



IForUT

Investing for a Sustainable Future

Irish Forestry Unit Trust

Broadford MU
Broadford, Co. Clare Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare
MANAGEMENT PLAN
2025 – 2044 (Plan Period: 2025 – 2029)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION, OWNERSHIP AND LANDUSE HISTORY.

Broadford MU comprises nine forest properties totalling 360.30ha. This forest MU is based on geographical location as well as forest type and river catchment: all properties are in Southeast Clare north of Limerick City and between the towns of Sixmilebridge and Broadford. They are at similar elevations and consist of similarly aged plantations of mostly Sitka Spruce planted between 1987 and 2000. The main access is from regional county road R471 for most sites except for Gartatrassa which is accessible across Coillte land from the regional county road R465.

Prior to forest establishment land provided marginal farmland, with better land parcels such as Knockshanvo heavily grazed. All properties are marked as enclosed fields except upland/rough grazing/heath areas in Glenagross and Gartatrassa. Neighbouring landuse is agricultural (grazing) and forestry (private and Coillte).

Forest properties being reviewed:

1. Oatfield 36.67ha. Established 1987.
2. Glenagross 51.08ha. Established 1991.
3. Knockshanvo 69.50ha. Established 1990/1995.
4. Gartatrassa 33.47ha. Established 1991.
5. Cloontra 38.15ha. Established 1987.
6. Cloontra West 46.34ha. Established 1998/1999.
7. Cloghoolia 40.51ha. Established 2000.
8. Ballynevan 26.62ha. Established 1992.

New property to be added to the MU:

9. Gortatrassa 17.98ha. Established 2000.

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

Elevation

- Oatfield – 250 metres to 230 metres.
- Glenagross – 60 metres to 50 metres.
- Knockshanvo – 190 metres to 20 metres.
- Gartatrassa/Gortatrassa – 80 metres to 40 metres.
- Cloontra – 160 metres to 80 metres.
- Cloontra West – 70 metres to 40 metres.

- Cloghoolia – 70 metres to 40 metres.
- Ballynevan – 130 metres to 65 metres.

Statutory Land Designations

There is one forest site situated in NPWS (National Parks & Wildlife Service) designated area;

Castle Lake pNHA (00239)

- Ballynevan Forest is situated in the pNHA.

Water/Fisheries Sensitivities:

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

- Lower Shannon Catchment
 - Shannon [Lower]_SC_100 sub catchment
- Shannon Estuary North Catchment
 - Owenogarney_SC_010 sub catchment
 - Owenogarney_SC_020 sub catchment

Old Woodland Sites (OWS):

There is OWS/potential OWS in the Broadford MU in Cloghoolia. An area was identified as a potential Old Woodland Site, based on symbology found on the Ordinance Survey 6inch map. This area underwent an ecological survey in May 2021 to determine the status/location of OWS. The site contains several tree species, both native and non-native that outdate the conifer plantation. The most significant of these are Sessile oak and Ash. There are some cultural features in the locality of this OWS, namely an old ruin. The site is considered poor in terms of biodiversity, but it does provide patches of diverse habitat. Additional broadleaves and open ground will be concentrated in what was previously Old Woodland surrounding this ruin.

Archaeology/Historical/Cultural:

There is 1 feature of archaeological, historical and cultural significance within the Broadford MU 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/>).

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

There are seven soil types across the Broadford MU sites.

- Peat, rendzina, alluvial, groundwater gley, surface water gley, brown podzolic and luvisol soils are distributed across the forest sites within the MU.

SUMMARY OF THE LANDSCAPE VALUE OF THE FOREST.

Low Felling Impact with High Afforestation Sensitivity

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 has applied a significant coupe restructuring plan to reduce clearfell size and introduce coupe separation. Long-term restructuring plan outlines future restructuring species, which are limited to Sitka spruce and Norway spruce based on soil types and management objectives. Biodiversity enhancement is focused on the creation of additional open ground and the expansion of broadleaved woodland. Species choice is 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. **Broadford MU**

	Objective	Was it achieved?	How was this information applied to 5-year Management Plan review?
1	Economic Return	<u>Oatfield</u>: The last thinning in Oatfield was in 2011. This was a second thinning there will be no further thinning in this property going forward. A sub compartment in the east side of the property was felled and replanted in 2025 <u>Glennagross</u>: Glennagross property was 1st thinned in 2010 and second thinned in 2016. All subs were thinned apart from sub 7 and 8. A sub compartment in the north end of the property was felled and replanted in 2022/23. <u>Knockshanvo</u>: Last thinning operations that were carried out here was a subsequent thinning in 2012/2013. The northeast of the property was felled and replanted in 2021/22.	The county road in this townland is in extremely poor condition and was not fit for timber haulage in 2024/25. This road had to be repaired after the thinning in 2011. Road in question was not used for timber haulage. Timber was removed from site via a Coillte forest road. Permission for IForUT to use the road was approved by Coillte prior to haulage operations. There are pockets of windblow in Glennagross and where pockets were small, these were tidied up during thinning. Storm Eowyn did cause windblow in the north end of the property There will be no further thinning in this property due to concerns that further thinning would cause stability issues. While Knockshanvo has escaped significant storm damage there are small pockets of windblow throughout the site. Storm Eowyn did cause windblow in the southwest corner of the property. The decision was made that no further thinning to be carried out in this property as crop stability is a concern.

		<u>Gartatrassa</u>: No work was planned in the last plan review and that has been the case. No operations have been carried out on this property. This property is deemed too tall to thin, and the decision has been made that this property will be designated as a no thin. <u>Cloontra</u>: Cloontra has been the most active forest in this Management Unit. In 2012 the crop was high pruned which was grant aided. In 2013 the crop was thinned for a third time. In 2014 this property was damaged by storm Darwin. The remainder of the original crop was felled and replanted in 2024/25. <u>Cloontra West</u>: Cloontra West comprises two separate blocks. Both blocks were partially 1st thinned in 2017 and the same areas were 2nd thinned in 2021. Subs 1, 2, 3, and 11 have not been thinned. The crop suffered damage due to Storm Eowyn. <u>Cloghoolia</u>: Cloghoolia comprises one block of forestry. The crop has not been thinned due to access issues.	Access issue in Gartatrassa to be resolved and ROW to be negotiated agreed with Coillte. Windblow caused by Storm Eowyn in January 2025 will be cleared in 2026 subject securing access across Coillte land. Cloontra comprises crop planted in 2016, 2018 and 2025. The next planned harvest operation will be a thinning operation in the next decade subject to crop performance and stability. Cloontra West was initially established in 1998/99. The southern end of the west block has not been thinned due to access issues. There is a small plot of ash in this property which has been affected by Ash Dieback. Cloghoolia was initially established in 2000. There may be scope to carry out a thinning operation within the next 5-year period subject to adequate access for timber haulage and crop stability.
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		<u>Ballynevan</u>: Ballynevan comprised two blocks of oak and several blocks of Sitka spruce with an assortment of ash and other broadleaves throughout the property. The Sitka spruce was thinned first in 2010 and 2nd thinned in 2015. The entire Sitka spruce crop was felled and replanted with Scots pine and an assortment of native broadleaves in 2024/25. <u>Gortatrassa</u>: This property comprises Sitka spruce, larch and oak. The crop has not been thinned due to access issues. On the night of the 23rd and the early morning hours of the 24th of January 2025, several properties within the MU suffered significant windblow damage due to Storm Eowyn.	The Sitka spruce in Ballynevan was felled in 2024/25 as per the IForUT Felling Plan. Gortatrassa was established in 2000. There may be scope to carry out a thinning operation within the next 5-year period subject to adequate access for timber haulage and crop stability. Windblow clearance operations are scheduled to take place in 2025 and 2026.
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	Refer to Section 1 above.	Refer to Section 1 above. Felling coupes have been minimised in size and allocated different felling years 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 wind-damage because of delaying felling beyond a critical top height.
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.
5	Biodiversity Enhancement	Biodiversity areas have been identified and classified on IForUT's GIS system. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity have been exploited with a new pond and native woodland created in Knockshanvo and conversion to native conifer/mixed broadleaved woodland in Ballynevan. The Sitka spruce areas in Ballynevan were replanted with Scots pine and an assortment of native broadleaves.	Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement will continue during the reforestation phase following the felling of the first rotation crop. Native broadleaves will be planted, and specific areas left unplanted to create a mixture of native woodland and open habitat. In accordance with 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. Deer have been observed on all properties.
6	Stakeholder	No issues with stakeholders.	During plan review completed full stakeholder consultation - advert in Clare Champion, local community group, and local based statutory bodies.
7	Professional Development	██████████. Ongoing development of the IForUT FMM and database over the period. Forest Managers are members of SIF and attend lectures	Retendering of the whole portfolio into regional management units in 2010 to simplify overall forest-level management and Certification

		and field days as part of continuous professional development.	compliance. A new centralised network [REDACTED] has been introduced for managing the 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 annual reviews with forest managers.