

CLIMATE ACTION  
FOCUS AREAS

- ✓ ECO EXPERIENCE
- ✓ ECO-BUILD
- ✓ BIODIVERSITY

CASE STUDY

# BLACKSTAIRS ECO TRAILS

## ABOUT US

Blackstairs Eco Trails is nestled under the Blackstairs Mountains in Co. Carlow in the heart of Ireland's Ancient East. This family-run business offers eco-accommodation in restored Shepherd Huts, along with guided hill walking and foraging walks. Workshops and events are hosted in the restored Eco Barn, originally a farm outhouse dating back to 1829. Blackstairs Eco Trails is Gold Level Certified with Sustainable Travel Ireland.

“ I feel we have green blood running through our veins and our business has been eco-conscious since its inception. From the start, our mission has been to create a small, clean, healthy and sustainable place. ”

Mary White, Founder and Owner,  
Blackstairs Eco Trails



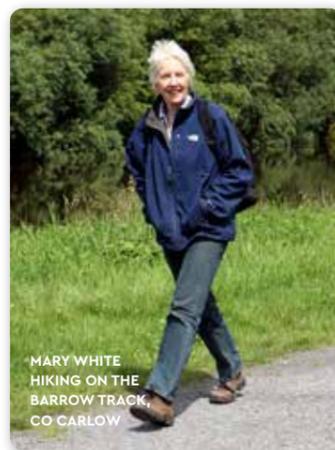
# Creating sustainable memories

## GETTING STARTED

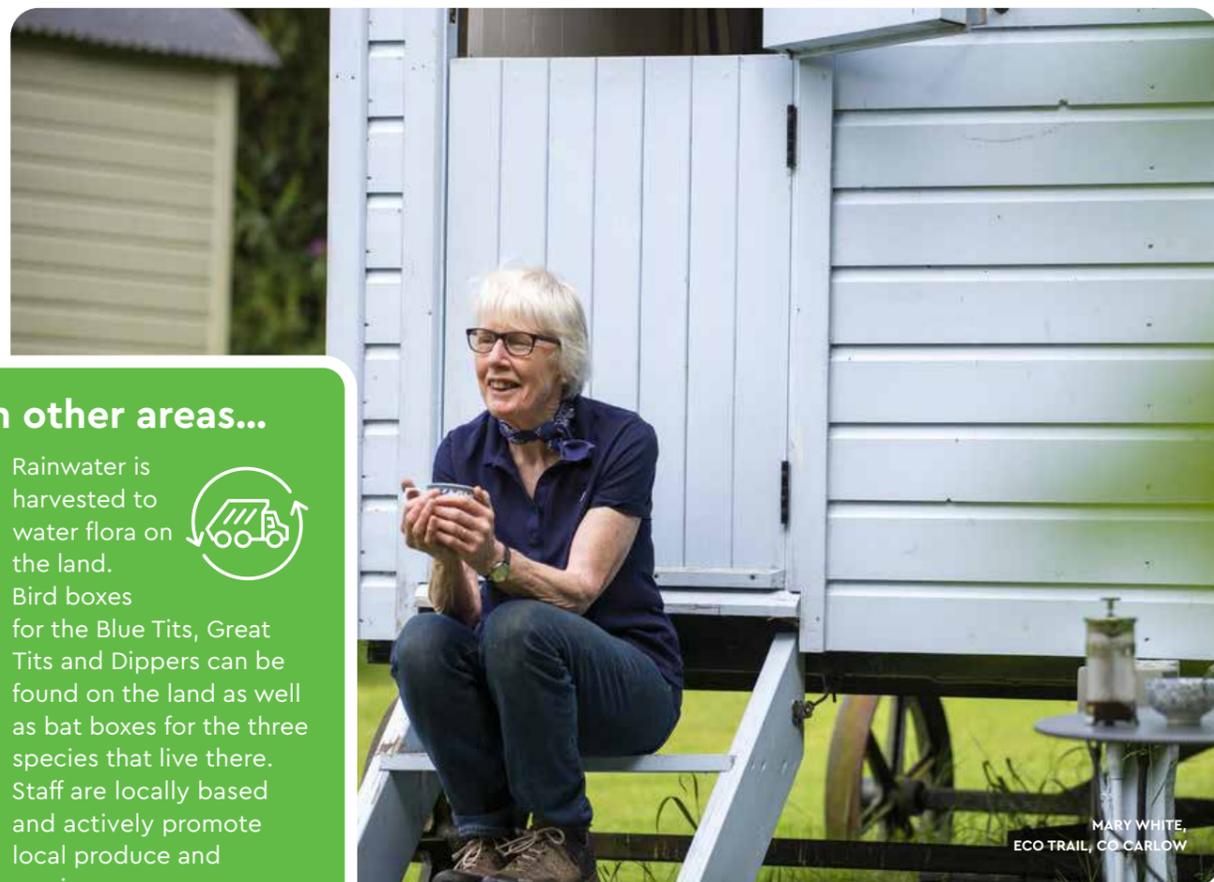
"I feel we have green blood running through our veins and our business has been eco-conscious since its inception. From the start, our mission has been to create a small, clean, healthy and sustainable place. We do that in a lot of different ways which hopefully add up to an all-round comfortable, memorable and sustainable experience for our guests. Our

guests tell us they are amazed at how sustainable we are and how well they feel when they are with us. So many remark on how lovely the Eco Barn feels and we feel that is related to the decisions we took in the build and fit-out."

**Mary White,**  
Founder and Owner,  
Blackstairs Eco Trails



MARY WHITE  
HIKING ON THE  
BARROW TRACK,  
CO CARLOW



MARY WHITE,  
ECO TRAIL, CO CARLOW

### In other areas...

- ✓ Rainwater is harvested to water flora on the land. 
- ✓ Bird boxes for the Blue Tits, Great Tits and Dippers can be found on the land as well as bat boxes for the three species that live there.
- ✓ Staff are locally based and actively promote local produce and services.

## WHERE SUSTAINABILITY IS THE EXPERIENCE

- ✓ When booking, visitors are provided with details on how to arrive to the local train station. From there, they have the option to be collected in an e-car.
- ✓ When going on nature and hill walks, carpooling is promoted and a local taxi service is arranged for larger groups.
- ✓ The maximum distance to travel to the start of Eco Trails or Mountain Hikes is set at 5km.
- ✓ There is a brochure in each Shepherd's Hut that shares detailed information about the eco measures that have been taken in the business.
- ✓ The hosts share eco tips with guests throughout the stay e.g. charge the e-car when the sun is at its highest.
- ✓ Before each guided walk, guests are asked to think about 'treading lightly on the earth' and 'leaving only your footprints'. To help with this, guests are given flasks as well as bags for collecting litter.
- ✓ Guests can enjoy a 10-acre broadleaf native woodland which captures carbon and provides a place where biodiversity and wildlife can flourish.



BLACKSTAIRS MOUNTAINS, CO CARLOW

“ We don't sacrifice comfort for sustainability and we have still succeeded in creating a small, sustainable and safe space. Now, we want to keep getting better. Guests value that we are committed to doing the right thing – we know that because they tell us that. ”

Mary White, Owner and Founder, Blackstairs Eco Trails



## ECO DECISION-MAKING – THE CASE OF THE ECO BARN

A lot of research time was invested to help Blackstairs Eco Trails make the most sustainable decisions when restoring an 1829 barn and converting it into a venue and meeting space.

- ✔ all fittings were sustainably sourced
- ✔ handmade oak tables and second-hand “pre-loved” furnishings were installed
- ✔ wherever possible, the original barn slates were retained. For new slates, Blue Bangor natural slates were selected
- ✔ all electrical appliances were sourced from ethical, green and cruelty-free suppliers and suppliers that had no evidence of greenwashing or investments in nuclear power
- ✔ paints used were earth-born which is more expensive but with less carbon used in manufacturing and with little or no toxins
- ✔ the floor was made with green cement, which has 75% less carbon



### About climate action

This case study is part of Fáilte Ireland’s suite of climate action business supports, helping tourism and hospitality businesses on their climate action journey.

Find out more at [Climate action \(Failteireland.ie\)](https://www.failteireland.ie)

### Top Tip

“Geothermal heating keeps the barn heated along with an Irish Clonmel wood stove which heats 14 radiators, and is fueled by their own wood. Solar panels have been installed to supply energy to the barn.”

**Mary White,**  
Founder and Owner,  
Blackstairs Eco Trails