



UL ENGAGE

Community Briefing

2017 No. 20

Lough Gur Project

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UL Engage

share

enable

grow

Promoting University Community Collaboration

Project Aim

Our project aims to help the Lough Gur Development group increase public awareness and thus visitation of Lough Gur. The intention was to come up with new and creative solutions that would show the value of what Lough Gur has to offer. This was to be done with particular focus on the local community who has easy access to Lough Gur yet does not come.

Project Objectives

Social Media Project: To facilitate growth in Lough Gur's community presence through increased social media outreach to increase visitation. This project aims to target local demographics as requested by the community partner through chain reaction networking throughout the local social media sphere.

Wildlife Brochure Project: Add reason to come to Lough Gur, particularly for nature enthusiasts and repeat visitors. The birding brochure will allow bird watchers to look for different bird by using the pictures and descriptions provided, as well as gain knowledge of seasonal variation in Lough Gur birds thus incentivizing seasonal return visits.

Outdoor Art Gallery Project: This project aims to incentivize visitation to Lough Gur, increase outreach to the arts community, and provide a way for Lough Gur to obtain additional funding. The art gallery would attract local artists and interested art consumers, who would then purchase the art. The artists would give Lough Gur a portion of the proceeds for their promotion and hosting of the event. This would also provide more reasons for people who have already been to Lough Gur to return.

UL Student Union Trip: This project aims to increase visitation from the UL student community, one of the biggest demographics in the county of Limerick. By providing subsidized transportation in the form of a student run event, this trip would draw students out to Lough Gur to enjoy what it has to offer, and spread the merits of Lough Gur through word of mouth.

Project Rationale

This project is being undertaken to benefit Lough Gur. Lough Gur is an important heritage site that needs more visitors in order to remain open. We want to increase the visitor count to ensure that Lough Gur will continue to operate for years to come. The Lough Gur Heritage Centre provides many opportunities for both locals and tourists to learn about the rich history in this part of Ireland, and it would be incredibly detrimental to the area to have the centre close.

COMMUNITY

Overview of Community Organisation

Lough Gur is a non-profit organization that promotes, preserves, and protects history, archaeology, folklore, and the environment. Lough Gur is a place for people to come and walk, read and listen about the history, and experience the heritage centre. It includes the largest ancient stone circle in Ireland, a lake with archaeological significance, and castle ruins. The newly renovated heritage centre features interactive exhibits suitable for all ages, replicas from archaeological finds at Lough Gur, and a small gift and snack shop.

Their philosophy is as stated: *“The objectives of Lough Gur Development Society Ltd is to promote, preserve and protect the rich culture and heritage of Lough Gur for local and international visitors in association with organisations with direct responsibility for the area. Including Limerick City & County Council, Office of Public Works and the Department of Culture and Heritage.”*



Community Partners

Kate Harrold is the manager of the Lough Gur Development group and oversees Lough Gur as a whole. She is the community partner for the Lough Gur Practicum group. She has over 16 years of experience in the tourism and heritage sector, she now works to promote, protect and preserve the internationally important site of Lough Gur, County Limerick. In parallel, she also is studying for an MBA at the University of Limerick. Kate has been working with our practicum group to give us feedback and suggestions as to how we could maximize the results of our project.

STUDENTS



Molly Brantner- Berry College

Originally from Maine, but attends college in Georgia at Berry College. I am in my second year and majoring in Biology. I enjoy hiking, biking, and doing just about anything outside.



Alex Brausen - University of Minnesota

Born and raised in the state of Minnesota within the United States. In my fourth and final year studying computer science at the University of Minnesota. I have been on many sports teams, especially for ice hockey, and love working with a team towards a collective goal.



Rebecca Adler – University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

I am a third year Technical Writing and Communication major with a focus on IT and Design. My interests include reading, design, and tortoises. I am originally from Los Angeles, California.



Zachary Pierce – Northeastern University

I am a 3rd year engineering student from Maine, USA. I'm pursuing a degree in Environmental Engineering at Northeastern University in Boston, MA, which I hope to use to work on water distribution or purification projects after graduation. I'm also an avid snowboarder, surfer, and actor in my free time.

OUTCOMES

Social Media Plan

The social media plan has yet to be implemented by the Lough Gur staff as it was only submitted within the last couple of weeks. However, when our community partner Kate presented this work to the Chairperson, Manager, and Board members of Lough Gur Development at a board meeting she received positive feedback which was then relayed to us. The Lough Gur leadership seems to be excited to implement this plan, and its projected impact will be long lasting and easily trackable through likes and outreach statistics provided by the social media services. The social media plan has been incorporated into the board's future plans to promote Lough Gur.

Wildlife Brochure

The Wildlife Brochure can be used to promote the location to nature lovers and bird watchers. This will increase visitor numbers from a previously untapped area of the population. The website has a section on local birds, but it is not easily accessible on the go, especially if people want to unplug from their devices. This brochure will provide a handy way for people to know what birds, butterflies, and dragonflies are around the area. The brochure is also eye-catching, which Lough Gur can use to promote itself. The brochure can be posted on social media as a way of attracting this group of nature lovers to Lough Gur. Even people who aren't avid bird watchers can benefit from the brochure, as it will provide them with more information about the birds that they are seeing around the lake. The brochure is accessible through the following link for potential future work:

https://www.canva.com/design/DACmE338PUQ/share?role=EDITOR&token=-K-26r6EO3k2wk4_e8YTYQ&utm_content=DACmE338PUQ&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton

Outdoor Art Gallery Project

Unfortunately, there is not an immediate outcome of the outdoor art gallery project that we will see this semester. The idea behind the outdoor gallery is outlined in a document and will be passed on to the next Practicum Lough Gur group. The ideal outcome of this idea will result in an outdoor art gallery of sculptures on display for people to come see at Lough Gur. After being on display, the pieces would then be auctioned off to raise money for Lough Gur. Doing this should get crowds out to Lough Gur as well as raise money which is always a goal. Hopefully these potential outcomes will come to life with the subsequent practicum groups.

Student Union Trip to Lough Gur

The contact with the Student Union has exposed the potential benefit of coordinated trips to Lough Gur for students. A business plan style report has been created to inform the next group of students on who they should contact in the future to ensure that UL students have the opportunity to visit Lough Gur in future academic semesters. This includes: further contact with the Student Union, reaching out to the International Society to gauge interest in including Lough Gur in one of their trips, and seeing if Campus Life Services would be interested in putting together a similar trip as the proposed trip run by the Student Union.

TESTIMONIAL



"The Chairperson, Manager, and Board members of Lough Gur Development are very grateful to the international students who worked diligently for the last 6 weeks to capture the unique qualities of Lough Gur. The work that was carried out will be included in our future plans to promote, protect and preserve the area. It was a very rewarding experience. We look forward to working with University of Limerick Students again in the near future"

-Kate Harrold, Lough Gur Community Partner

Due to the nature of our project, the only person we worked with at Lough Gur was Kate, and the Lough Gur visitors and staff have not been impacted by our project yet. Further testimonials to relate the success of the project after the fact could be gathered by next semester's students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On-going Projects to Continue

- Outdoor art gallery idea to be implemented: see appendix 1
- Student outing to Lough Gur through Student Union: see appendix 2

For Future Students

- Research legal logistics of Lough Gur and all their regulations regarding further planning for the outdoor art gallery project
- Look at our past ideas and achievements from Autumn 2017 to carry on with or get inspiration
- Make a follow up to the brochure project (appendix 3-7):
 - Add images to make the brochure more visually appealing
 - This requires finding pictures that have no copyright restrictions
 - Create a “kids” version with colouring pages and scavenger hunts
 - Create a brochure based on plant life or other wildlife
 - Combine the brochure with a binocular rental scheme
- Contact the Student Union or similar groups as soon as possible to allow time for them to sort out the details of a trip to Lough Gur
 - Be persistent in these efforts
 - Similar groups include the international society, or campus life services
 - When a trip is set up and finalized, be sure to promote it around campus
 - Suggest that this be a recurring trip each semester
 - Possibly run some sort of event associated with the trip
 - Photo contest
 - Costume contest (around Halloween for next year)
- Perform an evaluation of whether Lough Gur is following the proposed social media plan effectively
 - If they are, evaluate how the plan has impacted their online presence, likes, and visitation over time. This requires communication with employees and management for their perceived effect of the plan, as well as measurement of social media interaction over time
- Offer to assist Lough Gur staff when necessary to photograph events and draft social media posts

For Community Partner

- If not already done, assign a point person for social media posts, who is to proceed under the advisement of our submitted document
- Check in monthly or bimonthly to ensure the plan is being adhered to
- Print and prominently display the brochure we made, such that visitors are aware it is there

GALLERY



This is Lough Gur from which the entire heritage site gets its name. Behind the lake here is where the outdoor art gallery would be set up.



This is the heritage centre at Lough Gur and contains an exhibition showing the history of Lough Gur, as well as a small shop with snacks, drinks, and gifts.



This is the view from the top of the hill on the audio guided folklore walk. It is a good point for bird watching with binoculars and our bird brochure, as is the rest of this walk around Lough Gur.

APPENDICES

Outdoor Art Gallery Plan Suggestion for Lough Gur

Prepared by: Molly Brantner of University of Limerick Practicum Fall 2017

Idea: The outdoor art gallery plan is based on the idea on another reserve in the United States. The idea is for on the flat path of Lough Gur (the one without the audio-guides) to set up the exhibit. The art should be outdoor art sculptures that would usually sit in people's yards, patios, or somewhere outside. They should be able to withstand weather. The sculptures should ideally be made by local artists, so the gallery can promote local business and the city of Limerick. The sculptures could be on display outside all summer and possibly some of spring/fall for people walking to see. Since the weather is best in the summer, that is presumably when most people would come to Lough Gur, so the exhibit would get the most attention then. In the fall, Lough Gur could then have an auction, and auction off the art pieces to anyone that wants to buy them. The profit from the auction could then be split between the reserve and the local artist. This allows people to not only come to Lough Gur, but also possibly raise money for Lough Gur as well. This project could also be a one-day event, but the idea of it being more long term is so people come back and bring people to Lough to see the art.

Places of Contact:

- Gemma O'Mahony at Lough Gur
- Local artists or galleries in Limerick
 - Limerick Art Society
 - Art Limerick
 - Limerick City Council

Advertisement: Advertisement will need to get made to get people to come to Lough Gur to see the art once the event develops. The social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) should be used.

Potential Problems: Outdoor art can get stolen or damaged since it is not protected by being inside. This is a risk that artists or whoever provides the art will have to be willing to take. A solution would be to possibly bring the pieces inside for safe keeping overnight.

What has already happened: We as the 2017 UL practicum group has been in contact with Gemma already and she has stated that this project needs to get done another time due to timing and other aspects that need to get addressed. This project could be the main focus for another UL Practicum Lough Gur group (should they decide to take it on) and will take lots of planning and responsibly. It can be done. The first point of contact should be Kate and Gemma at Lough Gur and meet with them to get the logistics of Lough Gur and how they want this project to unfold. For inspiration on how the outdoor gallery is intended to play out, please visit this website: <https://www.wellsreserve.org/visit/summer-of-art-science>

Appendix 1: Outline for Outdoor Art Gallery Project

APPENDICES

During the Fall semester, we managed to get in contact with the Student Union about setting up a sponsored trip for students to Lough Gur. The contact was with the Student Union President, Jack Shelly, who can be contacted at supresident@ul.ie

The details we gave about the benefits of the trip are as follows:

In the heritage centre students will be able to enjoy an exhibit that includes tons of archaeological discoveries and the history behind them, some of which dates back over 6000 years. There's also a small gift shop and snacks for sale. Outside the students will be able to explore around the lake through trails that are scattered with historical significance. There are also audio based self guided tours around the area that explain the history behind each section of the trail. The audio also contains folklore that has its origin in the Lough Gur area*. When all the exploring is done, there's an area to sit down and relax to enjoy the nature and possibly have a snack/lunch. The Grange Stone Circle is the largest known stone circle in Ireland, and has its own share of history to offer. The Lough Gur area is rich with history and a very local attraction that is often overlooked.

*The audio guides and exhibit are usually a collective 4 euro fee for each student. This cost could be included in the trip price, and we can also talk with our contacts at Lough Gur about potentially working out a cheaper group price for this if it's desirable.

The Lough Gur community would benefit from the publicity gained from such an event. Their main issue they've been running into recently is that not enough people know the area even exists so having a group of students to have gone to spread the word of their trip would be a huge benefit itself. In addition, a photography competition would increase the publicity even further, especially if done through social media. With the consent of the photographers, the photos could be used by the Lough Gur community members on things such as their website.

There's also potential for this to be a recurring trip each semester if it's well received. They actually have a pretty informational website that you might find some other useful information on at <http://loughgur.com/>

A proposed timeline (for a Saturday we figured) was as follows:

11:30am - 12:00pm: Travel to Lough Gur
12:00pm - 2:50pm: Explore heritage center and trails around lake
2:50pm - 3:00pm: Travel to stone circle
3:00pm - 3:30pm: Enjoy the stone circle area
3:30pm - 4:00pm Travel back to campus


Appendix 2: Student Union Outing Follow Through Plan for Next Practicum Group

APPENDICES

2017

THE BIRDS OF LOUGH GUR

Summer, Winter, Resident, and Migratory



NATURE AT LOUGH GUR

Lough Gur has an incredible variety of birds and wildlife. Here is a list of common birds, dragonflies, and butterflies that can be found at and around Lough Gur.

CONTENTS:

**WATER BIRDS
BIRDS OF PREY - 2**

**WADERS
GULLS - 3**

SONGBIRDS - 4

**CROWS
DRAGONFLY
BUTTERFLY - 5**

Appendix 3: 'The Birds of Lough Gur' Brochure

APPENDICES

Water Birds

Resident

Mute swan
Greylag geese
Cormorant
Great crested grebe
Little grebe
Moorhen
Coot
Mallard
Tufted duck
Grey heron

Winter

Whooper swan
Pink- footed geese [occasional]
Black necked grebe [rare]
Wigeon
Teal [a few stay and breed]
Shoveller [a few stay and breed]
Gadwall
Pochard
Goldeneye
Shelduck
Ruddy duck [occasional]
Ring neck duck [rare]
Pintail [occasional]
Little egret



Birds of Prey



Resident

Barn Owl
Merlin
Kestrel
Peregrine
Sparrow hawk
Long eared owl

Winter

Hen harrier



Waders

Summer	Winter
Common sandpiper	Lapwing Golden plover Curlew Redshank

Gulls

Resident	Winter
Snipe Black headed	Dunlin Lesser- black back

Migratory

Wimbrel

APPENDICES

Songbirds

Resident

Wood pigeon
Collared dove
Pheasant
Kingfisher
House sparrow
Reed bunting
Skylark
Meadow pipit
Dunnock
Pied wagtail
Grey wagtail
Wren
Stone chat
Robin
Blackbird
Mistle thrush
Song thrush
Starling
Long tail tit
Blue tit
Great tit
Coal tit
Treetreeper
Gold crest
Chaffinch
Goldfinch
Greenfinch
Bullfinch

Winter

Blackcap
Fieldfare
Redwing
Redpoll
Siskin

Summer

Swallow
Swift
House martin
Sand martin
Sedge warbler
Whitethroat
Willow warbler
Chiffchaff
Blackcap
Spotted flycatcher

Crows

Resident

Hooded crow
Jackdaw
Raven
Magpie
Rook



Dragonfly

Common blue damselfly
Blue tail damselfly
Large red damselfly
Azure damselfly
Emerald damselfly
Common darter
Four spot chaser
Hairy dragonfly
Brown hawker
Autumn hawker

Butterfly

Small white
Large white
Green vein white
Orange tip
Common blue
Peacock
Red admiral
Painted lady
Small tortoiseshell
Meadow brown
Ringlet
Speckled wood

COMMUNITY VIDEO

Abstract

The Lough Gur project is designed to promote Lough Gur through advertisement as well as generate revenue for them through increased visitation. Some of the challenges posed by this project were having very limited money and staff at Lough Gur to work with, as well as a limited time frame of about three months. To achieve our advertising and visitation goal, we have come up with 4 solutions. The first was creating a wildlife brochure of animals and plants at Lough Gur which Rebecca designed. The brochure is the most successful, tangible project of the four and will be used in the near future at Lough Gur. The second plan is to create an outdoor art gallery of sculptures at Lough Gur. This plan depicts how the gallery will work and how the sculptures could then be auctioned off to raise money for Lough Gur, as well as contacts and a specific procedure. The outdoor art gallery idea could not be put into action this semester because it is best run in the summer months, and would require several months of planning in order to facilitate involvement from artists and advertisement. We have left a business plan detailing it for the next UL Practicum Lough Gur group to pick it up and carry it out. The third plan was to create a social media analysis coupled with a set of recommendations for staff at Lough Gur to follow. This project will facilitate a free way for Lough Gur to improve upon their existing advertising scheme. The fourth was to organize a student outing to Lough Gur through the student union. This project was unable to be facilitated by the UL Student Union at this time, but they were interested in the idea. We are again leaving a blueprint for contact and procedure for the next practicum group to use to lobby the Student Union to finalize the trip, and potentially make it a regular event. The impacts of these projects may not be seen immediately, as they are long-term solutions that we are hoping the following UL Practicum Lough Gur groups and staff will take on and further develop.

Video Link: <https://media.heanet.ie/page/5c96255345f154649fd9c7771546a750>



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