



## Irish Forestry Unit Trust

<b>Slieve Aughty MU</b>
Slieve Aughtys, Co. Galway
<b>MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>
<b>2022 – 2041</b> <b>(Period 1: 2022 -2026)</b>

## 2. GENERAL INTRODUCTION, OWNERSHIP AND LANDUSE HISTORY.

The Slieve Aughty Management Unit (MU) comprises 3 properties totaling 199ha. All properties are located in south Galway, on the Slieve Aughty Mountains. Most of these sites were previously rough grazing land, open mountain, heath and bog before they were planted.

### Properties:

1. Derrybrien 1, 97.4ha. Established in 1987. Acquired by IForUT prior to 2016
2. Derrybrien 2, 72.3ha. Established in 1990 and 1999. Acquired by IForUT prior to 2016
3. Ailleendarra East, 29.4ha. Acquired by IForUT in 2020 as a restock site

### Elevation

122m to 233m

### Statutory Land Designations

Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA Site code 004168 covers all properties in the MU. The specific species of concern in the SPA are Hen Harrier and Merlin. This is especially important for site operations where potential disturbance during the breeding season is a factor, and location in relation to nesting site (red zone) is advised by the NPWS. Generally, if a site falls within a HLNA (High likelihood nesting area) all significant operations are not permitted during the breeding season 1<sup>st</sup> April to 15<sup>th</sup> August. All licenced/grant operations are subject to statutory consultation with the NPWS and any other significant operations will involve consultation with the local wildlife ranger. IForUTs current forest area in this MU does fall within Hen Harrier foraging and nesting areas, being in the Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA

The Slieve Aughty bog does not intersect with any properties, but it is adjacent to Derrybrien 2 property. Slieve Aughty bog (site code 001229) is an NHA Bog which consists primarily of upland blanket bog and heath habitat and both cutover and intact blanket bog. A lesser stream separates the plantation from the bog.

Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA Site code 004168 [Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA/ National Parks and Wildlife Service](#)

Slieve Aughty Bog NHA Site code 001229 [Slieve Aughty Bog NHA/National Parks & Wildlife Service](#)

**Water/Fisheries Sensitivities:**

The Slieve Aughty MU is within the Kinvarra and the Lower river Shannon Catchment. Ailleendarra drains into the Woodford\_020 sub-catchments and the remaining properties within the Owendalulleegh\_010 and 020 which feeds into the Galway bay complex(site code 000268) much further downstream. In general the 3 catchments are in good ecological status with the Woodford 020 catchments ecological status being the lowest of the three, described as moderate. The lower Shannon is an important salmon, lamprey and otter river downstream, it is designated as an SAC in the lower sections.

The Lower River Shannon SAC Site code 002165 [Lower River Shannon SAC | National Parks & Wildlife Service \(npws.ie\)](#)

Galway Bay Complex SAC Site Code: 000268 [Galway Bay Complex SAC National Parks and Wildlife Service \(npws.ie\)](#)

**Margaritifera**

The area in which these properties lie areas according to NPWS: Catchments of other extant populations. Typically this means that there are no recent records of freshwater pearl mussel from these catchments, in most cases there has been little, if any, survey for the species since 1970.

**Old Woodland Sites (OWS):**

There is no OWS/potential OWS in the Slieve Aughty MU.

**Archaeology/Historical/Cultural:**

There are no recorded or protected structures/monuments in the Slieve Aughty MU. As standard procedure, any old farmhouse/cottage or other buildings and stone walls/significant ditches etc are considered as more recent cultural heritage and are protected during harvesting and roading operations.

**4. SOIL TYPES.**

The main soil types in the Slieve Aughty MU are peat soils. There are some pockets of gleys in the landscape and on the fringes of the properties, which are slightly more productive.

**5. SUMMARY OF THE LANDSCAPE VALUE OF THE FOREST.****Low Felling Impact with Moderate Afforestation Sensitivity**

All forest blocks are classed as low felling impact on the IForUT system due partly to the extensive forested landscape and relatively small size of the IForUT holdings. Whenever

felling licences are submitted the Forest Service will correspond with relevant local and statutory bodies to investigate any potential landscape sensitivities.

The Forest Service Moderate Landscape Sensitivity class, as defined for afforestation planning covers all properties. IForUT have no plans to carry out any afforestation within this Management Unit.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES.

- 1) To maximise economic output from the forest at local and national level.
- 2) To manage FMU in accordance with the principals of the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and international benchmarks of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC).
- 3) To manage timber production in a sustainable way.
- 4) To maintain and enhance the landscape value of the forest.
- 5) To protect existing biodiversity and where opportunities arise enhance and further promote new biodiversity.
- 6) To manage forest activities with due regard to local, regional and national stakeholder interests.
- 7) To promote continuous professional development at management level.

(IForUTs FSC licence code: FSC-C003194)

## 14. Summary of silvicultural systems to be used.

System	Conifers	Broadleaves
Clear fell	✓	
Selective fell		
Thinning to MTI	✓	
Line thinning only		
Non thin regime	✓	
Non intervention		✓
Natural regeneration		✓
Replanting	✓	✓
Other		

## 20. 5 Year Monitoring Report Summary. Slieve Aughty MU

	Objective	Was it achieved?	How this information was applied to 5 year Management Plan review?
1	Economic Return	None of the properties within the MU have been thinned due to a Yield Class and ground conditions.	There has been no economic return from these properties since IForUT have come into ownership due to lower yield class and ground conditions. Parts of Derrybrien 2 property had been thinned previously which will improve the crop. Alleendarra was purchased post clearfell.
2	Certification Standards	Certification standards and IForUT systems applied over plan period. Managers working off FMM	Continue as before and update FMM as required.
3	Timber production	Timber production in this MU has not happened during IForUTs ownership.	No timber production due to poorer yield classes in properties in the MU. Derrybrien was planned for thinning in 2017 however, this site is restricted for Hen Harrier and the ground is wet due to the soil type. Because of the ground conditions only a summer thinning would be suitable but Hen Harrier season will not allow this. Therefore it was decided to not thin any further. Timber will be produced within the next plan period assuming no hold ups with licences and access permissions. A ROW is being negotiated in Derrybrien 1 to facilitate clearfelling in the coming years. Alleendarra has only recently been planted and so will not see timber production within the plan period.
4	Landscape	Two new landscape layers added to designations GIS layer. Forest Service layer taken off National Development plan for new planting and Landscape Unit appraisals based on Coillte LUs.	New landscape layer added to Sensitivities Map in MP. All forest blocks are classed as low felling impact on the IForUT system due partly to the extensive forested landscape and relatively small size of the IForUT holdings. All sites are moderately sensitive for afforestation. To date IForUT has not carried out afforestation in this MU. IF that should change, any afforestation will be covered under DAFM licence.

5	Biodiversity Enhancement	Biodiversity limited in this MU and opportunities to enhance have been limited.	<p>Not many opportunities to enhance biodiversity in this plan period in either of the Derrybrien properties as no operations have taken place. Open space and biodiversity will increase over the next rotation due to changes in the required national standards. These standards will require increased broadleaves and open space alongside county roads and dwelling houses at restocking stage. This has been reflected in map 7. The large way leave for the ESB line in Derrybrien 1 is having the most impact for biodiversity at the moment and acts as a corridor between the NHA bog to the West and another area of bog/Heath to the East.</p> <p>Alleendarra has been replanted. Increase broadleaves have been added along watercourses on this site and also a significant area of Scots Pine. This will be managed going forward for Long-Term retention.</p>
6	Stakeholder	Sparsely populated locality. Very little interactions with neighbours.	During plan review a more comprehensive stakeholder consultation has been conducted. See Stakeholder files. Access routes are under negotiation. Very sparsely populated area and a largely forested landscape
7	Professional Development	██████████ and ██████████ Managed.	Retendering of whole portfolio into regional management units in 2010 to simplify overall forest level management and FSC compliance. New centralised network server (██████████) has been introduced for managing FMM and IForUT database.
8	Forward Planning	Continue with current standards and work practices and review on a continuous basis to implement industry best practice.	Carry out reviews of Forest Management Manual and updating of best practice.