

# Making Sense of the Cummeragh Catchment

Last month we introduced you to the **SMARTlab Skellig's CoDesRes team** and in this month's article **Anita McKeown** brings us on a fascinating journey back to more glacial times.

The formation of much of Ireland's terra ferma is due to glaciation and is one of its most interesting and obvious physical attributes of Ireland and no more so than here in south Kerry with its moraines and water-filled corries or cooms. The Munsterian or Kerry-Cork glaciation was centred around the Kenmare river and developed independently of the main Midlandian ice sheet that formed Ireland's great plain.

Some of Ireland's most striking mountain landscapes have been shaped by glacial erosion and recent research (Dunlop) has shown that the landbound ice extended west for 90Km and more out towards and reaching the Atlantic Continental Shelf – perhaps this explains why two thirds of Ireland's land mass is under the sea?

But if this glaciation could tell you the story of its formation and its impact on forming the land around you – what details might it share or think important to tell you or omit? Would it talk of climate and deposits, or the sounds of cracking and splitting rock as its slow but powerful rock-grinding movements made mountains? Have you ever imagined what it would be like to talk to mountains made this way or the lakes and rivers that filled the voids as the glaciers retreated?

The Cummeragh River Catchment drains the water from 120sq km and then connects through Lough Currane, Waterville, Lough Derriana and Cloonaghlin, as well as eight other loughs above them. Set in the foothills of the Black Stacks, Na Cruacha Dubha, commonly known after the name of the dan chief MacGillycuddy of the Reeks who owned the land until the end of the 20th century, is the focus of a day-long tour that explores the multiple stories and perspectives, real and imagined of the physiology, geology, inhabitants and Irish mythology of the area.

As part of the National Water Heritage Day of celebration on 26th August, the CoDesRes team of artists, marine biologists and ecologists will weave fact, fiction, history and the experience of life in those times into a journey beginning at Lough Derriana and ending at the Salt Marshes in Ballinskelligs Bay.



The tour shares the importance of this cultural and natural heritage of the Skellig Coast region and the Iveragh Peninsula's Special Areas of Conservation and Special Areas of Protection.

You can join them on this specially created tour integrating art and science and share this unique story of the Cummeragh catchment. Starting at IRD Waterville 10am the bus tour will make 4 stops along the catchment; Lough Derriana, the Salmon Hatchery, a stream access point and where the river enters the sea at the salt marshes, with each stop's activities designed to engage to develop a deeper sense of the catchment. Booking is essential and although it is suitable for children under 12 the tour will involve walking and activities that may need consideration before booking with small children.

**For more details on booking contact Anita  
codesres@gmail.com or book through the  
website [www.codesres.ie/events](http://www.codesres.ie/events)  
Please come prepared with warm layers,  
rain gear, lunch and water.**