

On April 19 Dr Eugene Farrell (Geography, NUIG) hosted 50 planners from the Irish Planning Institute at his field site in The Maharees, Co. Kerry to discuss the challenges of (1) the local coastal community faces from human/natural pressures and (2) the planners face in the implementation of new climate legislation, such as the National Adaptation Framework, and the changes that are occurring in Local Authorities for the transition to a climate resilient Ireland. The fieldtrip and workshop were organized by Dr Farrell with partners in IPI and IT Tralee to bring planners to a coastal area that is under severe pressure from both human (pedestrian paths and horse trails to access beach and related activities of parking, camping, unregulated access, dune scrambling, and fires) and natural pressures (dune erosion, cliff erosion, flooding, invasive species, sand deposition, and human practices). Mitigating these challenges and the implementation of the new National Adaptation Framework were all discussed from the perspective of scientists (geoscientists & social scientists) and the community & stakeholders (landowners, residents, visitors, managers). The participatory workshop was vigilated by Dr Kevin Lynch from NUIG Geography with guest speakers: Dr Martha Desmond (climate change research specialist; leader in participatory planning for the transition to a climate resilient Ireland in MAREI, UCC); Martin Keating (leader of Mayo County Council team dealing with Climate Action; Atlantic Seaboard North Regional Climate Change Office); and Prof Robert Devoy (coastal processes; climate change expert; member and reviewer of IPCC reports). The workshop addressed themes of: Scientific knowledge and expertise; Legislative framework and enforcement; Community conflict and participation; and Local Authority resources, structures, and funding. The results will be released this summer. Dr Farrell would like to thank the support of everyone who was involved – not least the Sun Gods!

Planners find a lot to learn in Maharees

A MEETING that brought together the knowledge and experience of scientists, locals and planners in the Maharees before the weekend could play an important part in future decisions on where people can and cannot live in rural Ireland.

The meeting came about after Dr Eugene Farrell of UCG, who is studying coastal erosion in the Maharees, was invited to host a field trip by a group of planners who were attending an Irish Planning Institute conference in Tralee last Thursday and Friday.

Dr Farrell showed the planners the serious impact of erosion on the Maharees and explained how locals are working with Kerry County Council, official bodies and other interests to save the sandy peninsula from the encroaching sea.

He also conducted a workshop in Spillane's pub, which provided a unique opportunity for scientists and the local community to sit down with the people who implement planning policies.

The workshop in Spillane's focused on the National Adaptation Framework (NAF), which was published in January, setting out the national strategy for coping with climate change. This strategy could have a huge influence on decisions to grant planning permission in the Maharees and elsewhere.

It emerged from the workshop that while planners know a lot planning policy, they need to learn more about climate change if they are to effectively implement the planning policies contained within the National adaptation Framework in areas

like the Maharees, which Dr Farrell described as "a good example of the impact of climate change".

Another important outcome from the workshop was that it gave the planners an insight into the work being done by locals in the Maharees to combat coastal erosion and how this could be integrated into planning policies. "The planners were incredibly excited seeing the cooperation between the community in the Maharees and official bodies," he added.

In the Maharees the local community, spearheaded by the Maharees Conservation Association, is looking for solutions to the challenges of climate change and coastal erosion. According to Dr Farrell, the work being done there could be a template for communication between communities and planners on dealing with these issues.

"Long term planning solutions have to be based on scientific evidence... We need to change the way we approach planning and we need to work with nature," he said. "Planners working with communities at local level is critical in this."

Meanwhile, one very positive result of ongoing co-operation between Maharees locals and official bodies on the problem of erosion is that the OPW announced in March funding of €150,000 for a coastal erosion and flood risk management study in the Maharees. "This is the first major step in coming up with a long term strategy and it came out of the community working with scientists to understand and work together on the problem," Dr Farrell said.



Representatives of Dingle Alliance and Clean Co

Dingle

DINGLE is leading a campaign to cut back on plastic cups, carton that litters our streets and our seas.

The Glan environment which was officially launched on Friday, aims to encourage to cut down on single-use to use more environmental alternatives. Take-away a prime example, but also applies to food even plastic drink straws of which are used 100 million globally each year.

The initiative grew from a conversation between Louis Oceanworld, Joe Lynn Towns and Susan V Coasts about litter a