



Managing areas of high conservation value on the Coillte estate

Pat Neville
Company Ecologist



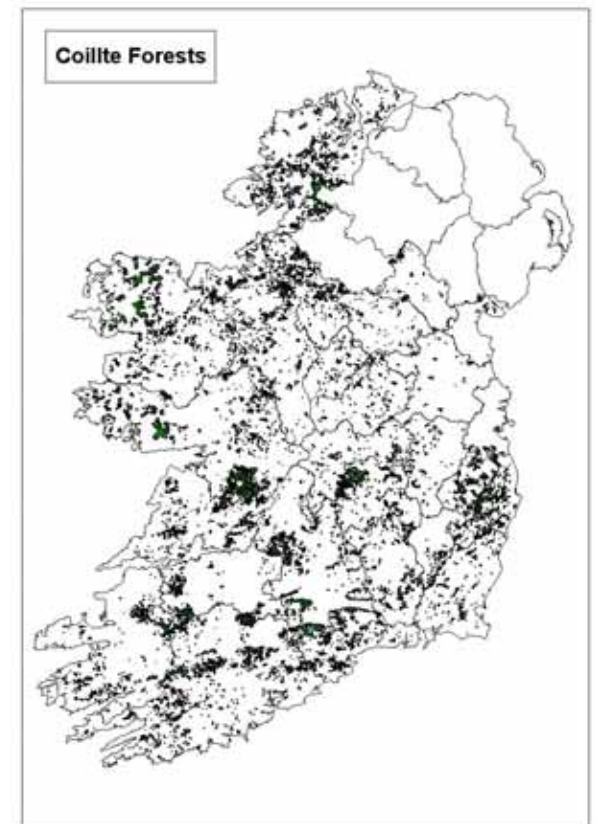
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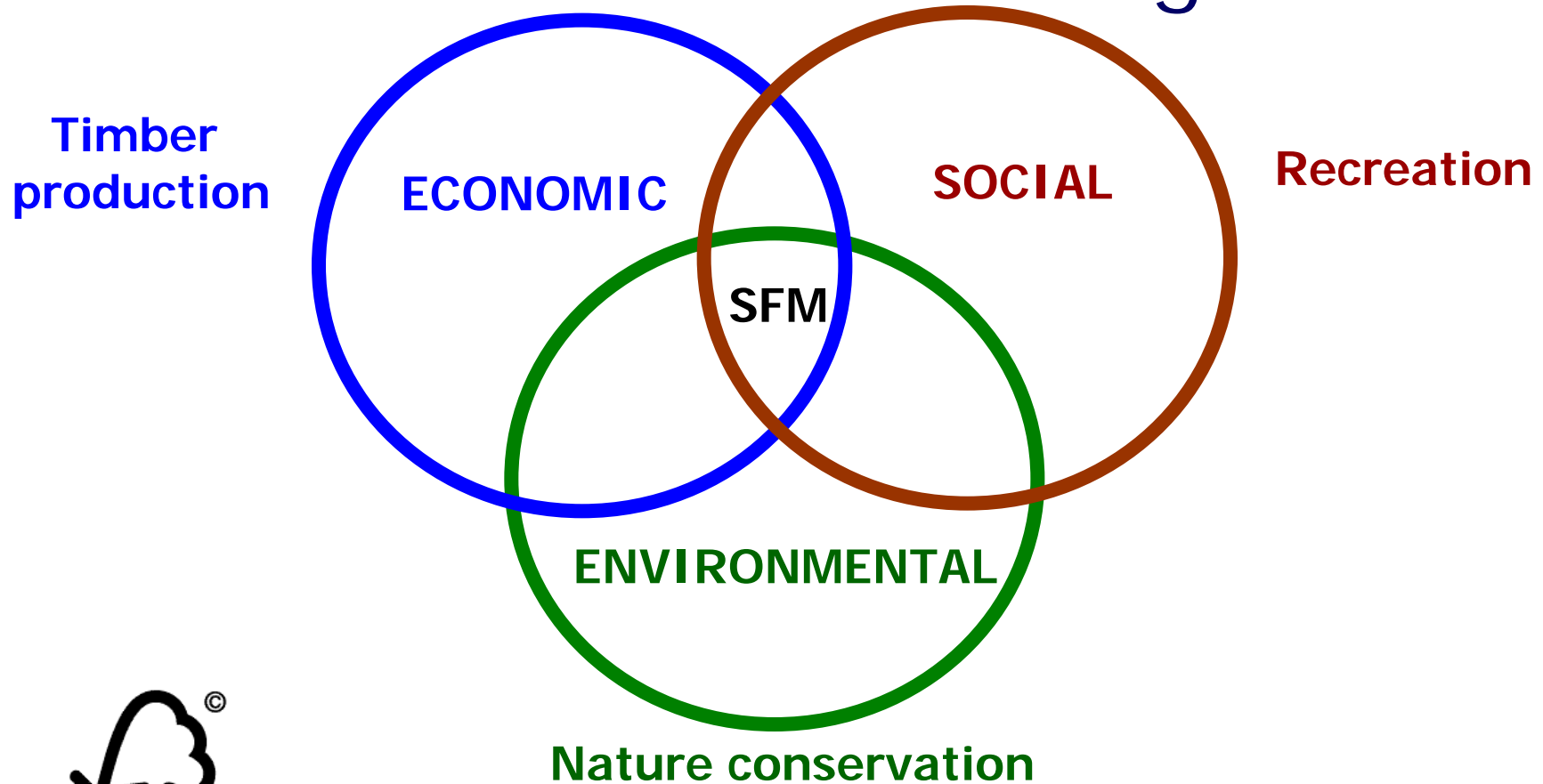
Coillte & Nature Conservation

- ➔ Manages 445,000 hectares of forest land
 - 7% of the land cover in Ireland
 - 80% (352,000 ha) is under forest
 - remainder comprised of open space & water
 - Major role in delivering national nature conservation & environmental objectives





Sustainable forest management





Designated areas in Coillte lands

- Both National and EU legislation
- National > 20,000 ha is NHA
- EU Habitats Directive ~ 14,000 ha is SAC
 - habitats listed on Annex I
 - species listed on Annex II
- EU Birds Directive ~ 3,750 ha is SPA
 - bird species listed on Annex I





Old woodlands (OWS)

- OWS survey conducted of entire estate
 - Based on review of OS maps back to 1830
- Four categories of woodland history identified
 - Old woodlands
 - Interrupted old woodland
 - Long established plantation
 - Parkland





Biodiversity Areas

- Coillte manages 20% of its estate for biodiversity (89,000 ha)
- Areas where biodiversity & nature conservation are the primary management objective
- Areas identified through ecological surveys by contract ecologists & local forest managers
- 14% (62,000 ha) fully surveyed
- 6% (27,000 ha) survey ongoing



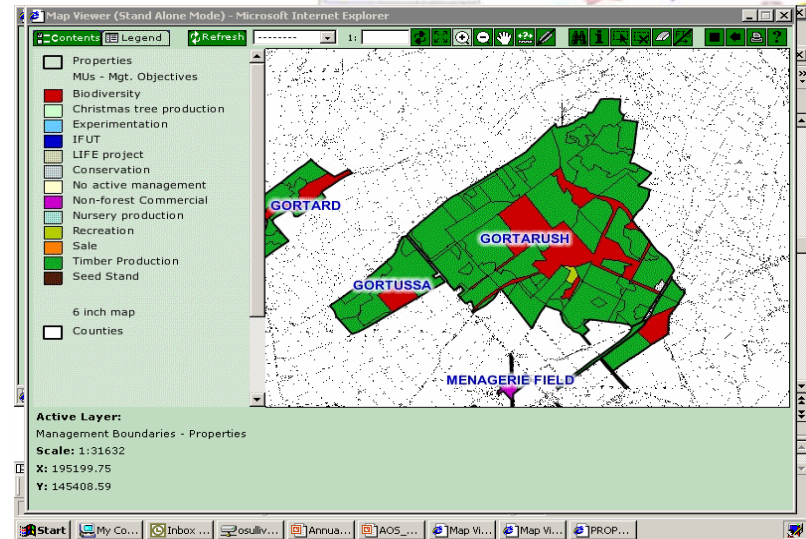
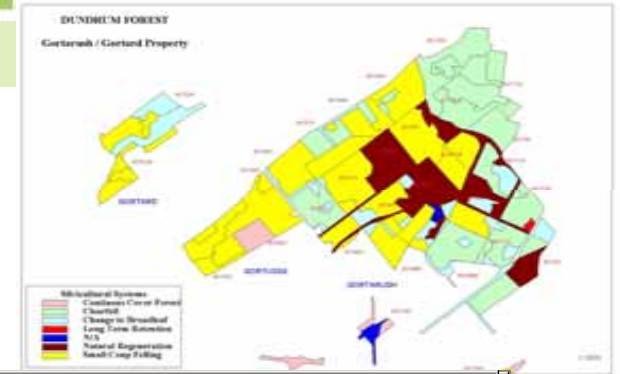
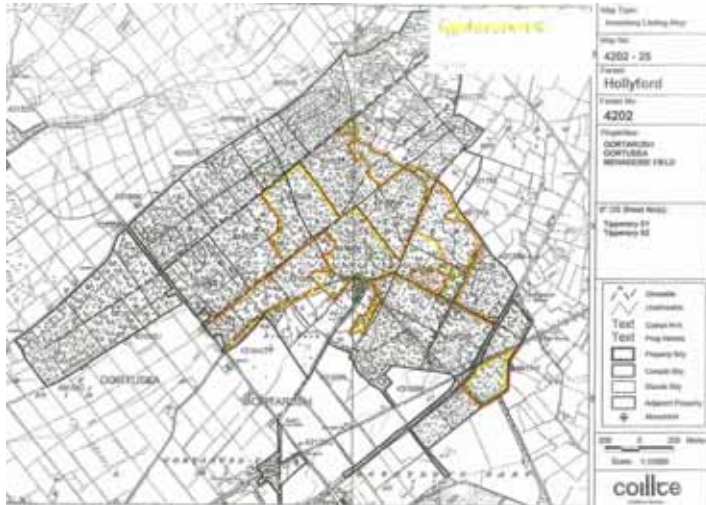


Ecological Surveys

- 36 surveys to cover 13 districts
- 12 freelance ecologists
- Close liaison with Coillte staff
- Visited and assessed potential biodiversity areas, old woodland sites, NHAs / SACs
- Identify and propose biodiversity areas = areas of particular nature conservation value
- **Habitat management recommendations**



Ecological Surveys Outputs

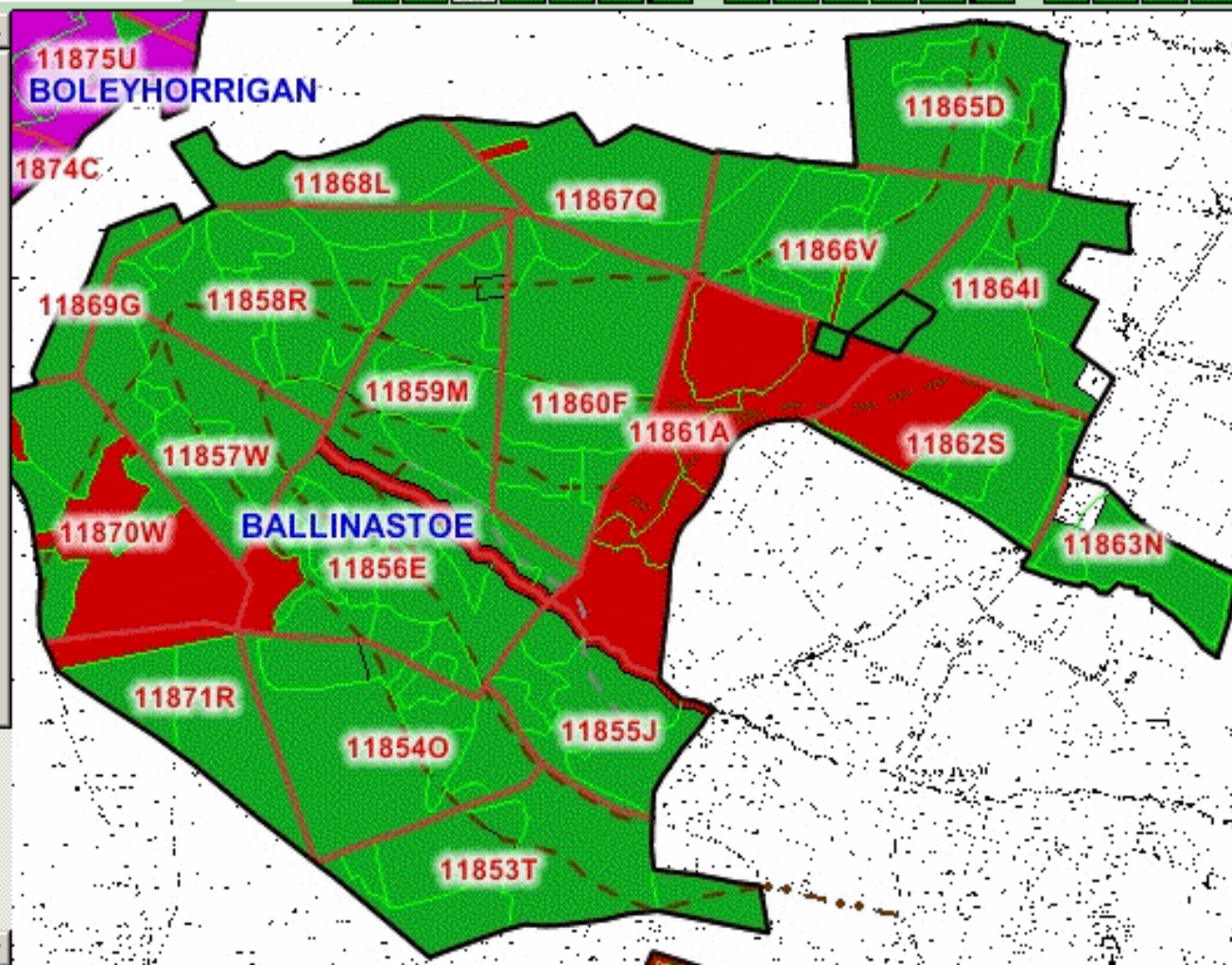


Ecologist's Map
"Agreed" biodiversity
areas

Categorisation of estate
BAs mapped as Management Units



-  Properties
-  Compartments
-  Sub Compartments
- Forest Roads
-  Forest Road
-  Proposed Road
-  Right of Way
-  Track
- MUs - Mgt. Objectives
-  Biodiversity
-  Christmas tree production
-  Experimentation
-  IFUT
-  LIFE project
-  Conservation
-  No active management
-  Non-forest Commercial
-  Nursery production
-  Recreation
-  Sale
-  Timber Production
-  Seed Stand



Active Layer:

Management Boundaries - Properties

Scale: 1:21151

X: 317458.75

Y: 207233.9



Selected Habitat Areas

Habitat	Area (ha)
Bogs (blanket, raised & cutover)	13,547
Heaths	11,994
Conifer plantation	16,631
Mixed woodlands	8,091
Semi natural woodlands	2,436
Scrub	4,084

86 habitats described according to Fossett, 2000

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Other Habitat Areas

Habitat	Area (ha)
Semi natural grassland	1,114
Fens & flushes	246
Sand dune systems	33
Turloughs	16
Calcareous & non-calcareous springs	4
Machair	3



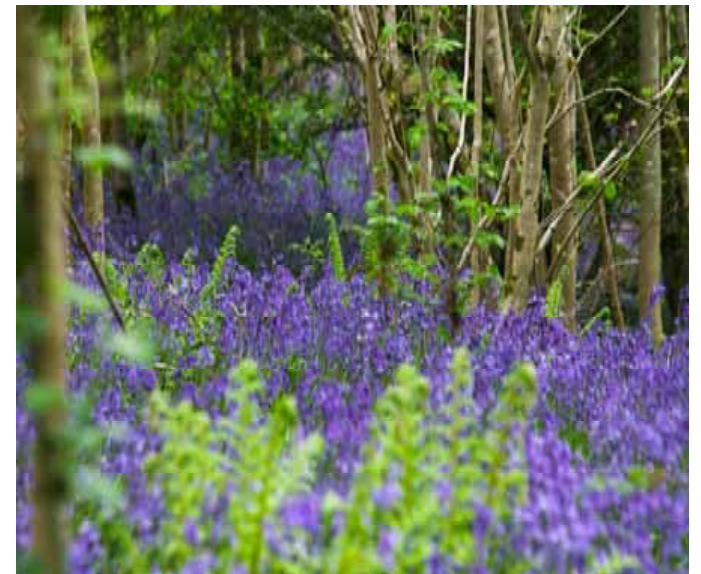
Selected Management Prescriptions

Management Objective	Area ha
Remove non-native conifers	11,969
Control grazing	10,729
Retain habitat	10,189
Encourage natural regeneration of native species	6,943
Control rhododendron, cherry laurel etc	5,559
Restore natural hydrology	3,955
Control naturally regenerating conifers	2,229
Fell conifers to recycle	1,024



Biodiversity Database

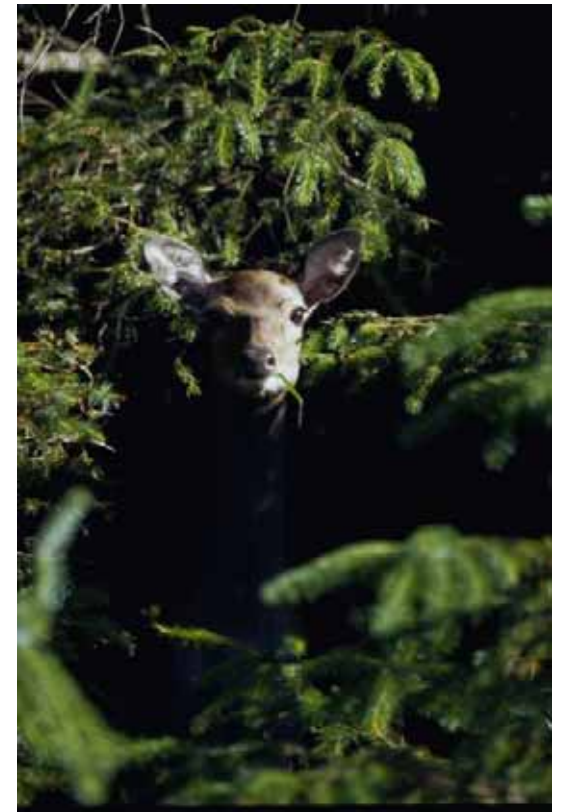
- Data from ecological surveys loaded
- Allows identification and location of key habitats and species
- Includes ecological management recommendations at site level
- Available to forest managers





Habitat & Species Guidelines

- Biodiversity database supported by
- Habitat and species guidelines
- Written by freelance ecologists
 - Distribution
 - Ecology
 - Threats (general & forestry)
 - Best practice
- For key species & habitats





BAP Species & Habitats

→ Lesser Horseshoe Bat



→ Hen Harrier



→ Freshwater Pearl Mussel



→ Raised Bog



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High conservation value areas

- All forests have value...
- But are some more valuable than others?
- *What about those exceptional cases?*
- How to define?





Defining high conservation value forests (HCVF)

- Use of internationally recognised **ProForest** HCVF toolkit
- Six different selection criteria
 - 1. **Species**
 - 2. **Landscape**
 - 3. **Ecosystems**
 - 4. **Ecological functions**
 - 5. **Local peoples' livelihood**
 - 6. **Culturally important sites**





Selection of HCVF (i)

- **HCV1** ~ Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, *endangered species*, refugia).
- **HCV2** ~ Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large *landscape level* forests,
- **HCV3** ~ Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered *ecosystems*



Selection of HCVF (ii)

- **HCV4** ~ Forest areas that provide basic *services of nature* in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control).
- **HCV5** ~ Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of *local communities* (e.g. subsistence, health).
- **HCV6** ~ Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional *cultural identity* (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).



HCVF in Ireland

- Workshop convened to discuss HCVs January 2008
- HCVs 1 & 3 considered most important in Irish context
- Forests which house rare and endangered species and ecosystems
 - All NHAs, SACs & SPAs on Coillte estate now designated and mapped as HCVF
 - Survey ongoing of all OWS to identify those with significant HCVs





Coillte & EU LIFE Nature

- 3 LIFE Nature projects
- "Flagship" projects of nature conservation
 - Raised bog ~ 571 ha
 - Blanket bog ~ 1,988 ha
 - Priority woodlands ~ 550 ha
- Best and most valuable habitats
 - Being actively restored





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