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Page

26



Members of the LIFE Insular project, which aims to protect Donegal's sand dunes, at Ards Forest Park. Ards along with Murravagh beach and Rinclevan are included in the project.

Importance of Donegal's sand dunes highlighted

AN environmental campaign is to run throughout the summer highlighting the fragility of Donegal's sand dune systems and emphasising their importance in coastal protection, countering climate impacts and providing a habitat for unique wildlife species.

The EU-funded 'LIFE Insular' project was launched as part of World Sand Dune Day and will see **Coillte Nature** and the National Parks and Wildlife Service take steps in collaboration with local communities to protect and conserve sand dune areas at Murravagh beach, Ards Forest Park and Rinclevan near Horn Head. A fourth site at Curracloe in Wexford is also

Murravagh, Ards and Rinclevan included in special programme

included in the scheme.

The project will work with local communities and scientific experts to develop long-term conservation management plans for these areas. The aim is to increase the biodiversity value and resilience of the ecosystems in the face of climate change and rising sea levels so that future generations can continue to enjoy the areas in a sustainable way.

The initiative will also seek to learn about the history and ongoing value of the sites from local communities and raise public awareness about the relevance, natural values and ecosystem services provided by these important sand dune ecosystems.

LIFE Insular is a five-year project and environmental surveying of the project areas and community engagement will take place this

summer.

Coastal Specialist with National Parks and Wildlife, Aoife Delaney, said: "Sand dunes are beautiful natural places that are home to hundreds of plant and animals.

"What's more, they help us by providing a recreational amenity, reducing the impacts of storms on the coast and giving refuge to pollinators.

"It is time to think about how we will manage these areas in future to ensure that we can get the best from this priceless resource."

People who visit the project sites or live nearby are encouraged to fill out a user survey at www.lifeinsular.eu.



The Townparks girls join together for a group photograph to mark the occasion at the reunion of residents in Convoys last Saturday.



Reggie Lindsay, Maresa Gallagher and Kathleen Lindsay enjoying the reunion for residents of Townparks in Convoys.