CORK - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	**Ballingeary Esker**		
Other names used for site			
IGH THEME	**IGH7 Quaternary**		
TOWNLAND(S)	**Goirtín Eoghain (*Gurteenwen*), Carraig na Damhaire (*Carrignadoura*), Goritín na Coille (*Gorteennakilla*)**		
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	**Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh *(Ballingeary)***		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	**69**		
ITM CO-ORDINATES	**513850E 568950N**		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	**79**	**GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.**	**21**
GIS CODE	**CK001**		

Outline Site Description
Undulating and ridge-like topography characterised by fertile pastures set in a valley bounded by rocky hillslopes.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type
The esker and nearby moraines are Quaternary in age and were deposited either under or at the edge of the westward-retreating ice sheet during the deglaciation episode at the end of the last Ice Age, around 14,000 years ago. The Ballingeary Esker and surrounding sands and gravels are formed entirely on Middle Devonian siltstones and sandstones.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest
The Ballingeary Esker and nearby moraines comprise a large accumulation of sand and gravel deposited at the base of the thick ice sheet as the ice withdrew westwards at the end of the last Ice Age. The esker is about 2.5 km long and is oriented northwest to southeast, running down the middle of the Bunsheelin River (Abha Bhun Sílinn) valley. The presence of an esker in this region is rare, even though it is situated in a glaciated landscape. The glacial geomorphology in the region includes numerous corries and glacially eroded valleys in the Cork-Kerry mountains to the west, glaciofluvial terraces in the upper River Lee valley to the east, and the meltwater channel in the Pass of Keimaneigh to the south. The esker sediments (boulder, gravel, sand) are visible in quarried sections along the esker.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA
This is an important County Geological Site because eskers are not a common landform in the glaciated Cork-Kerry montane landscape.

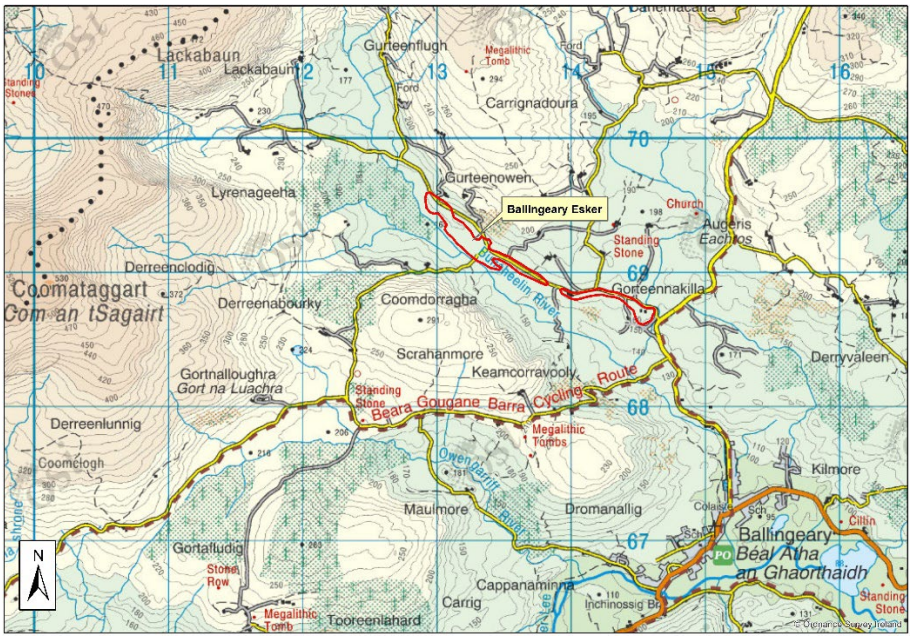
Management/promotion issues
Quarrying of sand and gravel along the esker is evident. Excessive sand and gravel removal could have a detrimental effect on what is a rare glaciofluvial landform in County Cork. The Slí Gaeltacht Mhuscraí, a section of the Beara-Breifne Way (National Waymarked Trail) follows the southeastern section of the esker through Goritín na Coille. The significance of eskers as navigable routes is well documented throughout the central plains of Ireland. The historical and continued use of eskers as travel routes is an important aspect of cultural heritage.

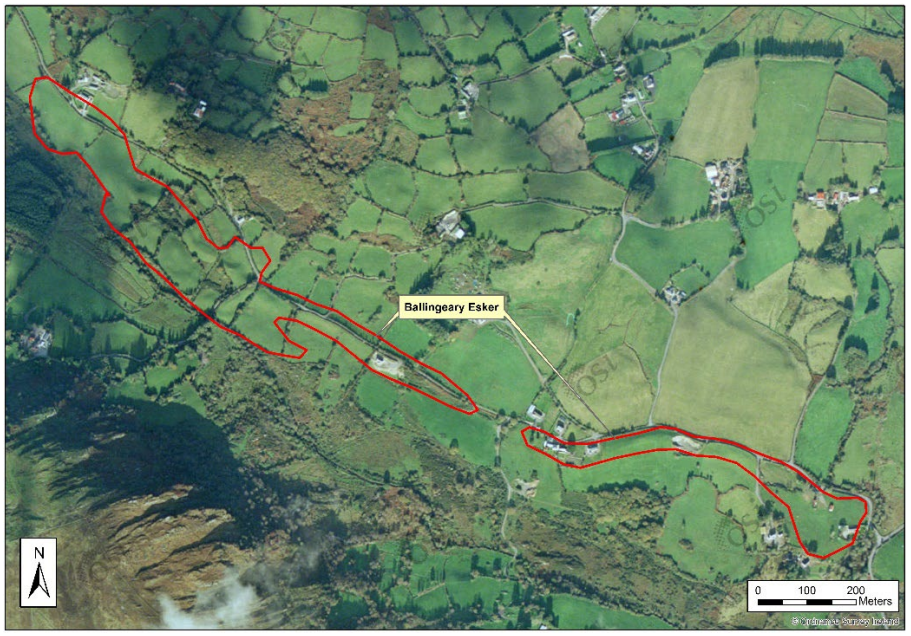
Road on crest of esker at Carraig na Damhaire, view to southeast.

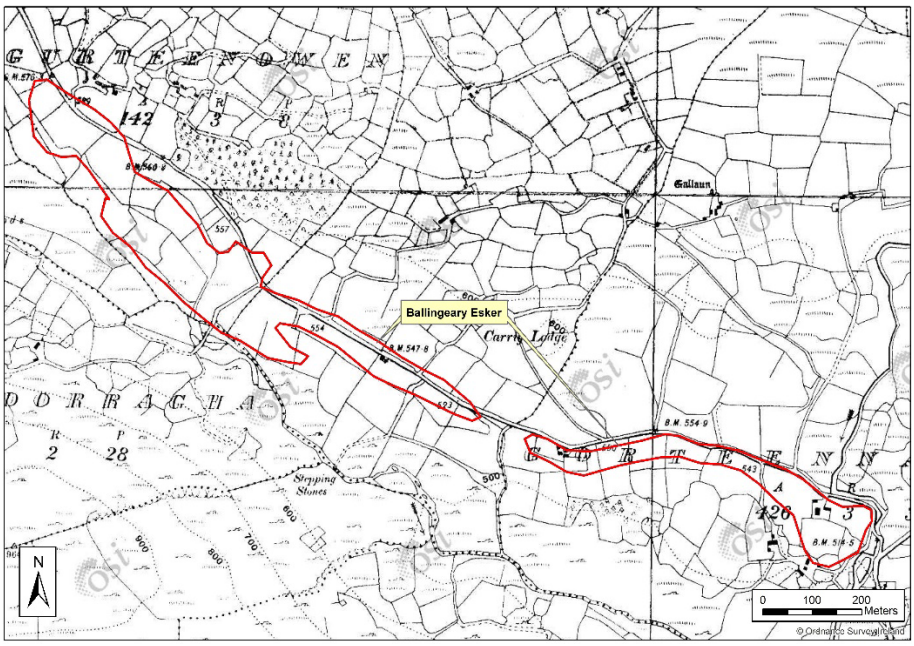
Slí Gaeltacht Mhuscraí way-mark sign at Carraig na Damhaire.

Esker sediments exposed at gravel pit at Goritín na Coille**.**

Road on crest of esker at Goritín na Coille, view towards northwest.







Hennessy et al., 2023. Geological Survey Ireland.