



IForUT

Investing for a Sustainable Future

Irish Forestry Unit Trust

Ballynultagh MU
Shillelagh, Co. Wicklow
MANAGEMENT PLAN
2024 – 2043 (Period 1: 2024 -2028)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION, OWNERSHIP AND LANDUSE HISTORY.

Ballynultagh Forest MU comprises of 2 separate forest blocks totalling 46.93ha.

Forest properties being reviewed:

1. Ballynultagh, 41.81ha. The first plantings were in 1961, all of which has been felled and restocked. The initial planting was primarily SS with areas of Sliver Fir on the lower slopes. Prior to establishment the land was poor pasture. Smurfit Natural Resources Ltd initially established this forest and was subsequently acquired by IForUT in early 1999.
2. Coolkenno, 5.12ha. Established circa 1990 and replanted in 2021 with SS. This site was acquired by IForUT in 2018.

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

Elevation

Site elevation in Ballynultagh is between 203m and 297m. Coolkenno elevation is between 129m and 147m.

Statutory Land Designations

There are no IForUT properties situated in a NPWS (National Parks & Wildlife Service) designated area with protected status.

However, within this management unit lies pNHA Tomnafinnoge Wood which is located 1.8km to the East of the Ballynultagh property. Slaney River Valley (SAC 000781 [Slaney River Valley SAC | National Parks & Wildlife Service \(npws.ie\)](https://www.npws.ie/river-valley-sac)) runs through the MU approximately 700m from Ballynultagh.

Water/Fisheries Sensitivities:

The forest sites within the Ballynultagh MU are in the following catchment(s) and sub-catchment(s):

- Coolkenno is in the Slaney sub-catchment.
- Ballynultagh is within the Derry (Slaney) sub-catchment.

Margaritifera (Fresh Water Pearl Mussel)

Both sites are in Margaritifera sensitive areas.

- Ballynultagh: Slaney – Derry. Catchments of other extant populations.
- Coolkenno: Slaney – Derreen. Catchments of SAC populations listed in S.I. 296 of 2009.

This is especially important for site operations planning where potential adverse impacts on these QI's is possible. Appropriate Assessment (Article 6 (3), Habitats Directive) screening and mitigation measures will need to be implemented for future felling and roading applications.

Old Woodland Sites (OWS):

There are no OWS/potential OWS in Ballynultagh MU.

Archaeology/Historical/Cultural:

There is a recorded monument mapped at the Northern part of Ballynultagh directly outside of the boundary defined by an earth and gravel bank. Features of archaeological, historical, and cultural significance situated in within the Ballynultagh MU which are marked on all operational maps and will be protected. These features are recorded on the 'Sites and Monuments Record' (<https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/>).

The Forest Service advises on protection and outlines mitigation measures when IForUT applies for a license 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.

SOIL TYPES.

- Ballynultagh has primarily shallow soils derived from non-calcareous rock or gravels – Soil group: Podzols (Peaty), Lithosols, Peats.
- Coolkenno has deep well drained mineral soil derived from non-calcareous parent materials – Soil group: Acid Brown Earths, Brown Podzolics.

SUMMARY OF THE LANDSCAPE VALUE OF THE FOREST.

Moderate to High Felling Impact with High Afforestation Sensitivity - The properties are on an elevated position with a South aspect. The forest is not visible within the local landscape but is visible from a greater distance. No significant viewpoints exist of the forests due to their rural, low population density and rounded/ hilly topography. Surrounding landscape is poor pasture and isolated forestry blocks.

To address the potential landscape impact issues caused by future clearfelling, the felling plan has applied a significant coupe restructuring plan to reduce clearfell size and introduce coupe separation. Long-term restructuring plan outlines future restructuring species which is limited to Sitka spruce based on soil types and management objectives. Biodiversity enhancement is focused on the creation of additional open ground and expansion of broadleaf planting. Species choice being specifically matched to soil type and exposure.

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.

(IForUT's FSC licence code : FSC-C003194)

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		

5 Year Monitoring Report Summary. **Ballynultagh MU**

	Objective	Was it achieved?	How was this information applied to 5-year Management Plan review?
1	Economic Return	<p>A subsequent thinning was carried out in Ballynultagh in 2024. Property is fully roaded and last clearfell in this property was completed in 2016. The next clearfell is planned to commence in 2028 and it is hoped to first thin in the younger crop when the machines are on site.</p> <p>Coolkenno was clearfelled in 2020 and replanted 2021. No further works to be carried out here during this plan period apart from general management.</p>	Ballynultagh MU is typically a strong productive MU. No significant changes to plan for next five-year period.
2	Certification Standards	Certification standards and IForUT systems applied over plan period. Managers working off FMM	Certification standards and IForUT systems applied over plan period. Managers working off FMM. Continue as before and update FMM as required.
3	Timber production	Subsequent thin in sub 7 in 2024 and clear-felling at front of the property in 2016 in Ballynultagh. Clearfell in Coolkenno in 2020.	Further clear-fells will not be scheduled until 2028 in sub 7, possibly earlier depending on volume increment. Thereafter no further clearfells will be taking place in the MU within the planning 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. Landscape character classified as LOW. Felling Plan and Restructuring Plan designed to mitigate future felling impacts. Coupes have been kept as small as possible.
5	Biodiversity Enhancement	Biodiversity areas have been identified and classified across the FMU on IForUT's GIS system. As crops are entering stages of felling and restocking, increased broadleaves and open spaces are being created.	<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.</p> <p>As per the standard for Felling and Reforestation (2019), 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>
6	Stakeholder	General a quiet locality. Little interaction with neighbours.	Comprehensive stakeholder consultation has been conducted.
7	Professional Development	██████████ managed. Forest Managers are members of SIF and attend lectures and field days as part of continuous professional development.	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 introduce manager training and updating of best practice.