# Appendix 7-2c - Lough Bannow Draft Rehabilitation Plans 2025

Bord na Móna

# Lough Bannow Bog

# Draft Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025

This document seeks to address the requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC Licence Ref. P0504-01:

> "*The licensee shall prepare, to the satisfaction of the Agency, a fully detailed and costed plan for permanent rehabilitation of the cutaway boglands within the licensed area.*"

*This licence condition requires Bord na Móna agree with the EPA the measures that will provide for rehabilitation, i.e. stabilisation of Lough Bannow Bog upon cessation of peat production and compliments the licence requirement to decommission the site.*

***Rehabilitation** generally comprises site stabilisation with natural colonisation with or without targeted management.*

*Industrial peat production has now fully ceased at Lough Bannow Bog.*

*Bord na Móna have defined the key rehabilitation outcome at Lough Bannow Bog as environmental stabilisation.*

*This rehabilitation plan for Lough Bannow Bog has been updated but not fully finalised. As such it remains a **draft** rehabilitation plan until it is fully finalised. Bord na Móna expect to finalise this rehabilitation plan in the future as part the Derryadd Wind Farm development or at a later date.*

*Any consideration of any other future after-uses for Lough Bannow Bog, will be conducted in adherence to the relevant planning guidelines and consultation with relevant authorities and will be considered within the framework of this rehabilitation plan.*

*Bord na Móna are planning to develop a renewable energy project at Lough Bannow Bog as part of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm. This project is currently in the pre-planning stages and is expected to be submitted for planning permission 2025. The wind farm planning boundary overlaps the Lough Bannow Bog rehabilitation boundary. This area has been mapped as a constraint in the rehabilitation plan.*

| Document Control Sheet | |
|---|---|
| **Document Name:** | Lough Bannow Bog - Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025 |
| **Document File Path:** | Z:\EPA draft rehab plans 2017 word docs\Mountdillon ref.504 (Lough Ree)\Lough Bannow |
| **Document Status:** | Draft |

| This document comprises: | DCS | TOC | Text (Body) | References | Maps | No. of Appendices |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 1 | 29 | 4 | 0 | 12 |

| Rev. 0.1 | Author(s): | Checked By: | Approved By: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name(s): | LC | JOS | JOS |
| Date: | 11/05/2023 | 14/06/2023 | 14/06/2023 |

| Rev. 1 | Author(s): | Checked By: | Approved By: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name(s): | LC | | MMC |
| Date: | 15/06/2023 | | 21/06/2023 |
| **Rev. 1.1** | **Author(s):** | **Checked By:** | **Approved By:** |
| Name(s): | LC | JOS | MMC |
| Date: | 09/01/2024 | 08/01/2025 | 10/01/2025 |

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## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- Bord na Móna is updating the draft rehabilitation plan for Lough Bannow Bog (also known as Derryadd 3), located approximately 7 km south-east of Lanesborough in Co. Longford.
- Lough Bannow Bog was in full industrial peat production since the early 1960's and supplied Lough Ree Power Station in Lanesborough up until its closure in 2020.
- Peat harvesting is now finished at Lough Bannow Bog.
- Lough Bawn pNHA, overlaps the south-east corner of the site and has been subject to rehabilitation in the past (2017).
- This rehabilitation plan has been prepared by Bord na Móna as part of obligations to carry out peatland rehabilitation via an IPC Licence issued by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- The key objective of peatland rehabilitation is environmental stabilisation. This means developing vegetation and promoting re-establishment of more typical cutaway peatland communities such as Birch woodland, fen habitat and *Sphagnum*-rich embryonic bog communities.
- Rehab measures will include drain-blocking and other measures to raise water levels to the surface of the bog, thus encouraging the development of naturally functioning cutaway peatland habitats.
- These rehabilitation measures will be planned by a team consisting of expert ecologists and engineers. It is a guiding principle of Bord na Móna rehabilitation planning that no actions or activities will be undertaken that would negatively impact on adjacent land. No boundary drains will be blocked. Water will still leave the bog via the existing outlets.
- Peatland rehabilitation of this bog will bring a range of benefits to the local community via improvements to the local landscape and is also important for supporting national policies and strategies in relation to reduction of carbon emissions from these peatlands, supporting biodiversity and improvements to water quality.
- Drain blocking at Lough Bannow Bog will result in improved water quality, climate benefits with the reduction of carbon emissions and enhanced biodiversity when the residual peat is re-wetted.
- Many Bord na Móna bogs cannot be restored back to raised bog, as the majority of peat has been removed and the environmental conditions have been modified. However other natural habitats will develop, like poor fen and *Sphagnum* rich embryonic bog communities (on deeper peat); and wetlands with Reedbeds and Birch woodland on shallower peat. In time a naturalised peatland can be developed.
- It will take some time for active raised bog communities (50 + years) to fully develop at Lough Bannow Bog, and for an active raised bog peatland ecosystem to be restored.
- The development of a range of habitats at Lough Bannow Bog will support biodiversity including plants, insects, birds and mammals. This includes some species that are rare and protected in the wider landscape. It will increase the national area of native woodland. Many wetland habitats in the wider landscape have been reclaimed for agriculture and other uses and peatland rehabilitation is an opportunity to create new wetland habitats.
- Bord na Móna are planning to develop a renewable energy project at Lough Bannow Bog as part of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm. The Wind Farm project is currently in the pre-planning stage and is expected to be submitted for planning permission in 2025. The wind farm planning boundary overlaps the Lough Bannow Bog rehabilitation boundary and has been mapped as a constraint in the rehabilitation plan. Lough Bannow Bog will be rehabilitated as part of the Derryadd Wind Farm development or at a later date. Any other proposed development will be planned in adherence to relevant planning guidelines and will consider the rehabilitation and the condition of the site.

- Longford County Council lodged a Part 8 Planning Application in 2021 named 'No. 88 Mid Shannon Wilderness Park trackways' which includes greenway or amenity walking/cycling tracks through Lough Bannow Bog. There are additional proposals to create an amenity track through Lough Bannow Bog as part of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Project.
- This peatland rehabilitation plan does not consider future after-use or development. Bord na Móna continually reviews its land-bank to consider future commercial or industrial developments. Any other proposed development will be planned in adherence to relevant planning guidelines and will consider the rehabilitation and the condition of the bog.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Bord na Móna operates under IPC Licence issued and administered by the EPA to extract peat within the Mountdillon bog group (Ref. P0504-01). As part of Condition 10.2 of this licence, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. Lough Bannow Bog is part of the Mountdillon bog group (see Appendix I for details of the bog areas within the Mountdillon bog group).

This plan is a specific rehabilitation plan for the bog and outlines:

- Description of site management and status.
- Main issues and approaches to rehabilitation.
- Consultation to date with interested parties.
- Interaction with other policy and legislative frameworks (Appendix V).
- The planned rehabilitation goals and outcomes.
- The scope of the rehabilitation plan.
- Criteria which define the successful rehabilitation and key targets to validate rehabilitation.
- Proposed rehabilitation actions.
- Proposed timeframe to implement these measures.
- Budget and Costings.
- Associated aftercare, maintenance, and monitoring.

*Note: This plan should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Map book*.

Bord na Móna have announced the complete cessation of industrial peat production across its estate (January 2021).

This draft rehabilitation plan outlines the proposed approach to be taken for IPC compliance in respect of Lough Bannow Bog and how the site will be rehabilitated. Bord na Móna is fully committed to meeting its obligations relating to rehabilitation and decommissioning under the Integrated Pollution Control Licence.

It has been proposed by Government that Bord na Móna carry out a Peatlands Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme on its peatlands. Note this proposal is also known colloquially as the 'Peatlands Climate Action Scheme' (PCAS). The additional costs of the Scheme will be supported by Government through the Climate Action Fund and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan, administered by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), while the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) will act as the Scheme regulator. The Peatlands Climate Action Scheme is expected to operate between 2021-2025. Over 13,000 ha of cutaway peatlands have already been rehabilitated as part of this scheme to date, across multiple Bord na Móna peatlands.

**PCAS measures are NOT proposed as part of this draft rehabilitation plan.** The potential implementation of enhanced rehabilitation measures at Lough Bannow will be dependent on the selection of the bog to be included in PCAS.

## 1.1 Constraints and Limitations

This document seeks to address the requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC Licence Ref. P0504-01:

> "*The licensee shall prepare, to the satisfaction of the Agency, a fully detailed and costed plan for permanent rehabilitation of the cutaway boglands within the licensed area.*"

Parts of Lough Bannow Bog (around the perimeter of the site) are currently being used by domestic turf cutters for intensive private sod peat production. These areas are ecologically and hydrologically linked to the area owned by Bord na Móna where rehabilitation is planned. It is beyond the scope of this rehabilitation plan to address turf cutting issues on Lough Bannow Bog that are outside of the control of Bord na Móna. Nevertheless, Bord na Móna are aware of such issues which may constrain the proposed rehabilitation actions, and this rehabilitation plan considered potential impacts of these on the delivery of the stated objectives.

Bord na Móna are planning to develop a renewable energy project at Lough Bannow Bog as part of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm (see Location | Derryadd Wind Farm). This proposed wind farm project is located within Lough Bannow Bog as well as the adjacent Bord na Móna bogs of Derryarogue and Derryadd. Derryadd Wind Farm is currently in the pre-planning stage and is expected to be submitted for planning permission in 2025.

There are known rights of way around the margins of Lough Bannow Bog. Where a public right of way or similar burden exists on Bord na Móna property, consideration will be given to ensuring that this remains intact where possible. In some instances, depending upon previous land uses and management, alternative solutions may be required. These will be explored in consultation with local communities and statutory bodies during the consultation work associated with the decommissioning and rehabilitation work described here.

Rehabilitation in other areas of the bog may also be constrained due to other property issues.

Lough Bannow Bog will be rehabilitated as part of the Derryadd Wind Farm development or at a later date. The wind farm associated amenity trail overlaps the Lough Bannow Bog rehabilitation boundary. The amenity trail and proposed wind farm infrastructure have been mapped as a constraint in the rehabilitation plan.

Lough Bannow Bog will be rehabilitated **either** in association with the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Project, with peatland rehabilitation integrated into the proposed project, **or** will be completed in the event of an unsuccessful planning application. It is expected that Bord na Móna will revise and update the rehabilitation plan for Lough Bannow Bog when a decision is made in relation to planning permission for the Wind Farm. Bord na Móna remain fully committed to rehabilitating Lough Bannow Bog and meeting the conditions of the IPC Licence. Any consideration of any other future after-uses for Lough Bannow Bog will be conducted in adherence to the relevant planning guidelines, and consultation with relevant authorities, and will be considered within the framework of this rehabilitation plan.

Longford County Council lodged a Part 8 Planning Application in 2021 named 'No. 88 Mid Shannon Wilderness Park trackways' which includes greenway or amenity walking/cycling tracks through Lough Bannow Bog. Future sections of further cycling and walking amenity tracks will developed through Lough Bannow Bog as part of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Project (see Location | Derryadd Wind Farm).

Rehabilitation in other areas of the bog may also be constrained due to other property issues or archaeological features. There are known archaeological features present at Lough Bannow Bog, which may constrain rehabilitation activities.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This rehabilitation plan was developed with a combination of desktop and field surveys, consultations with internal and external stakeholders. The development of this rehabilitation plan considered **recently published** guidance issued by the EPA in 2020 – **Guidance on the process of preparing and implementing a bog rehabilitation plan**.

The ecological information and site information collected during the Bord na Móna ecological baseline surveys, additional confirmatory site visits (covering the period 2012 to 2023 inclusive) and monitoring and desktop analysis, forms the basis for the development of this rehabilitation plan for the bog along with:

- Experience of 40 years of research on the after-use development and rehabilitation of the Bord na Móna cutaway bogs (Clarke, 2010; Bord na Móna, 2016);
- Significant international engagement during this period with other counties in relation to best-practice regarding peatland rehabilitation and after-use through the International Peat Society and the Society for Ecological Restoration (Joosten & Clarke, 2002; Clarke & Rieley, 2010; Gann *et al*., 2019);
- Consultation and engagement with internal and external stakeholders;
- GIS Mapping;
- BNM drainage surveys;
- Bog topography and peat depth data;
- Hydrological modelling;

## 2.1 Desk Study

The desk study involved collecting all relevant environmental and ecological data for the study area. The development of the rehabilitation plan also takes account of research, experience and engagement with other peatland restoration and rehabilitation projects and peatland research including Irish, UK, European and International best practice guidance (full citations are in the References Section):

- Anderson *et al*. (2017). An overview of the progress and challenges of peatland restoration in Western Europe.
- Barry, T.A. *et al.* (1973). A survey of cutover peats and underlying mineral soils. Soil Survey Bulletin No. 30. Dublin, Bord na Móna and An Foras Taluntais.
- Bonn *et al*. (2017). Peatland restoration and ecosystem services- science, policy and practice.
- Carroll *et al*. (2009). *Sphagnum* in the Peak District. Current Status and Potential for Restoration. Moors for the Future Report No 16.
- Clark & Rieley (2010). Strategy for responsible peatland management.
- Eades *et al*. (2003). The Wetland Restoration Manual.
- Farrell & Doyle (2003). Rehabilitation of Industrial Cutaway Atlantic Blanket Bog, NW Mayo, Ireland.
- Feehan, J. (2004). A long-lived wilderness. The future of the north midlands peatland network. Department of Environmental Resource Management, UCD.
- Foss, P.J., Crushell, P. & Gallagher, M.C. (2017) Title: Counties Longford &Roscommon Wetland Study. Report prepared for Longford and Roscommon County Councils.
- Gann *et al*. (2019). International Principles and Standards for the practice of Ecological Restoration.
- Hinde *et al*. (2010). *Sphagnum* re-introduction project: A report on research into the re-introduction of *Sphagnum* mosses to degraded moorland. Moors for the Future Research Report 18.
- Joosten & Clarke (2002). Wise Use of mires and peatlands – Background and Principles including a framework for Decision-making.
- Lindsay (2010). Peatbogs and Carbon: A Critical Synthesis to Inform Policy Development in Oceanic Peat Bog Conservation and Restoration in the Context of Climate Change.
- Mackin *et al*. (2017). Best practice in raised bog restoration in Ireland. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 99. National Parks and Wildlife Service,

- McBride *et al*. (2011). The Fen Management Handbook (2011), Scottish Natural Heritage.
- McDonagh (1996). Drain blocking by machines on Raised Bogs. Unpublished report for National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- NPWS (2017a). National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation management plan. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- Pschenyckyj et al., 2021, Optimising Water Quality Returns from Peatland Management while Delivering Co-Benefits for Climate and Biodiversity. An Fóram Uisce.
- Quinty & Rochefort (2003). Peatland Restoration Guide, second edition. Canadian *Sphagnum* Peat Moss Association and New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources and Energy.
- Regan *et. al.* (2020). Ecohydrology, Greenhouse Gas Dynamics and Restoration Guidelines for Degraded Raised Bogs. EPA Research Report. Prepared for the Environmental Protection Agency by Trinity College Dublin.
- Renou-Wilson *et al*. (2011). BOGLAND - Sustainable Management of Peatlands in Ireland. STRIVE Report No 75 prepared for the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Schouten (2002). Conservation and Restoration of Raised Bogs: Geological, Hydrological and Ecological Studies. Dúchas - The Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment and Local Government, Ireland;
- Thom (2019). Conserving Bogs – Management Handbook.
- Wheeler & Shaw (1995). Restoration of Damaged Peatlands – with Particular Reference to Lowland Raised Bogs Affected by Peat Extraction.
- Wittram *et al*. (2015). A Practitioners Guide to Sphagnum Reintroduction. Moors for the Future Partnership.


Additional on-line resources were also incorporated into the desk study, including:

- Mountdillon bog group Integrated Pollution Control Licence;
- Mountdillon bog group Annual Environmental Reports;
- Review of the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) webmapper;
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) Reports;
- Environmental Protection Agency database (www.epa.ie);
- EPA Guidance on Requests for Alterations to a Licensed Industrial or Waste Activity;
- BirdWatch Ireland online data (including I-WeBS and CBS datasets; www.birdwatchireland.ie);
- Geological Survey of Ireland - National Draft Bedrock Aquifer map;
- Geological Survey of Ireland - Groundwater Database (www.gsi.ie);
- Historic Environment Viewer at https://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/
- National Parks & Wildlife Services Public Map Viewer (www.npws.ie);
- Water Framework Directive catchments.ie/maps/ Map Viewer (www.catchments.ie);
- OPW Indicative Flood Maps (www.floodmaps.ie);
- CFRAM Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) maps (www.cfram.ie);
- River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027
- Bord na Móna Annual Report 2024.
- Spatial data in respect of Article 17 reporting, available online at https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/habitat-and-species-data/article-17.

## 2.2 Consultation

A number of stakeholders have been identified during the course of Bord na Móna's rehabilitation and Biodiversity Action Plan activities and are contacted during the rehabilitation planning process for their views. See Section 4.

## 2.3 Field Surveys

Bord na Móna carried out a baseline ecological survey of all of its properties in 2009-2012 and developed habitat maps. As part of this exercise, Lough Bannow Bog was surveyed in July of 2012. Additional ecological walk-over surveys and visits have taken place at Lough Bannow Bog between 2014-2019. Habitat maps have been updated, where required. This rehabilitation plan is informed by the original baseline survey as well as subsequent confirmatory site walk-over surveys and visits, and updates to baseline data.

Habitat mapping followed best practice guidance from Smith *et al.* (2011). Map outputs including all habitat maps and target notes were produced using GIS software application packages (ArcGIS). General marginal habitats and other habitats that had not been modified significantly by industrial peat extraction were classified using Fossitt *et al*. (2000). Plant nomenclature for vascular plants follows Stace (2019), while mosses and liverworts nomenclature follows identification keys published by the British Bryological Society (2010). A more detailed Bord na Móna classification system was previously developed for classifying pioneer cutaway habitats as Fossitt categories were deemed not to be detailed enough for cutaway bog (much of cutaway bog could be classified as Cutover Bog - PB4).

A detailed ecological survey report for Lough Bannow Bog is contained in Appendix II.

# 3. SITE DESCRIPTION

Lough Bannow Bog is situated approximately 7 km south-east of Lanesborough, Co. Longford along the R392 Road. The R398 public road runs along the north of the site while a secondary road (Keenagh road) runs along part of the southern section of the bog. The Royal Canal passes within 500 metres of eastern edge of the site. Two large mineral islands are located within the site boundaries but are not under BnM ownership.

Much of Lough Bannow is now cutaway and the majority of the original raised bog has now been removed. In some places there are exposed sub-soils. Peat depth is in general shallow and between 0.5-1.5 of residual fen or minerotrophic peat remains. Some isolated pockets with residual peat of deeper than 2 m also occur at Lough Bannow.

See Drawing number BNM-ECO-23-27-01 titled ***Lough Bannow Bog: Bog Site Location***, included in the accompanying Mapbook[1] , which illustrates the location of Lough Bannow Bog in context to the surrounding area.

## 3.1 Status and Situation

### *3.1.1 Site history*

Industrial peat production commenced at Lough Bannow in the 1960's and ceased in 2020. Lough Bannow Bog formerly supplied fuel peat for Lough Ree Power Station in Lanesborough.

### 3.1.2 Current land-use

The proposed Derryadd Wind Farm infrastructure partially overlaps with the Derryarogue rehabilitation footprint (see drawing number BNM-ECO-23-27-20: **Standard Rehab Measures**); the wind farm and its associated infrastructure have been mapped as a constraint in the rehabilitation plan.

The Proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Development will comprise:

- 22 no. wind turbines with a blade tip height of 190 m, blade rotor diameter of 165 m, hub height of 107.5 m and the associated infrastructure including tower sections, nacelle, hub, and rotor blades and all associated foundations and hard-standing areas in respect of each turbine;
- New internal site access roads, approximately 27,500m in length including passing bays and associated drainage;
- 2 no. permanent Meteorological Masts, both of which will be 120 m in height, and associated hardstanding areas for both masts, as well as the decommissioning and removal of an existing 100 m Meteorological Mast on site in Lough Barrow Bog;
- 4 No. Borrow pits in Derryadd Bog; All works associated with the opening, gravel and spoil extraction, and decommissioning of the borrow pits;
- 4 No. temporary construction compounds, including material storage, site welfare facilities, and site offices;
- 4 No. temporary security cabins at the main construction site entrances as well as at a number of access points around the proposed wind farm site;

[1] Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan – Lough Bannow Bog Map Book

- 1 no. 110 kV electrical substation compound in Derryarogue Bog. The substation will consist of 2 No. control buildings, a 36 m high telecommunications tower, associated electrical plant and equipment, ground water well, wastewater holding tank and welfare facilities;
- All associated underground electrical and communications cabling connecting the turbines and masts to the proposed electrical substation, including road crossing at N63 and associated grid connection via a 110 kV loop-in connection to the existing Lanesborough-Richmond 110 kV overhead line which traverses the proposed wind farm site;
- 1 No. 16 MW battery storage facility;
- 2 No. Peat Deposition Area, one to the north of the proposed substation compound in Derryarogue Bog and one in Derryadd Bog;
- New site access entrances, temporary improvements and modifications to existing public road infrastructure to facilitate delivery of abnormal loads including locations on N6 Eastbound Slip Road, N6/N61 Roundabout at Athlone, N61/N63 Roundabout at Roscommon, N63 Roscommon Arts Centre Roundabout and N61/N63 Roundabout, Northeast of Roscommon;
- Hinge 3 No. permanent lighting fixtures in Folio RN40465F in Roscommon town to facilitate the delivery of abnormal loads (i.e. turbine blades);
- Approximately 7,500m of dedicated amenity access tracks to provide linkages between the proposed wind farm site roads and the existing royal canal greenway (to the east) and Corlea visitor centre and amenity areas (to the south);
- 3 No. permanent amenity carparks, one of which is situated in Derryarogue Bog (19 no. car parking spaces in total) and two carparks in Derryadd Bog (19 no. car parking spaces in each carpark);
- All associated site work and ancillary works including new drainage and upgrading existing drainage, access road, earthworks, site reinstatement and erosion control, which will be aligned with the existing and future site rehabilitation plans; and,
- A 10-year planning permission is being sought with a 30-year operational life from the date of commissioning of the entire wind farm.

Overall, this site varies greatly from areas that are re-vegetating rapidly since they came out of industrial peat production to bare peat areas that were still in peat production until relatively recently (2020). The majority of the site is now developing pioneer cutaway habitats. Some parts of the site have recently developed pioneer wetlands communities including Reed beds. The drier sections of the site have developed areas of Birch dominated scrub.

Topographically, the site undulates and has regular small hills of gravel that are exposed between basins of low-lying peat. A rail line crosses the site in an east-west direction, dissecting the site into a much larger northern section and a smaller southern section.

An area covering approx. 35ha in the western section of the site is owned by Coillte and was planted with conifers in 1995, comprising Sitka Spruce and Norway Spruce. No rehabilitation works will be carried out within Coillte owned lands and this area has been mapped as a constraint.

Lough Bannow Bog contains three pumps (one to the south and two along the northern boundary). Some of the drains in the east of the site have been excavated down to limestone bedrock. There was ongoing hydrological management via pumping to support the former industrial peat production and its infrastructure. Pumping is ongoing during the decommissioning phase.

There are some areas of active turbary around the margins of the site. These are mapped in the accompanying Mapbook. See Appendix II for more detail on site, habitats and local features.

#### *3.1.3. Socio-Economic conditions*

Bord na Móna has historically been a vital employer for the rural community of the Midlands of Ireland. Bord na Móna compiled a report on the role of peat extraction in the midlands historically in which they report that in 1986, by the end of Bord na Móna's Third Development Programme, a total of twenty-three work locations had been established around the country. The company had an average employment of approximately 4,688 in the mid 1980's, with a peak employment of 6,100 during the production season, which placed it among the country's largest commercial employers. The importance of such levels of employment were largely due to its regional concentration in the Midlands and the lack of alternative employment opportunities at the time.

According to the Energy Crop Socio-Economic Study undertaken by Fitzpatrick Associates in 2011, there were an estimated 1,443 jobs supported by the peat-to-power industry in Ireland at the time, some 81% of which were located in the catchment areas of the three peat-fired generating stations (Lough Ree, West Offaly, and Edenderry Power Stations). These constituted jobs in the plants and in peat extraction, jobs indirectly supported in upstream supply industries and jobs induced through the trickle-down effects of the wages and salaries of those supported directly or indirectly.

According to the Energy Crop Socio-Economic Study undertaken by Fitzpatrick Associates in 2011, there were an estimated 1,443 jobs supported by the peat-to-power industry in Ireland at the time, some 81% of which were located in the catchment areas of the three peat-fired generating stations (Lough Ree, West Offaly, and Edenderry Power Stations). These constituted jobs in the plants and in peat extraction, jobs indirectly supported in upstream supply industries and jobs induced through the trickle-down effects of the wages and salaries of those supported directly or indirectly.

In respect of Lough Bannow Bog, jobs included in the above study would have included those to facilitate peat extraction for the supply of fuel peat for Lough Ree Power.

As the primary employer in many Midland counties, Bord na Móna played a central role in building communities through several initiatives, including Education bursaries, support of local sporting clubs, the provision of community gain funds, charity programmes and the provision and building of amenity areas. These job numbers have now declined with the cessation of peat extraction at this bog.

### 3.2 Geology and Peat Depths

#### *3.2.1 Sub-soil geology*

The underlying geology[2] of Lough Bannow Bog is comprised of Agrillaceous Limestones (Visean), Ballysteen Formation, Moathill Formation and Meath Formation.

[2] https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=de7012a99d2748ea9106e7ee1b6ab8d5&scale=0

### 3.2.2 *Peat type and depths*

Much of Lough Bannow is now cutaway and the majority of the original raised bog has now been removed. In some places there are exposed sub-soils. In general, there is between 0.5-1.5 of residual fen or minerotrophic peat. This will have a significant influence on the development of future pioneer habitats. There are also some isolated pockets with residual peat of deeper than 2 m. This may have the potential to develop embryonic *Sphagnum*-rich peat-forming communities if optimum hydrological conditions can be developed.

## 3.3 Key Biodiversity Features of Interest

Lough Bannow Bog is one of a group within the Mount Dillon bog group that is susceptible to being partially inundated with water during winter periods. In each of these bogs, a portion of the industrial peat production areas lie below the winter flood level of the Shannon and pumping these sites was critical to sustaining industrial peat production.

A detailed ecological report is provided in Appendix II.

### *3.3.1 Current habitats*

The most common habitats[3] present in the former production areas at Lough Bannow Bog include:

- Poor fen (pEang, pJeff, pTyp, pPhrag and pTrig)
- Bare peat (0-50% cover) (BP)
- Pioneer dry calcareous and neutral grasssland (*Centaureo-Cynosuretum*) (gCal)
- *Tussilago farfara*-dominated community (vegetation > 50%) (Colt's Foot) (DisCf)
- Pioneer *Campylopus*-dominated community (pCamp)
- Rip - riparian areas (streams/drains with fringing habitats)
- Birch dominated scrub (ebir, oBir and cBir)
- Exposed gravel
- Pioneer dry *Calluna vulgaris*-dominated community (Heather) (dHeath)
- Temporary open water (tow)
- Conifer plantation (WD4)
- Transition mire and quaking bog (PF3)
- Birch woodland (WN7)
- Raised bog (PB1) remnant
- Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland (WN2)
- Possible calcareous springs (FP1)
- Dense Bracken (HD1)

3 Codes refer BnM classification of pioneer habitats of production bog and Heritage Council habitat classification, Fossitt 2000

- Wet grassland (GS4) along the fringes of the bog

See Drawing number BNM-ECO-23-27-17 titled ***Lough Bannow Bog: Current Habitat Map***, included in the accompanying Mapbook, which illustrates the habitats at Lough Bannow Bog.

### *3.3.2 Species of conservation interest*

A number of species of conservation concern have been recorded at Lough Bannow Bog. The following is a summary of the records of these species available within both BnM records and those of the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC).

Multiple mammal species have been recorded at Lough Bannow Bog including Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus subsp. Hibernicus)*, Eurasian Badger (*Meles meles),* Pine Marten (*Martes martes*) and European Otter (*Lutra lutra*).

Regarding lepidoptera species, there are NBDC/BNM records for the following species at Lough Bannow: Brimstone (*Gonepteryx rhamni*), Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*), Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*), Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*), Large Heath (*Coenonympha tullia*), Large White (*Pieris brassicae*), Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*), Peacock (*Inachis io*), Silver-washed Fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*), Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*), Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*), Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) and Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*). Marsh Fritillary (Euphydryas aurinia) was recorded at Lough Bannow as part of the surveys carried out for the previous Derryadd Wind Farm application (Planning Ref. No. ABP-303592-19).

Numerous bird species are known to use the cutover bogs in Ireland's midlands as breeding grounds, wintering grounds or both. Raven (*Corvus corax*), Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*), Common Gull (*Larus canus*), Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*), Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) and Magpie (*Pica pica*) have all been recorded during BNM ecology surveys.

NBDC records for red-listed[4] bird species of conservation concern recorded in the 10km squares (N06, N16) which Lough Bannow intersects include; Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Bewick's Swan (*Cygnus columbianus subsp. bewickii*), Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*), Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), Corncrake (*Crex crex*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*), Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*) and Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) and Grey Partridge (*Perdix perdix*).

A review of the Ornithology Chapter for the previously proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)[3] (Planning Ref. No. ABP-303592-19) was also undertaken. The below paragraphs provide a summary of the bird species of conservation concern (previously) recorded during surveys to inform the above, and which may still occur at the site.

Surveys in the wind farm study area recorded Red Listed (BoCCI) species including Curlew, Redshank, Herring Gull, Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*), Lapwing and Eurasian Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*). The results of the breeding bird surveys (2015, 2016 and 2017) undertaken in the wider wind farm study area also recorded several additional Red List species (BoCCI), including Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*), Curlew, Lapwing and Quail (*Coturnix*

[4] Gilbert G, Stanbury A and Lewis L (2021), "Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020 –2026". Irish Birds 9: 523—544

[3] Tobin, 2019, Derryadd Wind Farm Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), Volume II, EIAR Main Report.

*coturnix*). A number of species recorded during the winter months in the wind farm study area are listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, namely Golden Plover, Greenland White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*), Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) and Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). Golden Plover, Hen Harrier, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon were also recorded during breeding season surveys along with Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) and Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*). Habitat is limited for many of these species at Lough Bannow however.

It should be noted that much of the wildfowl, wader and gull observations recorded as part of the ornithological study were associated with the River Shannon and associated wet grasslands to the north of the area.

A review of the interim bird survey report detailing the results of bird surveys undertaken by Tobin Consulting Engineers at the Derryadd Wind Farm Site from April 2022-April 2023 was also undertaken. The below paragraphs provide a summary of the bird species of conservation concern recorded. These records are from the Wind Farm study area including Derryadd Bog, Derryarogue Bog to the north and Lough Bannow Bog to the south.

In total, during the range of ornithological surveys conducted since April 2022, 98 bird species have been observed at the proposed Derryadd WF site. A number of species recorded in the Wind Farm study area are listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, including Little Egret, Greater White-fronted Goose, Peregrine Falcon, Whooper Swan, Common Kingfisher, Merlin, Hen Harrier, Eurasian Curlew and European Golden Plover. The following Red Listed (BoCCI) species were recorded in the study area: Common Kestrel, Common Snipe, Meadow Pipit, Northern Lapwing, Northern Shoveler. The following Amber Listed (BoCCI) species were also recorded in the study area: Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), Eurasian Teal (*Anas crecca*), Eurasian Wigeon, Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*), Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*), Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*), Common Gull, Common Coot (*Fulica atra*), and Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*).

#### *3.3.3 Invasive species*

There are no NBDC/BNM records for invasive species at Lough Bannow Bog. A broad range of common garden escapes are also occasionally present around the margins of Bord na Móna bogs. Although spatial overlap with the rehabilitation work is expected to be limited, these are, where necessary, to be treated in line with best practice during rehabilitation.

### 3.4 Statutory Nature Conservation Designations

There are a number of European Sites (SAC's or SPA's) in close proximity (i.e. within a 5km radius at minimum) to Lough Bannow Bog. Lough Bannow Bog has no overlapping EU designated sites. The nearest EU Designated sites to Lough Bannow Bog are as follows:

- Mount Jessop SAC (Site Code: 002202) – 3.4 km east of Lough Bannow
- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (site code: 001818) – 8.2 km to the north east of Lough Bannow
- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (site code: 004101) – 8.2 km to the north east of Lough Bannow
- Brown Bog (site code: 002346) – 8 km to the north of Lough Bannow
- Lough Ree SAC (Site Code: 000440) – 4.2 km to the west of Lough Bannow
- Lough Ree SPA (Site Code: 004064) – 4.7 km to the west of Lough Bannow
- Fortwilliam Turlough SAC (site code: 000448) – 4.6 km to the south-west of Lough Bannow

One non-statutory designated site, Lough Bawn pNHA, overlaps the south-east corner of the site and has been subject to rehabilitation in the past. A number of non-statutory designated sites also occur in the wider area around Lough Bannow Bog. Lough Ree pNHA (NPWS Site Code: 002103), occurs approximately 4.2 km to the west of Lough Bannow. Mount Jessop NHA (NPWS Site Code: 001450), occurs approximately 3.4 km to the east of Lough Bannow. Forthill Bog NHA (NPWS Site Code: 001448), occurs approximately 3.8 km to the south of Lough Bannow. Lisnanarriagh Bog NHA (NPWS Site Code: 002072), occurs approximately 10.8 km to the west of Lough Bannow Bog.

See drawing *BNM-ECO-23-27-23:* ***Lough Bannow Bog Proximity to Designated Sites*** in the accompanying map book.

### *3.4.1 Other Nature Conservation Designations*

The Ramsar Convention entered into force in Ireland on 15th March 1985. Ireland currently has 45 sites/wetlands designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites). These cover a surface area of 66,994ha. There are no Ramsar sites located in proximity to Lough Bannow Bog.

## 3.5 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

Lough Bannow bog forms part of the Upper Shannon Catchment (Catchment ID: 26C) as defined by the EPA under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The bog lies within the Shannon [Upper]_SC_80, Shannon [Upper]_SC_60 and Bilberry_SC_10 sub-catchments.

There are several rivers and streams within the site and around the margins that drain the site. The Ballynakill_26 River (EPA code: 26B22) runs along the northern boundary in a northerly direction where it flows into the River Shannon donwstream. The Bilberry (26B03) River rises near the south west of the bog and its tributary, the Ledwithstown_26, rises near the south eastern boundary, both flow in a south westerly direction. The Bilberry eventually discharges to Lough Ree, located in the Shannon [Upper]_SC_9 sub-catchment.

Lough Bannow Bog has a pumped drainage regime. The site contains three pumps (one to the south and two along the northern boundary). These facilitate drainage from several discharge points for the former peat production and support of infrastructure.

GSI data indicates that the majority of Lough Bannow Bog lies within a locally important aquifer – bedrock which is moderately productive only in local zones. An aquifer is an underground body of water-bearing rock or unconsolidated materials (gravel or sand) from which groundwater can be extracted in useful amounts. GSIs Aquifer classes are divided into three main groups based on their resource potential, and further subdivided based on the type of openings through which groundwater flows. There are nine aquifer categories in total. Locally important aquifers are capable of supplying locally important abstractions (e.g. smaller public water supplies, group schemes), or good yields (100-400 m3/d). This data gives an indication of sub-surface deposits (bedrock and unconsolidated materials) in terms of their groundwater resource potential and dominant groundwater flow type.

Regionally important aquifers are those in which the network of fractures, fissures and joints, through which groundwater flows, is well connected and widely dispersed, resulting in a relatively even distribution of highly permeable zones. There is good aquifer storage and groundwater flow paths can be up to several kilometres in

length. There is likely to be substantial groundwater discharge to surface waters ('baseflow') and large (>2,000 m3/d), dependable springs may be associated with these aquifers.

The majority of Lough Bannow Bog is located in an area mapped by GSI as of low groundwater vulnerability (GSI Map viewer), with the two mineral islands to the centre and west mapped as moderate groundwater vulnerability. Groundwater Vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease with which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities. Groundwater vulnerability maps are based on the type and thicknesses of subsoils (sands, gravels, glacial tills (or boulder clays), peat, lake and alluvial silts and clays), and the presence of karst features. Groundwater is most at risk where the subsoils are absent or thin and, in areas of karstic limestone, where surface streams sink underground at swallow holes. These data indicate there is generally low risk of any groundwater contamination occurring at this site.

Quaternary sediment maps show that Lough Bannow Bog is generally underlain by cutover raised peat. The two mineral islands to the centre and west of the site are underlain by till derived from limestones. This combination of sediment is common in the wider context surrounding the site.

## 3.6 Emissions to surface-water and watercourses

Drainage is an important feature of industrial peat production and there were extensive field drains maintained throughout bog areas to facilitate industrial peat production annually, each of which eventually drains into a terminal silt pond that allows for settlement of suspended solids before entering the main river systems. In accordance with the existing Integrated Pollution Control licence, all drainage water from boglands in a licensed area is discharged via an appropriately designed silt pond treatment arrangement as required in Condition 6.6. of the licence. Industrial peat production has now permanently ceased at Lough Bannow Bog.

Silt ponds are the key silt control infrastructure to control potential emissions from industrial peat production sites. As required under licence, BNM have a number of procedures for how it manages and maintains its silt pond network. The silt that builds up in silt ponds is excavated on a regular basis by Bord na Móna to facilitate an efficient level of silt control. Silt ponds will continue to be maintained during the rehabilitation and decommissioning. Silt pond decommissioning will be considered when sites are deemed to be on a trajectory of environmental stability and peatland rehabilitation has been completed.

Lough Bannow Bog has 5 treated surface water outlets which discharge to the Upper Shannon (26C) and Upper Shannon (26E) catchments. The Derrygeel (26D77) River flows in close proximity to the north-west corner of the site into Lough Bannow Stream (26L12) and subsequently the River Shannon (Upper) (26S02). Two outlets are associated with Ballynakill_26 (26B2) River flow north and into the River Shannon (Upper) (26S02). The fourth outlet is located to the north east and provides hydrological connectivity with the Royal Canal. The fifth outlet is located in the south west and discharges to Bilberry (26B03) River which subsequently joins the Ledwithstown River (26L84) and discharges to Lough Ree. The River Shannon (Upper)_100 (26S02) is listed as being under pressure from peat extraction in the 2nd cycle of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland and is indicated as remaining so in the third cycle. The Ledwithstown River (26L84) is listed as being under pressure from peat extraction in the 2nd cycle, but not indicated as being so in the third cycle.

Details of silt ponds, associated surface water emission points and monitoring and sampling locations are detailed in Drawing numbers BNM-ECO-23-27-SP01 titled ***Lough Bannow Bog: Sampling Points***, along with Drawing number BNM-ECO-23-27-WQ01 titled ***Lough Bannow Bog: Water Quality Map*** included in the accompanying Mapbook, which illustrate the various drainage and water quality infrastructure present at Lough Bannow Bog.

There is a robust monitoring program to track and verify any changes in baseline water quality conditions pre and post decommissioning and rehabilitation so that the success or otherwise can be tracked and verified for the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Programme Water Quality Monitoring.**

Rehabilitation of cutaway peatland is closely linked with control of emissions. One of the criteria for successful rehabilitation is stabilisation through re-vegetation, which will stabilise all substrates and in turn remove the need for further silt control measures. This site is already largely vegetated. Re-wetted peat also aids the primary objective of stabilizing peat, as when peat is re-wetted it is not vulnerable to wind erosion. Re-wetted peat and the development of wet peatland habitats can also act as sinks for silt and mobile peat, and increases additional retention time for solids, and the peatland vegetation can quickly stabilise this material within blocked drains on site (by acting like constructed wetlands).

Water quality of water discharges from restored peatlands normally improves as a result of bog restoration measures and the restoration of natural peatland processes (Bonn *et al*., 20017). Bog restoration is also expected to improve water attenuation of the site as the drains are blocked, slowing water movement and water release from the site. Restored peatlands help slow the release of water and aid the natural regulation of floods downstream (Minayeva *et al*., 2017). The National River Basin Management Plan (NRBMP) (DHPCLG, 2024) is the key national plan for Ireland to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The NRBMP outlines how key actions such as the Bord na Móna peatland rehabilitation is expected to have a positive impact on water quality and help the NWBMP deliver its objectives in relation to the WFD.

Water will still discharge from designated emission points when rehabilitation at Lough Bannow has been completed. This discharge will have improved water quality and there will be increased wetland attenuation, meaning slower release of water. This is expected to have a positive impact on status of the key watercourse receptors and the Shannon [Upper]_SC_80, Shannon [Upper]_SC_60 and Bilberry_SC_10 sub-catchments and will support the future status of the watercourses achieving Good Status.

**Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Programme Water Quality Monitoring**

Water quality monitoring will be established. There will be initial quarterly monitoring assessments of the site to determine the general status of the site, the condition of the silt-ponds, assess the condition of the rehabilitation work, asses the progress of natural colonisation, monitoring of any potential impacts on neighbouring land and general land security. The number of site visits will reduce after 2 years to bi-annually. These site visits will assess the need to additional rehabilitation.

Monitoring results will be maintained, trended and reported on each year as part of the requirement to report on Condition 10.1 of the IPC Licence on Bog Rehabilitation in the Annual Environmental Report, which will be available in April each year at www.epa.ie.

The parameters to be included (as per condition 6.2 of the IPC Licence) include monthly monitoring for pH, Flow, Suspended Solids, Total Solids, Total Phosphorus, Total Ammonia, Colour, and COD.

This sampling regime on a selected number of silt ponds will be carried out over a two-year cycle. The original (licence) requirement was for a quarterly sampling regime.

## 3.7 Fugitive Emissions to air

Rehabilitation of the drained peatland will seek to re-wet the dry peat where possible. Collectively re-wetting and re-vegetating will minimise any risk of emission to air from dust.

## 3.8 Carbon emissions

Irish peatlands are a huge carbon store, containing more than 75% of the national soil organic carbon (Renou-Wilson *et al.*, 2012). Peatland drainage and extraction transforms a natural peatland which acts as a modest carbon sink (taking in 0.1 to 1.1 t of carbon as CO2-C /ha/yr) into a cutaway ecosystem which is a large source of carbon dioxide (releasing 1.3 to 2.2 t of carbon as CO2-C /ha/yr) based on Tier 1 Emission factors (Evans *et al*., 2017). Renou-Wilson *et al.* (2018) reported losses of between 0.81 – 1.51 CO2-C /ha/yr from drained peatlands located in Ireland.

Re-wetting of dry peatlands will increase methane emissions (Gunther et al. 2020) as a consequence of the anoxic conditions within the peat body that provide a suitable environment for the microbial breakdown of plant litter and root exudates. Tanneberger *et al.* (2021) describes how peatland management has to choose between CO2 emissions from drained peatlands or increased methane (CH4) emissions from rewetted industrial peatlands. However, when radiative effects and atmospheric lifetimes of both GHG gases are considered and modelled, postponing rewetting increases the long-term warming effect of continued CO2 emissions (Gunther *et al.,* 2020). This means the increase in methane due to rewetting of dry peatlands is still negated by the CO2 emissions reductions. Further, Wilson *et al.* (2022) confirmed the benefit of rapid rewetting to achieve strong carbon reductions and potentially altering the warming dynamics from warming to cooling depending upon the climate scenario.

It is expected that Lough Bannow Bog will become a reduced Carbon source following rehabilitation. The potential of any cutaway site to develop as a carbon sink in the longer-term depends on the success of the rehabilitation measures, the extent of development of *Sphagnum*-rich or other peat-forming habitats, the balance of carbon fluxes from different cutaway habitats and future climatic conditions. The majority of the bog will develop as birch woodland on drier areas and peripheral headlands. Large wetlands are expected to develop on shallow peat with open water, reed swamp and fen habitats with alkaline emission factors. Part of this bog is expected to develop regenerating wet deep peat vegetation on deep peat areas.

## 3.9 Current ecological rating

(Following NRA (2009) Evaluation Criteria)

The majority of Lough Bannow Bog can be rated as **local importance; lower value to Local Importance; higher value.** Bare peat in the former production area of Lough Bannow Bog are assessed as **local importance (lower value)**.

The revegetated former production areas to the east and west of the site and marginal habitats including woodland, scrub, pioneer cutaway habitats, fen, calcareous grassland, remnant raised bog, and wetlands may act as a refuge and as ecological corridors for wildlife and are therefore deemed to be **locally important (higher value)**.

# 4. CONSULTATION

## 4.1 Consultation to date

Consultation seeks to engage an audience of relevant stakeholders at both a national and local level. National stakeholders have been identified from varied bog restoration and rehabilitation efforts undertaken by Bord na Móna over the past 40 years, with particular emphasis on engagement with stakeholders during their Biodiversity Action Plan programme, since 2010. National Stakeholders includes relevant government departments and agencies, relevant semi-state bodies, NGOs and other environmentally focused groups with a national remit.

There has been ongoing consultation on rehabilitation, biodiversity and other general issues at Lough Bannow Bog in relation to the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm (Bord na Móna Wind Farm | Derryadd Wind Farm). Specific consultation relating to the wind farm development and associated amenity development is not listed here, although there has been detailed consultation with stakeholders in relation to these issues and overlap with rehabilitation and biodiversity.

There has been ongoing consultation about rehabilitation, biodiversity, and other general issues over the years about Mountdillon bog group, including Lough Bannow Bog, with various stakeholders in relation to:

- General consultation with range of stakeholders at annual Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan review days 2010-2018.
- Longford Wetland Wilderness (general proposal led by Longford County Council and other stakeholders. This has had several iterations. See Lough Ree and Mid Shannon, Spirit Level 2017. A feasibility study for Longford County Council).
- Feehan, J. (2004) A Long-Lived Wilderness; the future of the north midlands peatland network UCD/NWWPC.
- Lauder, A. & O'Toole L. (2017). Concept development for a landscape-scale Wetland Wilderness Park in the Mid Shannon Region. A report funded by the Heritage Council's Heritage Grant Scheme.
- Foss, P.J., Crushell, P. & Gallagher, M.C. (2017). Counties Longford &Roscommon Wetland Study. Report prepared for Longford and Roscommon County Councils.
- Archaeological Liaison Committee (National Museum of Ireland & Dept of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht).
- Midlands & East Regional WFD Operational Committee (River Basin Management Plans).
- Sub-committee on Shannon Flooding Work Programme and Measures (OPW, Waterways Ireland, ESB, LA's, Fisheries Ireland, NPWs etc.).
- Greenway development at Lough Bannow (Longford County Council).

To inform the current Plan, both national and local stakeholders, including neighbours whose land adjoins Lough Bannow Bog and local representatives of national bodies (such as Regional National Parks and Wildlife Service staff) and relevant offices in County Councils (such as the Heritage or Environmental Offices) will be contacted. Any identified local interest groups will be sought and informed of the opportunity to engage with this rehabilitation plan, and when identified invited to submit their comments or observations in relation to the proposed rehabilitation at Lough Bannow Bog.

All correspondence received will be acknowledged and evaluated against the rehabilitation work proposed here, and the final draft of the Lough Bannow Bog Rehabilitation Plan will contain a review of the consultation.

## 4.2 Issues raised by Consultees

N/A Yet as consultation has not commenced.

## 4.3 Bord na Móna response to issues raised during consultation

N/A Yet as consultation has not commenced.

# 5. REHABILITATION GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The rehabilitation goals and outcomes outline what Bord na Móna want to achieve by implementing the rehabilitation. These include:

- Meeting conditions of IPC Licence.
- Environmental stabilisation of the former peat production areas and mitigation of potential silt run-off.
- Stabilisation or reduction in water quality parameters of water discharging from the site (e.g. suspended solids).
- Reducing pressure on receiving waterbodies that have been classified as At Risk from peatlands and from peat extraction, via stabilization or improving water-quality from this bog, and therefore, reducing pressures.
- Supporting the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Project. Integrating rehabilitation measures with planned renewable energy and any amenity infrastructure on site. It is not proposed to carry out any rehabilitation actions to change or negatively affect planned renewable energy infrastructure.
- Optimising hydrological conditions for the protection of exposed archaeological structures, their retention in situ and preservation into the future.
- The main goal and outcome of this plan is the successful rehabilitation (environmental stabilisation and restoration) of cutaway bog, in a manner that is acceptable to both external stakeholders and to Bord na Móna.

The rehabilitation goals and outcomes take account of the following issues.

- Natural colonisation will form the basis for the environmental stabilisation of the bare peat areas. Re-wetting of the cutaway, where possible, is a general rehabilitation strategy. The main target will be to maintain water-levels close to the peat surface, and to avoid the creation of large-water bodies. Re-wetting and water levels close to the peat surface accelerates the re-vegetation processes, the development of vegetation cover and therefore environmental stabilisation. There is already significant potential for the creation of wet cutaway habitats at Lough Bannow Bog due to the local topography (localised basins).
- It will take some time for stable naturally functioning habitats to fully develop at Lough Bannow Bog. This will happen over a longer timeframe than the implementation of this rehabilitation plan.
- Re-wetting residual peat will initially maintain and enhance the carbon storage capacity of the bog. There is scientific consensus that restoration of hydrology in damaged bog can improve carbon storage, water storage and attenuation and help support biodiversity both on the site and in the catchment (See Section 3.8). This will reduce carbon emissions from the site from a larger carbon source to a smaller carbon source. In time, the site has the capacity to develop in part as a carbon sink.
- It is not expected that the site has the potential to develop active raised bog (ARB) analogous to the priority EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitat within the foreseeable future (c.50 years). Furthermore, only a small proportion of the bog has potential to develop *Sphagnum*-rich habitats in this timeframe. Nevertheless, re-wetting across the entire bog, will improve habitat conditions of the whole bog. Other peatland habitats will develop in a wider mosaic that reflects underlying conditions.
- Rehabilitating former industrial peat production bog will also in the longer-term support other ecosystem services such as such the development of new habitat to support biodiversity and local attenuation of water flows from the bog.

- WFD status in receiving water bodies can be affected by peatlands and peat extraction but is also affected by other sources such as agriculture. In addition, receiving water bodies that are assessed as At Risk from peatlands and from peat extraction are likely to have several contributary sources of impacts (private peat extraction and Bord na Móna). Reducing pressures due to former peat extraction activities at Lough Bannow Bog will contribute to stabilising or improving water quality status of receiving water bodies in general. Ultimately, improving the WFD status of the receiving waterbody will depend on reducing pressure from a range of different sources, including peatlands in general (private and Bord na Móna).
- Re-wetting in general will benefit the future preservation of most known and unknown archaeological features.
- Planned land uses, such as renewable energy generation infrastructure.

# 6. SCOPE OF REHABILITATION

The principal scope of this rehabilitation plan is the environmental stabilisation of the bog. This is defined by:

- The area of Lough Bannow Bog.
- EPA IPC Licence - Ref. P0504-01. As part of Condition 10.2 of this licence, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. Lough Bannow bog is part of the Mountdillon bog group.
- The local environmental conditions of Lough Bannow Bog mean that drain blocking is the most suitable rehabilitation approach for this site. Lough Bannow Bog while largely comprising shallower peat does retain deep peat reserves in places.
- The key goals and outcomes of rehabilitation set by Bord na Móna. Bord na Móna have defined the key goal and outcome of rehabilitation at Lough Bannow Bog as **environmental stabilisation**, **optimising residual peat re-wetting,** to enhance the development of compatible habitats.
- The cutaway is already developing a mosaic of woodland, grassland, wetland and cutaway peatland habitats. Much of this cutaway has largely stabilised. Rehabilitation is proposed to enhance residual peat re-wetting in these areas while taking account of future infrastructure and land-uses.
- Rehabilitation of Lough Bannow Bog will support multiple national strategies of climate action, biodiversity action and other key environmental strategies such was the Water Framework Directive.
- The time frame for the delivery of the planned rehabilitation will be undertaken according to available resources and appropriate constraints.
- It is not proposed to carry out rehabilitation on all marginal or peripheral cutover bog zones. Generally, these bog remnants are narrow, or are subject to turbary, and do not have positive bog restoration prospects.

## 6.1 Key constraints

- **Bog conditions.** Rehabilitation outcomes of sites are constrained by the environmental characteristics of these particular areas. Drain blocking can be widespread in scale with each field drain being blocked (e.g. Kellysgrove) or more localised with targeted drain-blocking (e.g. Mountlucas Wind Farm) and both can be very effective. This can be used in conjunction with local topographical features like natural hollows to manage water levels or with other typical features of cutaway peatlands like high peat fields, which act as berms to hold water to some extent. Active management to create low berms to manage water-levels and create shallow wetland habitats dominated by emergent vegetation has also been successfully developed (e.g. Mountlucas Wind Farm, Bruckana Wind Farm, Oweninny, Lough Boora Discovery Park, Ballycon).
- The majority of this bog has been cutaway. Lough Bannow bog has a partially pumped drainage regime, which will need to be considered as part of the wider rehabilitation. A mosaic of wetland habitats are the most compatible habitat that can be developed in response to re-wetting, if pumping ceases or is reduced.
- **Potential land-use.** Bord na Móna are planning to develop a renewable energy project at Lough Bannow Bog as part of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm. This wind farm project is in pre-planning and is expected to be submitted for planning permission in 2025. Lough Bannow will be rehabilitated **either** in association with the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Project, with peatland rehabilitation integrated into the proposed project or will be completed in the event of an unsuccessful planning application. It is

expected that Bord na Móna will revise and update the rehabilitation plan for Lough Bannow Bog when a decision is made in relation to the wind farm planning application. Bord na Móna remain fully committed to rehabilitating Lough Bannow Bog and meeting the conditions of the IPC licence.

- **Amenity development.** Longford County Council lodged a Part 8 Planning Application in 2021 named 'No. 88 Mid Shannon Wilderness Park trackways' which includes greenway or amenity walking/cycling tracks through Lough Bannow Bog. There are additional proposals to create an amenity track through Lough Bannow Bog as part of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Project.
- **Coillte.** An area covering approx. 35ha in the western section of the site is owned by Coillte and has been mapped as a constraint. No rehabilitation works will be carried out within Coillte owned lands.
- **NPWS.** Lough Bawn Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) partially overlaps the southeastern corner of the bog and has been subject to previous rehabilitation (2017).
- **Surrounding landscape and neighbours.** Another key constraint is the interaction between the Bord na Móna sites and the surrounding landscape. Care has to be taken that no active rehabilitation management is carried out that could negatively and knowingly impact on surrounding land. This includes any hydrological management on neighbouring farmland. It is anticipated that the work proposed here (blocking drains and re-wetting cutaway peatlands) will not have any flooding impacts on adjacent land.
- **Archaeology**. There are archaeological features present at Lough Bannow Bog, which may similarly constrain rehabilitation activities. The discovery of monuments or archaeological objects during peatland rehabilitation may potentially constrain the rehabilitation measures proposed for a particular area. The rehabilitation will optimise hydrological conditions for the protection of exposed archaeological structures, their retention in situ and preservation into the future. Any newly discovered archaeology may require rehabilitation measures to be reviewed and adapted. A review of known archaeology and an archaeological impact appraisal of the proposed rehabilitation will be carried out. In the worst-case scenario works affecting the surface and sub-surface of the bog might disturb previously unknown archaeological deposits or artefacts without preservation by record taking place. Should any previously unknown archaeological material be uncovered during the rehabilitation works, it will be avoided and reported to the Bord na Móna Archaeological Liaison Officer and the National Museum of Ireland. The results of this assessment will be incorporated into the rehabilitation plan to minimise known archaeological disturbance, where possible.
- **Public Rights of Way**. Public rights of way occur in the SW of Lough Bannow. Where a public right of way or similar burden exists on Bord na Móna property, consideration will be given to ensuring that this remain intact where possible. In some instances, depending upon previous land uses and management, alternative solutions may be required. These will be explored in consultation with local communities and statutory bodies during the consultation work associated with the decommissioning and rehabilitation work described here. Two Rights of Way exist at or around the margin of Lough Bannow Bog.
- **Turf-cutting.** Some marginal areas of Lough Bannow Bog are subject to active turf cutting. These areas are ecologically and hydrologically linked to the area owned by Bord na Móna where rehabilitation is planned.

## 6.2 Key Assumptions

- It is assumed that Bord na Móna will have all resources required to deliver this project.
- It is expected that weather conditions will be within normal limits over the rehabilitation plan timeframe. Long periods of wet weather have the capacity to significantly affect ground conditions and constrain drain blocking and other ground activities.

## 6.3 Key Exclusions

The scope of this rehabilitation plan does not cover:

- The longer-term development of stable naturally functioning habitats to fully develop at Lough Bannow Bog. The plan covers the short-term rehabilitation **actions** and **an additional monitoring and after-care programme** to monitor the rehabilitation and to respond to any needs.
- This plan is not intended to be an after-use or future land-use plan for Lough Bannow Bog.
- The longer-term management of this site, potentially as a nature conservation site, or for amenity, or for other uses in the future.

# 7. CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL REHABILITATION

This section outlines what criteria will be used to indicate successful rehabilitation and what critical success factors are needed to achieve successful rehabilitation. All criteria used to indicate successful rehabilitation will be measured to validate the achievement of the rehabilitation goals and outcomes and validate the completion of the rehabilitation.

The key objective of this rehabilitation plan is **environmental stabilisation** and the stabilisation of any emissions from the site that related to the former industrial drainage activities.

Rehabilitation is generally defined by Bord na Móna as:

- stabilisation of bare peat areas via targeted active management (e.g. drain-blocking/re-wetting) slowing movement of water across the site and encouraging a naturally functioning raised bog ecosystem; and
- mitigation of key emissions (e.g. potential suspended solids run-off).

## 7.1 Criteria for successful rehabilitation to meet EPA IPC licence conditions:

- Rewetting of residual peat in the former production area to offset potential run off of suspended solids and to encourage and accelerate development of vegetation cover via natural colonisation and increase in the area of potentially peat forming habitats. See Table 7.1 for a summary of the criteria for successful rehabilitation and associated monitoring. The target will be the delivery of measures, and this will be measured by an aerial survey after rehabilitation is completed.
- That there is a stabilizing/improving concentration of suspended solids and ammonia in discharges from Bord na Móna sites, associated with the measures undertaken to stabilize the peat surface by the blocking of the internal drainage system and the maximized rewetting of the peat surface. This will be demonstrated by developing a stable or downward trajectory of water quality indicators (suspended solids and ammonia) towards what would be typical of a re-wetted cutaway bog. This will be measured via water quality monitoring (suspended solids and ammonia) for at least 2 years after the rehabilitation has been completed.
- Receiving water bodies have been classified under the River Basin Management Plan and this classification includes waters that are At-Risk from peatlands and peat extraction. The success criteria will be that the At-Risk classification will see improvements in the associated pressures from this peatland or if remaining At-Risk, that there is an improving trajectory in the pressure from this peatland.

With regard to predicting and estimating likely trends that might materialize or could be considered as a target, monitoring of surface water ammonia emissions from Longfordpass bog in Littleton over 3 yrs., post cessation of peat extraction with ongoing rehabilitation, were considered. These are indicating a downward trend in Ammonia concentrations (Figure 7.1).

Similarly monitoring of surface water ammonia emissions from a Corlea bog in Mountdillon over the past 3 yrs. post cessation of peat extraction with ongoing rehabilitation, indicate downward trends.

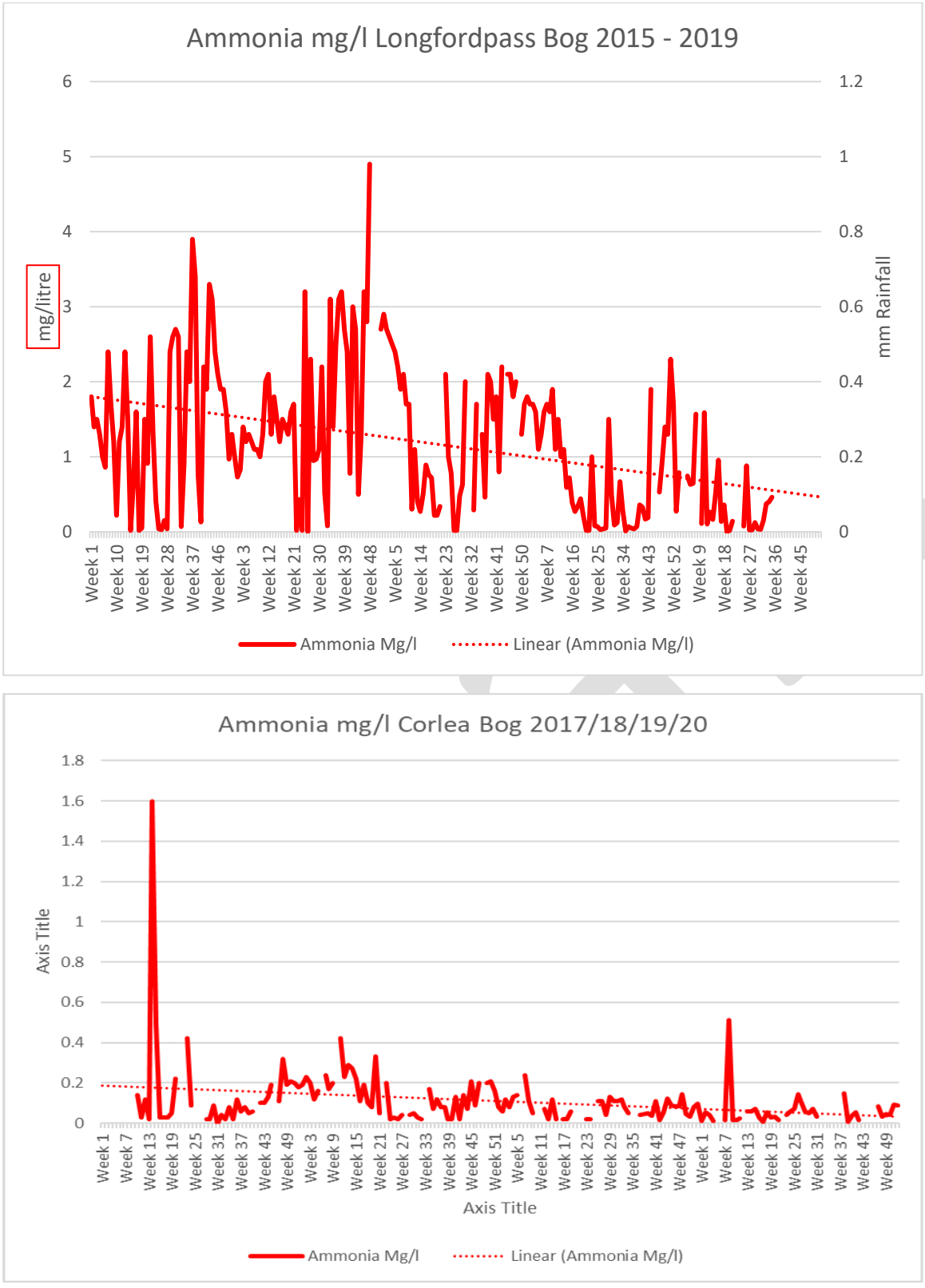


**Figure 7.1.** Ammonia levels over the period 2015-2019/2020 at Longfordpass and Corlea.

**Table 7.1. Summary of Success criteria, targets, how various success criteria will be measured and expected time-frames.**

| Criteria type | Criteria | Target | Measured by | Expected Time-frame |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| IPC validation | Rewetting in the former area of industrial drainage. | Delivery of rehabilitation measures<br>Restoration of hydrological regime. | Aerial photography after rehabilitation has been completed – to demonstrate measures (drain-blocking)<br>Establishment of a baseline for future monitoring of bare peat, vegetation establishment and habitat condition. | 3 years |
| IPC validation | Key water quality parameters<br>Ammonia, Phosphorous, Suspended solids, pH and conductivity | Reduction or stabilisation of key water quality parameters associated with this bog | Water quality monitoring for a period after rehabilitation has been completed | 2 years |
| IPC validation | Reducing pressure from drainage on the local water body catchment (WFD) | Where this section of the water body (that this bog drains to) has not been identified as under pressure from peat extraction, that the intervening EPA monitoring programme associated with its Programme of Measures for this water body, confirms that its classification remains at not being at risk from peat extraction associated with activities at this bog. | EPA WFD monitoring programme | WFD schedule |

## 7.2 Critical success factors needed to achieve successful rehabilitation as outlined in the plan

The achievement of successful rehabilitation as outlined in the plan requires:

- **Funding to pay for resources required to deliver the planned rehabilitation (Bord na Móna).** Bord na Móna maintains a Provision on its balance sheet to pay for these future costs when industrial peat extraction ceases. Bord na Móna is fully committed to meeting its obligations relating to rehabilitation and decommissioning under the Integrated Pollution Control Licence.
- **Bord na Móna to have sufficient resources (staff and training) to deliver the planned rehabilitation with required associated skills and competencies.**
- **Bord na Móna to have sufficient resources (suitable machinery) and staff to maintain this machinery.**
- **Weather conditions to be within normal limits over the rehabilitation plan timeframe.** Long periods of wet weather have the capacity to significantly affect ground conditions and constrain the delivery of rehabilitation. The potential impact of wet weather on ground conditions can be reduced by appropriate planning and management. Bord na Móna have significant experience of managing these issues through 70 years of working in these peatland environments.
- **Rehabilitation measures to be effective.** The rehabilitation measures proposed in this plan are based on 40 years of Bord na Móna experience of peatland management and best practice applied internationally in peatland management. Measures proposed in this plan have already been shown to be affective at other sites. Bord na Móna will apply a flexible and adaptable approach to the more innovative rehabilitation measures proposed in this plan. If measures are not initially effective, Bord na Móna will review any requirement for additional practical rehabilitation.
- **Natural colonisation of vegetation to develop semi-natural habitats at a rate within the normal limits.** The development of naturally functioning semi-natural habitats on cutaway peatland takes time. Pioneer vegetation can develop relatively quickly (3-10 years) and wetland habitats can develop relatively quickly. Birch woodland make take 20-30 years to develop. However, it may take 50 years for active raised bog vegetation to re-develop on ground that was previously cutaway. Different environmental conditions will have a significant impact on the rate of natural colonisation, and as a result of the combination of different environmental conditions and the application of different rehabilitation measures, there will be a variety of habitat outcomes. Future habitat modelling has taken cognisance of the proposed hydrological regime post construction.
- Rehabilitation measures have been designed to accelerate and work with natural colonisation and other natural processes. Bord na Móna experience of rehabilitation and restoration has shown that re-wetting improves conditions for natural colonisation and that natural colonisation is accelerated where the environmental conditions are most suitable. Rehabilitation measures have been designed to modify the conditions of areas within sites where conditions are less suitable for natural colonisation (modifying hydrology, topography, nutrient status or availability of potential seed sources).
- **Monitoring to be robust and effective.** Rehabilitation Monitoring will be established to validate the success of rehabilitation as required by Condition 10 of the IPC Licence. This will focus on a collecting a range of scientific data that can then quickly be adapted and into metrics that can be used to measure changes in various ecosystem services.

# 8. REHABILITATION ACTIONS AND TIME FRAME

Peatland restoration and rehabilitation requires detailed planning and the use of data from desktop surveys and field surveys. This data in association with topographical and hydrological modelling will be important in planning the future peatland landscapes and planning the use of the most appropriate rehabilitation methodologies based on environmental characteristic. Hydrological modelling indicates those areas that are likely to re-wet when drains are blocked, based on the current topography. This planning is essential for matching the most sustainable rehabilitation methodology to the most suitable cutaway environment to maximise the benefits of the resource outlay (maximising cost/benefit).

A number of illustrative figures have been produced to inform Rehab Planning and Design, including Aerial Photography, Peat Depths and LiDAR Surface Maps, these are included in the accompanying Mapbook as the drawings referenced below:

BNM-ECO-23-27-21 titled ***Lough Bannow Bog: Aerial Imagery 2000***

BNM-ECO-23-27-22 titled ***Lough Bannow Bog: Aerial Imagery2020***

BNM- ECO-23-27-04 ***Lough Bannow Bog: Peat Depths***

BNM-ECO-23-27-03 titled ***Lough Bannow Bog: LiDAR Map***

The restoration and rehabilitation measures are provisionally outlined in drawing titled BNM-ECO-23-27-20 ***Lough Bannow Bog: Standard Rehabilitation Measures*** in the accompanying Mapbook.

These rehabilitation measures for Lough Bannow Bog will include (see Table 8.1):

- Re-assessment of the pumping regime and removing pumps or reducing pumping if this is desired and has no significant external impact or impacts on proposed future land-uses. Initial hydrological modelling indicates that a part of the site will develop a mosaic of wetland habitats with some permanent deeper water if pumps are decommissioned, or pumping is reduced. Hydrological management will look to optimise summer water levels to maximise the development of wetland vegetation (by looking to set water depths at < 0.5 m, where possible. It is inevitable that some sections will naturally have deeper water due to the topography at this site). Water-levels will be adjusted at outfalls and by adjusting piped drainage, where possible. More sustainable permanent gravity drainage solutions will be examined. Some pumping may have to be retained. Some targeted bunding may be required. It is expected that a natural seasonal regime of water fluctuation will develop, with water-levels fluctuating in association with levels of surrounding rivers.
- A widespread drain-blocking programme will be implemented across the cutaway, where possible. In general, field drains will be blocked where possible to re-wet cutaway and re-wet to the optimum water-level. More intensive measures will be targeted towards the bare peat.
- Less intensive measures (targeted drain-blocking) will be used in areas where habitats have already established.
- Measures will include drain blocking (3/100 m), modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes.
- Wetland measures including blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes.
- The existing silt ponds will be retained and maintained during the rehabilitation phase. During the monitoring and verification phase the silt ponds will be continually inspected and maintained, where appropriate. When it is deemed that the silt ponds are not required, as the bog has been successfully stabilised and there is no silt run-off, the condition of the silt ponds will be reviewed. The silt ponds will

either be de-watered (water levels lowered to a level where the silt pond will naturally develop as a small wetland feature), left in situ, or infilled (where discharges do not require silt control).

*Table 8.1: Types of and areas for rehabilitation measures at Lough Bannow Bog.*

| Type | Code | Description | Area (Ha)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deep peat cutover bog | DPT1 | Regular drain blocking (3/100 m) + modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes | 46.1 |
| Dry cutaway | DCT1 | Modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes | 295.3 |
| Wetland cutaway | WLT1 | Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes | 188.4 |
| Marginal land | MLT1 | No work required | 96.2 |
| Silt Pond | Silt Pond | Silt Pond | 0.4 |
| Constraint | Constraint | Constraint | 130.8 |
| **Total Area** | | | **757.2** |

**Note that the types of rehab and areas of rehab may change in response to stakeholder consultation and refinement of the rehabilitation measures.*

## 8.1 Completed and Ongoing

- A significant part of the site has already re-vegetated, with pioneer vegetation maturing and developing a mosaic of typical cutaway peatland habitats with Birch woodland predominating. Bare peat areas within the older cutaway areas are reducing. Natural re-colonisation of the cutaway so far has been quite effective. Other parts of the site (younger cutaway) are naturally colonising for more than 10 years and are developing a mosaic of cutaway habitats.

## 8.2 Short-term planning actions (0-1 years post plan finalisation)

- Seek formal approval of the rehabilitation plan from the EPA.
- Develop a detailed site plan outlining how the various rehabilitation methods will be applied to Lough Bannow Bog. This will take account of peat depths, topography, drainage and hydrological modelling (see rehabilitation map for an indicative view of the application of different rehabilitation methodologies).
- A drainage management assessment of the proposed rehabilitation measures will be carried out and any issues identified resolved and the rehabilitation plan adapted.
- A review of known archaeology and an archaeological impact appraisal of the proposed rehabilitation will be carried out. The results of this assessment will be incorporated into the rehabilitation plan to minimise known archaeological disturbance, where possible.
- A review of issues that may constrain rehabilitation such as known rights of way, turbary and existing land agreements is to be carried out.
- An ecological appraisal of the potential impacts of the planned rehabilitation on the presence of sensitive ground-nesting bird breeding species (e.g. breeding waders) is to be carried out. The scheduling of rehabilitation operations will be adapted, where required.
- Ensure all activities comply with the environmental protection requirements of the IPC Licence.

- Carry out Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the Rehabilitation Plan. Incorporate any required mitigation measures from the AA in the plan for the delivery of rehabilitation and decommissioning across the site.
- Track implementation and enforcement of the relevant IPC Licence conditions, the mitigation measures (AA) and other environmental control measures during the implantation of the rehabilitation plan.

## 8.3 Short-term practical actions (0-2 years post plan finalisation)

- Carry out proposed measures as per the detailed site plan. This will include intensive drain blocking and targeted hydrological management prescriptions in the cutaway. All rehabilitation will be carried out with regard to best practice environmental control measures (Appendix III).
- Monitor the success of rehabilitation measures in relation to developing suitable hydrological conditions.
- Carry out the proposed monitoring, as outlined in section 9.
- Silt ponds will be monitored during this period and there will be continued maintenance and cleaning to prevent potential suspended solids run-off from the site during the rehabilitation phase.

## 8.4 Long-term (>3 years post plan finalisation)

- Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate where necessary.
- Delivery of a monitoring, aftercare and maintenance programme (See section 9 below).
- Decommissioning of silt-ponds will be assessed and carried out, where required.
- Reporting to the EPA will continue until the IPC Licence is surrendered.

## 8.5 Timeframe

- **Year 1 post finalisation:** Short-term planning actions (specific year is dependent on planning consent).
- **Year 1-3 post finalisation:** Short-term practical actions.
- **Year 1-3 post finalisation**: Long term practical actions. Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate where necessary.
- **> Year 3 post finalisation:** Decommission silt-ponds, if necessary.

## 8.6 Budget and costing

Bord na Móna maintains a provision on its balance sheet to pay for the future costs of standard rehabilitation and decommissioning when industrial peat extraction ceases. This is updated every year - for more information see the Bord na Móna Annual Report (Bord na Móna, 2024). Bord na Móna is fully committed to meeting its obligations relating to rehabilitation and decommissioning under the Integrated Pollution Control Licence.

At this time, a ‘standard’ rehabilitation provision (sufficient to discharge the requirement of Condition 10 in the licence) has been allocated to the site based on the area of different cutaway types across the site.

# 9. AFTERCARE AND MAINTENANCE

## 9.1 Programme for monitoring, aftercare and maintenance

This programme for monitoring, aftercare and maintenance has been designed to meet the Conditions of the IPC Licence. This is defined as:

- There will be **initial quarterly monitoring assessments** of the site to determine the general status of the bog, the condition of the silt ponds, assess the condition of the rehabilitation work, monitoring of any potential impacts on neighbours land, general land security, boundary management, dumping and littering.
- The number of these site visits will reduce after 2 years to bi-annually.
- These monitoring visits will also consider any requirements for further practical rehabilitation measures.
- The **baseline condition of the site will be established** post-rehabilitation implementation by using an aerial survey to take an up to date aerial photo, when rehabilitation is completed. This will be used to verify completion of rehabilitation measures. The extent of bare peat will be assessed using this baseline data, and habitat maps will be updated, if needed. It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- **Water quality monitoring** at the bog will be established. The main objective of this water quality monitoring will be to establish a baseline and then monitor the impact of peatland rehabilitation on water quality from the bog.
- Monitoring results will be maintained, trended and reported on each year and as required, as part of the requirement to report on Condition 10.1 of the IPC Licence on Bog Rehabilitation in the Annual Environmental Report, and will be provided to LAWPRO and the EPA as required to inform progress and national monitoring requirements under the WFD. These results will also be available in April each year as a requirement of the Annual Environmental Report at www.epa.ie.
- The parameters to be included (as per condition 6.2 of the IPC Licence) include monthly monitoring for pH, Flow, Suspended Solids, Total Solids, Total Phosphorus, Total Ammonia, Colour, and COD.
- This monthly sampling regime on a selected number of silt ponds will be carried out over a two-year cycle.
- If, after two years, key criteria for successful rehabilitation are being achieved and key targets are being met, then the water quality monitoring will be reviewed, with consideration of potential ongoing research on site. The water quality data, the aerial surveys and the habitat mapping will be collated and will be submitted to the EPA as part of the final validation report.
- If, after two years, key criteria for successful rehabilitation have **not** been achieved and key targets have **not** been met, then the rehabilitation measures and status of the site will be evaluated and enhanced, where required. This evaluation may indicate no requirement for additional enhancement of rehabilitation measures but may demonstrate that more time is required before key criteria for rehabilitation has been achieved. Monitoring of water quality will then also continue for another period to be defined.
- Where other uses are proposed for the site that are compatible the provision of biodiversity and ecosystem services, these will be assessed by Bord na Móna in consultation with interested parties. Other after-uses can be proposed for licensed areas and must go through the required assessment process and planning procedures.

## 9.2 Rehabilitation plan validation and licence surrender – report as required under condition 10.4

***IPC Licence Condition 10.4.*** *A final validation report to include a certificate of completion for the Rehabilitation Plan, for all or part of the site as necessary, shall be submitted to the Agency within six months of execution of the plan. The licensee shall carry out such tests, investigations or submit certification, as requested by the Agency, to confirm that there is no continuing risk to the environment.*

Reporting to the EPA will continue until the IPC Licence is surrendered. The bog will be included in the full licence surrender process as per the Guidance to Licensees on Surrender, Cessation and Closure of Licensed Sites EPA, 2012, when:

- The planned rehabilitation has been completed;
- The key criteria for successful rehabilitation has been achieved and key targets have been met;
- Water quality monitoring demonstrates that water quality of discharge is stabilising or improving; and
- The site has been environmentally stabilised.

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# APPENDIX I: BOG GROUP CONTEXT

The Mount Dillon Bog Group IPC Licenced area is made up of two sub-groups (Lough Ree- the Mount Dillon Energy Peat Group) and Mostrim) and the bog units within the group have been in industrial peat production for several decades. There are 28 defined bog units covering a total area of 11,322 ha. Of the 28 units, 23 mainly straddle the River Shannon within counties Roscommon and Longford, with five sites partially in County Westmeath to the east. Each bog area further comprises a range of habitats from bare milled peat former production areas to re-colonising cutaway to workshops areas and transport infrastructure. Industrial peat extraction from these sites mainly supplied ESB power stations at Lanesborough (LRP) or for horticultural peat products.

Industrial peat extraction in the Mount Dillon Bog Group finally ceased in 2021. Peat stockpiles which were harvested within the Bog Group continued to be delivered to Lough Ree Power Station until its closure in 2020. The removal of harvested peat stocks from the Mount Dillon Bog Group to supply other customers finally ceased in 2024. Intensive decommissioning and rehabilitation for the Mount Dillon Bog Group started in 2020/2021.

One bog site, Cloonmore, was never used for industrial peat production. Several bogs in the Mostrim group were drained but never fully developed and still retain typical high bog characteristics. These include Clonwhelan, Glenlough and a section of Mostrim. These sites have been zoned for biodiversity and a high bog drain blocking has been used to re-wet the high bog and encourage restoration of the raised bog habitat. Several sites (Glenlough, Mostrim, Clonwhelan and Clynan) were assessed by consultants for NPWS as part of the review of the raised bog Natural Heritage Area network (NPWS, 2014).

The rehabilitation plan for the Mount Dillon Bog Group encompasses all areas involved in industrial peat production including former industrial production areas and associated facilities. It also includes rehabilitation measures for those bogs that were initially drained but not fully developed.

A breakdown of the component bog areas for the Mount Dillon Bog Group IPC Licence Ref. P0-504-01 is outlined in Table Ap-1.

Industrial peat production history varies across the Mount Dillon bog group, so there is a wide range of peat depths at present. Bogs close to Lanesborough tend to have shallower peat depths or have been cutaway, while some bogs on the periphery of the group tend to have deeper peat reserves. Several sites such as Mount Dillion and Derrycashel have been mostly cutaway to the fen peat layers or in some cases to expose the underlying gravel/sub-soil. Several bogs in the Mostrim group have only been partially developed or have had no industrial peat production and have relatively deep peat depths.

*Table Ap-1: Mount Dillon Bog Group names, area and indicative status (Mount Dillon Energy Peat sub-group)*

| Bog Name | Area (ha) | Stage of development | Land-Use and History | Peat Production Cessation | Rehab Plan Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Begnagh | 265 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Begnagh Bog in 1977 and ceased in 2020. Deep peat reserves remain on much of the former production area. Begnagh is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Begnagh Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power<br>Some areas of cutaway on site are developing pioneer cutaway vegetation communities.<br>A greenway through Begnegh has been proposed as part of an amenity project with Faillte Ireland and Longford County Council (Midlands Trail Network). | 2020 | Finalised 2022<br>Rehab started in 2022 |

| Bog Name | Area (ha) | Stage of development | Land-Use and History | Peat Production Cessation | Rehab Plan Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clooneeny | 358 | Cutover Bog<br><br>Industrial peat production commenced at Clooneeny Bog in 1985 and ceased in 2020. Deep peat reserves remain on much of the former production area. Clooneeny is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Clooneeny Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including horticultural peat and fuel peat for Lough Ree Power<br><br>Most of the former production area on site is bare peat.<br><br>Some areas of cutaway on site are developing pioneer cutaway vegetation communities. | 2020 | Finalised 2022<br><br>Rehab started in 2022 |
| Cloonmore | 102 | N/A | Never developed for industrial peat production. scattered plots. | N/A | N/A |
| Moher | 494 | Cutover Bog<br><br>Industrial peat production commenced at Moher Bog in 1985 and ceased in 2020. Deep peat reserves remain across the former production area. Moher is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Moher Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including horticultural peat and fuel peat for Lough Ree Power<br><br>Restoration work has been carried out on a 38ha section of high bog within Moher Bog.<br><br>Some of the former production area on site is developing pioneer cutaway vegetation communities, the remainder of the site is bare peat.<br><br>A greenway through Moher has been proposed as part of an amenity project with Faillte Ireland and Roscommon County Council (Midlands Trail Network). | 2020 | Finalised 2024<br><br>Rehab to start in 2025 |
| Moher Rail Link | 28 | Moher rail link is a link between sites. | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Corlea | 163 | Cutaway Bog<br><br>Industrial peat production commenced at Corlea Bog in 1960 and ceased in 2018. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Corlea is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog. | The former production area at Corlea has already extensively colonised. Pioneer wetland and scrub development has occurred over much of the site.<br>Some wetland and rehabilitation management was undertaken between 2016-2018.<br>Part of site leased to local community development group to develop amenity walkway in association with Longford County Council. This greenway has been constructed. | 2018 | Finalised in 2023<br><br>Rehab started in 2023 |
| Derraghan | 289 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Derraghan Bog in the 1940's and ceased in 2020. Most of the former production area has shallow peat reserves. Some pockets of deep peat remain. Derraghan is considered a shallow peat cutover bog. | Derraghan Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power<br><br>Much of the former production area at Derraghan has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland and scrub vegetation communities. | 2020 | Plan Finalised 2021<br><br>Rehab commenced 2022 |
| Derryadd | 653 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Derryadd Bog in 1964 and ceased in 2019. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Most of the former production area has shallow peat reserves. Some pockets of deep peat remain. Derryadd is considered a shallow peat cutover bog. | Much of the former production area at Derryadd has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland and scrub vegetation communities<br><br>Derryadd Bog will form part of the footprint of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Project (in pre-planning).<br><br>An amenity walkway through part of Derryadd Bog is proposed for the Derryadd Wind Farm project | 2019 | Draft 2025 |

| Bog Name | Area (ha) | Stage of development | Land-Use and History | Peat Production Cessation | Rehab Plan Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Derryadd2 (Derryadd East) | 328 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Derryadd 2 Bog in 1960 and ceased in 2020. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Most of the former production area has shallow peat reserves. Some pockets of deep peat remain. Derryadd 2 is considered a shallow peat cutover bog. | Much of the former production area at Derryadd 2 has been out of peat production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland and scrub vegetation communities | 2020 | Finalised 2023<br>Rehab started 2023 |
| Derryarogue | 895 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Derryarogue Bog in 1952 and ceased in 2019. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Most of the former production area has shallow peat reserves. Some pockets of deep peat remain. Derryarogue is considered a shallow peat cutover bog. | Much of the former production area at Derryarogue has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland, cutaway and scrub vegetation communities.<br>Derryarogue Bog will form part of the footprint of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm project (in pre-planning).<br>An amenity walkway through part of Derryarogue is proposed for the Derryadd Wind Farm project. Additional greenway through Derryarogue is in construction as part of an amenity project with Longford County Council.<br>A further section of greenway has been proposed as part of an amenity project with Faillte Ireland and Longford County Council (Midlands Trail Network). | 2019 | Derryarogue West Finalised in 2023<br>Rehab started in 2023<br>Derryarogue Draft 2024 (remainder of site) |
| Derrycashel | 388 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Derrycashel Bog in 1951 and ceased in 2018. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Most of the former production area has shallow peat reserves. Some pockets of deep peat remain. Derrycashel is considered a shallow peat cutover bog. | Derrycashel Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power<br>Much of the former production area at Derryarogue has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland and scrub vegetation communities.<br>Some wetland and rehabilitation management was undertaken (c.60ha) between 2014-2015. | 2018 | Finalised 2021<br>Rehab started in 2021 |
| Derrycolumb | 454 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Derrycolumb Bog in the 1980's and ceased in 2019. Most of the former production area still has deep peat reserves. Derrycolumb is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Derrycolumb Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power<br>Much of the former production area at Derrycolumb has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland and scrub vegetation communities.<br>A greenway through Derrycolumb has been constructed as part of an amenity project with Longford County Council. | 2018 | Finalised 2021<br>Rehab started in 2021 |
| Derrymoylin | 356 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Derrymoylin Bog in 1985 and ceased in 2020. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Derrymoylin is considered a shallow peat cutover bog. | Derrymoylin Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power.<br>Most of the former production area on site is bare peat.<br>A greenway through Derrymoylin has been proposed as part of an amenity project with Faillte Ireland and Roscommon County Council (Midlands Trail Network). | 2020 | Finalised 2024<br>Rehab to start in 2025 |

| Bog Name | Area (ha) | Stage of development | Land-Use and History | Peat Production Cessation | Rehab Plan Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| Derryshannoge | 452 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Derryshannoge Bog in 1985 and ceased in 2020. Deep peat reserves remain across most of the site. Derryshannoge is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Derryshannoge Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power.<br>Much of the former production area at Derryshannoge has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities. | 2020 | Finalised 2023<br>Rehab started in 2024 |
| Edera | 281 | Cutover Bog<br>Development for industrial peat production commenced at Edera Bog in 1990's. Active extraction from Edera began in 2003 and ceased in 2018. Edera is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Edera Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power.<br>The majority of Edera Bog former production area is bare peat. | 2020 | Finalised 2021<br>Rehab started in 2021 |
| Erenagh | 93 | Cutover Bog<br>Development for industrial peat production commenced at Erenagh Bog in 1970's.<br>Erenagh is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Erenagh Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power.<br>Much of the former production area at Erenagh has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities. | 2020 | To be finalised in 2025 |
| Granaghan | 212 | Cutover Bog<br>Development for industrial peat production commenced at Granaghan Bog in 1980's. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog but deep peat reserves remain on site. Granaghan is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Granaghan Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including horticultural peat and fuel peat for Lough Ree Power.<br>The majority of Granaghan Bog former production area is bare peat. | 2020 | Finalised 2023<br>Rehab to start in 2025 |
| Killashee | 110 | Cutover Bog<br>Development for industrial peat production commenced at Killashee Bog in 1985.<br>Killashee is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Killashee Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including horticultural peat and fuel peat for Lough Ree Power.<br>The majority of Killashee Bog former production area is bare peat. Some areas have colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities. | 2020 | Finalised 2023<br>Rehab started in 2024 |
| Knappoge | 313 | Cutaway Bog<br>Peat Production at Knappoge bog commenced in 1963 and finished in 2018. Peat depths on the former production area are generally shallow. There are some pockets of deeper peat. Knappoge is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog. | Knappoge Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power.<br>The majority of Knappoge Bog former production area is bare peat. Some areas have colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities.<br>A greenway through Knappoge has been constructed as part of an amenity project with Longford County Council.<br>An additional section has been proposed as part of an amenity project with Faillte Ireland and Longford County Council (Midlands Trail Network). | 2018 | Finalised 2021<br>Rehab started in 2022 |
| Lough Bannow | 739 | Cutaway Bog | Much of the former production area at Lough Bannow has been out of production for some | 2019 | Draft 2025 |

| Bog Name | Area (ha) | Stage of development | Land-Use and History | Peat Production Cessation | Rehab Plan Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Peat Production at Lough Bannow bog commenced in 1964 and finished in 2019. Peat depths on the former production area are generally shallow. There are some pockets of deeper peat. Lough Bannow is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog. | time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities.<br><br>A small (35ha) conifer plantation was established in 1980's.<br><br>Lough Bannow will form part of the footprint of proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Project (in pre-planning).<br><br>An amenity walkway through part of Lough Bannow is proposed for the Derryadd Wind Farm project | | |
| Moher | 483 | Cutover Bog<br>Peat Production at Moher Bog commenced in the 1960's and finished in 2020. Peat depths on the former production area remain relatively deep. Moher is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Moher Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power.<br><br>Much of the former production area at Moher has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities. | 2020 | To be finalised 2025<br><br>Rehab to start 2025 |
| Mount Dillon | 592 | Cutaway Bog<br>Peat Production at Mount Dillon bog commenced in the 1940's and finished in 2020. Peat depths on the former production largely shallow and the peat is considered cutaway. Some deep peat remains on the west of the site. Mount Dillon is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog. | Mount Dillon Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including fuel peat for Lough Ree Power.<br><br>Much of the former production area at Mount Dillon has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer cutaway, wetland and scrub vegetation communities. | 2020 | To be finalised 2025<br><br>Rehab to start 2025 |

See Drawing number BNM-ECO-23-27-24 titled **Mount Dillon Bog Group**, included in the accompanying Mapbook which illustrates the location of Lough Bannow bog and the Mount Dillon Bog Group in context to the surrounding area.

# APPENDIX II: ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT

**Ecological Survey Report**

*Note: This report outlines an ecological survey of the bog. This report should not be taken as a management plan for the site as other land-uses may still be considered. Information within this report may inform the development of other land-uses and identify areas with particular biodiversity value.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Bog Name:** | **Lough Bannow** | **Area (ha):** | 743ha |
| **Works Name:** | Mount Dillon | **County:** | Longford |
| **Recorder(s):** | BnM Ecology Section | **Survey/ monitoring Date(s):** | 27th and 29th July 2010<br>Habitats re-surveyed 2012. |

**Habitats present (in order of dominance)**

The most common habitats present at this site include:

- Poor fen (pEang, pJeff, pTyp, pPhrag and pTrig)
- Bare peat (BP)
- gCal
- DisCf
- pCamp
- Rip - riparian areas (streams/drains with fringing habitats)
- Birch dominated scrub (ebir, oBir and cBir) (Codes refer BnM classification of pioneer habitats of production bog. See Appendix II).
- Exposed gravel
- dHeath
- Temporary open water (tow)
- Conifer plantation (WD4)
- Transition mire and quaking bog (PF3)
- Birch woodland (WN7)
- Raised bog (PB1) remnant
- Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland (WN2)
- Possible calcareous springs (FP1)
- Dense Bracken (HD1)
- Wet grassland (GS4) along the fringes of the bog

**Description of site**

Lough Bannow Bog is situated approximately seven kilometres south east of Lanesborough, Co. Longford along the R392 Road. The R398 public road runs along the north of the site while a secondary road (Keenagh road) runs along part of the southern section of the bog. The Royal Canal passes within 500 metres of eastern edge of the site. Two large mineral islands are located within the site boundaries but are not under BnM ownership. This site has been harvested for milled peat since

the late 1960's. A large section of failed conifer plantation is located on the site. Overall this site varies greatly from areas that are re-vegetating rapidly since they came out of production to areas that are currently under production (Bare peat). Topographically, the site undulates and has regular small hills of gravel that are exposed between areas of low lying peat, the latter areas being still in production. A rail line crosses the site in an east west direction, dissecting the site into a much larger northern section and a smaller southern section.

Small hills and ridges of gravel are being exposed, these hills and ridges are becoming revegetated with Dry grassland mosaic (DisCf, gCal and gAn-H-Eq). Areas between these hills are revegetating with plant species that are indicative of poor fen habitats such as pEang, pTyp and pJeff. Birch scrub is also becoming established on many of the habitats that have been out of production for longer periods of time, particularly the drier areas.

A conifer plantation was planted in 1995 and is comprised of Sitka and Norway spruce. Some sections of this plantation had trees of medium quality and were in need of thinning and fertilisation, however the majority of the area was extremely poor, with dead or dying trees throughout. The most logical reason for the widespread loss of trees in this plantation was the presence of Heather throughout these areas. Heather is extremely well suited to savaging nitrogen from poor soils and will deprive trees such as Sitka Spruce of nitrogen, causing then to go into check followed by eventual death. Birch and Scots Pine had become established in areas of the plantation and appeared to be doing much better than the spruce.

Immediately to the east of the conifer plantation a large area of the site was largely revegetated with a mixture of cBir, oBir, dHeath, BP and pEang. Much of the cBir was dense and was developing into Birch woodland. Other areas beyond the cBir were younger and were a mosaic of wet and dry habitats (depending on the topography of the site), intermixed with areas of bare peat. To the southeast of the conifer plantation a row of three small hills were at different levels of development, mainly Birch scrub, but the notable feature of these areas was the presence of Oak and Hazel.

A large mineral island is located within the site boundaries in the centre of the site. This "Island" is connected to the public road that runs close to the northern boundary of the site via a small track. This area is not owned by BnM and is managed as agricultural grassland. To the south of the mineral island the site is a mixture of pioneer habitats including DisCf, BP, eBir, pJeff and gCal. To the south of the re-vegetating areas the site is still in production.

The central-eastern part of the site is largely a mixture of dry grassland mosaics and wet grassland mosaics (gCal, DisCf, eBir, oBir, pJeff, pEang, pPhrag, pTyp), with areas of bare peat scattered throughout, some of the areas of bare peat were large but some areas were much smaller and were comprised of a couple of short fields between gravel ridges.

A small works area is located along the railway line close to the eastern end of the line. This works area is comprised of a large tea centre with large amounts of machinery stored around it. Immediately to the north of the works area an area of scrub (cBir) that was developing some of the components of Oak Ash Hazel woodland. This woodland is young and is still developing with Birch, Oak, Rowan, Holly, Hawthorn, Hazel, Guelder Rose, Bramble, Raspberry, Herb-Robert, Meadow-sweet, Honey-suckle, Tufted Sedge, Purple Moor-grass and Male Fern. Paths through this are of the site were in regular use by BnM machinery and relatively large areas of Meadow-sweet dominated wet grassland was located along the access routes. A large rectangular shaped area had been excavated in this area and was filled with water resulting in the presence of an artificial pond. This pond did not contain many macrophytes apart from Reedmace, Floating Sweet Grass with some Water Crow's-foot also. The wet grassland areas contained Meadow Sweet, Knapweed, Willow, Plantain, Vetch, Sweet Vernal-grass, Devil's Bit-Scabious, Hogweed, Horsetails, Red Clover and Creeping Bent Grass. A small wet hollow was also located close to this area and further investigations may be needed in order to determine if this is an actual spring. Although this spot was damp with no standing or flowing water at the time of the ecological survey it did contain tufa which may indicate the presence of springs in this area.

Moving north from this area towards the north eastern corner of the site, the bog again comprises a mosaic of habitats including pJeff, pEang, eBir, gCal, pEqus and DisCf, the largest single habitat consists of a large area of pJeff and oBir along the western edge of the north east corner of the site. An old, disused, railway line is located close to the eastern edge of the site and has been colonised with gMol, dHeath and eGor, several old railway carriages are still located on the track.

The north eastern corner of the site also contains two small mineral islands that contain Birch, Oak, Blackthorn, Ash and Hazel along with Male fern, Bramble, Lords and Ladies, Hogweed, Harts Tongue Fern, Honeysuckle, Wood Anemone and Herb Robert. Sections of these mounds contain large mature Oak (older than 100 years).

Moving westwards from the mire onto sections of cutover, the site again becomes a mosaic of habitats, mainly pJeff, oBir and bare peat before encountering a mineral island. This mineral island is similar to the one that has already been described to the north of the railway line.

Moving west a large area of bare peat is located before the site again becomes a mosaic of pioneer poor fen and pioneer grassland habitats.

The south west corner of the site is mainly bare peat with pTrig, pRos and pTyp becoming established along the drains, this area is marked on the 2nd edition OSI 6 inch map as a small lake called Lough Anpastia. This lake no longer exists and there is no evidence of it ever having been present on the ground. A pump was in operation close to this area.

Some of the drains in the east of the site have been excavated down to limestone bedrock, Otter spraint were found in one of these drains in the northern section of the site, this drainage ditch is connected to the nearby Royal Canal.

Lough Bawn pNHA 001819

This area is located along the eastern edge of the site. It is bordered by remnant raised bog to the south, west and north while an area of woodland on mineral soil borders Lough Bawn to the east. The south eastern corner of the site is bordered by conifer plantation, part of which was clear felled in the past few years and replanted. The majority of the Lough is in Bord na Mona ownership with a small section owned by Coillte.

The sections of raised bog that surround part of the Lough were in moderate to poor condition overall and the most westerly sections had been ditched many years ago. The ditched sections were dominated by Heather; however the most southerly section of raised bog were in somewhat better condition with a more varied flora.

Lough Bawn is fringed with woodland throughout. This woodland varies from wet bog woodland (WN7) to dry Oak Ash Hazel woodland (WN2) along its eastern side. The woodland that fringes the Lough to the west, north and south is bog woodland (WN7) that varies from sparse cover to denser cover; these sections of bog woodland were quaking and had a high cover of Sphagnum moss in general. These sections of woodland are classed as Annex I habitats (91D0) and are considered to be a rare habitat in Ireland with an estimated nationwide land cover of 150ha approximately (NPWS - Bog woodland (91D0) Conservation Status Assessment report).

The areas of bog woodland ranged to thick, dense areas of woodland to areas that had a lesser density of trees. The main tree species were Birch and Scot's Pine along with Alder, Eared Willow and some gorse. There was extensive evidence that the water levels fluctuate throughout these areas, with some areas being permanently water logged with a quaking feel throughout. Species within the areas of bog woodland included Bog Myrtle, Devil's-bit Scabious, Bog Bean, Honeysuckle, Soft Rush, Sphagnum palustre, Ivy, Bramble, Sweet Vernal Grass, Heather, Star Sedge, Wood Horsetail, Grey Willow, Holly, Broad Buckler Fern, Cow wheat, mint, Water Horsetail, Hogweed, Calliergon sp., Ragged Robin, Lesser Spearwort, Lousewort, *Aulacomnium palustre*, Spotted Marsh Orchid, Marsh Bedstraw. Yorkshire Fog, Heath Wood-Rush and *Epilobium obscurum*.

A section of mature Oak-Ash-Hazel (WN2) is located on the eastern side of Lough Bawn, this woodland was relatively dry and was located on mineral soil. Species here included Birch, Scot's Pine, Ash, Alder, Willow, Hazel, herb Robert, Spindle, Enchanter's nightshade, Ivy, Honeysuckle, Wood False Broome, Hypnum sp., Bramble, Viola sp., Blackthorn, Rowan, Wavy hair Grass, Meadow Sweet, Wood horsetail, Wild strawberry, Holly, hawthorn, Blackthorn, Gorse, Glaucous Sedge, Sycamore, Bush Vetch, Cock's foot, Beech, Rough meadow Grass, Spear Thistle, Wood dock, Wood Sanicle, wood Sedge, Primrose, Lady Fern, Sorrell, Male Fern, Hart's Tongue Fern, Yew, Wytch Elm, *Polytrichum commune*, Yellow rattle, Cep, Bay Bolete, Common Puffball and Trooping Funnel Cap.

A section to the east of this woodland has been fenced off and is grazed, the grazed area ran along the entire eastern edge of the woodland.

The Coillte owned woodland to the south east of Lough Bawn is a mixture of recently felled conifer plantation and mature plantation with sitka Spruce, Norway Spruce and Lodgepole Pine, the edge of these sections were a mixture of species such as Oak, Birch and Hazel with some Yew also.

Lough Bawn had been a lake up until 1964 when drainage of the lake begun, after this initial drainage the water levels shrink until the lake was mostly terristrailized by the late 1960's. This area is classed as transition mire and quaking bog (PF3) according to Fossitt, 2000.

At present the lough has filled in with very small amounts of open water remaining and the entire area has a quaking feel to it. The Lough is covered with a mat of vegetation containing hummocks of vegetation interspersed with shallow water. The Lough is dominated with mosses and sedges and individual trees have spread across the surface of the Lough. Plant species in the area of the lough include Purple Moor Grass, Eared Willow, Birch, Bog Asphodel, Bog Bean, Devil's-bit Scabious, Star Sedge, Purple Loosestrife, Greater Tussock Sedge, Bottle Sedge, Sphagnum palustre (tussock forming) S. subnitens, Heather, Lesser tussock Sedge, Marsh cinquefoil, *Aulacomnium palustre* (tussock forming), marsh Pennywort, Round-leaved Sundew, Wild Angelica, Marsh Thistle, Ragged Robin, Reedmace, Alder, Mint, Water Horsetail, Creeping Bent-grass, Eriophorum angustifolium and Lousewort. *Usnea* sp. lichen was growing on the branches of many of the trees.

One of the BnM employees on the site reported the presence of springs at locations around the site.

There are records of Black Headed Gull, Snipe and Lapwing using this site.

**Designated areas on site (cSAC, NHA, pNHA, SPA other)**

Lough Bawn is situated in the south eastern corner of the site and was formally a lake until the late 1960's. The lake dried out after intensive drainage works and is now classified as a 'Transition mire and quaking bog' pNHA 001819.

**Adjacent habitats and land-use**

Adjacent habitats include improved agricultural grassland (GA1), wet grassland (GS4), conifer plantation (WD4), raised bog (PB1), recently planted woodland (WS2) and cutover bog (PB4). The Royal Canal (FW3) is located approximately 0.5km to the east of the site.

**Watercourses (major water features on/off site)**

- The Bilberry River begins at the southern boundary of the site, this river flows southwards before flowing into Lough Ree
- A tributary of the Bilberry River begins in the south western corner of the site.
- A tributary of the River Shannon starts in the north of the site before flowing northwards.
- All of the watercourses are part of the Shannon catchment.
- The Royal Canal flows within 0.5km of the eastern edge of the site.

**Peat type and sub-soils**

Gravel ridges and hills are exposed, these hills are composed of Limestone gravel.

**Fauna biodiversity (2010)**

Several bird species were noted on the site during the survey.

- Raven (2)
- Sky Lark
- Sand marten
- Common Gull
- Snipe (3)
- Swans are reported to be using the flooded areas during the winter.
- Other more common species include Meadow Pipits, Swallow, Dunnock, Blackbird, Chaffinch, Wood Pigeon, Pheasant and Magpie.

Mammals

- Otter spraint found in a drainage ditch in the north east of the site, this drain is connected to the nearby Royal Canal.
- Pine Marten
- Badger
- Fox
- Hare
- Rabbit

Invertebrates

- Silver-washed Fritillary Butterfly
- Peacock Butterfly
- Green-veined White Butterfly
- Large Heath Butterfly
- Large White Butterfly
- Small Heath Butterfly
- Small Copper Butterfly
- Painted Lady Butterfly

Fish

- Stickleback in the drains

**Fungal biodiversity**

The Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland along the eastern boundary of the site is rich in fungal diversity with Ceps, Bay Bolete, Razor Strop and Trooping Funnel Cap observed.

## APPENDIX III. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL MEASURES TO BE APPLIED TO BOG REHABILITATION

- Bog restoration/rehabilitation measures will be restricted to within the footprint of the proposed rehabilitation area.
- The proposed rehabilitation will have due regard to noise limits and hours of operation (i.e. dusk and dawn) to minimise any potential disturbance on resident and local fauna that utilise the site and immediate environs.
- All plant and equipment for use will comply with the Construction Plant and Equipment Permissible Noise Levels Regulations (SI 359/1996).
- The proposed activities will be restricted to daylight hours and there will be no requirement for artificial lighting.
- Silt ponds will be inspected and maintained as per the IPC Licence.
- During periods of heavy precipitation and run-off, activities will be halted.
- Measures will be carried out using a suitably sized machine and, in all circumstances,, excavation depths and volumes will be minimised where possible.
- All machines will be regularly checked and maintained prior to arrival at the site to prevent hydrocarbon leakage.
- Hoses and valves will be checked regularly for signs of wear and will be closed and securely locked when not in use.
- Fuelling and lubrication of equipment shall only be carried out in designated areas away from surface water drainage features and ecologically sensitive areas.
- Waste oils and hydraulic fluids will be collected in leak-proof containers and removed from the site for disposal or re-cycling.
- Vehicles will never be left unattended during refuelling.
- No direct discharges to waters will be made. No washings from vehicles, plant or equipment will be carried out on site.
- All plant refuelling will take place using mobile fuel bowsers. Only dedicated trained and competent personnel will carry out refuelling operations.
- Mobile storage such as fuel bowsers will be bunded to 110% capacity to prevent spills. Tanks for bowsers and generators shall be double skinned. When not in use, all valves and fuel trigger guns from fuel storage containers will be locked. All pumps using fuel or containing oil will be locally and securely bunded where there is the possibility of discharge to waters.
- Potential impacts caused by spillages etc. during rehabilitation will be reduced by keeping spill kits and other appropriate equipment on-site.
- Site activities will be carried out in accordance with 'best practice'. In order to ensure compliance and implementation of 'best practice', these measures will be communicated to relevant Bord na Móna staff and updated as required.

# APPENDIX IV. BIOSECURITY

The potential for importation or introduction of non-native plant species (such as Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, etc.) during future rehabilitation management, such as drain-blocking using excavators, has the potential to result in the establishment of invasive species within the site. Section 49 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 prohibits the introduction and dispersal of invasive alien species (particularly plant species) listed on Part 1 (third column) of the 'Third Schedule'.

This section aims to reduce the risk from, and impacts of, invasive species and protecting biodiversity on lands under Bord na Móna ownership. Rehabilitation and decommissioning in the bog will have due regard to the relevant biosecurity measures outlined below:

- Records of problematic invasive species within the various bog units will be marked out with signs to highlight areas of infestation to personnel.
- All plant machinery will be restricted from disturbing known colonies of invasive species.
- All plant machinery will avoid unnecessary crossings to adjoining lands.
- Good site hygiene will be employed to prevent the introduction and spread of problematic invasive alien plant species (i.e. Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Himalayan Knotweed (*Persicaria wallichii*), etc.) by thoroughly washing vehicles prior to entering the area.

The biosecurity measures outlined above are in line with best practice guidelines issued by the National Roads Authority (NRA, 2010) – The Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-native Invasive Plant Species on National Roads and broadly based on the Environment Agency's (2013) – The Knotweed Code of Practice: Managing Japanese Knotweed on Development Sites (Version 3, amended in 2013, accessed on the Environment Agency's website on the 11th of July 2016).

In addition to the above, Best Practice measures around the prevention and spread of Crayfish plague[5] will be adhered with throughout all rehabilitation measures and activities.

[5] https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/invasive-species/crayfish-plague/

# APPENDIX V. POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Bord na Móna Plc is a publicly owned company, originally established in 1934 to develop some of Ireland's extensive peat resources for the purposes of economic development and to support energy security. In the decades since its establishment the company has employed tens of thousands of people in its fuel, energy, and horticultural growing media businesses. For much of its history the company's support of important national policy aims has been enabled and encouraged in a variety of ways by Government.

Today, Bord na Móna is undertaking a number of highly significant actions in support of climate policy. These actions involve a radical transformation and decarbonisation of nearly the entire Bord na Móna business. This transformation will be driven by unlocking the full potential of our land and creating significant value for Ireland and the Midlands in particular.

Bord na Móna is an integral part of the economic, social, and environmental fabric of Ireland and Irish life. As a key employer in the Midlands, the company is conscious that its obligations go beyond purely commercial and environmental – there is also a social responsibility to employees and the communities served by Bord na Móna. It is the company's role and absolute priority to ensure that its long-term strategy delivers on all of these important areas in a robust and balanced way.

There are a wide range of policies, plans, legislation and land designations that inform the development of this Bord na Móna peatland rehabilitation plan. Bord na Móna have also developed and operate various policies and strategies that also inform the development of this rehabilitation plan.

## 1 EPA IPC Licence

Bord na Móna operates under IPC Licence issued and administered by the EPA to extract peat within the Mount Dillon bog group (Ref. PO-504-01). As part of Condition 10.2 of this licence, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. The bog is part of the Mount Dillon group. This regulatory requirement is the main driver of the development of this rehabilitation plan.

## 2 The Peatlands Climate Action Scheme (PCAS)

Bord na Móna (BnM) understand that it is the Minister's (DECC) intention to impose an obligation on Bord na Móna to develop a programme of measures, 'the Scheme', for the enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration of boglands previously used to supply peat for electricity generation within the State. The enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration of the peatlands funded by the Scheme (PCAS) will deliver benefits across climate action (GHG mitigation through reduced carbon emissions and acceleration towards carbon sequestration), enrich the State's natural capital, increase eco-system services, strengthen biodiversity, improve water quality and storage attenuation as well as developing the amenity potential of the peatlands.

It is envisaged that Bord na Móna carry out an enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration, under the Scheme (PCAS), and supported by the Climate Action Fund and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan across a footprint of 33,000 ha. This scheme will significantly go beyond what is required to meet rehabilitation and decommissioning obligations under existing EPA IPC licence conditions. Interventions and measures supported by the Scheme will ensure that environmental stabilisation is achieved (meaning IPC obligations are met), and importantly, significant additional benefits, particularly relating to climate action and other ecosystem services, will also be delivered. However, only the additional costs associated with the additional

and enhanced rehabilitation, i.e., those activities which go beyond the existing decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements arising from Condition 10 will be eligible for support under the Scheme.

## 3 National and EU Climate and Biodiversity Policy

The National Policy Position establishes the fundamental national objective of achieving a transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. It sets out:

- the context for the objective;
- clarifies the level of GHG mitigation ambition envisaged; and
- establishes the process to pursue and achieve the overall objective.

The evolution of climate policy in Ireland will be an iterative process based on the adoption by government of a series of national plans over the period to 2050. GHG mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change are to be addressed in parallel national plans – respectively through the National Climate Action Plan. The plans will be continually updated, as well as being reviewed on a structured basis at appropriate intervals and, at a minimum, every five years. This will include early identification and ongoing updating of possible transition pathways to 2050 to inform sectoral strategic choices.

Bord na Móna is following a decarbonisation programme aimed at reducing the carbon emissions from its activities. Industrial peat production has now ceased, and several other decarbonisation measures are being implemented. The company aims to further develop renewable energy and resource recovery markets with a key objective of reducing the carbon intensity of all products. In addition, the carbon emission mitigation benefits associated with the post-peat extraction rehabilitated peatland following re-wetting, revegetation and colonisation of significant areas with native woodland will make a significant contribution to achieving the State's carbon emission reduction targets.

Peatlands rehabilitation and restoration is referenced in Section 17.3.3 of the Land Use, Land Use Change, Forestry and Marine Chapter of the National Climate Action Plan 2021 as follows:

"The rehabilitation of degraded peatlands to a condition in which they regain their ability to deliver specific ecosystem services has considerable potential for initial mitigation gains, and future carbon sequestration. Additional benefits of peatland restoration include positive socio-economic outcomes for the Midlands, increased natural capital, enriched biodiversity, improved water quality, and flood attenuation."

The scheme is included as Action 33 in the Climate Action Plan 2021 Annex of Actions - Deliver the Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration (EDRR) Scheme for Bord na Mona Peatlands.

EDRRS is also referenced in the Climate Action Plan 2021 as a measure to deliver a Just Transition in the Midlands.

International research and scientific understanding of peatlands is now reflected in key Irish national policy and strategy documents such as the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017 - 2022 (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 2017), The National Peatland Strategy (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 2015), The National Biodiversity Action Plan (National Parks and Wildlife Service 2017), The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2024 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage 2024), and the Biodiversity – Climate Change Sectoral Action Plan (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 2019). Each of the national plans, which are also complemented with the recently published EU Green Deal communication on Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (COM 2020) have overlapping objectives and actions

that focus on the restoration of peatlands damaged by turf-cutting, drainage and other impacts, as well as the re-wetting of Bord na Móna industrial peat extraction bogs.

While not specifically identified as a restoration implementor, EDRRS objectives are in line with those of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 of Preventing, Halting and Reversing the Degradation of Ecosystems worldwide.

EDRRS is also in line with the EU Commission proposal for a Nature Restoration Law which will apply legally binding targets for nature restoration in different eco-systems to every Member State. The aim is to cover at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 with nature restoration measures and eventually extend these to all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

## 4 National Peatlands Strategy

The National Peatlands Strategy (2015) contains a comprehensive list of actions, necessary to ensure that Ireland's peatlands are preserved, nurtured and become living assets within the communities that live beside them. It sets out a cross-governmental approach to managing issues that relate to peatlands, including compliance with EU environmental law, climate change, forestry, flood control, energy, nature conservation, planning, and agriculture. The Strategy has been developed in partnership between relevant Government Departments/State bodies and key stakeholders through the Peatlands Council.

The strategy recognises that Ireland's peatlands will continue to contribute to a wide variety of human needs and to be put to many uses. It aims to ensure that Ireland's peatlands are sustainably managed so that their benefits can be enjoyed responsibly. It aims to inform appropriate regulatory systems to facilitate good decision making in support of responsible use. It also aims to inform the provision of appropriate incentives, financial supports and disincentives where required. The strategy attempts to strike an appropriate balance between different needs, including local stakeholders like turf-cutters and semi-state bodies such as Bord na Móna.

In line with a National Peatlands Strategy recommendation, a Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG), was established, assisted in the finalisation of the Strategy, is overseeing subsequent implementation and will report to Government on an annual basis on the implementation of the actions and principles contained within the Strategy.

Bord na Móna is a key stakeholder in the National Peatlands Strategy and the Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group. The strategy recognises the potential for some Bord na Móna sites to be restored and to contribute to the national SAC and NHA network of protected raised bog sites. The strategy (agreed in 2015) also recognises the various different values of cutaway bog and developed six key principles (with Bord na Móna) for the after-use of cutaway bog.

- Bord na Móna will continue to assess and evaluate the potential of the company's land bank, using a land use review system. The assessment will help prepare a set of evidence-based management plans for the various areas of peatland. These plans will also inform its cutaway bog rehabilitation.
- The policy of Bord na Móna is not to open up any undrained new bogs for peat production.
- Lands identified by Bord na Móna as having high biodiversity value and/or priority habitats will be reserved for these purposes as the principal future land use.
- Generally, Bord na Móna cutaway bogs that flood naturally will be permitted to flood unless there is a clear environmental and/or economic case to maintain pumped drainage.

- In deciding on the most appropriate afteruse of cutaway peatlands, consideration shall be given to encouraging, where possible, the return to a natural functioning peatland ecosystem.
- This will require re-wetting of the cutaway peatlands which may lead in time to the restoration of the peatland ecosystem.
- Environmentally, socially and economically viable options should be analysed to plan the future use of industrial cutaway peatlands, in conjunction with limiting factors as outlined in Bord na Móna's Strategic Framework for the Future Use of Peatlands.

The National Peatlands Strategy highlights the importance and value of developing peatland rehabilitation plans for Bord na Móna cutaway sites and implementing this peatland rehabilitation. Some of these principles have now been superseded by the company's decision to cease industrial peat extraction. The National Peatlands Strategy is currently being reviewed by Government.

## 5 Draft National River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 (Water Framework Directive)

The National River Basin Management Plan (Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government 2017) is the key national plan for Ireland to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). In broad terms, the objectives of the WFD are (1) to prevent the deterioration of water bodies and to protect, enhance and restore them with the aim of achieving at least good status and (2) to achieve compliance with the requirements for designated protected areas.

The NRBMP 2018-2021 outlined how peat extraction can be a potentially significant pressure on various water quality parameters. Peatland rehabilitation of Bord na Móna cutaway (in addition to other measures) was part of the WFD (2018-2021) programme of measures. The NRBMP 2018-2021 takes account of the fact that Bord na Móna was in the process of phasing out the extraction of peat for energy production, that it set a target to rehabilitate 9,000 ha of cutaway bogs (covering 25 peatlands) by 2021 (in 2018) and will look to implement best-available mitigation measures to further reduce water quality impacts caused by peat extraction while the phasing-out process is taking place. This NRBMP 2018-2021 rehabilitation target was superseded by the acceleration of the Bord na Móna de-carbonisation programme and the Scheme **(PCAS)**.

The development of site rehabilitation plans and the delivery of peatland rehabilitation by Bord na Móna was expected to have a positive impact on water quality and will help the NRBMP 2018-2021 deliver its objectives in relation to the Water Framework Directive and is one of the five key principle actions.

The NWBMP 2022-2027 (DHLGH 2024) describes how the number of waterbodies impacted by peat, industry and forestry have decreased by 10, 10 and 5 waterbodies, respectively since the second cycle. Impacts on water quality and river habitat arising from peat and peat extraction and associated drainage include the release of ammonium and fine-grained suspended sediments, and physical alteration of aquatic habitats. Drainage of peatlands also results in changes to the hydromorphological condition of rivers.

The NWBMP 2022-2027 (DHLGH 2024) outlines how maintaining and restoring Irish bogs will lead to a decrease in waterborne carbon leaching to levels comparable with intact bogs as well as reducing losses of peat silt and ammonia. Vegetation on the surface of the peat can also slow the flow of water over the land surface. Based on the EPA's most recent reports, peat extraction and drainage is impacting on 106 water bodies across the country, with peat the single pressure on 28 of these water bodies. However, compared to the data in the second-cycle plan, the number of water bodies impacted by peat has decreased.

The cessation of industrial peat extraction by Bord na Móna in 2021 was expected to have a significant positive impact on water quality of receiving water courses by reducing the impact of peat extraction as a key pressure on particular water courses. This is now being supported by the results and conclusions of the draft NWBMP 2022-2027.

## 6 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature. The 4th NBAP has been developed with the support, advice and input of the interdepartmental Biodiversity Working Group and the independent Biodiversity Forum. Ireland's 2nd National Biodiversity Conference was held to gather insights and recommendations for the development of the NBAP and a public consultation process was held to provide further opportunities to engage with the Plan.

The 4th NBAP strives for a "whole of government, whole of society" approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, while also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to "act for nature".

The delivery of rehabilitation via PCAS is expected to significantly contribute in the future to actions and targets of the 4$^{th}$ National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030, particularly in relation to peatland restoration, nature restoration and creation of new habitats such as wetlands and woodlands.

## 7 EU Nature Restoration Law

The EU Nature Restoration Law is a key element of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, which sets binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems, in particular those with the most potential to capture and store carbon and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters. The regulation combines an overarching restoration objective for the long-term recovery of nature in the EU's land and sea areas with binding restoration targets for specific habitats and species. These measures should cover at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030, and ultimately all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

This regulation has now been adapted and it is expected that all Member States will be required to produce a National Restoration Plan within two years of adoption. This will be led by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and will comprise a broad and deep public participation process, informed by robust ecological and socio-economic impact assessments. Bord na Móna are working with NPWS to identify bog restoration and other re-wetted cutaway sites that can contribute towards Irelands targets for the Nature Restoration Law.

## 8 National Conservation Designations

Bord na Móna operates in a wider landscape that also includes a network of European and National nature conservation sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), National Heritage Areas (NHAs, cNHAs) and National Nature Reserves). Bord na Móna will take account of this network of conservation objectives and their conservation objectives when developing these rehabilitation plans. It is expected that

peatland rehabilitation will, in general, benefit the conservation objectives of this network of nature conservation sites.

## 9 National Raised Bog Special Area of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022.

The National Raised Bog Special Area of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022 sets out a roadmap for the long-term management, restoration and conservation of protected raised bogs in Ireland. The Plan strikes an appropriate balance between the need to conserve and restore Ireland's raised bog network as part of Ireland's commitments towards the EU Habitats Directive, and the needs of stakeholders and gives recognition to the important role that communities have to play in the conservation and restoration of raised bogs. The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017-2022 is part of the measures being implemented in response to the on-going infringement action against Ireland in relation to the implementation of the EU Habitats Directive, with regard to the regulation of turf cutting on the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The then Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, also published a **Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network** in 2014.

Bord na Móna has played a key role in the development of the National Raised Bog Special Area of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022 and the Review of the Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network. Several Bord na Móna sites were assessed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service as part of the above Plan and Review and there is an expectation that several Bord na Móna sites will be designated as SACs and NHAs in the future. This will reinforce the network of protected raised bog sites and replace in part sites that will be de-designated as they have been deemed to be significantly damaged and are deemed to have no raised bog restoration prospects. PCAS is expected to restore several sites that will contribute to The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017-2022 targets in relation to the restoration of raised bog habitat.

Bord na Móna has also responded to the needs of the NRBMP and provided several sites to the government for the relocation of turf-cutters from SACs. This is part of a suite of ongoing bog conservation measures in the NRBMP to manage turf-cutting in protected sites. Bord na Móna and the National Parks and Wildlife Service continues to engage regarding the ongoing relocation of turf-cutters from protected raised bog sites.

## 10 All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 outlines key objectives and actions to protect and support pollinating insects and the habitats they rely on. A Bord na Móna specific action in this plan includes the adoption of pollinator-friendly management within the Bord na Móna network of sites. One action to help achieve this objective is habitat rehabilitation and restoration, where possible, of pollinator-friendly habitats, including peatland habitats.

## 11 Land-use Planning Policies

As Bord na Móna operates in many counties across Ireland, it is important to note the respective development plans in these counties. Many of the existing development plans recognise the potential that exists in the after-use of cutover/cutaway peatlands. Bord na Móna seeks to work with all of the relevant local authorities to ensure that the most appropriate after-uses are reflected in local planning policy. The following areas of consistent

importance are of both direct and indirect relevance to Bord na Móna: heritage, tourism, biodiversity/conservation, landscape, renewable energy, and economy/enterprise.

## 12 National Archaeology Code of Practice

Bord na Móna operates under an agreed Code of Practice regarding archaeology with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the National Museum of Ireland which provides a framework to enable the Company to progress peat extraction whilst carrying out archaeological mitigation. (https://www.archaeology.ie/sites/default/files/media/publications/cop-bord-na-mona-en.pdf

The Code replaced a set of Principles agreed with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in the 1990s. Under the Code Bord na Móna, the Minister and Director work together to ensure that appropriate archaeological mitigation is carried out in advance of peat extraction.

- BNM must ensure that any monuments or archaeological objects discovered during peat extraction are protected in an appropriate manner by following the Archaeological Protection Procedures.
- BNM must ensure that any newly discovered monuments on Bord na Móna lands are reported in a timely manner to the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- BNM must ensure that any archaeological objects discovered on Bord na Móna lands are reported immediately to the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.
- Bord na Móna will adhere to the Archaeology Code of Practice relating to management of any archaeological finds that may arise during cutaway peatland rehabilitation and decommissioning.

## 13 Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021

Rehabilitation of industrial peatlands is a key objective of the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021. This action plan outlines the main objectives and actions around biodiversity on Bord na Móna lands. The Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan also outlines key International and European policy in relation to biodiversity. This includes the **United Nations Convention on Biodiversity 2011-2020 (CBD)** and **European Biodiversity Strategy to 2020**. Further details of these policies and Bord na Móna s responses can be found in the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan (Bord na Móna, 2016). Both policy documents highlight targets such as reducing pressure on biodiversity, promoting sustainability, habitat restoration and benefits of ecosystem services.

One example of a key CBD target is:

- *"Restore at least 15% of degraded areas through conservation and restoration activities."*

The EUs headline target for progress by 2020 is to:

- *"halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU by 2020, restore them as far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss."*

This rehabilitation plan is aligned to the CBD target and the EU Biodiversity Strategy target and will help Ireland meet its commitment to these international Biodiversity polices.

## 14 Bord na Móna Commitments

Bord na Móna made the commitment in 2009 not to develop any new peatland sites for industrial peat production. The company has continued to work with different stakeholders.

The company announced that industrial peat production would be cut by over 50 percent in 2019 and would entirely cease over most of its lands by the mid-2020s. Rehabilitation measures would continue to be carried out with the focus on re-wetting and rehabilitation of cutover and cutaway areas in line with national policies (such as the National Peatland Strategy, the National Biodiversity Action Plan, the Climate Action Plan 2019, the Water Framework Directive, etc.) and rehabilitation guidelines set down by the Environmental Protection Agency. To date, 15,000 hectares of cutaway and cutover bog have been rehabilitated using this approach with 5,000 hectares in active rehabilitation.

In line with Bord na Móna's accelerated decarbonisation programme, the company made a further commitment to a significantly larger rehabilitation target. This was reflected in our plans to rehabilitate a further 20,000 hectares of cutaway and cutover bog to wetland and woodland mosaics by 2025. In addition, we planned to restore a further 1,000 hectares of raised bog habitat by 2025.

The above commitments have now been followed by the decision by the company to cease industrial peat extraction and rehabilitate a target of 33,000 ha between 2021-2025.

These commitments outline the importance of peatland rehabilitation to Bord na Móna. The company will continue to demonstrate environmental responsibility and continue to deliver on these commitments in relation to peatland rehabilitation and in relation to the future management of these lands to maximise their benefits, particularly their ecosystem service benefits, along with the sustainable development of a portion of the land bank for other uses, such as renewable energy.

## 15 Bord na Móna Strategic Framework for the future use of cutaway peatlands 2020 (Draft)

The general after-use strategy of Bord na Móna is outlined in the Bord na Móna Strategic Framework for Future-Use of Cutaway Bogs 2020 (draft document). This document outlines how Bord na Móna's cutover peatland estate is complex in nature with great variability in terms of peat depths, peat types, drainage, subsoil condition and environmental value. Thus, future options require consideration on a site-specific basis, also bearing in mind the considerable internal variation within bogs. The development of the land-bank will also take account of national needs, while also taking account of the various national legislation, policies and plans related to the management of peatlands. In general, Bord na Móna will seek to balance and optimise commercial, social, and environmental value of these sites, and develop integrated land-uses, while taking account of the need for sustainability and their biodiversity value.

Any consideration of other future after-uses for Bord na Móna land such as development or other mixed uses will be conducted following the relevant planning guidelines and consultation with relevant authorities and will be considered within the framework of this peatland rehabilitation plan.

# APPENDIX VI. DECOMMISSIONING

## 1. Condition 10 Decommissioning

This is a requirement of the applicable Integrated Pollution Control Licence issued by the Environmental Protection Agency. This condition 10.1 requires the following:

*10.1 Following termination of use or involvement of all or part of the site in the licensed activity, the licensee shall:*

*10.1.1 Decommission, render safe or remove for disposal/recovery, any soil, subsoils, buildings, plant or equipment, or any waste, materials or substances or other matter contained therein or thereon, that may result in environmental pollution.*

The main success criteria pertaining to successfully complying with this condition is ensuring that no environmental liability remains from this infrastructure and material and that the bog can be deemed suitable for surrender of the licence under section 95 of the EPA Acts. This is achieved by Bord na Móna identifying and quantifying any mechanical and infrastructural resources that were installed in the bog to enable the development and production operation at the site. This list is then refined to identify any items that would be deemed as possibly resulting in environmental pollution, should they not be removed.

Typically, these items/infrastructures would be any remaining, unconsolidated plant, equipment and attachments, waste materials, unused raw materials such as land drainage pipes, remaining peat stockpiles, stock pile covering, pumps, septic tanks and fuel tanks.

In relation to this bog, the list and tasks would be as follows:

| Item | Description | Lough Bannow Decommissioning Plan |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Clean-up of remaining or unconsolidated waste or materials located in Bogs, Yards, Buildings and Offices | Where relevant |
| 2 | Cleaning Silt Ponds | Cleaning Silt Ponds |
| 3 | Decommissioning Peat Stockpiles | Where relevant |
| 4 | Decommissioning or Removal of Buildings and Compounds | Where relevant |
| 5 | Decommissioning Fuel Tanks and associated facilities | Where relevant |
| 6 | Decommissioning and Removal of Bog Pump Sites | Where relevant |
| 7 | Decommissioning or Removal of Septic Tanks | Where required |

In addition, condition 7 of the licence requires these now defined waste items to be disposed of or recovered as follows:

7.1 Disposal or recovery of waste shall take place only as specified in *Schedule 2(i) Hazardous Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* and *Schedule 2(ii) Other Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* of this licence and in accordance with the appropriate National and European legislation and protocols. No other waste shall be disposed of/recovered either on-site or off-site without prior notice to, and prior written agreement of, the Agency.

7.2 Waste sent off-site for recovery or disposal shall only be conveyed to a waste contractor, as agreed by the Agency, and only transported from the site of the activity to the site of recovery/disposal in a manner which will not adversely affect the environment.

7.3 A full record, which shall be open to inspection by authorized persons of the Agency at all times, shall be kept by the licensee on matters relating to the waste management operations and practices at this site. This record shall as a minimum contain details of the following:

7.3.1 The names of the agent and transporter of the waste.

7.3.2 The name of the persons responsible for the ultimate disposal/recovery of the waste.

7.3.3 The ultimate destination of the waste.

7.3.4 Written confirmation of the acceptance and disposal/recovery of any hazardous waste consignments sent off-site.

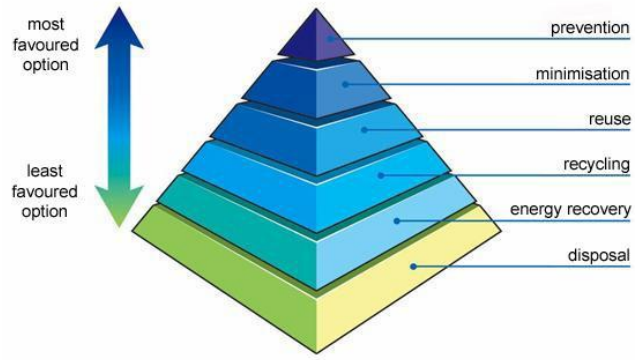
7.3.5 The tonnages and EWC Code for the waste materials listed in *Schedule 2(i) Hazardous Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* and *Schedule 2(ii) Other Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* sent off-site for disposal/recovery.

7.3.6 Details of any rejected consignments.

A copy of this Waste Management record shall be submitted to the Agency as part of the AER for the site.

As required by the licence, these waste items will be removed for recycling or disposal, using external contractors with the required waste collection permits, approved under 7.2, with waste records maintained as required under 7.3.

Where possible, Bord na Móna will utilize the appropriate waste hierarchy to identify waste that can reused or recycled ahead of disposal.




The validation of the success of condition 10.1 is carried out through an Independent Closure Audit (ICA), followed by and EPA Exit Audit (EA) and the eventual partial or full surrender of the licence.

## APPENDIX VII. GLOSSARY

**Cutaway Bog:** A Bord na Móna site generally becomes cutaway when it is economically unviable to continue industrial peat extraction or when the majority of peat has been removed.

**Deep peat cutover bog.** Deep peat cutover bog is defined as former raised bogs that have been in industrial peat production, where production has ceased but the residual peat depth is typically in excess of 2m. *Sphagnum* mosses are key species of raised bogs and the majority of the peat mass is formed from these mosses. *Sphagnum* species and other raised bog species are a key part of raised bog habitat function and prefer more acidic, nutrient poor, water-logged conditions. Typical raised bog *Sphagnum* mosses and other bog species do not thrive with the more typical alkaline water chemistry of cutaway bog but do grow well in these more acidic conditions where peat has been re-wetted. There is potential to re-develop embryonic *Sphagnum*-rich plant communities in these conditions if the peat can be re-wetted. This brings the opportunity of re-developing embryonic *Sphagnum*-rich vegetation communities that are considered Carbon sinks or peat-forming habitats and restoring the carbon sequestration function of these sites.

**Dry cutaway bog:** Cutaway bog is categorised as dry cutaway where it is not practical or feasible to re-wet these areas completely. It is inevitable that some areas of cutaway will remain relatively dry due to the heterogenous topography of the cutaway, as well as requirements for continued drainage on site for identified after-uses, or off site in relation to neighbouring lands or other infrastructure. Ridges and mounds of glacial deposits can become exposed during peat extraction and form a heterogenous topographical mosaic separated by basins. Dry cutaway may have very thin or no residual peat where ridges and mounds have been exposed. The exposed sub-soils are a mix of glacial gravels, muds and tills that can be quite free-draining. Dry cutaway may also have deeper residual peat but in a location (i.e. at the margin) where the peat cannot be re-wetted due to boundary constraints. Dry cutaway may also develop in situations where there a relatively steep slope that inhibits re-wetting. The majority of dry cutaway will develop towards grassland, heath, scrub and dry woodland habitats.

**Environmental stabilisation:** The key objective of peatland rehabilitation is environmental stabilisation. This means developing habitats and vegetation back onto the bare peat, slowing water movement across the bog, minimising effects to downstream waterbodies and meeting the conditions of the IPC Licence. This is achieved by a combination of re-wetting, where possible, and natural colonisation of the former cutaway, with or without intervention**.** Habitats will develop that reflect the underlying environmental conditions. Other after-use development may also serve to act as environmental stabilisation.

**Marginal land.** Marginal land is defined as land around the margin of the industrial peat production area. This margin generally contains a range of habitats including scrub, Birch woodland, cutover bog and raised bog remnants. It has a variety of land-uses including turf-cutting (private turbary).

**Rehabilitation:** Rehabilitation is defined in general by Bord na Móna as environmental stabilisation of the former cutaway. This is generally achieved via re-wetting, where possible, and natural colonisation of the former cutaway, with or without intervention. It is not possible to restore raised bog habitats on BnM cutaway in general in the short-term. In general, most of the peat mass has been removed from many BnM cutaway sites and the environmental characteristics of these areas have therefore changed radically (peat depths, hydrology, water chemistry, substrate type, nutrient status. This means there will therefore be different habitat outcomes (wetlands, fen, heathland, grassland and Birch woodland). Other after-use development may also serve to act as rehabilitation.

**Restoration:** Ecological restoration to defined as the process of re-establishing to the extent possible the structure, function and integrity of indigenous ecosystems and the sustaining habitats they provide" (SER 2004).

Defined in this way, restoration encompasses the repair of ecosystems (Whisenant 1999) and the **improvement of ecological conditions in damaged wildlands** through the **reinstatement of ecological processes**. In general, Bord na Móna cutaway peatlands cannot be restored back to raised bog in a reasonable timeframe as their environmental conditions has changed so radically (with the removal of the acrotelem – the living layer and much of the peat mass). However, they can be returned to a **trajectory** towards a naturally functioning peatland system (Renou-Wilson 2012). **Raised bog restoration** is an objective of some BnM sites where there is residual natural raised bog vegetation and where the majority of the peat is still intact.

**Standard rehabilitation:** This is defined as rehabilitation that is designed to meet the conditions of the EPA IPC Licence. The key objective of rehabilitation is environmental stabilisation. This is achieved by a combination of re-wetting, where possible, and natural colonisation of the former cutaway, with or without intervention**.** Other after-use development may also serve to act as rehabilitation.

**Standard decommissioning:** This is defined as decommissioning that is designed to meet the conditions of the EPA IPC Licence. This is defined as to render safe or remove for disposal/recovery, any soil, subsoils, buildings, plant or equipment, or any waste, materials or substances or other matter contained therein or thereon, that may result in environmental pollution.

# APPENDIX VIII. EXTRACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

**(Minimisation, treatment, recovery and disposal)**

**Objective:**
The objective of this generic plan is to comply with the requirements of regulation 5 of the Waste Management (Management of Waste from Extractive Industries) Regulations, and to prevent or reduce waste production and its harmfulness.

**Scope:**
This plan covers IPPC Licence's Ref P0504-01, Mountdillon Group of Bogs located in Co. Longford.

**1.0 Extractive Waste:**
Waste classified as extractive waste from peat extraction operations arise from three operations associated with this activity.

**1.1 Silt Pond excavations and maintenance.**
All peat extraction activities in the Mountdillon bog group are serviced by silt lagoons/ponds. During the excavation of these silt ponds, pre IPPC Licensing in 1999 and since licensing, the excavated material is stored adjacent to the silt pond, where it either remains in situ ores levelled out. As required by condition 6.6, these silt lagoons are cleaned twice per annum or more often if inspections dictate. These silt cleanings are also deposited on the same location, adjacent to the silt pond, where they may be levelled periodically to allow room for subsequent cleanings. These mounds of silt pond excavation material and cleanings are generally no higher that 2-3 metres.

**1.2 Power Station screenings:**
Lough Ree Power Station screens the peat from the bogs prior to processing. This screening removes oversized peat, stones and bogs timbers. Schedule 3 (ii) of the IPPC licence permits disposal of these peat screenings back to the bog, where it is levelled and graded into the surrounding peat landscape. These locations have been agreed with the Agency as per condition 7.4 of the IPPC Licence, and as per the attached locations.

**1.3 Bog Timbers:**
During peat extraction operations, bog timbers often arise in the bog surface and are required to be cleared. These timbers consist of bog pine, oak and some yew. Some of these timbers, such as the oak and yew are removed for use in the wood craft industry, with the remaining bog pine stockpiled in locations at the opposite end of each bog, where it generally becomes a habitat for flora and fauna. These piles of timber are generally no higher than 1-2 metres.

**2.0 P0504-01 IPPC Licence Extractive Waste Conditions**

**2.1 Condition 7.5 Extractive Waste Management**
The licensee shall draw up a Waste Management Plan (to be known as an Extractive Waste Management Plan) for the minimisation, treatment, recovery and disposal of extractive waste. This Plan shall meet the requirements of regulation 5 of the Waste Management (Management of Waste from the Extractive Industries) Regulations,2009. The Plan shall be submitted for agreement by the Agency by the 31' December 2012. The Plan shall be reviewed at least once every five years thereafter in a manner agreeable to the Agency and amended in the event of substantial changes to the operation of a waste facility or to the waste deposited. Any amendments shall be notified to the Agency.
All extractive waste shall be managed in accordance with the Extractive Waste Management Plan. A report on the implementation of the Extractive Waste Management Plan shall be provided in the AER.

**2.2 Condition 7.6 Waste Facility**

(i) No new waste facility may be developed or an existing waste facility modified unless agreed by the Agency.
(ii) The licensee shall ensure that all existing waste facilities are managed and maintained to ensure their physical stability and to prevent pollution or contamination of soil, air, surface water or groundwater.
(iii) The licensee shall ensure that all new waste facilities are constructed, managed and maintained to ensure their physical stability and to prevent pollution or contamination of soil, air, surface water or groundwater.
(iv) Operational measures shall be continuously employed to prevent damage to waste facilities from personnel, plant or equipment.
(v) The licensee shall establish and maintain a system for regular monitoring and inspection of waste facilities.
(vi) All records of monitoring and inspection of waste facilities, as required under the licence, shall be maintained on-site in order to ensure the appropriate handover of information in the event of a change of operator or relevant personnel.

**2.3 Condition 7.7 Excavation Voids**
7.7.1 Unless otherwise agreed by the Agency, only extractive waste shall be placed in excavation voids.
7.7.2 When placing extractive waste into excavation voids for rehabilitation and construction purposes, the licensee shall, in accordance with regulation 10 of the Waste Management (Management of Waste from the Extractive Industries) Regulations, 2009, and the Extractive Waste Management Plan:

- Secure the stability of the waste
- Put in place measures to prevent pollution of soil, surface water and ground water.
- Carry out monitoring of the extractive waste and excavation void.

**Condition 7.5. Extractive Waste Management Plan. 5 (1)**

**3.0 Minimisation.**
**3.1 Silt pond excavation material and cleanings.**
IPPC Licence conditions require all production areas to be serviced by an appropriately designed silt pond based on storage volume and retention time. Condition 6.6 requires all ponds to be cleaned bi-annually and more often if inspections dictate, so the only opportunity for minimisation of same is through Standard Operating Procedures. These are required under condition 2.2.2 (i) regarding minimisation of suspended solids, and are in-place to minimise the generation of silt, which in-turn will minimise the generation of silt pond waste.

**3.2 Power Station Screenings.**
These screenings cannot be minimised as they are a consequence of peat production, stones, timbers and oversize peat materials are naturally occurring on the bog, and are required to be removed prior to processing.

**3.3 Bog Timbers.**
Bog timbers are also naturally occurring materials within a bog and are required to be removed prior for production. The volume of these bog timbers varies from bog to bog and as such their minimisation is not controllable or quantifiable.

**4.0 Treatment**
**4.1 Silt pond excavation material and cleanings.**
The silt pond excavation material and silt cleanings do not require any treatment for its end use which will be either backfilling these silt pond voids as per condition 7.7.1 above as part of the Bog Rehabilitation Plan, or reincorporated into the surrounding peatlands.

**4.2 Power Station Screenings.**
The factory screenings are permitted to be returned to the bog as they were naturally occurring materials from the bog, and as such do not require any treatment to serve this purpose.

**4.3 Bog Timbers**

As per 1.3 above, these timbers are stockpiled at two locations in each bog, as per the attached list of sites and become habitats for various flora and fauna.

**5.0 Recovery**

**5.1 Silt pond excavation material and cleanings.**

Condition 2.2.2 (vi) requires the reuse of silt pond waste to be examined. This was undertaken in 2006, the outcome of which was that this waste peat silt material, as a fuel, was contaminated with sub-soils, rendering it unsuitable for combustion. In addition, volumes are small compared to overall peat production volumes.

**5.2 Power Station Screenings.**

Given the nature of these screenings as outlined in 1.2 above, there is no further use identified and they are permitted to be disposed of back to the bog.

**5.3 Bog Timbers**

Investigations into processing these materials into smaller fractions for potential heating purposes did not yield any viable results. In addition, these older stockpiles are now classified as habitats and as such would not be considered for reuse as a fuel.

**6.0 Disposal**

**6.1 Silt pond excavation material and cleanings.**

Schedule 3 (ii) permits the disposal of silt pond cleanings (Lagoon Sediments) to the bog and these locations, adjacent to the silt pond site, are presented in the attached spreadsheet, with associated grid coordinates.

**6.2 Power Station Screenings.**

Schedule 3 (ii) permits the disposal of screenings (Peat Screenings) to the bog at designated locations agreed under Condition 7.4, and these locations, are presented in the attached spreadsheet, with associated grid coordinates.

**6.3 Bog Timbers**

These naturally occurring bog timbers are stockpiled at locations in each bog, grid coordinates attached.

**7.0 Extractive Waste Management Plan**

**5 (2a)(i)**

The vast majority of peat extraction bogs were all designed and drained for production prior to the 1960's and as such the production fields layout cannot' be altered. Under our Cleaner Reduction Procedures, various design changes have been implemented to the production machines and process to reduce lost peat which eventually is captured in the silt ponds and requires removal as waste peat silt. This along with training and ongoing research and development will continuously reduce waste peat and subsequently waste silt pond cleanings. Bog timbers are present naturally in various volumes and quantities in different bogs and as peat production involves stripping peat in layers, the exposure, generation and removal of these timbers is unavoidable. Work has been undertaken recently into project looking at grinding of these bog timbers in situ using a timber miller, and if this project becomes viable it will contribute to the reduction of bog timbers.

**5 (2a)(ii)**

Given the nature and expanse of peat bogs, the stockpiling and storage of these waste materials do not present a visual, storage or stability problem. As required under Condition 10 of the IPPC Licence, the silt pond excavations and screenings will be utilised to backfill the silt pond voids once the bogs have finished and stabilised in accordance with out Bog Rehabilitation Plan. Storage of these wastes in the interim, open to the elements does not present a change on the nature of these wastes that will threaten the environment or prevent their reuse during the bog rehabilitation process.

**5 (2a)(iii)**
Under Condition 10 of the IPPC Licence, all silt ponds will be decommissioned once the bog surface has stabilised, in agreement with the Agency. This will involve the removal of weirs and flow controls, returning the silt pond back to its original drain or removing the silt pond from the drainage system. Both of these activities will involve placing the silt pond extraction and cleaning material back into the excavation void.

**5 (2a)(iv)**
The peat bogs do not contain any topsoil, so this is not required.

**5 (2a)(v)**
Peat mineral resources do not undergo any treatment.

**5 (2b)**
These three extractive waste are all being reused and recovered back to their original extraction points and have not undergone any physical, chemical, or biological change.

**5 (2c)(i, ii & iii)**
These three extractive wastes, stored on the bog for reuse or recovery during the bog rehabilitation phase, do not require any management or monitoring during the operation of these bogs. Silt pond excavations and cleanings are stored adjacent to the silt pond and quickly revegetated and stabilise, the screenings are graded back into the bog at the agreed locations upon disposal and the bog timbers do not prevent any water or airborne danger to the environment.

**5 (3)**
The three extractive wastes arising from peat extraction operations at this site are classified wastes from mineral non-metalliferous excavation, with an EWC code of 0101 02. The materials are not classified as hazardous under Directive 91/689/EEC20, and do not contain substances or preparations classified as dangerous under Directives 67/548/EEC5 or 1999/45/EC6 above a certain threshold.
The peat excavations and cleanings are stored in locations and in a manner that they could not collapse, and are remote in their nature. The stockpiles are located adjacent to silt ponds that are cleaned regularly and as such these stockpiles are managed and levelled to facilitate further cleanings.
Therefore the material stored at these waste facilities would not be considered to be a Category A waste facility.

**Classification in accordance Annex II.**

| Waste Material | Description | Classification | Chemical Process treatment | Deposition description | Transport System |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Silt Pond Excavations and cleanings | Peat and mineral soils associated with peatlands. Stored for reuse during bog rehabilitation, with no displacement of overburden | 01 01 02 | None | Excavated from silt ponds by excavator and deposited adjacent to the silt pond. | Excavator |
| Peat Screenings | Stones, timbers and oversized peat particles, reincorporated into low areas, agreed with the Agency, and stabilized under | 01 01 02 | None | Removed by screen at the factory and transported by tractor and trailer | Tractor and trailer. |

| Waste Material | Description | Classification | Chemical Process treatment | Deposition description | Transport System |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | normal natural bog conditions | | | to the designated and agreed locations | |
| Bog Timbers | Pine, Oak and Yew species, stored at locations in each bog. Not subject to any stability issues due to exposure to atmospheric/meteorological conditions. | 01 01 02 | None | Removed from the bog surface by excavator and transported by tractor and trailer to the agreed locations | Tractor and Trailer |

**Description of operations.**
Silt pond excavations arise from the requirement to have silt ponds treating all peat extraction sites. Silt pond cleanings arise from the removal of peat silt from silt ponds as required under IPPC Licence. Bog timbers arise from preparation of the bogs surface for peat production. Estimated quantities of materials are below:

**Closure plan. (Bog Rehabilitation Plan).**
Condition 10.1 – 10.3 of the IPPC Licence requires the following:

- 10.1 Following termination of use or involvement of all or part of the site in the licensed activity, the licensee shall:
- 10.1.1 Decommission, render safe or remove for disposal/recovery, any soil, subsoils, buildings, plant or equipment, or any waste, materials or substances or other matter contained therein or thereon, that may result in environmental pollution.
- 10.1.2 Implement the agreed cutaway bog rehabilitation plan (refer Condition 10.2).

10.2 Cutaway Bog Rehabilitation Plan:

- 10.2.1 The licensee shall prepare, to the satisfaction of the Agency, a fully detailed and costed plan for permanent rehabilitation of the cutaway boglands within the licensed area. This plan shall be submitted to the Agency for agreement within eighteen months of the date of grant of this licence.
- 10.2.2 The plan shall be reviewed every two years and proposed amendments thereto notified to the Agency for agreement as part of the AER. No amendments may be implemented without the written agreement of the Agency.

10.3 The Rehabilitation Plan shall include as a minimum, the following:

- 10.3.1 A scope statement for the plan; to include outcome of consultations with relevant Agencies, Authorities and affected parties (to be identified by the licensee).
- 10.3.2 The criteria which define the successful rehabilitation of the activity or part thereof, which ensures minimum impact to the environment.
- 10.3.3 A programme to achieve the stated criteria.
- 10.3.4 Where relevant, a test programme to demonstrate the successful implementation of the rehabilitation plan.
- 10.3.5 A programme for aftercare and maintenance.

10.4 A final validation report to include a certificate of completion for the Rehabilitation Plan, for all or part of the site as necessary, shall be submitted to the Agency within six months of execution of the plan. The licensee shall carry out such tests, investigations or submit certification, as requested by the Agency, to confirm that there

is no continuing risk to the environment. This plan including maps and ecological classifications are available on file at the Mountdillon IPPC Licence Coordinators office.
The location in relation to the silt pond excavations and cleanings are adjacent to the silt ponds, which are considered under the Shannon River Basin Management Plan in accordance with the requirements of Directive 2000/60/EC.
Screenings and bog timbers are all naturally occurring elements of peatland and there placement back to the bog in smaller concentrated designated waste facilities does not constitute a risk to the prevention of water compliance.
The lands under where these materials are deposited are peatlands and are un-effected by the placing of this material.

**Review.**
This plan will be reviewed every five years, the first review to take place in September 2017. This review will entail an inspection of these waste facilities to ensure their placing, management, maintenance and stability comply with the requirements of the Extractive Waste Management requirements and condition 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7 of the Mountdillon IPPC Licence P0504-01.

## APPENDIX IX. MITIGATION MEASURES FOR THE APPLICATION OF FERTILISER

- Any fertiliser used will be Rock Phosphate and will not be applied in the following conditions:
    1. The land is waterlogged;
    2. The land is flooded, or it is likely to flood;
    3. The land is frozen, or covered with snow;
    4. Heavy rain is forecast within 48 hours (forecasts will be checked from Met Éireann).
    5. The ground slopes steeply and there is a risk of water pollution, when factors such as surface run-off pathways, the presence of land drains, the absence of hedgerows to mitigate surface flow, soil condition and ground cover are taken into account.
- No fertiliser will be spread on land within 2 metres of a surface watercourse.
- Buffer zones in respect of fertilisation near waterbodies, as specified on FAQ Listing | Environmental Protection Agency will be adhered with at all times with regard to fertiliser application. Reproduced as follows:

| Water body / Feature | Buffer zone |
|---|---|
| Any water supply source providing 100m$^3$ or more of water per day, or serving 500 or more people | 200 metres (or as little as 30 metres where a local authority allows) |
| Any water supply source providing 10m$^3$ or more of water per day, or serving 50 or more people | 100 metres (or as little as 30 metres where a local authority allows) |
| Any other water supply for human consumption | 25 metres (or as little as 30 metres where a local authority allows) |
| Lake shoreline | 20 metres |
| Exposed cavernous or karstified limestone features (such as swallow holes or collapse features) | 15 metres |
| Any surface watercourse where the slope towards the watercourse exceeds 10% | 10 metres |
| Any other surface waters | 5 metres* |

# APPENDIX X. ARCHAEOLOGY

## Role of the Archaeological Liaison Officer

1. To communicate this Code of Practice and the *Archaeological Protection Procedures* (Appendix IV) to all personnel operating on the bog.
2. To ensure that all notices relating to the *Archaeological Protection Procedures* are posted and maintained at appropriate locations on the bog.
3. To report any stray finds, presented to the Liaison Officer from his/her group of bogs, to the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.
4. To provide for the appropriate protection of the stray find, whether in-situ or removed from the bog, as directed by the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.

Code of Practice

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Code of Practice

5. To arrange for the delivery or collection of the stray find, as directed by the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.

6. To complete the Report of Discovery of Archaeological Object(s) in Bogs (Appendix V), as directed by the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.

7. To maintain a file of all stray finds and associated documentation and provide copies to the Project Archaeologist.

8. To provide assistance, where required, to the Department during archaeological surveys.

9. To provide assistance, where required, to Bord na Móna's Consultant Archaeologists, during investigation and mitigation of monuments.

10. To report to the Bord na Móna members on the Archaeology Management Liaison Committee any planned developments or new activities on cutaway peatland areas within his/her group of bogs.

| Bord na Móna | **Procedure: ENV017** | **Rev: 1** |
|---|---|---|
| **Title: Archaeological Findings** | **Approved: EM** | **Date:** |

**1) Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the arrangements in Bord na Móna for findings of Archaeological material (Stray Finds).

**All objects, sites or monuments, no matter how fragmentary, are important elements of our heritage.**

**2) Procedure**

1. Check whether there are any known archaeological monuments in your area.
2. Be vigilant at all times - objects or traces of structures can be found on the field surfaces, in the drain faces, on the bog margins or caught within the mechanics of machinery.
3. If an object is found leave it in place, if it is safe to do so, note its position and immediately contact your Archaeological Liaison Officer who will assess the situation and contact the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.
4. Resist the temptation to investigate the find spot as this may disturb fragile archaeological deposits.
5. If the object is already dislodged or is in imminent danger, remove it carefully, mark its find spot and report it immediately to your Archaeological Liaison Officer.
6. Objects made of wood, leather or textile, which are removed from peat should be kept in conditions similar to those in which they are found. This can be done by packing them in peat or, if waterlogged, placing them in a clean basin of water and sealing the container. Resist the temptation to clean or remove peat from the object.
7. If timbers or other materials, such as gravel or stones, which could be part of a man-made structure are noted on the bog, mark the location and report it immediately to your Archaeological Liaison Officer. If you suspect the find is of archaeological importance, resist the temptation to expose it any further as this could result in damage to the structure.
8. Report anything that looks unnatural in the bog – your Archaeological Liaison Officer will decide whether it should be referred to the appropriate authorities.

**NOTE:** Our archaeological heritage is a finite, non-renewable resource. Once a site is destroyed its information is lost forever and we have lost the chance to understand a little more about our past, where we have come from and perhaps the opportunity to learn for the future.

Your Archaeological Liaison Officer is ……

**3) Records**

| Revision Index | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Revision | Date | Description of change | Approved |
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |

Bord na Móna

# Lough Bannow Bog
# Draft Rehab Plan
# GIS Map Book
# 2025

| Document Control Sheet | |
|---|---|
| **Document Name:** | Lough Bannow Bog Draft Rehab Plan GIS Map Book 2025 |
| **Document File Path:** | |
| **Document Status:** | **Draft v0.2** |

| This document comprises: | DCS | TOC | Text (Body) | References | Maps | No. of Appendices |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 |

| Rev. 0.1 | Author(s): | Checked By: | Approved By: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name(s): | BG | LC | MMC |
| Date: | 17/05/2024 | 17/05/2024 | 17/05/2024 |

| Rev. 1.0 | Author(s): | Checked By: | Approved By: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name(s): | BG | JOS | CC |
| Date: | 09/01/2025 | 09/01/2025 | 09/01/2025 |

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# Bog Site Information Maps

**BNM-ECO-23-27-01: Site Location Map**

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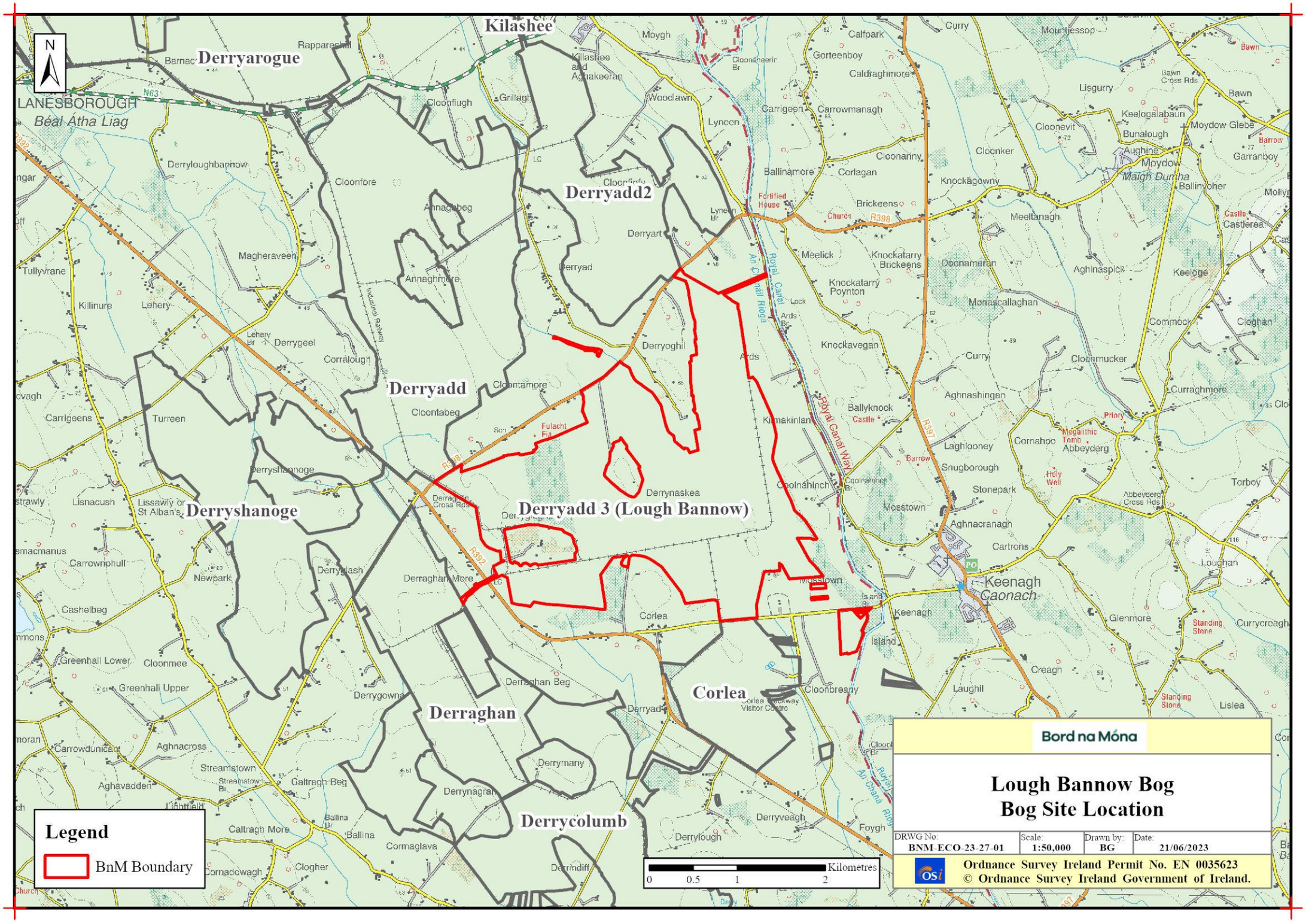

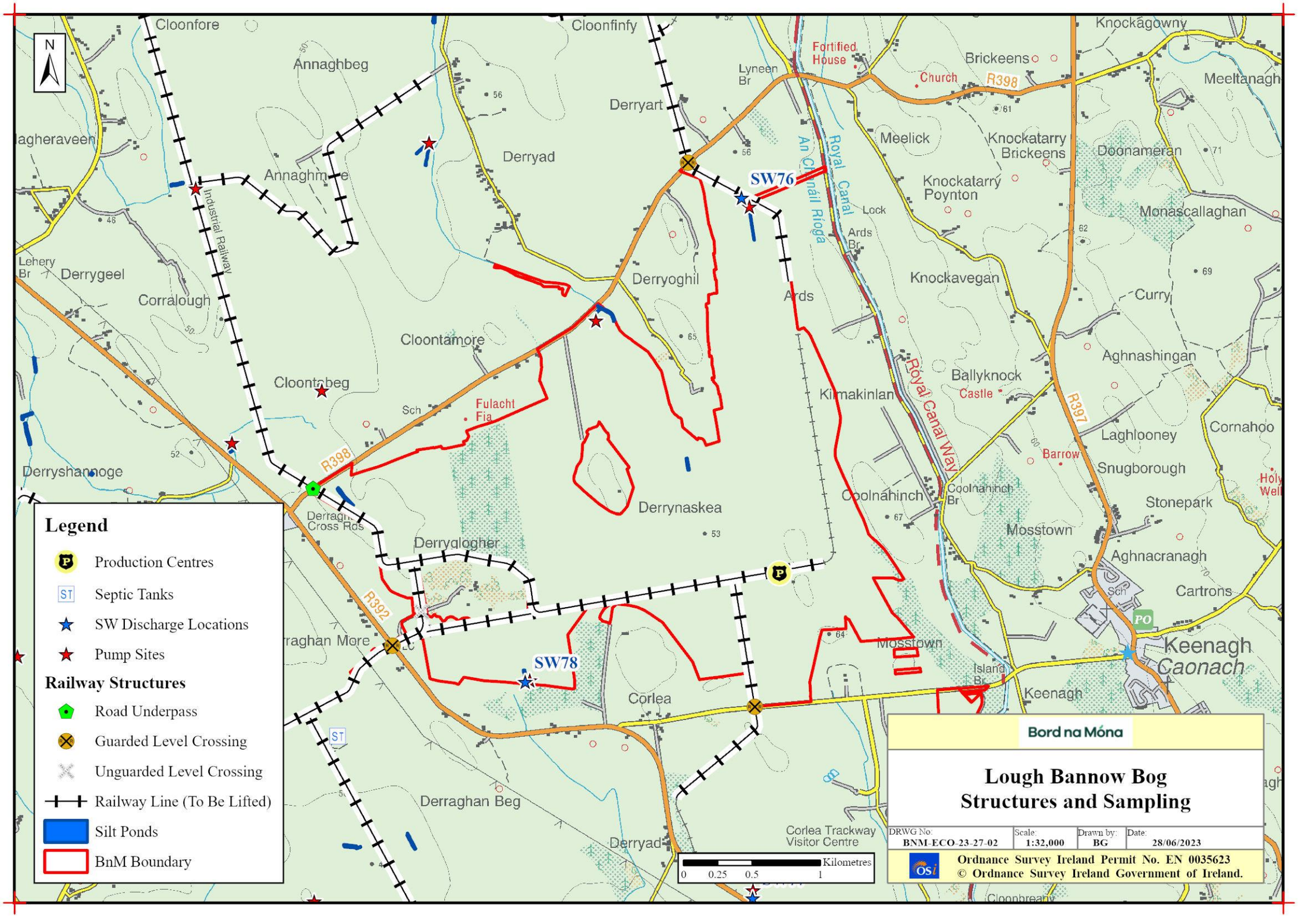
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Cloonfore
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Cloontamore
Cloontabeg
Sch
Fulacht Fia
R398
Derryshannoge
Derragh Cross Ros
Derryglogher
Derrynaskea
R392
raghan More
SW78
Corlea
Derraghan Beg
Derryad
Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre
Lyneen Br
Fortified House
SW76
An Chanáil Rioga
Royal Canal
Lock
Ards Br
Ards
Meelick
Brickeens
Church
R398
Knockagowny
Meeltanagh
Knockatarry Brickeens
Doonameran
Knockatarry Poynton
Monascallaghan
Knockavegan
Curry
Aghnashingan
Ballyknock
Castle
Kilmakinlan
Royal Canal Way
R397
Laghlooney
Cornahoo
Barrow
Snugborough
Coolnahinch
Coolnahinch Br
Stonepark
Mosstown
Aghnacranagh
Cartrons
PO
Keenagh Caonach
Island Br
Keenagh
Cloonbreany
Legend
Production Centres
Septic Tanks
SW Discharge Locations
Pump Sites
Railway Structures
Road Underpass
Guarded Level Crossing
Unguarded Level Crossing
Railway Line (To Be Lifted)
Silt Ponds
BnM Boundary
Kilometres
0 0.25 0.5 1
Bord na Móna
Lough Bannow Bog
Structures and Sampling
DRWG No: BNM-ECO-23-27-02
Scale: 1:32,000
Drawn by: BG
Date: 28/06/2023
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**BNM-ECO-23-27-04: Peat Depths**

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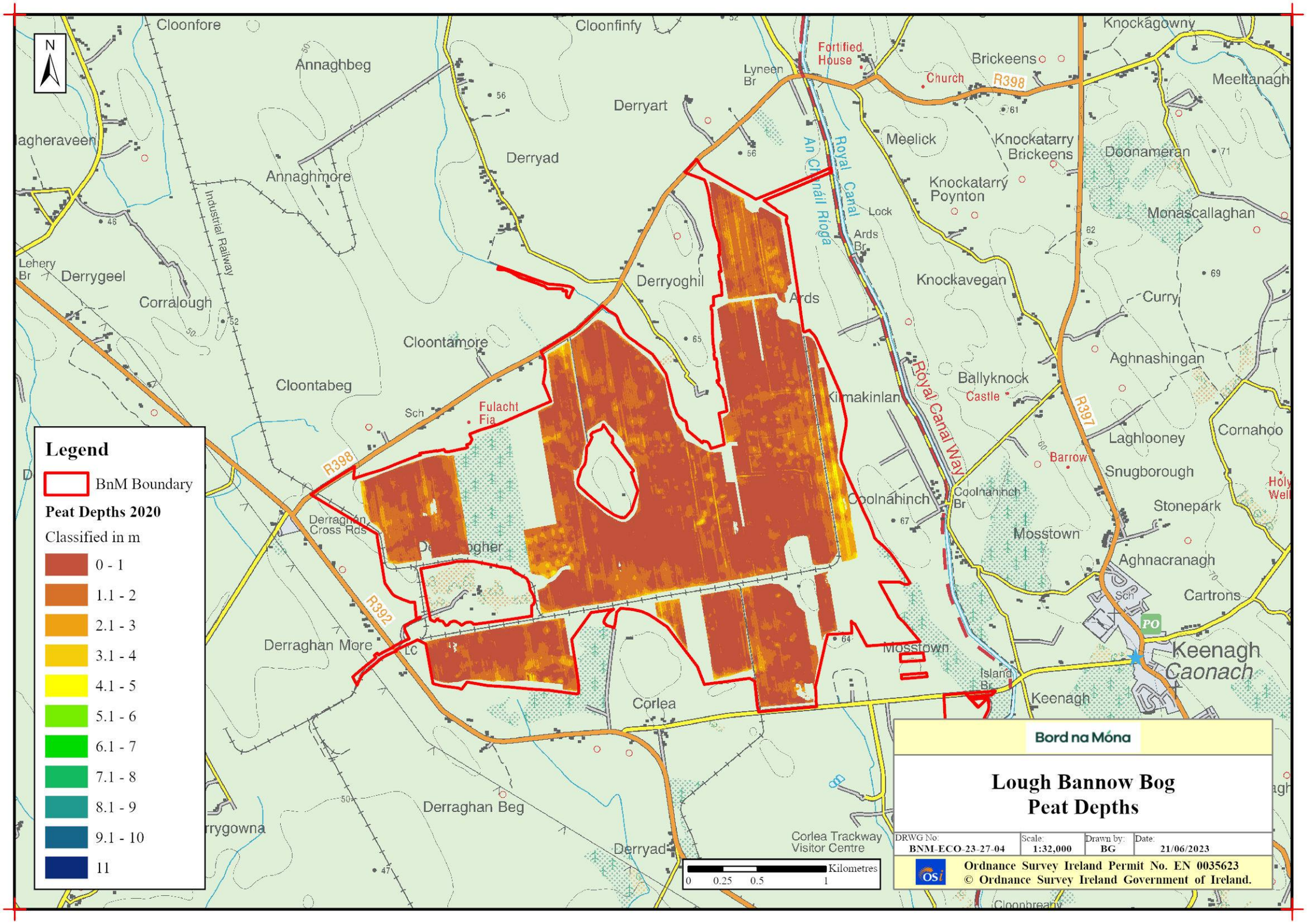

**BNM-ECO-23-27-17: Current Habitat Map**

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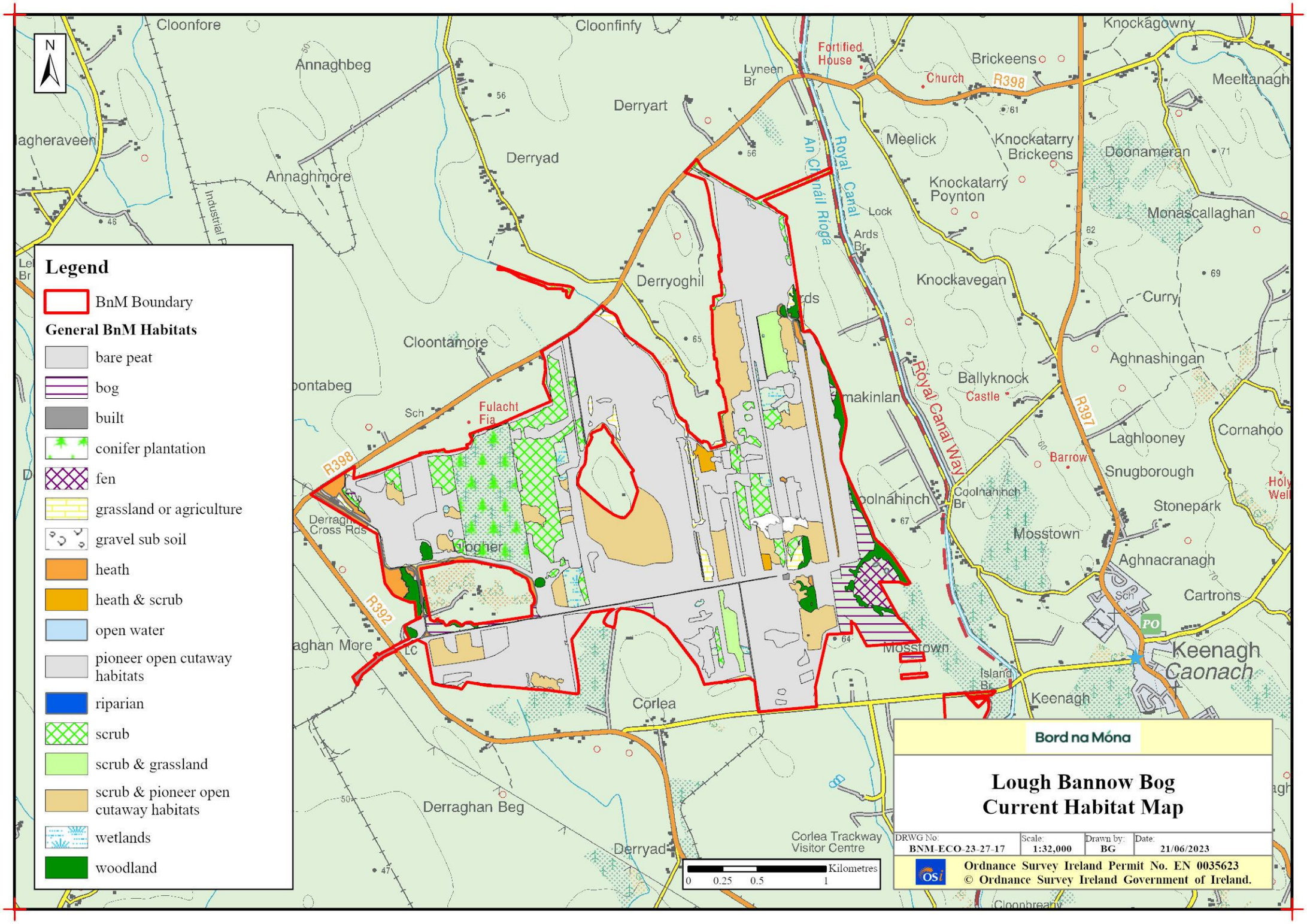

**BNM-ECO-23-27-18: Potential Future Habitats**

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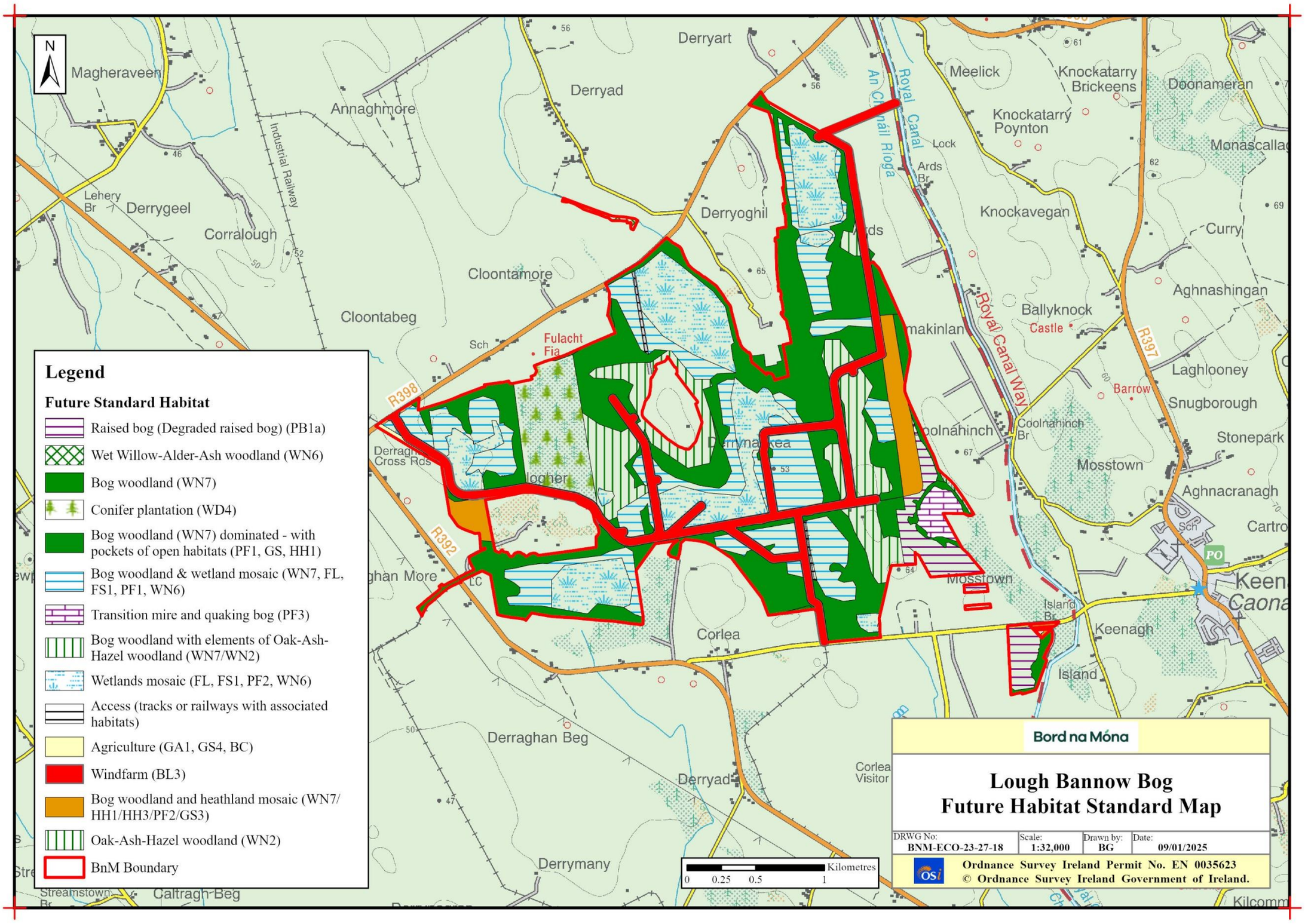

**BNM-ECO-23-27-21: Aerial Imagery 2000**

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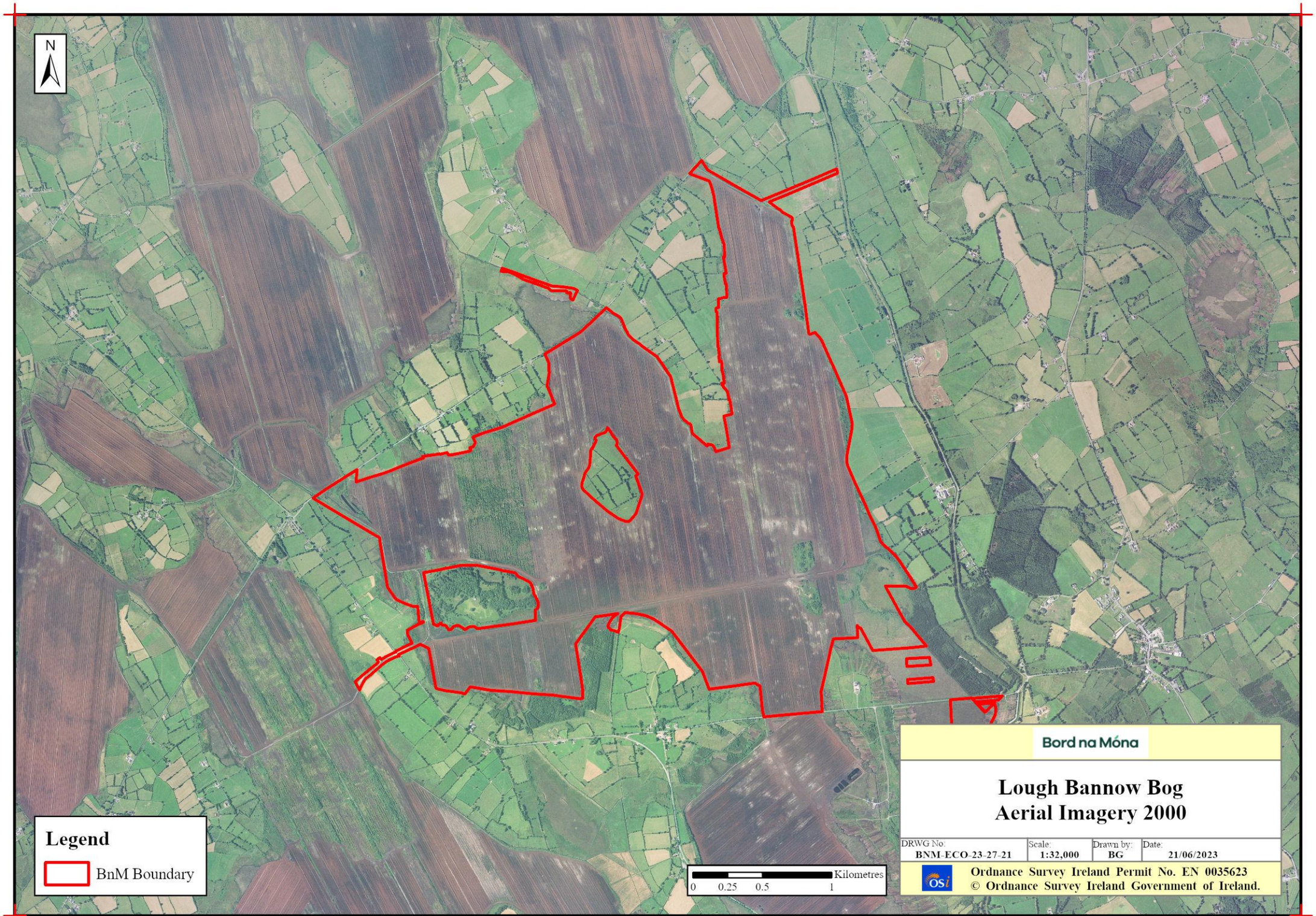

**BNM-ECO-23-27-22: Aerial Imagery 2020**

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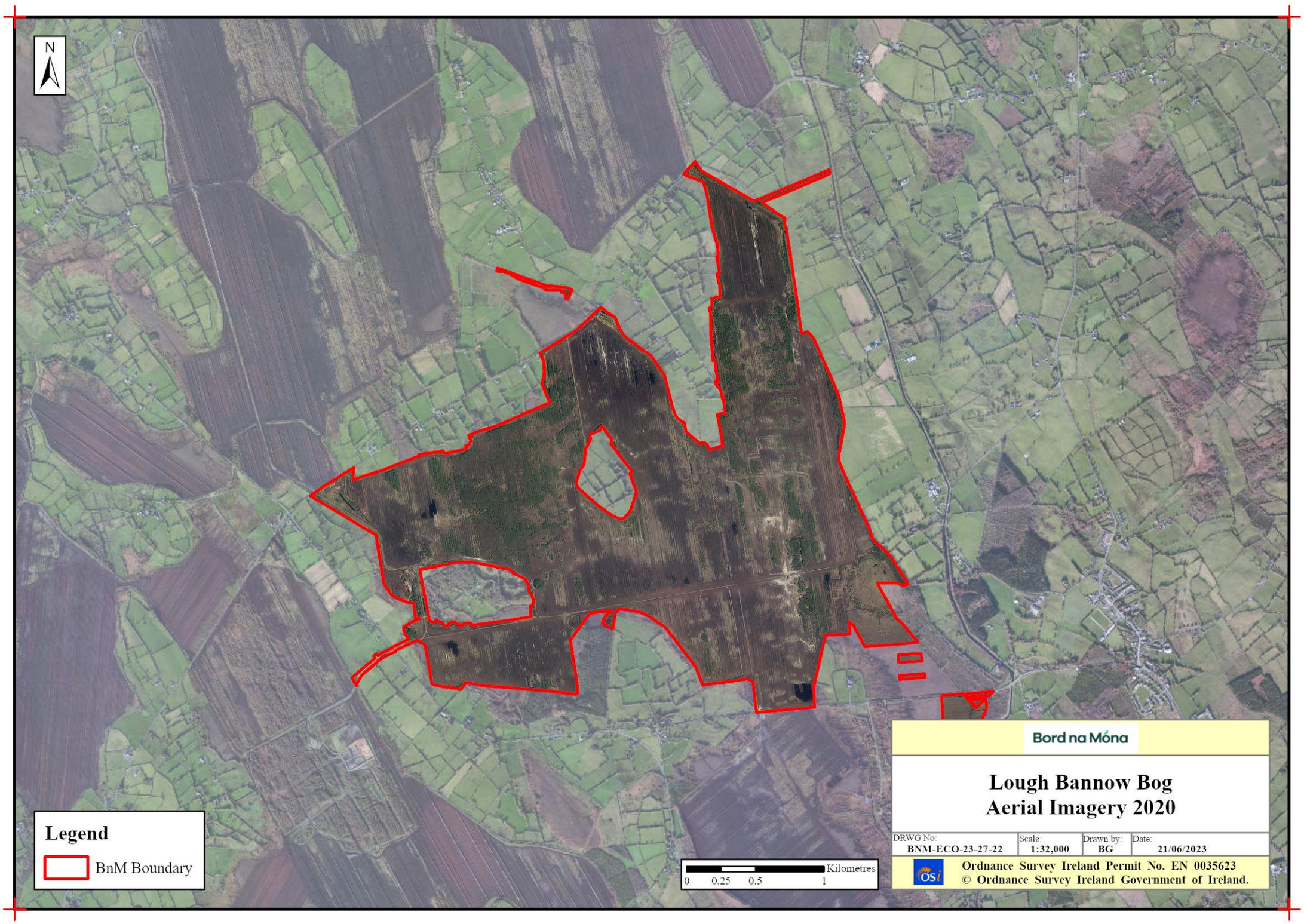

**BNM-ECO-23-27-23: Proximity Designated Sites**

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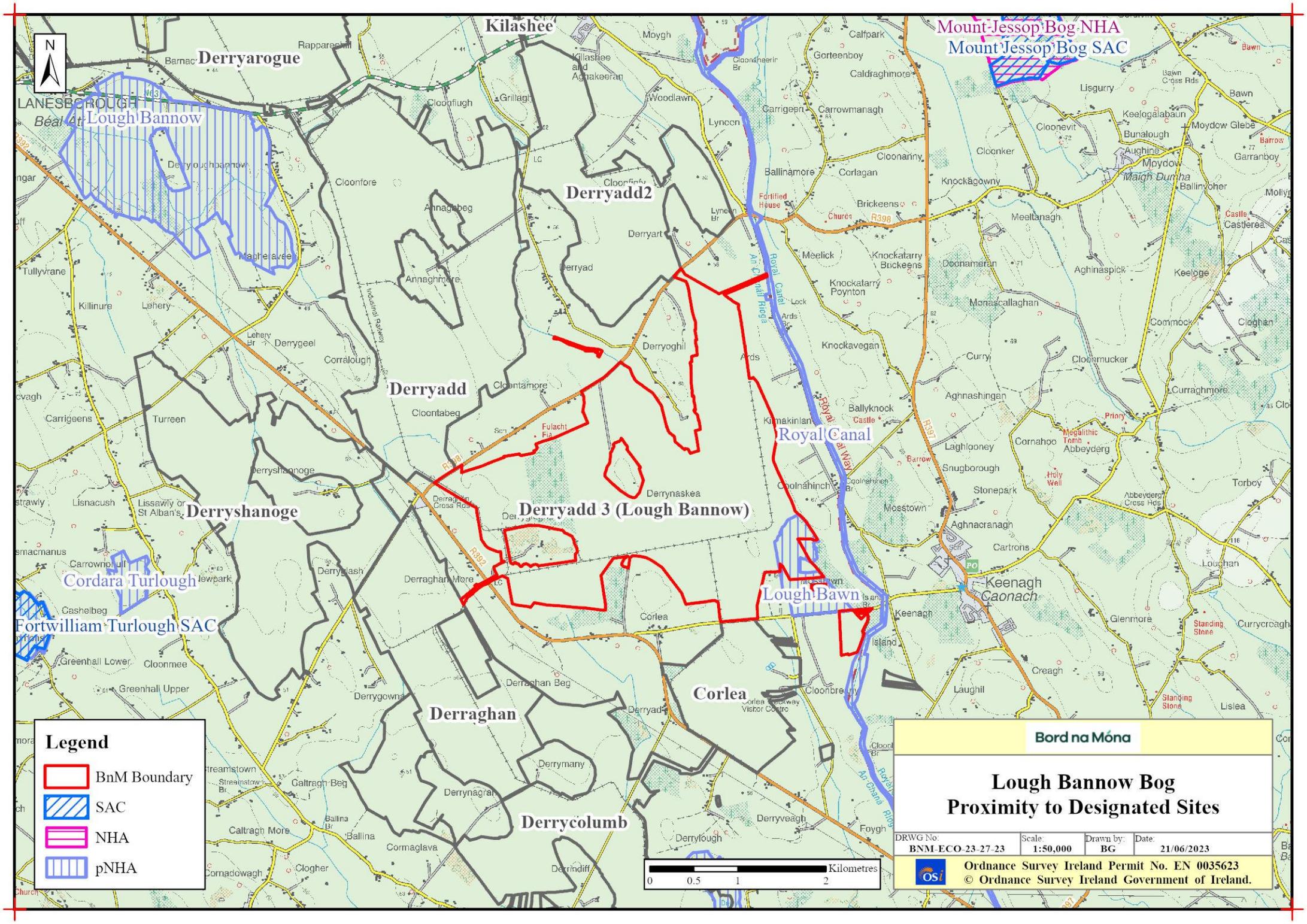

**BNM-ECO-23-27-24: Bog Group Map**

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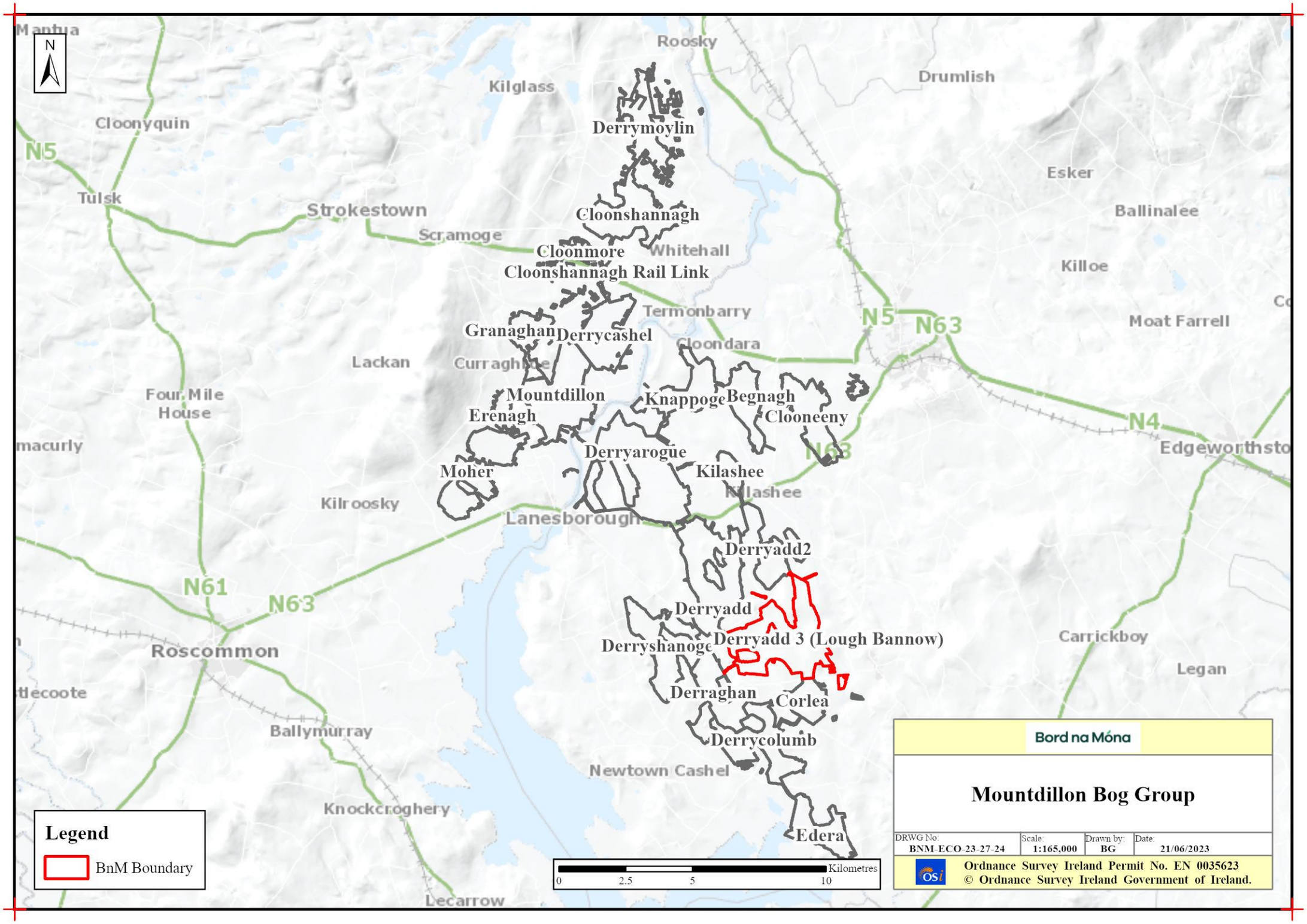

# Hydrology / Topography Maps

**BNM-ECO-23-27-WQ01: Water Quality Map**

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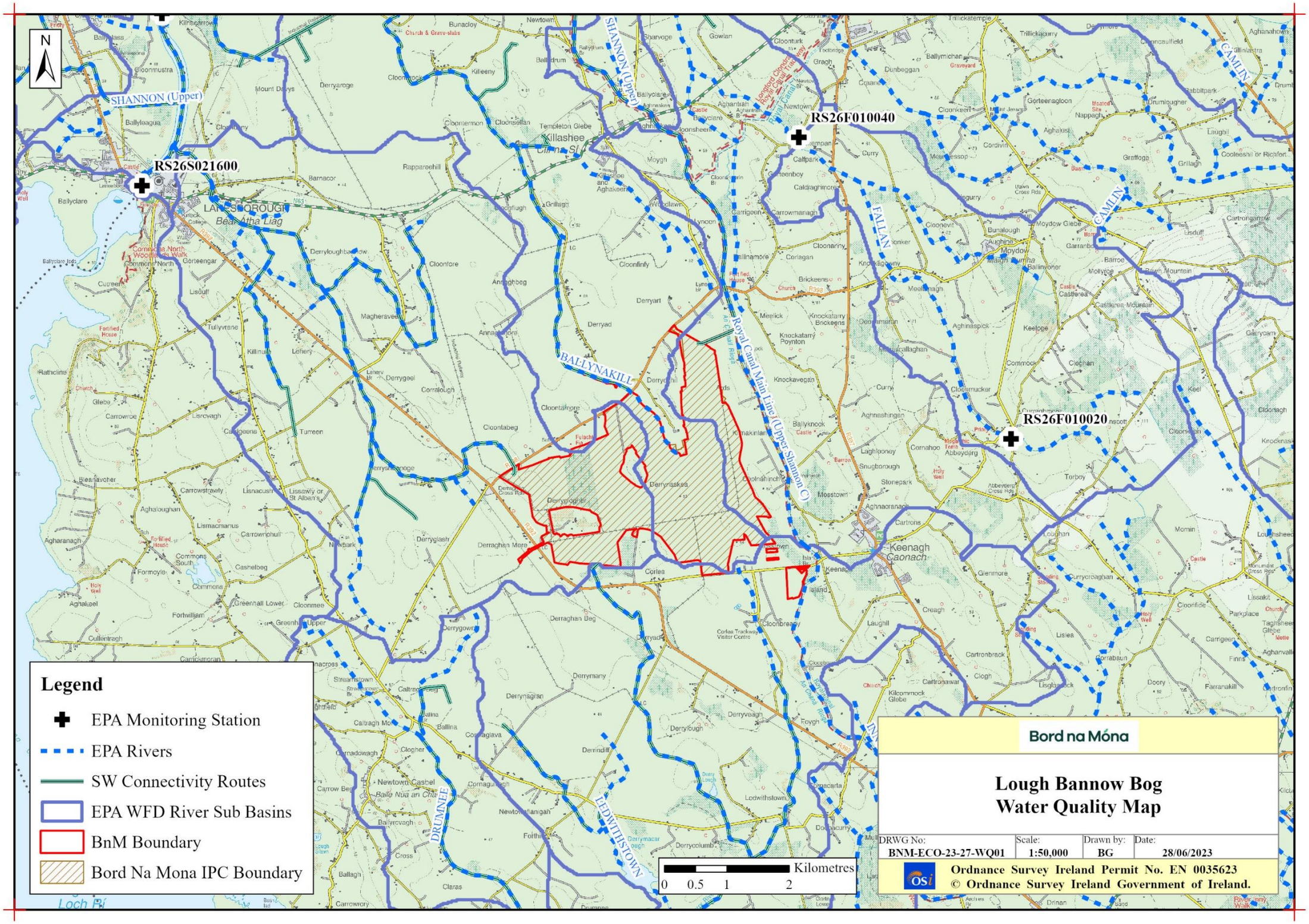

**BNM-ECO-23-27-SP01: Sampling Points**

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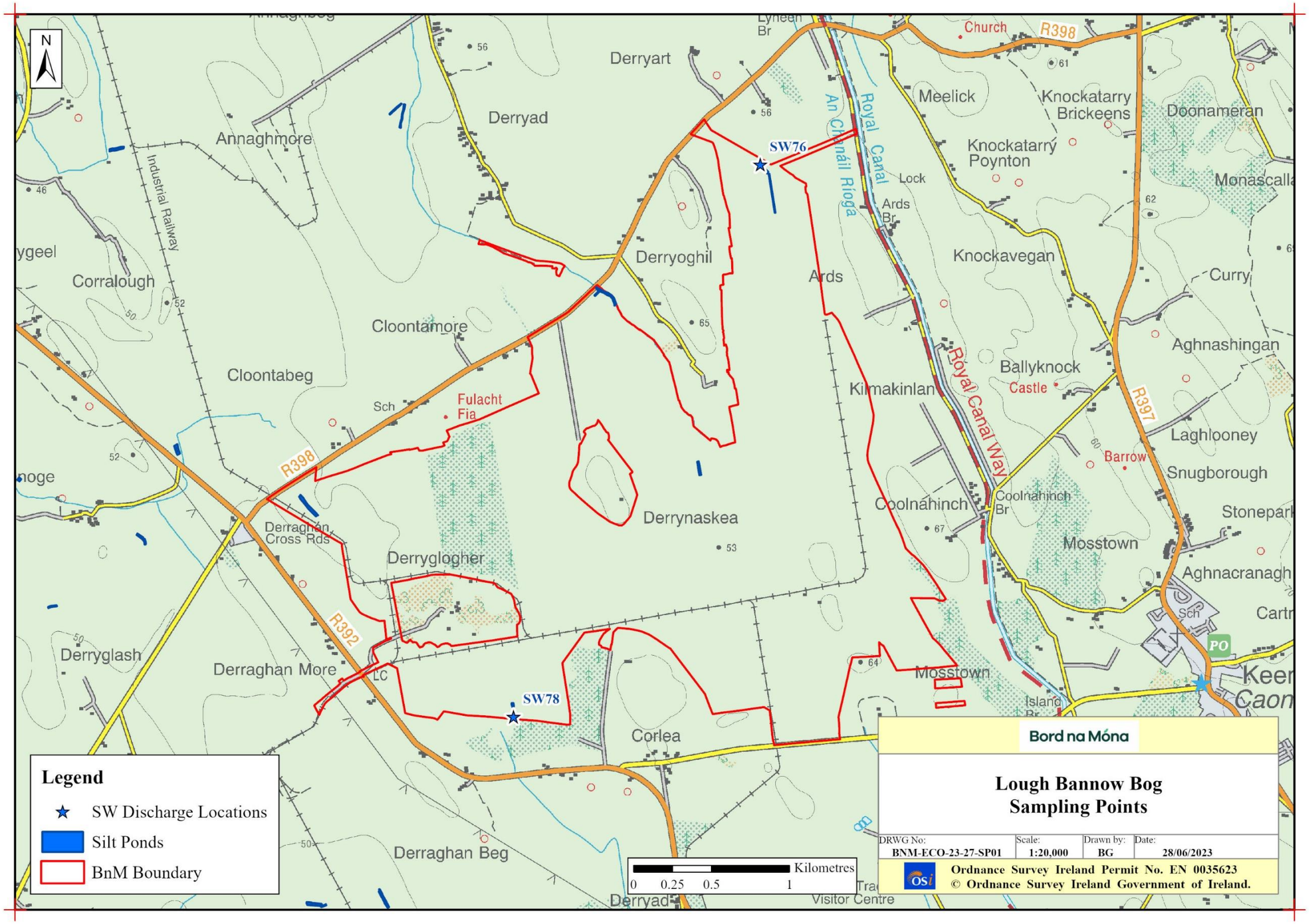

**BNM-ECO-23-27-03: LiDAR Map**

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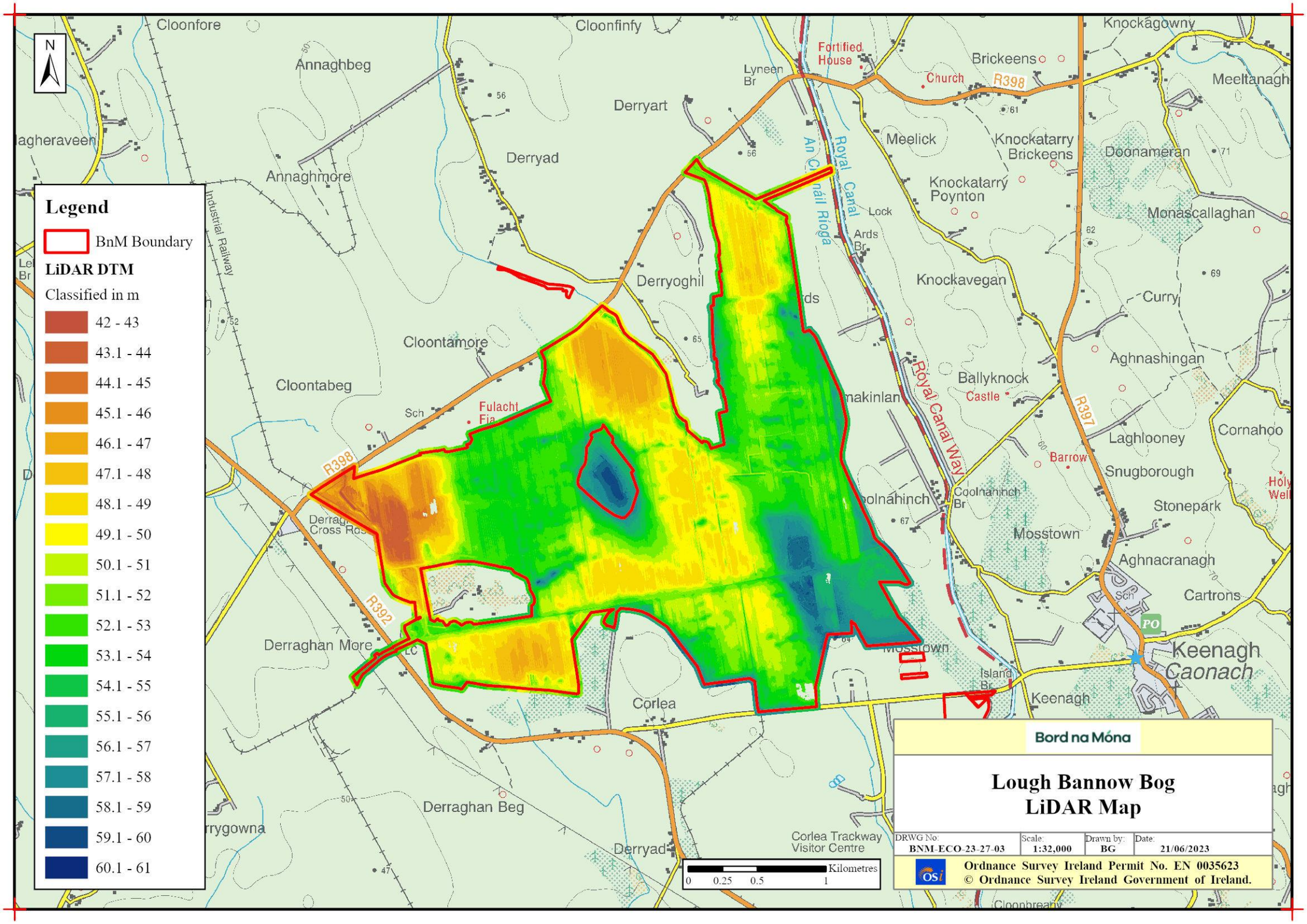

# Rehabilitation Maps

**BNM-ECO-23-27-20: Standard Rehab Measures**

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