

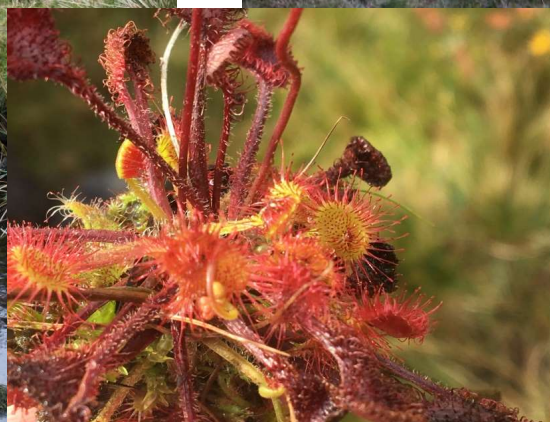
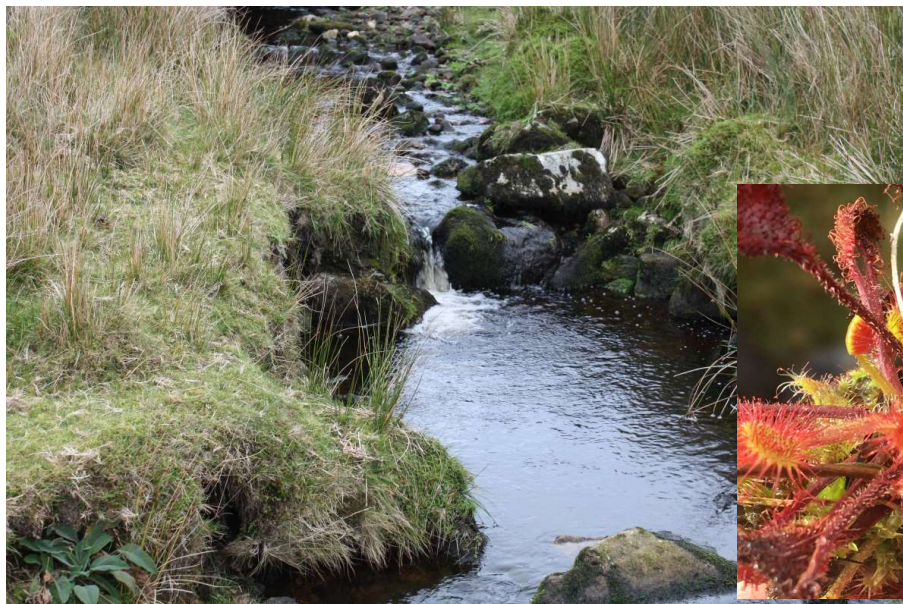
Sustainable Uplands Agri- Environment Scheme (SUAS)

Declan Byrne
SUAS Project Manager



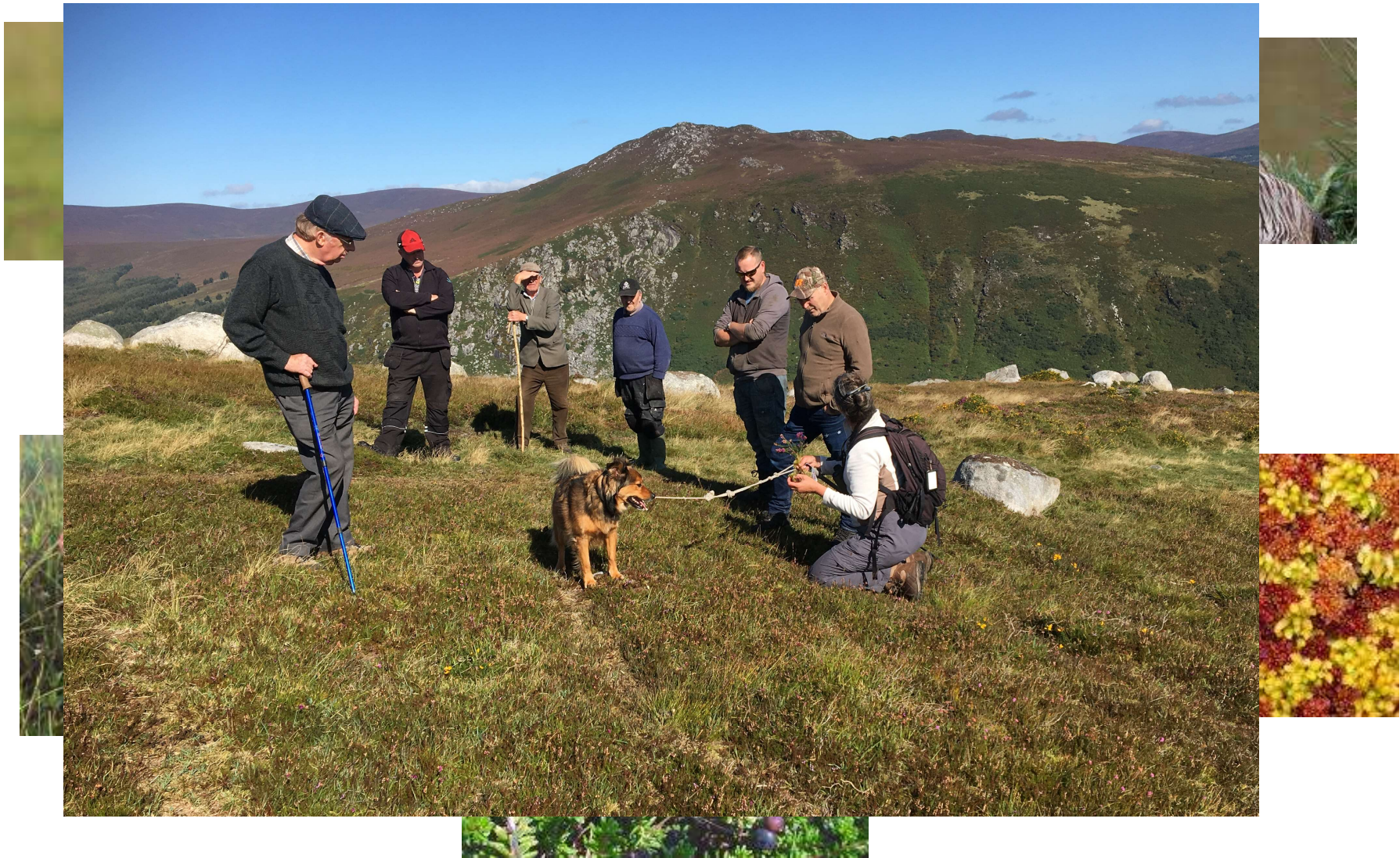
Habitats













Background

A Study to Identify Suitable Habitats in the Wicklow Uplands
Mary Tubridy & Aisling Maguire



WicklowUplands
COUNCIL



teagasc
Agriculture Food Development Authority

Sustainable Uplands Agri-environment Scheme (SUAS)

Management practices and attitudes associated with commonage use


University College Dublin in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters

By
Aisling Maguire (B.Agr.Sc.)


September 2015

Supervisors of Research
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NDP
National Development Plan 2007-2013




Department of
Agriculture,
Food and the Marine
Tábhachtairíocht,
Bia agus Mara



EU-2011
Investment in the future



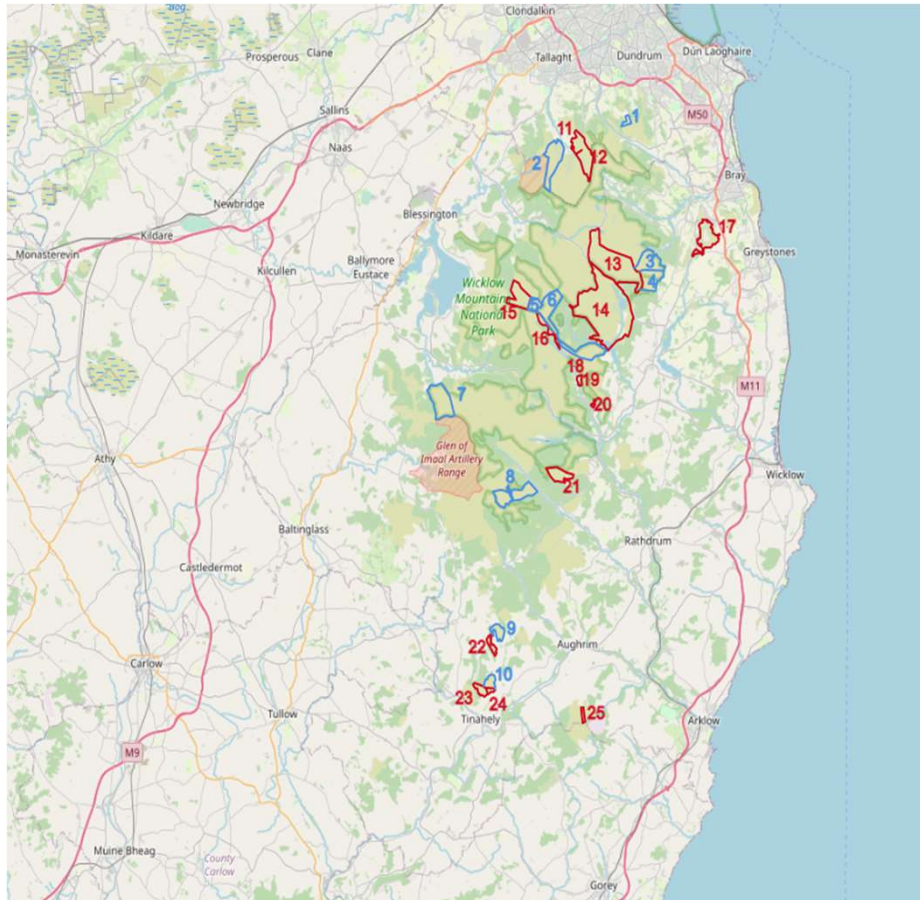
The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development
Europe Investing in rural areas



Operation Group Members

Name	Organisation	Expertise
Declan Byrne	Teagasc	Hill Sheep Production
Brian Dunne	WUC	Project Contact Point
Owen Carton	Independent Consultant	Project Implementation & Management
Helen Sheridan	UCD	Biodiversity/Ecology
Pat Dunne	WUC & Hill Farmer	Project Lead
Larry O'Loughlin		Communications & PR
Tom Byrne	WUC & Farmer	Farming
Sean Byrne	WUC & Hill Farmer	Farming
Monica Gorman	UCD	Rural Development & Adult Education
Catherine Keena	Teagasc	Agri-Environment
Donal O'Keefe	LAWCO	Water Quality
Enda Mullin	NPWS	Ecologist & NPWS rep.

SUAS Participants



14 Commonages

- 58ha to 1,025ha
- 2 to 10 Shareholders

Non-Commonage Areas

- 11 Sites
- 6.0ha to 1,745ha

DEALING WITH COMMONAGE



Constitution of Granamore Commonage Group, Adopted on 6th December 2018

1 Name

- 1.1 The name of the Organisation is the Granamore Commonage Group, referred to in this document as the Organisation.

2 Definitions

- 3 "The commonage" refers to the lands detailed in the First schedule to this Constitution
- 4 "Shareholder" refers to an individual who owns Grazing Rights over the Commonage as set out in the Second schedule to this Constitution

5 Address

- 5.1 The postal address of the Organisation shall be the postal address of the secretary for the time being

6 Membership

- 6.1 The membership of the Organisation will be made up of persons over 18 years of age:
- (a) Full Member, being shareholders who own grazing rights over the commonage.
 - (b) Associate Members, being individuals who are not shareholders but have an interest in or impact on the management of the commonage as agreed by the Members
 - (c) A full member may by letter addressed to the secretary appoint a nominee to attend and vote at meetings on his/her behalf.

6.2

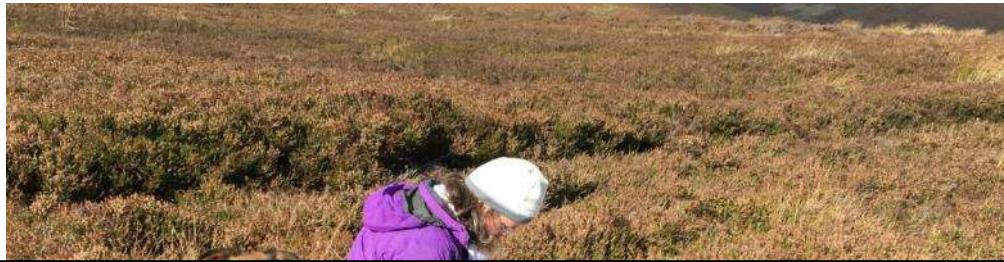
6.2 All members must be resident in the area

Commonage Groups



MANAGEMENT PLANS

Habitat Assessment



SUAS



Commonage Management Plan



Id	Annex I Code	Annex I Description	Fossitt Code	Habitat	Area (m)	Area (Ha)	Conservation Status	Management Measure
4			PB5/HM3/GS3 FW1	Eroding Blanket Bog/Wet Heath/Dry Acid Grassland Eroding Upland Watercourse	206217	20.62	Unfavourable - Inadequate	Control and remove regenerating spruce. Destocking and exclusion of grazing is recommended. Erection of deer enclosures to assess deer browsing pressures. Protect watercourse through establishment of gully woodland.
5			HD1 FW1	Dense Bracken Eroding Upland Watercourse	31815	3.18	Unfavourable - Inadequate	Destocking and exclusion of grazing is recommended. Erection of deer enclosures to assess deer browsing pressures. Provide grouse flight diverters on fencing if erected to reduce collision risk. Control bracken. Protect watercourse through establishment of gully woodland.
6			HM3/GS4 FW1	Wet Heath/Wet Grassland Eroding Upland Watercourse	101	0.01	Unfavourable - Inadequate	Control bracken to prevent invading heath. Protect watercourse through establishment of gully woodland.
7			HM3/GS4 FW1	Wet Heath/Wet Grassland Eroding Upland Watercourse	8563	0.86	Unfavourable - Inadequate	Destocking and exclusion of grazing is recommended. Protect watercourse through establishment of gully woodland.
8			HD1	Dense Bracken	19933	1.99	Unfavourable - Inadequate	Control bracken. Destocking and exclusion of grazing is recommended. Protect watercourse through establishment of gully woodland.
9	4010	Northern Atlantic Wet Heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>	HM3	Wet Heath	56010	5.60	Unfavourable - Inadequate	There is some cracking in the peat here and the upper slopes are at risk of slippage. No burning or vegetation control should be proposed for this area as a result. Trespass from cattle was noted here. Destocking and exclusion of grazing is recommended.
10	7130*	Active Blanket Bog	PB2	Upland Blanket Bog	104934	10.49	Favourable	Monitor grazing pressure and sheep movements to ensure no decline.

Granamore Commonage

Commonage Management Activities

Year 1 (2019)

1. Clean up all the box shores and drains along the side of the roads coming in from Corragh and bog road from Granamore. Aim is to divert water off the road to prevent further erosion. Consult with NPWS for advice before commencing work.
2. Cut some of the windblows in Area 3. Use some of these cut trees to block up some of the gullies in the peat on the slopes of area 3 (advice on how to block these gullies to be provided by and in consultation with project ecologist).
3. Cut a number of small sections of heather & gorse in area 20 to encourage sheep to graze in this area. Cut sections up to 0.5ha each and up to a total of 2ha in 2019.
4. Block drain along top of turf banks in area 18 (advice to be given by project ecologist).
5. Control burn a section, up to 1ha in size in area 23 to control strong heather and encourage sheep to graze this area. Fire control lines, at least 2-3m wide shall be cut around each section, either by tractor mounted machine or by hand, to ensure these controlled burning areas are contained. Controlled burning may be carried out either in the spring or the autumn so long as it is within the legal burning season and has the approval of NPWS.

Year 2 (2020)

1. Control burn gorse on the dry banks in area 10. Ensure that the fire does not extend into the surrounding gorse areas.
2. Cut or control burn a further 1ha in area 23, ensuring to leave some areas of tall heather untouched.
3. Cut more of the windblows on the various areas of the commonage.
4. Cut gorse in area 2 (around the mass rock). This will be cut by hand using either saws or brush cutters as the area is surrounded by bracken and due to the rough terrain and rocky nature, burning would be very difficult to control. Professional contractors will be hired in to trial this work to see if it is feasible.
5. Discuss further road repairs with NPWS.

Year 3 (2021)

To be reviewed at the end of year 2

Year 4 (2022)

To be reviewed at the end of year 2

Shepherding

Average time per shepherding: 6 Hours

No of times sheep are to be shepherded: 2-3 Times per week from 1st May to 30th November

Identified objective of the shepherding:

- Sheep are to be kept from straying off the commonage onto surrounding areas.
- Move off sheep from other commonages.
- Help new sheep on the commonage to settle onto the commonage and not wander too far or just stay around the mass rock or top of the pastures.
- Sheep to be moved off area 3 regularly to reduce grazing pressure there. Move sheep into the taller vegetation regularly to get them to graze these areas.
- Monitor sheep health for signs of tick diseases.
- Count numbers of deer grazing the commonage and areas they are grazing.

Other works to be carried out for entire commonage

Erect 1-3 grazing enclosures on plot 3 to see what effect deer grazing is having on this area.

Use feed buckets to encourage more sheep grazing the commonage in the Jan/Feb and April/May period.

Use the feed buckets to move grazing pressure away from the grass areas to overgrown areas in Jan/Feb period.





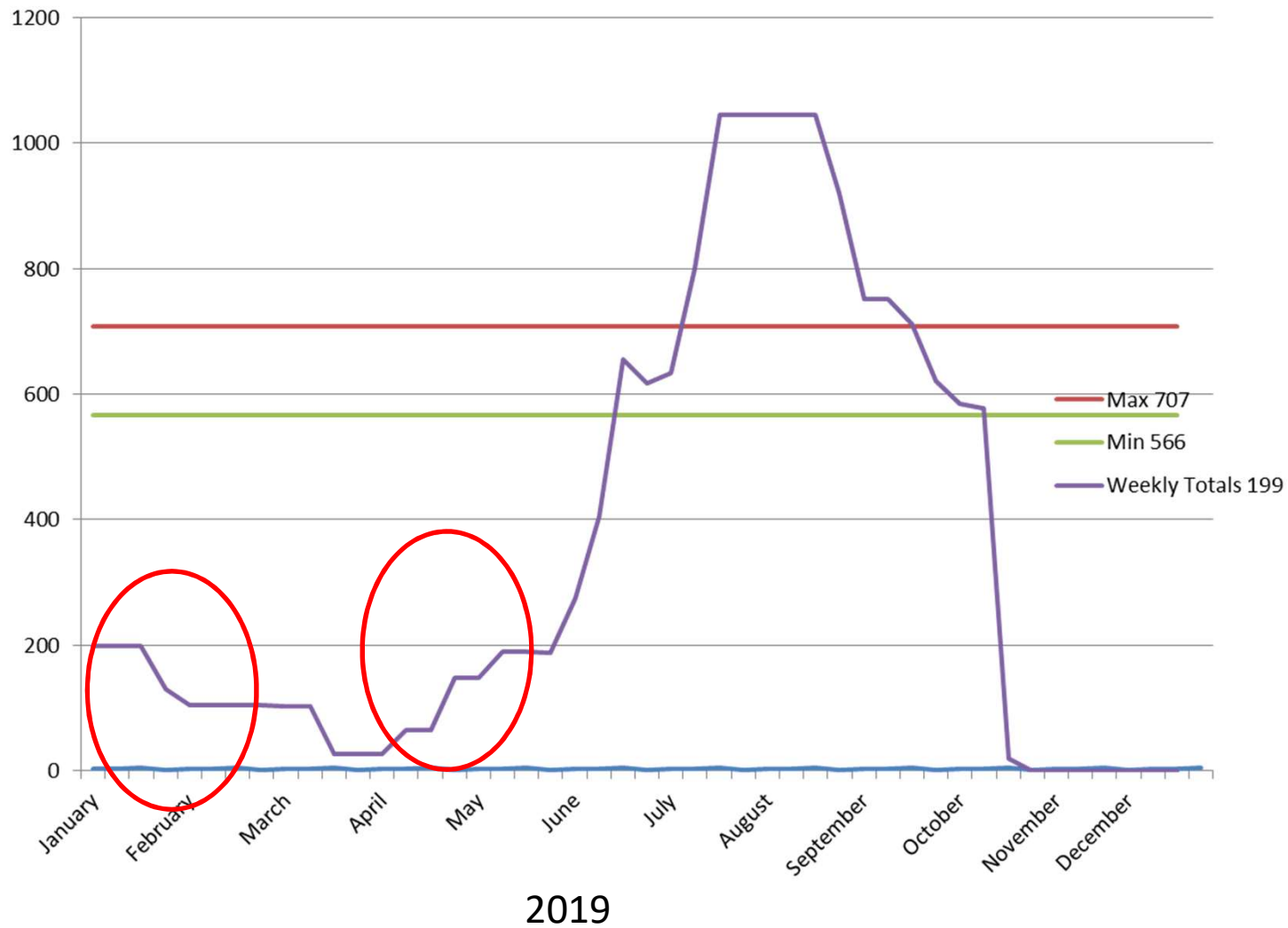








Grazing Levels on the Hills



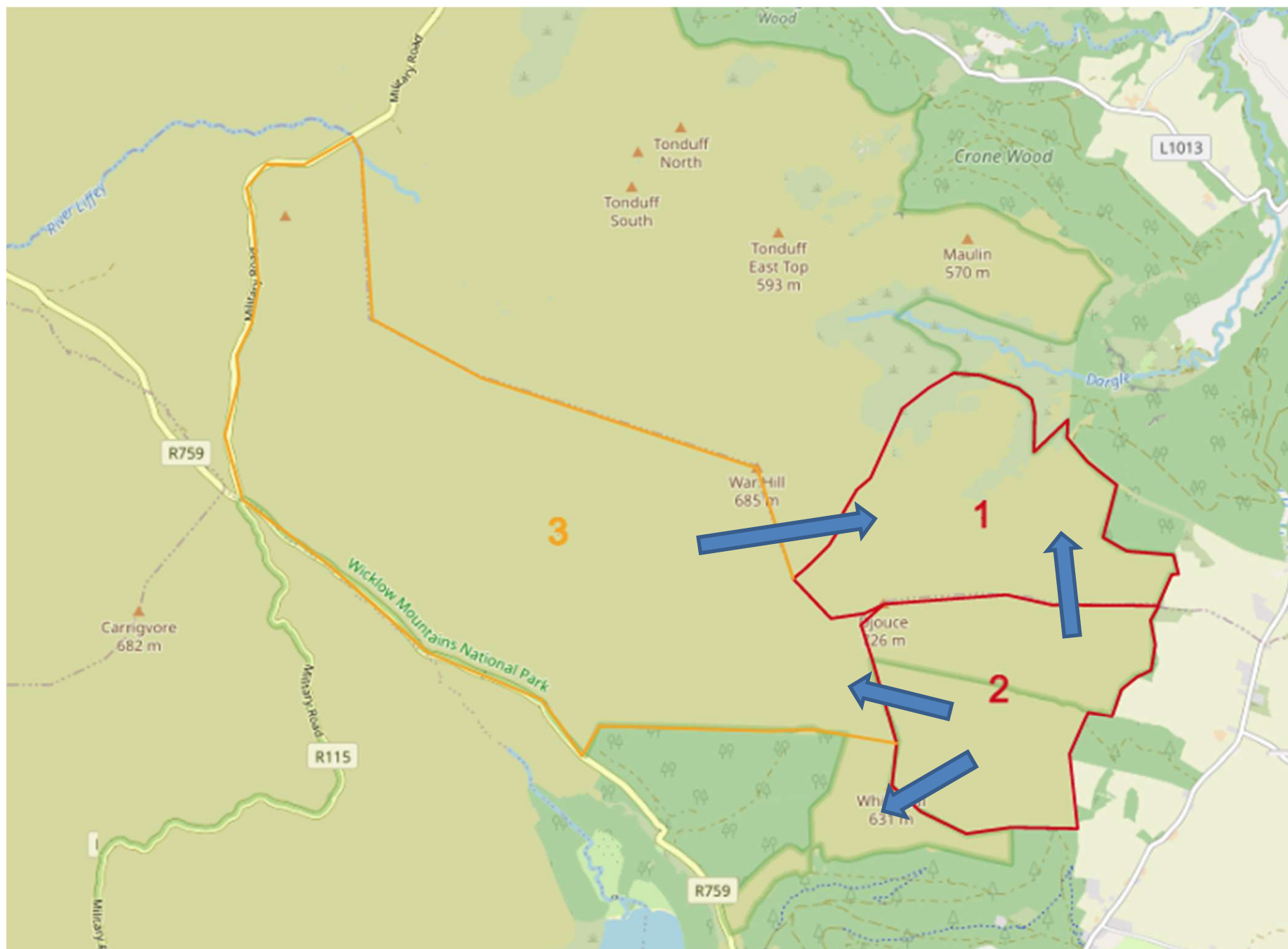


VS



VS



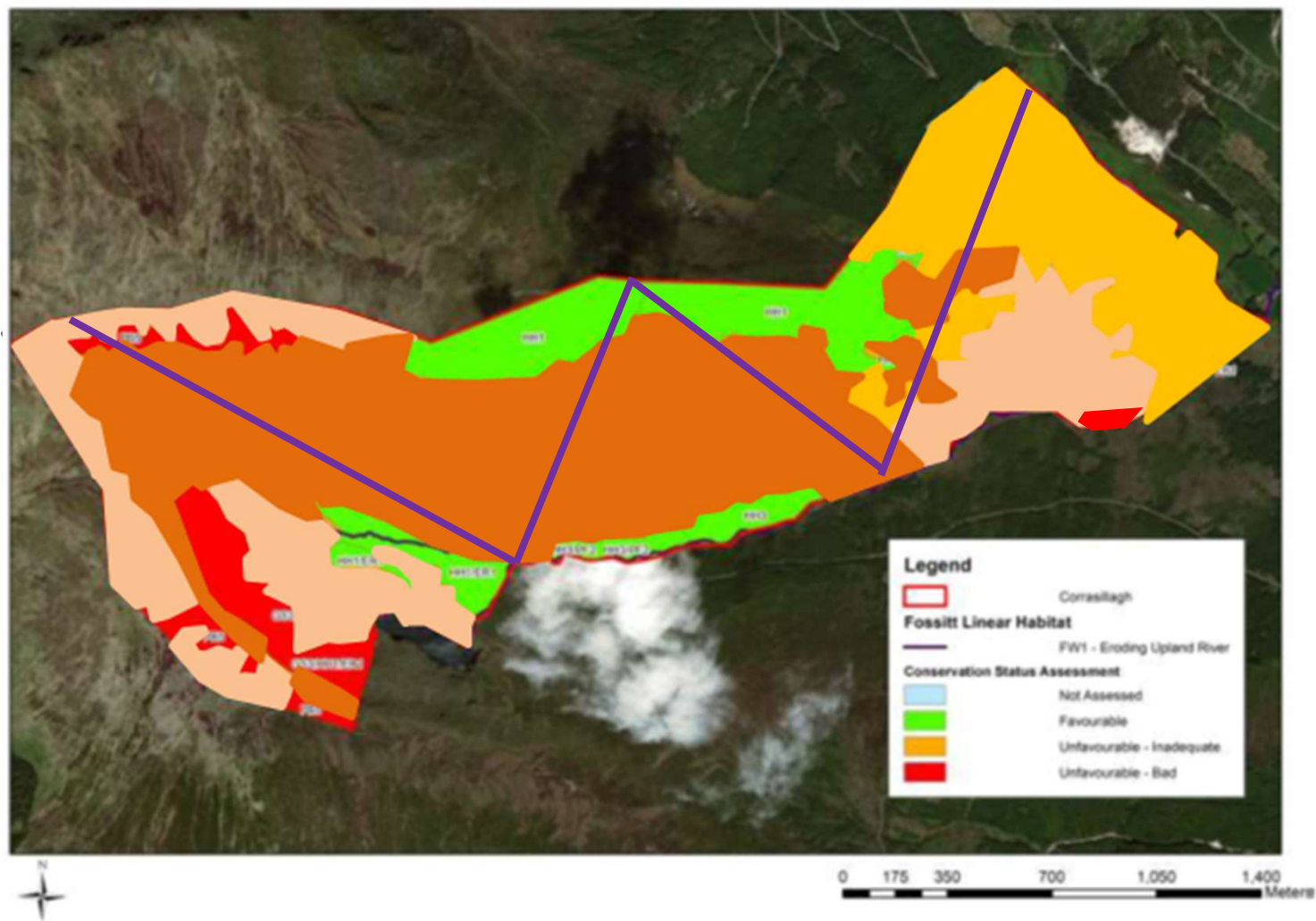




Learnings to Date

- Payment for actions alone provided no incentive for farmers to be involved
- Farmers take on the actions that favours production rather than habitat improvement
- Grazing management is complicated and takes time to change

Results Based Payment Systems



Payment Bands	Habitat Score							Totals
	Unfavourable Bad	Unfavourable Inadequate			Favourable			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Total area at score	28.29	88.67	70.39	130.53	54.19	0	0	370

Emerging challenges

- Uncontrolled Burning
- Bracken Control in absence of Asulox & follow-up treatments required
- Gorse Control & long-term control
- Erosion in the uplands
- Areas that we can't restore to good condition-
What do we do with them?



SUAS

SUSTAINABLE UPLANDS
AGRI-ENVIRONMENT SCHEME

**People
Working
Together**