

What would you do with land?



GROW HQ

21st January 2024

Aims and objective

This event was arranged as a response to a steadily increasing number of conversations between BWL and stakeholders, within and beyond the bioregion, who have good ideas regarding land-use that generating one or several of the 4 Returns, as well as with land-owners with capacity and interest implement such new ideas.

Topic: How can we best match pockets of land/water with regenerative/4Returns kind of ideas across the bioregion? What are transferrable learnings to and from other regions? What role can BWL and collective stakeholders play to accelerate impact?

The workshop:

Sunday 21st January

2.30-4.30pm

GROW HQ, Waterford

NB: This event replaced a planned visit to Donal Tully's land in Passage East due to bad weather conditions. A rescheduled date for the visit was proposed as 18th February.

Participant	Coming with knowledge of...
John Murphy	Rural-Link, CAP network, Dairy farming, Social farming, Outdoor play. East Cork.
John Carney	Farming, social farming, food boxes, land now grazed by sheep. Portally
Bridget Carney	Farming family, social farming, food boxes. Portally
John Kiersey	Transitioning to organic dairy farmer. Kilmacthomas
Grace Kiersey	Farming family and vegetable garden. Kilmacthomas
Richard Murphy	Organic tillage and inventor. Glenmore
Eleanor Murphy	Farming family and nurse. Glenmore
Ray McGrath	Storyteller, educator and changemaker. Cheekpoint
Sabrina Birner	World Bank regenerative farming. Waterford
Ali Crighton	Co-weaver BWL-dairy project. Sligo and The SE Bioregion.
Donal Tully	Landowner and dentistry. Passage East
Rosemary Valentine	Concerned citizen, Canary Islands. Tramore
Sarah Prosser	BWL, weaver and workshop facilitator. The SE Bioregion.
Donal Sheehan (written contribution)	Dairy farming, biodiversity on farms, sustainability index. East Cork.

Agenda

The agenda was designed to uncover collective intelligence and resources in the room, and stimulate creativity for real-life case studies

Framing

- All participants: Where are you coming from regarding insights, experience and knowledge of land-use and/or land-ownership?
- BWL principles and ongoing relevant projects

Current collective knowledge

1. Examples of 4R land-use activities – within bioregion, outside of bioregion.
2. Examples of land that might be open to thinking new – and uniqueness of them

The future

1. Case examples – to follow up with visit
2. The role of the BWL and associated circles?

Next steps?



Framing



Bioregional Weaving Labs Collective



1 million Ha
1 million CM
4 Returns

Today's event directly responds to our European mission to restore, protect or regenerate 1 million Hectares of Land, mobilize 1 million changemakers and to do so withing the 4Returns framework.

The Netherlands



Brandenburg, Germany



Åre, Sweden



Waterford, Ireland



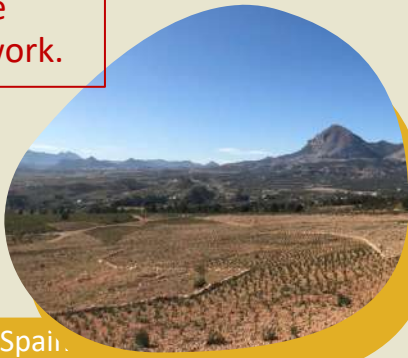
Adour Garonne, France



Thermenlinie-Wiener Becken, Austria



Altiplano Estepario, Spain



Oltenia de sub Munte, Romania



We decide what to do with land

Today's event also directly responds to the BWL mission within the bioregion, expressed through the multi-stakeholder co-authored Waterford Bioregion's Food Manifesto - For example in the part referring to the fact 'we are the ultimate decision makers' when it comes to what we do with land we own.



Waterford Bioregion's Food Manifesto *(to be read out loud)*

Food is not a luxury.

Food is a basic social need to which everyone has a right. It is a right not only to enjoy food, but to be able to create it.

Food is a way of building ideas, connections and communities. Through food we become aware of ourselves and of each other.

Food is a common good. It is grounded in our common need, and our common vulnerability.

Food is revolutionary. How we grow food, how we consume it, how we think about it, can lead to radical change.

Food is not only about the present: rethinking our relationship with food is a call for a different future, a better one.

We, the local producers and consumers of food in the Waterford bioregion, assert:

We have the right to a good quality of life, grounded in communities of mutual support.

We have the right to disagree, to disrupt the status quo.

We have the right to respect, even while we dissent.

Our dissent is moral, philosophical, cultural, affective, economic and political. Sometimes all at once.

Our dissent is about building a better world, **because we, are the ultimate decision-makers.**

Continued....

We stand for:

The breaking-down of barriers between thinkers and doers. We are, all of us, both thinkers and doers.

A reinvention of the relationships between producers, retailers and consumers.

A renewed focus on quality of life for all.

Food that is sustainable for our health.

The protection of the land.

The richness of the soil.

The flourishing of the imagination.

New ideas. New stories. New inspirations.

New ways of relating to the food we grow and eat.

We want future food to come from a place where community is core. Our aims are both visionary and practical. We want to create new habits, and new ways of working. We want viable ways of living. We want to protect our rivers, restore nature, cherish life. We want a world where everything is connected, from rocks to the human heart.

We want our children and grandchildren to know the taste of wild salmon and the foods those before us enjoyed. We want to be good guardians of the soil, and of our traditions. We want to become good ancestors.

We want future food to be:

Grown and eaten with passion, without which we will fail.

Inspirational

Easy to get and affordable for all.

Connected to people and communities

Familiar

Surprising

Secure, in a system where farmers and consumers share an interest in this security.

Pristine

Fair

Seasonal

Nutritious

Delicious

The manifesto is available to listen to/watch [here](#).

BWL Principles

1. Bioregion

“A bioregion invites us to inhabit a place in a way that is full of relationship. Seeing where the natural boundaries of our bioregion are, we can then see the many ecosystems and human systems alive within it. All of these systems, such as fresh water and biodiversity, or transport and health, are connected.

There is also a connecting story that starts in deep geological time, shows up in the landscape and soil, and then in human culture.

Bioregioning is the collective practice of bringing vitality to these connections, angling the systems towards regeneration, and taking actions for a climate resilient and biodiverse future”*.

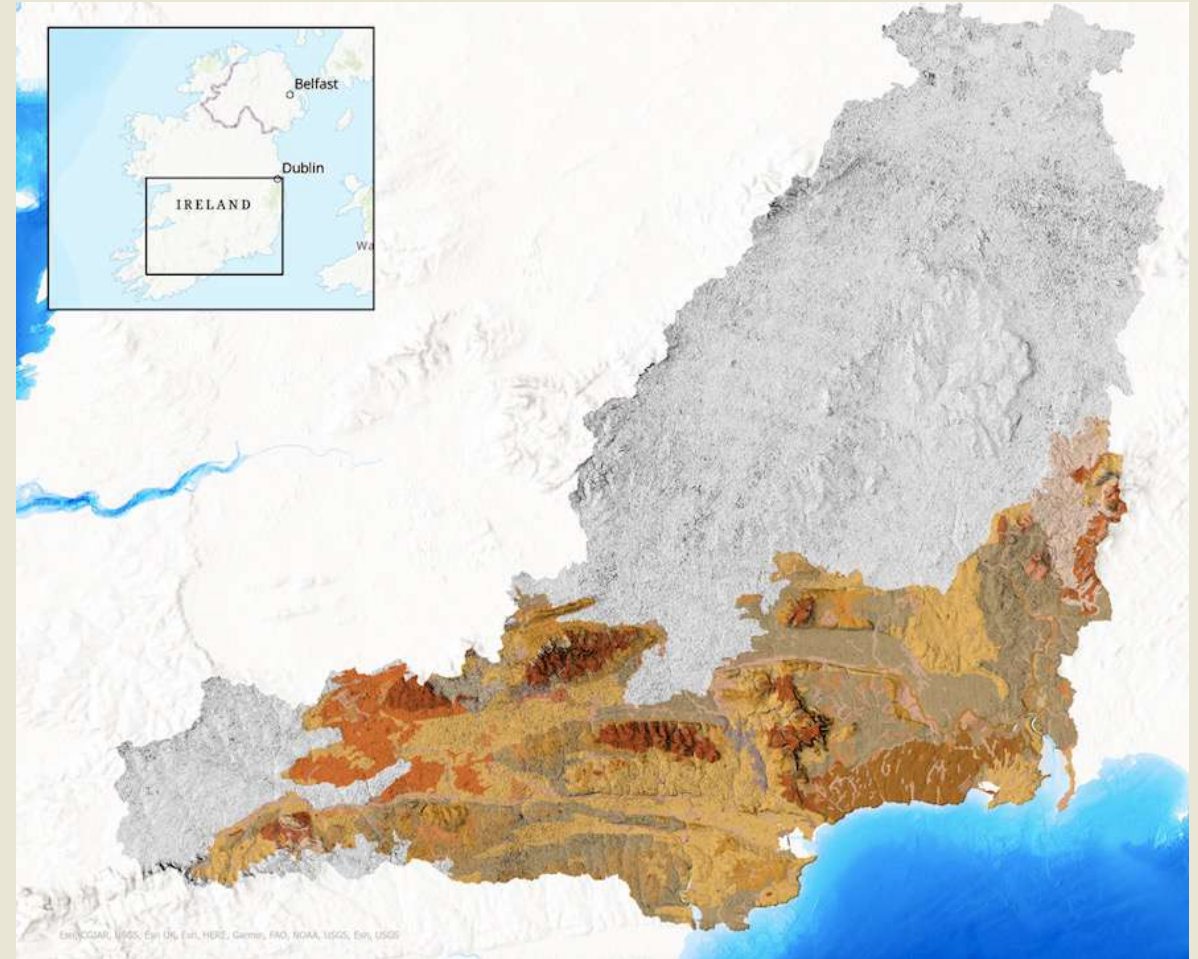


* <https://bioregion.org.uk/>

Mapping the SE bioregion - catchments



Mapping the SE bioregion – geology, soils

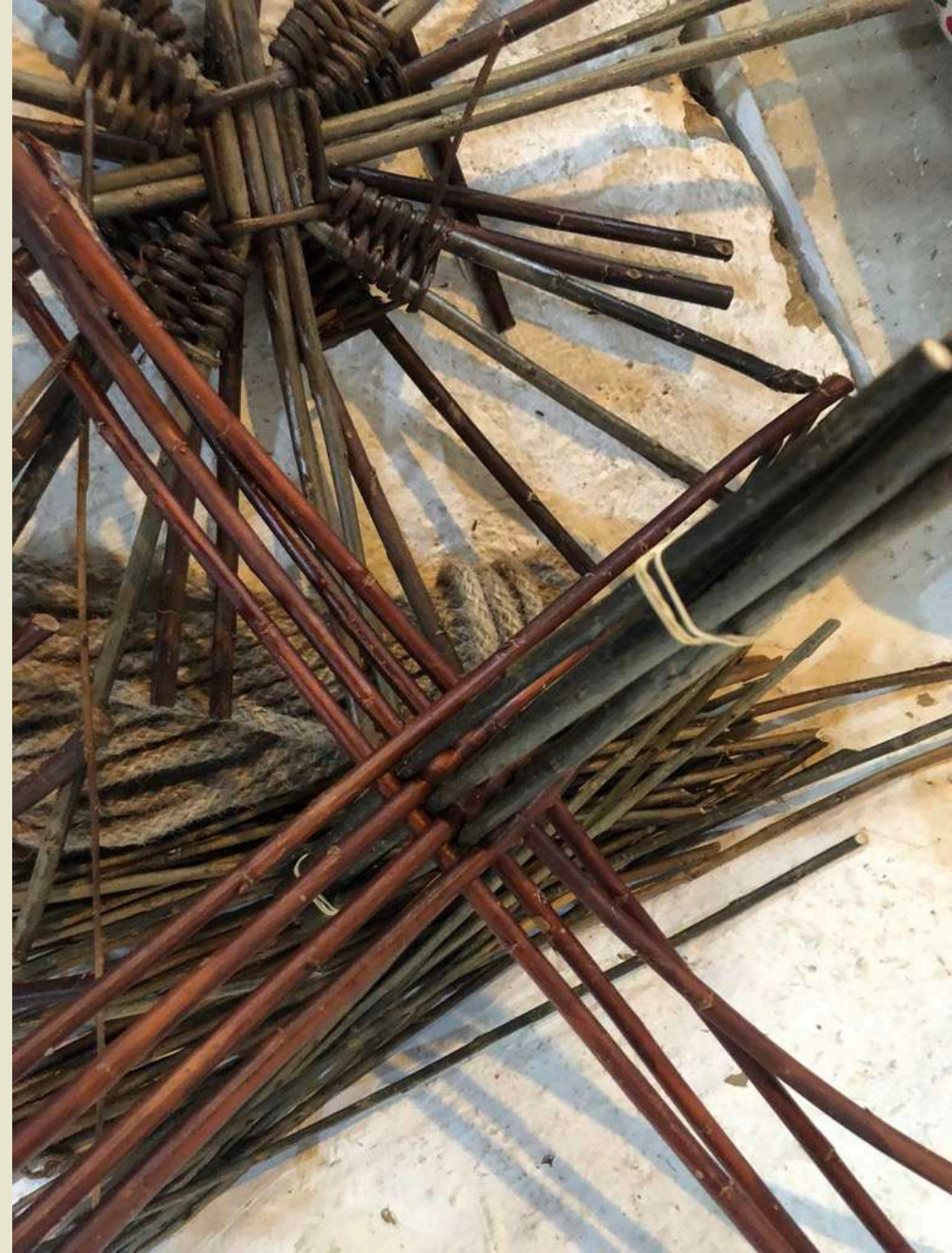


BWL Principles

2. Weaving

Connecting people, projects and place together for universal well-being.

Synergetic connections can bring about collective impact and systems change in ways single solution innovations cannot.



BWL Principles

3. Lab

Social innovations

System innovations

Nature-based solutions

We believe these kind of innovations, and in understanding how they can be replicated and more impact generated for all 4 Returns.



BWL Principles

4. The 4 Returns Framework



Return of Inspiration

Giving people hope and a sense of purpose



Social return

Bringing back jobs, education and social connections



Natural return

Restoring biodiversity and soils for healthy and resilient landscapes

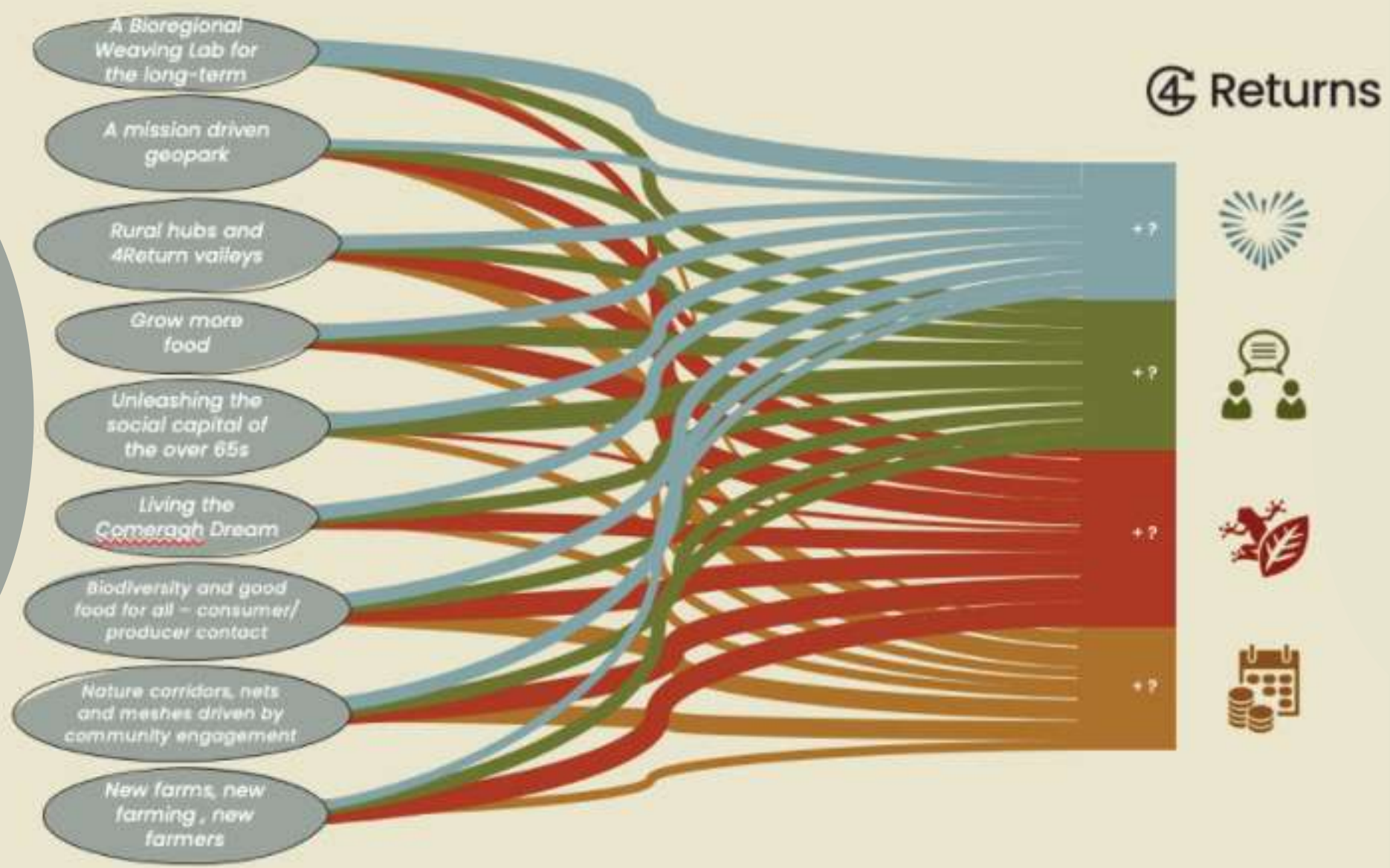


Financial return

Realising long-term sustainable income for communities

Land-use is entangled with many other 4Return Concepts

What we choose to use land for is entangled with many 4R concepts in the bioregion, all delivering on the 4 Returns

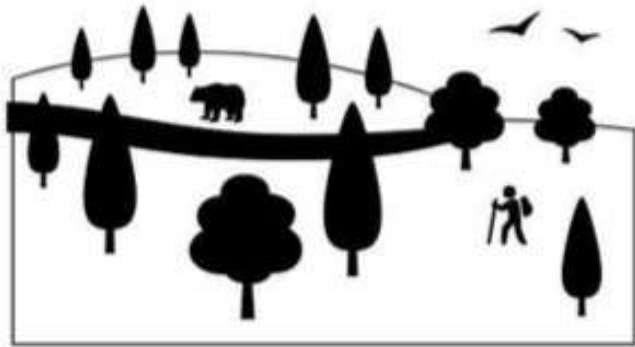


BWL Principles

5. The 3 zones

3 landscape zones

The 4 Returns holistic framework breaks down landscape restoration into 3 distinct landscape zones – natural, economic and combined.



Natural zone

Regenerating a landscape's ecological foundation by restoring and protecting native vegetation, trees, and biodiversity.



Combined zone

Restoring the topsoil and biodiversity, and delivering sustainable economic returns through regenerative agriculture, agroforestry and rotational grazing.

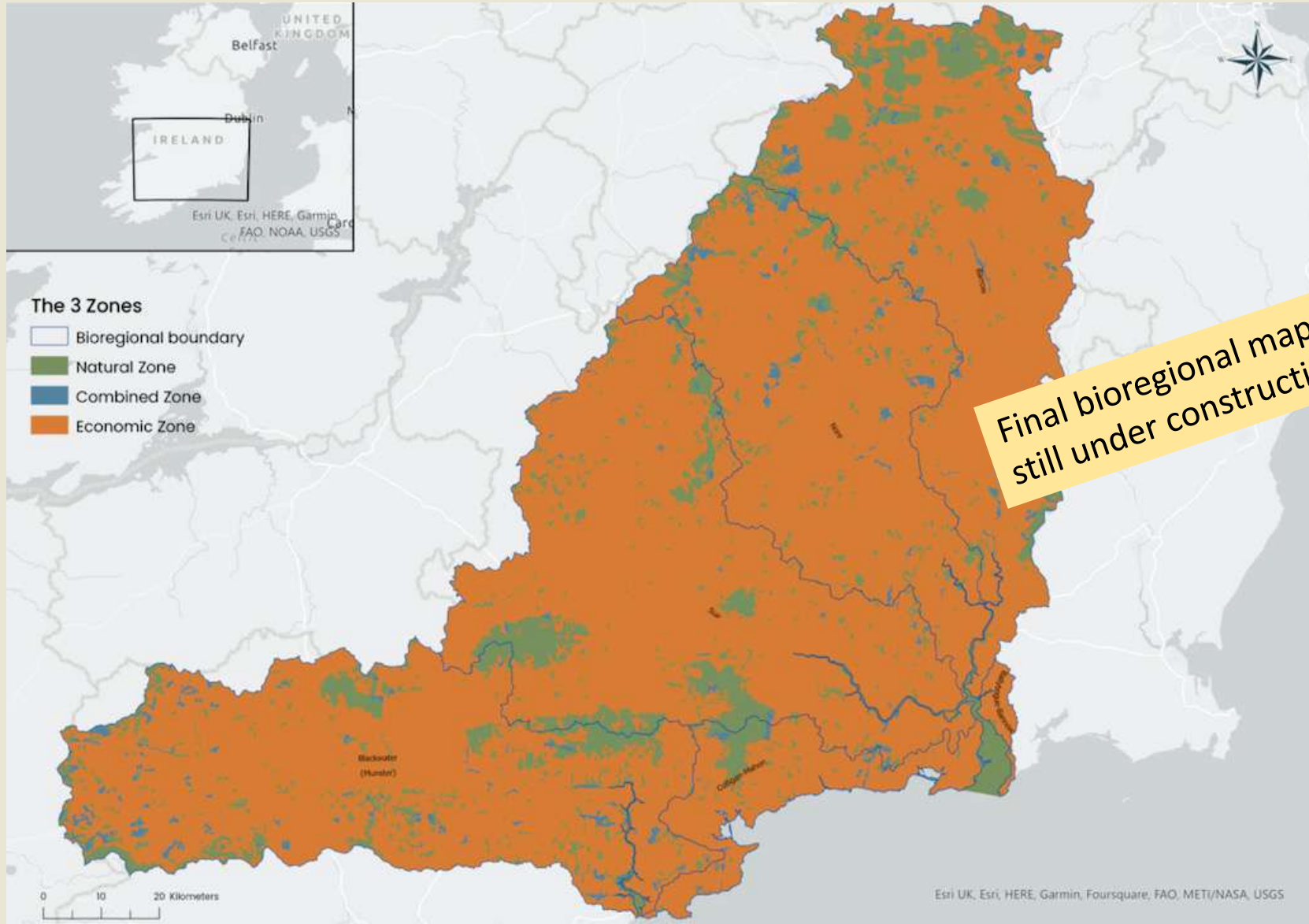


Economic zone

For delivering sustainable economic productivity with dedicated areas for value-adding activities like processing, typically concentrated in urban areas.

Mapping the SE bioregion – 3 zones

Our bioregion is dominated by the zone driven by financial returns.



Final bioregional maps
still under construction

Mapping the SE bioregion – detailed community mapping

Mapping of community-led water quality projects (in collaboration with Dunhill Multi-Education Centre, funded by Lawpro).

The image shows a screenshot of the Explorer.Land website. The left panel displays the project details for "Anne Valley Water Conservation Initiatives". The right panel shows a satellite map of the project area with several numbered markers (1, 2, 7) and a "Show project area" button. A notification bubble is visible on the map.

explorer.land EXPLORE FUND ABOUT BLOG HELP FEEDBACK LOGIN REGISTER

PROJECT

Anne Valley Water Conservation Initiatives

Home News Sites SDGs Contact

County Waterford • Ireland Started in January 2023 Active
Education

Sustainable Development Goals

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION Life Below Water
14 LIFE BELOW WATER

Share your conservation initiative

Show project area

Anne Valley Water Conservation Initiatives

Check out the latest post
Integrated Constructed Wetlands...
about 2 months ago

explorer.land mapbox 3000 ft 500 m

Workshop part 1

Current collective knowledge



Q1: What examples do we know of that are models for 4R land-use and water-use? *From within the bioregion, and as inspiration from outside it too*

Q2: What examples do we have of land and water in the bioregion that might be open to applying new ideas? *From within the bioregion*

Group 1

Group 2

Examples of 4R Land/water use (in/out bioreg.)

- Community Farming**
 - 1980s - Este example
 - farmers need to sign 5 year lease not to be any condition possible
 - Security of tenure
 - Right people
 - ML = densely populated
 - work together (Co-op) / (Method)
 - eg. Daniel
 - CSA farming in the 90s a nobody wanted to do the work - John Conroy
 - Farm Shop
 - Visitor farm
 - ENERGY** and solar farm
 - SEL
- Connecting Land owner to land-user**
 - eg. allotments / Co-ownership
 - Community organic veg growing
 - responsibility water use insurance [TRUST] through people involved or "one person" (Co-owner)
- CO-LIVING**
 - care for water-owner
 - Thursday @ Woodcreek
 - Thursday @ Tully's
 - men's/women's sheds
- POWDS (Re-WILD)**
 - Forest Schools?
 - Eco-tourism (Christine Thomas for land-owner)
 - need to drinkable water.
- Agro-forestry**
 - mixed elements
 - eg. Fior Bhia Farm
 - prof. McAdam
 - big grant aids (10 years) restrictive variety of trees??
- HOUSING**
 - planning permission
 - communities of tiny houses + compost loos??
 - social benefits

Examples of Land/water where could try new approaches (in/out bioreg.)

- Donal Tully - Passage East
- Anne Valley
- Dunhill Centre
- John + Brigid Carney
- Richard + Eleanor Murphy (Robins Glen)
- Campmill
- Pieter Ploeg
- Cheek point
- Hugh O'Brien → Council space eg. GIY
- Golf courses?
- Uplands
- Carraigmore

Examples of 4R Land/sea use

- Rewilding**
- Food → connect local community → local food**
- Multiple use**
 - walkways, wood bed
 - rivers, walk
 - connect biodiversity
- Nature corridor**
- agro-ecology**
- scenic view designation 4R = I**
- Natural species scheme**
 - 10K - 1st year +
- Use of existing laws**
- Preserve biodiversity value**
- Fishing?**
 - Access?
- Ecosystem services**
 - current = potential
 - excitant in off setting
- Native Woodlands + public water**
 - Ballynacree (Rathfriland)
- Develop an alluvial ortho to land for the village.**
- People buy shares of a farm.**
 - Willingford, sample
 - Carraigmore Estate
- Rewilding**
 - eg. last cat
- Need the Right Series structure!**
- Requests for woodland**
- Community capital**
 - eg. lease to landowner
 - eg. grant
 - use community capital
- Preserve for next gen.**
 - Being submitted to next county
 - last plan (Garran + 2016)
- Native Woodlands + public water**
- SETU?**
- social hub**
 - South
 - schools
- shallow fish?**
 - and other uses of the marshes
 - + interaction with water
 - trawlers
 - fish
 - trawlers
 - trawlers
- Solar farm + dig**
- aesthetics**
 - walks
 - tourism
 - ecotourism
- Mixed use**
 - Forestry
 - Forage
 - Ag.
- wider context community hub**
- Need the Right Series structure!**
- Examples of Land/sea use to try**

Summary Q1

What models and ideas for 4R land/water use?

- Rewilding
- Food grown for community markets not global markets
- Nature and wildlife corridors
- Agro-ecology
- Natural Species Tree Scheme
- Food forests
- Scenic view designations for aesthetic value, eco-tourism implications (Inspiration 4R)
- Walkways – river walks and trails
- Shellfish – interaction with trawlers
- Existing housing – meetings? storage? ‘Tuesdays at Woodhouse gatherings for mental and physical health, contact with nature, social capital etc.
- Ecosystem services – ponds, riparian zones
- Solar farms and vegetables mixed
- Link to research at SETU
- Community shares
- Scouts, schools and village connection
- Food hub distribution point
- Community supported agriculture
- Carbon offsetting possibilities – e.g. with Coillte?
- Mixed social and farming with nature
- Transition pension lease agreement – be paid to let others grow organic food
- Community farming – as tried in 1980s and did not work. learnings?
- CSA farming – will anyone want to do the work?
- Allotments
- Co-ownership models for community organic veg. growing
- Agro-forestry
- Aronia berries – soil type dependent.
- Test site for experiments with new crops?
- Ponds
- Forest schools
- Eco-tourism – income stream for land-owner
- Housing – zoned for eco-village/housing?
- Tiny houses that need less planning permission
- Co-living – care for older people, residential, weekly gatherings
- Fior Bhia farm for inspiration
- Prof McAdam
- Energy – wind and solar? SEC
- Meithal/Comar attitudes – Dunhill inspiration?
- Farm shops
- Visitor farms – lamas or trees

Summary Q2

What land/water might be open to applying new ideas?

- Donal Tully – Passage East, 22 acres grassland, some forest, 400m nearshore river.
- Anne Valley – through Dunhill Ecopark
- John and Bridget Carney – 40 acres, left to sheep grazing for now
- Richard and Eleanor Murphy – are experimenting on own farm in Glenmore
- Camphill – Paul Henry new model
- Pieter Ploeg – smallholding in Knockmealdowns, new crops (Aronia), forest school
- Cheekpoint 1 – Ray McGrath's field, house, woodland and neighbouring marsh
- Cheekpoint 2 – Two fields owned by Scouts
- Waterford County Council – open space strategy for city, golf courses and neighbourhoods
- Uplands – upland farmer group open to considering new income streams



Next steps

Discussion and next steps



Discussion

To do:

Summarise the most relevant models with more detail. For example, fact sheets on:

- Community owned farms (*Herenboeren*)
- Tree planting schemes eligibility and incentives (NTAS)
- Forest schools, connection to local schools
- Older people – opportunities for partnering on mental/physical health
- Nature and wildlife corridors (*Weald to Waves*)
- Succession is key to mindset, future farm-size and more. Research on how many have successors.
- What is the state of the advice being given to farmers at the moment? Who is being educated in these ways of thinking? Find out. Ask students what they would do with land?
- Develop response to need for knowledge dissipation – for example with new modules being investigated by BWL/DMEC
- Food distribution – hubs and local delivery (*Food Hub Ireland*)

Note: nearly **ALL** of these relate to concepts that are emerging as part of the ‘BWL portfolio’ and being supported by the BWL infrastructure. Supporting the whole portfolio and the BWL support platform would be a good idea!



Next steps

1. Week of 5th February

We will convene a BWL thematic circle on the topic of:

“The importance of understanding and designing innovative models around farm succession”

Planned for the week beginning the **5th February**.

Get in touch if you'd like to join this circle.

2. Provisional date: Sunday 18th February

We will try again to visit Donal Tully's land and arrange for the sun to shine this time.

Provisional date **18th February** 2.30-5pm

To be confirmed when weather and suitability prove possible

3. Ongoing

Consider and develop strategy for BWL match-making, value stacking and knowledge sharing when it comes to ‘What to do with land’. Do this in larger entangled bioregional manner, looking for opportunities in emerging concepts in Ireland. Link to inspiration from other bioregions – e.g. fieldtrip to Herenboeren, Netherlands, in April for stakeholders who might implement this in Ireland.

While we move forward, we will strive to remember

(summary of reflections in the workshop):

- The need for the right skills
- Learnings from 1980s – security, tenure
- Insurance
- Responsible water use
- Trust comes before and during everything
- Enough people need to be interested - one person or co-owners?
- CSA farming – will anyone want to do the work? They didn't in the 1990s
- Next chance to influence WCC Development Plan, for example on zoning, is 2026
- Population explosion might happen in next 50 years – design for feeding ourselves not exporting 94% dairy
- The importance of the intangible

“When you are bucking the trend, making the decision is the hardest part”

Workshop participant