



## Irish Forestry Unit Trust

<b>Knockagh MU</b>
By Carrickboy & Abbeyshrule, Co. Longford
<b>MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>
<b>2022 – 2041</b> <b>(Plan Period: 2022 -2026)</b>

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

Knockagh Management Unit (MU) comprises 3 properties totalling 81.40ha. This MU is based on geographical location as all blocks are in the same locality of south County Longford. Prior to forest establishment, the sites within the MU were previously enclosed marginal grazing. Neighbouring landuse improved pasture, forestry, and bog/scrub woodland. Access to Knockagh is via RoW over neighbouring farm road. The general locality is low lying raised bog with no neighbouring dwelling. Sparsely populated area.

### **Forest properties being reviewed:**

1. Knockagh – 40.32ha. Established circa 1987.

All forested land is owned by freehold title by the Irish Forestry Unit Trust (IForUT). Legal folios are held on file.

### **New properties to be added to the MU:**

2. Cloonagh South – 22.14ha. Established circa
3. Lissawarriff – 18.93ha. Established circa

### **Elevation**

- Knockagh – 95 metres to 85 metres.
- Cloonagh South – 125 metres to 105 metres.
- Lissawarriff – 60 metres to 50 metres.

### **Statutory Land Designations**

There are no forest sites situated in NPWS (National Parks & Wildlife Service) designated areas with protected status.

### **Water/Fisheries Sensitivities:**

The forest sites within the Knockagh MU are in the following catchments and sub catchments:

- Upper Shannon Catchment
  - Inny[Shannon]\_SC\_080 sub catchment
  - Inny[Shannon]\_SC\_050 sub catchment

**Old Woodland Sites (OWS):**

There are no OWS/potential OWS in Knockagh MU.

**Archaeology/Historical/Cultural:**

There are no features of archaeological, historical and cultural significance situated within the Knockagh MU but any features in adjoining properties are marked on all which is marked on all operational maps and will be protected as such. These features are recorded on the 'Sites and Monuments Record' (<https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/>). Refer to Map 4.

The Forest Service give advice on protection and outline mitigation measures when IForUT apply for a licence to carry out any harvesting operation in the vicinity of any monument. Also, as standard procedure, any old farmhouse/cottage or other buildings and stone walls/significant ditches are considered as more recent cultural heritage and are protected during harvesting and roading operations.

**4. SOIL TYPES.**

There are four soil types across the Knockagh MU Forest sites.

- Peat is the primary soil type within the MU with luvisol, surface water gley and alluvial soils also distributed across the forest sites.

**5. SUMMARY OF THE LANDSCAPE VALUE OF THE FOREST.**

**Low Felling Impact with High Afforestation Sensitivity** - Refer to Map 3. All forest blocks are classed as low felling impact on the IForUT system due partly to the extensive forested landscape and 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 the three upland properties which will require some sensitivity given to the restocking planning in this MU.

To address the potential landscape impact issues caused by future clearfelling, the felling plan (Map 6) has applied a significant coupe restructuring plan to reduce clearfell size and introduce coupe separation. Long-term restructuring plan (Map 7) outlines future restructuring species which is limited to Sitka spruce based on soil types and management objectives. Biodiversity enhancement in Map 7 is focused on the creation of additional open

ground and expansion of broadleaf planting. Species choice being specifically matched to soil type and exposure.

## 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. Knockagh MU**

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Was it achieved?</b>	<b>How was this information applied to 5-year Management Plan review?</b>
1	Economic Return	All of sub 1 thinned 3 times. Windfirm with YC24 growth.	Continue with current caretaking work. Carry out preventative measures as required. 3rd thin carried out in 2014 in Knock, the property would have been suitable for a 4th thinning but stability was a concern so the decision was made to stop at 3 thinning's as a windblown crop would diminish economic return. Two clearfells have taken place in that property which were needed to avoid windthrow issues. Cloonagh South has been fully clearfelled. This crop was affected by windthrow which affected economic return somewhat. Lissawarrif has been 1 <sup>st</sup> thinned which will improve crop form, average tree and economic prospects into the future.
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	<p>Knockagh Sub1 2nd thinned over the plan period.</p> <p>Concerns over carrot form of timber.</p>	<p>Several clearfells have taken place in Knockagh and also in Cloonagh South. Cloonagh South was affected by windthrow and that crop has been removed in its entirety. The remaining block in Knockagh is an awkward site, strip at the West would be difficult to access – at the end point there is a 1.2km draw to the forest road. Lissawarrif has been thinned in the past year which will improve crop quality going forward. There are a number of spikes in felling however these are within tolerance. The new properties have improved general timber production cycles due to them adding diversity to the age structure of the FMU. Felling coupes have been kept as small as possible whilst taking windblow risk, site topography and logistics into account.</p> <p>Felling coupes have also been separated out as much as possible to allow for time delays between felling coupes and to try to ensure that there is not a glut of felling in any five year period. However, delaying felling or bringing felling forward any further would result in severe economic losses from either a too small tree size or winddamage as a result of delaying felling beyond a critical top height.</p>
4	Landscape	<p>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.</p>	<p>New landscape layer added to Sensitivities Map in MP. Landscape character classified as LOW with high afforestation sensitivity. Felling Plan (Map6) and Restructuring Plan (Map7) designed to mitigate future felling impacts.</p>

5	Biodiversity Enhancement	<p>Biodiversity enhancement during 2nd thinning was limited as racks were already in place. Some hedgerows were opened. Cloonagh South was felled and replanted during the 2019 – 2023 plan period where biodiversity features were enhanced and/or created.</p>	<p>Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement will continue to occur at the reforestation phase following the felling of the first rotation crops. Native broadleaves will be planted, and specific areas left unplanted to create a mixture of native woodland and open habitat. As per the new standard for Felling and Reforestation, there will be uninterrupted water/aquatic zone, habitat, archaeological, public road, and utilised building (i.e. dwelling houses) setbacks created where required, and native broadleaves and Scots pine planted where practicable.</p> <p>Cloonagh South was felled and replanted in the previous plan period. Planting setbacks from the public road and forest road, watercourses/aquatic zones, and property boundaries were created with several rows of native broadleaves planted between the setback and commercial crop.</p> <p>The enhancement and/or creation of biodiversity features will continue with all replanting operations as illustrated in the Long-Term Restructuring Plan for the Knockagh FMU.</p> <p>In terms of species of note in the FMU, there are records and sightings of buzzards in the vicinity of Knockagh.</p>
6	Stakeholder	<p>Quiet locality. No neighbouring dwellings. Good relations with neighbouring/ RoW owner. Full stakeholder consultation completed for plan review. No responses to date.</p>	<p>During plan review a more comprehensive stakeholder consultation has been conducted compared. Refer to stakeholder spreadsheet.</p>

7	Professional Development	<p>██████████ managed. Forest Managers are members of SIF and attend lectures and field days as part of continuous professional development.</p>	<p>Retendering of whole portfolio into regional management units in 2010 to simplify overall forest level management and Certification compliance. New centralised network server (██████████) has been introduced for managing FMM and IForUT database.</p>
8	Forward Planning	<p>Continue with current standards and work practices and review on a continuous basis to implement industry best practice.</p>	<p>Carry out reviews of Forest Management Manual and introduce manager training and updating of best practice.</p>