

Case study

Lough Key Forest & Activity Park, Ireland



Lough Key Forest Activity Park contributes significantly to the economic redevelopment of the predominantly rural area and is already a major resort type

Lough Key is a park with many unique, natural and historical features from its 19th-century parkland with majestic trees, follies, bridges and canals to the numerous walks and trails through the native woodlands, Bog garden and forests.

This vast estate is predominantly covered by forest and woodland with both broadleaf and conifer trees growing within the Park. The broadleaf trees include ash, oak, beech, lime, sycamore and horse chestnut, while the most prominent conifers are Norway spruce, Sitka spruce, Scots pine and the magnificent western red cedar.

<https://loughkey.ie/>



**Environment
Sustainability**



**Wellbeing
Activities**

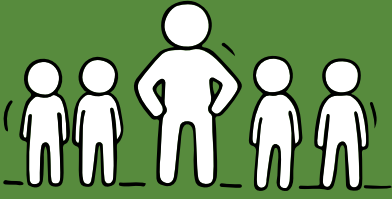


**Events & Groups
Forest Trails**



**Caravan &
Camping**

Linking economies and stakeholders for commercial partnership



Activities & Commercial Model



Sustainability and Trees



Coillte believes that this redevelopment provides a model for similar forest park developments both in Ireland and abroad, marrying as it does landowners, with commercial objectives, tourism businesses, and organizations such as the local authorities, who have other objectives including the economic and social development of rural communities.

Lough Key Forest Experiences include local tourism SMEs e.g.,

- ❖ Electric Bike Trails and Zipit Forest Adventures
- ❖ A **circular trail** which brings together the existing tunnels and a **tree-top walk** in an innovative and iconic mix which will attract a cross-section of visitors
- ❖ The **Adventure House** for 15- to 35-year-olds
- ❖ A **welcome center** with catering, retail and rest facilities
- ❖ The **pay-to-play zone** for younger people
- ❖ A range of **forest recreation activities** in the surrounding park
- ❖ **Caravan and Camping Park** and car parking for over 300 vehicles.

They began their sustainability programme through Fáilte Ireland, focused on reducing our carbon footprint as much as possible. For example, they identify trees as the ‘**lungs of the earth**’ on their website.

‘Trees are often called the lungs of the earth. By managing the park sustainably, we’re making sure our little forestry area is helping to keep our planet healthy’.

Trees and Plants



Green Friendly Approaches



Wellbeing



To allow the flora and fauna to live and breathe, they leave certain areas to grow naturally without being “manicured”. And to make sure trees continue to flourish for generations to come, they replant every one that falls or needs to be knocked. The fallen trees are put to good use; their bark is used for mulch to keep the cycle of life rotating.

Energy

They endeavour to be as **energy-efficient** as possible by using wood pellet heating and underfloor heating. Their solar panels help them to generate their own energy and they use rechargeable batteries where possible.

Waste

They follow the mantra of “**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**”, meaning very little gets thrown away. Recycling and compost bins are in place and all their takeaway packaging is eco-friendly.

Promote Healthy and Enjoyable Activities

Their outdoor activities are designed to be a positive choice for **both body and mind**. Their park provides opportunities for both land and water-based activities, including Ireland’s only tree-top canopy walk.

Whether visitors come to the park for an exhilarating bike ride or a thoughtful stroll, they are confident they will leave feeling all the better for it.

They also make nature and wellbeing **accessible** to all so that everyone can enjoy the benefits of nature and natural landscapes.

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