Bord na Móna

# Noggusboy Bog

# Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2022

This document seeks to address the requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC License Ref. PO500-01:

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

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

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

*Industrial peat production has now fully ceased at Noggusboy Bog.*

*In addition, to preparing this document to comply with Condition 10 of IPC Licence Ref. PO500-01, due regard was also given to the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme (PCAS) announced by the Minster. This Scheme will see the Minister support, via the Climate Action Fund* and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan*, Bord na Móna in developing a package of measures, 'the Scheme', for enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration of cutaway peatlands referred to as, the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme'. However, only the additional costs associated with the additional and enhanced rehabilitation, i.e, measures which go beyond the existing standard mandatory decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements arising from Condition 10 will be eligible for support. The additional costs of the Scheme will be supported by Government, administered by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), while the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) will act as the Scheme regulator.*

*While this document outlines the enhanced rehabilitation measures planned for Noggusboy bog, activities which goes beyond that required by Condition 10 in the Licence, rehabilitation necessary to comply with the 'standard' requirement of Condition 10 (in the absence of the Scheme) is also included, to estimate costs. The inclusion of the 'standard' rehabilitation together with the enhanced rehabilitation in this document allows the Scheme Regulator to distinguish and objectively determine the specific activities (and their associated costs) eligible for support under the Scheme.*

*Bord na Móna have defined the key rehabilitation outcome at Noggusboy Bog as environmental stabilisation, re-wetting and setting the bog on a trajectory towards development of naturally functioning peatland and wetland habitats.*

*Lough Boora Discovery Park is a key amenity in the midlands of Ireland that has been developed at Boora Bog and surrounding bogs over a long period. This includes Cloghan Lake amenity, which has been leased and managed by Cloghan Community Development Association. Rehabilitation will take account of existing land-uses and infrastructure and will seek to positively integrate peatland re-wetting while maintaining other land-uses, particularly amenity.*

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

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## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- Industrial peat harvesting is now finished at Noggusboy Bog, located 0.8 km east of Cloghan and 1.8 km south of Ferbane in Co Offaly.
- Bord na Móna is planning to rehabilitate Noggusboy Bog.
- This is happening as Bord na Móna are obliged to carry out peatland rehabilitation via an IPC License issued by the Environmental protection Agency. In addition, the Government has agreed to support peatland rehabilitation via the establishment of the Peatland Climate Action Scheme (PCAS). This is funded via the government and by Bord na Móna.
- The key objective of peatland rehabilitation is environmental stabilisation. This means developing habitats and vegetation back onto the bare peat, and minimising impacts to downstream. The bog was drained in the past to allow peat production. Better results for water quality improvements, climate action, the reduction of carbon emissions and biodiversity are achieved when the remaining peat is re-wetted. This means drain-blocking and other measures to raise water levels to the surface of the bog and to encourage the natural colonisation of vegetation.
- In general, soggy ground conditions are preferred. This means the remaining peat is wet and that plants that prefer wetter conditions, like bog cotton and reeds will thrive.
- Many Bord na Móna bogs can not be restored back to raised bog, as so much peat has been removed and the environmental conditions have been modified. However, other natural habitats will develop like shallow wetlands with reedbeds and birch woodland, and in time a naturalised peatland can be restored.
- Re-wetting peat is also better for climate action. This reduces carbon emissions as re-wetting the remaining peat reduces carbon losses such as the production of Carbon Dioxide, the main Greenhouse Gas. The site is expected to still be a reduced carbon source for some time, but eventually the carbon sink function can re-establish in suitable conditions, as peat-forming conditions are restored. This will take some time.
- The development of a range of habitats in Noggusboy Bog will support biodiversity including plants, insects, birds and mammals. This includes some species that are rare and protected in the wider landscape. It will increase the national area of native woodland. Many wetland and peatland habitats in the wider landscape have been reclaimed for agriculture and other uses and peatland rehabilitation is an opportunity to create new wetland and peatland habitats.
- Noggusboy Bog was drained and developed for industrial peat production in the 1950's. Industrial peat extraction ceased completely in 2020. The western side of the that have been out of production for a longer period has already developed a mosaic of wetland and peatland habitats.
- Part of Noggusboy was developed as Cloghan lake amenity. This area is managed by Cloghan Community Development Association as an amenity and fishing lake. This area is considered rehabilitated already. Cloghan Community Development Association have also leased an additional area of cutaway to the west of the site.
- Part of the site was also developed for conifer forestry, by Coillte.
- Measures proposed for Noggusboy Bog include internal drain blocking and other measures required to raise water levels to the surface of the peat (changing levels of pipes for example). Some fertiliser will be spread on headlands and other areas (a small part of the overall area) to encourage vegetation growth.
- Bord na Móna plan to carry out this work in 2022.
- These rehabilitation measures will be planned by a team consisting of ecologists, hydrologists and engineers. It is a principle of Bord na Móna rehabilitation planning that no actions will be taken that

would negatively impact on adjacent land. No boundary drains will be blocked. Water will still leave the site via the existing outlets.

- It will take some time for vegetation and habitats to fully develop at Noggusboy, and a peatland ecosystem to be restored. However, it is expected that most of the site with bare peat will be developing pioneer habitats after 5-10 years. Other areas where pioneer habitats have already established will continue to develop.
- This is a peatland rehabilitation plan. Bord na Móna continually reviews its land-bank to consider future commercial or industrial developments, such as renewable energy. Bord na Móna are reviewing the potential to develop a potential renewable energy project at Noggusboy Bog. It is expected that this review will be completed in 1-2 years. In advance of this review of renewable energy potential, it is planned to rehabilitate **part** of Noggusboy Bog in 2022-2024 that is not constrained (see drawing number BNM-DR-23-11-05: Enhanced Rehab Measures and BNM-DR-23-11-20: Standard Rehab Measures). The remaining area (east section) will be rehabilitated after the renewable energy review is complete.
- Any other proposed development will planned in adherence to relevant planning guidelines and will consider the rehabilitation and the condition of the site.
- Peatland rehabilitation of these bogs will bring a range of benefits to the local community via improvements to the local landscape and is also important for supporting national policies and strategies in relation to reduction of carbon emissions from these peatlands, supporting biodiversity and improvements to water quality.

## SUMMARY

**Name of bog:** Noggusboy **Area:** 977 ha

**Site description:**

- Noggusboy Bog was drained and developed for industrial peat production in the 1950's. Noggusboy Bog formerly supplied milled fuel peat. Industrial peat production ceased in 2018.
- The former peat production footprint now comprises bare peat, mosaics of pioneer vegetation, some emergent scrub and wetland habitats. Active drainage channels are present on site, although some wetland creation works were undertaken in the past within the western portion of the site.
- Noggusboy Bog is a shallow peat cutaway bog as the majority of the peat has been cutaway.
- The drainage of Noggusboy was partially pumped, with the pump located along the road to the west. The pump is now turned off.
- Noggusboy bog is drained by the Falsk stream, a tributary of the nearby Silver River to the east. The Silver River joins the River Brosna further downstream to the north of the site. The Brosna River joins the River Shannon further to the northwest, north of Banagher.
- Cloghan lake amenity was developed on Noggusboy Bog. This area is managed by Cloghan Community Development Association.
- Part of the bog was also developed for conifer forestry by Coillte.

**Rehabilitation goals and outcomes**

Bord na Móna is committed to discharging the obligations arising from Condition 10 of the IPC licence. This is defined as:

- Meeting conditions of the IPC licence;
- Stabilisation or improvement in water quality parameters (e.g. suspended solids);
- Environmental stabilisation.
- Optimising hydrological conditions in the former area recently in industrial peat production for the further development of wetland, Reed swamp, wet woodland and fen habitats on shallow cutaway peats, along with management of existing wetlands.
- The site has already developed a mosaic of pioneer cutaway habitats in places, notably wetland, Birch woodland and fen habitats. These areas will be assessed for potential for targeted actions to enhance existing wetland habitats and create small wetland features.
- Optimising hydrological conditions for the protection of exposed archaeological structures, their retention in situ and preservation into the future.
- Supporting current land-use and potential future amenity. Cloghan Lake is an important amenity area. Part of the site is leased to Coillte and managed as conifer forestry. Integrating rehabilitation measures with current infrastructure and land-uses.
- Rehabilitation will support the National Policies on Climate Action and GHG mitigation by maintaining and enhancing the current residual peat storage capacity of the bog (locking the carbon into the ground). It is expected that the bog will have reduced emissions (reduced source) as it develops naturally functioning wetland and peatland habitats. It will also support Ireland's commitments towards Water Framework Directive and the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021.

**Scope of rehabilitation**

The principal scope of this rehabilitation plan is defined by:

- The area of Noggusboy Bog.
- EPA IPC Licence - Ref. PO500-01. As part of Condition 10.2 of this license, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. The key objective of 'rehabilitation', as required by this licence, is achieved by the **environmental stabilisation** of the bog.
- The enhanced rehabilitation measures defined in the Scheme (PCAS), which are designed to exceed/meet the standard stabilisation requirements as defined by the IPC Licence and to enhance the ecosystem services of Noggusboy Bog, in particular, optimising **climate action benefits**.
- The local environmental conditions of this bog. Noggusboy Bog has variable environmental characteristics with a range of residual peat depths, and variable hydrology and topography. Some pioneer habitats have already developed. Noggusboy is suited to cutaway wetland development, particularly where low lying areas occur and a large wetland already occurs within the west of the site.
- The key goals and outcomes of rehabilitation at this bog.
- Areas are managed for conifer forestry by Coillte. It is not proposed to carry out any measures that would negatively affect Coillte managed lands.
- Current Land-uses. Cloghan Lake is an important midlands amenity site. It is not proposed to carry out any intensive rehabilitation actions to change or negatively affect any current amenity infrastructure or existing land-uses.
- Bord na Móna are reviewing the potential to develop a potential renewable energy project at Noggusboy Bog. It is expected that this review will be completed in 1-2 years. In advance of this review of renewable energy potential, it is planned to rehabilitate part of Noggusboy Bog in 2022-2024 that is not constrained (see drawing number BNM-DR-23-11-05: Enhanced Rehab Measures and BNM-DR-23-11-20: Standard Rehab Measures). The remaining area will be rehabilitated after the renewable energy review is complete. This peatland rehabilitation will either be in association with a potential renewable energy project, with peatland rehabilitation integrated into the proposed project, or will be completed in the absence of any proposed renewable energy project. Bord na Móna remain committed to rehabilitating all of Noggusboy Bog and meeting conditions of the IPC Licence for this bog.
- Minimising potential impacts on neighbouring land. Some boundary drains around Noggusboy Bog will be left unblocked as blocking boundary drains could affect adjacent land.

**Criteria for successful rehabilitation:**

The Criteria for successful rehabilitation for IPC Licence validation and for climate action verification have been defined as:

- Rewetting of residual peat in the former area of industrial peat production to slow water movement across the site to retain silt, accelerating the development of vegetation cover via natural colonisation, and reducing the area of bare exposed peat (IPC Licence validation) through the creation of compatible fen, reed swamp, wet woodland and other wetland and peatland habitats.
- Stabilising or reducing key emissions to water (e.g. potential run-off of suspended solids) This will be measured via water quality monitoring (suspended solids and ammonia) for at least 2 years after the rehabilitation has been completed (IPC Licence validation).
- Reducing pressure from peat production on the local river catchment (WFD) (IPC Licence validation). This will be measured by the EPA WFD monitoring programme.
- Optimising the extent of suitable hydrological conditions to optimise climate action (Climate action verification).
- Reduction in carbon emissions (Climate action verification). This will be measured by an aerial survey after rehabilitation has been completed.
- Setting the site on a trajectory towards establishment of a mosaic of compatible habitats including fen, reed swamp, wet woodland, heath, scrub, embryonic *Sphagnum*-rich peat forming communities, birch woodland habitats, where conditions are suitable, and eventually towards a reduced carbon source/carbon sink (Climate action verification). These habitats will generally establish initially as pioneer

vegetation. It will take some time for stable naturally functioning peatland habitats to fully develop at Noggusboy Bog.
- Improvement in biodiversity and ecosystem services. (Climate action verification).

**Summary of measures:**

The below section is a summary of measures proposed for rehabilitation.

- Planning actions, including developing a detailed site plan and carrying out a drainage management assessment.
- Carry out an ecological appraisal of the potential impacts of the planned rehabilitation.
- Carry out proposed measures, which will be a combination of targeted drain blocking, peat field re-profiling, modifying outfalls and water level management.
- Phase 2 measures may include fertiliser application targeting bare peat areas on headlands, high fields and other areas, and further water level management.
- Silt ponds will continue to be maintained during the rehabilitation and decommissioning schedule.
- Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate, where necessary.
- Decommissioning of silt-ponds will be assessed and carried out, where required.

**Timeframe:**

- 2021-2022. Short-term planning actions.
- 2022. Short-term practical actions.
- 2022-2024. Long term practical actions. Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate, where necessary.
- Post 2024. Decommission silt-ponds, if necessary.

**Monitoring, after-care and maintenance**

The monitoring, after-care and maintenance programme for Noggusboy Bog, as required to meet Condition 10 of the IPC Licence, is defined as:

- There will be initial quarterly monitoring assessments of the site to determine the general status of the site, the condition of the silt-ponds, assess the condition of the rehabilitation work, asses the progress of natural colonisation, monitoring of any potential impacts on neighbouring land and general land security. The number of site visits will reduce after 2 years to bi-annually. These site visits will assess the need to any additional rehabilitation.
- **Water quality monitoring** will be established. Monitoring of key water quality parameters will include: Ammonia, Phosphorous, Suspended solids (silt), pH and conductivity.
- Where other uses are proposed for the site, these will be assessed by Bord na Móna in consultation with interested parties. Other after-uses can be proposed for licensed areas and must go through the required assessment and planning procedures.

**Additional Monitoring:**

- The monitoring and validation of re-vegetation via natural colonisation and changes in bog condition will be carried out using an aerial survey, after rehabilitation measures are implemented. It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- Biodiversity Ecosystem services will be monitored using specific indicators.
- Carbon emissions monitoring only be carried out on a small proportion of BnM sites to develop better understanding of carbon emissions and GHG emission factors from different types of BnM sites and will be developed on association with other established research programmes. Reduction in carbon

emissions will be modelled by a combination of habitat condition assessment and application of appropriate carbon emission factors derived from other sites. Baseline monitoring (habitat condition) will be carried after rehabilitation is completed (during the Scheme). It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.

- Monitoring as part of Climate Action Verification is dependent on support from PCAS or other external funding.

**Validation and IPC Licence surrender**

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

- The planned rehabilitation has been completed.
- Water quality monitoring demonstrates that water quality of discharge is stabilising or improving.
- The site has been environmentally stabilised.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Noggusboy bog is situated 2.2km south of Ferbane, Co. Offaly, see Drawing no. *BnM_DR23_12_01 'Site Location'*, included in the accompanying Mapbook. This bog is bisected by the R437 Ferbane to Tullamore road while the R357 and the N62 roads form boundaries along part of the site's southern and western boundaries. The Grand Canal (pNHA) flows close to the northern boundary of the site while the Silver River flows close to the eastern boundary of the site. Noggusboy is part of the Boora bog group. Bord na Móna operates under IPC Licence issued and administered by the EPA to extract peat within the Boora bog group (Ref. 500). As part of Condition 10.2 of this licence, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the cutaway boglands within the licensed area. The bog is part of the Boora bog group (Ref. 500) (see Appendix II for details of the bog areas within the Boora bog group, PO500-01).

This document seeks to address the requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC Licence Ref. Ref. PO500-01:

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

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

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

It is proposed by Government that Bord na Móna carry out a Peatlands Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme on its peatlands. Note this proposal is also known colloquially as the 'Peatlands Climate Action Scheme' (PCAS). The additional costs of the Scheme will be supported by Government through the Climate Action Fund Climate Action Fund and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan, administered by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), while the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) will act as the Scheme regulator. Bord na Móna have identified a footprint of 33,000 ha as peatlands suitable for this scheme. This Scheme will significantly go beyond what is required to meet rehabilitation and decommissioning obligations (Appendix VII & IX) under existing EPA IPC licence conditions. Improvements supported by the Scheme will ensure that environmental stabilisation is achieved (meaning IPC obligations are met), and importantly, significant additional benefits, particularly relating to climate action and other ecosystem services, will also be delivered.

Only the costs associated with the additional, enhanced and accelerated rehabilitation, i.e. those measures which go beyond the existing decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements arising from Condition 10, will be eligible for support under the Scheme. Bord na Móna have now announced the complete cessation of industrial peat production across its estate (January 2021).

It is expected that the PCAS will have benefits accruing from biodiversity provision, water quality and storage attenuation as well as increased carbon storage, reduced carbon emissions and acceleration towards carbon sequestration. The Scheme will also facilitate monitoring of carbon fluxes (Greenhouse Gases and fluvial carbon) in selected areas (in addition to other established Research programmes), to monitor changes in where the interventions will accelerate the trajectory towards a naturally functioning peatland ecosystem.

It is envisaged that the PCAS will support activities, interventions, or measures across the Bord na Móna cutaway peatlands which accelerate the original timelines. Selected rehabilitation measures will take account of site environmental conditions, which can vary significantly. These measures potentially include:

- more intensive management of water levels through outfall management, drain-blocking and management of water levels within the bog;
- re-profiling/re-wetting of extant deep peat that will deliver suitable conditions for development of wetlands, fens and bog habitats;
- targeted fertiliser applications,
- seeding of targeted vegetation; and
- proactive inoculation of suitable peatland areas with *Sphagnum.*

These are collectively designed to optimise hydrological conditions (ideally and where possible water-levels <10 cm) for climate action benefits and to accelerate the trajectory of the site towards a naturally functioning ecosystem, and eventually a reduced carbon source/carbon sink again. (In some areas of dry cutaway this trajectory will be significantly longer and it is not feasible in the short-term to re-wet some areas. These areas will develop other habitats. The key to optimising climate action benefits is the restoration of suitable hydrological conditions and more intensive intervention means that the extent of suitable hydrological conditions can be optimised.

These measures are designed to encourage the development of peat-forming habitats, where possible. They are also designed to further slow the movement of water across the site (with the site acting similarly to a constructed wetland), slowing the release of water (improving local water attenuation) and water quality is also expected to improve as the site returns to a naturally functioning peatland ecosystem. The measures will also accelerate the development of new habitats for a range of species under pressure in the wider landscape and will have the potential to develop habitats (e.g. Annex I raised bog, wetlands that support wader water birds of conservation interest) that will contribute towards the delivery of national biodiversity objectives.

Noggusboy Bog is proposed to be part of this Scheme (PCAS) and this rehabilitation plan outlines the approach taken.

## 1.1 Constraints and Limitations

This document only covers the area of Noggusboy Bog, see Drawing no. *BnM_DR23_11_01 'Bog Site Location'*.

Bord na Móna are reviewing the potential to develop a potential renewable energy project at Noggusboy Bog. It is expected that this review will be completed in 1-2 years. In advance of this review of renewable energy potential, it is planned to rehabilitate **part** of Noggusboy Bog in 2022-2024 that is not constrained (see drawing number BNM-DR-23-11-05: Enhanced Rehab Measures and BNM-DR-23-11-20: Standard Rehab Measures). The remaining area will be rehabilitated after the renewable energy review is complete. The peatland rehabilitation will **either** be in association with a potential renewable energy project, with peatland rehabilitation integrated into the proposed project, **or** will be completed in the absence of any proposed renewable energy project. It is expected that Bord na Móna will revise and update the rehabilitation plan for Noggusboy when this renewable energy review is complete. Bord na Móna remain fully committed to rehabilitating the whole bog and meeting

the conditions of the IPC Licence. Any consideration of any other future after-uses for Noggusboy Bog, such as renewable energy, will be conducted in adherence to the relevant planning guidelines, and consultation with relevant authorities, and will be considered within the framework of this rehabilitation plan.

Industrial peat extraction at Noggusboy Bog permanently ceased in 2020. Currently the former peat production area comprises both bare peat, some re-vegetated areas. The combination of active rehabilitation measures and natural colonisation will quickly establish and/or increase the extent of pioneer vegetation and will be planned to accelerate environmental stabilisation. Nevertheless, it will take some time (30-50 years) for naturally functioning peatland ecosystems to fully re-establish.

This rehabilitation plan takes account of the **current land-uses** of Noggusboy Bog. Part of the site has been developed as Cloghan Lake and is managed as an amenity area. This section and an additional section of cutaway is leased to the Cloghan Community Development Association. Sections of the site used for conifer forestry and are managed by Coillte.

# 2. METHODOLOGY

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

The ecological information and site information collected during the Bord na Móna ecological baseline survey, additional confirmatory site visits and monitoring and desktop analysis forms the basis for the development of the rehabilitation plan for the bog, along with:

- Experience of 40 years of research on the after-use development and rehabilitation of the Bord na Móna cutaway bogs (Clarke, 2010; Bord na Móna, 2016);
- Significant international engagement during this period with other counties in relation to best-practice regarding peatland rehabilitation and after-use through the International Peat Society and the Society for Ecological Restoration (Joosten & Clarke, 2002; Clarke & Rieley, 2010; Gann *et al*., 2019);
- Consultation and engagement with internal and external stakeholders;
- GIS Mapping;
- BNM drainage surveys;
- Bog topography and LiDAR data:
- Hydrological modelling; and
- The development of a **Methodology Paper (draft) outlining the Scheme (PCAS)**. This rehabilitation includes enhanced measures defined in the Methodology Paper which are designed to exceed the standard stabilisation requirements as defined by the IPC Licence and to enhance the ecosystem services of Noggusboy Bog, in particular, optimising **climate action benefits**.

## 2.1 Desk Study

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

- Anderson *et al*. (2017). An overview of the progress and challenges of peatland restoration in Western Europe.
- Bonn *et al*. (2017). Peatland restoration and ecosystem services- science, policy and practice.
- Carroll *et al*. (2009). *Sphagnum* in the Peak District. Current Status and Potential for Restoration. Moors for the Future Report No 16.
- Clark & Rieley (2010). Strategy for responsible peatland management.
- Eades *et al*. (2003). The Wetland Restoration Manual.
- Farrell & Doyle (2003). Rehabilitation of Industrial Cutaway Atlantic Blanket Bog, NW Mayo, Ireland.
- Gann *et al*. (2019). International Principles and Standards for the practice of Ecological Restoration.
- Hinde *et al*. (2010). *Sphagnum* re-introduction project: A report on research into the re-introduction of *Sphagnum* mosses to degraded moorland. Moors for the Future Research Report 18.
- Joosten & Clarke (2002). Wise Use of mires and peatlands – Background and Principles including a framework for Decision-making.

- Lindsay (2010). Peatbogs and Carbon: a Critical Synthesis to Inform Policy Development in Oceanic Peat Bog Conservation and Restoration in the Context of Climate Change.
- Mackin *et al*. (2017). Best practice in raised bog restoration in Ireland. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 99. National Parks and Wildlife Service,
- McBride *et al*. (2011). The Fen Management Handbook, (2011), Scottish Natural Heritage.
- McDonagh (1996). Drain blocking by machines on Raised Bogs. Unpublished report for National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- NPWS (2017a). National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation management plan. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- Quinty & Rochefort (2003). Peatland Restoration Guide, second edition. Canadian *Sphagnum* Peat Moss Association and New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources and Energy.
- Regan*, et. al.* (2020). Ecohydrology, Greenhouse Gas Dynamics and Restoration Guidelines for Degraded Raised Bogs. EPA Research Report. Prepared for the Environmental Protection Agency by Trinity College Dublin.
- Renou-Wilson *et al*. (2011). BOGLAND - Sustainable Management of Peatlands in Ireland. STRIVE Report No 75 prepared for the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Pschenyckyj et al., 2021, *Optimising Water Quality Returns from Peatland Management while Delivering Co-Benefits for Climate and Biodiversity*, Report produced for An Fóram Uisce, Online, Available at: https://thewaterforum.ie/app/uploads/2021/04/Peatlands_Full_Report_Final_March2021b.pdf, Accessed 17.08.2021.
- Schouten (2002). Conservation and Restoration of Raised Bogs: Geological, Hydrological and Ecological Studies. Dúchas - The Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment and Local Government, Ireland;
- Thom (2019). Conserving Bogs – Management Handbook.
- Wheeler & Shaw (1995). Restoration of Damaged Peatlands – with Particular Reference to Lowland Raised Bogs Affected by Peat Extraction.
- Wittram *et al*. (2015). A Practitioners Guide to Sphagnum Reintroduction. Moors for the Future Partnership.


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

- Boora Integrated Pollution Control Licence;
- Boora Annual Environmental Reports;
- Review of the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) webmapper;
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) Reports;
- Environmental Protection Agency database (www.epa.ie);
- EPA Guidance on Requests for Alterations to a Licensed Industrial or Waste Activity;
- BirdWatch Ireland online data (including I-WeBS and CBS datasets; www.birdwatchireland.ie);
- Geological Survey of Ireland - National Draft Bedrock Aquifer map;
- Geological Survey of Ireland - Groundwater Database (www.gsi.ie);
- National Parks & Wildlife Services Public Map Viewer (www.npws.ie);

- National Parks & Wildlife Services Article 17[1] and Article 12[2] data;
- Water Framework Directive catchments.ie/maps/ Map Viewer (www.catchments.ie);
- OPW Indicative Flood Maps (www.floodmaps.ie);
- CFRAM Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) maps (www.cfram.ie);
- River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 – 2021;
- Bord na Móna Annual Report 2021;
- Spatial data in respect of Article 17 reporting, available online at https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/habitat-and-species-data/article-17.

## 2.2 Consultation

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

## 2.3 Field Surveys

Bord na Móna carried out a baseline ecological survey of all of its properties in 2009-2012 and developed habitat maps. Additional ecological walk-over surveys and visits have taken place at Noggusboy Bog in 2021 to inform rehabilitation planning and habitat maps have been updated, where required. This rehabilitation plan is informed by the original baseline survey as well as subsequent site walk-over surveys and visits, and updates to baseline data.

Habitat mapping followed best-practice guidance from Smith *et al*. (2011). Map outputs including all habitat maps and target notes were produced using GIS software application packages (ArcGIS). General marginal habitats and other habitats that had not been modified significantly by industrial peat extraction were classified using Fossitt *et al*. (2000). Plant nomenclature for vascular plants follows Stace (2010), while mosses and liverworts nomenclature follows identification keys published by the British Bryological Society (2010). A more detailed Bord na Móna classification system was developed for classifying pioneer cutaway habitats as Fossitt categories were deemed not to be detailed enough for cutaway bog (much of cutaway bog could be classified as Cutover Bog - PB4). Much of the pioneer cutaway vegetation is still at an early stage of its development and cannot be assigned to Fossitt Level 3 categories yet.

A detailed ecological baseline survey report for Noggusboy Bog is contained in Appendix II.

[1] https://www.npws.ie/publications/article-17-reports

[2] https://www.npws.ie/status-and-trends-ireland%E2%80%99s-bird-species-%E2%80%93-article-12-reporting

## 3. SITE DESCRIPTION

Noggusboy bog is located 2.2km south of Ferbane in Co Offaly, see Drawing no. BnM_DR23_13_01 *'Bog Site Location'*. The location of Noggusboy bog within the Boora bog group (PO500-01) is provided in Drawing no. BnM_DR23_13_24 *'Bog group map'*. Noggusboy bog is located within a group of BnM bogs, with nearby bogs surrounding the site including Drinagh connected to the south of the site, Boora connected to the southeast, Derrybrat situated to the south, Belmont situated to the northwest and Derries bog situated to the west. The R437 bisects the site, with the N62 located to the west of the site, the R357 located along the southern boundary and a local access road located to the northeast. Access to the site is via the R437 and a Bord na Móna railway network that connected the bog with Derrinlough Brickette Factory and to West Offaly Power located in Shannonbridge.

The surrounding landscape comprises of a mosaic of low-lying agricultural land (pasture) interspersed with other raised bogs, many of which have also been managed by Bord na Móna for peat production. Forestry also occurs within the western boundary of the site, as well as other small forestry plots located outside the south and north of the site boundary. Several sections of remnant raised bog are located along the margins of the site, notably to the northeast, see Drawing no. DR23_11_17 '*Current habitat map*', which illustrates the current habitats at Noggusboy bog. Small areas within the northeast and south of the site have also been used for the production of domestic turf.

The majority of the former production bog within the eastern parcel is still bare peat. There are some sections of older cutaway with Birch scrub (WS1), minor Birch woodland (WN7) and pioneer poor fen (PF2) habitats. Younger emerging cutaway areas tend to have pioneer poor fen and wetland communities dominated by marsh arrowgrass (*Triglochin palustris*), bog cotton (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) and or soft rush (*Juncus effusus*). The margins around the production bog contain various habitats including actively used cutover bog (PB1), birch scrub and woodland (WN7), and small remnant patches of high bog (PB1).

A community group based in nearby Cloghan are actively managing parts of the site for recreation (Cloghan Community Development Association). Management objectives include rearing game such as duck and pheasant on the site, providing game crops and predator control. A fishing lake was dug out in 1998 with peat and blue-clay cleared from the site. The lake is now stocked with rainbow and brown trout. Anglers may obtain a licence from the community group to fish this lake. This lake is fed by a small stream and there is also an outflow. Two wetlands were also developed further north by drain-blocking and raising of some embankments. Walking paths have also been created around the site along with message boards which educate people on the wildlife of the area.

The community group have also leased an additional area of cutaway bog to the west of the site. This area is currently used by Cloghan Gun Club to support the rearing of game birds. This area is developing a mosaic of pioneer cutaway habitats

Noggusboy was a partially pumped bog. A pump is located close to the road in the western section of the site, see Drawing no. BnM-DR23_11_02 "Structures and Sampling". The western section was part pumped while the eastern section is drained by gravity. The pump has been turned off for several years. The western section is currently not in peat production and is developing as wetland cutaway.

A cranberry growing enterprise was established by Bord na Móna on the site in the early 1990's and is located in the townland of Falsk. This involved importing North American cranberry plants and creating suitable growing conditions. This project became financially unsustainable during the 2000's and the cranberries have not been harvested industrially in a number of years. The plants still produce berries that are picked by members of the

local community. Some of the introduced cranberry has spread to other parts of the site, although it is not extensive.

## 3.1 Status and Situation

### *3.1.1 Site history*

- Noggusboy Bog was first developed for industrial peat production in the 1950's. Peat production ceased in 2020 and the majority of peat has been cutaway. Noggusboy Bog is a shallow peat cutaway bog.
- The North American cranberry growing enterprise, established in the early 1990's in the townland of Falsk, was no longer harvested by Bord na Móna following cessation of the project in the 2000's. However, the site still produces berries that are picked by members of the local community.

### *3.1.2 Current land-use*

- Industrial peat production has now permanently ceased at Noggusboy Bog.
- A community group based in nearby Cloghan are actively managing parts of the site for recreation, see Drawing no BNM- DR23_11_25 "*Constraints Map*" (Cloghan Community Development Association). Management objectives include rearing game such as duck and pheasant on the site, providing game crops and predator control. A fishing lake "Cloghan lake" was dug out in 1998 and is now stocked with rainbow and brown trout.
- A large area to the west of the site has already been developed for forestry in the 1980's by Coillte, with the site being leased by Coillte.
- Some small areas of turbary also occur within the site boundary.
- The eastern part of Noggusboy bog is currently under review for a potential renewable energy project (solar). It is expected that the decision to develop a renewable energy project at Noggueboy Bog will take place within 1-2 years.
- An active rail line is still operational between Noggusboy and other BnM bogs in the landscape surrounding the site. The rail line is used to transport peat from Noggusboy to Derrinlough and other customers and will continue to be used until stockpiles are removed.

### *3.1.3. Socio-Economic conditions*

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

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

supply industries and jobs induced through the trickle-down effects of the wages and salaries of those supported directly or indirectly.

In respect of Noggusboy Bog, jobs included in the above study would have included those to facilitate extraction of peat at this site, and associated processing and transfer to the relevant power station.

As the primary employer in many Midland counties, Bord na Móna played a central role in building communities through several initiatives, including Education bursaries, support of local sporting clubs, the provision of community gain funds, charity programmes and the provision and building of amenity areas."

These job numbers have now declined with the cessation of peat extraction at this bog. It is anticipated that the Scheme (PCAS) will provide some employment for a team of workers at this site for a period of time (> 1 year).

## 3.2 Geology and Peat Depths

### *3.2.1 Sub-soil geology*

The underlying geology at Noggusboy Bog is limestone. A small section of the south-eastern part of the site comprises of Waulsortian Limestones, much of the centre of the site comprises of Ballysteen Formation, while a small portion of the western end of the site comprises of Navan Beds[3].

The underlying soils and sub-soils are classed as 'Raised Bog Cutover Peat'. The peat is underlain by glacial deposits, lacustrine clays; mainly green plastic clays and some sandy green plastic clays, marl and sandy gravel. The glacial deposits generally consist of grey gravelly clay/silt. The peat depths and associated peat coring data is provided in Drawing reference no. BnM DR23_11_04 '*Peat depth*'.

### *3.2.2 Peat type and depths*

As described above, peat depths have been mapped across the site and are provided in Drawing reference no. BnM DR23_11_04 '*Peat depth*'. As a result of the harvesting programme in place at Noggusboy, peat depths are varied across the site with largely shallow residual peat. Shallow residual peat i.e. 0-1m occur over approximately 85% of the site. Some pockets of deeper peat, 1.1-2.5m in depth, still persist. However, these are restricted to small areas within the southeast and southwest of the site. Fen peat is the main peat type remaining in Noggusboy.

## 3.3 Key Biodiversity Features of Interest

The majority of the site can be rated as local importance (lower value) (NRA, 2009) due to the extent of bare peat; associated with industrial peat production which ceased in 2020 and the dry nature of the pioneering habitats that have begun to establish, see Plates 3.1 to 3.3 and Plate 3.7. Much of the western part of the site has begun to revegetate in some of the formerly active production areas. Some areas of the marginal lands within the site boundary contain remnant bog, cutover bog, woodland or dry heath and these have been assessed as of local importance (higher value) in a local context (NRA, 2009). Some areas of the Noggusboy cutaway bog are beginning to develop pioneer cutaway wetland habitats (poor fen, birch scrub). A large wetland has also

[3] https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/data-and-maps/Pages/Bedrock.aspx

developed within the western part of the site (see Plate 3.7) and this has been assessed as of Local importance (higher value) (NRA, 2009) as it supports assemblages of wildfowl.

For the purpose of this report the site has been divided into two main sections, an east and west side where the Ferbane to Tullamore road bisects the site.

**Western section**

The western side of Noggusboy bog has been out of peat production for some time and has thus begun to revegetate. The Cloghan Community Development Association have leased sections of the site, mainly in the south and mid-west of the site. The southern areas are used as an angling resource on the man-made lakes, Plate 3.6. This area also includes walking tracks (see Plate 3.6) and a pheasant viewing area where different species of pheasant are on display. Information signs are also displayed around this area relating to the flora and fauna of the site. Another area close to the mid-west boundary of the site is used to raise pheasants for release onto the site and sections of the cutaway had also been planted with game crops such as grasses and Brassica spp. Predator control has also been undertaken on the site.

The southern end of the site is also managed by the community group and comprises the oldest area of cutaway bog. This area has some well-established wetlands and mature birch scrub, some of which is developing to birch woodland.

A large section, close to the middle of the site, had been planted with conifers by Coillte. This plantation was of varying quality and, overall, yield class appeared to be low.

Sections along the boundary, mainly along the west and northern boundaries have been used for domestic turf cutting. Sections of former peat production areas, that are now cutaway, are at different stages of revegetation; ranging from scrub development to dry grasslands and developing poor fen. The mainly pioneer poor fen vegetation areas are low lying and wet.

A number of small sections of remnant raised bog are located around this section of the site mainly along the western boundaries, see Plate 3.4. These sections are dry and degraded and dominated by heather, some of these raised bog remnants were being encroached upon by domestic turf cutters.

**Eastern section**

The majority of this section is production bog with bare peat dominant. Most of the former production area is relatively clean of vegetation with functional drains. The eastern side is further divided into several other sections by the railway through the southern half and by a large drain running the breadth of the bog through the central zone. There is a small band of cutaway along the northern side adjacent to the high bog. This section is a typical poor fen and Birch scrub mosaic, with much of it being young emergent Birch. Different sections have denser Birch patches and towards the north-east there is some closed Birch scrub. The poor fen is generally dominated by soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) and or bog cotton (*Eriophorum angustifolium*). Non-native cranberry from the plantation located in the townland of Falsk has spread into this cutaway and appears along the drains and in some of the more open sections.

More cutaway is located along the east side of this section. This is largely vegetated by a birch scrub and poor fen mosaic with mainly soft rush. Some of the birch scrub is denser and is closed. The edge of this area is used for storing bog timber and there is a significant amount of this bog timber along this section. Several fields in the adjacent production bog (not in production for several years) towards the east side are re-vegetating with marsh arrowgrass (*Triglochin palustris*) and some other Poor Fen vegetation (soft rush and bog cotton).

Some remnant high bog is found along the southern boundary. Much of this is quite dry and being invaded by scrub and birch. There is also a significant amount of private peat-cutting (PB4) in this area that is industrial in scale.

There is a large section of intact and un-ditched high bog (PB1) to the north of the Cranberry plantation (Falsk) with associated flush (PF2) and surrounded by cutover bog (PB4) and other associated habitats such as Birch woodland (WN7), scrub and reclaimed grassland. This area is used as private sod peat production.

*Plate 3.1 Example of cutaway bare peat and pioneering cutaway vegetation occurring within the west of the site.*

*Plate 3.2 Example of developing pioneering cutaway vegetation on former cutaway production bog.*

*Plate 3.3 Example of pioneering bog woodland (WN7) within the west of the site with Sphagnum recurvum, S. palustre and S. capillifolium occurring in the ground layer.*

*Plate 3.4 Example of remnant sections of raised bog occurring within the northwest of the site.*

*Plate 3.5 Example of public amenity path within the area leased by the* Cloghan Community Development Association.

*Plate 3.6 Cloghan fishing lake and public amenity area within the area leased by the* Cloghan Community Development Association *(southwest of the site).*

*Plate 3.7 Example of developing pioneering cutaway vegetation (i.e. scrub, developing woodland, poor fen) and wetland habitats occurring on former cutaway production bog within the north east of the western portion of Noggusboy.*

### *3.3.2 Species of conservation interest*

A number of species of conservation concern utilize the habitats available at Noggusboy Bog, with the habitats around the margins i.e. remnant raised bog, pioneer heath, scrub and woodland of most value. The former production areas, dominated by bare peat, are of lower ecological value. The following is a summary of the records of these species available within BnM records.

Multiple mammal species have been recorded at Noggusboy Bog. Evidence of badger (*Meles meles*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), fox (*Vulpes Vulpes*), field mouse *(Apodemus sylvaticus),* American mink *(Neovision vision),* hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*), fallow deer (*Dama dama*) and common frog (*Rana temporaria*) were observed on site during BnM walkover surveys.

Lepidopteran (butterfly) and Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) species recorded on site included; large white butterfly (*Pieris brassicae*), small heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*), peacock butterfly (*Aglais io*), common blue butterfly (*Polyommatus icarus*), speckled wood butterfly (*Pararge aegeria*), common darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*), brown hawker (*Aeshna grandis*) and four-spotted chaser (*Libellula quadrimaculata*). The EU Habitats Directive Annex II listed species marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) has also recently been recorded within the southwest of the site.

The large wetlands within the west of the site are regularly used by wintering wildfowl including; whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), wigeon (*Anas penelope*), teal (*Anas crecca*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), coot (*Fulica atra*) and other wetland species typical of flooded cutaway bog. This site has also been surveyed for Irish Wetland Bird Surveys (I-WEBS) and other Birdwatch Ireland surveys.

Common bird species recorded across the site include; willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*), swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), hooded crow (*Corvus cornix*), chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*), blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), lesser redpoll (*Carduelis flammea cabaret*), grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), coal tit (*Periparus ater*), magpie (*Pica pica*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*), ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*), kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), jay (*Garrulus glandarius*), raven (*Corvus corax*), snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) and long-tailed tit (*Aegithalus caudatus*).

#### *3.3.3 Invasive Alien Species*

No invasive species listed on the Third Schedule of the EC Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations, have been recorded within the site during Bord na Móna. The non-native American cranberry from the trial area located in the townland of Falsk has spread into the wider cutaway.

## 3.4 Statutory Nature Conservation Designations

The area of Noggusboy bog described in this plan is not located within or adjacent to any EU Designated sites i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA). The nearest EU Designated sites in the wider area include:

- Moyclare Bog SAC (over 2.8 km to the northwest),
- Ferbane Bog SAC (over 2.8 km to the north-northwest),
- River Shannon Callows SAC (over 5.6 km to the west),
- Middle Shannon Callows SPA (over 5.8 km to the west).

There are no Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) in close proximity to Noggusboy bog. The nearest NHAs include:

- Kilnaborris Bog NHA (located over 11.4km to the southwest of the site),
- River Little Brosna Callows NHA (located over 12.7km to the southwest of the site).

In terms of non-statutory designated sites i.e. proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) the Grand Canal pNHA is located adjacent to the north eastern boundary of the site. Other pNHAs occurring in the wider area include:

- Lough Boora (located over 2.3km to the southeast of the site),
- Moyclare Bog (located over 2.8km to the north of the site),
- Ferbane Bog (located over 2.8km to the north of the site),
- River Shannon Callows (located over 5.6km to the southwest of the site).

## 3.5 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

Noggusboy Bog is in the Brosna sub-catchment (EPA code: SC_070), part of the River Shannon catchment. Noggusboy bog is drained by the Falsk stream, a tributary of the nearby Silver River to the east. The Silver River joins the River Brosna further downstream to the north of the site. The Brosna River joins the River Shannon further to the northwest, north of Banagher.

The drainage of Noggusboy was partially pumped, although this pump has been turned off for several years. There are a series of drains through the bog at regular intervals that form part of the main drainage system. There are a number of silt ponds located at the site, see Drawing number BNM-23-11-SP01.

Regional hydrological data suggest that Noggusbog receives average precipitation of 857mm/yr (1981-2010), with an estimated evapotranspiration rate of c. 500mm/yr, leaving an average effective precipitation of 357mm/yr. Assuming no recharge to groundwater and no groundwater contribution to discharge from the bog, the available precipitation that may become runoff (assuming no change in storage) is 357mm/yr, which equates to an annual runoff rate of c. 3,570m3/ha.

GSI data indicates that Noggusboy Bog is primarily underlain by the Ballysteen Formation and the Navan Beds, both of which are classified as locally important aquifers as they are only moderately productive in local zones. The south-eastern potion of the bog is underlain by Waulsortian Limestones which is also a locally important aquifer (moderately productive only in local zones). There is a a locally important gravel aquifer further north-west beyond the boundary of the bog. Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) mapping does not identify any known karst features within close proximity to the bog. No data exists concerning depth to bedrock; however, the closest bedrock outcrop occurs 0.35km to the south of the bog.

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

Regionally important aquifers are those in which the network of fractures, fissures and joints, through which groundwater flows, is well connected and widely dispersed, resulting in a relatively even distribution of highly permeable zones. There is good aquifer storage and groundwater flow paths can be up to several kilometres in length. There is likely to be substantial groundwater discharge to surface waters (‘baseflow’) and large (>2,000 m3/d), dependable springs may be associated with these aquifers.

The bog is located in an area mapped by GSI as of 'medium' groundwater vulnerability (GSI Mapviewer[4]). A narrow strip of ground, dominated by rank grassland, along the eastern side of the R347 has been mapped as 'high' groundwater vulnerability. No works are proposed within this marginal land. Groundwater Vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease with which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities. Groundwater vulnerability maps are based on the type and thicknesses of subsoils (sands, gravels, glacial tills (or boulder clays), peat, lake and alluvial silts and clays), and the presence of karst features. Groundwater is most at risk where the subsoils are absent or thin and, in areas of karstic limestone, where surface streams sink underground at swallow holes. The above data, the peatland composition of the site and the nature of the proposed works indicate there is generally low risk of any groundwater contamination occurring at this site. While Groundwater Vulnerability is typically used to indicate the susceptibility to groundwater pollution, it can provide a useful proxy indication of likely groundwater flow rates in the surrounding area. Groundwater vulnerability for the area surrounding Noggusboy Bog is generally high with pockets of extreme vulnerability associated with thinner sequences of subsoil and bedrock outcrop.

## 3.6 Emissions to surface-water and water-courses

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

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

Noggusboy bog has 3 surface water outlets. Two are to the Silver River (IE_SH_25B090950 BROSNA_120) via the Flask rivers with the remaining one to the Silver (IE_SH_25B090950 BROSNA_120) direct. While two of the outlets have silt ponds, an additional silt pond will be required to service Noggus west during the rehabilitation measures to cater for any runoff from remaining bare peat areas.

While the Silver River, just upstream of the Brosna and the associated outlets from Noggusboy Bog is defined as under pressure from various activities including peat extraction, and because of this is a Priority Action Area, the Brosna _ 120 its self is not indicated as under pressure in the third cycle of the River Basin Management Plan, currently under preparation.

Details of silt ponds, associated surface water emission points and those being monitored and sampled as part of the PCAS scheme are detailed on the accompanying structures map along with water quality map. See Drawing number BNM-DR-23-11-02 titled **Noggusboy Bog: Structures and Sampling**, along with Drawing number BNM-

[4] https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7e8a202301594687ab14629a10b748ef

DR-23-11-WQ01 titled **Noggusboy Bog: Water Quality Map** included in the accompanying Mapbook, which illustrate the various drainage and water quality infrastructure present at Noggusboy.

There is a robust monitoring program to track and verify any changes in baseline water quality conditions pre and post decommissioning and rehabilitation so that the success or otherwise can be tracked and verified for the National Parks & Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency and Local Authority Water Program, amongst a range of stakeholders.

The main emission limit value associated with this bog is 35mg/l suspended solids, with trigger levels for ammonia of 3.7 mg/l and COD 100mg/l.

Initial monthly ammonia concentrations from November to November 2021 have a range of 0.026 to 0.559mg/l with an average of 0.163mg/l.

Results for suspended solids for the same period indicate a range of <2 to 5mg/l with an average of 3.33.

From an analysis of any monitoring over the past 7 yrs. of the IPC licence environmental monitoring of some of the discharges from this bog, indicate that results were under the ELV for SS and trigger levels for ammonia and COD, except for one exceedance back in Q1 2017 in relation to SS and Ammonia ELV and trigger level's respectively (Table 3.1).

| Bog | SW | Monitoring | pH | SS | TS | Ammonia | TP | COD | Colour |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Noggusboy | SW-10 | Q2 20 | 7.9 | 4 | 325 | 0.076 | <0.05 | 70 | 192 |
| Noggusboy | SW-10 | Q3 18 | 7.6 | 5 | 560 | 0.19 | 0.017 | 57 | - |
| Noggusboy | SW-10 | Q1 17 | 7.5 | 247 | 488 | 0.35 | 0.05 | 110 | 127 |
| Noggusboy | SW-10 | Q1 14 | 7.4 | 19 | 233 | 0.71 | <0.05 | 75 | 130 |

**Table 3.1. Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Programme Water Quality Monitoring.**

Rehabilitation of cutaway peatland is closely linked with control of emissions. One of the criteria for successful rehabilitation is stabilisation through re-vegetation, which will stabilise all substrates and in turn remove the need for further silt control measures. Re-wetted peat also aid the primary objective of stabilizing peat, as when peat is re-wetted it minimises risk to wind erosion. Re-wetted peat and the development of wet peatland habitats can also act as sinks for silt and mobile peat, and increases additional retention time for solids, and the peatland vegetation can quickly stabilise this material within blocked drains on site (by acting like constructed wetlands).

Water quality of water discharges from restored/rehabilitated peatlands normally improves as a result of bog rehabilitation and restoration measures and the restoration of natural peatland processes (Bonn *et al*., 20017). Peatland rehabilitation is also expected to improve water attenuation of the site as the drains are blocked, slowing water movement and water release from the site. Restored peatlands help slow the release of water and aid the natural regulation of floods downstream (Minayeva *et al*., 2017). The National River Basin Management Plan (NRBMP) 2018-2021 (DHPCLG, 2017) is the key national plan for Ireland to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The NRBMP outlines how key actions such as the Bord na Móna Raised Bog Restoration Project and ongoing Bord na Móna rehabilitation is expected to have a positive impact on water quality and help the NWBMP deliver its objectives in relation to the WFD.

Water will still discharge from designated emission points when rehabilitation at Noggusboy Bog has been completed. The existing silt the silt pond will continue to be maintained and operated as long as required, or such point as they can be decommissioned, with no change in outfall type This discharge will have improving

water quality and there will be increased wetland attenuation, meaning slower release of water. This is expected to have a positive impact on status of the key downstream water body receptors, and is expected to support the improvement of the current and future status of the Figile River and Philipstown River, currently assessed as being at risk.

The licence obligation of quarterly sampling regime on a selected number of ponds to be sampled over a 3 year cycle will not be sufficient to be able to appropriately track the changing water chemistry that will occur as part of this enhanced rehabilitation programme, so this sampling regime will occur on a monthly basis.

In order to assist in monitoring surface water quality from this bog, it was agreed to increase the existing licence monitoring requirements of the IPC Licence, to sampling for the same parameters every month.

This new sampling programme commenced in November 2020 and is enabling a baseline to be established, with sampling to progress during the scheduled works, and for a period of up to 2 years post rehabilitation. Depending on the period required to confirm that the main two parameters, suspended solids and ammonia as remaining compliant with the licence emission and trigger limit values and there is an improving trajectory in these two parameters i.e. reduction in concentration, the monitoring programme and intensity will be periodically reviewed and amended.

In the preparation of this monitoring programme, Bord na Mona have been providing the Local Authority Water Programme (LAWPRO) with details of the surface water emissions points associated with this bog and will be amending some of the proposed monitoring locations on foot of this engagement. LAWPRO have in turn provided details of their 2021 monitoring programme and these are included in the Water Quality Map.

This is necessary to ensure that there is alignment with the WFD monitoring programme and that where possible, the monitoring programme will enable any improvements in water quality or establishing trends to be quantified against any available WFD monitoring data. It will also enable the periodic sharing of data which will inform the monitoring reports, success criteria and enable LAWPRO under the Water Framework Directive to track any changes in pressures and be aware of changes in water chemistry.

This enhanced monitoring programme will aim to include a minimum of 70% of a bog's drainage catchments, whatever number of surface water outlets these include.

Monitoring results will be maintained, trended every six months and reported on each year and as required, as part of the requirement to report on Condition 10.1 of the IPC Licence on Bog Rehabilitation in the Annual Environmental Report, and will be provided to LAWPRO and the EPA as required to inform progress and national monitoring requirements under the WFD. These results will also be available in April each year as a requirement of the Annual Environmental Report at www.epa.ie.

The parameters to be included as per condition 6.2 of the IPC Licence include monthly monitoring for pH, Flow, Suspended Solids, Total Solids, Total Phosphorus, Total Ammonia, Colour & COD. In addition, DOC has been included as a parameter to try and identify any changes in carbon in the surface water, and where required by LAWPRO, to assist in investigating other changes in water chemistry, the series of parameters can be reviewed and amended.

## 3.7 Fugitive Emissions to air

None

The bog is no longer in industrial peat production. Rehabilitation of the cutaway peatland will seek to re-wet the dry peat where possible, and re-vegetate all areas (whether wet or dry). Collectively, ceasing industrial peat production, re-wetting and re-vegetating will minimise any risk of emission to air from dust.

## 3.8 Carbon emissions

The bog is likely to be a carbon source as it is a drained (degraded) peatland with currently active drainage, which facilitates the oxidation of peat. Peat extraction generally transforms a natural raised bog which acts as a modest carbon sink into a cutaway ecosystem which is a large source of carbon dioxide (2–5 t C/ha/year) (Waddington & McNeil, 2002; Alm *et al*., 2007; Wilson *et al*., 2007, Wilson *et al*., 2015). Furthermore, they are also a significant source of methane (Huttunen *et al*., 2003; Laine *et al*., 2007a) as a consequence of the conditions within the peat body that provide a suitable environment for the microbial breakdown of plant litter and root exudates. Degraded peatlands also release carbon/GHG emissions via the fluvial/aquatic pathway (Dissolved Organic Carbon – DOC, Suspended Solids/Particulate Matter, degassing of GHGs from water).

The EPA-funded CarbonRestore Project (Renou-Wilson et. al. 2012) found that rewetting of drained peatlands can lead to restoration of functional peatland, such as the return of typical plant and animal species, which in turn may lead to the restoration of peat-formation and the C-sink function.

It is expected that Noggusboy Bog can become a reduced carbon source/part carbon sink following rehabilitation. The potential of any cutaway site to develop as a reduced carbon source/carbon sink in the longer-term depends on future land-use, the success of the rehabilitation measures, the extent of development of *Sphagnum*-rich or other peat-forming habitats, the balance of carbon fluxes from different cutaway habitats and future climatic conditions. The site is expected to develop *Sphagnum*-rich vegetation with some sections developing fen habitats. Birch woodland is expected to develop on the drier Noggusboy and peripheral headlands.

# 4. CONSULTATION

## 4.1 Consultation to date

Consultation will seek to engage an audience of relevant stakeholders at both a national and local level. National stakeholders have been identified from varied bog restoration and rehabilitation efforts undertaken by Bord na Móna over the past 40 years, with particular emphasis on engagement with stakeholders during their Biodiversity Action Plan programme since 2010. National Stakeholders includes relevant government departments and agencies, relevant semi-state bodies, NGOs and other environmentally-focused groups with a national remit. Stakeholders can be emailed a copy of this draft plan when it has been finalised internally by Bord na Móna, and invited to make submissions on the objectives and content of this plan in relation to Noggusboy Bog.

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

- General consultation with range of stakeholders at annual Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan review days 2010-2018.
- The development of Cloghan Lake amenity and the long-term development of Lough Boora Discovery Park (Offaly County Council, Failte Ireland and multiple stakeholders).
- Breeding bird surveys of the nearby Drinagh Bog with Birdwatch Ireland.
- Ongoing consultation with Cloghan Community Development Association and Cloghan Gun Club regarding Cloghan Lake amenity and the leased area of cutaway.
- Ongoing consultation with Coillte regarding forestry management (forestry leased to Coillte),
- 
- Midlands & East Regional WFD Operational Committee (River Basin Management Plans).
- Sub-committee on Shannon Flooding Work Programme and Measures (OPW, Waterways Ireland, ESB, LA's, Fisheries Ireland, NPWs etc).
- Archaeological Liaison Committee (National Museum of Ireland & Dept of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht).

Local stakeholders will continue to be identified through ongoing engagement with neighbours whose land adjoins Noggusboy Bog. Additionally, local representatives of national bodies (such as Regional National Parks and Wildlife staff) and relevant offices in County Councils (such as the Heritage or Environmental Offices) will be contacted. Any identified local interest groups will also be sought and informed of the opportunity to engage with this rehabilitation plan, and when identified will be invited to submit their comments or observations in relation to the proposed rehabilitation at Noggusboy Bog.

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

## 4.2 Issues raised by Consultees

N/A. Not issued to consultees yet.

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

N/A

## 5. REHABILITATION GOALS AND OUTCOMES

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

- Meeting conditions of IPC Licence.
- Stabilisation or reduction in water quality parameters of water discharging from the site (e.g. suspended solids).
- Reducing pressure on receiving water-bodies that have been classified as At Risk from peatlands and from peat extraction, via stabilization or improving water-quality from this bog, and therefore, reducing pressures.
- Optimising hydrological conditions for **climate action benefits as part of PCAS**. Optimising hydrological conditions for the development of Reed Swamp and fen on shallow more alkaline peat and other subsoils.
- Optimising hydrological conditions for the protection of exposed archaeological structures, their retention in situ and preservation into the future, where possible.
- Integrating rehabilitation measures with existing conifer forestry. It is not proposed to change or affect any conifer or commercial forestry via this scheme. The future forestry management of these areas will be defined by Coillte.
- Supporting ongoing amenity land-use. Integrating rehabilitation measures with current amenity infrastructure on site. It is not proposed to carry out any rehabilitation actions to change or negatively affect any amenity infrastructure. Integrating rehabilitation measures with future potential amenity projects.
- Taking account of potential future land-uses.
- The main goal and outcome of this plan is the successful rehabilitation (environmental stabilisation) of peatlands used for industrial peat production at the bog in a manner that is acceptable to both external stakeholders and to Bord na Móna and which optimise climate action and other ecosystem service benefits.

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

- It will take some time for stable naturally functioning habitats to fully develop at Noggusboy Bog. This will happen over a longer time-frame than the implementation of this rehabilitation plan.
- Re-wetting residual peat will initially maintain and enhance the carbon storage capacity of the bog. There is scientific consensus that restoration of hydrology in damaged bog can improve carbon storage, water storage and attenuation and help support biodiversity both on the site and in the catchment (See Section 3.8). This will reduce carbon emissions from the site from a larger carbon source to a smaller carbon source. In time, the site has the capacity to develop in part as a carbon sink. PCAS is expected to deliver significant contributions to Ireland's climate action.
- Some rehabilitation has already been carried out in recent years at Noggusboy.
- It is not expected that the site has the potential to develop active raised bog (ARB) analogous to the priority EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitat within the foreseeable future (c.50 years). Furthermore, only a proportion of the bog has potential to develop *Sphagnum*-rich habitats in this timeframe. Nevertheless, re-wetting across the entire bog, as part of the Scheme, will improve habitat conditions of the whole bog, making the overall bog wetter. Other peatland habitats will develop in a wider mosaic that reflects underlying conditions.

- Rehabilitating former industrial peat production bog will also in the longer-term support other ecosystem services such as such the development of new habitat to support biodiversity and local attenuation of water flows from the bog.
- WFD status in receiving water bodies can be affected by peatlands and peat extraction but is also affected by other sources such as agriculture. In addition, receiving water bodies that are assessed as At Risk from peatlands and from peat extraction are likely to have several contributary sources of impacts (private peat extraction and Bord na Móna).
- Re-wetting in general will benefit the future preservation of most known and unknown archaeological features.
- Bord na Móna are also planning rehabilitation measures in some adjacent bogs (e.g. Boora, Derrybrat, Derries and Turraun) in 2021. There are expected to be cumulative water quality and other ecosystem service benefits to receiving water bodies downstream from the rehabilitation of more than one bog in the same catchment.

# 6. SCOPE OF REHABILITATION

The principal scope of this rehabilitation plan is to rehabilitate the bog. This is defined by:

- The area of Noggusboy Bog (Drawing reference no. DR23_11_01 '*Bog site location'*).
- EPA IPC Licence - Ref. PO500-01. As part of Condition 10.2 of this licence, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the cutaway boglands within the licensed area. Noggusboy bog is part of the Boora bog group.
- The Scheme is designed to exceed the stabilisation requirements as defined by the IPC Licence. This Scheme is designed to enhance the ecosystem services of Noggusboy Bog, in particular, optimising **climate action benefits**. The proposed interventions will mean that environmental stabilisation is achieved (meaning IPC obligations are met) and, in addition, significant other ecosystem service benefits particularly for climate action will be accrued.
- The local environmental conditions of Noggusboy Bog identify cutaway re-wetting as the most suitable rehabilitation approach for the shallow peat areas within the site. In some parts of the site, where shallow peat depths remain, there is an alkaline influence on the water chemistry. This means that re-wetting will lead to the development of fen, reed swamp and other associated wetland/peatland habitats.
- A significant part of the site has already largely vegetated and stabilised, with a waterbody now supporting local wildfowl and waders occurring within the west of the site. This wetland area within the west of the site is now considered rehabilitated. The aerial photo demonstrates the contrast between the rewetted area within the west and those areas that remain drier. Additional measures are needed to optimise the hydrological regime across the site in order to maximise the areas extent of areas that can be rewet.
- Integrating rehabilitation measures with existing conifer forestry. It is not proposed to change or affect any conifer or commercial forestry via this scheme. The future forestry management of these areas will be defined by Coillte.
- The BnM review of a potential renewable energy project at Noggusboy Bog is a temporal constraint on the scope of rehabilitation. It is expected that the decision to develop a renewable energy project at Noggusboy Bog will take place within 1-2 years.
- The key goals and outcomes of this rehabilitation plan.
- The key objective of rehabilitation, as defined by this licence, is environmental stabilisation of the bog.
- Rehabilitation of Noggusboy Bog will support multiple National strategies of climate action, biodiversity action and other key environmental strategies such as the Water Framework Directive.
- The time frame for the delivery of the planned rehabilitation will be undertaken according to available resources and appropriate constraints.
- Some rehabilitation measures are proposed on the marginal cutover bog zone at the peripheries of the bog.

## 6.1 Key constraints

**Bog conditions.** Rehabilitation outcomes of sites are constrained by the environmental characteristics of these particular areas. For example, there is potential for raised bog restoration at some bogs where there has not been significant industrial peat extraction and the peat body is largely intact (deep peat sites that are drained). At other bogs (such as Noggusboy), most of the peat mass has been removed, the environmental

characteristics of these areas have therefore changed radically (peat depths, hydrology, water chemistry, substrate type, nutrient status), and there will therefore be different habitat outcomes (wetlands, fen, heathland, grassland and birch woodland).

- At Noggusboy Bog, much of the bog has been cutaway and it is now considered a shallow peat bog.
- There are local factors that will influence the future trajectory of this site (the site has been partially pumped to manage water levels within the west of the site) which need to be considered as part of the wider rehabilitation work.
- At Noggusboy Bog, the majority of the bog has been cutaway. Much of the cutaway has already naturally colonised with pioneering vegetation and has re-wetted in part due to previous drainage management.
- **Surrounding landscape and neighbours.** Another key constraint is the interaction between the Bord na Móna sites and the surrounding landscape. Care must be taken that no active rehabilitation management is carried out that could negatively and knowingly impact on surrounding land. This includes any hydrological management on neighbouring farmland. It is anticipated that the work proposed here (blocking drains and re-wetting cutaway peatlands) will not have any flooding impacts on adjacent land. For example, agricultural grassland occurs outside of, but adjacent to, Noggusboy bog.
- **Archaeology**. The discovery of monuments or archaeological objects during peatland rehabilitation may potentially constrain the rehabilitation measures proposed for a particular area. If this occurs, rehabilitation measures will be reviewed and adapted. An archaeological impact assessment of the proposed rehabilitation at Noggusboy Bog will be carried out (see Appendix XII).
- **Current land-use.** Key land-uses are **forestry** and **recreation**. Re-wetting will be planned as to not to impact on current forestry or amenity infrastructure. Cloghan Community Development Association are actively managing part of the west of the site for recreation, see Drawing no BNM- DR23_11_25 "*Constraints Map*". Existing public access, infrastructure and fishing lake at Cloghan Lake will be maintained and constrained from the rehabilitation works. Re-wetting will be planned as to not to impact on any future amenity. Future amenity does not constrain re-wetting at this site as access through the site via the industrial railway will be maintained.
- Potential land-use. Bord na Móna are reviewing the potential to develop a potential renewable energy project at Noggusboy Bog. It is expected that this review will be completed in 1-2 years. In advance of this review of renewable energy potential, it is planned to rehabilitate part of Noggusboy Bog in 2022-2024.
- Bord na Móna remain committed to rehabilitating all of Noggusboy Bog and to meeting IPC Licence conditions for this bog. The remaining area will be rehabilitated after the renewable energy review is complete. The peatland rehabilitation of the remaining area will either be in association with a potential renewable energy project, with peatland rehabilitation integrated into the proposed project, or will be completed in the future in the absence of any proposed renewable energy project. Phasing rehabilitation in way has the potential to support additional climate action measures (integrating renewable energy).
- See Noggusboy Bog: Mapbook, which outlines the proposed cutaway footprint to be rehabilitated with PCAS enhanced rehabilitation measures (drawing number BNM-DR-23-11-05: Enhanced Rehab Measures and BNM-DR-23-11-20: Standard Rehab Measures). A minor road divides the eastern side from the western side of the bog and forms a natural boundary between the area to be rehabilitated and the constraint area being considered for future land-use. At this stage, it is not anticipated that any future potential land-use in the east side of the site will impact on the proposed rehabilitation in the western side of the site, as there is a natural hydrological break (the minor road).

- **Public Rights of Way**. Where a public right of way or similar burden exists on Bord na Móna property, consideration will be given to ensuring that this remain intact where possible. In some instances, depending upon previous land-uses and management, alternative solutions may be required. These will be explored in consultation with local communities and statutory bodies during the consultation work associated with the decommissioning and rehabilitation work described here.

## 6.2 Key Assumptions

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

## 6.3 Key Exclusions

The scope of this rehabilitation plan does not cover:

- The longer-term raised bog restoration trajectory of the site. The plan covers the short-term rehabilitation **actions** and **an additional monitoring and after-care programme** to monitor the rehabilitation during the Scheme and to respond to any needs (failure of environmental stabilisation for example). It is expected that this rehabilitation plan will set the site on an enhanced and accelerated trajectory towards environmental stabilisation and wetland creation. The plan does not set any goals or outcomes, for example, the extent (specific area) of active raised bog habitat (ARB) that may develop at this site in the long-term. This is beyond the scope of this rehabilitation plan.
- This plan is not intended to be an after-use or future land-use plan for Noggusboy Bog.
- Land leased to Coillte. This rehabilitation plan does not cover conifer forestry management on lands leased by Coillte.
- As described above, Cloghan Community Development Association are actively managing part of the site for recreation. Existing public access associated with Cloghan Lake will be maintained and there will be no alterations to the existing fishing lake or amenity infrastructure.

# 7. CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL REHABILITATION

This section outlines what criteria will be used to indicate successful rehabilitation and what key criteria/targets will be used to mark the achievement of the rehabilitation goals and outcomes and validate the completion of the rehabilitation.

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

Rehabilitation is generally defined by Bord na Móna as

- stabilisation of bare peat areas via targeted active management (e.g. drain-blocking/re-wetting) slowing movement of water across the site and encouraging natural colonisation, and,
- mitigation of key emissions (e.g. run-off of suspended solids).

In addition, Bord na Móna wish to optimise climate action and other ecosystem service benefits via enhanced rehabilitation measures.

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

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

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

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

As the monthly monitoring program at Noggusboy continues in 2021 and 2022, during the rehabilitation works, and data from the 2020/21 monitoring program is compiled, further trending will be produced to verify any ongoing trends (Plate 7.2).

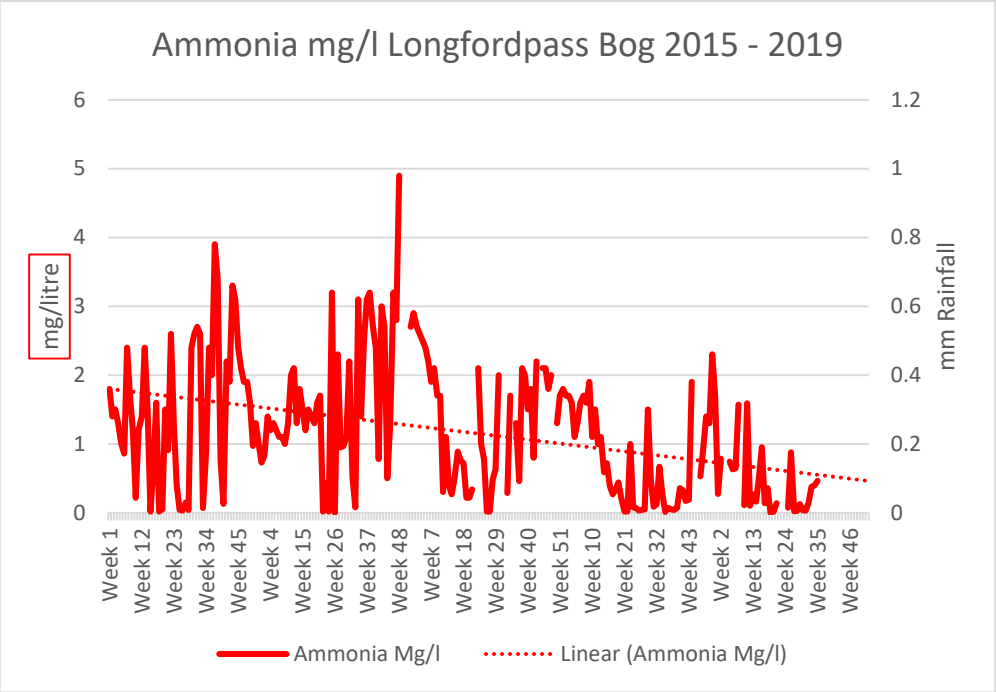


*Plate 7.1 Example of decreasing ammonia emissions at Longfordpass bog following cessation of peat extraction and commencement of rehabilitation.*

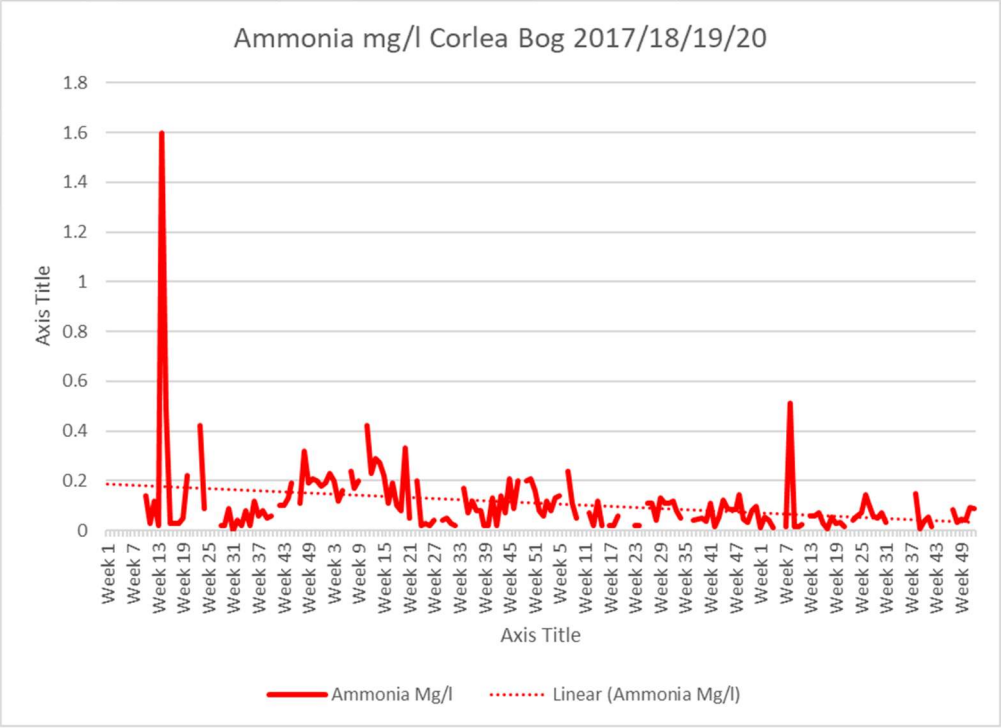


*Plate 7.2 Example of decreasing ammonia emissions at Corlea bog following cessation of peat extraction and commencement of rehabilitation.*

### *7.1.1 Additional criteria for successful rehabilitation for the optimisation of climate action and other ecosystem service benefits:*

- Optimising the extent of suitable hydrological conditions to optimise climate action and other ecosystem service benefits (optimising residual peat re-wetting). This will be measured and demonstrated by site monitoring (updated aerial photography) to measure the extent of suitable hydrological conditions.
- Accelerating the trajectory of the site towards becoming reduced carbon source. This will be measured through habitat mapping and the development of cutaway bog condition assessment. This cutaway bog condition assessment will include assessment of environmental and ecological indicators such as vegetation cover, vegetation communities, presence of key species, *Sphagnum* cover, bare peat cover and water levels (similar to ecotope mapping).
- Reduction in carbon emissions. This will be estimated via a combination of habitat condition assessment and application of appropriate carbon emission factors derived from other sites. Baseline monitoring (habitat condition) will be carried after rehabilitation is completed (during the Scheme). It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- Setting the site on a trajectory towards establishment of a mosaic of compatible habitats including, fen, reed swamp, wet woodland, heath, scrub, birch woodland, and embryonic *Sphagnum*-rich peatland communities, where conditions are suitable. These habitats will generally establish initially as pioneer vegetation. It will take some time for stable naturally functioning habitats to fully develop at Noggusboy Bog. This will be demonstrated by the reduction in bare peat and the establishment of further pioneering habitats. This will be measured via aerial photography, habitat mapping and cutaway/habitat condition assessment.
- Improvement in biodiversity and ecosystem services. This will be demonstrated by metrics outlined in Section 9.1 that can be used to measure changes in ecosystem services (e.g. water quality parameters, development of pioneer habitats, breeding bird monitoring etc). This will be measured by collecting a range of scientific data that can then quickly be adapted and into metrics that can be used to measure changes in various ecosystem services. Baseline monitoring will be carried after rehabilitation is completed (during the Scheme). It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future. These metrics will be defined in the context of the overall Scheme resources and after consultation with stakeholders.

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

| Criteria type | Criteria | Target | Measured by | Expected Time-frame |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| IPC validation | Rewetting in the former area of industrial peat production | Delivery of rehabilitation measures<br>Reduction in bare peat. | Aerial photography after rehabilitation has been completed – to demonstrate measures (drain-blocking)<br>Establishment of a baseline for future monitoring of bare peat, vegetation establishment and habitat condition. | 2022-2025 |
| IPC validation | Key water quality parameters<br>Ammonia, Phosphorous, Suspended solids (silt), pH and conductivity | Reduction or stabilisation of key water quality parameters | Water quality monitoring. Started in advance of the proposed rehabilitation. | 2022-2024 |
| IPC validation | Reducing pressure from peat production on the local river catchment (WFD) | No decline in the WFD status of the local river catchment | EPA WFD monitoring programme | WFD schedule |
| Climate action verification | Optimising the extent of suitable hydrological conditions to optimise climate action | Optimal extent of suitable hydrological conditions | Aerial photography and Habitat mapping to map extent of suitable hydrological conditions.<br>Baseline monitoring to be carried out during the Scheme when rehabilitation is complete. Sites can be re-monitored in the future and compared against this baseline. | 2022-2025 |
| Climate action verification | Reduction in carbon emissions. | Reduction in carbon emissions | Carbon emissions – estimated using a high bog condition assessment and appropriate carbon emission factors. | 2022-2025 |

| Criteria type | Criteria | Target | Measured by | Expected Time-frame |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Climate action verification | Setting the site on a trajectory towards establishment of a mosaic of compatible habitats | Establishment of compatible cutaway habitats | Habitat map, Cutaway bog condition map<br>Baseline monitoring to be carried out during the scheme when rehabilitation is complete. Sites can be re-monitored in the future and compared against this baseline. | 2022-2025 |
| Climate action verification | Biodiversity and ecosystem services.<br>Habitat establishment<br>Presence of key species – Sphagnum<br>Wintering birds | Improvement in biodiversity and ecosystem services. | Metrics that relate to selected biodiversity and ecosystem services (to be defined).<br>Presence of key species – Sphagnum – Walkover survey<br>Baseline monitoring to be carried out during the Scheme when rehabilitation is complete. Sites can be re-monitored in the future and compared against this baseline. | 2022-2025 |

Meeting climate action verification criteria and monitoring of these criteria after the Scheme has been completed is dependent on support from PCAS or other sources of funding. Note that monitoring and verification of the overall Scheme will be stratified – not all these criteria will be measured at each individual site.

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

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

- **Funding to pay for resources required to deliver the planned rehabilitation (Bord na Móna and external).** Bord na Móna maintains a Provision on its balance sheet to pay for these future costs when industrial peat extraction ceases. Bord na Móna is fully committed to meeting its obligations relating to rehabilitation and decommissioning under the Integrated Pollution Control Licence. It is expected that additional costs of enhanced rehabilitation will be supported by Government through the Climate Action Fund and Climate Action Fund and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan.
- **Bord na Móna to have sufficient resources (staff and training) to deliver the planned rehabilitation with required associated skills and competencies.**
- **Bord na Móna to have sufficient resources (suitable machinery) and staff to maintain this machinery.**
- **Weather conditions to be within normal limits over the rehabilitation plan timeframe.** Long periods of wet weather have the capacity to significantly affect ground conditions and constrain the delivery of

rehabilitation. The potential impact of wet weather on ground conditions can be reduced by appropriate planning and management. Bord na Móna have significant experience of managing these issues through 70 years of working in these peatland environments.

- **Rehabilitation measures to be effective.** The rehabilitation measures proposed in this plan are based on 40 years of Bord na Móna experience of peatland management and best practice applied internationally in peatland management. Measures proposed in this plan have already been shown to be affective at other sites. Bord na Móna will apply a flexible and adaptable approach to the more innovative rehabilitation measures proposed in this plan**.** If measures are not initially effective, Bord na Móna will review any requirement for additional practical rehabilitation.
- **Natural colonisation of vegetation to develop semi-natural habitats at a rate within the normal limits.** The development of naturally functioning semi-natural habitats on cutaway peatland takes time. Pioneer vegetation can develop relatively quickly (3-10 years) and wetland habitats can develop relatively quickly. Birch woodland make take 20-30 years to develop. However, it may take 50 years for active raised bog vegetation to re-develop on ground that was previously cutaway. Different environmental conditions will have a significant impact on the rate of natural colonisation, and as a result of the combination of different environmental conditions and the application of different rehabilitation measures, there will be a variety of habitat outcomes.
- Rehabilitation measures have been designed to accelerate and work with natural colonisation and other natural processes. Bord na Móna experience of rehabilitation has shown that re-wetting improves conditions for natural colonisation and that natural colonisation is accelerated where the environmental conditions are most suitable. Rehabilitation measures have been designed to modify the conditions of areas within sites where conditions are less suitable for natural colonisation (modifying hydrology, topography, nutrient status or availability of potential seed sources).
- **Monitoring to be robust and effective.** Rehabilitation Monitoring will be established to validate the success of rehabilitation as required by Condition 10 of the IPC Licence and to verify the benefits of the proposed measures to optimise climate action. This will focus on a collecting a range of scientific data that can then quickly be adapted and into metrics that can be used to measure changes in various ecosystem services.

## 8. REHABILITATION ACTIONS AND TIME FRAME

Peatland rehabilitation requires detailed planning and the use of data from desktop surveys and field surveys. This data in association with topographical and hydrological modelling (depression analysis) will be important in planning the future peatland landscapes and planning the use of the most appropriate rehabilitation methodologies to maximise climate action benefits. Hydrological modelling indicates those areas that are likely to re-wet when drains are blocked, based on the current topography, and areas where water levels may have to be modified, where needed. Enhanced rehabilitation measures will look to optimise hydrological conditions for re-wetting peat in other areas. This planning is also essential for matching the most sustainable rehabilitation methodology to the most suitable cutaway environment to maximise the benefits of the resource outlay (maximising cost/benefit).

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

BNM- DR-23_11_22 titled **Noggusboy Bog: Aerial Imagery 2020**

BNM- DR-23_11_04 titled **Noggusboy Bog: Peat Depths**

BNM- DR-23_11_03 titled **Noggusboy Bog: LiDAR Map**

BNM-DR-23-11-07 titled **Noggusboy Bog: Depression Analysis**

The rehabilitation actions will be a combination of PCAS measures to re-wet peat. The distribution of these measures is provisionally outlined in Drawing no. BnM-DR23_11_05 "*Enhanced Rehab Measures*". (Note that the actual distribution of these measures may be subject to change in response to stakeholder consultation and refinement of the enhanced rehabilitation measures.)

These enhanced measures for Noggusboy Bog will include**:**

- Re-assessment of the pumping regime; removal of the pump on site is desired if this has no significant external impact. The west of the site has already developed a mosaic of open water and wetland habitats with permanent deeper water when pumping is reduced or stopped. Hydrological management will look to optimise summer water levels to maximise the development of wetland vegetation (by looking to set water depths at < 0.5 m, where possible). It is inevitable that some sections will naturally have deeper water due to the topography at this site. Water-levels will be adjusted at outfalls and by adjusting piped drainage. More sustainable permanent gravity drainage solutions will be examined. Some targeted bunding may be required. It is expected that a natural seasonal regime of water fluctuation will develop, with water-levels fluctuating in association with levels in the adjacent watercourses and associated groundwater conditions.
- Initial hydrological modelling (depression analysis) indicates that a significant part of the west of the site has the potential to retain wet conditions. It is anticipated that this will develop a mosaic of wetland and peatland habitats. Hydrological management will look to optimise summer water levels to maximise the extent and development of wetland vegetation.
- Re-wetting the extensive areas of peat remaining on site within the former production area using berms and drain blocking.
- Undertaking intensive drain blocking, blocking outfalls and managing overflows in areas where depression analysis predicts wet conditions will occur. Drain blocking will also occur across other areas in order to retain surface water locally.

- Modifying water levels at outfalls, as it may be desirable to change and control water levels at the site over time, e.g. to increase water levels as the site becomes increasingly vegetated. This will further slow the movement of water through and out of Noggusboy Bog.
- Some targeted drain blocking in marginal (degraded) remnant raised high bog areas is proposed as part of this plan, although they are small in size and degraded nature.
- The existing silt ponds will be retained and maintained during the rehabilitation phase. During the monitoring and verification phase the silt ponds will be continually inspected and maintained, where appropriate. When it is deemed that the silt ponds are not required, as the bog has been successfully stabilised and there is no run-off of suspended solids, the condition of the silt ponds will be reviewed. The silt ponds will either be de-watered (water levels lowered to a level where the silt pond will naturally develop as a small wetland feature), left in situ, or infilled (where discharges do not require silt control).
- Targeted fertiliser applications to accelerate vegetation establishment on areas of bare peat on headlands and high fields as required, see Drawing no. DR_23_11_28 '*Targeted fertiliser map*'.

*Table 8.1: Types of and areas for enhanced rehabilitation measures at Noggusboy Bog.*

| **Type** | | **Enhanced Rehabilitation Measure** | Extent (Ha) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dry Cutaway | DCT1 | Blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes | 20.3 |
| Dry Cutaway | DCT2 | Regular drain blocking (3/100m) +blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes + targeted fertiliser treatment | 167.1 |
| Deep Peat | DPT 4 | Berms and field re-profiling (45x60m cell), blocking outfalls and managing overflows & drainage channels for excess water & Sphagnum Inoculation | 12.7 |
| Wetland | WL2 | Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes + Targeted blocking of outfalls within a site | 98.2 |
| Wetland | WLT3 | Blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes. Targeted blocking of outfalls within a site, constructing larger berms to re-wet cutaway and transplanting reeds and other rhizomes. | 14.6 |
| Wetland | WLT4 | More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), + blocking outfalls and managing overflows + transplanting Reeds and other rhizomes | 66.0 |
| Marginal land | MLT1 | No work required | 33.9 |
| Marginal land | MLT2 | More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m) | 10.2 |
| Silt ponds | Silt pond | Silt ponds | 2.3 |
| Constraint | Constraint | Other Constraints (Renewable Energy, Amenity, Coillte plantation etc) | 477.5 |
| Additional Works | AW2 | More intensive drain blocking and outfall management | 20.6 |
| **Total** | | | **923.4** |

## 8.1 Short-term planning actions (0-1 years)

- Seek formal approval of the enhanced plan, noting the alternative adapted standard plan should funding from the Scheme not materialise, from the EPA.
- Agree an *ex ante* budget of eligible costs (based on the approved enhanced plan) with the Scheme regulator.
- Develop a detailed site plan with detailed site drawings outlining how the various rehabilitation methodologies (with the Scheme) will be applied to Noggusboy Bog. This will take account of peat depths, topography, drainage and hydrological modelling. (See map for an indicative view of the application of different rehabilitation methodologies).
- Carry out a hydrology and drainage management assessment of the proposed enhanced rehabilitation measures.
- An Archaeological Impact Appraisal (AIA) will be undertaken. This will carry out a review of known archaeology and an archaeological impact appraisal of the proposed rehabilitation. Incorporate the results of this appraisal into the rehabilitation plan to minimise known archaeological disturbance, where possible.
- Carry out a review of issues that may constrain rehabilitation such as known rights of way, turbary and existing land agreements. There are no known rights of way at Noggusboy bog.
- Carry out a review of remaining milled peat stocks. It is expected that all peat stocks will eventually be removed or decommissioned.
- Carry out an ecological appraisal of the potential impacts of the planned rehabilitation, such as the presence of sensitive ground-nesting bird breeding species (e.g. curlew, ringed plover or lapwing) or marsh fritillary butterfly larval webs, etc. The scheduling of rehabilitation operations will be adapted, if needed. Surveys will be scoped and carried out based on the baseline ecological survey and previous knowledge of sites.
- Ensure all activities comply with the environmental protection requirements of the IPC Licence.
- An Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the Rehabilitation Plan will be undertaken. Incorporate any required mitigation measures from the AA in the plan for the delivery of rehabilitation and decommissioning across the site.
- Track implementation and enforcement of the relevant IPC Licence conditions, the mitigation measures (AA) and other environmental control measures during the implantation of the rehabilitation plan.

## 8.2 Short-term practical actions (0-2 years)

- Carry out proposed measures as per the detailed site plan. This will include a combination of hydrological management, drain blocking, peat field re-profiling and cell-bunding. All rehabilitation will be carried out with regard to best practice environmental control measures (Appendix IV).
- Monitor the success of rehabilitation measures in relation to developing suitable hydrological conditions.
- Carry out the proposed monitoring, as outlined in Section 9 of this report and accompanying documents.

- While natural colonisation is expected to commence almost immediately once peat production ceases, Phase 2 actions will be carried out in targeted areas to accelerate re-vegetation and colonisation of target species. Phase 2 actions will include fertiliser application on high fields and headlands (where there is bare peat).
- Silt-ponds will be monitored during this period and there will be continued maintenance and cleaning to prevent run-off of suspended solids from the site during the rehabilitation phase.
- Submit an *ex post* report to the Scheme regulator to verify the eligible measures to be carried out in year 1 of the Scheme, and an *ex ante* estimate for year 2 of the Scheme; and so on for each year of the Scheme.

## 8.3 Long-term (>3 years)

- Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate where necessary.
- Delivery of a monitoring, aftercare and maintenance programme (See section 10.2 below).
- Decommissioning of silt-ponds will be assessed and carried out, where required.
- Reporting to the EPA will continue until the IPC Licence is surrendered.

## 8.4 Timeframe

- 2021-2022. Short-term planning actions.
- 2022. Short-term practical actions.
- 2022-2025. Long term practical actions. Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate where necessary.
- 2025. Decommission silt-ponds, if necessary.

## 8.5 Budget and costing

Bord na Móna (BnM) appreciates the Minister's intention to support, via the Climate Action Fund and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan, Bord na Móna in developing a package of measures, 'the Scheme', for enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration of cutaway peatlands referred to as, the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme'. *However, only the additional costs associated with the additional and enhanced rehabilitation, i.e, measures which go beyond the existing standard mandatory decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements arising from Condition 10 will be eligible for support.*

The enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration of the peatlands funded by the Scheme will deliver benefits across climate action (GHG mitigation through reduced carbon emissions and acceleration towards carbon sequestration), enrich the State's natural capital, increase eco-system services, strengthen biodiversity, improve water quality and storage attenuation as well as developing the amenity potential of the peatlands.

Bord na Móna maintains a provision on its balance sheet to pay for the future costs of **standard** rehabilitation and decommissioning when industrial peat extraction ceases. This is updated every year - for more information see the Bord na Móna Annual Report (Bord na Móna 2021). Bord na Móna is fully committed to meeting its obligations relating to rehabilitation and decommissioning under the Integrated Pollution Control Licence.

At this time, a 'standard' rehabilitation provision (sufficient to discharge the requirement of Condition 10 in the licence) has been be allocated to the site based on the area of deep peat habitats, wetland habitats, shallow cutaway areas, drier areas, and regenerating bog communities across the bog (See Appendix I).

# 9. AFTERCARE AND MAINTENANCE

## 9.1 Programme for monitoring, aftercare and maintenance

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

- There will be **initial quarterly monitoring assessments** of the site to determine the general status of the site, the condition of the silt-ponds, assess the condition of the rehabilitation work, monitoring of any potential impacts on neighbours land, general land security, boundary management, dumping and littering.
- The number of these site visits will reduce after 2 years to bi-annually (two per year). This will further reduce to a single visit each year after 5 years.
- These monitoring visits will consider any further requirements for practical rehabilitation measures.
- The **baseline condition of the site will be established** post-rehabilitation implementation by using an aerial survey to take an up to date aerial photo, when rehabilitation is completed. The extent of bare peat will be assessed using this baseline data, and habitat maps will be updated.
- **Water quality monitoring** at the bog will be established. This will start in advance of the proposed rehabilitation. The main objective of this water quality monitoring will be to establish a baseline and then monitor the impact of peatland rehabilitation on water quality from the bog.
- In order to assist in monitoring surface water quality from this bog, it is planned to increase the existing licence monitoring requirements to sampling for the same parameters to every month during the scheduled activities and for a period up to two years, post rehabilitation, depending on the period required to confirm that the main two parameters, suspended solids and ammonia are remaining compliant with the licence emission and trigger limit values and there is an improving trajectory in these two parameters i.e. reduction in concentration.
- Water quality monitoring will aim to include up to 70% of a bog's drainage catchments.
- Monitoring results will be maintained, trended and reported on each year as part of the requirement to report on Condition 10.1 of the IPC Licence on Bog Rehabilitation in the Annual Environmental Report, which will be available in April each year at www.epa.ie.
- The parameters to be included (as per condition 6.2 of the IPC Licence) include monthly monitoring for pH, Flow, Suspended Solids, Total Solids, Total Phosphorus, Total Ammonia, Colour, and COD.
- This monthly sampling regime on a selected number of silt ponds will be carried out over a three-year cycle. The original (licence) requirement was for a quarterly sampling regime but this has been increased to a monthly regime to appropriately track the changing water chemistry that will occur as part of this rehabilitation. In addition, DOC will be included as a parameter to try and identify any changes in carbon in the surface water.
- If, after two years, key targets for successful rehabilitation are being achieved, then the water quality monitoring programme will be reviewed, with consideration of potential ongoing scientific research on site. The water quality data, the aerial surveys and the habitat mapping will be collated and will be submitted to the EPA as part of the final validation report.
- If, after two years, key targets for successful rehabilitation have **not** been achieved, then the rehabilitation measures and status of the site will be evaluated and enhanced, where needed. This evaluation may indicate no requirement for additional enhancement of rehabilitation measures, but may demonstrate that more time is required before key targets for successful rehabilitation has been achieved. Monitoring of water quality will then also continue for another period to be defined.

- Where other uses are proposed for the site, these will be assessed by Bord na Móna in consultation with interested parties. Other after-uses can be proposed for licensed areas and must go through the required assessment process and planning procedures.

Additional monitoring measures are also proposed to monitor ecosystem service benefits that have been derived by rehabilitation. These proposed monitoring measures will be funded by the Scheme or additional other funding. Monitoring of climate action and other ecosystem service benefits will be designed to take account of the requirements of monitoring benefits of the overall Scheme and will be stratified; that is not all monitoring will be carried out in each site. These are defined as:

- Vegetation and habitat monitoring after rehabilitation is completed using a cutaway bog condition assessment (Similar to ecotope mapping). This assessment will include assessment of on environmental and ecological indicators such as vegetation cover, vegetation communities, presence of key species, Sphagnum cover, bare peat cover and water levels. It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- The condition of the bog can be assessed using the condition assessment and suitable Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission factors can be assigned to different habitats. GHG emission factors have been determined for various peatland habitats in Ireland (Wilson *et al.*, 2015) and are constantly being refined with more and more research. BnM is actively supporting research into GHG fluxes in different rehabilitated peatland habitats. This means that potential GHG emissions can be estimated from the site, as the site continues along its trajectory towards a naturally functioning peatland ecosystem.
- It is proposed to monitor the improvement of some biodiversity ecosystem services. A breeding bird and Pollinator monitoring programme will be established. Specific pollinator indicators will be monitored (i.e. bees and butterflies). To be defined in relation to monitoring of the overall Scheme and after consultation with stakeholders.

## 9.2 Rehabilitation plan validation and licence surrender – report as required under condition 10/4

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

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

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

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# 11. APPENDIX I: A STANDARD PEATLAND REHABILITATION PLAN TO MEET CONDITIONS OF THE IPC LICENCE

In the event that the Scheme (PCAS) is not supported by additional funding, Bord na Móna is still obligated to carry out peatland rehabilitation to meet the conditions of the IPC Licence. Under its EPA licences and following cessation of peat extraction, BnM is mandated to 'decommission' its operations by removing materials 'that may result in environmental pollution' and establish that 'rehabilitation' measures have environmentally stabilised peat production areas.

This proposed standard peatland rehabilitation plan is outlined here to **estimate potential costs**. Bord na Móna will still be expected to cover the costs that would have accrued from standard decommissioning and rehabilitation activities, as part of its original obligations. The existing costs associated with both the removal of potentially polluting materials and the environmental stabilisation of the peatlands resides with Bord na Móna. However, the expenditure necessary to deliver the additional and enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration and the benefits that flow from these measures and interventions/improvements will be eligible for funding by government through the Climate Action Fund and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

The same process as outlined in Section 2 will be followed.

**Scope of rehabilitation**

The principal scope of this rehabilitation plan is to rehabilitate the bog. This is defined by:

- EPA IPC Licence - PO500-01. As part of Condition 10.2 of this licence, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. Noggusboy bog is part of the Boora bog group).
- A key objective of rehabilitation, as defined by this licence, is **environmental stabilisation** of the bog.
- The area of former industrial peat production at Noggusboy Bog as defined by Drawing no. BnM_DR23_11_01 titled '*Bog Site Location*'. Industrial peat production has now permanently ceased at Noggusboy Bog.
- Minimising potential impacts on neighbouring land. Some boundary drains around Noggusboy Bog will be left unblocked as blocking boundary drains could affect adjacent land.
- Future land-use: Bord na Móna are reviewing the potential to develop a potential renewable energy project at Noggusboy Bog. It is expected that this review will be completed in 1-2 years. In advance of this review of renewable energy potential, it is planned to rehabilitate part of Noggusboy Bog in 2022-2024 that is not constrained. The remaining area will be rehabilitated after the renewable energy review is complete. The peatland rehabilitation will either be in association with a potential renewable energy project, with peatland rehabilitation integrated into the proposed project, or will be completed in the absence of any proposed renewable energy project.

**Rehabilitation goals and outcomes**

The key rehabilitation goal and outcome for Noggusboy Bog is environmental stabilisation of the site via re-wetting. This is defined as:

- Carrying out drain blocking to re-wet peat and slow runoff.
- Stabilising potential emissions from the site (e.g. suspended solids).

- Environmental stabilisation.

The outcome is setting the site on a trajectory towards establishment of natural peatland habitats.

**Criteria for successful rehabilitation:**

- Rewetting of residual peat in the former area of industrial peat production to offset potential run off of suspended solids and to encourage development of vegetation cover via natural colonisation, and reducing the area of bare exposed peat.
- That there is a stabilising/improving concentration of suspended solids and ammonia associated with the measures undertaken to stabilise the peat surface by the blocking of the internal drainage system and the maximised rewetting of the peat surface. This will be demonstrated by developing a stable or downward trajectory of water quality indicators (suspended solids and ammonia) towards what would be typical of a re-wetted cutaway bog. This will be measured via water quality monitoring (suspended solids and ammonia).
- Receiving water bodies have been classified under the River Basin Management Plan and this classification includes waters that are At Risk from peatlands and peat extraction. The success criteria will be that the At Risk classification will see improvements in the associated pressures from this peatland or if remaining At Risk, that there is an improving trajectory in the pressure from this peatland.

**Rehabilitation targets**

- Demonstrating the delivery of the rehabilitation through site visits and through updated aerial photography (indicating presence of peat barriers, elevated water levels and re-wetting).
  Stabilising potential emissions from the site (run-off of suspended solids). The key target will be developing a stable or downward trajectory of water quality indicators (suspended solids and ammonia) towards what would be typical of a re-wetted cutaway bog. This will be demonstrated by water quality monitoring results.

**Rehabilitation measures: (see Figure Ap-1)**

- Blocking field drains in the former industrial production area and creating regular peat barriers (three barriers per 100 m) along each field drain.
- Re-alignment of piped drainage.
- Realignment of gravity outfalls (where needed).
- Fertiliser treatment of high fields and headlands (typically slow to naturally re-colonise) to encourage natural colonisation, if needed.
- No measures are planned for the surrounding marginal peatland habitats.
- Silt ponds will continue to be maintained during the rehabilitation and decommissioning.
- Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures and enhance where necessary.
- Decommissioning of silt-ponds will be assessed and carried out, where required.

**Timeframe:**

- 2022. 1st phase of rehabilitation. Field drain blocking with dozer/excavator.

- 2022. 2nd phase. Further realignment of piped drainage and other re-wetting measures dependent on success of 1st phase re-wetting, as determined by ongoing monitoring of water levels and re-vegetation.
- Other enhancement measures such as fertiliser treatment will be carried out, if needed. These will be determined by ongoing monitoring.
- 2024-2025. Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate where necessary.
- 2024-2025. Decommission silt-ponds, if necessary.

**Budget and Costing**

- Bord na Móna maintains a Provision on its balance sheet to pay for the future costs of rehabilitation and decommissioning when industrial peat extraction ceases. This is updated every year. For more information see the Bord na Móna Annual Report (Bord na Móna, 2021). Bord na Móna is fully committed to meeting its obligations relating to rehabilitation and decommissioning under the Integrated Pollution Control Licence.
- At this time, a standard rehabilitation provision has been allocated to the site based on the area of different cutaway types across the bog.

Table AP-1. Rehabilitation measures and target area.

| **Type** | **Code** | **Enhanced Rehabilitation Measure** | **Extent (Ha)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dry cutaway | DCT1 | Blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes | 187.3 |
| Deep peat cutaway | DPT1 | Regular drain blocking (3/100 m) + blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes | 12.7 |
| Wetland cutaway | WLT1 | Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes | 178.8 |
| Marginal land | MLT1 | No work required | 64.6 |
| Other | Silt pond | Silt ponds | 2.3 |
| Other | Constraint | Amenity/Coillte plantation/Rights of Ways and constrained areas/buffers/Archaeology | 477.5 |
| **Total** | | | **923.4** |

**Monitoring, after-care and maintenance**

- There will be initial quarterly monitoring assessments of the site to determine the general status of the site, the condition of the silt-ponds, assess the condition of the rehabilitation work, asses the progress of natural colonisation, monitoring of any potential impacts on neighbouring land and general land security. The number of site visits will reduce after 2 years to bi-annually. These site visits will assess the need to any additional rehabilitation.
- Water quality monitoring will be established.
- Monitoring results will be maintained, trended and reported on each year as part of the requirement to report on Condition 10.1 of the IPC Licence on Bog Rehabilitation in the Annual Environmental Report, which will be available in April each year at www.epa.ie.

- The parameters to be included (as per condition 6.2 of the IPC Licence) include monthly monitoring for pH, Flow, Suspended Solids, Total Solids, Total Phosphorus, Total Ammonia, Colour, and Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD).
- This sampling regime on a selected number of silt ponds will be carried out over a two-year cycle. The original (licence) requirement was for a quarterly sampling regime.
- Where other uses are proposed for the site, these will be assessed by Bord na Móna in consultation with interested parties. Other after-uses can be proposed for licensed areas and must go through the required assessment and planning procedures.

**Validation and IPC Licence surrender**

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

- The planned rehabilitation has been completed.
- The water quality monitoring demonstrates that water quality of discharge is stabilising or improving.
- The site has been environmentally stabilised.

# 12. APPENDIX II: BOG GROUP CONTEXT

The Boora group of bogs are sited between Killeigh (Offaly) in the East to Banagher (Offaly) in the West and between Kinnitty (Offaly) in the south and Clara (Offaly) in the North. The River Shannon is the major river catchment for the area with a smaller area lying within the Barrow catchment.

The Boora Group is one of the oldest bog groups in Ireland. Bord na Móna was set up in 1946 and it commenced the development of the Boora Bogs in 1946 with milled peat production commencing in 1955. Milled peat was produced in the Boora Bog for the supply of fuel peat to the power station in Ferbane which commenced power generation in 1957 and closed in 2001. The Boora bogs were also developed for the supply of milled peat to the Derrinlough Briquette factory, which commenced production in 1957.

Much of the Boora Bog complex became cutaway as it was in peat production at an early stage. A number of rehabilitation measures comprising naturalisation and development of alternative after-uses have been already explored at the Boora Bog Group, including coniferous forestry, biomass, agricultural grassland, amenity use, rare species conservation management (specifically Grey Partridge) and wetland creation. Some of this was carried out in the 1980s While agricultural fields and coniferous forestry have been developed successfully on the cutaway bogs at Boora, it was found that these require financial investment that at this time exceeds any potential commercial output value. The Lough Boora Discovery Park encompasses all areas relating to amenity and biodiversity. www.loughboora.com.

The bogs in the Boora Bog Group have been used in the past to supply milled peat for the horticultural market, local power stations (Ferbane, Shannonbridge and West Offaly Power) and Derrinlough Briquette factory. Industrial peat extraction has now ceased in the Boora Bog Group. Remaining peat stocks are being transported to Derrinlough Briquette Factory and other customers.

A breakdown of the component bog areas for the Boora Bog Group IPC Licence Ref. PO500-01, and current, indicative Peat Production Status, is outlined in Table Ap-2. These areas are also outlined in the Mapbook (Map of the Boora Bog Group).

*Table Ap-2: Boora Bog Group names, area and indicative status*

| Bog | Area (Ha) | Stage of development | Land-Use and History | Peat Production Cessation | Rehab Plan Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Killaun | 359.5 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Killaun Bog in 1996 and ceased in 2020. Only the upper most layers of peat have been harvested. Deep peat reserves remain on site. Killaun is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Killaun Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial customers including; horticultural peat and fuel peat.<br>Most of the former production area is bare peat. | 2020 | Draft<br>2017 |
| Boora | 1,842.4 | Cutaway<br>Harvested since the 1950's resulting in the exhaustion of the commercially viable peat resource at the bog. The majority of Boora Bog is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog. Some areas of deep peat persist at this site. | The majority of Boora bog has already been rehabilitated. A significant area of cutaway bog has been re-wetted, developed as conifer forestry (Coillte) and developed as farmland (1980s).<br>This site now forms the core of Lough Boora Discovery Park. | 2020 | Finalised 2021<br>Rehab beginning 2021 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pollagh/ Cornalaur | 280.8 | Cutaway<br>At Pollagh Bog, industrial peat production began in 2004 and ceased in 2020.<br>Peat reserves of variable depth remain on site. Some deep peat areas remain. Pollagh is considered a cutover bog with variable peat depths. | Pioneer emergent peatland vegetation communities are developing throughout the bog.<br>The adjacent Cornalaur Bog was never developed for peat production. | 2020 | Finalised 2021<br>Rehab beginning 2021 |
| Noggusboy | 917.4 | Cutaway Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Noggusboy during the 1950's and ceased in 2020. Long-term peat extraction has exhausted commercially viable peat reserves on this bog. Noggusboy is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog. | Part of the site was developed for conifer forestry by Coillte.<br>Part of the site was developed as Cloghan Lake, as part of Lough Boora Discovery Park, in 1999.<br>There is some emerging naturally colonising cutaway. | 2020 | Draft to be finalised in 2021 |
| Drinagh | 1,339.1 | Cutaway Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Drinagh during the 1950's and ceased in 2020. Some small pockets of deep peat reserves remain in parts of Drinagh Bog but most of the commercially viable peat reserves have been exhausted. Drinagh is considered a shallow peat, cutaway bog. | Drinagh East is cutaway and has been extensively rehabilitated as wetland. This part of the site has extensive development of naturally functioning peatland habitats.<br>Some Coillte conifer forestry is also present.<br>There is some emerging naturally colonising cutaway in Drinagh West. | 2020 | Draft 2017 |
| Killaranny | 242.8 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Kilaranny during the 1980's. Deep peat reserves remain on much of the bog. Kilaranny is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Kilaranny Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; horticultural peat and fuel peat.<br>A portion of the site is leased by NPWS since 2011 as a re-location area for turf cutters from nearby Clara Bog SAC. | 2020 | Finalised 2021 |
| Oughter | 352.9 | Cutaway<br>Development of Oughter Bog commenced in the 1960's. Industrial peat production ceased in 2012. Shallow peat depths remain over much of the former production bog area. Oughter is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog. | The site has naturally been re-wetting and there is already significant natural colonisation.<br>Part of the site has been developed as the Midlands National Shooting Centre of Ireland. | 2012 | Finalised 2021<br>Rehab beginning 2021 |
| Galros | 191.5 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Galros during the 1980's and ceased in 2020. Some areas of deep peat remain on the former production area. Galros is considered a cutover bog of variable peat depth. | Galros Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial customers including; horticultural peat and fuel peat.<br>Some naturally emerging cutaway habitats are developing in part of the site. | 2020 | Draft 2017 |
| Clongawny More | 987.2 | Industrial peat production commenced at Clongawny More during the 1950's and ceased in 2020. Some pockets of deep peat persist, particularly in the south- | Part of the site rehabilitated, as part of Lough Boora Discovery Park, in 1999. | 2020 | Draft 2017 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | western portion of the former production area. Clongawny More is considered a cutover bog with variable peat depths throughout the site. | Some Coillte conifer forestry is also present.<br>The site has naturally been re-wetting and there is already significant natural colonisation. BnM currently have submitted an application for renewable energy development on this bog. | | |
| Derrinboy | 305.7 | Cutover Bog<br>Derrinboy was first developed by BnM in the 1980's. Peat production ceased at Derrinboy in 2020. This bog was used to supply horticultural peat. Only the upper layers of peat have been harvested. Derrinboy is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Derrinboy Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial customers including; horticultural peat and fuel peat. | 2020 | To be finalised in 2021 |
| Moneitta | 707.5 | Cutover Bog<br>Moneitta was first developed by BnM in the 1970's. Peat production ceased at Monietta in 2020. This bog was used to supply horticultural peat. Only the upper layers of peat were harvested. Moneitta is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Moneitta Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial customers including; horticultural peat and fuel peat. | 2020 | Draft 2017 |
| Boora Lemanaghan Rail_Link | 6.9 | N/A | Not applicable | N/A | N/A |
| Derries | 368.2 | Cutaway Bog<br>Development of The Derries Bog commenced in the 1960's. Industrial peat production ceased in 2005. Shallow peat depths remain over much of the former production bog area.<br>The Derries Bog is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog. | Wetland rehabilitation carried out over part of site in 1999.<br>Amenity trackway development in 2015. Part of the Lough Boora Discovery Park.<br>The site has now been extensively naturally colonised and is a mosaic of wetland and Birch woodland habitats. | 2005 | Finalised 2021<br>Rehab beginning 2021 |
| Turraun | 534.5 | Cutaway Bog<br>Development of Turraun Bog commenced in the 1950's. Industrial peat production ceased in 2018. Turraun is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog. | Wetland rehabilitation carried out over part of area in 1999 as part of the Lough Boora Discovery Park. This section of the site has now been extensively naturally colonised and is a mosaic of wetland and Birch woodland habitats. | 2018 | Finalised 2021<br>Rehab beginning 2021 |
| Derryclure | 327.6 | Cutover Bog<br>Derryclure was first developed by BnM in the 1980's. Peat production ceased at Derryclure in 2020. This bog was used to supply horticultural peat. Only the upper layers of peat were harvested. Derryclure is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Derryclure Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; horticultural peat and fuel peat. | 2020 | Draft 2021 |
| Lemanaghan | 1,253.7 | Cutover Bog<br>Industrial peat production commenced at Lemanaghan during the 1950's and ceased in 2019. Varied peat depths across the site. Deep peat reserves remain on | Lemanaghan Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; horticultural peat and fuel peat. | 2020 | Draft 2017 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | much of the former production area of Lemanaghan Bog. It is considered a cutover bog. | There are some naturally emerging cutaway habitats. | | |
| Belair North | 565.7 | Cutover Bog<br><br>Belair North was first developed by BnM in the 1960's. TPeat production ceased at Belair North in 2020. This bog was used to supply horticultural peat. Only the upper layers of peat were harvested. Belair North is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Belair North Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; horticultural peat and fuel peat. | 2020 | Draft 2017 |
| Derrybrat | 171.6 | Cutaway Bog<br><br>Industrial peat production commenced at Derrybrat during the 1950's and ceased in 2016. Derrybrat has shallow peat depths across the site. It is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog. | The site has been partially rehabilitated and there is already significant natural colonisation. Some conifer forestry has been developed by Coilte on the site. | 2016 | Finalised 2021 |
| Belair South | 228.8 | Cutover Bog<br><br>Belair South was first developed by BnM in the 1970's. Peat production ceased at Belair South in 2020. This bog was used to supply horticultural peat. As a result, only the upper layers of peat were harvested. Belair South is considered a deep peat cutover bog. | Belair South Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; horticultural peat and fuel peat. | 2020 | Draft<br><br>2017 |
| **Boora Bog Group Total** | **10,983.7** | | | | |

See Drawing number BNM-DR-23-11-24 titled **Boora Bog Group**, included in the accompanying Mapbook which illustrates the location of Derrybrat Bog and the Boora Bog Group in context to the surrounding area.

# 13. APPENDIX III: ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT

**Ecological Survey Report**

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

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Bog Name:** | **Noggusboy** | **Area (ha):** | 1028 Hectares |
| **Works Name:** | Derrygreenagh | **County:** | Offaly |
| **Recorder(s):** | MMC & DF | **Survey Date(s):** | 5 & 11th August 2010, 2015 |

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

The most common habitats present at this site include:

- Bare peat (BP) (Codes refer BnM classification of pioneer habitats of production bog. See Appendix II)
- Birch-dominated scrub (cBir, oBir, eBir & eGor)
- Poor fen vegetation – (pEang, pTrig, pJeff)
- Reedbeds (pTyp, pPhrag)
- Dry grassland habitats (gMol, gCal)
- Open water (OW) (some temporary)
- Access routes (Acc)
- Riparian zones (Rip)
- Works

- Conifer plantation (WD4) (on cutaway) (Codes refer to Heritage Council habitat classification, Fossitt 2000), See Appendix II.)
- Raised bog (PB1)
- Cutover bog (PB4)
- Dry heath (HH1)
- Arable crops (BC1) (Cranberry plantation)

**Description of site**

Noggusboy Bog is located 3km south of Ferbane in Co Offaly. This bog is bisected by the R437 Ferbane to Tullamore road while the R357 and the N62 roads form boundaries along part of the site's southern and western boundaries. The Grand Canal (pNHA) flows close to the northern boundary of the site while the Silver River flows close to the sites eastern boundary.

A community group based in nearby Cloghan are actively managing parts of the site for recreation. Management objectives include rearing game such as Duck and Pheasant on the site, providing game crops and predator control. A fishing lake was dug out in 1998 with peat and blue-clay cleared from the site. The lake is now stocked with Rainbow and Brown Trout. Anglers may obtain a licence from the community group to fish this lake. This lake is fed by a small stream and there is also an outflow. Two wetlands were also developed further north by drain-

blocking and raising of some embankments. Walking paths have also been created in the south of the site along with message boards which educate people on the wildlife of the area.

Noggusboy is a partially pumped bog. A pump is located close to the road in the western section of the site. The western section is part pumped while the eastern section is drained by gravity.

A Cranberry growing enterprise was established on the site in the early 1990's on this site by Bord na Móna. This involved importing North American Cranberry plants and creating suitable growing conditions. This project became financially unsustainable during the 2000's and the Cranberries have not been harvested industrially in a number of years. The plants still produce berries that are picked by members of the local community. Some of the introduced Cranberry has spread to other parts of the site, although it is not extensive.

For the purpose of this report the site has been divided into two main sections, an east and west side where the Ferbane to Tullamore road bisects the site.

**Western section**

The western side of Noggusboy bog is a mix of habitats and land use. The Cloghan Community Group have leased sections of the site, mainly in the south and mid west of the site. The southern areas are used as an angling resource on the man-made lakes. This area also includes walking tracks and a Pheasant viewing area where different species of Pheasant are on display in a viewing area. Information signs are also displayed around this area relating to the flora and fauna of the site. Another area close to the mid-west boundary of the site is used to raise Pheasants for release onto the site and sections of the cutaway had also been planted with game crops such as grasses and Brassica spp. Predator control was also in practice on the site.

The southern end of the site where the Community group are managing is the oldest area of cutaway on the bog. This area has some well established wetlands and mature Birch scrub, some of which is developing to Birch woodland. The area around the new lake is quite open and vegetated with poor fen/wet grassland type communities. Some of this vegetation is quite dry in parts and species such as Glaucous Sedge and Yellow Sedge are prominent. There is a significant calcareous influence on the vegetation around the lake where glacial spoil and blue-clay from the lake was spread and levelled. A small naturally developed wetland area to the south of the lake and adjacent to the road has Bottle Sedge-dominated communities with standing water in small pools. This wetland is spring-fed and there may be potential for further development of rich fen in this area. Towards the south-east corner of this area there is another small pool that contains Roach and Rudd in the past.

A large section, close to the middle of the site, had been planted with conifers by Coillte. Tree species included Sitka Spruce and Lodgepole Pine. This plantation was of varying quality and, overall, yield class appeared to be low. No management appears to have been carried out on this plantation.

Areas of former peat production are spread out around this section of the site, with the north of the site containing the largest section of bog that was in production until recent years. Other areas of relatively recent peat production were located around this section of the site, with various high fields formerly used for production using the Haku system.

Sections along the boundary, mainly along the west and northern boundaries are used for domestic turf cutting. Some large areas of cutaway bog are located in these areas as a result of domestic turf cutting over a long period of time. These areas have revegetated with a mixture of scrub (mainly Gorse) and poor fen vegetation dominated by Soft Rush and Bog Cotton (pEang & pJeff). Some sections of the older cutaway were grazed by horses.

Sections of former peat production areas that are now cutaway are at different stages of revegetation, ranging from scrub development to dry grasslands and poor fen development. The wetter areas appear to become revegetated quickly with Marsh Arrowgrass (pTrig) before other poor fen vegetation such as Soft Rush-dominated vegetation (pJeff) becomes established. Several low lying cutaway fields had been colonised by Jointed Rush. The cutaway sections appeared to be revegetating rapidly. The mainly pioneer poor fen vegetation cutaway areas are low lying and wet. A pump situated close to the centre of the site previously prevents wetland development, however, this has since been switched off and a large area within the eastern part of this parcel is now a wetland.

A number of small sections of remnant raised bog are located around this section of the site mainly along the western boundaries. These sections were dry and degraded and were dominated by Heather, the majority of these raised bog remnants were being encroached upon by domestic turf cutters.

**Eastern section**

An industrial Cranberry plantation was developed in the northern section adjacent to the road and the high bog (located in the townland of Falsk and marked Horticulture on the habitats map). Different varieties of Cranberries were imported from the USA and planted in specially prepared bays surrounded by berms. This low-growing shrub has completely covered large parts of the bay. These bays could be flooded during harvesting from an adjacent artificial lagoon to collect the Cranberries. The plantation has not been in production for some time and has been colonised by other typical cutaway plants such as Heather, Willow, Gorse and Birch. The northern part of the plantation was cleared of invasive scrub in recent years and is quite open. The southern section has much more scrub, although the ground layer is still dominated in places by the Cranberry.

The majority of this section is production bog with bare peat dominant. Most of the production area is relatively clean of vegetation with functional drains. The eastern side is further divided into several other sections by the railway through the southern half and by a large drain running the breadth of the bog through the central zone. There is a small band of production-related cutaway along the northern side adjacent to the high bog. This section is a typical poor fen and Birch scrub mosaic, with much of it being young emergent Birch. Different sections have denser Birch patches and towards the north-east there is some closed Birch scrub (cBir). The poor fen is generally dominated by Soft Rush and or Bog Cotton. Non-native Cranberry from the plantation has spread into this cutaway and appears along the drains and in some of the more open sections.

More production-related cutaway is located along the east side of this section. This is largely vegetated by a Birch scrub and poor fen mosaic with mainly Soft Rush. Some of the Birch scrub is denser and is closed (cBir). The edge of this area was used for storing bog timber and there is a significant amount of this bog timber along this section. Several fields in the adjacent production bog (not in production for several years) towards the east side are re-vegetating with Marsh Arrowgrass and some other Poor Fen vegetation (Soft Rush and Bog Cotton). A small pool has also developed in this area adjacent to the travel path, although it is likely to be temporary winter inundation. There were frequent signs that this area, and the adjacent production bog with Marsh Arrowgrass, was consistently being used by Whooper Swans (feathers, droppings), although none were recorded during fieldwork. Marsh Arrowgrass (pTrig) is a prominent feature along the edges of some drains in the production bog and within some of the Soft Rush-dominated vegetation developing on the fields not in production. The non-native Cranberry was also noted in this area along the edge of the pool. It was also noted along the travel path along the eastern boundary of the bog.

Further south of the large drain that divides the eastern section, there is some younger poor fen vegetation (mainly Soft Rush-dominated) along the eastern side in a production area. Clean production bog with bare peat is also found south of the railway.

Some remnant high bog is found along the southern boundary. Much of this is quite dry and being invaded by scrub and Birch. There is also a significant amount of private peat-cutting (PB4) in this area that is industrial in scale (licensed by Bord na Móna).

There is a narrow strip of land adjacent to the road that has not been in production. Much of this is scrub (WS1) and wet grassland (GS4) with Purple Moorgrass. Some of this land may have been improved in the past and developed for grazing. There are signs of recent works on part of this land, possibly for land improvement or for clearance to facilitate turf-cutting.

There is a large section of intact and un-ditched high bog (PB1) to the north of the Cranberry plantation (Falsk) with associated flush (PF2) and surrounded by cutover bog (PB4) and other associated habitats such as Birch woodland (WN7), scrub and reclaimed grassland. This area is not occupied by Bord na Móna and was given over to private sod peat production. The high bog (PB1) is quite dry and firm and contained typical species with Heather and Bog Asphodel prominent. *Sphagnum* spp. included typical hummocks of *S. capillifolium* and S. *papillosum*.

No pools were present. This flush (PF2) is typical with patchy Birch and Gorse scrub along its length and sections dominated by Purple Moorgrass with Bog Myrtle present. There is a natural drainage feature along the centre of the flush with an open channel in places. The bog is quite high with about a 2-3 m drop along the southern side and a significant fall towards the northern side, so there is little prospect of any re-wetting or restoration. This is active private peat cutting around the majority of the northern margin although towards the north-east side, the cutover bog is quite old and regenerating with scrub (WS1) and dry heath (HH1).

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

None

The Grand Canal pNHA (NPWS site code 2104) is located to the north of this site and part of the designated area along the canal is adjacent to part of the northern Noggusboy boundary.

**Adjacent habitats and land-use**

Conifer plantation (WD4), wet grassland (GS4), improved agricultural grassland (GA1), raised bog (PB1), cutaway bog (PB4) are all located adjacent to the site.

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

- Two small streams now channelised in deep channels flow across the site. One of these streams feeds the fishing lake.
- The Silver River flows within 200m of the eastern boundary of the site. Two tributaries of the Silver River flow off the site. The Silver River in turn joins with the Brosna River approximately 1.2km from the north eastern corner of the site. The Silver River holds stocks of Brown Trout, Salmon and Pike (Shannon Fisheries Board website).
- The Silver River is in the lower River Shannon catchment.
- The Grand Canal flows within 200m from the northern end of the site.

**Peat type and sub-soils**

The western side of the bog is underlain with shell marl and blue silt-clay in places. The eastern side is predominately underlain with blue silt/clay and gravel deposits.

**Fauna biodiversity**

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

- Lapwing (several breeding pairs noted during 2010)
- Ringed Plover (several breeding pairs noted during 2010)
- Woodcock (1)
- Goldfinch (10) (mixed groups of finches using scrub on cutaway)
- Kestrel (1)
- Raven (2)
- Mallard (17)

- Whooper Swan – 7 were counted during the field visit but numbers in excess of 70 have been recorded on this bog in the past. Attracted to Marsh Arrow-grass areas and temporarily-wet areas.
- Snipe (8)
- Cormorant (1)
- Bullfinch (2)
- Other more common bird species include Blackbird, Wren, Blue Tit (1), Reed Bunting, Wood Pigeon (50 – roosting and feeding on bog), Grey Crow, Pheasant (7), Long-tailed Tit (2), and Redpoll, Linnet and Chaffinch.
- This site has also been surveyed for IWEBS bird surveys and other Birdwatch Ireland surveys and contains other species not mentioned in the above list.

**Mammals**

- Fox
- Hare droppings noted around Cranberry plantation and Hare sighted in eastern section
- Rabbit (droppings noted on several access zones).
- Badger (numerous tracks around site. Tracks also noted on bog along road dividing the site and foraging signs noted in scrub towards the eastern side of the site.)
- Mink (Mink trapping is carried out at the south of the site in the amenity area).
- Fallow Deer (2) along the western boundary close to the conifer plantation. Signs of Deer stripping bark of Willow in mixed conifer woodland (WD2) towards the east side of the site.
- Field Mice in the Pheasant viewing area.

**Activities on the site**

Activities on the site include:

- Conifer forestry
- Recreation – use of the Clochan Lake amenity/biodiversity area with shooting, fishing, walking, and viewing of Pheasants in display area).

**References**

European Commission (1996). Interpretation manual of European Union habitats. Brussels. European Commission, DGXI.

Fossitt, J. (2000). A guide to habitats in Ireland. Kilkenny. The Heritage Council.

## HABITAT DESCRIPTIONS

(See Habitats Description Document for detailed description of each vegetation community not described in this section.)

**HABITAT DESCRIPTIONS**

# 14. APPENDIX IV: ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL MEASURES TO BE APPLIED TO BOG REHABILITATION

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

# 15. APPENDIX V: BIOSECURITY

No invasive species listed under Regulations 49 and 50 of the EC Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations were recorded within the site.

The potential for importation or introduction of non-native plant species (such as Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, etc.) during future rehabilitation management, such as drain-blocking using excavators, has the potential to result in the establishment of invasive species within the site.

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

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

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

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

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

# 16. APPENDIX VI: POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

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

## 1 EPA IPC Licence

Bord na Móna operates under IPC Licence issued and administered by the EPA to extract peat within the Boora bog group (PO500-01). As part of Condition 10.2 of this licence, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. The bog is part of the Boora bog group (Ref. PO500-01). This regulatory requirement is the main driver of the development of this rehabilitation plan.

## 2 The Peatlands Climate Action Scheme (PCAS)

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

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

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

The proposed enhanced rehabilitation detailed in this document, are predicated on the understanding that the element of the activities, over and above the 'standard' rehabilitation necessary to comply with pre-existing Condition 10 IPC Licence requirements, will be deemed eligible costs be the Scheme regulator and funded by the Climate Action Fund and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

For the avoidance of doubt, should the Scheme and the associated statutory obligation on Bord na Móna not materialise, Bord na Móna will not carry out the enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration measures described in this plan. Bord na Móna will instead plan to complete an adapted standard decommissioning and rehabilitation measures required under Condition 10 and outlined in Appendix I.

## 3 National Climate Policy

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

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

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

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

## 4 National Peatlands Strategy

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

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

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

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

- Bord na Móna will continue to assess and evaluate the potential of the company's land bank, using a land use review system. The assessment will help prepare a set of evidence-based management plans for the various areas of peatland. These plans will also inform its cutaway bog rehabilitation.
- The policy of Bord na Móna is not to open up any undrained new bogs for peat production.
- Lands identified by Bord na Móna as having high biodiversity value and/or priority habitats will be reserved for these purposes as the principal future land use.
- Generally, Bord na Móna cutaway bogs that flood naturally will be permitted to flood unless there is a clear environmental and/or economic case to maintain pumped drainage.
- In deciding on the most appropriate afteruse of cutaway peatlands, consideration shall be given to encouraging, where possible, the return to a natural functioning peatland ecosystem.
- This will require re-wetting of the cutaway peatlands which may lead in time to the restoration of the peatland ecosystem.
- Environmentally, socially and economically viable options should be analysed to plan the future use of industrial cutaway peatlands, in conjunction with limiting factors as outlined in Bord na Móna's Strategic Framework for the Future Use of Peatlands.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 6 National Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021

The National Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2022 has a vision that biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society and that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally. Ireland's 2nd National Biodiversity Action Plan outlines the main policies, strategies, actions and targets in relation to biodiversity. This plan has several Bord na Móna specific objectives and actions including implementing the BnM Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021 and overlaps with both the National Peatlands Strategy and the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022.

The delivery of rehabilitation via PCAS is expected to significantly contribute in the future to actions and targets of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021, particularly in relation to peatland restoration and creation of new habitats such as wetlands and woodlands.

## 7 National conservation designations

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

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

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

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

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

## 9 All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025

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

## 10 Land-use planning policies

As Bord na Móna operates in many counties across Ireland, it is important to note the respective development plans in these counties. Many of the existing development plans recognise the potential that exists in the after-use of cutover/cutaway peatlands. Bord na Móna seeks to work with all of the relevant local authorities to ensure that the most appropriate after-uses are reflected in local planning policy. The following areas of consistent importance are of both direct and indirect relevance to Bord na Móna: heritage, tourism, biodiversity/conservation, landscape, renewable energy, and economy/enterprise.

Noggusboy Bog is located in an area zoned by Offaly County Council as open countryside.

## 11 National Archaeology Code of Practice

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

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

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

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

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

One example of a key CBD target is:

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

The EUs headline target for progress by 2020 is to:

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

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

## 13 Bord na Móna commitments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# 17. APPENDIX VII. DECOMMISSIONING

## 1. Condition 10 Decommissioning

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

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

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

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

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

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

| Item | Description | Noggusboy Decommissioning Plan |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Clean-up of remaining or unconsolidated waste or materials located in Bogs, Yards, Buildings and Offices | Clean-up of Bog |
| 2 | Cleaning Silt Ponds | Cleaning Silt Ponds |
| 3 | Decommissioning Peat Stockpiles | Peat Stockpile Management via Levelling |
| 4 | Decommissioning or Removal of Buildings and Compounds | Decommission and Removal of Porto-cabin tea centre and materials store |
| 5 | Decommissioning Fuel Tanks and associated facilities | Decommissioning and De-Gassing Mobile Fuel Tanks |
| 6 | Decommissioning and Removal of Bog Pump Sites | Not Applicable |
| 7 | Decommissioning or Removal of Septic Tanks | De-sludge Septic Tank, where needed |

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

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

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

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

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

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

waste.

7.3.3 The ultimate destination of the waste.

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

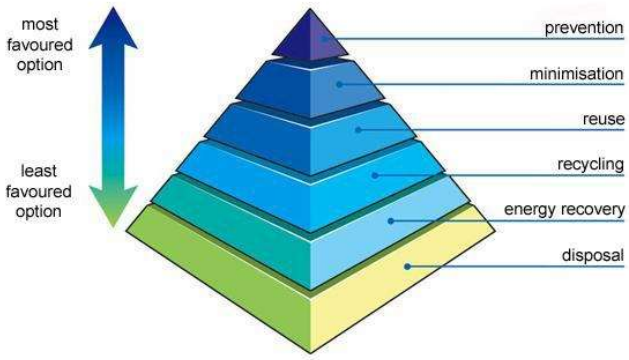
7.3.5 The tonnages and EWC Code for the waste materials listed in *Schedule 2(i) Hazardous Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* and *Schedule 2(ii) Other Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* sent off-site for disposal/recovery.

7.3.6 Details of any rejected consignments.

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

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

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



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

**2. Enhanced Decommissioning.**

The remaining infrastructure does not constitute a risk to the environment and would not be a requirement of condition 10 of the licence. The removal of these are deemed as enhanced measures. These may enhance the future afteruse of the bog for amenity value, security against access for illegal and unsocial activities and general State and community benefit. In relation to this bog, this would include the infrastructure defined below:

| Item | Enhanced Decommissioning Type | Noggusboy Decommissioning Plan |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Removal of Railway Lines | Removal of Railway Lines |
| 2 | Decommissioning Bridges and Underpasses | Not Applicable |
| 3 | Decommissioning Railway Level Crossing | Decommissioning Railway Level Crossing |
| 4 | Restricting Access (bogs and silt ponds) | Restricting Access to Bog. |
| 5 | Removal of High Voltage Power Lines | Not Applicable |

## 18. APPENDIX VIII. GLOSSARY

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

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

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

**Enhanced decommissioning:** This is defined as decommissioning carried out under Scheme, which is proposed to externally funded.

**Enhanced rehabilitation:** This is defined as rehabilitation carried out under Scheme, which is proposed to be externally funded. It is proposed by Government that Bord na Móna be obligated to carry out enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration on peatlands. This Scheme will significantly go beyond what is required to meet rehabilitation and decommissioning obligations under existing EPA IPC licence conditions. Interventions and activities supported by the Scheme will ensure that environmental stabilisation is achieved (meaning IPC obligations are met), and importantly, significant additional benefits, particularly relating to climate action and other ecosystem services, will also be delivered. However, only the costs associated with the additional, enhanced and accelerated measures, i.e., those interventions which go beyond the existing decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements arising from Condition 10 will be eligible for support under the Scheme.

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

**Marginal land.** Marginal land is defined as land around the margin of the industrial peat production area. This margin generally contains a range of habitats including scrub, Birch woodland, cutover bog and raised bog remnants. It has a variety of land-uses including turf-cutting (private turbary). The Scheme will consider potential rehabilitation and restoration actions (e.g. drain blocking) within marginal land zones, where appropriate.

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

**Restoration:** Ecological restoration to defined as the process of re-establishing to the extent possible the structure, function and integrity of indigenous ecosystems and the sustaining habitats they provide" (SER 2004). Defined in this way, restoration encompasses the repair of ecosystems (Whisenant 1999) and the **improvement of ecological conditions in damaged wildlands** through the **reinstatement of ecological processes**. In general, Bord na Móna cutaway peatlands cannot be restored back to raised bog in a reasonable timeframe as their environmental conditions has changed so radically (with the removal of the acrotelem – the living layer and much of the peat mass). However, they can be returned to a **trajectory** towards a naturally functioning peatland system (Renou-Wilson 2012). **Raised bog restoration** is an objective of some BnM sites where there is residual natural raised bog vegetation and where the majority of the peat is still intact.

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

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

**Wetland cutaway bog.** Wetland cutaway bog is defined as former raised bogs that have been in industrial peat production, where production has ceased and the majority of peat has been cutaway, and where this cutaway has the potential to be re-wetted. A significant number of Bord na Móna sites have pumped drainage and these sites are likely to develop a mosaic of wetland habitats when pumping in reduced or stopped. The water chemistry of wetland cutaway frequently is strongly influenced by the more alkaline sub-soils that have been exposed during peat production. This means that pioneer vegetation is more typical of fen and wetland, rather than raised bog. Wetland cutaway will have a broad range of hydrological conditions depending on the local topography. In some cases, these wetlands may form deep water (> 0.5 m) whilst other areas may have the water table at or just below the surface of the ground.

# 19.APPENDIX IX. EXTRACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

## (Minimisation, treatment, recovery and disposal)

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

**Scope:**
This plan covers IPPC Licence's Ref. PO500-01, Boora bog group.

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

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

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

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

**2.0 P0500 IPPC Licence Extractive Waste Conditions**

**2.1 Condition 7.5 Extractive Waste Management**
The licensee shall draw up a Waste Management Plan (to be known as an Extractive Waste Management Plan) for the minimisation, treatment, recovery and disposal of extractive waste. This Plan shall meet the requirements of regulation 5 of the Waste Management (Management of Waste from the Extractive Industries) Regulations, 2009. The Plan shall be submitted for agreement by the Agency by the 31' December2012. The Plan shall be reviewed at least once every five years thereafter in a manner agreeable to the Agency and amended in the event of substantial changes to the operation of a waste facility or to the waste deposited. Any amendments shall be notified to the Agency.
All extractive waste shall be managed in accordance with the Extractive Waste Management Plan. A report on the implementation of the Extractive Waste Management Plan shall be provided in the AER.

**2.2 Condition 7.6 Waste Facility**
(i) No new waste facility may be developed or an existing waste facility modified unless agreed by the Agency.
(ii) The licensee shall ensure that all existing waste .facilities are managed and maintained to ensure their physical stability and to prevent pollution or contamination of soil, air, surface water or groundwater.
(iii) The licensee shall ensure that all new waste facilities are constructed, managed and maintained to ensure their physical stability and to prevent pollution or contamination of soil, air, surface water or groundwater.
(iv) Operational measures shall be continuously employed to prevent damage to waste facilities from personnel, plant or equipment.
(v) The licensee shall establish and maintain a system for regular monitoring and inspection of waste facilities.
(vi) All records of monitoring and inspection of waste facilities, as required under the licence, shall be maintained on-site in order to ensure the appropriate handover of information in the event of a change of operator or relevant personnel.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**7.0 Extractive Waste Management Plan**

**5 (2a)(i)**
The vast majority of peat extraction bogs were all designed and drained for production prior to the 1960's and as such the production fields layout cannot' be altered. Under our Cleaner Reduction Procedures, various design changes have been implemented to the production machines and process to reduce lost peat which eventually is captured in the silt ponds and requires removal as waste peat silt. This along with training and ongoing research and development will continuously reduce waste peat and subsequently waste silt pond cleanings. Bog timbers are present naturally in various volumes and quantities in different bogs and as peat production involves stripping peat in layers, the exposure, generation and removal of these timbers is unavoidable. Work has been undertaken recently into project looking at grinding of these bog timbers in situ using a timber miller, and if this project becomes viable it will contribute to the reduction of bog timbers.

**5 (2a)(ii)**
Given the nature and expanse of peat bogs, the stockpiling and storage of these waste materials do not present a visual, storage or stability problem. As required under Condition 10 of the IPPC Licence, the silt pond excavations and screenings will be utilised to backfill the silt pond voids once the bogs have finished and stabilised in accordance with out Bog Rehabilitation Plan. Storage of these wastes in the interim, open to the elements does not present a change on the nature of these wastes that will threaten the environment or prevent their reuse during the bog rehabilitation process.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Classification in accordance Annex II.**

| **Waste Material** | Description | **C**lassification | Chemical Process treatment | Deposition description | Transport System |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Silt Pond Excavations and cleanings | Peat and mineral soils associated with peatlands. Stored for reuse during bog rehabilitation, with no displacement of overburden | 01 01 02 | None | Excavated from silt ponds by excavator and deposited adjacent to the silt pond. | Excavator |
| Peat Screenings | Stones, timbers and oversized peat particles, reincorporated into low areas, agreed with the Agency, and stabilized under normal natural bog conditions | 01 01 02 | None | Removed by screen at the factory and transported by tractor and trailer to the designated and agreed locations | Tractor and trailer. |
| Bog Timbers | Pine, Oak and Yew species, stored at locations in each bog. Not subject to any stability issues due to exposure to atmospheric/meteorological conditions. | 01 01 02 | None | Removed from the bog surface by excavator and transported by tractor and trailer to the agreed locations | Tractor and Trailer |

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

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

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

10.2 Cutaway Bog Rehabilitation Plan:

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

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

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

10.4 A final validation report to include a certificate of completion for the Rehabilitation Plan, for all or part of the site as necessary, shall be submitted to the Agency within six months of execution of the plan. The licensee shall carry out such tests, investigations or submit certification, as requested by the Agency, to confirm that there is no continuing risk to the environment. This plan including maps and ecological classifications are available on file at the IPPC Licence Coordinators office.
The location in relation to the silt pond excavations and cleanings are adjacent to the silt ponds, which are considered under the National River Basin Management Plan in accordance with the requirements of Directive 2000/60/EC.
Screenings and bog timbers are all naturally occurring elements of peatland and there placement back to the bog in smaller concentrated designated waste facilities does not constitute a risk to the prevention of water compliance.
The lands under where these materials are deposited are peatlands and are un-effected by the placing of this material.

**Review.**
This plan will be reviewed every five years, the first review to take place in September 2017. This review will entail an inspection of these waste facilities to ensure their placing, management, maintenance and stability comply with the requirements of the Extractive Waste Management requirements and condition 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7 of the IPPC Licence Ref. PO500-01.

## 20. APPENDIX X. MITIGATION MEASURES FOR THE APPLICATION OF FERTILISER

- Any fertiliser used will be Rock Phosphate and will not be applied in the following conditions:
    1. The land is waterlogged;
    2. The land is flooded, or it is likely to flood;
    3. The land is frozen, or covered with snow;
    4. Heavy rain is forecast within 48 hours (forecasts will be checked from Met Éireann).
    5. The ground slopes steeply and there is a risk of water pollution, when factors such as surface run-off pathways, the presence of land drains, the absence of hedgerows to mitigate surface flow, soil condition and ground cover are taken into account.
- No fertiliser will be spread on land within 2 metres of a surface watercourse.
- Buffer zones in respect of waterbodies, as specified on https://www.epa.ie/about/faq/name,57156,en.html, will be adhered with at all times with regard to fertiliser application. Reproduced as follows:

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

An map of the areas identified for targeted fertiliser application is provided in Figure APX 1 below.

# 21.APPENDIX XI. CONSULTATION SUMMARIES

**Table APXI -1 Consultees contacted**

| Bog Name | Contact Organisation | Contact Name | Date of Issue | Communication Format | Date Response Received | Response format |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

# Archaeological Impact Assessment of Proposed Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Noggusboy Bog, Co. Offaly

**Draft**

**Report For**

**Bord Na Móna Energy Ltd.**

**Author**

**Dr. Charles Mount**

**Bord Na Móna Project Archaeologist**

## Introduction

The EPA (2020) *Guidance on the process of preparing and implementing a bog rehabilitation plan* notes that the licensee should characterise the bog prior to embarking on detailed planning and implementation. This characterisation should detail how the land is classified in terms of statutory protections, e.g. as European sites, world heritage sites, RAMSAR sites, National Heritage Areas, national monuments, archaeological heritage, etc. This archaeological impact assessment report was prepared by Dr. Charles Mount for Bord na Móna Energy Ltd to fulfil this characterisation in relation to archaeological heritage. It represents the results of a desk-based assessment of the impact of proposed bog rehabilitation of c.x hectares at Noggusboy Bog, Co. Offaly on the known archaeological heritage of the bog. The proposed rehabilitation actions will be a combination of measures to create wetlands and re-wet deep peat as outlined in the draft Methodology Paper for the proposed Bord na Móna Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme. These enhanced measures for Noggusboy Bog will include:

- Re-assessment of the pumping regime; removal of the pump on site is desired if this has no significant external impact. The west of the site has already developed a mosaic of open water and wetland habitats with permanent deeper water when pumping is reduced or stopped. Hydrological management will look to optimise summer water levels to maximise the development of wetland vegetation (by looking to set water depths at < 0.5 m, where possible). It is inevitable that some sections will naturally have deeper water due to the topography at this site. Water-levels will be adjusted at outfalls and by adjusting piped drainage. More sustainable permanent gravity drainage solutions will be examined. Some targeted bunding may be required. It is expected that a natural seasonal regime of water fluctuation will develop, with water-levels fluctuating in association with levels in the adjacent watercourses and associated groundwater conditions.
- Initial hydrological modelling (depression analysis) indicates that a significant part of the west of the site has the potential to retain wet conditions. It is anticipated that this will develop a mosaic of wetland and peatland habitats. Hydrological management will look to optimise summer water levels to maximise the extent and development of wetland vegetation.
- Re-wetting the extensive areas of peat remaining on site within the former production area using berms and drain blocking.
- Undertaking intensive drain blocking, blocking outfalls and managing overflows in areas where depression analysis predicts wet conditions will occur. Drain blocking will also occur across other areas in order to retain surface water locally.
- Modifying water levels at outfalls, as it may be desirable to change and control water levels at the site over time, e.g. to increase water levels as the site becomes increasingly vegetated. This will further slow the movement of water through and out of Noggusboy Bog.
- Some targeted drain blocking in marginal (degraded) remnant raised high bog areas is proposed as part of this plan, although they are small in size and degraded nature.
- The existing silt ponds will be retained and maintained during the rehabilitation phase. During the monitoring and verification phase the silt ponds will be continually inspected and maintained, where appropriate. When it is deemed that the silt ponds are not required, as the bog has been successfully stabilised and there is no run-off of suspended solids, the condition of the silt ponds will be reviewed. The silt ponds will either be de-watered (water levels lowered to a level where the silt pond will naturally develop as a small wetland feature), left in situ, or infilled (where discharges do not require silt control).
- Targeted fertiliser applications to accelerate vegetation establishment on areas of bare peat on headlands and high fields as required, see Drawing no. DR23_11_XX 'Targeted fertiliser map'.

Noggusboy Bog is located c.2,3km south of Ferbane, Co. Offaly, to the west and east of the R437 road. The overall rehabilitation area occupies the townlands of Coolreagh or Cloghanhill, Cush East, Falsk, Gallen, Killowney Beg and More, Lumcloon and Noggusboy on OS 6 inch sheets Offaly Nos. 14, 15, 22 and 23.

## Methodology

This is a desk-based archaeological assessment that includes a collation of existing written and graphic information to identify the likely archaeological potential of Noggusboy Bog. The overall extent of the rehabilitation is indicated in Fig. 1. This area was examined using information from:

- The Peatland Survey 1993
- The Sites and Monuments Record that is maintained by the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- The topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland.
- The Excavations database
- Previous assessments

An impact assessment has been prepared and recommendations have been made.

## Desktop assessment

### Peatland Survey 1993

Noggusboy Bog was surveyed by the Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit (IAWU) in 1993 as part of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland Peatland Survey (Unlicensed). There were no sightings of archaeological material made in the bog.

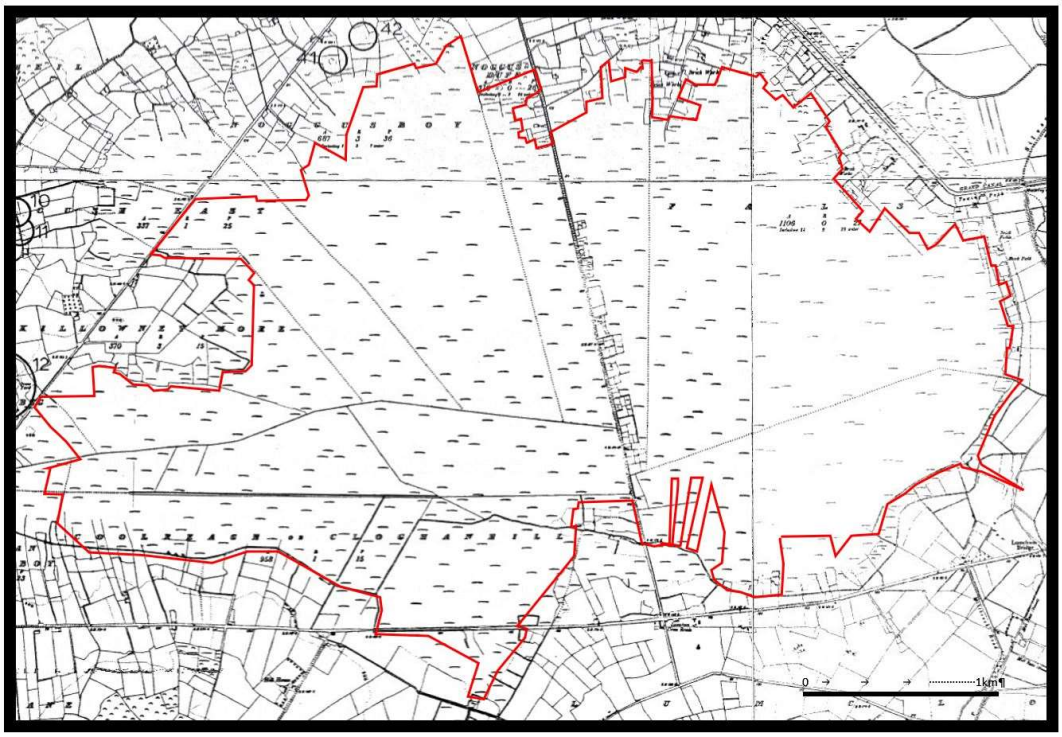


Fig. 1. Noggusboy Bog, Co. Offaly, detail of the RMP map sheets Offaly Nos. 14, 15, 22 and 23. The proposed rehabilitation area is outlined with the red line. There are no RMPs in the rehabilitation area.

**Recorded Monuments**

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) for Co. Offaly which was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 was examined as part of the assessment (DAHGI 1995). This record was published by the Minister in 1995 and includes sites and monuments that were known in Noggusboy Bog before that date. This review established that there are no RMPs located in the proposed rehabilitation area (see Fig. 1).

**Sites and Monuments Record**

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) which is maintained by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage was examined as part of the assessment on the 17th of December 2021. The SMR consists of records included in the RMP and sites and monuments notified to the Dept. since the publication of the RMP. This review established that there are no entries in the SMR in the proposed rehabilitation area (see Fig.2).

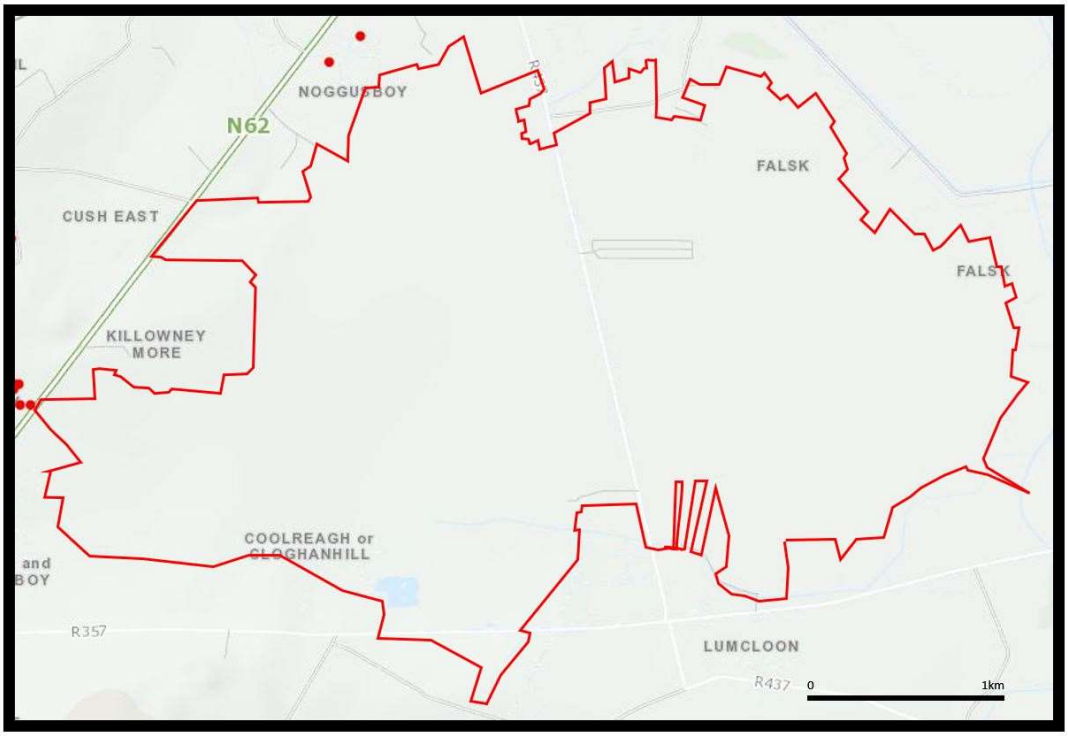



Fig. 2. Noggusboy Bog, Co. Offaly, detail of the SMR. The proposed rehabilitation area is outlined with the red line. There are no SMRs in the rehabilitation area.

**Previous assessments**

Noggusboy Bog has been the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report caried out by Irish Archaeological Consultancy LTD in 2018 for Bord na Móna Energy Limited in relation to IPC Licence P0500-01. This assessment included a review of the topographical files and finds registers of the National Museum of Ireland intended to identify all finds from the bog reported to the Museum by that date and these finds are included below in Table 1 (Pers Comm. Jane Whitaker). The assessment noted that there was a moderate potential for archaeological features to be uncovered during the course of any future development works in Noggusboy Bog.

**Reported finds**

As noted above the Environmental Impact Assessment Report caried out by Irish Archaeological Consultancy LTD in 2018 for Bord na Móna Energy Limited in relation to IPC Licence P0500-01 contains a complete list of known finds from Noggusboy Bog reported to the National Museum of Ireland up to 2018 (see Table 1).

| Townland | Museum No. | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Lumcloon | 1957:132 | Wooden keg containing bog butter |
| Lumcloon | 1977:2177 | Large cylindrical bog butter |
| Noggusboy | 1977:2182 | barbed and tanged flint arrowhead |
| Noggusboy | 1977:2183 | serrated flint knife or blade |

Table 1. List of archaeological finds from Noggusboy Bog reported to the National Museum of Ireland.

**Archaeological investigations**

Reports of archaeological excavations and licensed monitoring in the study area listed in the excavations database at excvations.ie were examined as part of the assessment. There are no additional reports of archaeological investigation carried out in the rehabilitation area.

## Impact assessment

There is no known archaeological material in the rehabilitation area. Several archaeological find from Noggusboy Bog have been reported to the National Museum of Ireland (see Table 1).

## Recommendations

There is no known archaeological material in the rehabilitation area. Several archaeological find from the bog have been reported to the National Museum of Ireland. Should any previously unknown archaeological material be uncovered during the rehabilitation works, it should be avoided and reported to the Bord na Móna Archaeological Liaison Officer and the National Museum of Ireland.

## Conclusion

This is a desk-based archaeological assessment and includes a collation of existing written and graphic information to identify the likely archaeological potential of the proposed rehabilitation area There is no known archaeological material in the rehabilitation area. Several archaeological find from the bog have been reported to the National Museum of Ireland. Should any previously unknown archaeological material be uncovered during the rehabilitation works, it should be avoided and reported to the Bord na Móna Archaeological Liaison Officer and the National Museum of Ireland.

## References

DAHGI 1995. Recorded Monuments Protected under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994. County Offaly.

EPA 2020. Guidance on the process of preparing and implementing a bog rehabilitation plan.

Dr. Charles Mount
22 December 2021

# 22.APPENDIX XII. ARCHAEOLOGY

## Role of the Archaeological Liaison Officer

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

Code of Practice

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Code of Practice

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

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

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

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

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

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

| Bord na Móna | **Procedure: ENV017** | **Rev: 1** |
|---|---|---|
| **Title: Archaeological Findings** | **Approved: EM** | **Date: 13/10/2020** |

**1) Purpose**

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

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

**2) Procedure**

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

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

Your Archaeological Liaison Officer is ……

**3) Records**

| Revision Index | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Revision | Date | Description of change | Approved |
| 1 | 13/10/2020 | First release | EMcD |
| | | | |