

Regenerative Community Tourism Case Study: Mulranny Stone Wall Festival

Preserving Ireland's traditional skills

- Community-led event which nurtures volunteerism and a collective effort for conservation and community projects
- Contributes to a sense of pride in the local area
- Parallel children's activities held on the nearby beach expands the positive impact of the event
- Synergy with other community, tourism and conservation activities in the area

COMMUNITY



- Uses tourism as a mechanism to improve the environment
- Small scale event (just 30 places) 'gentle construction', i.e. manpower used for the building rather than machinery
- Attracts low impact visitors who tend to stay longer in the area
- Enhances the habitat value of dry-stone walls due to the biodiversity they support such as frogs, lichens, insects, birds, etc

NATURE



Best
practice
examples

PLACE

- Contributes to the preservation of a traditional skill/expertise
- Economic impact of visitors spread around local businesses
- Legacy of this project is clearly tangible through the gradual rebuilding of a local historical resource
- Long term impact.. it will take 28 years of festivals to fully mend this specific stretch of dry-stone wall!



VISITOR

- Transformative visitor experience due to the combination of physical involvement, immersion in nature and teamwork
- High level of authentic community interaction adds to the visitor experience
- Intimate experience due to the limited numbers of participants and nature of the event
- High level of repeat visits to the event and area among participants





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Mulranny, County Mayo, is a small rural, coastal village in the west of Ireland. As in many rural areas in the west of the country, dry stone walls are a prominent feature in the area. These walls are not only an important and integral part of Ireland's landscape, but they have also come to form a valuable habitat for wildlife. However, they have come into disrepair over the years and the associated traditional skills are dying out.

The idea for this small-scale festival came from community members who saw that tourism could contribute to a solution to this problem as well as bringing additional benefits. Some financial support was made available through the heritage office of Mayo County Council. The resulting innovative community led festival, which started in 2015, includes a programme of talks, demonstrations, dry stone wall building in association with the Dry-Stone Wall Association of Ireland and a parallel Children's Stone Art Competition. It complements a growing range of activities in the locality on the theme of heritage and the environment such as the old Irish goat visitor centre, the great western greenway and the dark skies festival.

The event has proven to be significant in terms of community development, nurturing local leadership and volunteerism. This strong community presence has also been an important element of the tourists' experience, which involves immersing themselves, side by side with community members, in a truly authentic interaction with the landscape. The tangible legacy in the form of the slowly emerging completed building works serve to evidence the effort made and success of this event.

[The Mulranny Stone Wall Festival.ie](http://TheMulrannyStoneWallFestival.ie)



This 2023 project, funded by the Royal Irish Academy and carried out by Munster Technological University and the University of the Highlands and Islands, aimed to explore a regenerative tourism approach to rural community development in Scotland and Ireland. For more details contact Sophie.price@mtu.ie