



## Irish Forestry Unit Trust

<b>West Limerick MU</b>
Newcastle West, Co. Limerick
<b>MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>
<b>2013 – 2032</b> <b>(Period 2: 2022 -2026)</b>

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

West Limerick MU comprises of 26 separate forest blocks totalling 800.5ha. This MU is based on geographical location as all blocks are in the same locality of NW county Limerick, scattered over the uplands and hills to the West and Northwest of the main town of Newcastle West. The other main towns and villages close to this MU are Carrigkerry, which is centrally positioned, and Ardagh/Athea to the East/West of the MU. Most of this land was marginal farm land or upland grazing before establishment, neighbouring land use is generally forestry, grazing and cutaway blanket bog.

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

1. Ballinloughane 21.3ha Established 1990. Sub 3 replanted in 2016.
2. Boughilbo 7.3ha Established 1995
3. Carrigkerry 18.1ha Established 1995. Replanted in 2015 & 2016.
4. Dromada 100ha Established 1987. Sub 5 replanted in 2016.
5. Glenbaun 31.2ha Established 1986. Sub 7 & 8 replanted in 2015 & 2016 repectively.
6. Glensharrold 35.7ha Established 1987. Sub 4 replanted in 2016.
7. Knockfinnisk 17ha Established 1990. Sub 4 replanted in 2016.
8. Sugarhill 27.7ha Established 1986. Sub 3 replanted in 2016.
9. Cleanglass 174ha Established 1987. With some areas replanted in 2016.
10. Mauricetown 15.9ha Established 1989. Sub 3 replanted in 2016.
11. Mount Plumer 8.6ha Established 1990

### **New property being added to the MU:**

12. Boughilbo 2 18.4ha. Restocked 2015. Acquired by IForUT 2019
13. Cloonlahard West 52.7ha. Established 1992. Acquired by IForUT 2016
14. Cloonyclohassy 8.1ha. Established 2002. Acquired by IForUT 2021
15. Crataloe East 38.2ha. Established 2002. Acquired by IForUT 2019
16. Glenagower 14.9ha. Established 2003. Acquired by IForUT 2019
17. Glensharrold 3 18.3ha. Established 1995. Sub 3 restocked 2017 . Acquired by IForUT 2020
18. Glensharrold 2 24.9ha. Sub 3 established 1989. Sub 1 restocked 2015. Acquired by IForUT 2016
19. Gortadroma 18.5ha. Established 1994. Acquired by IForUT 2016
20. Gortroe 40.5ha. Established 2001. Acquired by IForUT 2019
21. Keale 36.3ha. Established 1989. Sub 2 replanted 2016. Acquired by IForUT 2016
22. Park 18.4ha. Established 2003. Acquired by IForUT 2019
23. Rooskagh West 32.8ha. Established 2003. Acquired by IForUT 2019

24. Tooraree Upper 14.5ha. Established 2004. Acquired by IForUT 2019
25. Rathcahill West 11ha. Established 2021. Acquired by IForUT 2020
26. Dromstrasne (Hartnett) 10.7ha. Established 2002. Acquired by IForUT 2022

All sites managed by Forest Link except Rathcahill West and Dromstrasne which is managed by The Forestry Company.

### **Elevation**

Ballinloughane, Crataloe East, Mount Plummer - 212m to 260m

Boughilbo, Boughilbo 2, Carrigkerry – 164m to 210m

Dromada – 242m to 306m

Glenbaun, Glensharrold, Glensharrold 2, Glensharrold 3, Knockfinnisk, Tooraree Upper, Glenagower, Keale – 128m to 226m

Cleanglass, Mauricetown, Sugarhill – 239m to 303m

Cloonlahard West, Cloonyclohassey, Drumtrasne – 96m to 140m

Gortroe, Gortadroma, Park – 70m to 124m

Rathcahill West – 196m to 231m

Rooskagh West – 262m to 289m

### **Statutory Land Designations**

Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA covers the majority of the MU. The special interest of this SPA is the Hen Harrier. Sites within this SPA are Mauricetown, Mount Plumer, Cleanglass, Keale, Cratloe East, Glenagower, Knockfinnisk, Glenbaun, Cloonlahard, Tooraree, Gortadroma, Park, Glensharrold. Rathcahill West touches it on the N boundary of the site. 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 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 along with surrounding grazing land, open bog and moorland, provides optimum habitat conditions for this protected bird. It is significant afforestation that is the main threat to the bird according to the NPWS.

[Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA | National Parks & Wildlife Service \(npws.ie\)](#)

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

The Newcastle West MU is within the large Shannon River Catchment, and it straddles the boundary of two river basins (see MU Map3), parts being in the Feale River Basin, and also the Shannon Estuary South Basin.

The main tributaries of the River Feale feed into an important salmon and sea trout river, it is designated as an SAC downstream and is an important resource for local anglers.

Lower River Shannon SAC Site code 002165 runs along the N boundary of Cleanglass and Keale. Dromada is 60m S of this SAC, 45m W of Glenagower.

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

### **Margaritifera**

Keale, Glenagower, Rooskagh West, Knockfinnisk. Ballinloughane are within Margaritifera sensitive areas: Catchments with previous records of Margaritifera, but current status unknown. Mauricetown, Sugarhill, Cleanglass, Crataloe East, Dromtrasne and Rathcahill West fall into Catchments of other extant populations. Dromada falls into both categories. Mount Plummer falls into Catchments of SAC populations listed in S.I. 296 of 2009.

### **Old Woodland Sites (OWS):**

One small area in Torraree Upper was identified. The area concerned was approximately 0.1ha. An Ecologist visited this area in the summer of 2020. The area was not considered valuable in terms of Old Woodland Habitat. It would not be a good candidate for Old Woodland regeneration and had no Old woodland features to note.

### **Archaeology/Historical/Cultural:**

There are no recorded features in the West Limerick MU.

## **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.

## 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.

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

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

**20. 5 Year Monitoring Report Summary. West Limerick**

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Was it achieved?</b>	<b>How this information was applied to 5 year Management Plan review?</b>
1	Economic Return	Some properties within the MU have been thinned. As is typical in this part of the country – productivity is mixed within the MU and productivity and quality varies dramatically within the properties.	Thinning volumes removed have been below production forecasting to maintain crop stability. No further thinning expected as risk of windblow is high and harvesting of windblown timber will diminish economic return. Significant windblow following storm Darwin in 2014 had diminished economic return greatly in regards to Timber Revenue.
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 had been maximised through thinning where possible	<p>Strong DBH growth in thinned crops and significant volume increment. However the 2014 storm blew over the best crops within this MU. This led to timber production plans being front loaded in 2015 and 2016.</p> <p>Most of the Clearfelling in the MU up until recent years was to facilitate harvesting of storm damage. Properties will now be entering into a sequence of felling and restocking due to age and crop readiness as well as to mitigate Windthrow risk, eg. Cleanglass which commenced in 2021 and Cloonlahard West and Mount Plummer are planned in 2022. A premature Clearfell in Cloonyclohassy is planned at the moment due to signs of windblow in this shallow rooting site.</p> <p>Most of the older stands in the Management unit will not be thinned any further due to the extent of damage from the 2014 storm. However, some of the newly acquired crops such as Tooraree and Gortroe are at an age where thinning is possible. These operations will depend on whether road approval can be sought before the crop gets too tall (Tooraree for example). Applications are submitted and pending return for several of these properties.</p>

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 properties classified as having Low sensitivity according to LU classification and moderate in FS classification.
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5	Biodiversity Enhancement	Biodiversity limited in this MU and opportunities to enhance have been limited.	<p>Main opportunities for biodiversity enhancement will occur at next rotation. % of broadleaves and open space in the MU has been increased marginally. However some of the most significant felling has been done in the likes of Cleanglass which is an internal forest landscape which would not have great potential for biodiversity enhancement. None the less, in what has been replanted to date, additional open space and broadleaves have been situated next to riparian areas.</p> <p>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 openspace alongside county roads and dwelling houses at restocking stage. Properties such as Glensharrold for example which are due to be felled will provide some opportunities for adding to our biodiversity areas due to the setbacks required from houses, roads, streams etc.</p> <p>There are some existing areas of value for example there are areas of unplanted ground in Glenbaun which would have a bog/heath type vegetation.</p> <p>Some species of Note were recorded within the MU over the past number of years including birds of prey(Buzzards or Harrier) in Cleanglass in 2021 and Hare were also spotted in that property in the same year. There were further sightings of Buzzards in Glensharrold 3 in 2021. There were also signs of recent red squirrel feeding in both Boughilbo properties.</p> <p>In Tooraree upper there is a minor area which on 6 inch maps appears to have been old woodland in the area around the old homestead. Today, it is a relatively young broadleaf woodland which was dominated by Ash and Alder. An ecologist carried out a report on the area and noted that it was not suitable for Old woodland restoration but still was of benefit to wildlife. These areas have been positively incorporated into restock plans.</p>
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6	Stakeholder	Generally a quiet locality with some interaction with neighbours	During plan review a more comprehensive stakeholder consultation has been conducted. See Stakeholder files. Good relationships being built with most neighbours in the area. Housekeeping matter such as keeping on top of Hedgecutting helps to maintain positive relationships with locals. Good rapport with people with whom we share access. Any issues have been resolved with neighbours amicably.
7	Professional Development	██████████ and the ██████████ 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. Training of new managers into IForUT systems.