell of Living Legacy (www.livinglegacy.ie) participants worked through the questions most community organisations quietly avoid — who really holds the knowledge that keeps things running, what would happen if a key volunteer stepped back tomorrow, whether their board is genuinely ready to manage a leadership transition, and what a good handover actually looks like in practice. Meeting on a weekly basis, each group had one person attending these masterclasses and leading on developing their organisation's succession plan. Together they mapped their organisations' vulnerabilities, stress-tested their governance, and began building written succession plans, many for the first time. For these groups that depend on the deep local knowledge, long-standing funder relationships, and hard-won community trust that tend to live in just one or two people, the programme offered something practical and rare: a structured way to protect what you have built, before you need to.

The next cohort is now open. Each group will be presenting their draft plan at the end of April and from there working with their group to implement and keep it living and succeeding.

If your group is interested to participate in the next cohort, please contact development@communitywetlandsforum.ie



Dúlra is the Irish word for "Nature". The Dúlra Project is a project that initially came about as a collaboration between FORUM Connemara's Agri-EIP, the North Connemara Locally Led Agri-Environmental (NCLLAES) Scheme and the Leenane Development Association. It aims to address the serious issue of controlling the spread of *Rhododendron Ponticum* in the ecologically sensitive areas (SACs) in Connemara and South Mayo.

For more information and to find out more about their work please visit their website: <https://scanner.topsec.com/?d=1406&r=show&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dulraproject.com%2F&t=1fd8fda96fa30de9184aa98cdd2216f1931d81f5>



An tSeirbhís Páirceanna Náisiúnta
agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife Service





Community Wetlands Forum

<https://scanner.topsec.com/?d=1406&r=show&u=www.communitywetlandsforum.ie&t=50264495e468054ead576ce6cd14b5e7d410c013>

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