

Figure 1: Location and boundaries of the Girley Bog NHA in County Meath. Source: NPWS Map Viewer 26.2.14 www.npws.ie.

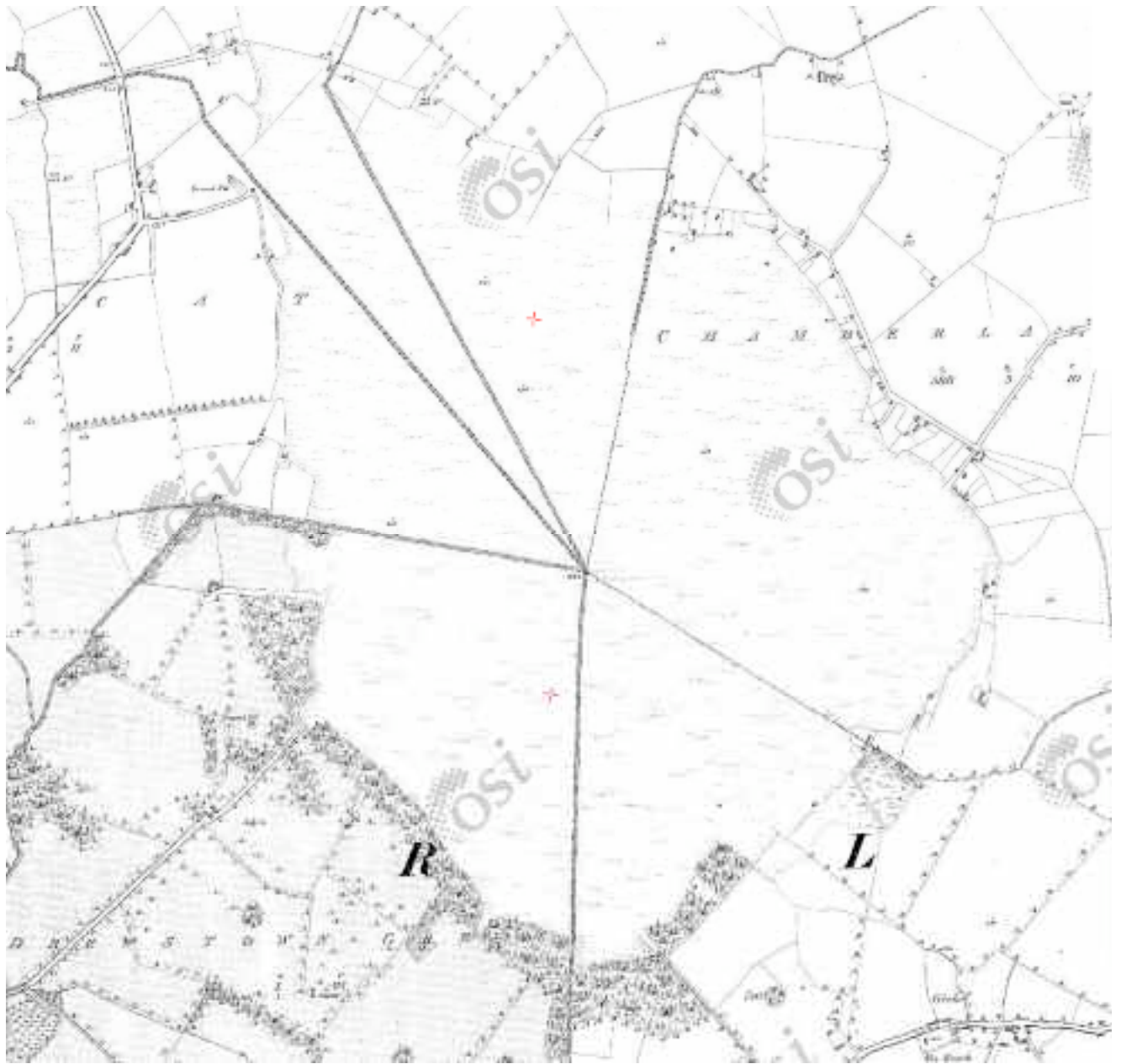


Figure 2: Ordnance survey map of Girley Bog from 1836 showing the drains marking out the townland boundaries within the bog. Source: [www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie)

**Girley Bog NHA (No. 1580) Conservation Management Plan  
Townlands Map**



Figure 3: Satellite image of Girley Bog from 2015 showing the high bog habitat, the partially forested cutover bog and the farming landscape surrounding the bog. The townlands of the bog are indicated. Source: applemaps.



# Collaborative Conservation of Girley Bog Co. Meath, Ireland

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Girley Bog, Co. Meath (GPS 53.68483N -6.94971E) is a raised bog Natural Heritage Area (NHA1580). It is 100ha in extent located on the eastern margin of the range of raised bog distribution in Ireland. Girley Bog is owned by state agencies, non governmental organisations and private individuals. The bog is of significant importance for biodiversity and recreation. The successful management of Girley Bog for its species and habitats and its amenity value has required collaboration between a diverse range of community individuals and stakeholder groups. These include the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Coillte Teoranta, Dutch Foundation for the Conservation of Irish Bogs, Meath County Council, Meath Eco Tours, Irish Peatland Conservation Council, Native Woodland Trust, Denyer Ecology, Causey Farm, Queen's University Belfast and local community members.



The collaboration of the various members of the Girley Bog Meitheal Team has set a platform for the development of a conservation management plan for the site. The plans goals will be to protect and enhance the raised bog and woodland habitats on the site and to ensure the accessibility of the site for all. This work is made possible through funding support from the Heritage Council, Environmental Protection Agency, Meath County Council, Native Woodland Trust, National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Dutch Foundation for the Conservation of Irish Bogs.

This poster has been supported by the Irish Environmental Network  
Images courtesy of the National Parks and Wildlife Service,  
Irish Peatland Conservation Council and Apple Maps



Figure 4: The IPCC poster paper presented to the Irish Peat Society/International Peat Society meeting in Tullamore in 2015 on the theme of Peatlands - A New Conversation which described the work of the different stakeholders on Girley Bog. What was the name of the poster and get its pdf from Nuala.

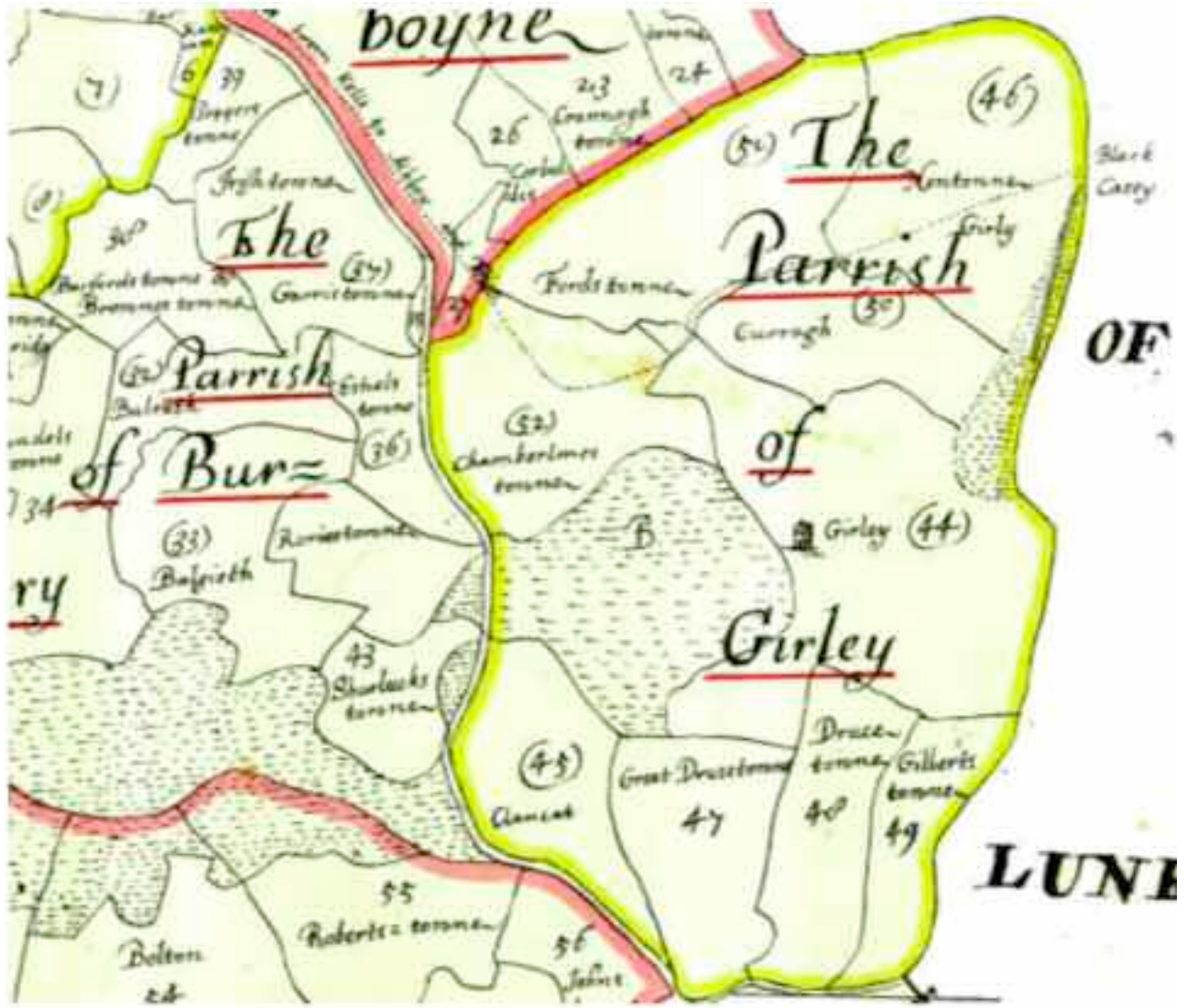


Figure 5: Maps of the Parish of Girley in the Barony of Kells and of Girley Bog from the Down Survey 17th century. Source: Trinity College Dublin.



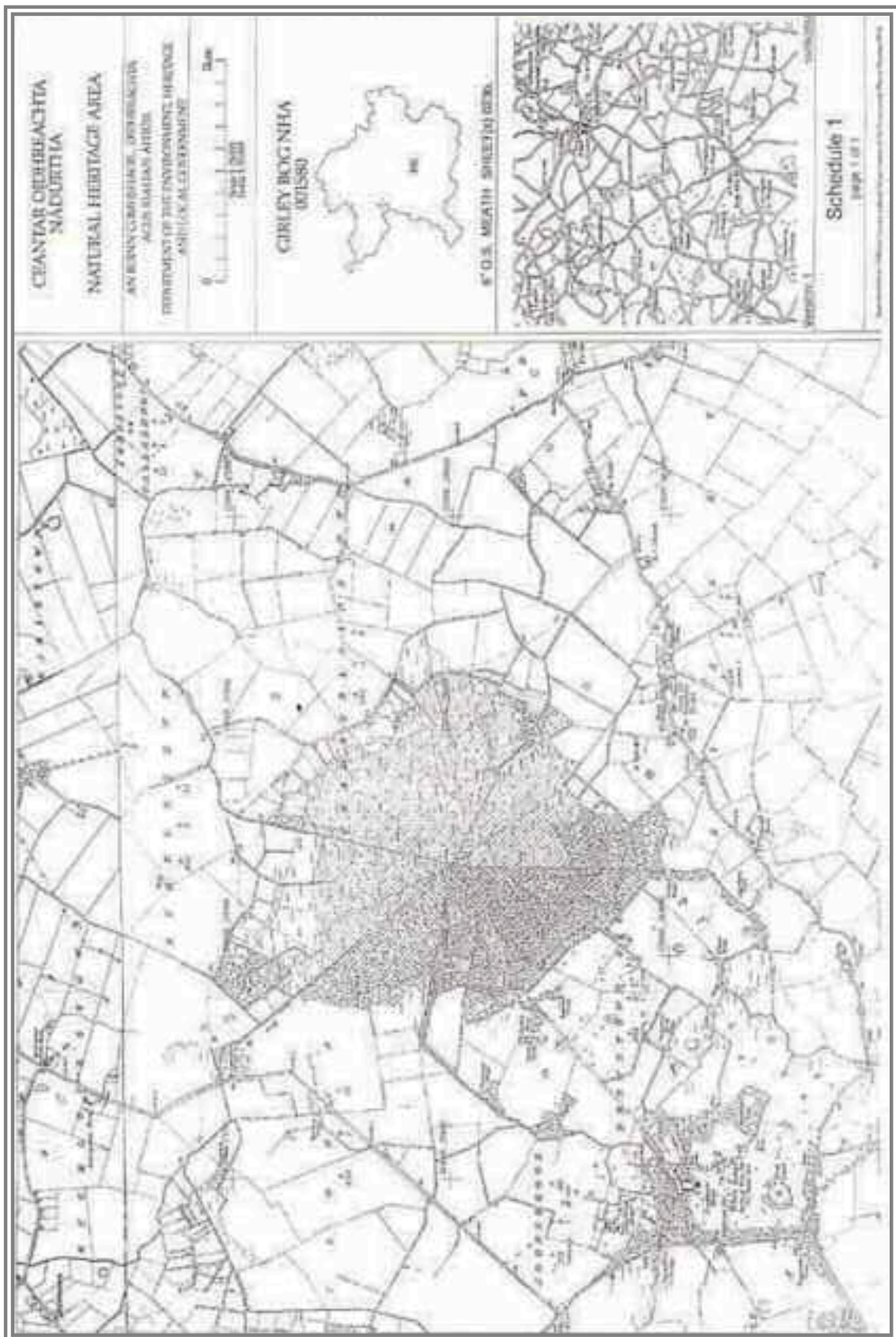


Figure 6: Map of the Girley Bog NHA boundaries presented with the Statutory Instrument No. 600 in 2003.

**Girley Bog NHA (No. 1580), Co. Meath Conservation Management Plan  
Ownership Map within the bog**

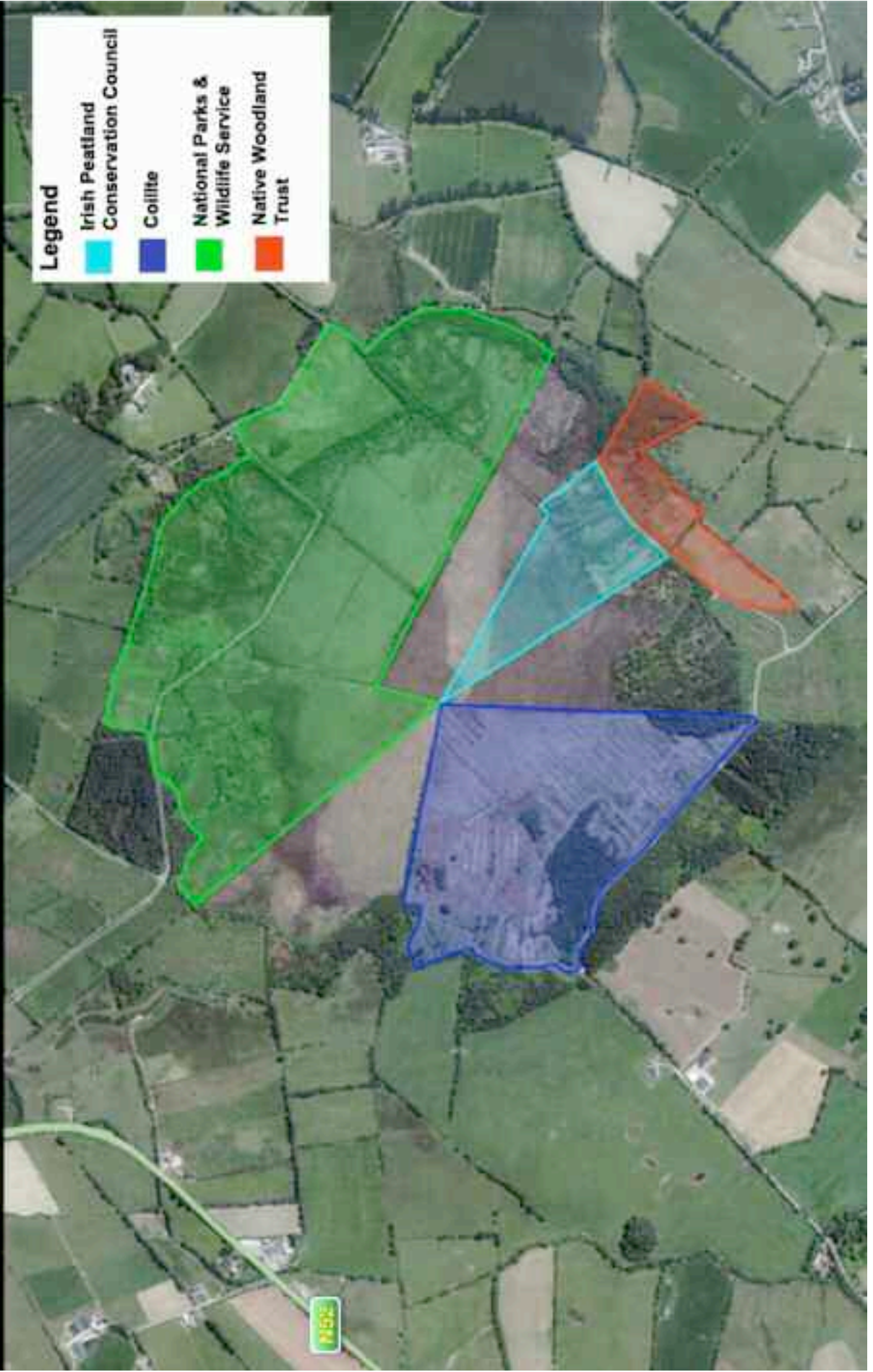


Figure 7: Ownership map of Girley Bog where known drawn by IPCC 2015.



**Girley Bog NHA (No. 1580), Co. Meath Conservation Management Plan  
Areas of Archaeological Interest in the surrounds of Girley Bog**

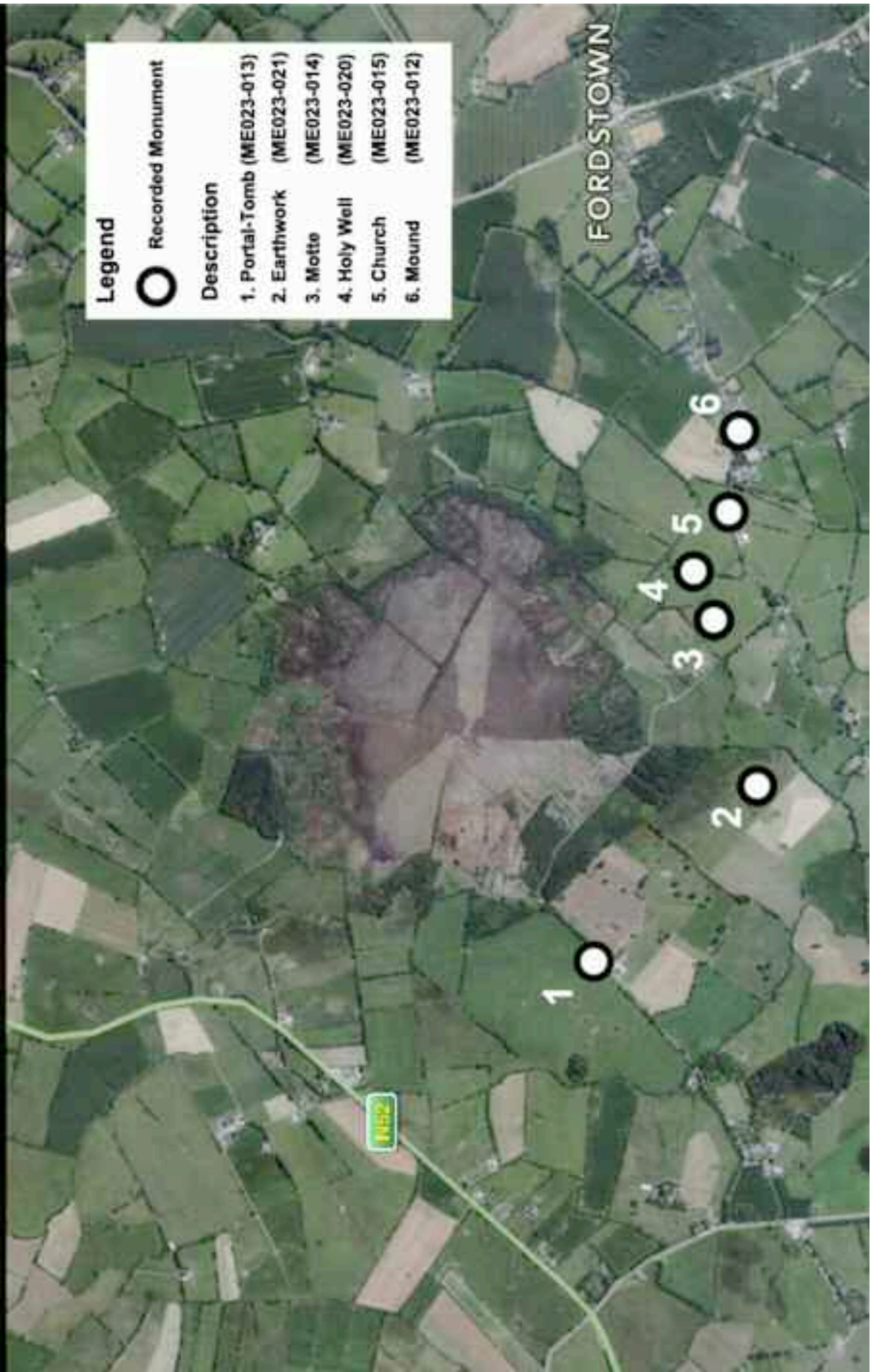


Figure 8: Archaeological sites and monuments located in the vicinity of Girley Bog drawn by IPCC 2015.





## Trailhead 51

Loop 51

## Girley Bog Loop

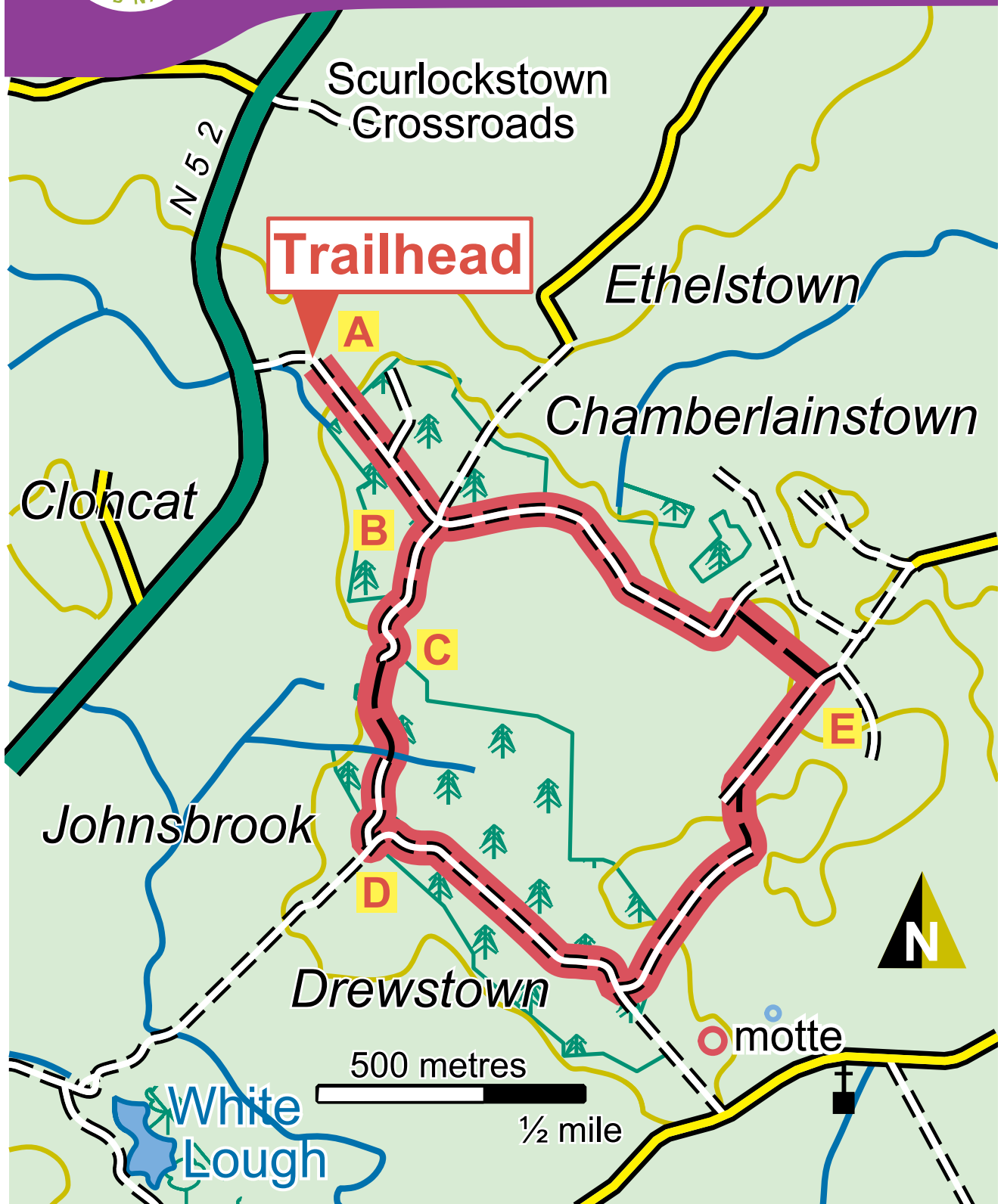
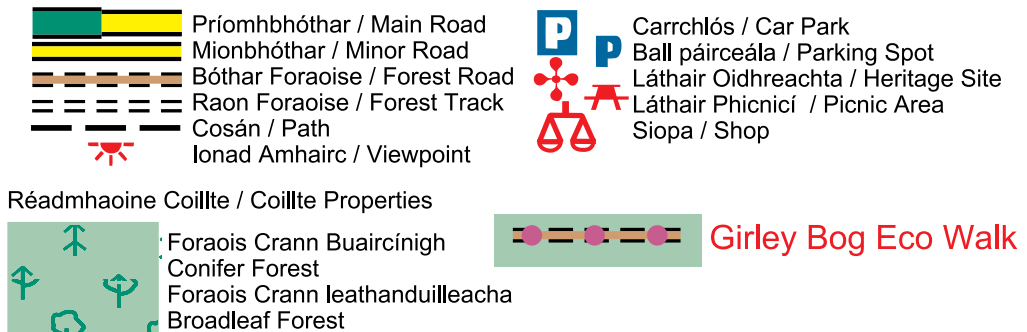
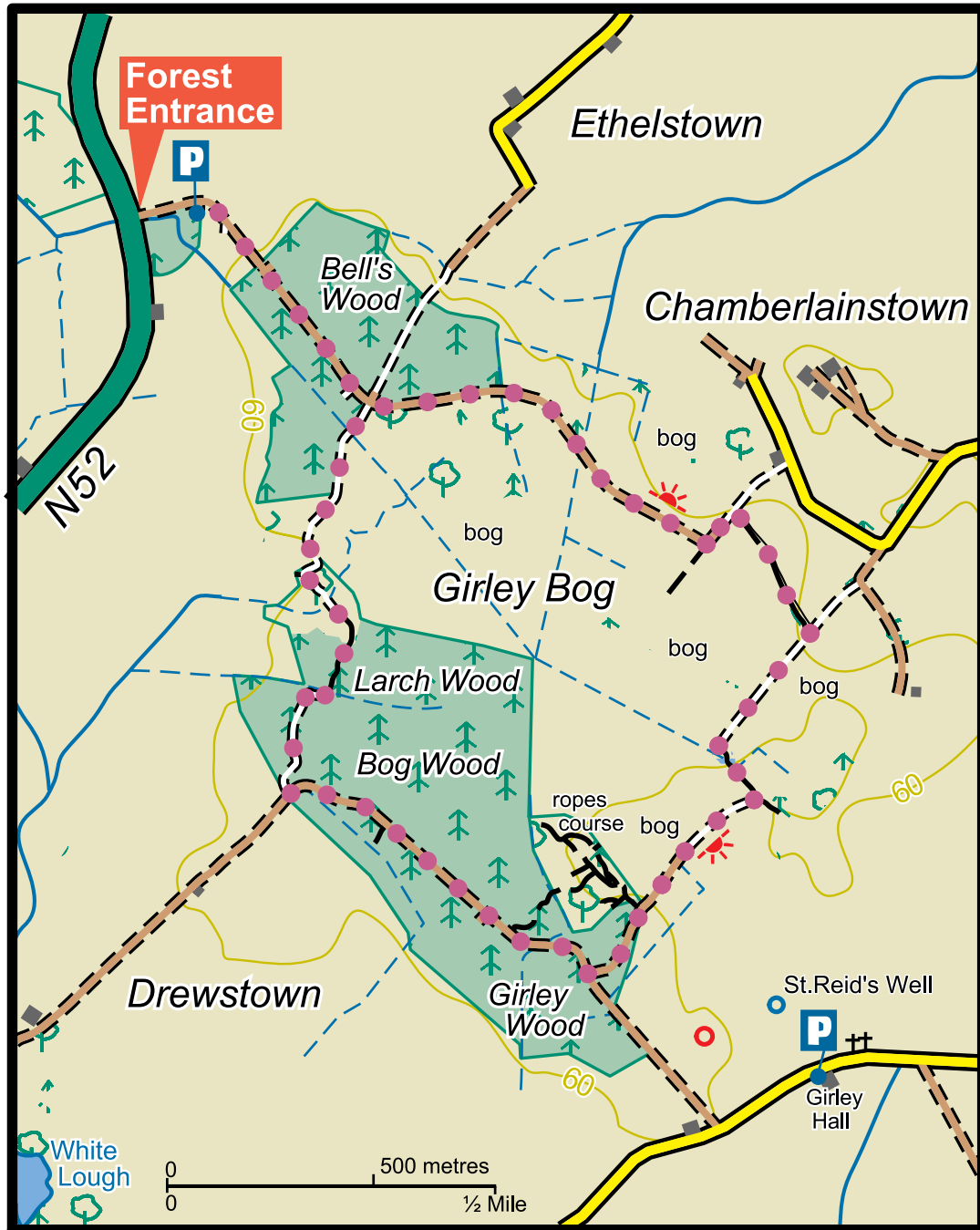


Figure 9: Map showing the location of the National Loop Walk No.51 at Girley Bog. Source: [www.irishtrails.ie](http://www.irishtrails.ie)

# Girley Bog - Portach Greillighe



Níor chóir go léirmhíneodh an léiriúchán ar an léarscáil de na bóithre, raonta agus cosáin taobh amuigh de réadmhaoin Coillte mar go bhfuil ceart slí tugtha  
 The representation on the map of roads, tracks and paths outside Coillte property should not be interpreted as conferring a right of way.

Figure 10: Source: [www.coillteoutdoors.ie](http://www.coillteoutdoors.ie)



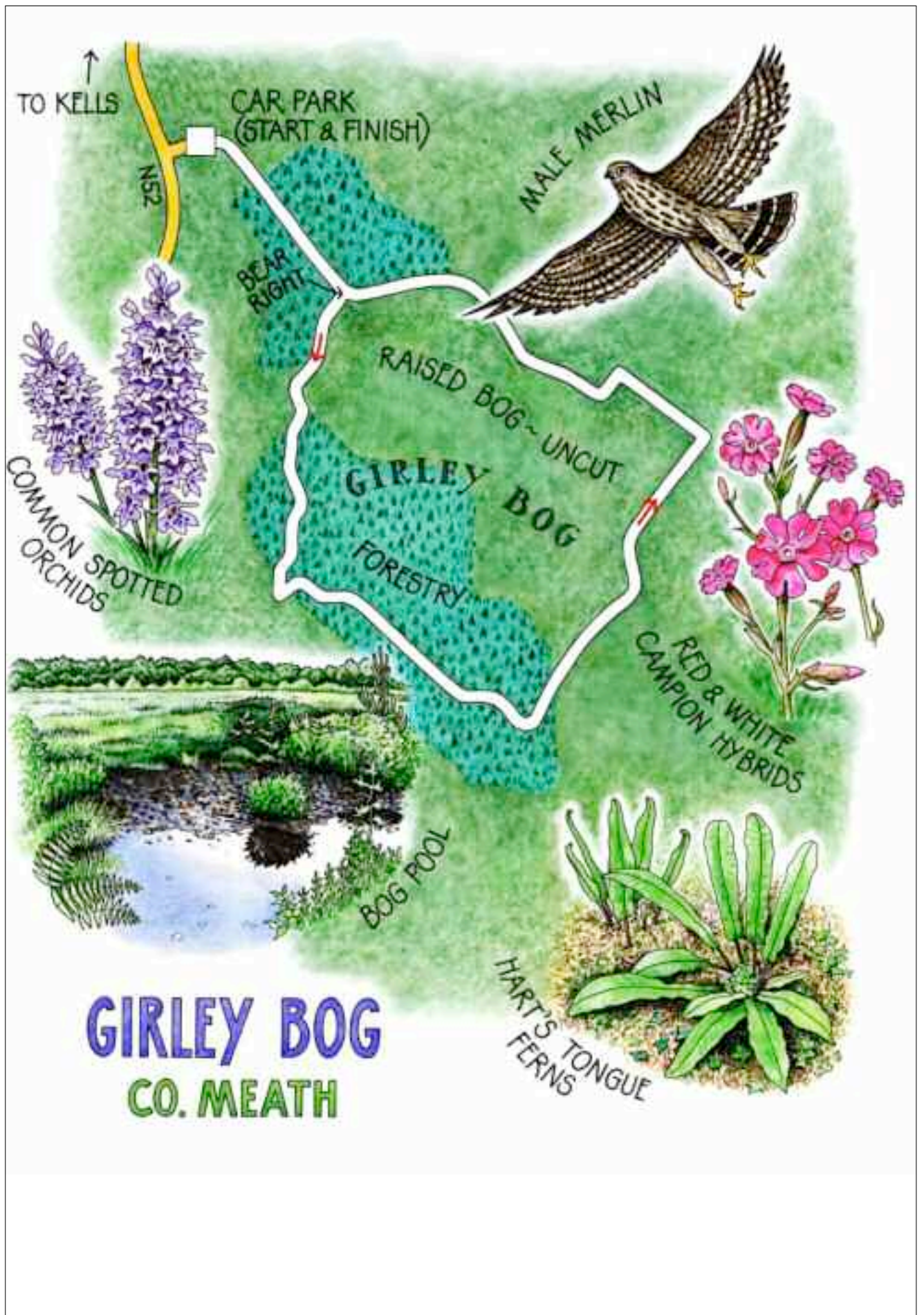


Figure 11: Girley Bog, Co. Meath Loop walk interpretive drawing prepared by Christopher Somerville, Irish Independent 2009. Source: [www.walksireland.ie](http://www.walksireland.ie)

# Kells Girley Bog Eco Walk



Like County Meath with its rich culture, heritage, myths and legends, you will have the same magical experience as you walk through this peaceful stretch of woodland and rare bog.

The Kells Girley Bog Eco Walk is a 3.5 miles / 5.6 km loop and covers varying landscape. The first section of this looped walk brings you through a tranquil Collie forest, where there is a coniferous forestry plantation located on high bog. The coniferous trees are fast-growing species that originate in North America. The two common species are Sitka Spruce and Lodgepole Pine. After this section, you will enter Girley Bog, one of the few remaining raised bogs in County Meath. Girley Bog is a site of considerable conservation significance, as it comprises of a raised bog - a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. There is a wonderful variety of birdlife, plant and animal life and this is displayed through a number of interpretive panels.

Girley Bog represents the eastern extreme of the range of raised bogs in Ireland. Raised Bogs are dome-shaped bogs which have developed in former lake basins in the midland counties of Ireland. At the end of the last ice age, about 10,000 years ago, the central lowlands of Ireland comprised of many large shallow lakes. These lakes gradually became totally overgrown with vegetation that slowly accumulated into peat. Bog mosses began to grow on this unique water-logged environment. These bog mosses soaked up rainfall like a sponge and over the millennia the bog mosses accumulated to a depth of up to 10 metres (30feet) creating the peat that now forms the 'high bog' part of Girley Bog.

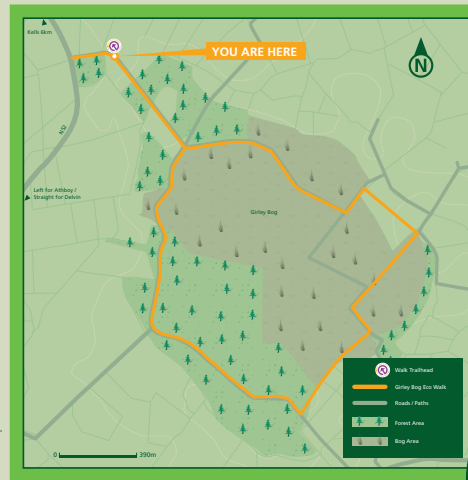
In 2003 Girley Bog was designated a Natural Heritage Area, which aims to protect the nature conservation value of the area.

By following the way-marked trail you will find interpretive panels, which will give you interesting facts that will help you enjoy the beauty of Girley Bog. Since the bog surface is fragile and dangerous, please stay on the trail.

If you want to find out more about bogs check out the Irish Peatlands Conservation Council website: [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie)

[www.meathtourism.ie](http://www.meathtourism.ie) [www.discoverireland.ie/walking](http://www.discoverireland.ie/walking)

This project has been funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan, 2007 - 2013 with an funding from Meath Local Authorities.



**SAFETY NOTICE**  
Due to the nature of the walk, you must be able to walk on uneven terrain. If you are unable to walk on uneven terrain, please do not attempt the walk. If you are unable to walk on uneven terrain, please do not attempt the walk.

**ORIENTATION**  
The walk is a looped walk of 3.5 miles / 5.6 km. The walk is a looped walk of 3.5 miles / 5.6 km. The walk is a looped walk of 3.5 miles / 5.6 km.

**GIRLEY BOG ECO WALK**  
Distance: 3.5 miles / 5.6 km  
Duration: 1.5 hours  
Difficulty: Moderate  
Terrain: Upland terrain to include woodland, bog and forestry roads.  
To Suit: Average levels of fitness.  
Min. Gear: Walking boots, rain gear and hat.



**Leave No Trace on the Loops**

1. Plan your route to avoid sensitive areas.
2. Stay on the marked paths.
3. Do not pick flowers or disturb plants.
4. Do not feed the animals.
5. Do not litter.
6. Do not smoke.
7. Do not drink alcohol.
8. Do not use sunscreen.
9. Do not use insect repellent.
10. Do not use a camera flash.

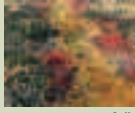
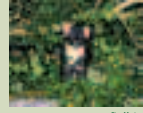


Figure 12a: The welcome sign for visitors located in the car park off the N52. Source: NPWS

# Kells Girley Bog Eco Walk Forest and Scrub



When the turf is cut away and the area abandoned it is not long before scrub invades and takes over. Most of this walk is around the edge of the bog in areas of 'cut-over' bog. Stands of the Bracken fern invade first and later birch and willow trees form thick scrub. This natural scrub hosts a wide variety of birds, including migrant species, which come from Africa each summer to raise their chicks. Although difficult to see they have loud, distinct and very tuneful songs. Willow Warbler, Chiff-chaff and Blackcap are the three most common species. Resident species like Long-tailed Tits can be seen throughout the year.

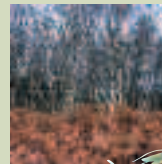
In the south-west of the high bog there is coniferous forestry plantation. The cutover on the western half of the site is also dominated by coniferous forestry. The coniferous trees are fast-growing species that originate in North America. The two common species are Sitka Spruce and Lodgepole Pine.

Although not so rich in wildlife, conifer plantations are host to species such as squirrel and goldcrest, Ireland's smallest bird.

Merlin, a small bird of prey, is also found in the forest areas.



Lodgepole Pine spreading out on to the bog



Goldcrests  
Ireland's smallest bird

Birch Trees with  
Bracken Understorey



Merlin  
Ireland's smallest bird of prey

"The largest Sitka Spruce tree in the world is in Washington State, USA where it grows to 60 metres tall and is almost 1000 years old"

Figure 12b: The forest and scrub themed visitor panel on the Girley Loop Walk. Source: NPWS

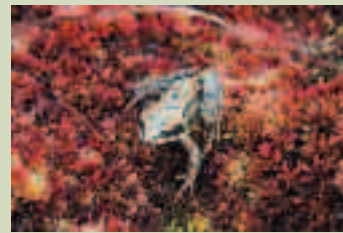


# Kells Girley Bog Eco Walk Plants and Animals of the Bog

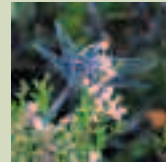
The most obvious plant species on the bog is Ling Heather and in the wetter areas Cross-leaved Heath is also found. However, on closer inspection there are a host of other species including Hare's-tail Cottongrass, Cranberry and Bog-rosemary. In the wettest parts of the bog there are several species of bog mosses. These bog mosses can form dense cushions or hummocks. Each species has a unique colour and together they can form a brilliant mosaic. The scarce bog moss *S. fuscum* is found at the centre of the bog. The insectivorous plant Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*) is also found. This plant gets nutrients by ingesting insects that it traps in its sticky leaves. Many species of lichen can be found on the bog. Lichens are ancient and simple plants that result from a symbiotic relationship between fungus and bacteria. The presence of the lichens is an indication that the area is free of air pollution.

Snipe and skylark are the two birds most often seen on the high bog. Snipe rise from the dense heather vegetation with a startle and zig-zig away over the bog. Skylark are most obvious in the middle of summer singing their incessant and tuneful song as they hover high above the bog.

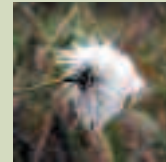
Badgers, foxes and hares also criss-cross the bog in feeding forays.



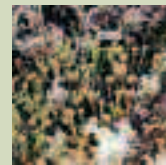
Common Frog on Bog Moss



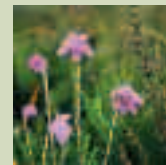
Black Darter Dragonfly



Bog Cotton



Lichens



Cross-leaved Heath



Sundew



Figure 12c: The plants and animals of bog themed visitor panel on the Girley Loop Walk. Source: NPWS

# Kells Girley Bog Eco Walk Human History

Throughout most of history Irish bogs were impassable. To cross the wet, boggy terrain people built bog roads or "toghers". In the twentieth century as the bogs were exploited for fuel thousands of important archaeological finds have been made. These "bog finds" include swords, gold jewellery, trumpets and even human bodies preserved by the acid nature of the bog. In July 2006, 20 pages of a Medieval bible (800AD - 1000AD) were found on an Irish Bog.

The walk around the bog is mostly on old bog roads that allowed people access their turf plots. The turf was the only source of heating and cooking for most people in the area. Traditionally, the turf was cut with a spade called a 'slane'. The wet 'bricks' of turf were then spread out on the low 'cut-over' ground and left there to dry for a few weeks. Once the turf was a bit firmer it was then stacked up and left to dry out more thoroughly. When properly dry the turf was either taken home or was gathered together into a stack or 'clamp'. The clamp may have stayed on the bog until September and then brought home. Another interesting use of the bog was the tradition of putting butter made in summer into the bog. The bog kept the butter cool and it was taken out and used or sold at a local market in the Christmas or spring. There have been many finds of butter in Irish bogs (sometimes in special wooden containers called 'methers'). The turf from Girley Bog was of low quality and no one has cut turf on the bog for the last 10 years and so there is a large area of intact high bog remaining on the bog. This makes the bog of special interest in nature conservation terms.



Wet turf spread out



Turf stacked into 'Caster'



Turf stacked into 'Footins'



'Mether' with bog butter, found in bog



'Slane' (Turf spade) and traditional wheel barrow



Figure 12d: The human history themed visitor panel on the Girley Loop Walk. Source: NPWS



Figure 12e: The Coillte welcome site sign at the Drewstown entrance to Girley Bog. Photo: C. O'Connell



Figure 12f: The Coillte welcome Information sign at the Drewstown entrance to Girley Bog. The sign is presented in both English and Irish. Photo: C. O'Connell



**Girley Bog NHA (No. 1580), County Meath Conservation Management Plan  
Tourism Amenities and Information in the surrounds**

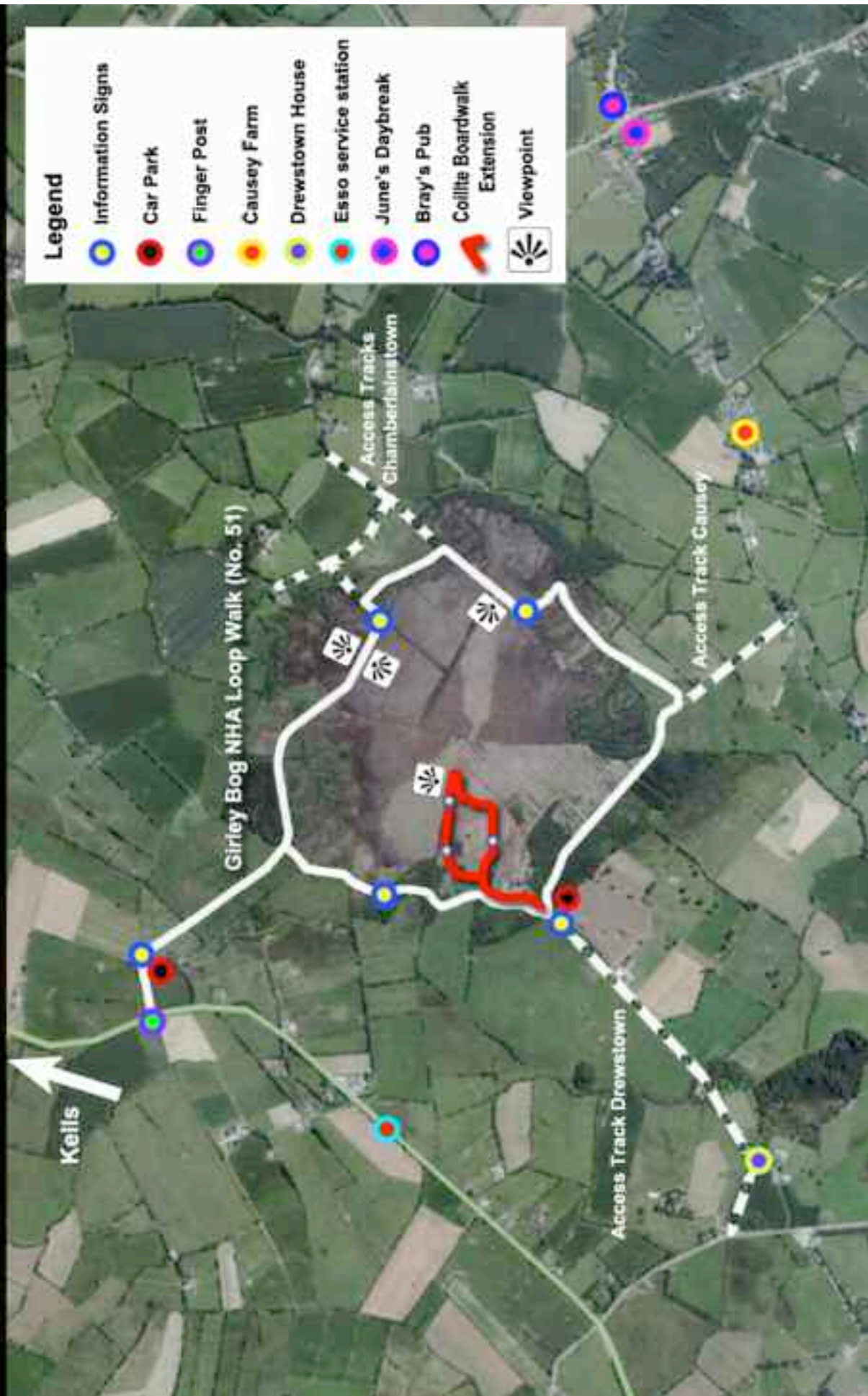


Figure 13: Map showing the location of the loop walk, the position of the interpretive signs and the various services for visitors surrounding the bog. Drawn by IPCC.

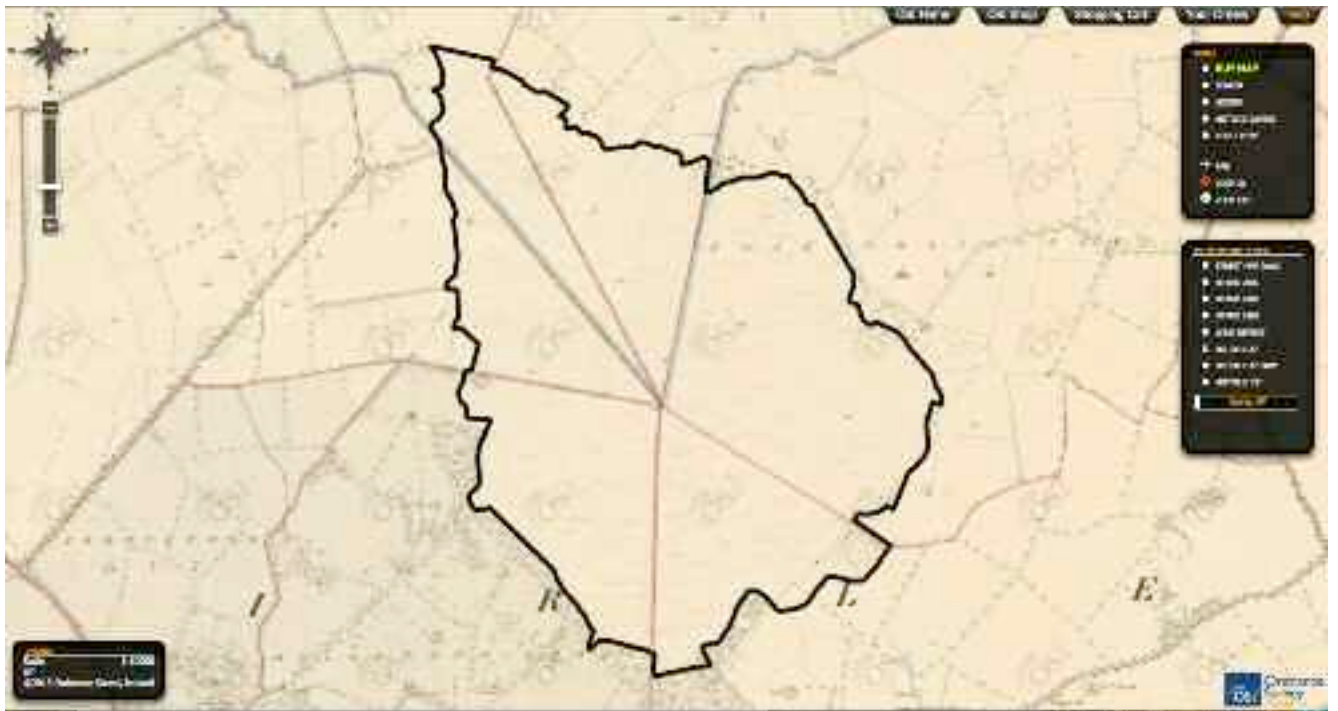


Figure 14: Map showing the natural hydrological boundary of Girley Bog and the present extent of the high bog. Drawn by IPCC. Source: www.osi.ie.





Girley Bog NHA (No. 1580), County Meath Conservation Management Plan  
Dumping Locations



Figure 16: Map showing the location of dumping on Girley Bog 2015. Drawn by IPCC.



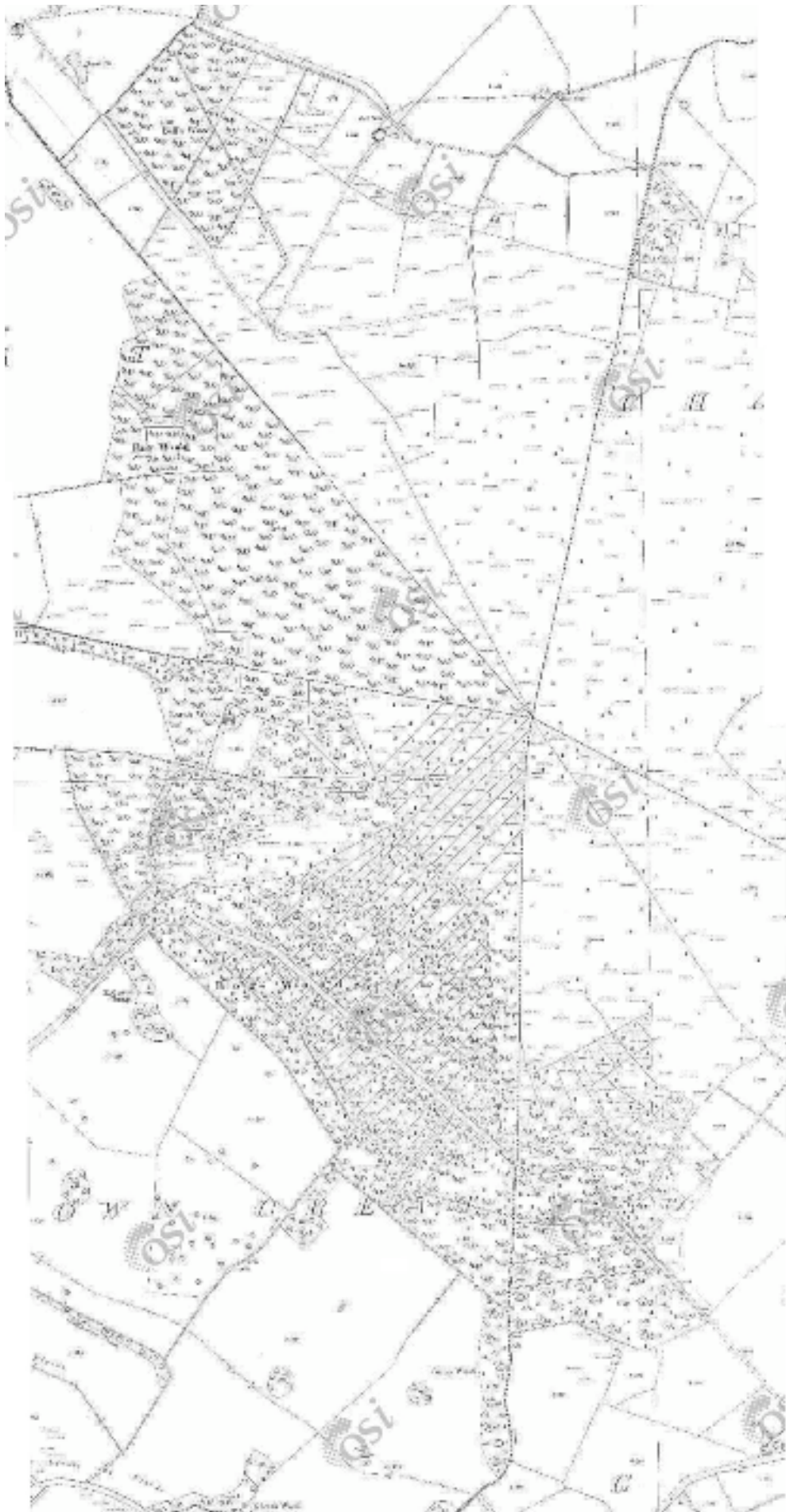


Figure 17: A portion of the 1910 Ordnance Survey Map showing the names and locations of the wooded areas at Girley bog.  
Source: [www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie)



Figure 18: Future habitats predicted for the portion of Girley bog restored by Coillte as part of an EU funded Life Project. Source: J. Derwin, Coillte.

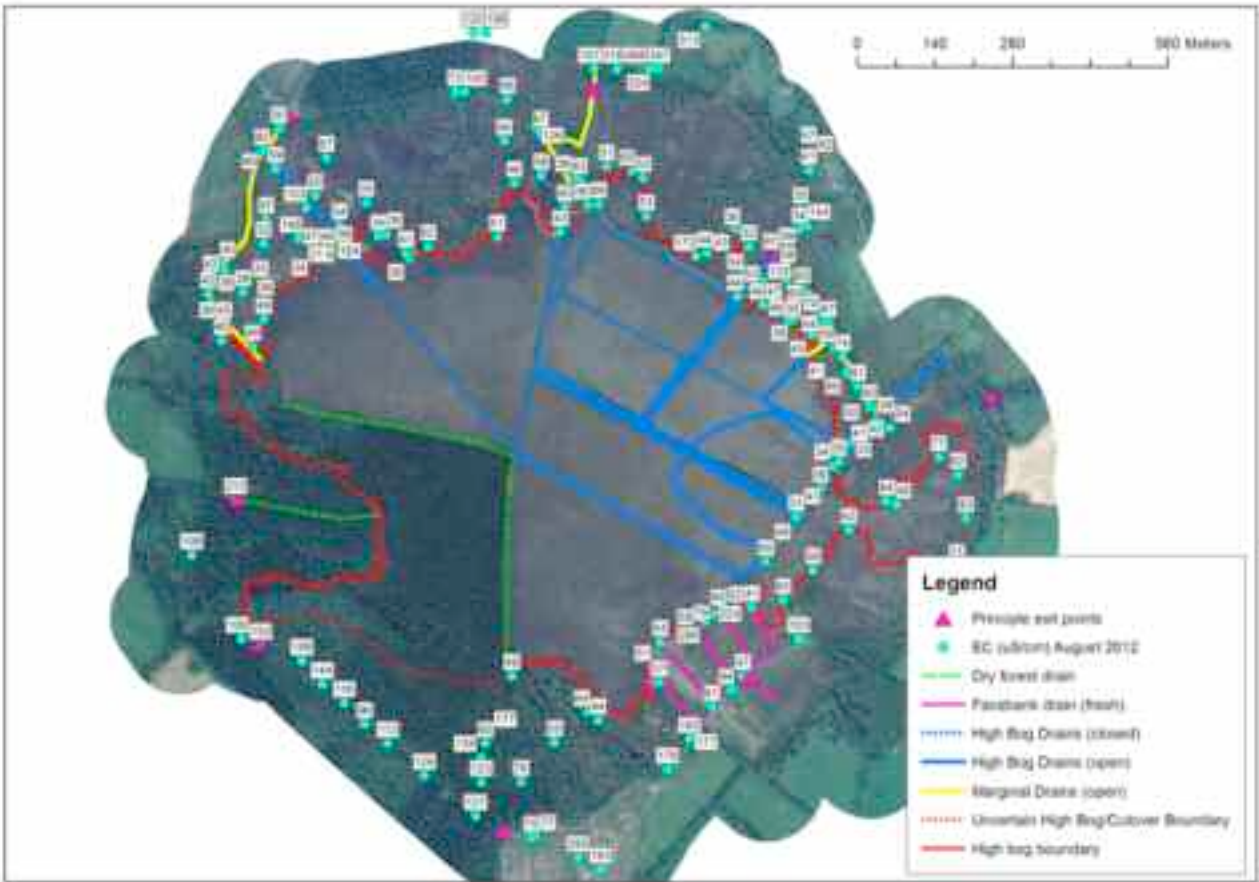


Figure 19: Map summarizing the results of a field hydrochemical survey of the drains immediately surrounding Girley Bog. (Completed August 2012). All electrical conductivity readings were corrected for temperature effects, i.e. Specific Electrical Conductivity (SEC). Source: Flynn & Regan 2012.





Figure 20: Water table map of Girley Bog generated using water level data collected on the 24th October 2012. Values beside each piezometer are heads (groundwater elevations about datum). Source: Flynn & Regan 2012.

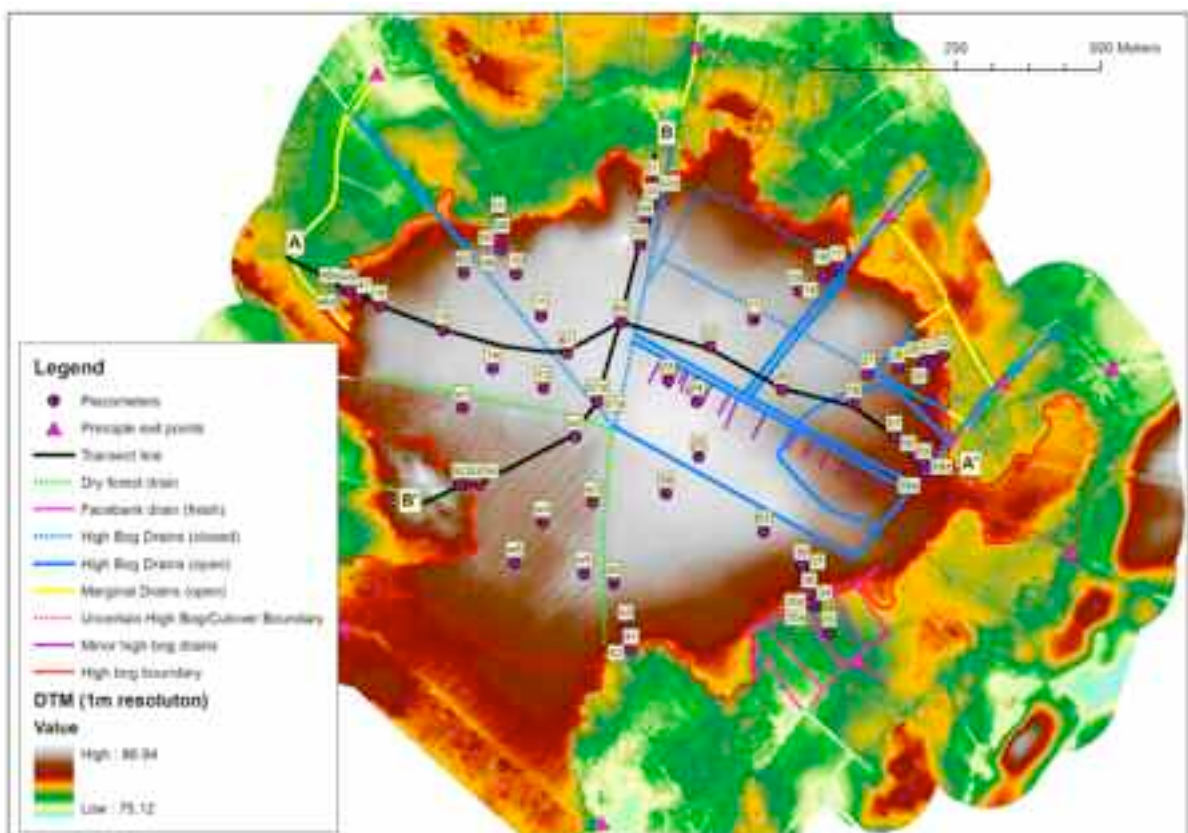


Figure 21: One metre DTM map of Girley bog showing the locations of the piezometers installed by Flynn & Regan 2012 and by Coillte 2011, the principal discharge points of water from the bog and the details of the drains on the high bog. Source: Flynn & Regan 2012.



Figure 22: Restoration Plan for the hydrology and peat forming ecotopes in a central core area of Girley Bog Co. Meath 2012. The area encompasses almost all part of the high bog (11%) where the topographic gradient is less than 1%. Primary dams are located at those points where the drain elevation has dropped by 10cm. Additional dams are located in those areas where the gradient is gentler, but where at least 3 dams per 100m length of drain are required. Source: Flynn & Regan 2012.



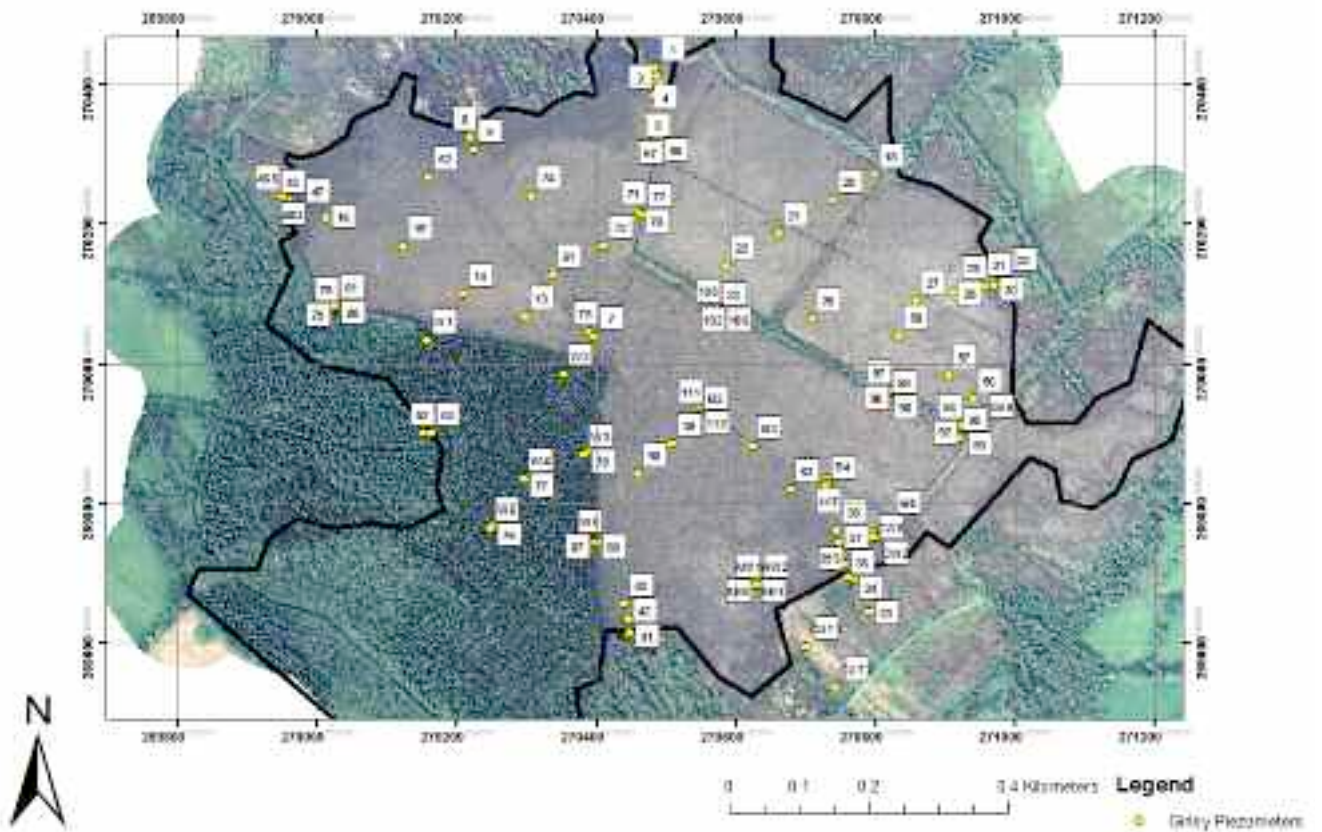
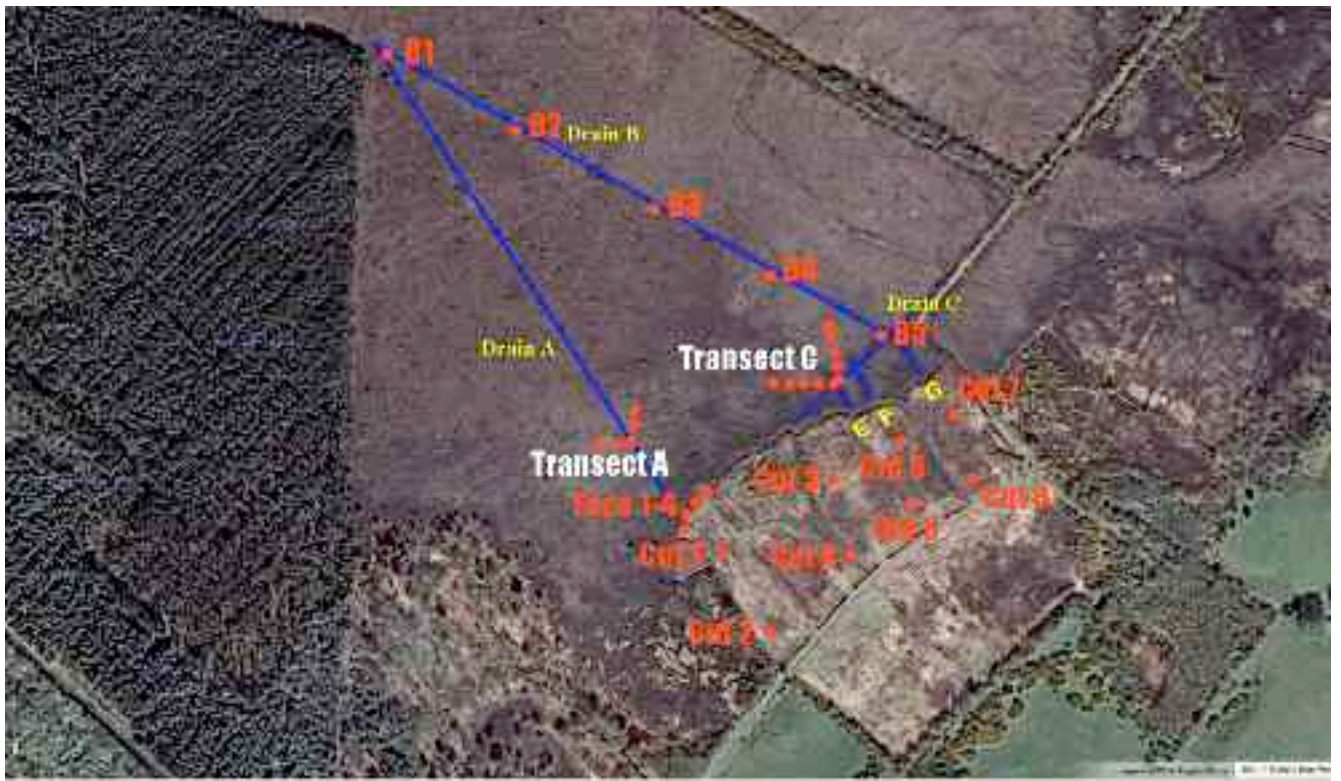


Figure 23: Map showing the total number of 145 water monitoring piezometers on Girley Bog. Source Cushnan pers. comm 2015. The image above show the detailed locations of the IPCC installed piezometers.



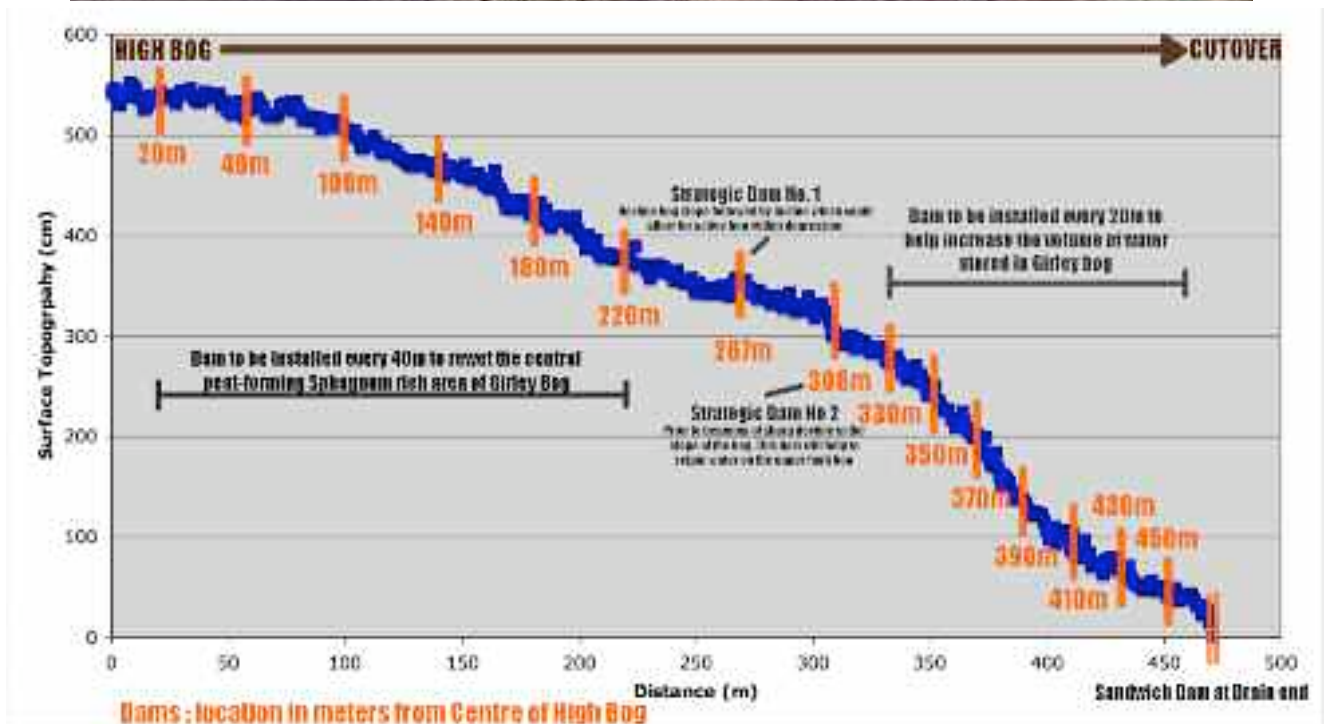


Figure 24: Drain blocking undertaken by IPCC on Girley Bog in 2014 and 2015 and the rationale for dam insertion into Drain B.



**Figure 25: List of moth fauna for Girley Bog NHA. Source: mothsireland.ie**

## NPWS Site Synopsis for Girley Bog NHA

SITE CODE: 001580

Girley Bog NHA is located 7 km south-west of Kells, mainly in the townlands Chamberlainstown, Girley, Drewstown Great and Ethelstown in Co. Meath. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog, and is bounded in parts by coniferous forestry to the south and north. The site is partially divided by a large drain that runs across the high bog. There is an area of hummocks and pools in the southern half of the high bog, although parts of the south-west have been afforested. Cutover is found all around this site and in the north-west and southwest the cutover has been utilised for forestry.

Much of the high bog has vegetation typical of a Midland Raised Bog, consisting of Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*) and Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*). Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*) and the lichen *Cladonia portentosa* are common on areas of the high bog. The bog mosses *Sphagnum papillosum*, *S. capillifolium* and *S. magellanicum* are common in the centre and south-west of the high bog and the scarce bog moss *S. fuscum* is found at the centre of the site. The bog moss *S. cuspidatum* is found in the pools at the centre of the bog and is also found in the tear pools in the north-west of the site in association with Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*). The bog moss *S. magellanicum* and White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) are found growing on the edges of these tear pools. Young Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*) and Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) are frequently encroaching on the high bog in the north-west and south-east of the site. In the south-west of the high bog there is coniferous forestry plantation. The cutover on the western half of the site is also dominated by coniferous forestry. The remainder of the cutover is dominated by Ling Heather and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) scrub.

Current landuses on the site include forestry, both on the high bog and on the cutover. There has been burning on the north-west of the high bog in the past. There is active peat-cutting in the north-west and south-east of the site. Damaging activities associated with these landuses include drainage throughout the site and burning of the high bog. There are major drains running through the centre of the high bog. All these activities have resulted in loss of habitat, damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Girley Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising as it does a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. This site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummocks and pools. This site is one of the few remaining raised bogs in County Meath and represents the eastern extreme of the range of raised bogs in the country. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of this habitat type (over 50%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

14.11.2002

**Figure 26: Site synopsis for establishing Girley Bog as a Natural Heritage Area. Source: [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)**





Figure 27: Site 704 Bog Woods, Cloncat, Co. Meath (Girley Bog Wood) surveyed by Perrin et al (2008) for the National Survey of Native Woodlands 2003-2008.

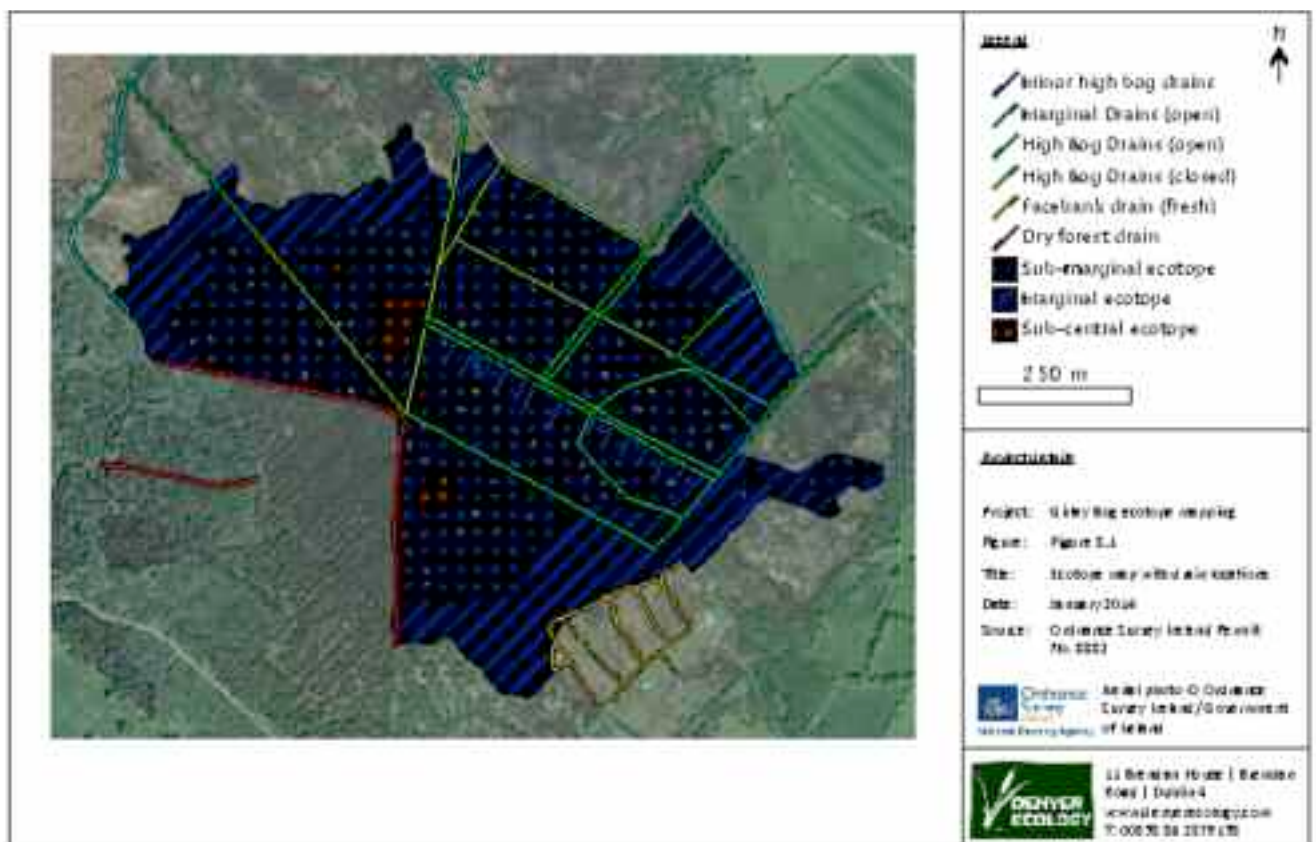


Figure 28: Ecotope survey of Girley bog 2014 showing the distribution of peat forming and non-peat forming communities on Girley Bog. Source: Denyer 2014.

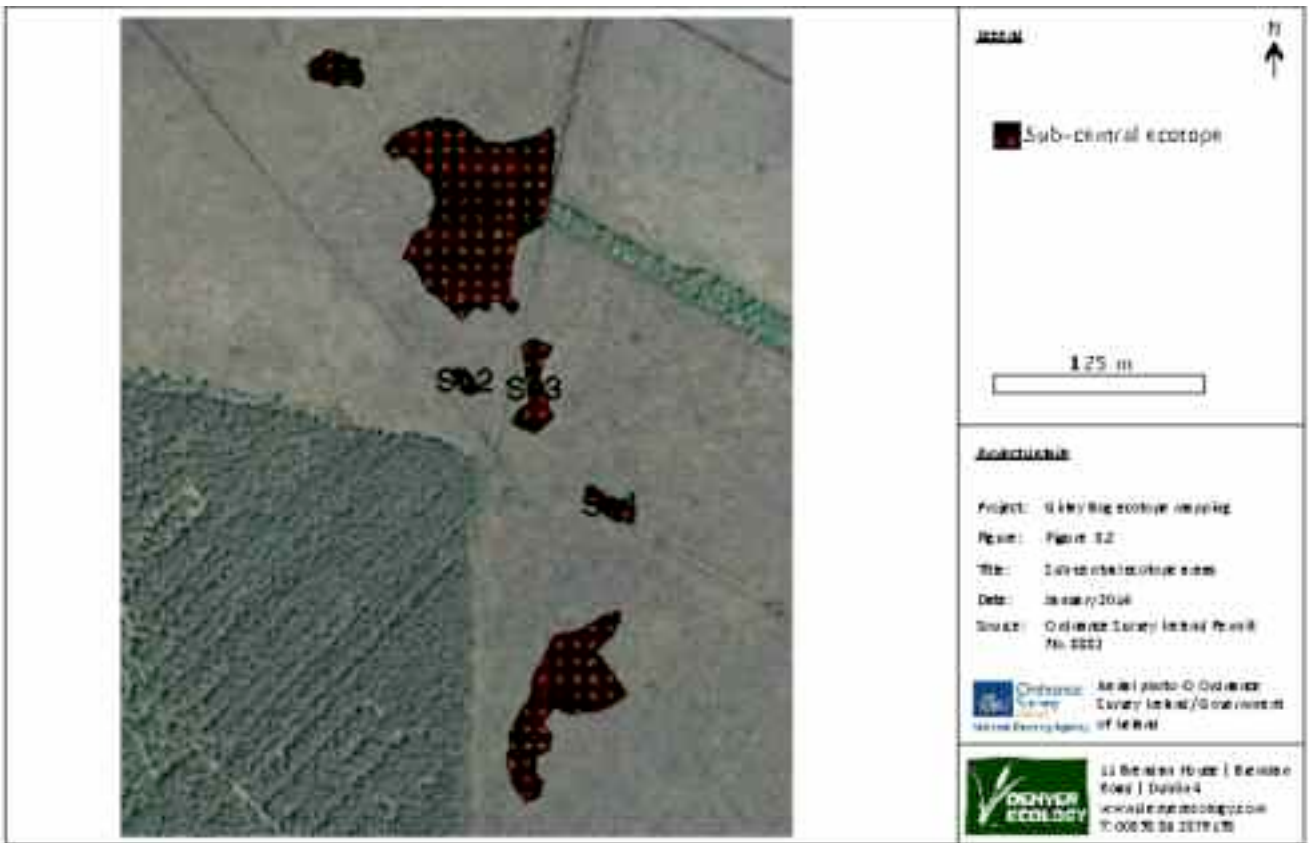


Figure 29: Detailed location of the 1.36ha of active peat forming sub central ecotope on Girley Bog 2014. Source: Denyer 2014.

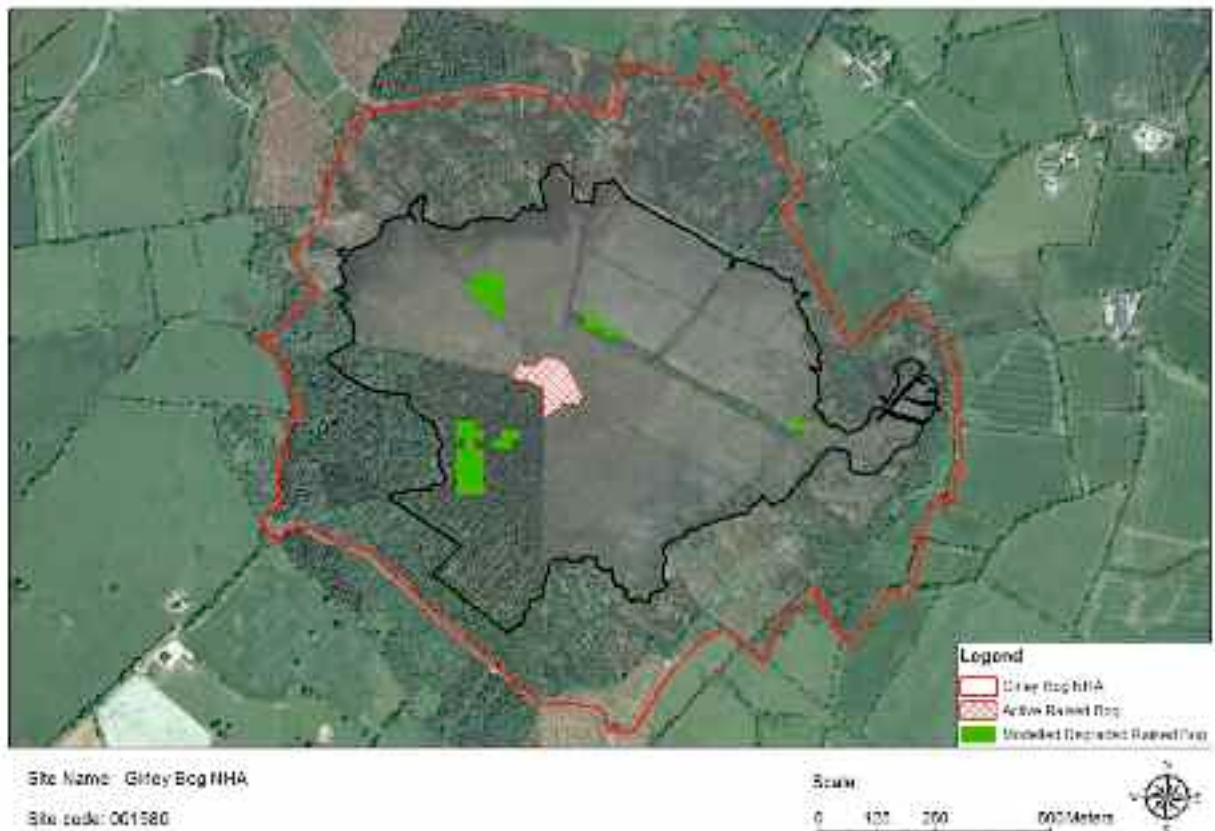


Figure 30: Detailed location of the active peat forming habitat and the modelled area of degraded raised bog habitat on Girley Bog. The area of each habitat is 1.6ha amounting to 3.6ha or 1% of the national active raised bog target. The area of the remaining high bog is outlined in black. Source: Macklin pers comm from the NHA Review 2014.



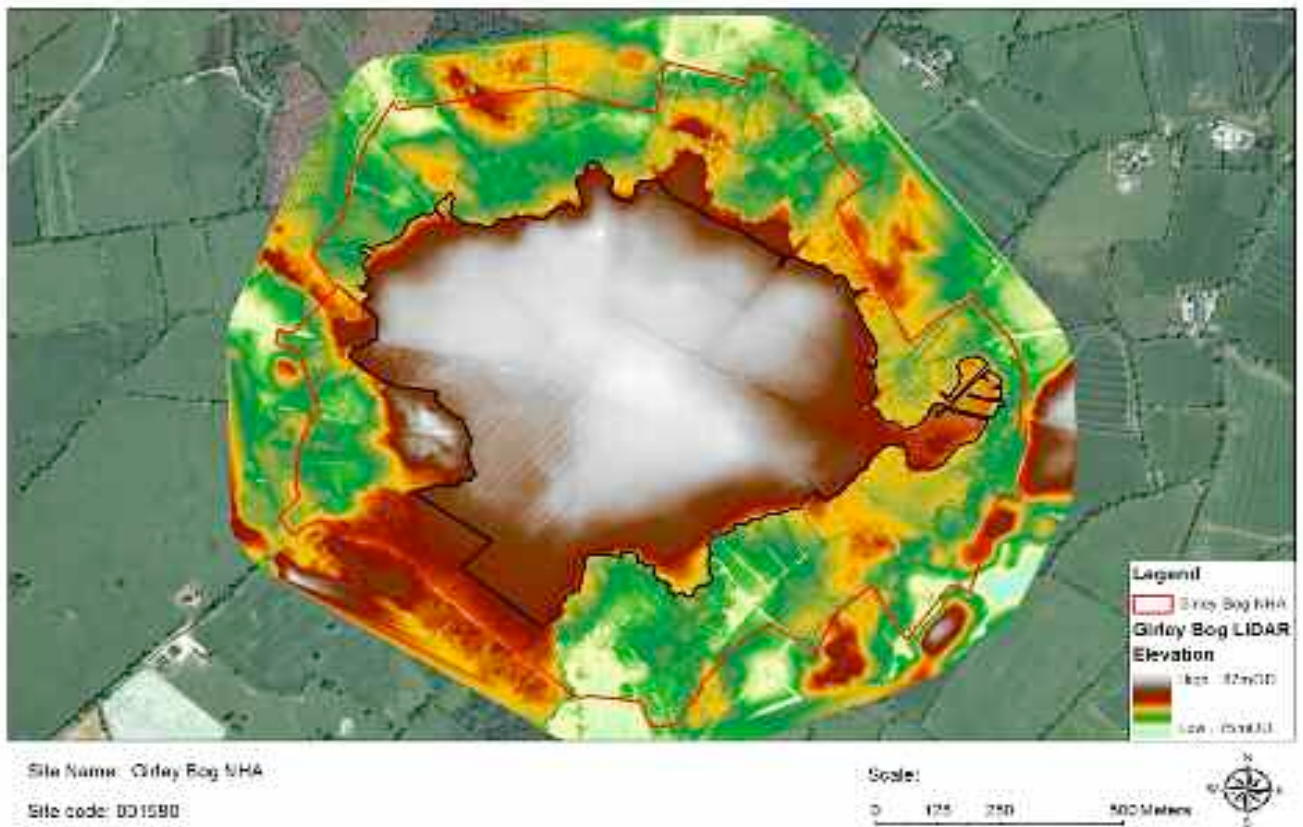


Figure 31: LIDAR map of Girley bog, Co. Meath. Source: Francis Macklin pers comm, NHA Review 2014).

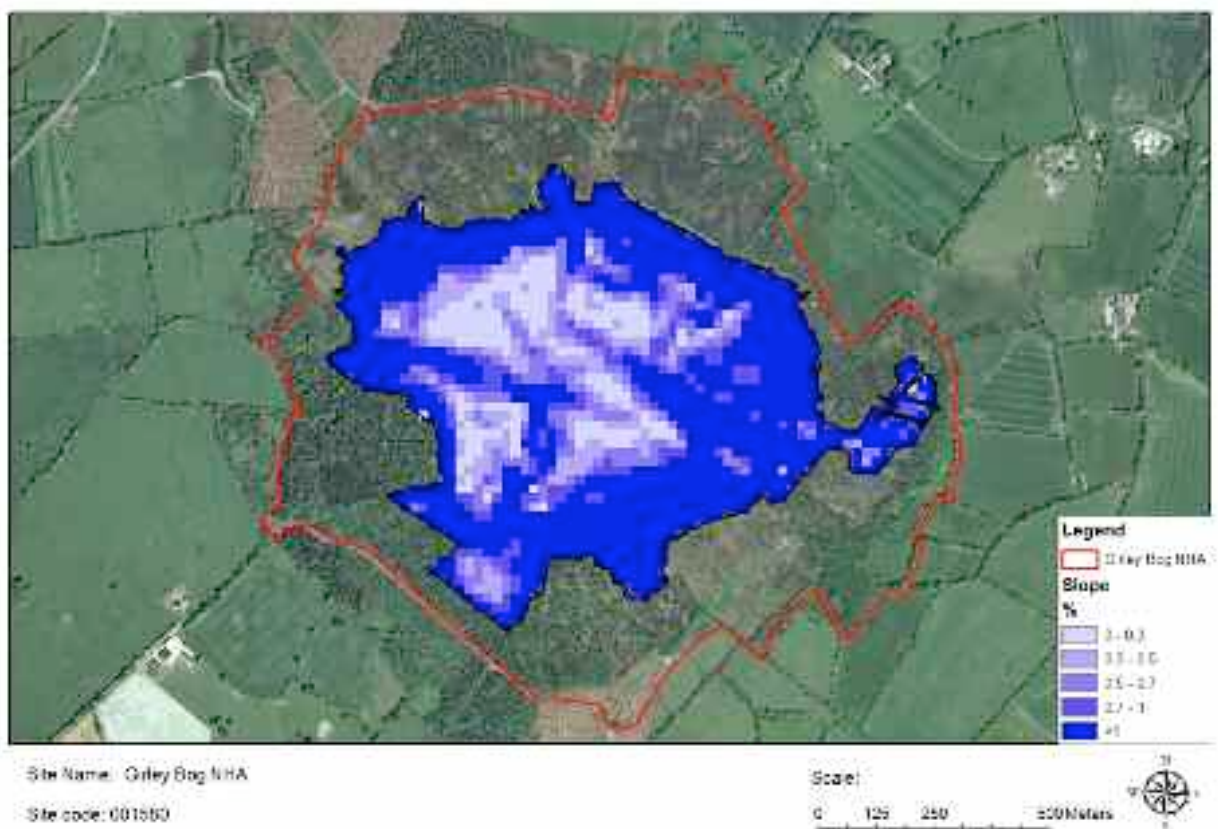


Figure 32: Slope map of Girley bog, Co. Meath. Source: Francis Macklin pers comm, NHA Review 2014).

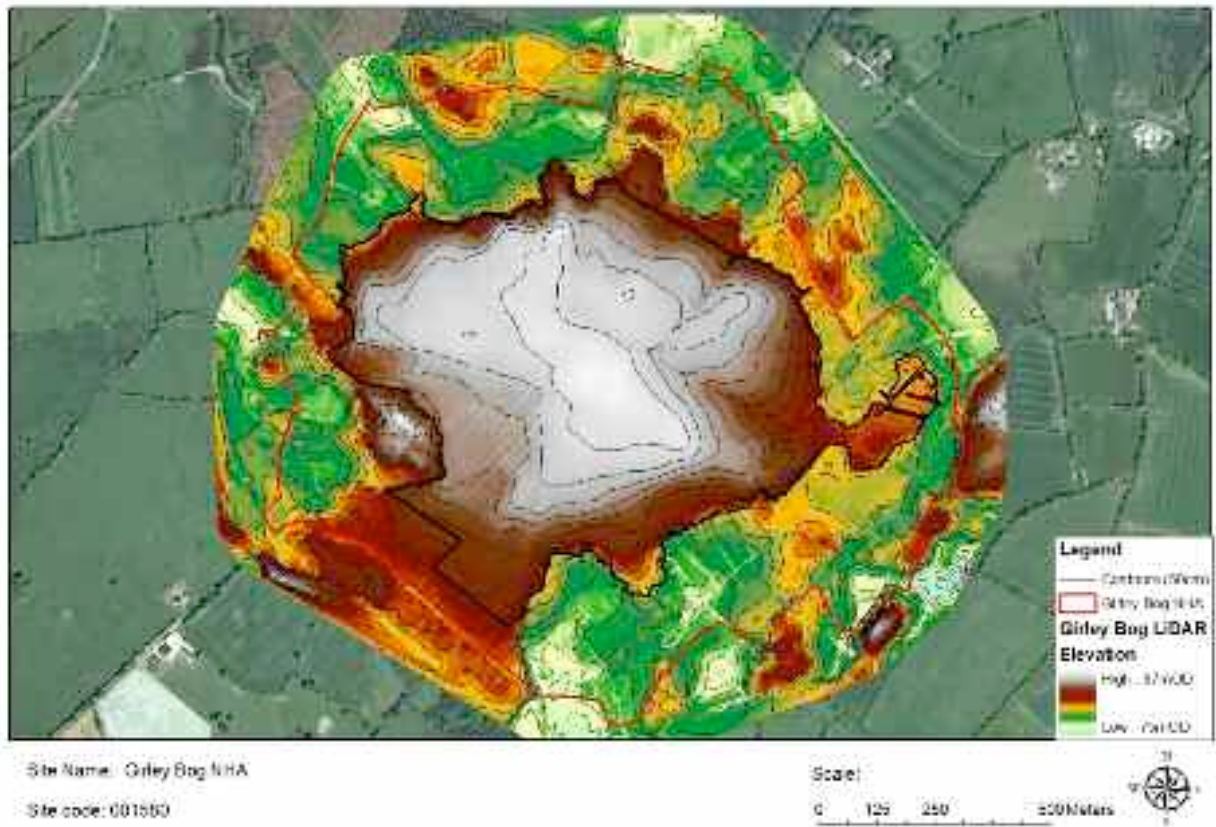


Figure 33: Contour map of Girley bog, Co. Meath. Source: Francis Macklin pers comm, NHA Review 2014).



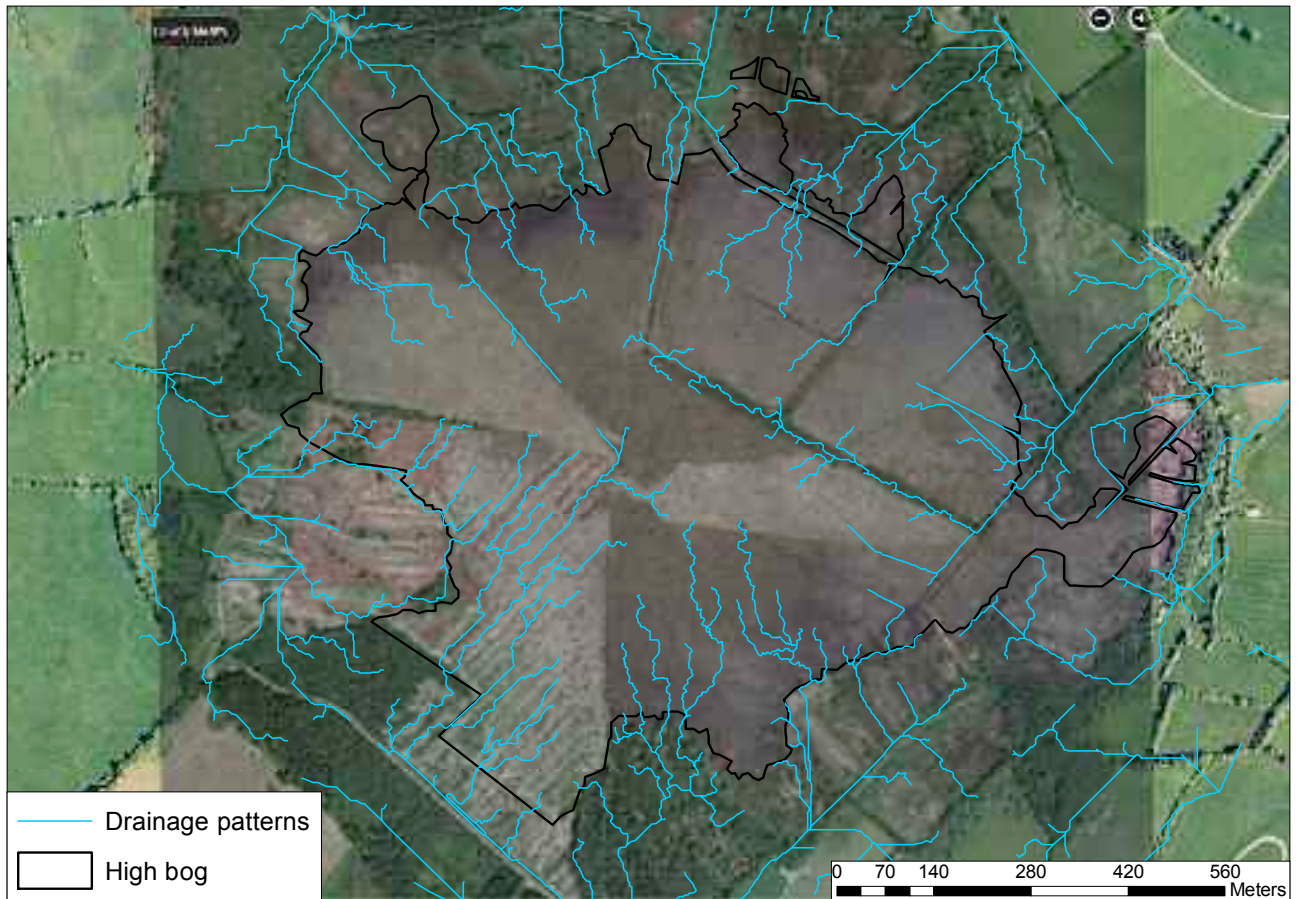


Figure 34: Drainage patterns on Girley Bog. Drawn by the RPS as part of the Natural Heritage Area Review in 2014.

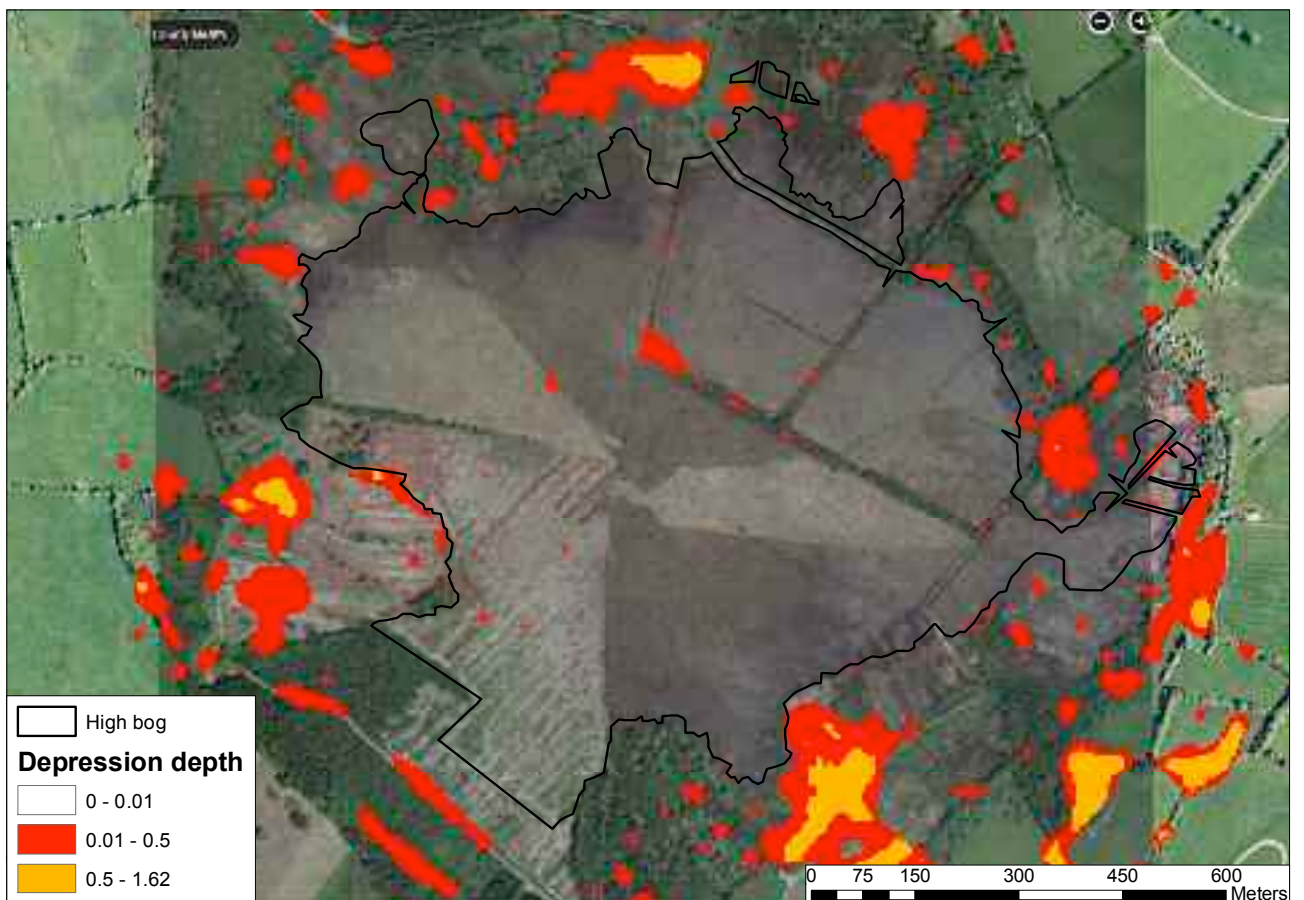


Figure 35: Depressions located in the cutover areas of Girley Bog which may be suitable for Active Raised Bog Restoration. Drawn by the RPS as part of the Natural Heritage Area Review in 2014.



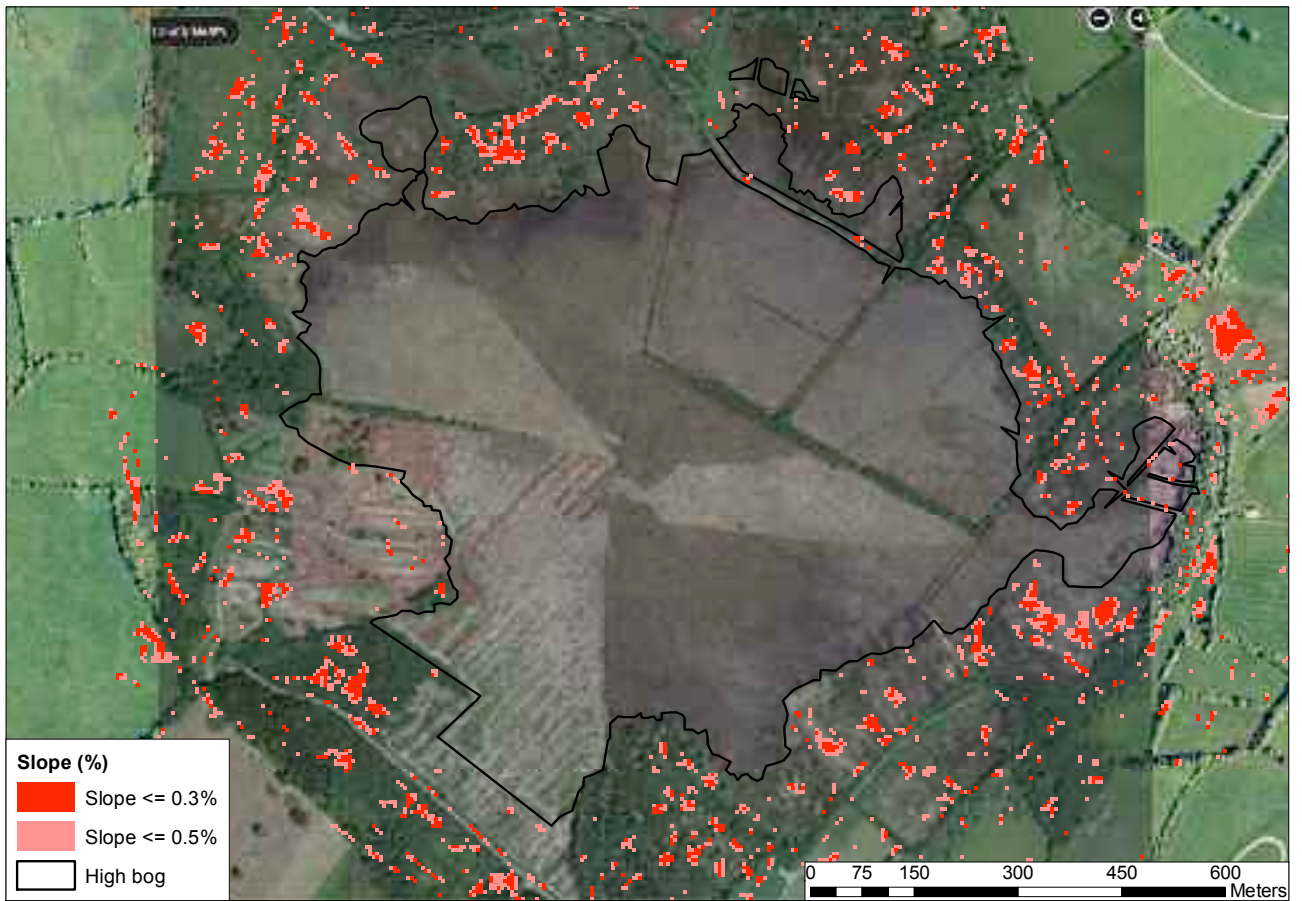


Figure 36: Slope patterns on the cutover bogland areas of Girley Bog. Drawn by the RPS as part of the Natural Heritage Area Review in 2014. Slopes of less than 0.3% are suitable for active raised bog formation provided the water table is high enough and there is a source of *Sphagnum* mosses. Drawn by RPS as part of the Natural Heritage Area Review in 2014.



Figure 37: *Sphagnum* moss restoration on the cutover of Girley by IPCC in 2014 and 2015.



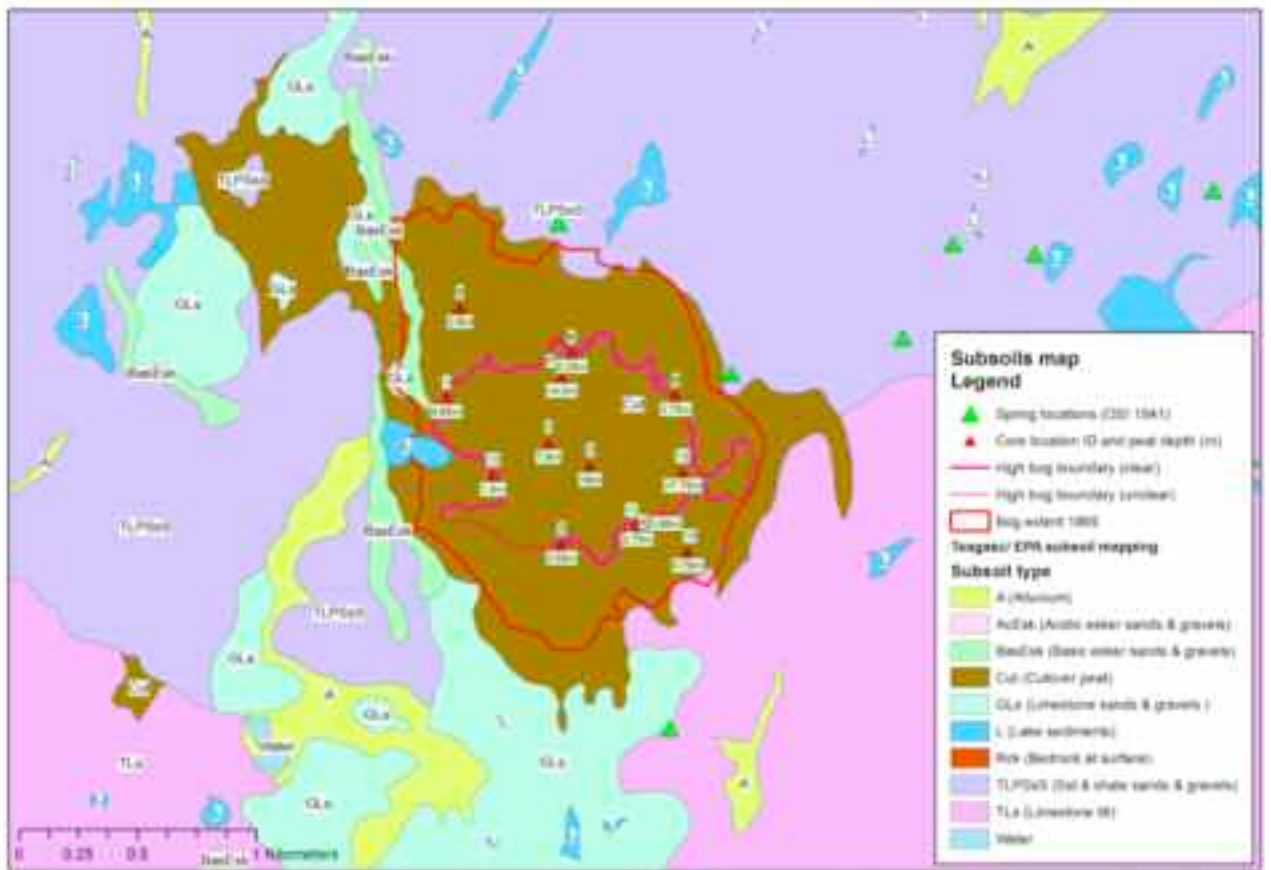


Figure 38: Subsoil geological map of Girley Bog and the surrounding area. The red line shows the extent of the bog in 1865. Source: Flynn & Regan 2012.



**Getting to Girley Bog**

**Safe Visit Guidelines**

As you explore Girley Bog you can learn more by stopping at the many information signs located throughout the loop walk. Here are some tips to ensure you have a safe visit and to help protect Girley Bog and its wildlife so that future generations can enjoy it too.



- \* Dumping of rubbish and personal items is prohibited as they damage the bog and spoil the environment.
- \* Camping, fires and the use of motorised vehicles on the bog are prohibited as they disturb wildlife. Please keep pets on a leash as they can disturb wildlife.
- \* It is an offence to feed or molest wildlife or remove or otherwise disturb any natural feature or plant on the bog.
- \* It is dangerous to walk on the bog surface owing to hidden ditches, soft ground, tree stumps and brambles. Please use the loop walk trail and the boardwalks provided.
- \* "Pursuant to the provisions of the Occupiers' Liability Act 1995, the occupiers of these premises puts all visitors to his premises on notice that his sole duties to them are: (a) not to injure the visitor or damage the property of the visitor intentionally, and (b) not to act with reckless disregard for the visitor or the property of the visitor."

Learn more about peatlands by visiting the Bog of Allen Nature Centre run by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council. Visit [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie) where you will find lots of information about Irish peatlands including a peatland passport offering you a selection of peatland sites that you can visit throughout Ireland.



Girley Bog is located 8km south west of Kells. Access and parking are available at the trail head for the Girley Bog National Loop Walk (No. 51) which is signposted from the N52.

GPS: N53.68483 E-6.94971

Grid Ref: N 705 680

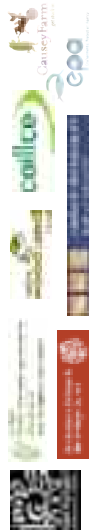
Area: 100ha

Status: Natural Heritage Area

No. 1580

Owners: private individuals, non governmental organisations and the Irish Government.  
Conserving Girley Bog is a meitheal between private individuals and the following groups:

Facilities:



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Irish Peatland Conservation Council,  
Bog of Allen Nature Centre, Lullymore,  
Rathangan, Co. Kildare.

Tel: +353-45-860133. [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie)

*Enjoy a walk through one of  
Ireland's wild peatlands and  
discover the variety of wildlife  
found on Girley Bog*



Figure 39a Girley Bog visitor map and guide published by the IPCC in 2014.



## Discovering Girley Bog - Formation, Wildlife & Conservation

Sundew one of Ireland's native insect eating plants can be found growing on *Sphagnum* moss on Girley Bog

### A Wilderness Preserved

Girley Bog from the Irish 'grelloch' meaning a mire or marshy place is a dome-shaped raised bog which developed in a lake basin over a period of 10,000 years. The dome of the bog is surrounded by deciduous woodlands. At the end of the last ice age, a shallow lake was present where the bog is today. This lake gradually became totally overgrown with vegetation that slowly accumulated in the lake basin, without decomposing, to form peat. Bog mosses (species of *Sphagnum*) began to grow in this unique water-logged environment. These mosses soaked up rainfall like sponges. Over the millennia their remains accumulated in the lake basin to a depth of 10m creating the peat that now forms the typical 'high bog' of Girley.



"The unique character of Girley Bog is formed through a combination of vegetation, water and peat that have been associated together for 10,000 years."

### Refuge for Wildlife

The surface of the bog is a mosaic of hummocks and hollows. In the wet hollows the water table is close to the surface and there are several species of bog moss or *Sphagnum* found here. Each species has a unique colour and together they form a vibrant mosaic or carpet on the bog surface. The insectivorous Great Sundew (*Drosera anglica*) and Round-leaved Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) are also found. Many species of *Cladonia* lichen form cushions on the bog. Some of them grow in interesting shapes including antler horns, pyxie cups, matchsticks and bearded types. The most obvious shrubs on the bog are Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) on the dry hummocks and in the wetter areas Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*). Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccus*) and Bog Rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) are also found. Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) and Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) are the two birds most often seen on the high bog. Ravens can be heard cawing as they patrol the skies above the bog and the surrounding woods. Frogs (*Rana temporaria*) are common on Girley Bog while Badgers, Foxes and Hares are sometimes seen criss-crossing the bog as they forage for food.

Watch out for Snipe rising from the bog surface



See Dragonflies that emerge from bog pools to hunt over the bog surface in the summer

Frogs are common on Girley bog



Listen for the Skylark as it sings while hovering high in the sky



### Conserving Girley Bog - A Meitheal

Girley Bog has suffered a lot of damage over the years. In the past drains were opened and turf cutting and afforestation were common. Today a number of state agencies including the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Coillte, with non governmental organisations including the Irish Peatland Conservation Council and the Native Woodland Trust along with private individuals and local tourism attractions are working together to ensure the conservation of Girley Bog for future generations to enjoy. Turf cutting ceased on the bog in 2011, drain blocking is ongoing and trees are being removed from the bog dome. Native trees are being planted on green fields around the perimeter of the bog. A loop walk has been developed around the perimeter of the bog to ensure that no damage occurs from visitors who enjoy this wonderful site.



Drain blocking helps to restore water levels and encourages growth of the bog building *Sphagnum* mosses

*Sphagnum* mosses also known as the 'Bog Builders' cover the surface of Girley Bog. As the mosses grow they form small cushions called hummocks, flat areas or lawns and depressions called hollows

See the vibrant yellow flowers of Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) on Girley in the Summer. The seed head is deep orange, colouring the bog in Autumn



Figure 39b Girley Bog visitor map and guide published by the IPCC in 2014.

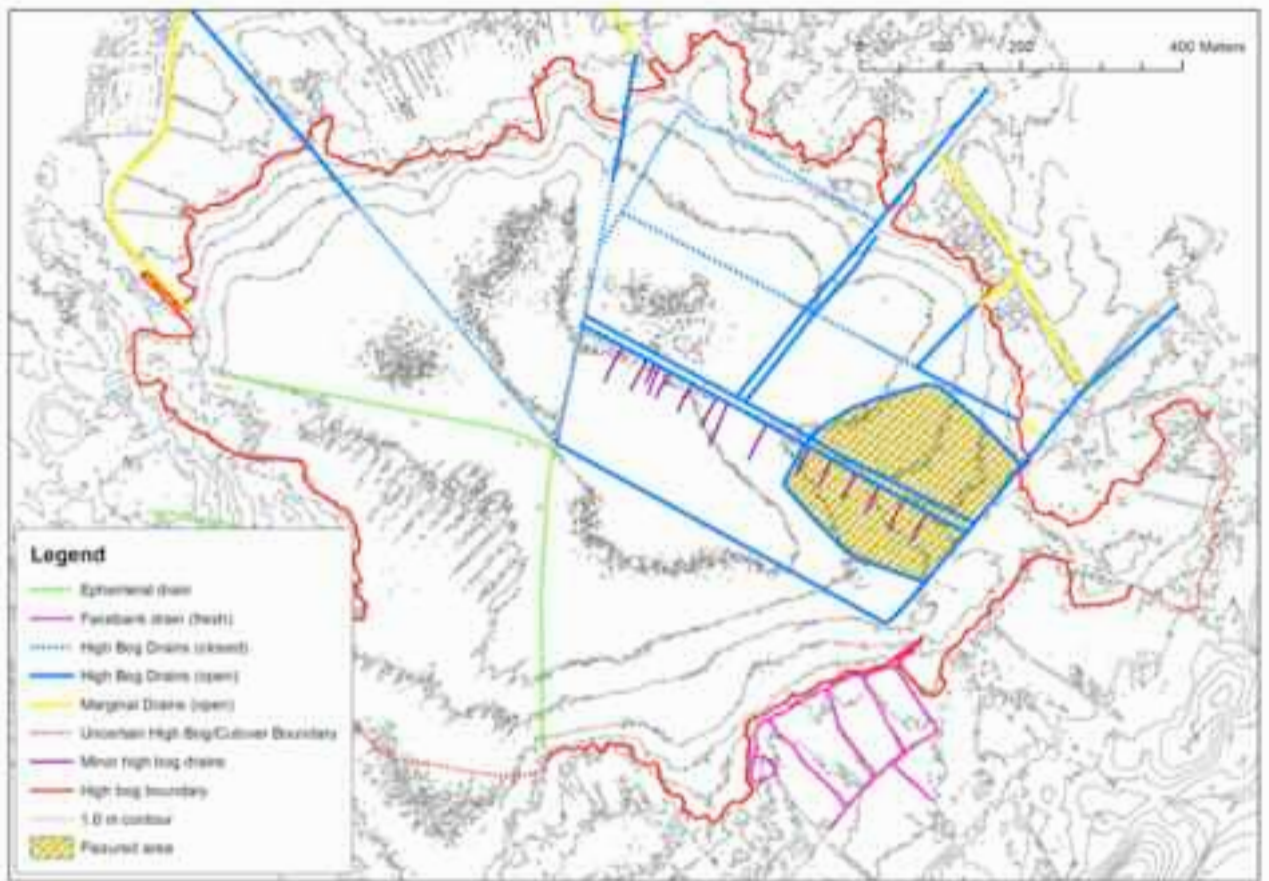


Figure 40: Effects of drainage on Girley Bog described by Flynn & Regan 2012.



**Outstanding Girley Bog**

What makes Girley Bog stand out from all the bogs in the land is its wildlife, its special loop walk and the wonderful fact it is bringing people together to help protect and promote this unique space. Here's the top 10 great things about Girley Bog

#1 Girley Bog is a special bog with a special loop walk. It is a special bog with a special loop walk.

#2 Girley Bog is a special bog with a special loop walk. It is a special bog with a special loop walk.

#3 Girley Bog is a special bog with a special loop walk. It is a special bog with a special loop walk.

#4 Girley Bog is a special bog with a special loop walk. It is a special bog with a special loop walk.

#5 Girley Bog is a special bog with a special loop walk. It is a special bog with a special loop walk.

#6 Girley Bog is a special bog with a special loop walk. It is a special bog with a special loop walk.

#7 Girley Bog is a special bog with a special loop walk. It is a special bog with a special loop walk.

#8 Girley Bog is a special bog with a special loop walk. It is a special bog with a special loop walk.

#9 Girley Bog is a special bog with a special loop walk. It is a special bog with a special loop walk.

#10 Girley Bog is a special bog with a special loop walk. It is a special bog with a special loop walk.

**Visiting Girley Bog**

- How often do you visit Girley bog? (tick answer)
  - Daily
  - Weekly
  - Monthly
  - Once a year
  - Never
  - Other (please specify) .....
- How long is it since your last visit? .....
- Why would you visit Girley Bog? (tick answers)
  - Event
  - Family outing
  - Volunteering
  - Walking
  - Adventure/Fun
  - Walking the dog
  - Wildlife
  - Bird Watching
  - Research
  - Work
  - Fitness/Health
  - Foraging
  - Other (please specify) .....
- Would you visit (tick answer)
  - Alone
  - With someone else
  - With a group
  - Other (please specify) .....

**Importance of Girley Bog to You**

- What does Girley Bog mean to you? .....
- What do you think is the most important issue in protecting the bog and its wildlife? (Rank your choices)
  - ... Protecting/Conserving Wildlife
  - ... Restoring bog habitat
  - ... Upgrading the loop walk
  - ... Reversing Victorian times
  - ... Involving the Community
  - ... Educating the public
  - ... Tackling illegal dumping
  - ... Other (please specify) .....
- Do you think a Conservation Action Plan is the best way to describe the importance of the bog and to list the work that needs to be done to protect it in the years ahead?  Yes  No Can you think of an alternative .....
- Where do you see Girley Bog in 30 years time. In 2025 and Girley Bog looks like (complete the sentence) .....

**Girley Bog, Co. Meath  
Conservation Action Plan 2015-2025  
Questionnaire**



The Girley Bog Meitheal Team invite you to give your opinion on the importance of Girley Bog to you and the issues you think need to be dealt with to safeguard and promote this site.

The survey will only take a few minutes of your time. We would value your opinion and thoughts and would like to include them in the Conservation Action Plan for the site. This plan will span the next 10 years to 2025.

Thank You.

P.S. If you would like to complete this survey on line please visit [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie) and click on the link provided. You can post this questionnaire to Girley Bog Meitheal, C/O IPCC, Lullymore, Rathangan, Co. Kildare or hand it in to Matt Maragh, Curragh Park, Blessington, Meath, Co. Meath.

**Closing date for questionnaires is Friday 29th May 2015**



This project is supported by the Heritage Council under the Community-based Heritage Grant Scheme 2015

**Protecting and Enhancing Girley Bog**

- Are you aware of the following management work or projects being undertaken on Girley Bog (please tick if yes)
  - Drain blocking to raise the water level in the high bog
  - Tree planting around the bog to enhance wildlife biodiversity
  - Rubbish removed from the loop walk for health and safety reasons
  - Bog mosses transplantation on the outdoor bog to restore bog growth
  - Removal of invasive species from the bog and the woodlands which threaten native wild species
  - Construction of a bog bridge across the high bog as an extension to the loop walk around its perimeter to add to the visitors experience of the bog
  - Raising water level on the bog in a series of dips/trails to ensure conditions are right for peat growth year round
  - Researching the local history of Girley bog to enhance our understanding of the importance of this site
  - Removal of a conifer plantation from the high bog by Cutliffe to help restore the original raised bog plants and vegetation
  - Provision of parking space for visitors
  - Provision of information signs to raise awareness of the wonder of Girley

**Getting Involved**

- Have you any suggestions about how to spread the word about Girley Bog to the local community and further afield? .....
- Are you interested in getting involved in projects on Girley Bog?
  - Yes
  - No
- Would you be interested in attending an information event about Girley bog this summer?  Yes  No
- Please give your name and contact email or telephone number if you answered yes to the last two questions or if you wish to be added to the Girley Bog mailing list.
 

Name: .....

Tel: ..... Email: .....

Please use this box for any further comments you wish to make

Figure 41: The Girley Bog Community Opinion Survey which helped to inform the development of the Conservation Action Plan.

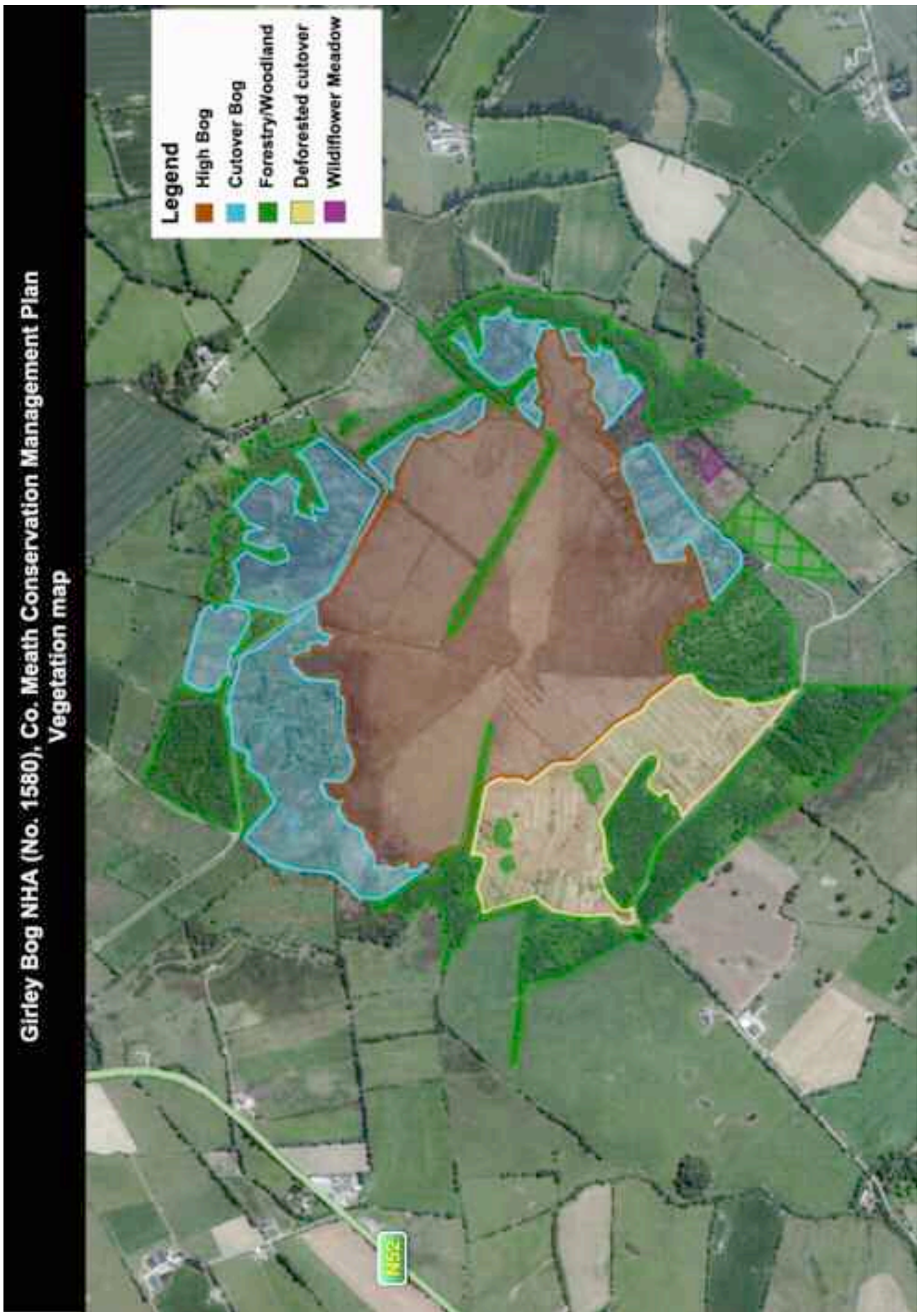


Figure 42: Vegetation Map of Girley Bog drawn by IPCC. Source: Applemaps