

# **Do you Enjoy the Great Outdoors?**

**31<sup>st</sup> March 2008**

*Wicklow Rural Partnership is leading a partnership project to develop an Outdoor Recreation Strategy for Co. Wicklow. The Rathdrum-based rural development company is now seeking the views of community groups and participants in outdoor activities.*

Every week, increasing numbers of people are taking to the hills, forests, rivers and coast of Wicklow for sports and leisure activities. This activity needs to be managed, to minimise damage and disturbance, and also to improve the recreation opportunities for visitors and local residents. Wicklow Rural Partnership has joined with other organisations including Wicklow County Council, Coillte, Wicklow IFA, Fáilte Ireland, the Irish Sports Council, Wicklow Uplands Council and the National Parks & Wildlife Service to prepare an Outdoor Recreation Strategy for Co. Wicklow.

A questionnaire has been posted to community groups around the county, asking about outdoor recreation activity in their area and seeking ideas for future development. With excellent examples like the Tinahely Railway Walk, the potential for community-led recreation projects in Wicklow is clear.

Individual participants in outdoor activities such as hillwalking, mountain-biking, birdwatching, sailing and horse-riding are being encouraged to complete an online questionnaire ([www.wicklowleader.ie/outdoorrecreation.php](http://www.wicklowleader.ie/outdoorrecreation.php)) to put forward their views and suggestions on outdoor recreation in Wicklow.

With increased funding through the new rural development programme starting later this year, and support through the national development plan, there is scope for private and community-based initiatives to cater for the increasing recreational demand.

WRP Manager Brian Kehoe says "This is an exciting time, there is a sense that outdoor recreation can become a major contributor to the Wicklow economy and to the health and well-being of the local population."

A public workshop to discuss the strategy will be held on Wednesday 7th May at 8pm in the Glendalough Hotel. The finished strategy will be available in September 2008.

## **Note for Editors**

### **For further information contact:**

Brian Kehoe, Manager, Wicklow Rural Partnership

Telephone: 0404 46977 / 087 2949768

E-mail: [bkehoe@wicklowleader.ie](mailto:bkehoe@wicklowleader.ie)

Website: [www.wicklowleader.ie/outdoorrecreation.php](http://www.wicklowleader.ie/outdoorrecreation.php)

*Wicklow Rural Partnership delivers a range of rural development initiatives including the LEADER programme, the Rural Social Scheme and the Rural Transport Programme.*