

Appendix L

Eco-hydrogeology Summary Report for Lough Corrib cSAC

L.1 Eco-hydrogeology Summary Report for Lough Corrib cSAC

Galway County Council

N6 Galway City Ring Road

Eco-hydrogeology Summary Report for Lough Corrib SAC

Reference: GCRR_4.04.03_30.9.10_A.10.8.2

Issue 3 | 28 March 2025

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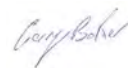
Job number 233985-00

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Document Verification

Project title N6 Galway City Ring Road
Document title Eco-hydrogeology Summary Report for Lough Corrib SAC
Job number 233985-00
Document ref GCRR_4.04.03_30.9.10_A.10.8.2
File reference GCRR_4.04.03_30.10_Appendix A.10.8.2

Revision	Date	Filename	GCRR_4.04.03_30.9.10_A.10.8.2		
Issue 1	6 Mar 2020	Description	Issue 1 Issued during 2020 Oral Hearing		
			Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
		Name	Les Brown	Catherine Buckley	Mary Hurley
		Signature			
Issue 2	10 Mar 2020	Filename	GCRR-4.03.34.17 Ecohydrogeology Coolagh Lakes I2.docx		
		Description	Issued during 2020 Oral Hearing		
			Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
		Name	Les Brown	Catherine Buckley	Mary Hurley
Issue 3	28 March 2025	Filename	GCRR-4.04.03_30.9.10_A.10.8 Ecohydrogeology Coolagh Lakes I3.docx		
		Description	Issue for 2025 RFI Response		
			Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
		Name	Les Brown	Alison Orr	Gerry Baker
		Signature			

Issue Document Verification with Document

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This report is an updated version of the report produced during the 2020 Oral Hearing to inform the hydrogeology assessment for the updated EIAR and updated NIS as part of the response to the request by ABP for further information in December 2023. This Appendix has been updated to incorporate all data presented during the oral hearing. The data presented also includes subsequent data that has been collected during the intervening period since the 2020 Oral Hearing, which includes data that is publicly available, and data specifically collected for this Project.

1.2 Location of Coolagh Lakes

Coolagh Lakes are located to the east of the River Corrib and are part of the Lough Corrib SAC. The location of the Lough Corrib SAC is presented in Plate 1 relative to the buried valleys that form part of the palaeolandscape, which have been identified in the wider area.



Plate 1 Lough Corrib SAC

The River Corrib is a substantial river that is not dependent on groundwater. However, the Coolagh Lakes, which ultimately discharge to the River Corrib, are mainly groundwater fed. Groundwater contributions are a combination of flow from a karst spring (Western Coolagh Spring) as well as from seepages around the periphery of the lakes. The location of Coolagh Lakes and Western Coolagh Spring are shown on Plate 2.

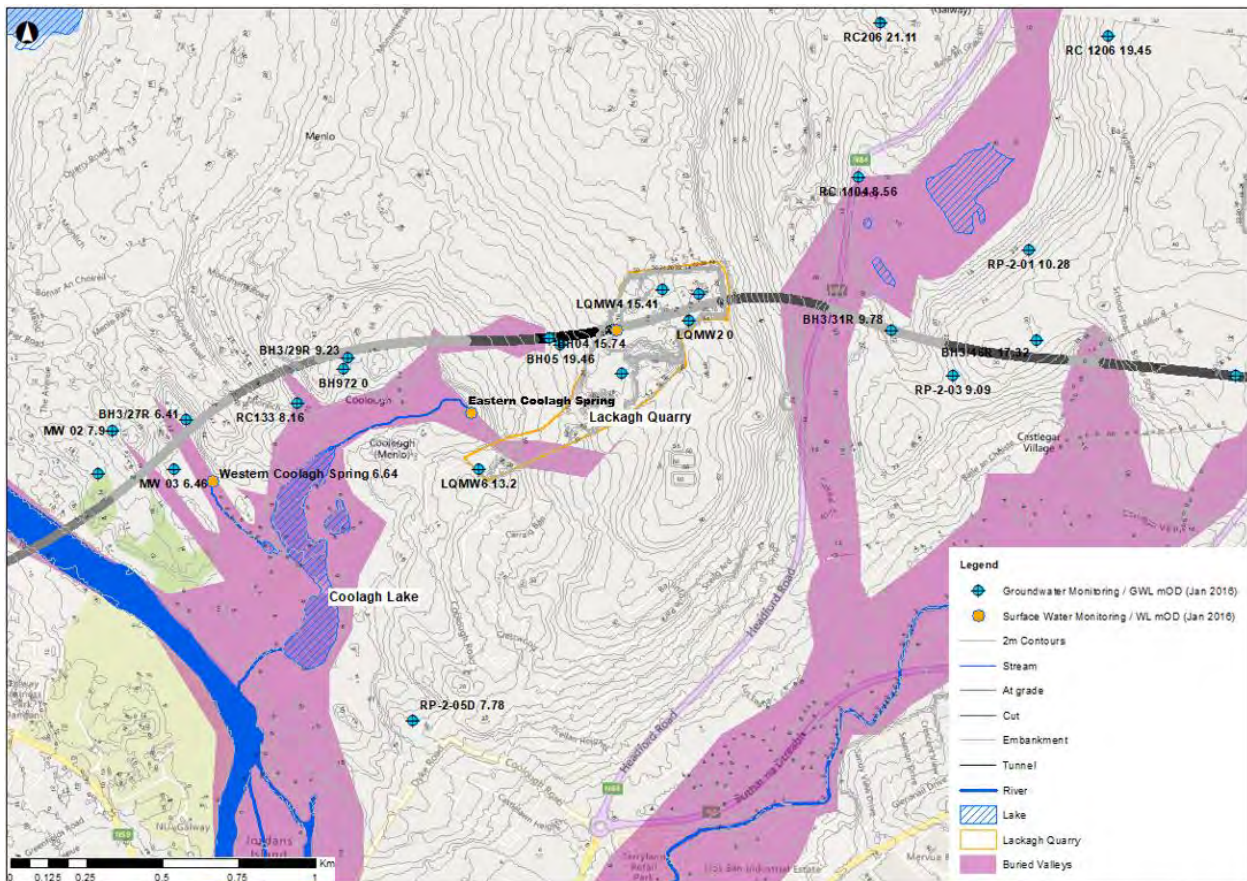


Plate 2 Location of Coolagh Lakes relative to Lackagh Quarry

1.3 Purpose of report

Biodiversity assessments have identified that the habitats at the Coolagh Lakes are dependent on the lake water level and lake water quality. On this basis, the groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE) around the lake margins are dependent on the groundwater contribution to Coolagh Lakes. The hydrogeological setting and interaction between groundwater, the Coolagh Lakes and the River Corrib are explored in terms of both water level and water quality in this summary report.

The Geotechnical and Hydrogeological Appraisal of the Lackagh Tunnel (EIAR Appendix A.7.3 of the updated EIAR and Appendix F of the updated NIS) and Chapter 10 of the updated EIAR assessed whether construction dewatering activities or the operational presence of the tunnel may act as a barrier to flow and intercept or divert the groundwater flow supplying Coolagh lakes, with the risk of compromising the integrity of the habitats.

Extensive assessments were undertaken to ensure that the hydrogeological regime was fully understood so that any potential impacts could be assessed.

To assess the potential for any impacts, the hydrogeological regime requires characterisation. This summary describes the major features of the hydrogeology and answers two critical concerns:

1. Does the groundwater from Lackagh Quarry drain to Coolagh Lakes?
2. What is the extent of the Coolagh Lakes groundwater catchment and by what flow mechanisms are the Lake water level and Lake water quality supported?

The nature of the groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE) at Coolagh Lakes are described below in Section 2 of this report. Section 3 outlines a summary of the data assessed. Section 4 summarises the hydrogeological conceptual model and explores the above two questions. Section 5 summarises the assessment of potential impacts.

Appendix A to this updated Appendix A.10.8.2 includes groundwater contour maps for winter (Appendix A-1) and summer (Appendix A-2) as well as three sets of Hydrographs. (Appendix A-3)

- Hydrograph i (Appendix A-3i) shows groundwater responses in Lackagh Quarry
- Hydrograph ii (Appendix A-3ii) shows groundwater responses related to a perched groundwater table from a shale bed
- Hydrograph iii (Appendix A-3iii) shows the groundwater levels recorded adjacent to Coolagh Lakes

This assessment includes both detailed and conceptual cross-sections to aid the understanding of the area. The conceptual cross-sections are presented in Section 3 below while the three detailed sections are presented in Appendix B to this updated Appendix A.10.8.2. The cross-sections comprise of:

- Appendix B Section A-A: Southwest to Northeast cross-section from the River Corrib to Ballindooley Lough via the Coolagh lakes and Lackagh Quarry (split over 4 drawings to allow sufficient detail)
- Appendix B Section B-B: A West to East cross-section through Lackagh Quarry along the alignment including the proposed Lackagh Tunnel
- Appendix B Section C-C: North to South section through Coolagh Lakes showing the relationship between the lake level and groundwater level

2. Groundwater Dependent Qualifying Habitat at Coolagh Lakes (Lough Corrib SAC)

The Coolagh Lakes and the associated fringing wetland habitat form part of the qualifying interests of Lough Corrib SAC.

The Coolagh Lakes themselves correspond with the qualifying interest Annex I habitat Hard water lakes [3140]. The lakes in turn support an associated wetland complex of wet grassland (GS4), wet heath (HH3), fen (PF1 and PF2) and reed swamp (FS1); areas of which correspond with the qualifying interest Annex I habitat types *Molinia* meadow [6410], *Cladium* fen [*7210] and Alkaline fen [7230]. Other Annex I habitat present which also form part of the associated wetland habitat complex are Residual alluvial forests [*91E0], Hydrophilous tall herb [6430], Wet heath [4010] and Transition mires [7140].

The full complex of wetland habitats associated with the Coolagh Lakes, including the fringing reed swamp, fen, marsh, wet heath, wet woodland and wet grassland habitats integrate with and support the structure and functions of the lake habitat. Equally, the area, distribution and quality of these habitats are dependent upon water levels and the water quality in the Coolagh Lakes.

The hydrogeological regime, particularly the groundwater contribution, must be maintained so that the area, distribution and depth of the lake habitat and its constituent/characteristic vegetation zones and communities are not reduced.

Critically, maintaining the area and condition of all fringing habitat, and not just those qualifying interest Annex I habitats, is a key component of the conservation objectives for Hard water lake [3140] habitat in Lough Corrib SAC.

An overview of where the qualifying interest Annex I habitat types of Lough Corrib SAC are located in relation to the Coolagh Lakes are shown on Plate 9.1 of the NIS.

Figure 11.3.3 of the NIS illustrates the collective extent of the groundwater dependent qualifying interest habitats of Lough Corrib SAC. It shows the extent of both the qualifying interest Annex I habitats and the other fringing habitats which provide a supporting role to the lake habitat itself.

The Fossitt classifications of the habitats associated with the Coolagh Lakes in the immediate vicinity of the proposed road development are shown on Figure 15.3 of the NIS.

The Annex I classifications of the habitats associated with the Coolagh Lakes in the immediate vicinity of the proposed road development are shown on Figure 1.7 of the NIS.

3. Hydrogeology background

3.1 Hydrogeological Overview

The ground investigations along the route of N6 Galway City Outer Bypass (2006 GCOB) and undertaken for the Project identify four locations where the geology is interrupted by deep buried valleys (River Corrib, Coolagh Lakes/Lackagh Quarry, N84 Headford Road and N83 Tuam Road). These buried valleys locally interrupt the regional groundwater gradient and either impound and/or deviate the regional trend. The location of these relative to Coolagh Lakes and Lackagh Quarry are presented in Plates 1 above and Plate 3 below.

The hydrogeological study undertaken to inform the EIAR and NIS for the proposed N6 GCRR identified 4 no. groundwater bodies (GWB) that contribute groundwater to the groundwater dependant habitats in the Lough Corrib SAC. They are Ross Lake GWB, Lough Corrib Fen 1 (Menlough) GWB, Lough Corrib Fen 2 GWB and the Clare-Corrib GWB. The location of these GWBs are explained and illustrated in Section 4.2 of NIS Appendix A. Plate 6 of NIS Appendix A (included below in Plate 3 for ease of reference) illustrates those groundwater bodies that contribute groundwater to the Lough Corrib SAC.

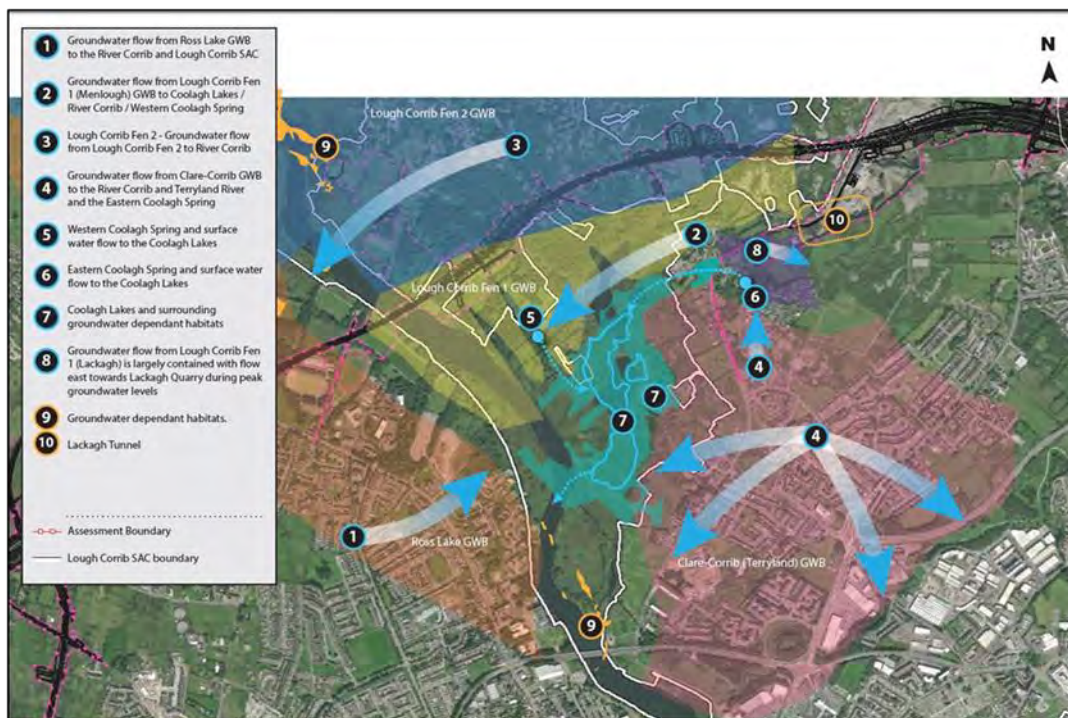


Plate 3 Generalised hydrogeology interactions with Lough Corrib SAC

The hydrogeological setting at Coolagh Lakes comprises of the lakes occurring in topographic depressions within an extent of thick, low permeability silt and clay subsoil deposits, which are bound to the north and east by limestone. The thick clay subsoils are part of the palaeolandscape in the limestone bedrock that have been infilled with fine grained sediment. A deep buried landscape at the eastern extent of the Lough Corrib Fen 1 (Menlough) GWB recorded a thickness of 106m of silty clay. The contact of the palaeolandscape is

sharp and vertical, and not dissimilar to that of the head of canyon or gorge. The Western Coolagh Spring is located at the margin of this significant palaeolandscape feature, where limestone crops out and encompasses the northern, eastern and southern margins of the Coolagh Lakes. The Coolagh Lakes fill the topographic depression where the deep subsoil deposits occur. These features are shown on Plate 2 above.

Due to the thickness and low permeability of the fill sediment from its fines dominated nature, any groundwater contribution through the base of the lakes is considered insignificant. Other than Western Coolagh Spring, there are no other karst springs around the periphery of the lakes. It is noted that the only other 'spring' feature associated with Coolagh Lakes is a pond at the head of a drain, which has been named Eastern Coolagh Spring. Eastern Coolagh Spring is located within the thick clay deposits in the valley floor, approximately 35m away from limestone that rises steeply on the north and western sides from the valley floor. Although no flow is measurable at Eastern Coolagh Spring or immediately downstream of it, it is anticipated that groundwater in the surrounding subsoil will migrate to it as seepages. It is noted from walkover surveys that the margins of the lake remain permanently wet even during summer, indicating that constant groundwater seepage occurs at the limestone/buried valley interface around the lake periphery.

Manual groundwater level monitoring data is presented in Appendix A.10.3 of the updated EIAR which is discussed in Chapter 10 of the updated EIAR and Appendix A of the updated NIS. This data has been presented in Appendix A to this updated Appendix A.10.8.2 as groundwater level contours for Winter and Summer. Hydrographs are presented in Appendix A to show the seasonal variation.

3.2 Regional groundwater level

The regional hydraulic gradient was developed for the limestone area using groundwater levels recorded in monitoring boreholes both upgradient and downgradient of the proposed N6 GCRR, as well as groundwater levels measured along the proposed N6 GCRR and the receiving water level at the River Corrib, Terryland River and Galway Bay.

A triangulation net was constructed across limestone groundwater bodies to provide a comprehensive assessment of gradient and flow direction. This allowed hydraulic gradients between monitoring points to be calculated and used to plot groundwater contours beyond the centreline and in the wider extent of the aquifer. The groundwater monitoring network allows groundwater flow directions to be calculated. An example of the triangulation net used is presented below in Plate 4.



Plate 4 Example of the triangulation net used (June 2016 water levels)

Based upon the gradient calculations and generation of groundwater contours (Refer to Appendix A-Figure 1 and Figure 2) the predominant groundwater flow of the regional groundwater system is towards the surface water features (the River Corrib and Terryland River).

There are seven groundwater monitoring boreholes in the wider limestone bedrock area. These include monitoring boreholes from 2006 GCOB (RC and MW) and the four monitoring boreholes designed to monitor surface water groundwater interaction (RP-02 series). In addition, the three Lackagh Quarry monitoring wells (LQMW series), BH04 and BH05 installed as part of the Lackagh Tunnel investigation and three surface water monitoring locations (SW-02 series) were also used to develop hydraulic gradients. The River Corrib (including the OPW gauge for the River Corrib at Dangan) and the Terryland River were used as receiving water for groundwater and where appropriate used to triangulate groundwater flow directions and gradients.

Groundwater levels are available for five monitoring wells in or adjacent to Lackagh Quarry (LQMW4, LQMW5, LQMW6, BH04 and BH05) (refer to EIAR Appendix A.10.3 Figure 1). The hydrographs i, ii and iii included in Appendix A show the seasonal responses of groundwater levels for Lackagh Quarry and Coolagh lakes. Water levels at the River Corrib, Western Coolagh Spring, Eastern Coolagh Spring are included for completeness. Cross-Section A-A, B-B and C-C (Appendix B of this updated A.10.8.2) show the groundwater levels in the Lackagh Quarry and Coolagh lakes area.

The Lackagh Quarry monitoring wells (LQMW1 to LQMW6) were originally installed when the quarry was operational, and no geological logs are available. LQMW1 to LQMW3 were not included in the monitoring network as the groundwater levels recorded were identical to the level at LQMW4. LQMW4 was chosen as representative of all these wells as it was in the best condition.

LQMW1, LQMW2, LQMW3 and LQMW4 are in the quarry void. LQMW5 and LQMW6 are to the south-west, in the quarry yard area and quarry access road respectively. These locations are shown on Figures 1 and Figure 2 of Appendix A of this updated A.10.8.2.

The geology of these wells was determined based on the condition survey (which determined their depth), the geological mapping of the quarry and from boreholes drilled for the project.

3.3 Perched groundwater level

In addition to the regional groundwater system there is also local perching of groundwater at specific stratigraphic horizons. One horizon in particular, an argillaceous limestone observed in Lackagh Quarry, perches recharge in the Menlough/Lackagh Quarry area. The geometry of the 'shale' bed dips at 2 degrees with a strike of 288 degrees. Plate 5 (reproduced from Figure 3.15 of the Lackagh Tunnel Geotechnical and Hydrogeological report in Appendix A.7.3 of the updated EIAR and Appendix F of the updated NIS) illustrates this shale bed above the limestone. Cross-sections A-A, B-B and C-C in Appendix B of this updated A.10.8.2 show the geometry of the shale horizon in the Lackagh Quarry and Coolagh Lakes area.

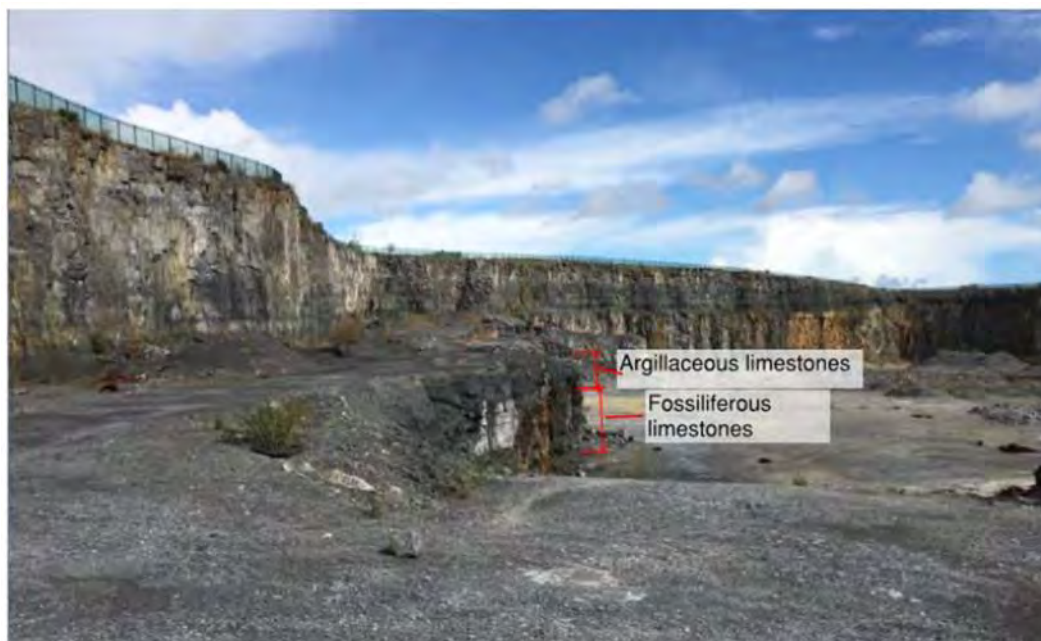


Plate 5 Shale bed in Lackagh Quarry

The location of boreholes in Lackagh Quarry is presented in Appendix A – Figures 1 & 2 of this updated A.10.8.2. The seasonal variation of groundwater levels in Lackagh Quarry are presented in Appendix A Hydrograph (i), which is derived from Plate 10.5 in Chapter 10 of the updated EIAR and Appendix A.10.3 of the updated EIAR and Appendix F of the updated NIS.

This geological geometry of the shale bed controls perching of recharge in the local area between Menlough and Lackagh Quarry. The groundwater levels at BH05, LQMW6 and RP-2-05S reflect the interaction of groundwater levels influenced by the shale bed. BH04 and LQMW4 are included to show the water level measurements in regional groundwater table as they measure below the shale horizon.

From mapping the geology at the wells, LQMW4 is entirely in the limestone aquifer below the shale horizon as is the screen for BH04. As outlined above, the argillaceous limestone (also referred to as shale bed) observed in Lackagh Quarry, perches recharge in the Menlough/Lackagh Quarry area. LQMW5 is installed through the shale horizon into the lower aquifer and as such picks up both deeper and shallower groundwater. LQMW6 (by extrapolation of the geology geometry) is also installed through the shale horizon but on the opposite side of a buried valley to LQMW5. These monitoring locations of all these wells are shown on the water level contour plots (for the main aquifer) which are shown in Appendix A of this document.

The geological logging of the five boreholes installed as part of the proposed N6 GCRR along the alignment of Lackagh Tunnel was used to cross check this. These are shown in Plate 6 below (also refer below to Figure 5 in Appendix A of the Lackagh Tunnel Geotechnical and Hydrogeological Appraisal in Appendix A.7.3 of the EIAR and Appendix F of the NIS for completeness). Of these five boreholes, three (BH04, BH05 and BH06) were completed with piezometers.

BH04 and BH05 are located in the narrow strip of limestone that lies to the west of the quarry, between the quarry and the buried valley (refer to Plate 6 below). Both BH04 and BH05 also encountered the shale bed.

In BH04 the shale was reported as mudstone with clay above and below it in a unit from 13.77mOD to 12.62mOD. In BH05 a zone of core loss and clay occurred between 13.94mOD to 13.69mOD.

In both BH04 and BH05, the piezometer response zone is installed below the shale horizon.

- BH04: 9.49 to -2.83mOD
- BH05: 11.54 to -5.84mOD

Based on the geology encountered, whilst BH04 has a significant thickness of shale and perches recharge above it, the shale horizon in borehole BH05 is weathered and will leak. As such, although shale bed perches recharge in the local area, there are locations where leakage occurs down to the regional groundwater table below and in these locations there will be localised recharge spikes in the regional groundwater table. These responses will be storm event related and temporary as the regional groundwater table equilibrates.

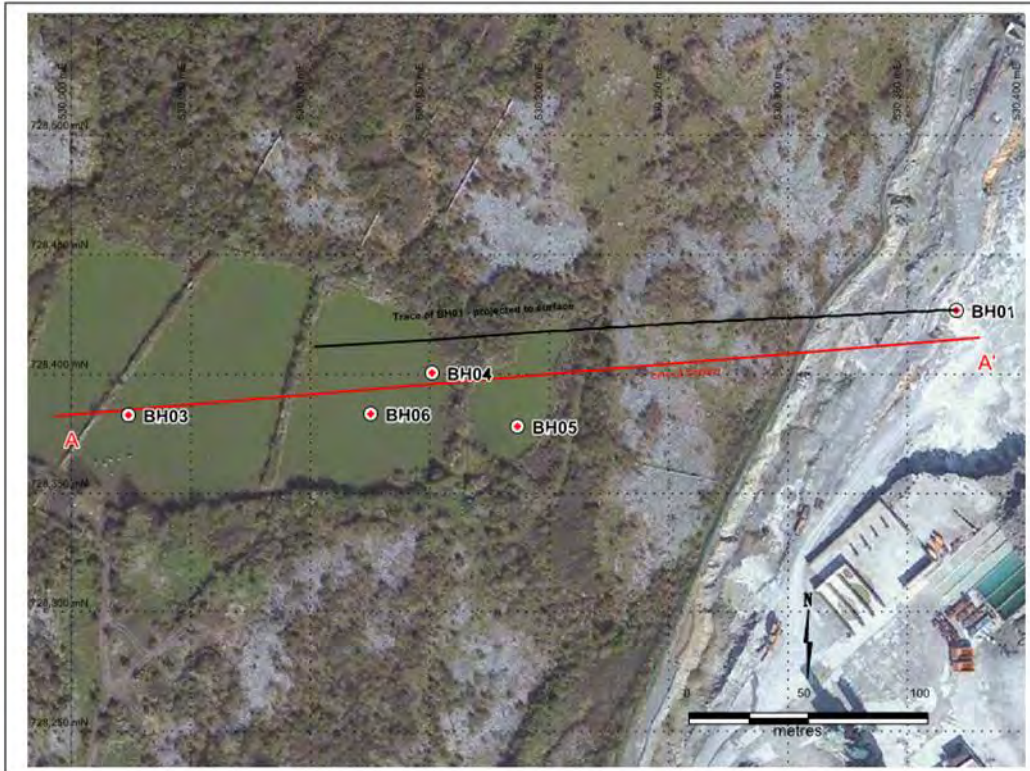


Plate 6 Locations of boreholes BH03, BH04, BH05 and BH06

3.4 Peak groundwater levels in Lackagh Quarry

Peak groundwater levels in the aquifer below the quarry floor were measured in LQMW4 at 15.4mOD, on 11 January 2016 which also matched the standing water level in the quarry on the day. This was the peak static water level recorded in the aquifer below the quarry floor (LQMW4) and for flooding on the main quarry floor. The level of 15.4m represents the peak groundwater flooding that occurred on the main quarry floor during the 2015/2016 winter from the groundwater table. After that time the water level and groundwater level receded.

The following groundwater levels were measured between 5 January and 11 January 2016 and are used to describe how the perched groundwater and main groundwater table responded to the storm event of early January 2016:

- BH04 was manually measured on 5 January 2016 at 14.29mOD and peaked on 11 January 2016 at 15.74mOD. The delayed peak response in BH04 is caused by the recharge percolating down to the main aquifer and then passing through the shale horizon, which is a leaky barrier.
- BH05 was manually measured on 5 January 2016 at 19.46mOD and on 11 January 2016 at 16.66mOD. The water perched above the shale horizon peaked early after the storm event and then took a few days for the perched groundwater to leak down through the shale and into the main aquifer below. As the perched groundwater table leaked into the main aquifer the water level in BH05 lowered and this was followed by a steady rise and subsequent peak response in nearby BH04 on 11 January 2016.

As was stated in Section 3.3, the shale horizon can be weathered and is expected to be extensively leaky. The short-lived high groundwater levels in BH05 on January 5, 2016 are a recharge response to the storm event but are not representative of the main regional groundwater table. Following rainfall, recharge will flow via multiple pathways through the thick unsaturated zone to where there are intercepted by the shale and become perched. Due to the leaky nature of the shale, the perched groundwater is able to drain through the shale and down to the regional groundwater table. Where natural weathered gaps in the shale bed occur then these will focus leakage down to the main regional groundwater table below. Where the perched water flows along the shale and into the quarry void, such as in the southwestern corner of the quarry, then this groundwater cascades down onto the quarry floor.

On 5 January 2016 a small area at the southwestern corner of the quarry floor had standing water at 15.69mOD. This was related to localised flow into the quarry from groundwater perched above the shale horizon. This localised flooding was not representative of the groundwater flooding occurring on the main quarry floor, instead it was caused by impoundment of runoff in that specific area by old quarry berms and mounds.

The hydrographs included in Appendix A ii show the seasonal responses of groundwater levels in wells that interact with the shale bed.

3.5 Water levels at Coolagh Lakes

As described in Section 10.3.3.2 of Chapter 10 of the EIAR, the water level in the Coolagh Lakes is controlled by a combination of flow from Western Coolagh Spring and flow from the Coolagh Lakes to the River Corrib. When groundwater level rises in the Lough Corrib Fen 1 GWB the flow at Western Coolagh Spring increases, conversely when groundwater levels lower, the flow at the spring reduces. On this basis the flow at Western Coolagh Spring is seasonal, with peak flows occurring in the winter and flow reducing in the summer to the extent that flow ceases.

The groundwater levels within the Lough Corrib Fen 1 (Menlough) GWB are included in the water level database presented in Appendix A.10.3 of the updated EIAR, which includes both groundwater levels recorded in monitoring boreholes, as well as the springs and Coolagh Lakes. The hydrographs included in Appendix A iii show the seasonal responses of groundwater levels at the River Corrib, Western Coolagh Spring, Eastern Coolagh Spring and groundwater levels in wells around the periphery of Coolagh Lakes.

The level of the River Corrib influences the water level in the Coolagh Lakes so that generally the levels of both are comparable. However, as the River Corrib responds more rapidly than the groundwater levels (and Western Coolagh Spring) the River Corrib can rise slightly higher than the Coolagh Lakes during storm events (by up to 25cm). This can lead to water from the river entering the lower lake and mixing with the lake water. The rise of the level in the lower lake will cause impoundment in the upper lake but it is unlikely that river water will enter the upper lake due to the narrow connecting channel between lakes.

The hydrographs included in Appendix A iii show the seasonal responses of groundwater levels in wells that interact with the shale bed.

3.6 Water quality at Coolagh Lakes

Water sampling was undertaken during the hydrogeological study to characterise the groundwater quality across the study area. Groundwater samples were taken from Western Coolagh Spring and monitoring boreholes around the periphery of Coolagh Lakes (RC133, RP-2-05S&D and MW03). The waters from these monitoring boreholes and also from Western Coolagh Spring are confirmed as having a high alkalinity ($>180\text{mg/l}$ total alkalinity CaCO_3), which is in line with the habitat description for Coolagh Lakes supporting alkaline fen. On this basis the fen is dependent on both the quality and quantity of groundwater.

Of the water samples taken from limestone, the total alkalinity from Western Coolagh Spring and borehole RC133 was slightly lower than other boreholes. It is likely that Western Coolagh Spring and RC133, which is adjacent to turlough K31, discharges younger groundwater which has had a shorter and/or faster flow through the aquifer, which has the effect of a reduced limestone contact when compared to groundwater from deeper fracture flows sampled from boreholes. On this basis it would be expected that groundwater seeping from the margin of the limestone aquifer around Coolagh Lakes will be higher alkalinity than the water emergent from the karst system at Western Coolagh Spring.

The hydrographs included in Appendix A iii show the seasonal responses of groundwater levels at the Western Coolagh Spring, Eastern Coolagh Spring and groundwater levels in wells around the periphery of Coolagh Lakes. Water levels in the River Corrib (Dangan) are also presented (Source OPW <http://waterlevel.ie>).

As discussed in relation to water levels at Coolagh Lakes, there are times, particularly in response to storm events, when the River Corrib water enters the lakes, this occurs when the river rises more rapidly than groundwater. On these occasions there will be a temporary natural fluctuation in water quality at the lower Coolagh Lake, with total alkalinity reducing due to mixing. Whilst the upper lake can become impounded

due to water level rise in the lower lake it is unlikely that a change in water quality at the upper lake occurs due to the restricted flow in the connecting channel between the two lakes.

4. Hydrogeological Conceptual Model

The information presented in the above section allows a conceptual model to be developed for the area between Lackagh Quarry and Coolagh Lakes. This conceptual model is based on all monitoring ground investigation data presented in the updated EIAR and is framed against the two questions posed above which are key to informing any potential impact assessment.

As outlined above detailed cross-sections have been prepared to illustrate the information available (refer to Appendix B Cross-sections A-A, B-B and C-C in Appendix B of this updated A.10.8.2).

A simple illustration of the conceptual hydrogeological model for Coolagh Lakes is presented in Plate 7 which is based on the information provided above and presented on the cross-sections (Appendix B).

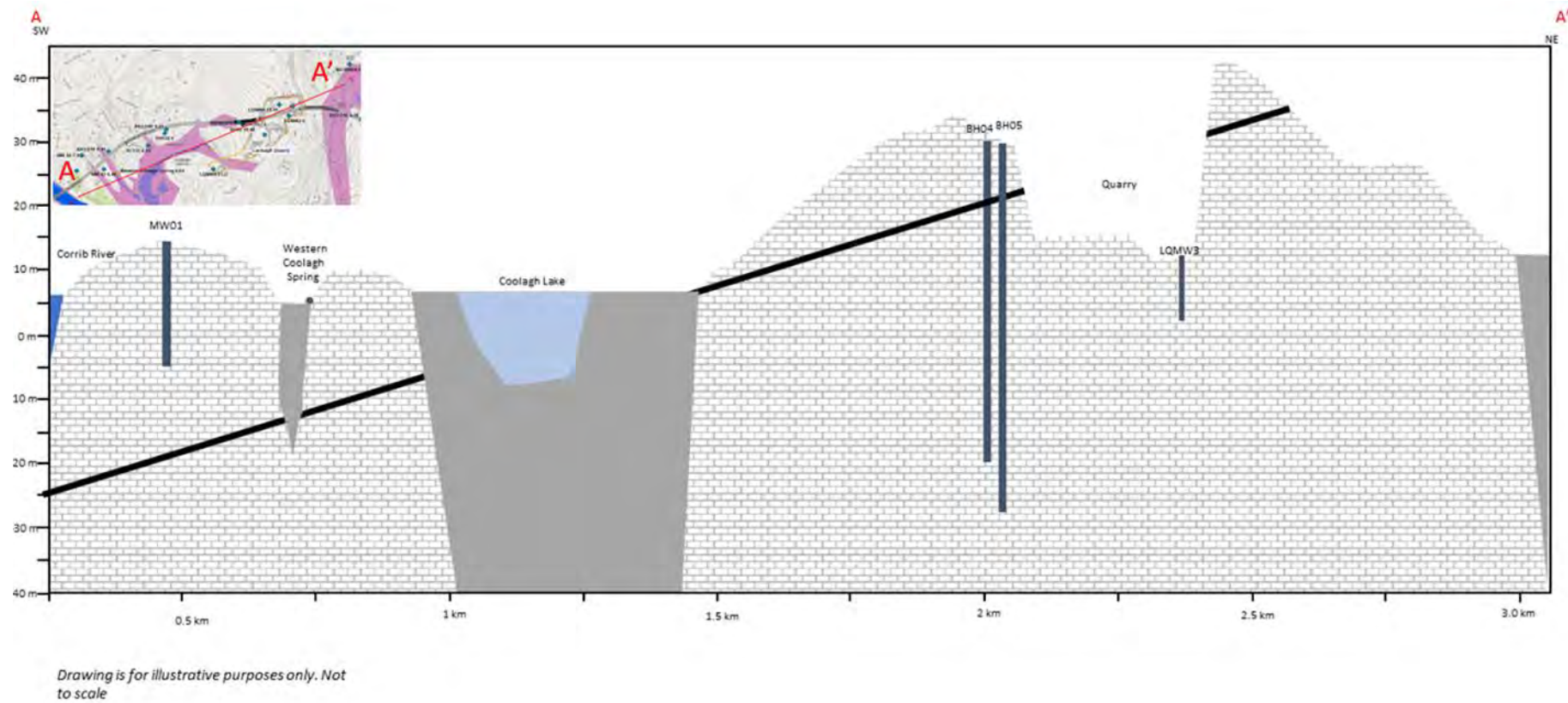


Plate 7 Conceptual model for Coolagh Lakes

4.1 Does groundwater from Lackagh Quarry drain to Coolagh Lakes?

The hydrogeology at Lackagh Quarry has been complicated by the quarry itself. Prior to the quarry operation groundwater was clearly divided into two regimes, a regional groundwater regime and a perched groundwater regime. With the development of the quarry, the perched groundwater regime has been removed from the aquifer at Lackagh Quarry. Rainfall now directly recharges the regional aquifer via the floor of the quarry and inflows to the quarry from perched groundwater occur from above the shale bed.

The regional groundwater regime is shown by the monitoring data to be south westwards towards the River Corrib south of Coolagh Lakes, with the groundwater flow direction being partially defined by the infilled buried valleys that form barriers to groundwater flow. Appendix A Figures 1 and Figure 2 of this updated A.10.8.2 show interpreted groundwater level contours for the Lackagh Quarry and Coolagh Lakes areas. These interpretations confirm that groundwater flows from the upland area north of Lackagh Quarry. This data also shows that the buried valley immediately west of Lackagh Quarry causes a bifurcation of the groundwater into two directions, part of the flow diverts west to the River Corrib and the other diverts flow south and then south westwards, via Lackagh Quarry and towards the River Corrib (south of Coolagh Lakes near Terryland).

Regarding the pre-quarrying groundwater flow directions: whilst the quarry has not changed the route of the regional groundwater flow, it has significantly altered the perched groundwater regime. Prior to the quarry, the perched groundwater would have flowed further west and would have contributed to Coolagh Lakes. Lackagh Quarry has severed the connection of the perched groundwater and drained these flows into the quarry void. As such, the perched groundwater regime of Lackagh Quarry is no longer connected to Coolagh lakes. The concept of the shale bed in Lackagh Quarry is clearly shown in Cross-sections A-A and B-B in Appendix B of this updated A.10.8.2.

On the basis that the regional groundwater table drains away from Coolagh Lakes and the perched groundwater table has been intercepted by the quarry, then neither the regional nor perched water table at Lackagh Quarry drains to Coolagh Lakes. Therefore, groundwater from Lackagh Quarry does not drain to Coolagh Lakes. This regime will not be modified by the proposed N6 GCRR and as such the groundwater at Lackagh Quarry will remain separate to Coolagh Lakes.

4.2 What is the extent of the Coolagh Lakes groundwater catchment and by what flow mechanisms are the lake water level and lake water quality supported?

Based on groundwater level monitoring and the description of the regional groundwater contours above, the catchment to Coolagh Lakes is limited to a reasonable small area that comprises of:

1. The catchment to Western Coolagh Spring (karst)
2. The seepages that emerge around the rock periphery of the Coolagh Lakes where the sediments fill the buried valley

On this basis the catchment can be divided into two flow types: (1) karst flow from the Western Coolagh Spring, which provides most of the volume to the lakes and (2) groundwater seepages from the surrounding limestone aquifer which keeps the margins wet and provides a year round supply of groundwater that is likely to be small in volume compared to Western Coolagh Spring but is very important in terms of the habitat in the marginal areas. Therefore, the only way there can be an impact to Coolagh Lakes water level or water quality is by way of an impact to the groundwater contribution from Western Coolagh Spring or by way of an impact to the groundwater seepages around Coolagh Lake.

The catchment to the Western Coolagh Spring comprises the Lough Corrib Fen 1 (Menlough) GWB. The catchment for seepages to Coolagh Lakes comprises Lough Corrib Fen 1 (Menlough) GWB, Lough Corrib Fen 1 (Lackagh) GWB and the Clare-Corrib GWB. The catchment to Coolagh Lakes does not include Lackagh Quarry.

Cross-sections C-C in Appendix B shows a section through Coolagh Lakes and confirms the high groundwater table around the periphery where limestone occurs. This high groundwater table provides source for constant seepage to the lakes all year round.

It is noted that prior to the quarry operations, the catchment would have included the perched groundwater regime at Lackagh Quarry, but it is important to recognise that the regional groundwater system at Lackagh Quarry has always been separate to Coolagh Lakes due to the buried valley that lies in between.

5. Impact assessment

The impact assessment for the habitats at Coolagh Lakes is considered in terms of potential for changes in the hydrogeological regime (water levels and flows) and the water quality during the construction and operation phases. The potential hydrogeological effects of the proposed road development on Lough Corrib SAC are detailed in Section 9.1.4.3 of the NIS.

Assessment of potential changes to the hydrogeological regime is based on the conceptual model presented in Section 4. The hydrogeological conceptual model provides a robust assessment of the groundwater regime at Lackagh Quarry that confirms that groundwater flow in Lackagh Quarry, both the perched and regional groundwater flows, do not drain to Coolagh Lakes (Section 4.1). The regional groundwater regime at Lackagh Quarry is isolated from Coolagh Lakes by a substantial buried valley that lies between them and the perched groundwater has been intercepted by the quarry void.

On this basis, the assessment of potential impacts below focuses only on those design elements that lie within the catchment to Coolagh Lakes, which is clearly stated in Section 4.2. These design elements include viaduct foundations, infiltration basins and small scale works to existing roads in the local area.

Mitigation is applied to Lackagh Tunnel and is included in the Schedule of Environmental Commitments comprising an enforcement of a no groundwater lowering in Lackagh Quarry. While the preceding text has illustrated the quarry is in a separate groundwater regime, this mitigation is highlighted here in recognition that Coolagh Lakes is a sensitive groundwater receptor less than 1km away from the quarry.

5.1 Potential Impacts to the Hydrogeological regime from proposed N6 GCRR

The potential hydrogeological effects of the proposed N6 GCRR on the Coolagh Lakes, and the associated groundwater dependent habitats that make up and support the qualifying interests of Lough Corrib SAC, relate to the two types of groundwater contribution (1) the karst spring and (2) groundwater seepages around the periphery of the lakes. As was described in Section 3 above (Hydrogeology Background), Eastern Coolagh Spring is included as part of the seepage that supplies the margins of the lakes and is not a karst feature.

Western Coolagh Spring, which is a karst spring with conduit flow, is a discharge point from a karst system in the Lough Corrib Fen 1 (Menlough) GWB. The limestone seepages that occur around the periphery of the Coolagh Lakes are maintained by a high groundwater table in the limestone aquifer that is impounded by the buried valley upon which the Coolagh Lakes formed.

Assessment of the proposed road development assesses potential impacts on both the karst and seepage system that are important for groundwater contribution to Coolagh Lakes. The section below identifies those elements of the design that (1) have the potential to lower groundwater levels and (2) potential impacts that may cause a reduction in water quality.

5.1.1 Groundwater Lowering and Groundwater Quality

Those elements of the proposed N6 GCRR in the catchment to Coolagh Lakes that have the potential to interact with groundwater during construction include viaduct foundations and infiltration basins. All areas of cutting in limestone in this location are located above the regional water table. The following risk assessment is based upon the conceptual hydrogeological model for the area in Section 4 above, (and also which is summarised in Appendix A and Appendix F of the updated NIS):

Except for the potential for intercepting groundwater conduits when constructing the supporting piers for the Menlough Viaduct, the construction of the proposed N6 GCRR will not affect the existing hydrogeological regime in terms of the quantity of water supply to the Coolagh Lakes or the frequency of flooding. To reiterate, groundwater dewatering during construction is not permitted within the design (see Section 5.2.1.2 of Appendix A of the updated NIS) in the catchments that drain to Coolagh Lakes.

In regard to the construction of the viaduct piers at Menlough, mitigation measures will ensure that flow in groundwater conduits will be maintained during construction of the Menlough Viaduct (refer to Section 10.5.3.1.2 of Chapter 10 of the updated EIAR and the CEMP in Appendix A.7.5 of the updated EIAR and Appendix C of the updated NIS). These mitigation measures include the control and treatment of site run-off during construction, preventing groundwater impacts arising from encountering karst features on site during construction works and ensuring that, during operation, the drainage system and infiltration basins function as designed over the life of the proposed road development.

The Clare-Corrib (Terryland) GWB overlaps with groundwater dependant habitats along the eastern edge of the Coolagh Lakes (Figures 11.3.7 and 11.3.8 of the updated NIS). Construction works at the Lackagh Quarry access road and along Bothar Nua and Sean Bothar have the potential to interact with groundwater. These works are small scale and do not include dewatering or require significant excavations.

As per all areas of the alignment of the proposed N6 GCRR, there is a risk that the accidental spillage of pollutants during construction could affect groundwater quality in the GWB, specifically the karst flows associated with Western Coolagh Spring, which in turn could affect the conservation objectives of the Lough Corrib SAC at Coolagh Lakes and the supported fringing wetland habitats. These issues are assessed in Section 10.5.3.1.2 of Chapter 10 of the updated EIAR and managed by the CEMP (Appendix A.7.5 of the updated EIAR and Appendix C of the updated NIS).

In the catchment of Coolagh Lakes, all runoff from construction drains either to infiltration basins or attenuation ponds (that themselves drain to the River Corrib), and hence the runoff risk to Coolagh Lakes is removed. The infiltration basins and attenuation ponds are designed to be used during both construction phase for site runoff and operational phase for road runoff and will be part of the initial works undertaken for the proposed N6 GCRR.

The design of each infiltration basin is specific to the local hydrogeology, taking into account the unsaturated zone available and including placement of engineered appropriate subsoil to provide the required infiltration capacity. All infiltration basins include pre-treatment by hydrocarbon interceptor and containment areas to provide an appropriate holding time to contain accidental spillages. All infiltration basins will be excavated into bedrock, with an over excavation to accommodate the thickness of appropriate subsoil. The sides of the excavation will be lined to control groundwater infiltration so that all discharges drain through a constructed subsoil appropriately placed for the thickness of the unsaturated zone. The design of the infiltration basins, coupled with the inclusion of hydrocarbon interceptor and containment area, will provide a robust level of protection to prevent contamination of groundwater from the infiltration basins during construction and operation.

Risk has been identified of accidental spills during construction for those areas where limestone outcrops, such as those areas where the groundwater has extreme or high vulnerability (Figure 3.01 and 3.02 of Appendix A of the updated NIS) and in cuttings and excavations. Mitigation measures will ensure that groundwater quality is not affected during construction (refer to Section 10.6.2 of Chapter 10 of the EIAR and by the CEMP (Appendix A.7.5 of the EIAR and Appendix C of the NIS).c

The drainage design (as described in Section 2, and Appendices A, F and D of the updated NIS) will ensure that groundwater quality will be maintained during operation, this includes inspection at maintenance intervals, with remediation actioned to ensure that karst features do not affect the functioning of the infiltration basins during operation. This will ensure that they continue to function as designed for the operational lifespan of the proposed road development (see Section 10.3.1.2 of the NIS).

5.2 Potential Effects to Lough Corrib SAC Qualifying Interest Habitats from hydrogeological impacts

This section examines how the groundwater dependent qualifying interest habitats of Lough Corrib SAC associated with the Coolagh Lakes would be affected by the potential hydrogeological impacts identified in Section 5.1.

These potential impacts are as follows and, in both instances, the risk of an impact occurring is highly unlikely:

- The potential of intercepting groundwater conduits in the Lough Corrib Fen 1 (Menlough) GWB when constructing the supporting piers for the Menlough Viaduct and the potential
- The potential of an accidental pollution event affecting groundwater quality in the Lough Corrib Fen 1 (Menlough) GWB, Lough Corrib Fen 1 (Lackagh) GWB and the Clare-Corrib GWB

Hard water lakes [3140]

As described above in Section 2, the conservation objectives for Hard water lakes [3140] includes the associated fringing lake habitats. Affecting water quality in the Coolagh Lakes and/or affecting the functioning or quality of the existing hydrogeological regime during construction (even though the risk of any perceptible effect is low) could affect the Annex I status of the lake thereby reducing habitat area and the distribution of this habitat type within Lough Corrib SAC. These impacts could also affect the type, abundance and distribution of the typical species supported by the lakes, the vegetation composition and distribution, the area and condition of the fringing aquatic vegetation, lake substratum quality and water chemistry.

Based upon the hydrogeological assessment outlined in Section 5.1 above, there will be no changes to the groundwater regime in this area. Minor water quality impacts associated with construction may occur and mitigation measures have been proposed as robust preventative measures to specifically manage accidental spills and sediment runoff (refer to Section 5.3). No impacts have been identified for the operational phase of the proposed N6 GCRR.

Molinia meadow [6410], *Cladium* fen [*7210] and Alkaline fen [7230]

Affecting water quality in the receiving environment and/or affecting the functioning or quality of the existing hydrogeological regime could affect ecosystem functioning and the condition of areas of these habitat types such that their area and distribution is reduced within Lough Corrib SAC. These impacts could also affect the vegetation composition and structure and the abundance and distribution of typical and locally distinctive species associated with QI habitats.

Introducing/spreading non-native invasive plant species could locally affect the extent, diversity, and vegetation composition or structure of these habitats within Lough Corrib SAC.

The assessment of potential groundwater impacts on the site specific conservation objectives for *Molinia* meadow [6410], *Cladium* fen [*7210] and Alkaline fen [7230] habitats in Lough Corrib SAC is presented in full in Table 9.16 of the NIS.

Based upon the hydrogeological assessment outlined in Section 5.1 above, there will be no changes to the groundwater regime in this area. Minor water quality impacts associated with construction may occur and mitigation measures have been proposed employed as robust preventative measures to specifically manage accidental spills and sediment runoff (refer to Section 5.3). No impacts have been identified for the operational phase of the proposed N6 GCRR.

5.3 Mitigation Measures

The mitigation measures in Lackagh Quarry to not lower the groundwater level are included as a precautionary approach even though Lackagh Quarry and Lackagh Tunnel do not drain to Coolagh Lakes.

The mitigation measures required to protect the existing groundwater regime supporting the groundwater dependent qualifying interest habitat of Lough Corrib SAC, including those associated with the Coolagh

Lakes, relate to potential groundwater quality impacts due to construction only. These potential impacts are mitigated by:

- Implementation of best practice construction practices and environmental controls to control the potential for, and respond to any, accidental groundwater pollution events on site as set out in the CEMP (Appendix A.7.3 of the EIAR and Appendix C of the NIS) – Section 10.3.1.1 of the NIS
- Application of the Karst Protocol to prevent groundwater impacts arising from encountering karst features on site during construction works – Section 10.3.1.2 of the NIS

These mitigation measures are robust and have been implemented successfully on other schemes and will be effective to ensure that the proposed N6 GCRR does not adversely affect the integrity of Lough Corrib SAC from hydrogeological impacts to the Coolagh Lakes.

6. Conclusion

Considering the design measures associated with the Project, particularly those related to the Lackagh Tunnel, groundwater supply supporting groundwater dependant habitats in Lough Corrib SAC will not be affected during operation.

The detailed mitigation strategy outlined above in Section 5 and described in Section 10.3 of the NIS will ensure that the proposed N6 GCRR will not affect groundwater supply to the Coolagh Lakes during construction of the Menlough Viaduct and will not affect the quality of groundwater contributing to the Coolagh Lakes during construction and/or operation. These mitigation measures include the control and treatment of site run-off during construction, preventing groundwater impacts arising from encountering karst features on site during construction works and ensuring that, during operation, the drainage system and infiltration basins function as designed over the life of the proposed road development.

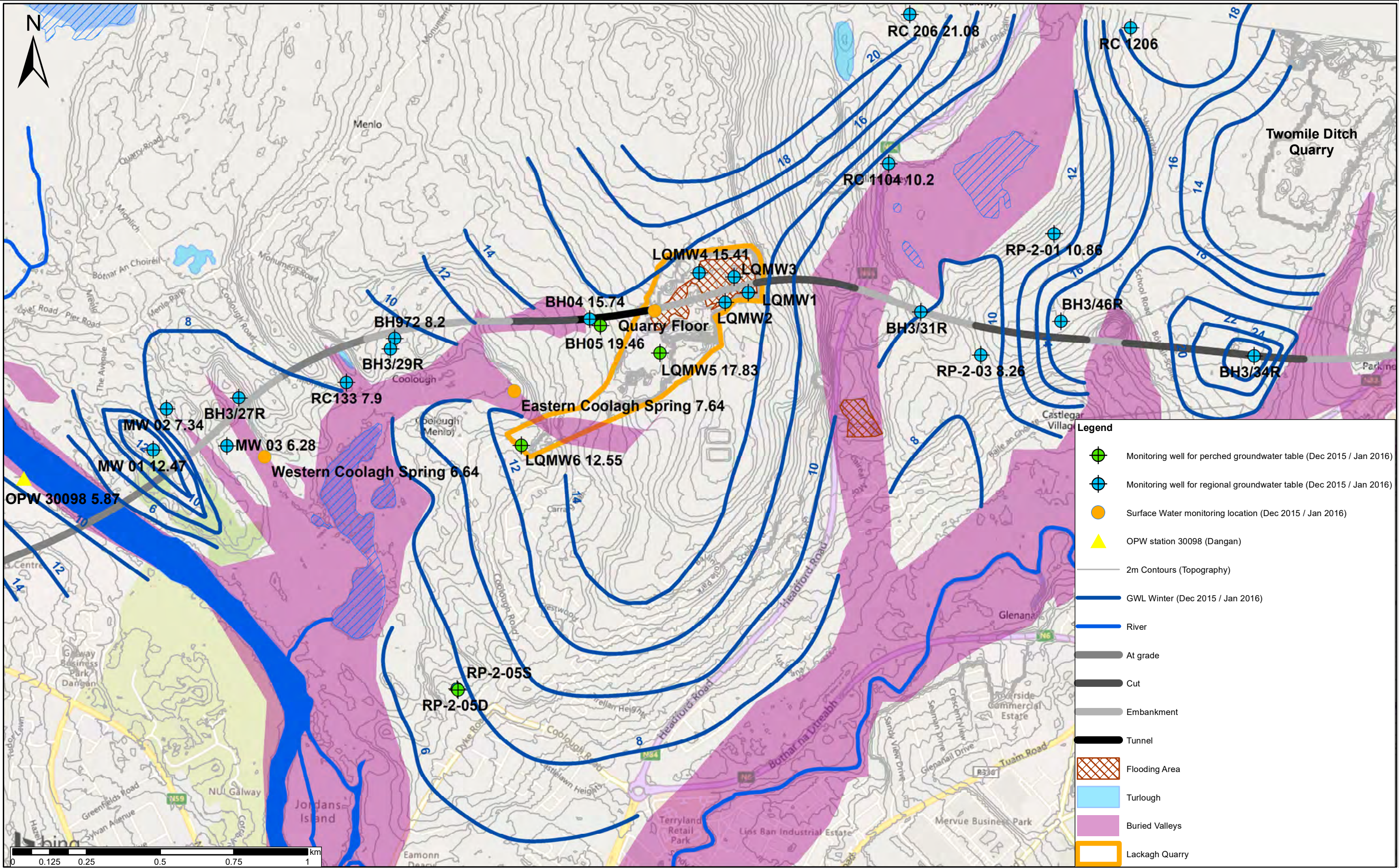
These mitigation measures will be implemented through the CEMP during construction (construction pollution risk) and by Galway County Council/TII over the operational lifespan of the Project (maintenance) and will ensure that hydrogeological impacts do not occur.

As a result, habitat degradation because of impacts on the existing groundwater regime will not occur or affect the conservation objective attributes and targets supporting the conservation condition of any groundwater dependent qualifying interest habitats and species of Lough Corrib SAC, including those associated with the Coolagh Lakes. Therefore, there are no residual direct or indirect groundwater related impacts that could adversely affect the integrity of Lough Corrib SAC.

Appendix A

Groundwater Monitoring and Hydrographs

A.1 Groundwater Monitoring and Hydrographs



San áireamh tá sonraíocht Shuirbhíreacht Ordánais Éireann ama atáirgeadh faoi Cheadúnas OSI Uimh. 2010/20CCMA/Comhairle20 Contae na Gaillimhe. Sáraíonn atáirgeadh neamhdaralthe cóipcheart Shuirbhíreacht Ordánais Éireann agus Rialtas na hÉireann. © Suirbhíreacht Ordánais Éireann, 2010.

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Transport Project

An Roinn Iompair
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TII

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ARUP

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www.arup.ie

Job Title

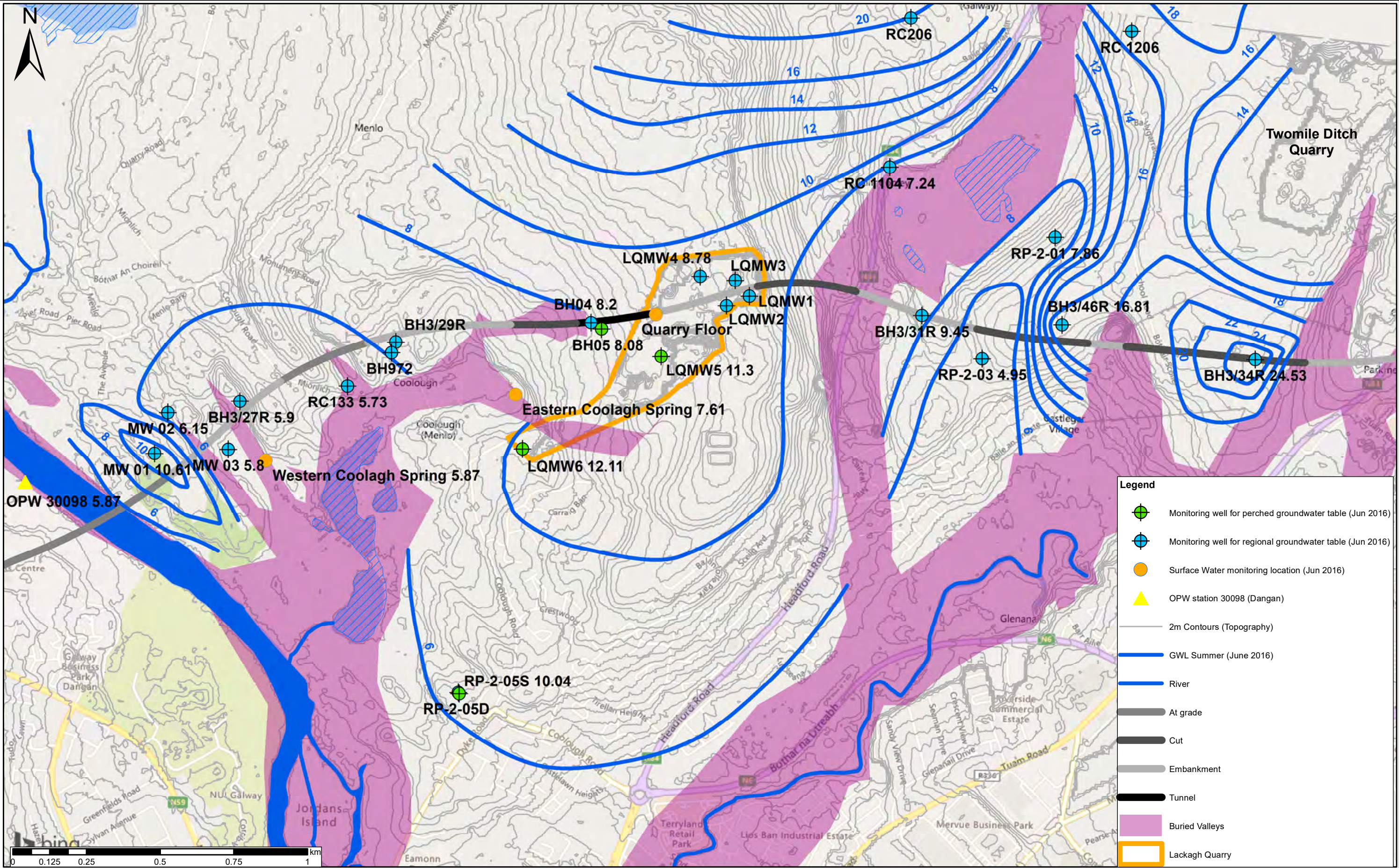
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Date: March 2020

All elevations mOD				
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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd

Drawing Title		
Winter Groundwater Levels		
Drawing Status		
For Information		
Job No	Drawing No	Issue
233985-00	Appendix A-1	I1



San áireamh tá sonraíocht Shuirbhíreachtaí Ordánais Éireann ama atáirgeadh faoi Cheadúnas OSI Uimh. 2010/20CCMA/Comhairle20 Contae na Gaillimhe. Sáraíonn atáirgeadh neamhóidrialithe cóipcheart Shuirbhíreachtaí Ordánais Éireann agus Rialtas na hÉireann. © Suirbhíreachtaí Ordánais Éireann, 2010.

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Job Title

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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd

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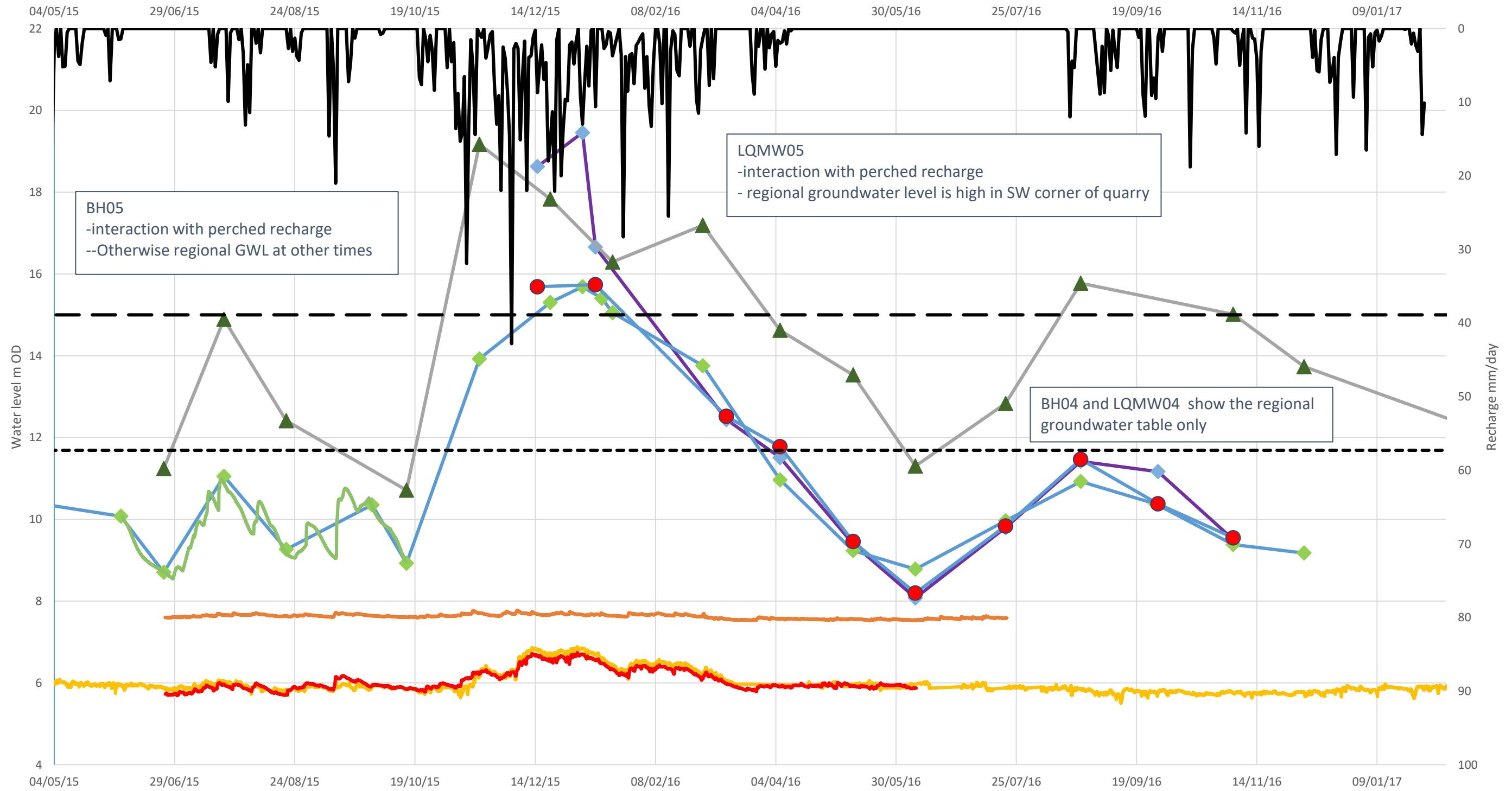
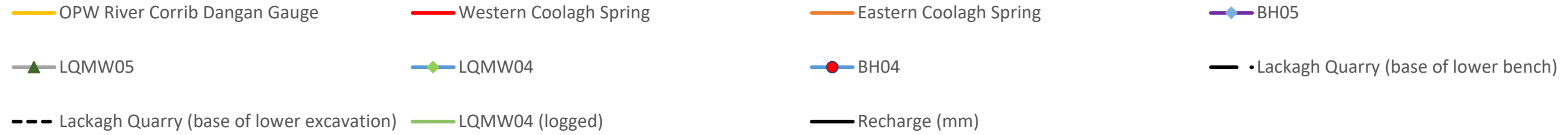
Summer Groundwater Levels

Drawing Status

For Information

Job No	Drawing No	Issue
233985-00	Appendix A-2	I1

APPENDIX A - Hydrograph i: Groundwater and surface water levels - River Corrib to Lackagh Quarry Characterising groundwater levels at Lackagh Quarry

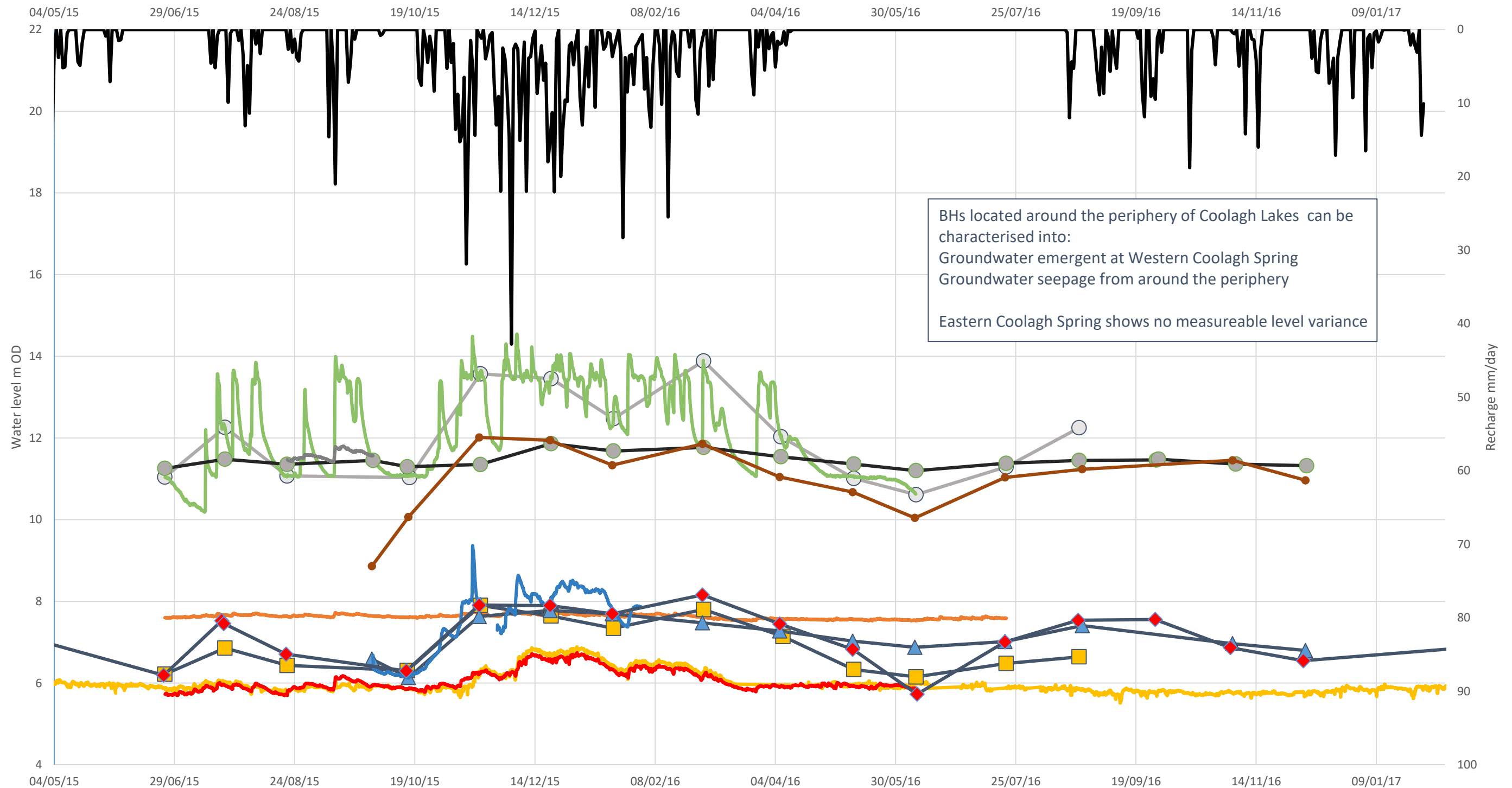


APPENDIX A - Hydrograph ii: Groundwater and surface water levels River Corrib to Lackagh Quarry Characterising groundwater perched by the shale bed



APPENDIX A - Hydrograph iii: Groundwater and surface water levels River Corrib to Lackagh Quarry Characterising groundwater contributions to Coolagh Lakes (Lough Corrib cSAC)

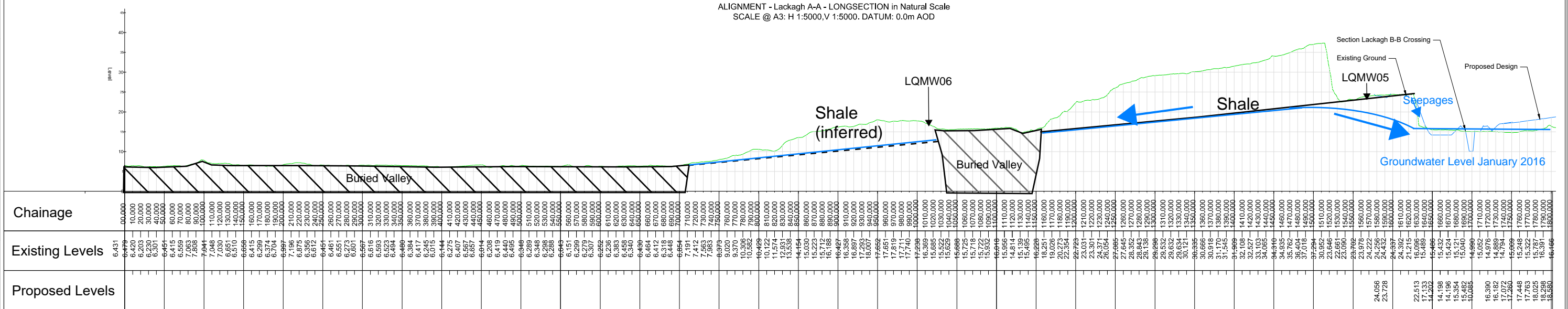
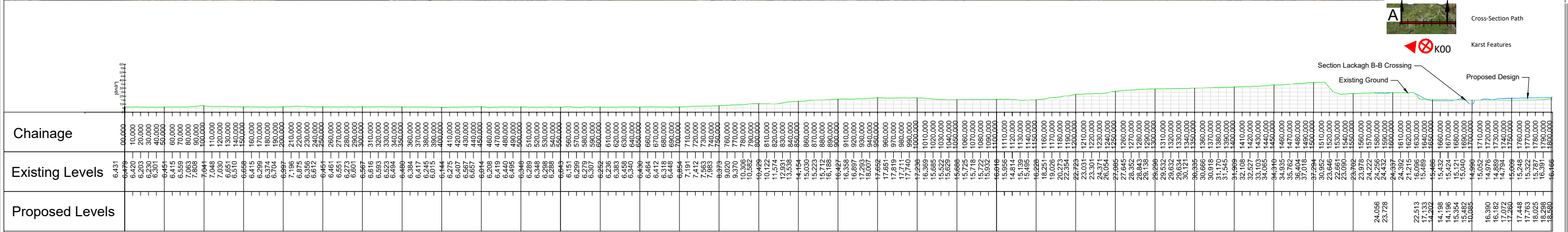
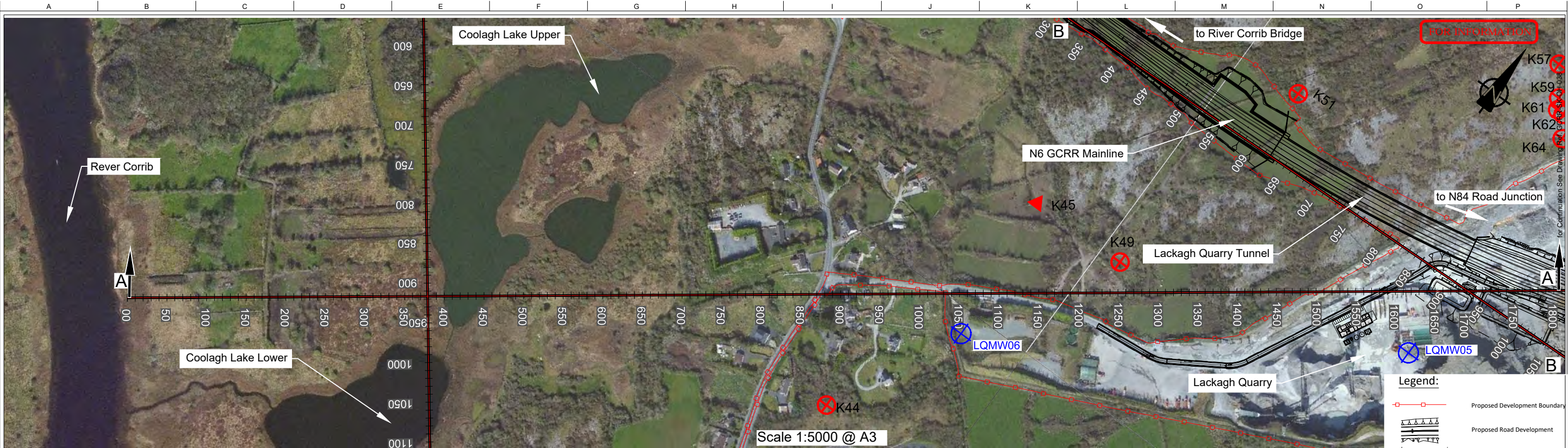
- OPW River Corrib Dangan Gauge
- Western Coolagh Spring
- Eastern Coolagh Spring
- MW2
- RP-2-5D
- RP-2-5D (logged)
- RC133 (Turlough K31)
- MW1
- MW01 (logged)
- MW3
- MW03 (Logged)
- RP-2-05S
- Recharge (mm)



Appendix B

Cross-Sections

B.1 Cross-Sections



Son áireamh tá sonraíocht Shuirbhíreachtí Ordánais Éireann arna áitirgeadh faoi Cheadúnas OSI Uimh. 2010/20CCMA/Comhairle Contae na Gaillimhe. Sárúinn áitirgeadh neamhdaraithe cóipeacht Shuirbhíreachtí Ordánais Éireann agus Rialtas na hÉireann. © Shuirbhíreachtí Ordánais Éireann, 2010.

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Issue	Date	By	Chkd	Appd

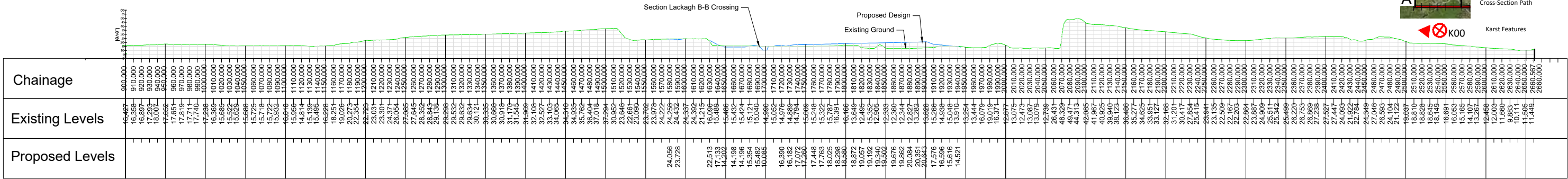
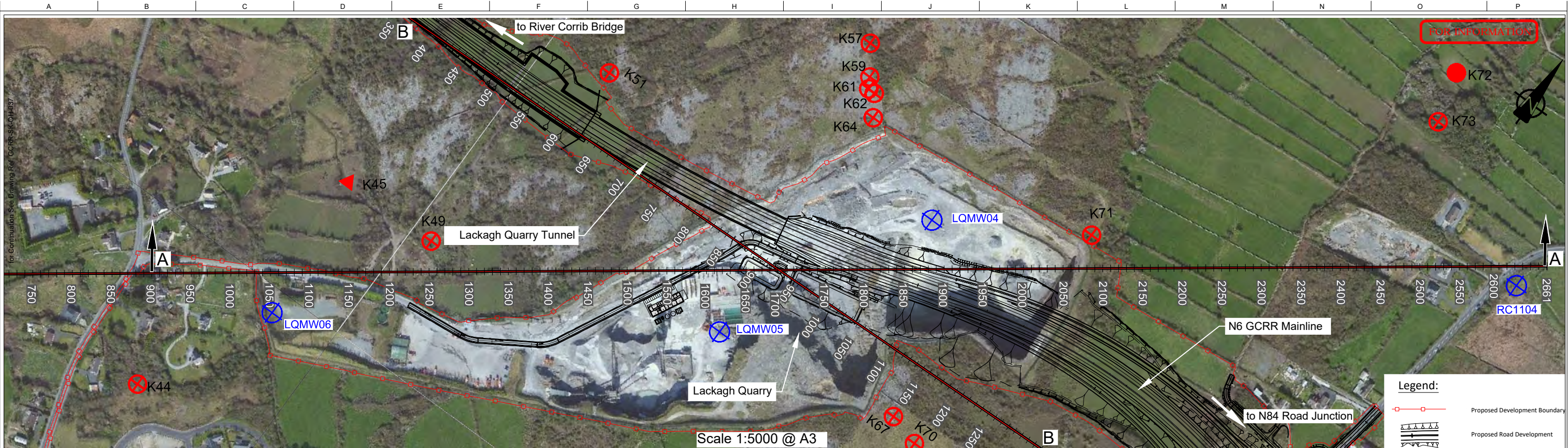
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Existing Ground & Proposed Design

Cross Section Lackagh A-A Sheet 1 of 2

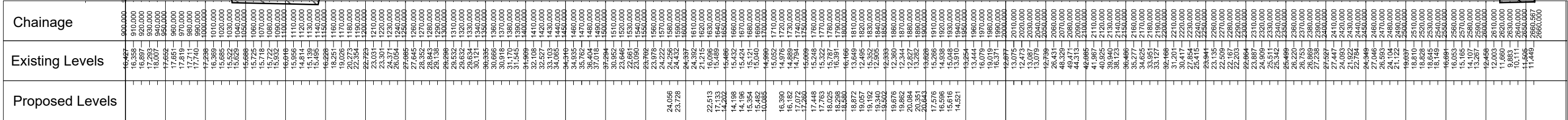
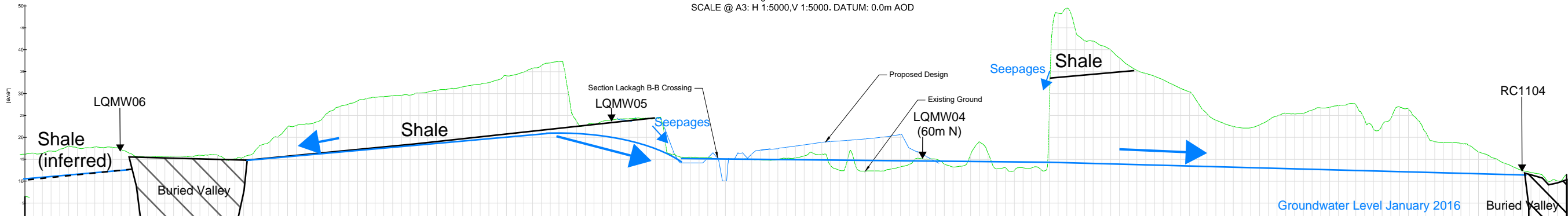
Drawing Status

For Information

Job No	Drawing No	Issue
233985-00	GC0B-SK-OH-037	I2



ALIGNMENT - Lackagh A-A - LONGSECTION in Natural Scale
SCALE @ A3: H 1:5000,V 1:5000. DATUM: 0.0m AOD



ALIGNMENT - Lackagh A-A - LONGSECTION in 5x Exaggeration Scale
SCALE @ A3: H 1:5000,V 1:1000. DATUM: 0.0m AOD

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March 2020

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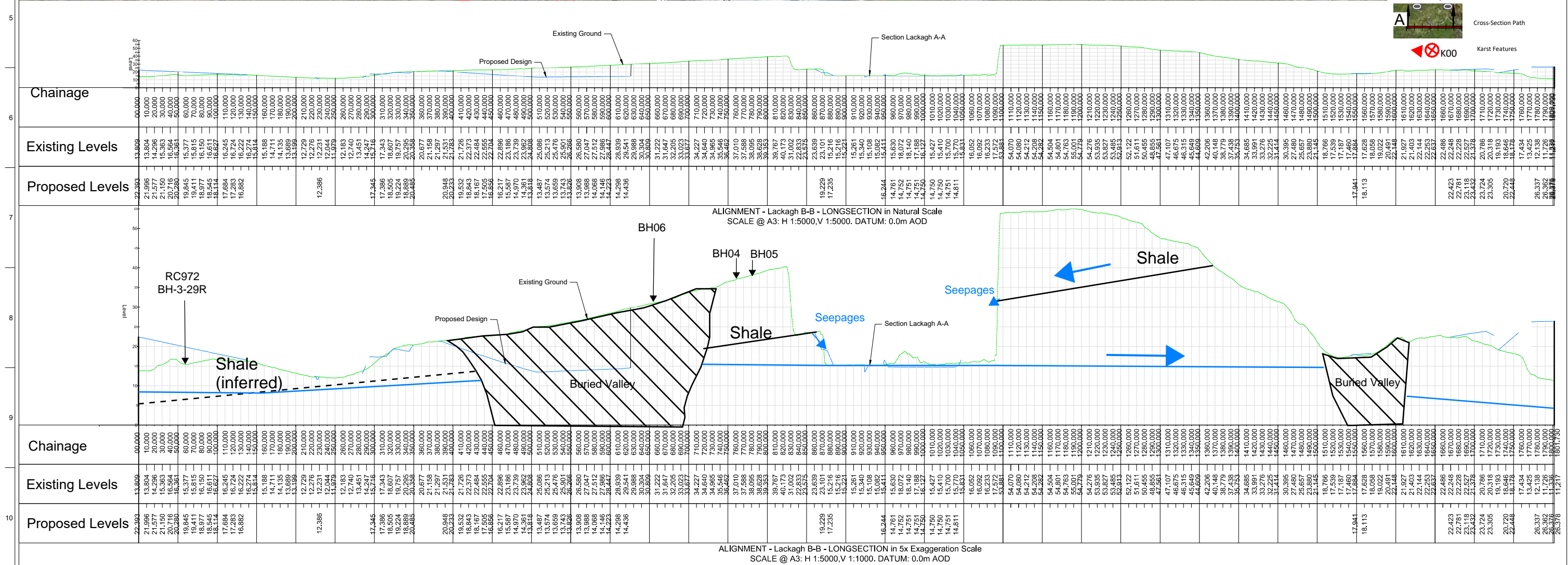
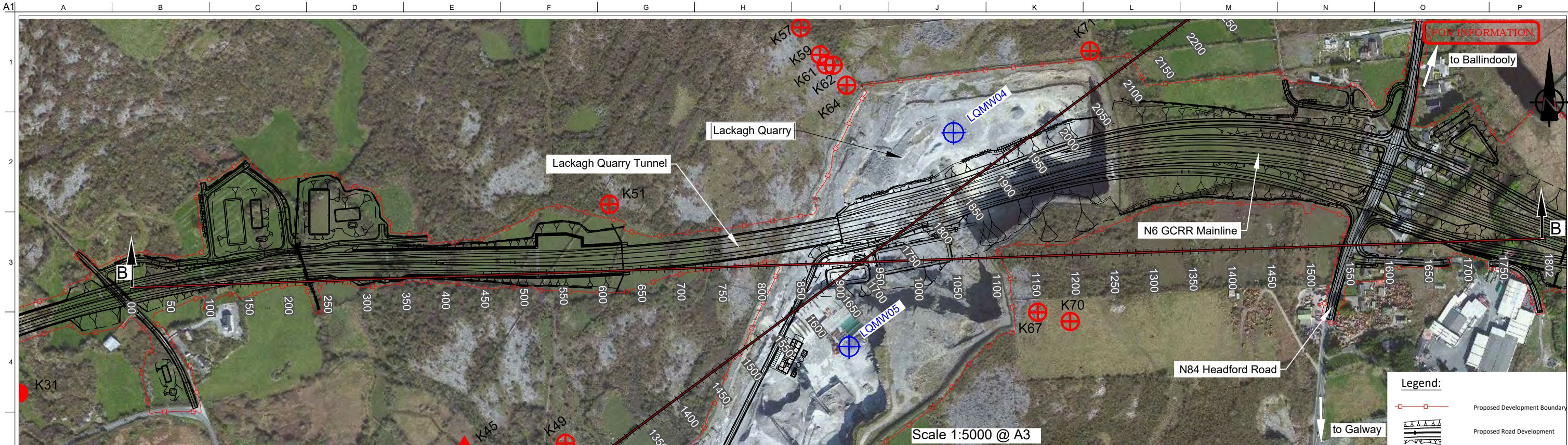
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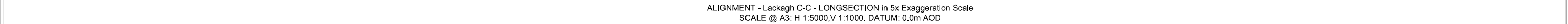
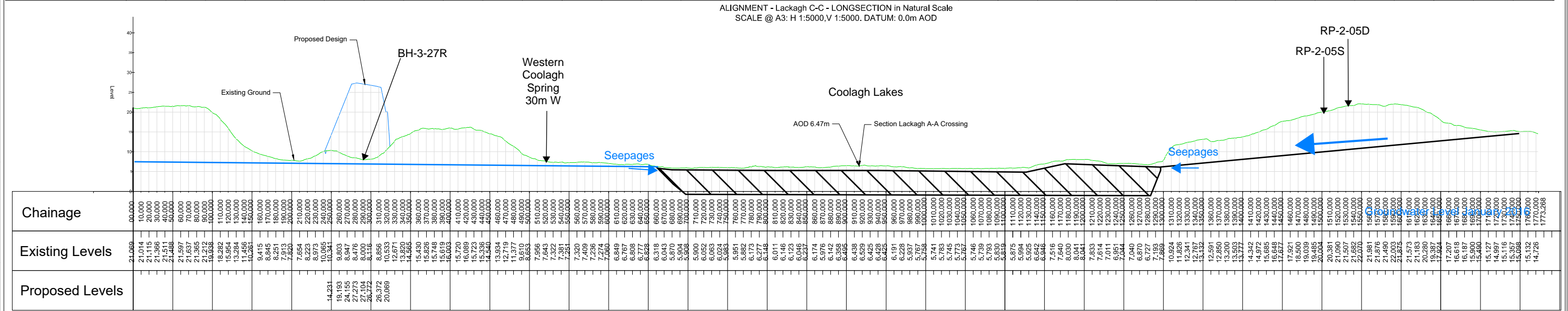
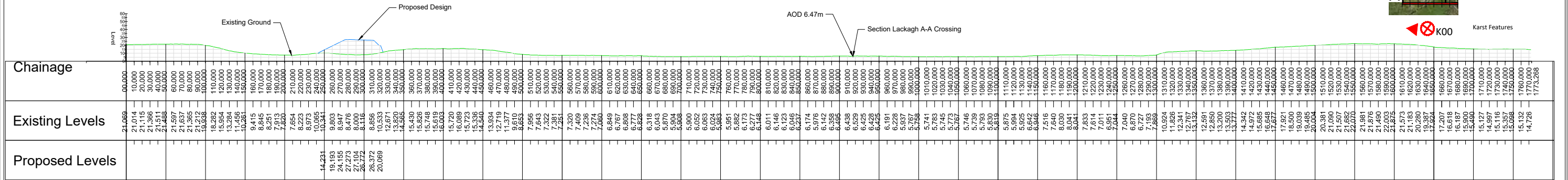
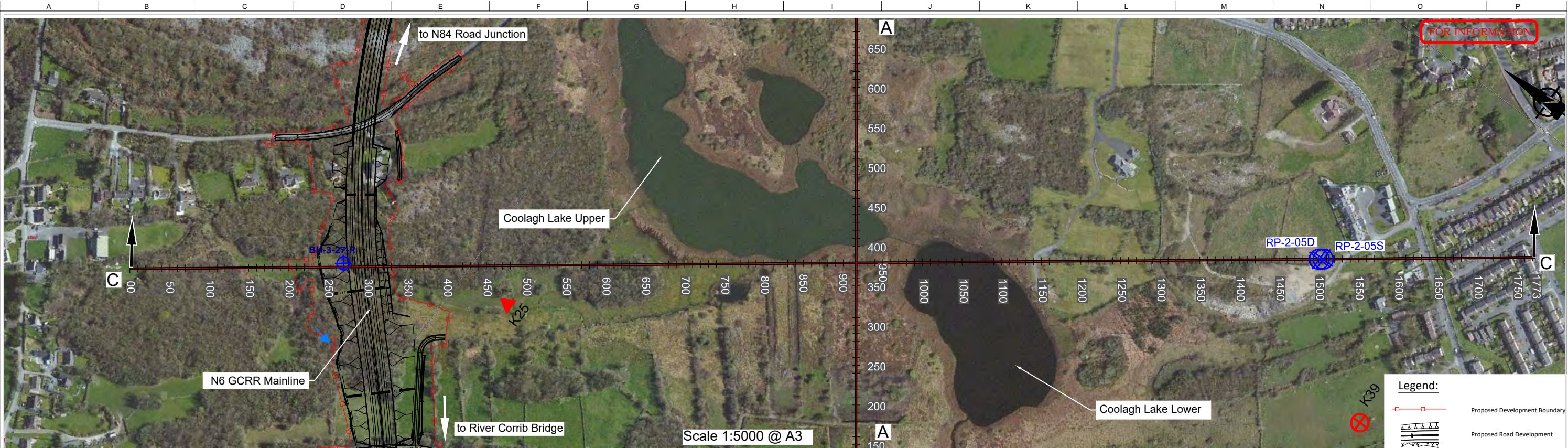
Cross Section Lackagh A-A Sheet 2 of 2

Drawing Status

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Job No	Drawing No	Issue
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Drawing Title
Existing Ground & Proposed Design

Cross Section Lackagh C-C

Drawing Status

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Job No
233985-00

Drawing No
GCOB-SK-OH-040

Issue
12