

DONEGAL - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Loch Finne
OTHER NAME(S)	Lough Finn, Lough Finn Lateral Moraine
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Fintown, Loughnambraddan, Currynanerriagh, Beaghmore, Crocam, Dalraghan Beg, Lough Muck, Meenatawy, Shallogan More, Meenamanragh, Meenasrone North
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Fintown
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	66, 67
ITM CO-ORDINATES	592220E, 901596N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER: 11	GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NOS. 3, 4
GIS Code DL024	

Outline Site Description

Lough Finn is a long, narrow lake set in a U-shaped valley at the northwestern edge of the Blue Stack Mountains. The area shows an excellent example of an aerielly scoured landscape, and the northwestern side of the lake is bounded by a particularly fine lateral moraine.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The tills forming the soft sediments in the moraine are Quaternary in age, while the eroded rock is of Dalradian metasediments, predominantly quartzites of the Slieve Tooy Quartzite Formation.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The U-shaped valleys trends northeast-southwest and is up to 200 m deep in places. The lake is flanked by a lateral moraine along the mountain face on the northwest side and a cross-valley moraine to the southwest, with the surrounding slopes showing beautifully-sculpted 'knock-and-lochan' topography. The lateral moraine is comprised of poorly-sorted gravel and diamict. The surrounding rock outcrops are aerielly scoured with striae, chattermarks, crescentic gouges, roches moutonnées, whalebacks and crag-and-tails. The site records a late phase of ice sheet decay as the Donegal ice cap retreated.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

The site is scientifically important because it records a late phase of ice sheet decay as the Donegal ice cap melted and there are few deposits of this type in Donegal. The site is entirely within the River Finn SAC (002301) and proposed NHA (001163), which include almost the entire freshwater element of the Finn and its tributaries and also Lough Finn. The River Finn has been selected as an SAC for its active blanket bog, lowland oligotrophic lakes (low level of nutrients), wet heath and transition mires. Lough Finn is also part of the Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA (004039).

Management/promotion issues

Gravel pits were used to construct the nearby railway embankment and might become vulnerable in the future as a source of fill for various purposes. Further gravel extraction must avoid conflict with fishing interests. Some of the steeper moraine slopes have been used for forestry and these may become unstable when the trees are harvested.

Scenically Lough Finn is an important tourist resource. Its valley is followed by main roads linking east and west Donegal and a narrow gauge railway on its north bank is a tourist attraction.

The site boundary has been taken as the boundary of the proposed NHA, as this contains both the aerielly-scoured landscape and moraine features. Ideally, geological information should be included in any promotional material or signboards for the proposed NHA.



Recent landslide on moraine (left, arrowed) and lateral moraine southwest of Lough Finn (right).



Lough Finn, viewed from the north. The aerielly scoured landscape on the hills in the distance is clearly seen.



Lough Finn, viewed from the south, with the lateral moraine along the far shoreline.

