

## Ecotourism, Business and the Environment

### Report on the First All- Island Ecotourism Conference

The Greenbox copper fastened its reputation as a national and international leader in ecotourism by hosting a timely and significant event recently. Timely because Ireland's clean green image has been muddied of late, significant because climate change is the most pertinent issue we face. With these and more issues in mind, the Greenbox organised Ireland's first all-island ecotourism conference in the Share Holiday Village, Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh on Wednesday 30th and Thursday

31st of January. This event, supported by the Western Development Commission, was attended by over 130 high calibre delegates from a number of relevant sectors, including the worlds of tourism, rural development, policy, business and research. Key business, marketing, media and environmental themes were addressed by an impressive array of both Irish-based and international expert speakers. These included informative presentations from Peter Krahenbuhl, Vice-President of Sustainable Travel International, on buying and selling sustainable holidays; Gillian Buckley of the WDC on regional development; Kieran Harding of Business in the Community on Corporate Social Responsibility, Alan Clark of the Northern Ireland Tourism Board and Desticorp's Anna Pollock on the potential for regions to make and market climate change calculations. The latter presentation in particular was a breath of fresh air, laying out how stark the climate change situation is while also signposting future opportunities this region could tap into.



The workshops were lively and well-attended, with product development standing out as especially busy and vibrant. The lively and colourful information area featured many network members, including Ireland Ecotours, Ard Nahoo, The Organic Centre, Tawnylust Lodge, Trinity Island Lodge, Blaney Yoga and Spa Centre and more.

Likewise the Failte Ireland funded study trips the next day, to Ard Nahoo Health Farm, Little Crom Cottages, the Food Hub and The Organic Centre, and finally the Share Holiday Village itself were popular learning opportunities.

As well as talking the talk the conference also walked the walk. It was carbon neutral, with emissions offset by Myclimate™, developed in accordance with the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto protocol. The conference food and refreshments were all either local or organic or both, with the likes of Lisnaskea's Cherry Tree bakery, Leitrim Organic Farmers' Coop, Rossinver's Cooladonnell catering all providing what was exceptional eating, a rarity at events on this scale. The venue itself, the Share Holiday Village has the largest reed-bed water purification plant in Northern Ireland, three wind turbines, four solar water heating systems, and three wood pellet boilers. This allows them to use 99% renewable electricity on site, and 90% renewable heat, resulting in a total overall offset of CO2 of almost 300 tonnes per annum.

Top Right & Above Left: Gold & Bronze medal winners in Greenbox photography competition.

Above: Mary McKeon (McKeon Tourism) & Catherine Mack (Journalist) at Ecotourism Conference.

## Network member focus

### Winners from Greenbox awards 2007:

**Most Ecologically Sound:** Kevin Currid of Lough Allen Adventure.

Kevin received this award for a number of reasons. These include the comprehensive new ecobuilding project at Lough Allen Adventure. The build is now near completion, and it includes timber frame and panelling, a wood pellet burner and solar panels. Kevin is also running a Greenbox ecopackage - the Wilderness Therapy Session - while the activities run at the centre itself are run in the ethos of Leave No Trace, which Kevin has recently qualified to teach. [www.loughallenadventure.com](http://www.loughallenadventure.com)

**Most Innovative:** Teresa O'Hare. Teresa is a real renaissance woman. There is so much going on with Teresa that summarising her is impossible. Teresa runs training courses, runs a Greenbox ecopackage in creative crafts, produces and sells her own organic produce, conducts research and even does the occasional spot of Thai massage. A refreshing and no nonsense lady. [www.orchardacrefarm.com](http://www.orchardacrefarm.com)

**Most Active:** Nuala McNulty. Nuala has been absolutely invaluable to the Greenbox network. When we need something done, and can't figure out who, what, when, where or how, Nuala is our default person. Nuala was central to organising our heritage and culture event over the Solstice weekend in The Gyreum, Co. Sligo, conducted customer research for the Greenbox, is currently going for the EU Flower and just knows and does great stuff.

**Best Website:** Ard Nahoo Health Farm. The Ard Nahoo website is a model for how things should be done. It is both busy with customers and very easy to use. It displays a leading-edge use of imagery and functionality. It is also worth mentioning that Noeleen Tyrrell, who runs Ard Nahoo, is another Greenbox dynamo, and could well have won other awards. [www.ardnahoo.com](http://www.ardnahoo.com)

**Best New Member:** Michael McCann. Michael joined the Greenbox network in 2007 on the back of



Enjoying the awards night: Top Right; Teresa O'Hare & Aggie Pugsley. Above; Nigel Brady (NIEA) & Mary Mulvey (Greenbox)

receiving a grant through the Capital Development Programme. He has renovated Meenaslieve Schoolhouse in Dowra into a luxurious self catering premises for tourists. Michael has a background in construction and engineering and the building renovation has been restored using innovative and ecofriendly methods. These include: pellet boiler, solar panels, reedbed system, underfloor heating and many more.

**Network Member of the Year:** Peter Hughes. Peter is a website designer and owns the business "Advantedge Interactive". Peter also is also one of the founders of Xtreme North West, an adventure and activity organisation. Peter has been a very active member of the network through participation in many training courses (National Certificate in Ecotourism, Leave No Trace, Greenbox Ecotourism Label Training). He also has worked with the Greenbox members in producing websites and mentoring them in google analytics. Peter has also tutored a class for the Greenbox in websites and the internet. He is a willing member who will help out in any way he can. [www.advantedgeinteractive.com](http://www.advantedgeinteractive.com)

## Ecotourism Class Graduation:

the 2007 Ecotourism class also graduated at our awards ceremony in December. This class ran in Sligo IT, and was taught by James Hanrahan. The graduates were drawn from a number of key areas, which made for a vibrant class dynamic. Another group has also just completed the course, again made up of a wide range of participants.

*L to R Michael Brown, Teresa O'Hare, Jerome O'Loughlin, Nuala McNulty, Aggie Pugsley, James Hanrahan (Sligo IT), Stephanie Donegan (Sligo IT), Eithne Huel, Barry Murphy, Jim Newman (Sligo IT), Pauline Gilmartin, Tanya Cathcart, Karen Hughes, Heather Bothwell*



## Training:

### Peace and Reconciliation OCR level 2 Certificate in Reconciliation.

The Greenbox four day Peace and Reconciliation course has been completed by fifteen Greenbox members, eight from the North and seven from the South. The course was delivered by TWN.

**GELT** (Greenbox Ecotourism Label Training) is up and running, with a large, knowledgeable and business-orientated set of attendees. The 6 sessions are being delivered by First Western Consulting in the Organic Centre, Rossinver. This training will lead to the further development of the Greenbox ecotourism packages – for more see <http://www.greenbox.ie/ecobreaks.php>

**EU Flower:** Seven applicants, all of whom have received training and mentoring from the Greenbox, have been sent for the EU flower audit – six for the south and one from the north. We wish them all well!

**Upcoming training:** Visiting Expert Day on March 4th in Blacklion Golf Club 9am-4pm. Focus will be on: Innovation, creativity, finances, ethical sourcing, familiarisation trips, networks and funding, storytelling and interacting with tourism organisations. For more info, contact Marella on (071) 9856898 or [marella@greenbox.ie](mailto:marella@greenbox.ie)

**Photography and Film Masterclass** 18th-19th April. For more contact Ollie on (071) 9856898 or [ollie@greenbox.ie](mailto:ollie@greenbox.ie)

**Greenbox has secured €380,000 funding from Skillsnet to continue training for the next two years.**

## Have You Renewed Your Membership?

If not please return your form with the correct payment. Copies of the form are on the Greenbox website: go to [www.greenbox.ie](http://www.greenbox.ie) and click on the Greenbox Network button. Access to Greenbox Skillsnet training will be only available to signed up members for 2008. Closing date for renewal is 14th March.

## Out and About:

Marella spoke on behalf of the Greenbox on Monday 28th January at a conference on Green, Eco and Fair Trade Tourism in the Silver Birch Hotel in Omagh. The conference was opened by Michelle Gildernew (MLA and Minister for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development). The Minister spoke of her department's support about Green tourism and of tourism funding.

**Upcoming event:** Slow Food AGM and feast in Brid Torrades' latest café, Tobergal Lane in Sligo on Thursday 3rd April. The AGM starts at 6.15pm, event at 7.30pm. The event to follow features Brid Torrades' suppliers showcasing their produce, musicians, Brid cooking up a storm and more. Event is free!



*Liam Scollan - board member Organic Centre  
Paul McCloon - manager Failte Ireland North West  
Noelle Cawley - Failte Ireland North West  
John Gormley - Minister of the Environment, Heritage & Local Govt  
Noeleen Tyrrell - owner ArdNahoo Health Farm  
Joe Lowe - CEO Leitrim County Enterprise Board  
Jackie Maguire - County Manager Leitrim County Council  
Mary Mulvey - CEO Greenbox.*

Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government John Gormley was in the region on Monday 11th February to meet with the Greenbox. He discussed various ideas for working together to develop ecotourism, and visited Greenbox flagship projects, He visited Ard Nahoo Health Farm's new ecolodges, which were funded under the Greenbox Capital Development Programme.

## Greenbox staff:

CEO: Mary Mulvey

mary@greenbox.ie

Network coordinators: Dr. Oliver Moore and Marella Fyffe  
ollie@greenbox.ie; marella@greenbox.ie

Capital development coordinator: Karen Hughes  
karen@greenbox.ie

Administration: Olga McCarrick and Bernie Carroll  
olga@greenbox.ie; bernie@greenbox.ie

## The Greenbox Board:

Jackie Mcguire (County Manager,

Leitrim County Council);

James Hanrahan (Tourism Lecturer,  
Sligo Institute of Technology);

Nigel Brady, (Northern Ireland Energy Agency);

Catherine Ryan (Fermanagh Local Action Group);

Anne Rutledge (Chair)

Noeleen Tyrrell (Ard Nahoo)

Joe Lowe (Leitrim County Enterprise Board)

Wayne Foord (Organic Centre)

Sinead Ni Mhaile (WDC)

Paddy Mathews (Failte Ireland)

Mary Mulvey (Greenbox)

## What's on?

### February 27th (Wednesday) RSPB

**Fermanagh Local Group** – talk Protecting the Environment by Shirelle Stewart (Policy Advocacy Officer RSPB) Cathedral Hall, Enniskillen 7.30pm. (028 6632 6654)

### February 29th (Friday): Cohab

**Workshop on Business and Ecosystems-** Innovation, opportunities & challenges for the private sector. Radisson SAS Hotel Galway 9am - 3.30pm. [www.cohabnet.org](http://www.cohabnet.org)

### March 12th-13th (Wednesday-Thursday) Climate Change and its Implications:

surfing, costal erosion, wildlife, inland waterway navigation, archeology and recreation, impacts on coastal park. With Dr. Conor Murphy (ICARUS-NUIM) in Lough Erne Golf Resort in Enniskillen

### March 13th (Thursday) Planet Earth

**Lecture:** Landscapes of Ice Age Ireland Portora Royal School, Enniskillen @ 7.30pm Professor Chris Clark from the University of Sheffield

### March 22nd -23rd (Sunday-Monday)

**Holey Soles Hill Walking Club's hill walking festival.** Registration at Castle Pub, Manorhamilton. (086 8418843)

## For More News and Events See [www.greenbox.ie](http://www.greenbox.ie)

### 19th-20th April: (Saturday-Sunday)

#### National Greener Ireland event in April:

Featuring exhibitions on: Awareness/ education; Consumables/Lifestyle; Energy saving/reducing costs (Solar, wind, water, heating, lighting etc); Recycling; Food and drink; building and more. See [www.greenerireland.ie/](http://www.greenerireland.ie/)

### April 25th-27th (Friday-Sunday) Trail maintenance course:

Mountain Meitheal will run a 2 day residential training course based at Avondale House, Co. Wicklow (hands on work in Glenmalure) [www.pathsavers.org](http://www.pathsavers.org)

### 10th June (Tuesday) Social Enterprise Trade Event in St. George's Market, Belfast.

(028 9045 6451)

### What Network Members are up to:

(remember for more see our blog: <http://greenboxireland.blogspot.com>)

### Monica Corish: Which Goddess are you?

A workshop to celebrate International Women's Day, March 8th 11am-4pm. North Leitrim Women's Centre Manorhamilton. (071 9856220)

### Anke at Bear Essentials: Creativity

Day Course for Easter at Bear Essentials Bawnboy, Co. Cavan Experience making an Easter Bunny, bread baking & Easter decorations for children boys & girls age 6-18 years. Wednesday 19th of March 10am-4pm 049 9523461, [info@bearessentials.ie](mailto:info@bearessentials.ie) [www.bearessentials.ie](http://www.bearessentials.ie)

**Teresa at Orchard Acre Barn:** Beauty from Nature's Store, One-Day Beauty Course, Orchard Acre Farm, Moynaghan North Road, Lisnarick. Learn to make your own quality beauty products using only natural ingredients. 028 686 21066, [info@orchardacrefarm.com](mailto:info@orchardacrefarm.com) , [www.orchardacrefarm.com](http://www.orchardacrefarm.com)

**The Organic Centre:** upcoming courses in March include Saturday 1st complete organic garden course; grow your own mushrooms; Sunday 2nd grow organic cook organic; Saturday 8th Organic gardening for beginners; Sat-Sun 8th-9th living willow sculpture; Sunday 16th Potato Day; Saturday 29th beyond baking. 071 9854338 email: [info@theorgancentre.ie](mailto:info@theorgancentre.ie) [www.theorgancentre.ie](http://www.theorgancentre.ie)

### Michael Brown's photography

**course:** Sat-Sun 10th-11th May [info@developmentmediaworkshop.org](mailto:info@developmentmediaworkshop.org) [www.developmentmediaworkshop.org](http://www.developmentmediaworkshop.org)

### Webwatch section:

A new cycling trial for the north west of Ireland:

[www.northwest-trail.com](http://www.northwest-trail.com)

New network member Max Bresi, who makes eco-friendly surfboards:

<http://cedarsurfboards.com>

Ernst & Young recognize green business:

[www.eoy.ie](http://www.eoy.ie)

### Are you after web-based market research on ecotourism? Why not check out...

Lohas (healthy and sustainable lifestyles information, incl. ecotourism):

<http://www.lohas.com>

Sustainable Travel International:

[www.sustainabletravel.com](http://www.sustainabletravel.com)

Responsible Travel:

[www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com)

World Tourism Organisation:

[www.world-tourism.org](http://www.world-tourism.org)

TIES (the international ecotourism society):

[www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org)



Above: Silver medal winner in Greenbox photography competition.

www.m-indesignstudios.com



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Fermanagh District Council

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WDC