

Seal Rescue Ireland - Tara Glen Habitat Restoration Collaboration

Ireland was once covered with over 80% native woodlands. However, today only 2% remains, which means there is a huge opportunity to reverse deforestation and bring back all the fantastic ecosystem services which native trees provide.

In the cold, dark Winter days nearing the end of 2020, Seal Rescue Ireland (SRI) approached Tara Glen about partnering on a project that would improve local biodiversity, improve water quality, fight climate change, and provide a wild amenity for visitors to enjoy. Following a discussion with Pauline Mooney, Tara Glen's General Manager, SRI's Project Manager, Jeshua Taucher, was welcomed to visit Tara Glen for a walking tour of the site. Following a discussion with Pauline Mooney, Tara Glen's General Manager. Jeshua Tacher, SRI's Project manager, was welcomed to visit the golf course for a walking tour of the potential plant site. Tim Popplewell and Paul Ryan, Tara Glen's Greenkeeping staff, met with Jeshua to discuss some ideal planting locations. Tim agreed on eight sites which were primarily grassy scrub on the outskirts of the well-kept golf course. Restoring these areas will not impact the usability of the current amenities but will encourage biodiversity to thrive.

Jeshua stated, "Native trees are phenomenal at cleaning our air, water and soil, and they provide habitats for all kinds of wildlife. Our Habitat Restoration Project has been running for nearly 3 years now. It began on a small riverside site in Courtown Woods, which was impacted by heavy machinery. Public interest in that planting event in which 300 people from the local community showed up to help us plant 600 trees inspired us to continue developing our Habitat Restoration efforts. In 2020, we managed to plant 3,800 native trees of 12 species in the Courtown/ Riverchapel area. For this, we were proud to be awarded 1st Prize in Wexford County Council's 'Keep Wexford Beautiful' Competition, under the category 'Best Community Initiative that Tackles and Mitigates the Impacts of Climate Change'. As public engagement and recognition for this project grew, so too did our aspirations, and SRI has now entered into a partnership with Salesforce, a global tech company, who have agreed to sponsor 20,000 additional native trees!"

Jeshua went on to say, "It was incredible to receive this sponsorship from Salesforce to cover the cost of trees and planting materials. The only thing left was to find land on which to plant them. That is when we reached out to Tara Glen, who was extremely welcoming and supportive of our efforts."

From that point, Tara Glen's Greenkeeping staff team have been working closely with the Volunteers from SRI to ensure the trees get the best start to life. So far, in 2021, 2,517 bare-rooted saplings from 19 different native species have been transplanted into Tara Glen and the surrounding environment. The trees, and restoration sites, are being carefully monitored by SRI, so there is a record of the ecological impact these activities have on the local ecosystem as the trees grow.

Next time you are out and about on the Tara Glen Golf Course, make sure to take some time to appreciate all the beautiful new trees that have been introduced to the landscape.

