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# The Geological Heritage of Donegal

An audit of County Geological Sites in Donegal **2019**

**North Donegal** by Ronan Hennessy, Robert Meehan, Vincent Gallagher,  
Matthew Parkes and Sarah Gatley

**South Donegal** by Malcolm McClure, Vincent Gallagher,  
Robert Meehan and Sarah Gatley



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



**Comhairle Contae  
Dhún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council

# **The Geological Heritage of County Donegal**

## **An audit of County Geological and Geomorphological Sites in north Donegal**

**by Ronan Hennessy, Robert Meehan, Vincent Gallagher, Matthew Parkes  
and Sarah Gatley  
2019**

**and**

## **A compilation of An audit of County Geological Sites in south Donegal**

**By Malcolm McClure, Vincent Gallagher, Robert Meehan and Sarah Gatley  
2019**

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**An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council**



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Donegal County Council

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For the:  
Geoheritage Programme  
Geological Survey Ireland  
Beggars Bush  
Haddington Road  
Dublin  
D04 K7X4  
01-6782837

And the:  
County Donegal Heritage Office  
Heritage Officer  
Donegal County Council  
Station Island  
Lifford  
County Donegal

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## Section 2 – Site Reports

### North Donegal Audit

#### IGH 1 Karst

##### Site Name

*Not represented in north Donegal*

#### IGH 2 Precambrian to Devonian Palaeontology

##### Site Name

*Not represented in north Donegal*

#### IGH 3 Carboniferous to Pliocene Palaeontology

##### Site name

*Not represented in north Donegal*

#### IGH 4 Cambrian-Silurian

##### Site name

*Not represented in north Donegal*



## **IGH 5 Precambrian**

### **Site name**

*Ardsbeg (An Ardaidh Bheag)*

*Ards Friary*

*Ballyness Bay (Bá Bhaile an Easa) [see IGH13]*

*Croaghan Hill*

*Doagh Isle*

*Dunfanaghy*

*Dunlewy Quarry (Cairéal Dhún Lúiche)*

*Fahan Pier, Inishowen*

*Glinsk*

*Horn Head Slide*

*Inishtrahull*

*Lackagh Bridge*

*Lagh Hill*

*Moville to Greencastle*

*Muckish Mountain (An Mhucais) [see IGH7; IGH15]*

*Pollnalong (Poll na Long)*

*Rosepenna (Machaire Loiscthe)*

*Tremone Bay*

## **IGH 7 Quaternary**

### **Site Name**

*Altawinny Bay (Ailt an Bhuinne)*

*Altnapeaste (Ailt na Péiste)*

*Ballycramsey*

*Burnfoot Spread*

*Carndonagh Fan*

*Corvish*

*Errigal (An Earagail)*

*Gweedore Moraines (Moiréin Ghaoth Dobhair)*

*Malin Flat*

*Muckish Mountain (An Mhucais) [see IGH5; IGH15]*

*The Poisoned Glen (Cró Nimhe) [see IGH11]*

*The Rosses (Na Rosa) [see IGH14]*

*Tory Island (Toraigh) [see IGH13]*

## **IGH 8 Lower Carboniferous**

### **Site Name**

*Not represented in north Donegal*

## **IGH 9 Upper Carboniferous and Permian**

### **Site Name**

*Not represented in north Donegal*

## **IGH 10 Devonian**

### **Site Name**

*Ballymastocker*  
*Knockalla*

## **IGH 11 Igneous intrusions**

### **Site Name**

*Barnes Beg Gap (An Bearnas Beag)*  
*Malin Head*  
*Melmore Migmatite (Miogmaitít an Mhill Mhóir)*  
*Mullaghderg (Mullach Dearg)*  
*Rough Point Sill*  
*The Poisoned Glen (Cró Nimhe) [see IGH7]*

## **IGH 13 Coastal Geomorphology**

### **Site Name**

*Ballymastocker Bay*  
*Ballyness Bay (Bá Bhaile an Easa) [see IGH5]*  
*Dunagree Point*  
*Five Finger Strand*  
*Inishfree Bay (Trá Inis Fraoigh)*  
*Inishowen Head*  
*Kinnagoe Bay*  
*Lough Swilly (Loch Súilí)*  
*Mulroy Bay (An Mhaoil Rua)*  
*Pollet Great Arch (Stua Mór Phollaide)*  
*Quigley's Point (Lough Foyle)*  
*Sheep Haven (Cuan na gCaorach)*  
*Tory Island (Toraigh) (see IGH7)*  
*Trawbreaga Bay*

## **IGH 14 Fluvial and lacustrine geomorphology**

### **Site Name**

*Lough Keel*  
*Owenator River (Abhainn an Toir)*  
*The Rosses (Na Rosa) [see IGH7]*

## **IGH 15 Economic Geology**

### **Site Name**

*Carrowtrasna*  
*Glentogher Mine*  
*Muckish Mountain (An Mhucais)[see IGH5; IGH7]*  
*Quigley's Point (Cabry River)*

## **IGH 16 Hydrogeology**

**Site Name**

*Carndonagh Well Field*

**South Donegal Audit****IGH 1 Karst****Site Name**

*Pollnapaste Caves*

*The Pullauns*

*St. John's Peninsula*

**IGH 2 Precambrian to Devonian Palaeontology****Site Name**

*Not represented in south Donegal*

**IGH 3 Carboniferous to Pliocene Palaeontology****Site name**

*Bundoran Bay*

*Largymore Syncline (Cuaschlaonas na Leargadh Móire)*

*St. John's Point*

**IGH 4 Cambrian-Silurian Not represented in south Donegal****IGH 5 Precambrian****Site name**

*Breesy Hill*

*Kiltyfanned Lough (Loch Choillte Feannaid)*

*Lough Boyle*

*Lough Lareen*

*Malin Bay (Bá Mhálanna)*

*Oughtarnid*

*Skelponagh Bay (Sceilp Úna)*

*Stralinchy (Srath Loingsigh)*

**IGH 6 Mineralogy****Site Name**

*Columbkille Lough*

*Crohy Head*

*Sheskinarone Site 2 (Seascann an Róin - Suíomh 2)*

*Skelponagh Bay (Sceilp Úna) [see IGH5]*

**IGH 7 Quaternary****Site Name**

*Barnesmore Gap*

*Donegal and Inver Bays (Bánna Dhún na nGall agus Inbhir)*

*Lough Finn (Loch Finne)*

*Trabane (An Trá Bhán)*

*St. John's Peninsula [see IGH1, IGH8, IGH13]*

*Slieve League Cliffs (Aillte Shliabh Liag)*

## **IGH 8 Lower Carboniferous**

### **Site Name**

*Ballyshannon*

*Bundoran Bay [see IGH3, IGH13]*

*Clady River*

*Edergole*

*Kildoney Point*

*Laghy Quarries*

*Largymore Syncline (Cuaschlaonas na Leargadh Móire) [see IGH3]*

*Mountcharles Sandstone Mine*

*Muckros Head (Cionn Mhucrois)*

*Slieve League Carboniferous (Sliabh Liag Carbónmhar)*

*St. John's Peninsula [see IGH1, IGH7, IGH13]*

*St. John's Point [see IGH3, IGH12]*

## **IGH 9 Upper Carboniferous and Permian Not represented in south Donegal**

## **IGH 10 Devonian Not represented in south Donegal**

## **IGH 11 Igneous intrusions**

### **Site Name**

*Barnesmore Granite*

*Brockagh (Na Brocacha)*

*Clooney*

*Doorin Point*

*Dunmore Head Breccia Pipe*

*Kilkenny Breccia Pipe*

*Kilrean Appinite*

*Naran Hill*

*Parkmore Dyke*

## **IGH 12 Mesozoic and Cenozoic**

### **Site Name**

*St. John's Point [see IGH3, IGH8]*

## **IGH 13 Coastal Geomorphology**

### **Site Name**

*Bundoran Bay [see IGH3, IGH8]*

*Doorin Point [see IGH11]*

*Fairies Bridge*

*Loughros More Bay*

*Maghera Strand (Trá an Mhachaire)*  
*Rathlin O’Birne Island (Reachlainn Uí Bhirn)*  
*Slieve League Cliffs (Aillte Shliabh Liag) [see IGH 7]*  
*Slieve Tooley Coast (Cósta Shliabh Tuaidh)*  
*Trabane (An Trá Bhán) [see IGH7]*  
*St John’s Peninsula [see IGH1, IGH7, IGH8]*

#### **IGH 14 Fluvial and lacustrine geomorphology**

##### **Site Name**

*River Finn Meanders (Lúba na Finne)*

#### **IGH 15 Economic Geology**

##### **Site Name**

*Crohy Head (Ceann na Cruaiche) [see IGH6]*  
*Glenaboghil (Gleann na mBuachaill)*  
*Mountcharles Sandstone Mine [see IGH8]*  
*Sheskinarone Site 2 (Seascann an Róin - Suíomh 2) [see IGH6]*

**IGH 16 Hydrogeology** *Not represented in south Donegal*



## Report Summary

This document is the combination of two independent county geological audits carried out within County Donegal. Due to the size of County Donegal and the number of sites to be audited it was decided to split the county geographically in to north and south for logistical reasons. The first audit was undertaken in south Donegal and was largely concluded in 2014. The second audit was undertaken in north Donegal and was largely concluded in 2018. The two audits were completed by different audit teams and authors. This document tries to be honest to both audit teams and sets of authors and for that reasons retains the structure of north and south to allow the individual audits to be presented with transparency under this single cover.

Donegal has some of the most dramatic landscape in Ireland. The coastal and mountainous landscape of the Donegal region owes its scenic diversity to the region's bedrock geology, its coastal and glacial geomorphology, and the surface cover of peat and soil. The bedrock foundation has undergone a long history of mountain-building, igneous intrusion and sediment deposition that, together with the more recent geomorphological processes such as glacial scouring and coastal erosion, has created wonderful geological diversity or geodiversity. North Donegal bedrock hosts the oldest rocks in Ireland (almost 1.8 billion years old), while in south Donegal, some of it dates back more than 700 million years. Geological understanding and interpretation is best carried out on the ground at sites where the rocks and landforms are displayed. Donegal has a wealth of such natural and man-made sites, from spectacular coastal scenery, to remarkable glacial valleys, to historical mining locations.

This report documents what are currently understood by the Irish Geological Heritage Programme (IGH) of Geological Survey Ireland to be the most important geological sites within Donegal. It proposes them as County Geological Sites (CGS), for inclusion within the Donegal County Development Plan (CDP). The audit provides a reliable study of sites to replace a provisional listing based on desk study which was adopted in a previous CDP.

County Geological Sites do not receive statutory protection like Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system. However, some of the sites described in this report are considered to be of national importance as best representative examples of particular geological formations or features. They have been provisionally notified to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) by the Geological Survey Ireland for designation as NHAs (Natural Heritage Areas), after due survey and consultation with landowners. However, many of these sites fall within existing pNHAs and SACs where the ecological interest is founded upon the underlying geodiversity. The commission of these audits and adoption of the sites within the County Development Plan ensure that County Donegal follows a now established and effective methodology for ensuring that geological heritage is not overlooked in the general absence of allocated resources for progress at national level. It ensures that Donegal remains at the forefront of geological conservation in Ireland.

This report is written in non-technical language (with a glossary for unavoidable geological terminology) as a working document for use by the Heritage Officer and the Planning department of Donegal County Council. It will also be made available via the County Council website for the people of Donegal. A chapter of the report includes recommendations on how to best present and promote the geological

heritage of Donegal to the people of the county. It will also inform the work of the IGH Programme and be made available through Geological Survey Ireland's website.

The preliminary sections, summary geological history and accompanying map, timescale and stratigraphical column particularly may be used as they stand to preface a booklet or as website information in the development of this work, and for information as seen fit by the Heritage Officer. The contents also provide the essential ingredients for a public-oriented book on the geological heritage of Donegal, if funding can be sourced to produce it.

## **Donegal in the context of Irish Geological Heritage**

This report ensures Donegal remains active at the forefront of geological heritage within Ireland, as it is one of around half of the counties to date to commission such an audit within the scope of the county-based Heritage Plan. It will hopefully encourage the remaining local authorities to follow what is now a tried and trusted methodology. In the absence of significant political and economic resources available at a national level to the relevant bodies for conservation of geological heritage as Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), it represents a significant level of progress in defining and safeguarding Ireland's geological heritage.

It also represents a significant commitment on the part of the Local Authority to fulfil its obligations to incorporate geology into the spectrum of responsibilities under the Heritage Act 1995, the Planning and Development Act 2000, Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 and the National Heritage Plan (2002). Geological Survey Ireland views partnerships with the local authorities, exemplified by this report, as a very important element of its strategy on geological heritage (see Appendix 1).

The Irish Geological Heritage Programme (IGH) in Geological Survey Ireland complements other nature conservation efforts of the last decade, by assessing Ireland's geodiversity. Geodiversity is the foundation of the biodiversity addressed under European Directives on habitats and species by the designations of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and more recently on a national scale by the introduction of NHAs as the national nature conservation method. As a targeted conservation measure to protect the very best of Irish geology and geomorphology the IGH Programme fills a void which has existed since the abandonment of the Areas of Scientific Interest scheme, listed by An Foras Forbartha in 1981.

The IGH Programme fulfils this by identifying and selecting the most important geological sites nationally for designation as NHAs. It looks at the entire spectrum within Irish geology and geomorphology under 16 different themes:

#### IGH Themes

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Karst                                   |
| 2  | Precambrian to Devonian Palaeontology   |
| 3  | Carboniferous to Pliocene Palaeontology |
| 4  | Cambrian-Silurian                       |
| 5  | Precambrian                             |
| 6  | Mineralogy                              |
| 7  | Quaternary                              |
| 8  | Lower Carboniferous                     |
| 9  | Upper Carboniferous and Permian         |
| 10 | Devonian                                |
| 11 | Igneous intrusions                      |
| 12 | Mesozoic and Cenozoic                   |
| 13 | Coastal geomorphology                   |
| 14 | Fluvial and lacustrine geomorphology    |
| 15 | Economic geology                        |
| 16 | Hydrogeology                            |

A fundamental approach is that only the minimum number of sites necessary to demonstrate the particular geological theme is selected. This means that the first criterion is to identify the best national representative example of each feature or major sequence, and the second is to identify any unique or exceptional sites. The third criterion, identification of any sites of International importance, is nearly always covered by the other two.

Designation of geological NHAs will be by the Geological Survey Ireland's partners in the Programme, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Once designated, any geological NHAs will be subject to normal statutory process within the Donegal Planning Department and other relevant divisions.

**However, compared to many ecological sites, management issues for geological sites are generally fewer and somewhat different in nature. The subsequent section considers these issues.**

From a national perspective, as a result of extensive comparison of similar sites to establish the best among them, there is now a good knowledge of many other sites which are not the chosen best example but may still be of national importance. Others may be of more local importance or of particular value as educational sites or as a public amenity. All these various important sites are proposed for County Geological Site (CGS) listing in the County Development Plan, along with any clear NHA selections.

Currently, a Master List of candidate CGS and NHA sites has been established in Geological Survey Ireland with the help of Expert Panels for all the 16 IGH themes. For several themes, the entire process has been largely completed and detailed site reports and boundary surveys have been done along with a Theme Report. Due to various factors, they have not been formally designated yet, but a number of sites (*e.g.* Pollnaste and Stralinchy) are considered to be of national or even international importance and have been put forward as Natural Heritage Areas (NHA). Therefore, inclusion of all sites as County Geological Sites (CGS) in Donegal's planning system will ensure that they are not inadvertently damaged or destroyed through lack of awareness of them outside of the IGH Programme in Geological Survey Ireland.

**The sites proposed here as County Geological Sites (CGS) have been visited and assessed specifically for this project, and represent our current state of knowledge.** It does not exclude other sites being identified later, or directly promoted by the Council itself, or by local communities wishing to draw attention to important sites for amenity or education with an intrinsic geological interest. New excavations, such as major road cuttings or new quarries, can themselves be significant and potential additions to this selection.

It was not possible within the scope of this study to identify landowners except in a few sites but it is emphasised that listing here is not a statutory designation and carries no specific implications or responsibilities for landowners. It is primarily a planning tool, designed to record the scientific importance of specific features and to provide awareness of them in any decision on any proposed development that might affect them. It thus also has an educational role for the wider public in raising awareness of this often undervalued component of our shared natural heritage.

## North Donegal County Geological Sites

Site Name	Designation	IGH Primary	IGH Secondary	IGH Third	IGH Fourth	GIS Code
Altawinny Bay (Ailt an Bhuinne)	CGS	IGH7				ND001
Altnapeaste (Ailt na Péiste)	CGS	IGH7				ND002
Ards Friary	CGS	IGH5				ND003
Ardsbeg (An Ardaidh Bheag)	CGS	IGH5				ND004
Ballycramsey	CGS, may be recommended for NHA	IGH7				ND005
Ballymastocker	CGS	IGH10				ND006
Ballymastocker Bay	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH13	IGH10			ND007
Ballyness Bay (Bá Bhaile an Easa)	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH5	IGH13			ND008
Barnes Beg Gap (An Bearnas Beag)	CGS, may be recommended for NHA	IGH11				ND009
Burnfoot Spread	CGS	IGH7				ND010
Carndonagh (Well Field)	CGS	IGH7				ND011
Carndonagh Fan	CGS	IGH7				ND012
Carrowtrasna	CGS	IGH15				ND013
Corvish	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH7				ND014
Croaghan Hill	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH5				ND015
Doagh Isle	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH5				ND016
Dunagree Point	CGS	IGH13				ND017
Dunfanaghy	CGS	IGH5				ND018
Dunlewy Quarry (Cairéal Dhún Lúiche)	CGS	IGH5	IGH11			ND019
Errigal (An Earagail)	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH14				ND020

Fahan Pier	CGS	IGH5				ND021
Five Finger Strand	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH13				ND022
Glentogher Mine	CGS	IGH15				ND023
Glinsk	CGS, may be recommended for NHA	IGH5				ND024
Gweedore Moraines (Moiréin Ghaoth Dobhair)	CGS	IGH7				ND025
Horn Head Slide	CGS, may be recommended for NHA	IGH5				ND026
Inishfree Bay (Trá Inis Fraoigh)	CGS	IGH13				ND027
Inishowen Head	CGS	IGH13				ND028
Inishtrahull	CGS, may be recommended for NHA	IGH5				ND029
Kinnagoe Bay	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH13				ND030
Knockalla	CGS	IGH10				ND031
Lackagh Bridge	CGS, may be recommended for NHA	IGH5	IGH11			ND032
Lagh Hill	CGS	IGH5				ND033
Lough Keel Fan (Fea Loch Caol)	CGS	IGH14				ND034
Lough Swilly (Loch Súilí)	CGS	IGH13				ND035
Malin Flat	CGS	IGH7				ND036
Malin Head	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH13	IGH7			ND037
Melmore Migmatite (Miogmaitít an Mhill Mhóir)	CGS	IGH11				ND038
Moville to Greencastle	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH5				ND039
Muckish Mountain (An Mhucais)	CGS, may be recommended for NHA	IGH15				ND040
Mullaghderg (Mullach Dearg)	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH11				ND041
Mulroy Bay (An Mhaoil Rua)	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH7	IGH13			ND042
Owenator River (Abhainn an Toir)	CGS	IGH14				ND043
Poisoned Glen (Cró Nimhe)	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH14				ND044
Pollet Great Arch (Stua Mór Phollaide)	CGS	IGH13				ND045
Pollnalong (Poll na Long)	CGS	IGH5				ND046
Quigley's Point (Cabry River)	CGS, may be recommended for NHA	IGH15				ND047
Quigley's Point (Lough Foyle)	CGS	IGH13				ND048
Rosepenna (Machaire Loiscthe)	CGS	IGH5				ND049



Rough Point Sill	CGS	IGH11				ND050
Sheep Haven (Cuan na gCaorach)	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH13				ND051
The Rosses (Na Rosa)	CGS	IGH14				ND052
Tory Island (Toraigh)	CGS	IGH13				ND053
Trawbreaga Bay	CGS	IGH13				ND054
Tremone Bay	CGS, recommended for NHA	IGH5				ND055

## South Donegal County Geological Sites

Site Name	Designation	IGH Primary	IGH Secondary	IGH Third	IGH Fourth	GIS Code
Ballyshannon	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 8				DL001
Barnesmore Gap	CGS; recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 7				DL002
Barnesmore Granite	CGS	IGH 11				DL003
Breesy Hill	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 5				DL004
Brockagh (Na Brocacha)	CGS	IGH 11				DL005
Bundoran Bay	CGS; recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 3	IGH 8	IGH 13		DL006
Clady River	CGS	IGH 8				DL007
Clooney	CGS	IGH 11				DL008
Columbkille Lough	CGS	IGH 6				DL009
Crohy Head (Ceann na Cruaiche)	CGS	IGH 15	IGH 6	IGH 13		DL010
Donegal and Inver Bays (Bánna Dhún na nGall agus Inbhir)	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 7	IGH 13			DL011
Doorin Point	CGS	IGH 13	IGH 11			DL012
Dunmore Head Breccia Pipe	CGS	IGH 11				DL013
Edergole	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 8				DL014
Fairies Bridge	CGS	IGH 13				DL015
Glenaboghil (Gleann na mBuachaill)	CGS	IGH 15				DL016
Kildoney Point	CGS	IGH 8				DL017
Kilkenny Breccia Pipe	CGS	IGH 11				DL018
Kilrean Appinite	CGS; recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 11				DL019
Kiltyfanned Lough (Loch Choillte Feannaid)	CGS; recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 5				DL020
Laghy Quarries	CGS	IGH 8				DL021

Largymore Syncline (Cuaschlaonas na Leargadh Móire)	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 3	IGH 8			DL022
Lough Boyle	CGS	IGH 5				DL023
Lough Finn (Loch Finne)	CGS	IGH 7				DL024
Lough Lareen	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 5				DL025
Loughros More Bay	CGS	IGH 13				DL026
Maghera Strand (Trá an Mhachaire)	CGS	IGH 13				DL027
Malin Bay (Bá Mhálanna)	CGS; recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 5				DL028
Mountcharles Sandstone Mine	CGS	IGH 15	IGH 8			DL029
Muckros Head (Cionn Mhucrois)	CGS	IGH 8	IGH 13			DL030
Naran Hill	CGS	IGH 11				DL031
Oughtarnid	CGS	IGH 5				DL032
Parkmore Dyke	CGS	IGH 11				DL033
Pollnapaste	CGS; recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 1				DL034
Rathlin O'Birne Island (Reachlainn Uí Bhirn)	CGS	IGH 13				DL035
River Finn Meanders (Lúba na Finne)	CGS	IGH 14				DL036
Sheskinarone Site 1 (Seascann an Róin - Suíomh 1)	CGS	IGH 6				DL037
Sheskinarone Site 2 (Seascann an Róin - Suíomh 2)	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 6	IGH 15	IGH 11		DL038
Skeppoonagh Bay (Sceilp Úna)	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 5	IGH 6			DL039
Slieve League Carboniferous (Sliabh Liag Carbónmhar)	CGS	IGH 8				DL040
Slieve League Cliffs (Aillte Shliabh Liag)	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 13	IGH 7			DL041
Slieve Tooey Coast (Cósta Shliabh Tuaidh)	CGS	IGH 13				DL042
St John's Peninsula	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 13	IGH 1	IGH 7	IGH 8	DL043
St John's Point	CGS; recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 3	IGH 8	IGH 12		DL044
Stralinchy	CGS; may be recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 5				DL045

The Pullauns	CGS; recommended as Geological NHA	IGH 1				DL046
Trabane (An Trá Bhán)	CGS	IGH 7	IGH 13			DL047

## Geological conservation issues and site management

Since **geodiversity is the often forgotten foundation for much of the biodiversity** which has been identified for conservation through SAC or NHA designation, it is unsurprising that many of the most important geological sites are actually in the same areas as SAC and NHA sites. In these areas, the geological heritage enhances and cements the value of these sites for nature conservation, and requires no additional designation of actual land areas, other than citation of the geological interest.

**Broadly speaking, there are two types of site identified by the Geoheritage Programme. The first, and most common, includes small and discrete sites.** These may be old quarries, natural exposures on hilly ground, coastal cliff sections, or other natural cuttings into the subsurface. They typically have a feature or features of specific interest such as fossils or minerals or they are a representative section of a particular stratigraphical sequence of rocks. **The second type of site is a larger area of geomorphological interest, i.e. a landscape that incorporates features that illustrate the processes that formed it.** The Quaternary theme includes such sites. In south Donegal, aerially scoured valleys and subglacial bedforms such as drumlins, and in north Donegal rock glaciers, glaciofluvial meltwater channels, and moraines are characteristic of the larger sites encompassed under the IGH 7 Quaternary Theme. Extensive areas of Donegal's landscape were affected by glaciation, which can present a problem for geoheritage as, although unique and impressive, they can be too extensive to consider as 'sites'.

It is also important from a geological conservation perspective that planners understand the landscape importance of geomorphological features which may not in themselves warrant any formal site designation but which are an integral part of the character of Donegal. A lack of awareness in the past, has led to the loss of important geological sites and local character, throughout the country. A Draft Landscape Characterization Assessment (including a Seascape Character Assessment and a Settlement Character Assessment) was carried out in 2015. Such an assessment should provide a tool to help future planning decisions maintain the character of the county. The Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement of the Donegal County Development Plan (2012-2018) also includes the mapping of environmental vulnerabilities, including SAC, NHA and CGS sites, in order to identify areas of the county most sensitive to development. In addition, the now routine pattern of consultations with Geological Survey Ireland, either by the planning department or by consultants carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment, plus strategic environmental assessment (SEA), has greatly improved the situation.

There are large differences in the management requirements for geological sites in comparison to biological sites. Geological features are typically quite robust and generally few restrictions are required in order to protect the scientific interest. In some cases, paradoxically, the geological interest may even be served better by a development exposing more rock. **The important thing is that the relevant planning department is aware of the sites and, more generally, that consultation can take place if**

**some development is proposed for a site.** In this way, geologists may get the opportunity to learn more about a site or area by recording and sample collection of temporary exposures, or to influence the design so that access to exposures of rock is maintained for the future, or occasionally to prevent a completely inappropriate development through presentation of a strong scientific case.

In many counties, working quarries may have been listed because they are the best representative sections available of specific rock sequences, in areas where exposure is otherwise poor. No restriction is sought on the legitimate operation of these quarries. However, maintenance of exposure after quarry closure is generally sought in agreement with the operator and planning authority in such a case. At present, two working quarries in south Donegal and two in north Donegal contain features that are now included as County Geological Sites. Issues specific to these types of sites are briefly explored in a set of Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry, published jointly by the Geological Survey Ireland and the Irish Concrete Federation in 2008.

A new quarry may open up a window into the rocks below and reveal significant or particularly interesting features such as pockets of fossils or minerals, or perhaps a karstic depression or cave. Equally a quarry that has finished working may become more relevant as a geological heritage site at that stage in its life. It may need regular maintenance to prevent overgrowth of vegetation obscuring the scientific interest or may be promoted to the public by means of a viewing platform and information panel.

Nationally, specific sites may require restrictions and a typical case might be at an important fossil locality, a rare mineral locality or an important glaciofluvial deposit, where a permit system may be required for genuine research, but the opportunity for general collecting may need to be controlled. Several of Donegal's sites may require such an approach, notably the Sheskinarone beryl site and several nationally important fossil localities in south Donegal. Visitors should be reminded to take home photos, not specimens.

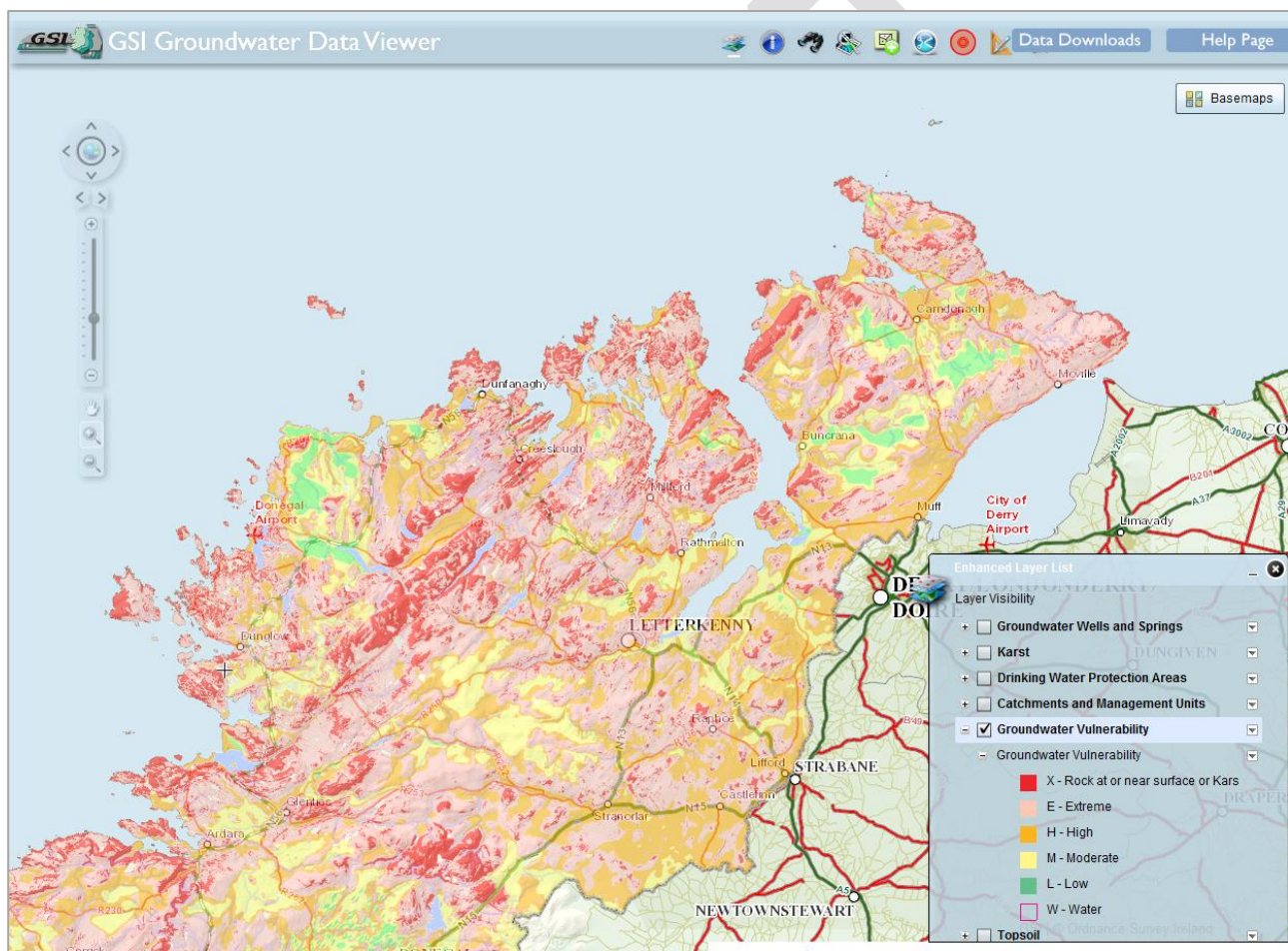
The only interpretive centre for geology and geomorphology is in south Donegal at the Kilclooney Dolmen Centre, between Ardara and Portnoo. The field studies exhibit there has been scaled back due to pressure for alternative usage of the room. These local initiatives deserve to be supported by the County Council, as they help provide residents and visitors with a context and direction for consideration of geological heritage in the county.

### **Waste dumping**

An occasional problem throughout the country, is the dumping of rubbish in the countryside. The dumping of waste, for example along coastal cliff sections, is not only unsightly and messy, but when waste materials are dumped in areas where rock is exposed, such as quarries or karstic depressions, they may leach into the groundwater table as they degrade. This can cause groundwater pollution and can affect nearby drinking water supplies in wells or springs. Groundwater Protection Schemes (DELG 1999) help to combat pollution risks to groundwater by zoning the entire land surface within counties into different levels of groundwater vulnerability. Such a scheme was completed for Donegal County Council by the Geological Survey Ireland in 2006, ranking the county land surface into vulnerability categories of 'Extreme', 'High', 'Moderate' and 'Low', and helping planners in assessing which developments are suitable or not in certain areas of Donegal. The location and management of

potentially polluting activities in each groundwater protection zone is by means of a groundwater protection response matrix for each activity or group of activities, which describes: (i) the degree of acceptability of each activity; (ii) the conditions to be applied and, in some instances, (iii) the investigations that may be necessary prior to decision-making. The Donegal Groundwater Protection Scheme was revised in 2012 and the maps reissued. This involved a significant amount of drilling in areas where new information had become available on depths of sediment in drumlin areas across Donegal, and involved a revision of the depth-to-bedrock and groundwater vulnerability maps for the scheme.

The Groundwater Vulnerability Map of County Donegal and the Groundwater Protection Scheme for the county can be seen on the Geological Survey Ireland website [<https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/programmes-and-projects/groundwater/Pages/Data-and-Maps.aspx>].



**Groundwater Vulnerability Map of County Donegal (GSI Groundwater Data Viewer)**





Dumping Prohibited sign on Oileán Toraigh above cliffs where dumping of rubbish ongoing.



Cliff section on Oileán Toraigh – site of fly-tipping and dumping over cliff edge.



Cliff section on Oileán Toraigh where dumping of rubbish ongoing (close up).

### New exposures in development

One less obvious area where the Local Authority can play a key role in the promotion and protection of geology is in the case of new roads. **Wherever major new carriageways are to be built**, or in other major infrastructural work, it should be a policy within the Planning Department that **where new rock exposures are created they be left open and exposed** unless geotechnical safety issues arise (such as

where bedding dips are prone to rock failure). The grading and grassing over of slopes in cuttings is largely a civil engineering convenience and a mind-set that is difficult to change. However, it leads to sterile and uninteresting roads that look the same throughout the country. Leaving rock outcrops exposed where they are intersected along the road improves the character and interest of the route by reflecting the geology and landscape of the locality. Sympathetic tree or shrub planting can still be done but leaving bare rocks, especially where they show interesting features, not only assists the geological profession but creates new local landmarks to replace those removed in the construction of the roadway. This can also potentially save money on the construction costs.

## Geoparks

An extremely interesting development in geological heritage, not just in Europe but internationally, has been the rapid recent growth and adoption of the Geopark concept. A **Geopark is a territory with a well-defined management structure in place (such as Local Authority support), where the geological heritage is of outstanding significance and is used to develop sustainable tourism opportunities.** Initially, it was largely a European Geoparks Network (EGN) but since 2004 has expanded worldwide as the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) and the Geoparks now have full UNESCO status [see [www.globalgeopark.org](http://www.globalgeopark.org) and [www.europeangeoparks.org](http://www.europeangeoparks.org)]. A fundamental theoretical basis of the Geopark is that it is driven from the bottom up – the communities in the Geopark are the drivers of the project and are the main beneficiaries. The Geopark branding therefore helps promote the geological heritage resource so that the community can benefit from it.

In Ireland there are three UNESCO Global Geoparks. One is the cross-border Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark in counties Fermanagh and Cavan [see [www.marblearchcavesgeopark.com/](http://www.marblearchcavesgeopark.com/) and <http://www.cavancoco.ie/marble-arch-caves-unesco-global-geopark.htm>]. The Copper Coast Geopark in County Waterford also joined the network in 2001 [see [www.coppercoastgeopark.com](http://www.coppercoastgeopark.com)]. The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark in County Clare is the latest member [2011; see [www.burrengeopark.ie/](http://www.burrengeopark.ie/)]. In addition, there are aspirant groups exploring the work and infrastructure required for applications in other areas such as Joyce Country and Western Lakes in Mayo and Galway and the Mourne Gullion Strangford area in Northern Ireland.

Although Donegal currently has no aspiring geotourism projects, it has a wealth of internationally renowned geology that could form the basis for a potential Geopark. The entire Slieve League and Inishowen peninsula areas, in particular, might be a candidate on the basis of their Dalradian bedrock and spectacular geomorphology (e.g. raised beaches, adjacent fjord at Inishowen), assuming sufficient local drive to use the outstanding geology to further develop sustainable tourism. Aside from the geology, the Slieve League peninsula is also noted for its archaeology, biodiversity and surviving traditional culture while the Inishowen peninsula is also noted for its archaeology, biodiversity and as a prominent geographical location at the most northerly part of Ireland (and its importance in terms of meteorology, shipping, the Irish Geodetic Datum.. The tentative list of candidate sites for Ireland regarding World Heritage Sites may be an alternative avenue for the area's recognition and promotion. However, WHS status tends to embrace single dramatic sites (such as the Giant's Causeway), whereas UNESCO Global Geopark membership requires an area with more than one site.

The following major national and international walking trail initiatives and geodetic Datum site also present possible opportunities for the inclusion and promotion of geological heritage within their ambit.

### **International Appalachian Trail (IAT) - Irish Landfall**

Ireland has joined in the effort to extend the International Appalachian Trail (IAT) to all parts of the once-continuous, pre-Atlantic Appalachian-Caledonian mountain belt. The existing IAT stretches from the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail at Mount Katahdin in the US state of Maine, through eastern Canada to the Atlantic coast of Newfoundland. Ten European countries have now joined the IAT and more plan to do so. When expansion is complete, the IAT will be the largest trail network and one of the largest outdoor adventure brands in the world, with a presence in 21 countries and three continents. More details can be found at <http://www.iat-sia.org/index.php>.

Landfall of the IAT in Ireland and Europe has been designated as Slieve League in County Donegal. Geological Survey Ireland has prepared a brochure on behalf of the IAT-Ireland consortium explaining this selection as a first step in rolling out the trail across Ireland. The brochure can be viewed at: <http://www.gsi.ie/News/International+Appalachian+Trail+%28IAT%29+-+Irish+Landfall.htm>

### **The Wild Atlantic Way**

The Wild Atlantic Way is a new long-distance driving route supported by Fáilte Ireland that represents potential opportunities for the inclusion and promotion of geological heritage along the route. The route takes in the entire west coast of Ireland from Donegal to Cork, over a distance of 2,750 km. In Donegal it starts on the Inishowen peninsula, and follows the coast road via Fanad, Rossguill, Dunfanaghy, Gortahork, Bloody Foreland, Gweedore, the Rosses, Dunglow and follows the coast road via Portnoo to Ardara, Glencolumbkille, Slieve League, Killybegs, Donegal town, Ballyshannon and Bundoran. See [www.failteireland.ie/wildatlanticway](http://www.failteireland.ie/wildatlanticway).

### **Malin Head Vertical Datum**

The Malin Head Vertical Datum is fixed as Mean Sea Level of the tide gauge at Malin Head, County Donegal. It was adopted as the National Datum in 1970 from readings taken between January 1960 and December 1969. All heights on Irish National Grid mapping since then are in International metres above this datum. Earlier maps (e.g. County Series) used the Poolbeg Lighthouse (Dublin) datum (given in Imperial feet). Malin Head datum is approximately 2.7m above the Poolbeg Lighthouse datum.

## **Proposals and ideas for promotion of geological heritage in Donegal**

The clear and significant inclusion of geological heritage in the County Donegal Heritage Plan 2007-2013 was a most welcome and positive step, for a topic that is often undervalued and poorly known in the wider community. This audit is an action plan of the 2007-2013 Heritage Plan. The new Donegal Heritage Plan (2014-2019) is currently being prepared, and it is hoped that it will continue pursuing objectives that promote geological heritage within the county.



This section examines selected points in the 2007-2013 CHP relating to geological heritage and provides specific suggestions as to how these may be implemented, supported or enhanced by the audit of geological heritage sites in the county.

The County Development Plan (2012-2018) has also made specific reference to protection of county geological sites proposed under Geological Survey Ireland's Geoheritage Programme (see Appendix 1).

## **DONEGAL HERITAGE PLAN 2007-2013 ACTIONS**

***Objective 1: To raise awareness and promote appreciation of County Donegal's natural, built and cultural heritage.***

*1.6. Identify landforms of significance (geological and geomorphological) in County Donegal and promote their natural heritage values*

**Audit Action:** The audit provides a currently definitive list of geological and geomorphological sites along with detailed descriptions of features therein. Site boundaries are defined and incorporated into GIS format to assist the planning function of the council. The report provides a basis for promotion of geological heritage through future publications (hard copy, web-based, etc.) and signage. However, ongoing review in future years for additional sites will be required. Some vigilance on the ground at sites will be required to ensure they are not damaged. The Geological Survey Ireland should be consulted on any planning application that is potentially impacting upon an identified County Geological Site.

*1.7. Raise awareness of the natural heritage of County Donegal through an annual promotional campaign*

**Audit Action:** The individual site reports, photographs and associated digital files can be adapted for use in annual promotional campaigns relating to natural heritage. It would also be possible to produce a panel-based exhibition, based on images from this audit with appropriate captions, and some additional research covering human dependence on geology and resources. In addition, the Geoschol four-page leaflet on the geology of Donegal, aimed at primary level, can be made available or through a link to it on the Geoschol website ([www.geoschol.com](http://www.geoschol.com)).

*1.12. Publish a newsletter on natural, built and cultural heritage issues in County Donegal*

**Audit Action:** Various issues related to heritage promotion and protection are raised both in the main report for this audit and in the individual site reports and can be used in a newsletter on this subject.

***Objective 2: To collect, publish and disseminate data and information about County Donegal's heritage.***

*2.16. Establish a database of, and disseminate information on, industrial heritage in the county*

**Audit Action:** Site reports for Crohy Head talc mine, Mountcharles Sandstone mine, Glentogher Mine (Lead-Silver), Carrowtrasna Mine (Talc) and Muckish Mountain (Quartz Sands) provide information on an important aspect of industrial heritage in the county.

*2.31. Produce and make accessible a comprehensive heritage bibliography for County Donegal as a*

*research and educational tool*

**Audit Action:** The report includes an extensive geological bibliography providing detailed information on the geology of Donegal and on specific county geological sites.

**Objective 3:** *To promote best practice in the management and care of our natural, built and cultural heritage.*

**Audit Action:** This report contains specific recommendations for protection and care of geological heritage sites, both individually and generally in the context of county development.

**Objective 4:** *To develop interest and knowledge in County Donegal's heritage through access, education and training.*

*4.4. Identify, develop and promote nature walks in urban and rural areas*

**Audit Action:** The site reports, photographs, maps and digital files included in the audit report can be used to assist with development of walking trails, particularly in rural areas where such trails may pass close to county geological sites that can provide interesting stopping points along the route.

*4.6. Produce a DVD/CD-ROM on the evolution of a Donegal landscape*

**Audit Action:** Some of the sites in the audit could serve as a basis for such a DVD/CD-ROM, e.g. Slieve League Cliffs, Malin Head, Bloody Foreland, Errigal. The audit reports illustrate various geological and geomorphological features and provide valuable information on the geological controls on landscape development as well as a supporting bibliography.

*4.7. Establish, promote and provide interpretation at selected places of natural, built and cultural heritage interest*

**Audit Action:** The individual site reports, photographs and associated digital files could be used as a basis for interpretative signage or literature for individual sites.

*4.10. Establish an interactive heritage website for the purposes of education and interpretation*

**Audit Action:** The digital data, including GIS site boundaries and associated metadata, photographs and text, can be easily incorporated into a heritage website.

*4.11. Identify and establish themed heritage trails in the county*

**Audit Action:** Several parts of Donegal contain clusters of County Geological Sites that could serve as the basis for local geology-themed heritage trails. County Donegal as a whole could be the basis for a geological heritage trail that covers the main geological periods and rock types found in Donegal. The site reports and associated digital data provide the necessary basic information for developing such trails.

*4.12. Produce educational and information materials to assist in the interpretation of selected heritage sites and topics in the county*

**Audit Action:** The site reports, photographs, maps and digital data can be used as the basis for printed material, a physical exhibition and as internet resources, all aiming to disseminate the audit results to a much wider audience. It is to be hoped that resources may be available in future to produce a 'public-friendly' book on the geological heritage of the county in a similar manner to Sligo,



Meath, Fingal, Waterford and Roscommon.

**Objective 5: To inform public policy and advocate the strategic and integrated management of heritage.**

*5.7. Produce a series of guidance leaflets on heritage topics*

**Audit Action:** The main report in this audit contains specific recommendations for dealing with geological heritage sites in the context of the county planning process and for enhancing protection of geological sites in the context of county development.

*5.8. Undertake an inventory of heritage assets in the ownership/care of Donegal County Council*

**Audit Action:** While most of the sites covered by this audit are on private land, some are on public land, notably coastal foreshore sites. Such sites identified by the audit include, for example, important fossil localities and outcrop localities such as Tremone Bay or Fahan Pier which may require active conservation by the county council to protect them from unscrupulous collectors and from damage through shoreline protection measures or coastal development.

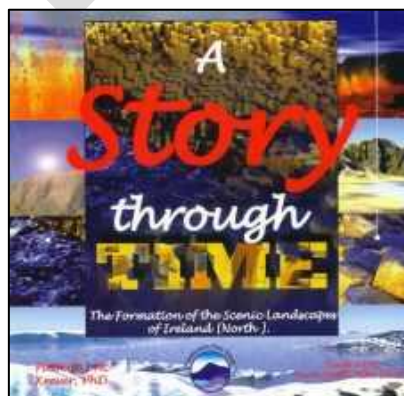
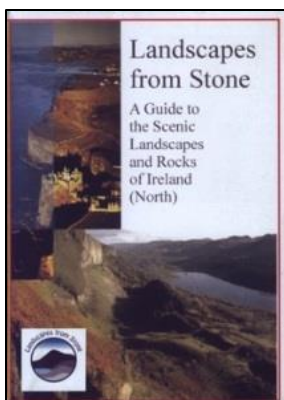
Promotion of geological heritage sites may lead to an increase in visitor traffic that will require careful management. Many existing single track access roads lack adequate passing places and some sites will need enhanced parking or turning spaces. Others have significant potential as tourist attractions but need a proper access footpath. Appropriate consideration of access factors could be included in the next County Heritage Plan.

### Specific ideas for projects

#### Leaflets

A project called 'Landscapes from Stone', run jointly between the Geological Survey Ireland and The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland produced a series of walking and driving guides as leaflets in the year 2000. For Donegal, *Walk Donegal* remains in print (there was also *Explore Donegal*, currently out of print) and covers several of the areas covered by this audit, including the western end of the Slieve League peninsula. This guide is non-technical and broader in scope than just geology. There is plenty of scope for other and different leaflets.

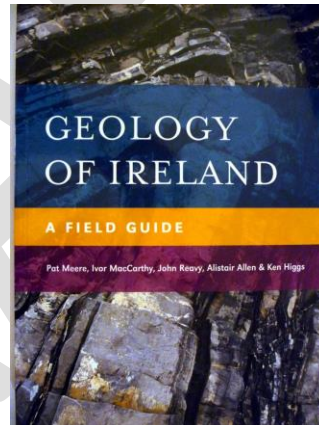
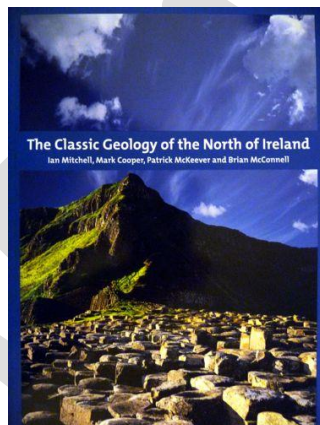
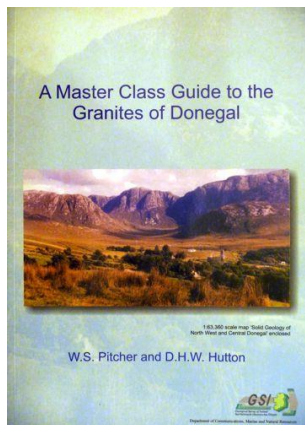
Any leaflets produced could simply be made available as pdf downloads on the Council's website to avoid large printing costs.



## Guides

There are numerous publications on the geology of Donegal, including some field guides, the most notable being “A Master Class Guide to the Granites of Donegal” (2002) by Pitcher and Hutton, which includes detailed information on a number of the sites in this audit.

The more recent “Field Guide to Irish Geology” (2013) by Meere *et al.* covers the geology in the area around Glencolumbkille while “The Classic Geology of the North of Ireland” (2010) by Mitchell *et al.* also includes some sites in the area. Most publications are directed at a scientific audience so there is certainly scope for others aimed at non-specialists. Aside from the guides mentioned above, there are few existing guides to the geology of Donegal, apart from literature produced within the geotourism projects funded through Peace and Reconciliation schemes. There is scope for guides at different levels of detail and accessibility to non-specialists. A wide range of leaflets, booklets, books and other media are all feasible, but the research and production of appropriate text and images is a difficult task to do well without appropriate experience, and adequate time and resources. **It is suggested that with only modest editing and reorganisation the content of this report would comprise a good general guide to the geological heritage of County Donegal, in a broadly similar style to those books produced for Sligo, Meath, Fingal, Waterford and Roscommon following audits for those counties.**



## Signboards

Simple explanatory or interpretive signboards may be advisable at key geological heritage locations, such as those presently installed at Malin Head. However, if these are considered, their locations and individual siting should be very selective, since a proliferation of different interest groups may provoke a ‘rash’ of panels all over the county. The Planning Section should clearly have a controlling input, in conjunction with the Heritage Office. It is most likely that a panel combining various heritage interests at a place is preferred to single interest panels. It is important to consult with potential partners in the planning stage so that duplication does not occur.



Malin Head signboard: "Malin's Unique Geology"

The subject of panels, and the successful integration of text and graphics are a fine art to complete successfully, and the Geoheritage Programme can offer input if signs are planned for key visitor localities.

Existing signs about wildlife and culture (e.g. Malin Village bridge) could be complemented by a simple sign explaining local features of observable geological or geomorphological interest.



Information sign at Cnoc Fola (Bloody Foreland)



Information sign at Gaath Dobhair (Gweedore)





Information and walking route sign on *Oileán Toraigh* (Tory Island)



Information at Fanad

### Museum exhibitions

As a result of the work to produce this report, the material for a panel based exhibition could be relatively easily compiled. With appropriate captions, and with some extra research covering human dependence on geology and resources, an interesting exhibition could be put together for display in the county museum, Council offices or County Library branches. The model could follow that produced for Carlow and for Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown.

### New media

There are increasing numbers of examples of new methods of promoting Earth Sciences, via mobile phone applications and other electronic media. Self-guiding apps on specific sites would be one of these, such as those produced by Ingenious Ireland for Dublin city geology and the recently launched app for tourists in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark. Plans for such products would require some considerable effort to produce and imaginative effort, with the sites being scattered across the county. Producing apps for main tourist areas, such as the Slieve League peninsula, the Gweedore or the Inishowen peninsula, might be a good starting point.

### Earth Science Ireland Group and magazine [\[www.earthscienceireland.org\]](http://www.earthscienceireland.org)

The group Earth Science Ireland was an all-Ireland group promoting awareness of earth sciences and supporting educational provision in the subject. A main vehicle for the efforts was the twice a year magazine Earth Science Ireland (until 2019) which was distributed free to thousands of individuals, schools, museums, centres and organisations.

### Geoschol website [\[www.geoschol.com\]](http://www.geoschol.com)

Geoschol is an educational project, now essentially represented by a website, which was largely aimed at producing educational materials on geology for primary schools. A four-page pdf summarising the geology and some highlights of Donegal is already part of the available material (see Appendix 7). Working links to the Heritage section of Donegal County Council website, and to other heritage websites, should be established.

### **Geological Heritage Research Archive**

The list of references provided in this report would be a valuable resource on which to base and establish a Research Archive, similar to that produced in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, with downloadable (or links to) free access papers and reports. This resource would prove valuable to researchers and communities seeking technical information on the county's geology and geomorphology. This resource could be served on, for example, the County Library website.

DRAFT

## A Summary of the Geology of Donegal

### *Introduction*

There are six main geological subdivisions of events and rock types (referred to as chapters or stories) that resulted in the formation of the geology we observe today in County Donegal. These are summarised below in chronological order and are expanded upon with respect to both the north and south regions of Donegal as per the individual audits which are combined in this report.

1. The oldest rocks are gneisses, coarsely crystalline banded metamorphic rocks. Inishtrahull off northern Donegal is composed of these gneisses (metamorphosed igneous rocks) originally formed around 1800 Ma ago. The rocks around Lough Derg are complexly deformed quartz-rich sedimentary rocks of uncertain origin.
2. Mixed sedimentary and volcanic rocks, including sediments of Precambrian glaciations, were deposited between about 800 and 600 million years ago. These were metamorphosed to schists during the early stages of a series of mountain-building events known as the Caledonian orogeny (between 475 and 385 Ma ago) to make up the Dalradian Supergroup which occurs over large areas of Donegal.
3. During the later stages of the Caledonian orogeny, several large granite plutons were intruded into the older rocks (420 – 385Ma). Donegal is a globally renowned area for the study of granites.
4. Erosion of the mountains of the Caledonian orogeny led to the formation of sedimentary deposits of continental red-bed facies (old red sandstone, ORS) between 355 and 410Ma ago. The red-beds were overlain by marine limestones of the Lower Carboniferous period (300-355Ma) as a shallow sea spread over Donegal in equatorial latitudes.
5. Volcanic activity associated with the opening up of the Atlantic Ocean around 65Ma ago resulted in the formation of basalt rocks and feeder dykes that cut through the older rocks in sheets.
6. The last Ice Age, which began around 1.6 Ma ago resulted in many of the landscapes we see today and sediments deposited over the bedrock.

### **1. Paragraph summary**

#### ***North Donegal***

The story of Donegal's geological history comprises six main chapters. The first chapter covers Ireland oldest rocks, found on Inishtrahull, off Malin Head, which were formed originally as igneous rocks around 1800 Ma, before undergoing a complex series of episodes of deformation and metamorphism deep in the earth's crust, forming gneisses (coarsely crystalline banded metamorphic rocks). The second chapter tells of the younger strata that make up the Dalradian Supergroup that were deposited between 800 and 600 million years ago, which include sandstones, mudstone, limestones, igneous rocks\*[these aren't sediments] and glacial sediments. These rocks underlie much of the area of northeast Donegal and the areas in the region of Gortahork, Dunfanaghany, Rosguill, and Fanad (roughly anywhere granite is not found). The Dalradian sediments were in turn metamorphosed and deformed between 475 and 385 Ma by the Caledonian orogeny. This mountain-building event that also saw the emplacement in the northwestern part of the county of the Donegal Granites around 400 million years ago makes up the third chapter. The fourth chapter relates to the sedimentary deposits of continental red-bed facies (Old Red Sandstone) sediments (dated between 355 and 410Ma) which are

found at Ballymastocker and Knockalla at Fanad. These ORS sediments formed from the erosion of the Caledonian mountains mentioned in the previous chapter. The continental ORS sediments were quickly covered by marine limestones of the Lower Carboniferous period (300-355Ma) as sea levels rose. Later Carboniferous sediments include thick sandstones formed in off-shore deltas. The Carboniferous sediments are preserved in an area along the southwest shore of Lough Foyle around Muff and Quigley's Point. The fifth chapter jumps forward in time to around 65 Ma, when the North Atlantic Ocean started to open (and continues to do so). The crustal rifting and volcanic activity associated with this event is well represented by the basalts of Antrim and the Giant's Causeway to the east. Following erosion over several hundred million years, the last two million years have had most impact on the landscape in Donegal. The sixth and final chapter in the story of north Donegal's geological history tells of the Ice Ages, which in Ireland began around 1.6 million years ago, and were characterised by repeated cold periods interspersed with warm periods that saw glaciers form in the mountainous areas such as the Derryveagh Mountains. The glaciers eroded the high ground, carved out corries and sculpted superb landscape features such as the Poisoned Glen, moulded bedrock outcrops, and blanketed much of the lower ground with till. The rock they ground down was deposited as till in thick blankets over much lower ground, now seen as drumlins around Mulroy Bay and Sheep Haven. Following the end of the last glaciation around 11,600 years ago, extensive land uplift and coastal erosion has given rise to the spectacular coastal landscapes of north Donegal, such as raised beaches, relic and extant cliffs, beaches and dune systems.

### ***South Donegal***

Donegal's geological history comprises six main stories. The oldest rocks, found in the southeast around Lough Derg, were originally deposited sometime after 1713 Ma as quartzo-felspathic sedimentary rocks, before undergoing a complex series of episodes of deformation and metamorphism deep in the earth's crust. The younger sediments that make up the Dalradian Supergroup were deposited between 800 and 700 million years ago at the opening of the Iapetus Ocean and include sandstones, mudstone, limestones and glacial sediments. These rocks underlie much of the area of central south Donegal. The Dalradian sediments were in turn metamorphosed and deformed between 475 and 385 Ma by the Grampian orogeny at the closure of the Iapetus Ocean. The end of this orogeny or mountain-building event saw the emplacement, in the northwestern part of south Donegal, of the Donegal Granite batholith around 400 million years ago. Erosion of the mountains formed during the Grampian orogeny led to the formation of thick deposits of continental red-bed facies (Old Red Sandstone) sediments (355-410 Ma) in rivers and floodplains around what is now Donegal Bay. These sediments were quickly covered by marine limestones of the Lower Carboniferous Period (300-355 Ma) as sea levels rose. Later Carboniferous sediments include thick sandstones formed in off-shore deltas. The Carboniferous sediments are preserved in an area around Donegal Bay. Around 65 million years ago (Palaeogene Period), the North Atlantic Ocean started opening up and volcanic activity occurred, with an outpouring of plateau basalts. The feeder dykes for these now eroded basalts include the many dolerite dykes and sills of the Donegal dyke swarm in south Donegal (61-62 Ma). These events culminated in plate separation and opening of the Atlantic along the northwest European margin at 53 Ma in the early Eocene Epoch. That series of uplifts, beginning in the Paleocene Epoch, gave rise to the land-sea distribution observed today. The final landscape shape was sculpted by ice sheets during the Ice Age, and by the deposition of glacial till and sediments throughout the county. These are especially well exposed in coastal cliffs around Donegal and Inver Bays. Since glaciation, extensive coastal erosion has

given rise to the spectacular coastal geomorphology of south Donegal, including steep cliffs, sea arches and caves.

DRAFT



AGE (Million Years Ago)	ERA	PERIOD	EVENTS IN DONEGAL	IF THIS TIMESCALE WERE A DAY LONG
2.6	Cenozoic	Quaternary	Series of ice ages, scouring of landscape and deposition of drumlins and moraines. Spread of vegetation, growth of lowland bogs, arrival of man.	Ice ages began 38 seconds before midnight
23.03		Neogene	Opening of North Atlantic, intrusion of dolerite dykes. Erosion.	Begins at 11:52 pm
66		Palaeogene	Opening of North Atlantic, intrusion of dolerite dykes. Erosion.	Palaeogene period begins at 11.40 pm
145	Mezozoic	Cretaceous	Erosion. <i>No record of rocks of this age in Donegal.</i>	11.14 pm
201		Jurassic	Uplift and erosion. <i>The age of dinosaurs.</i> <i>No record of rocks of this age in Donegal.</i>	10.55 pm
252		Triassic	<i>Desert sandstones deposited in NE Ireland. No record of rocks of this age in Donegal.</i>	10.41 pm
298	Palaeozoic	Permian	<i>Dykes intruded during earliest rifting between North America and Europe. No record of rocks of this age in Donegal.</i>	10.32 pm
359		Carboniferous	Northwards marine transgression reached Donegal by early Carboniferous. Deposits of near-shore and deltaic clastic sediments and limestone.	10.08 pm
419		Devonian	Caledonian mountain building during latest Silurian and early Devonian, intrusion of Donegal batholith over same period. Final closure of Iapetus. Rapid erosion.	9.50 pm
443		Silurian	Earliest intrusions of the Donegal Batholith; initiation of major sinistral shearing.	9.39 pm
485		Ordovician	<i>Iapetus closure initiated early in Ordovician.</i> Deformation, regional and thermal metamorphism of Dalradian during Grampian orogeny.	9.28 pm
541		Cambrian	<i>Opening and widening of the Iapetus Ocean.</i> Deposition of the Dalradian Supergroup extended into the Cambrian period.	9.08 pm
1000	NeoProterozoic	Precambrian	Slieve Donard Division rocks deformed and metamorphosed deep in the earth's crust. Dalradian rocks deposited between c. 800 and 550 Ma, earliest deformation of lower Dalradian rocks c. 630Ma.	6.43 pm
1600	MesoProterozoic		Deposition of Slieve Donard Division begins after 1700 Ma	4.00 pm
2500	PalaeoProterozoic		<i>Igneous material added to crust c. 1778 Ma, melted and intruded as magmatic arc, deformed during Ketilidian orogeny to form Inishtrahull of north coast of Donegal</i>	10.48 am
4000	Archaean		<i>Oldest known rocks on Earth.</i>	3.00 am
4600	Priscoan		<i>Age of the Earth.</i>	Begins 1 second after midnight

### The Geological Timescale and County Donegal.

## 2. Simple summary

### ***North Donegal***

The region of north Donegal comprises five main subdivisions of bedrock (Map 1): the Rhinns Complex, the Dalradian Supergroup, Devonian Granites, the Devonian Old Red Sandstone, and the Carboniferous Clastics.

The greater extent of the north Donegal region is underlain by Precambrian rocks, with Palaeoproterozoic orthogneisses (deformed and metamorphosed intrusive igneous rocks) occurring on the islands around Inishtrahull and the Tor Rocks, northeast of Malin Head. These coarsely crystalline banded metamorphic rocks, the oldest rocks in north Donegal, and in Ireland, formed around 1780 million years ago. These rocks are part of the Rhinns Complex, a suite of Palaeoproterozoic basement rocks. Isotopic data indicates that the Rhinns Complex represents the addition of igneous material to the crust at c. 1,800 Ma, during Proterozoic events associated with an extensive 1,900–1,700 Ma mobile belt around the southern margin of Laurentia-Baltica. The Rhinns Complex rocks of north Donegal are similar to rocks in Colonsay and Islay in Scotland and are really a part of Greenland, forming a link between the Ketilidian province of the Svecofennian orogeny of Scandinavia.

The most abundant rocks found throughout the entire county are the Dalradian Supergroup metasedimentary (and intermittent igneous) rocks. These rocks were deposited as sediments during Neoproterozoic times, and were later metamorphosed to form schists (metamorphic mudstones and muddy sandstones) and quartzites (metamorphic sandstones) during the mountain forming events of the Ordovician Period. The Dalradian Supergroup also contains abundant igneous intrusions throughout the metasedimentary rock sequences. The Dalradian stratigraphy is subdivided into four successions in County Donegal; two on either side of the Leannan Fault (see Map 1). A succession consists of a largely coherent stratigraphical sequence that may contain unconformities or disconformities. Northwest of the Leannan Fault, earlier deposits of Dalradian Appin Group age form the Creeslough Succession, found in NW Donegal. This succession is separated by the Knockateen Slide from the Kilmacrenan Succession, comprising rocks of later Appin and Argyll Group age. The Kilmacrenan Succession is found in north central Donegal (to the east of the Donegal Granite) and across the NW Inishowen peninsula. Both Creeslough and Kilmacrenan Successions contain quartzites, pelitic and psammitic schists, limestones and dolomites. The key correlation horizon within the Kilmacrenan Succession is the Port Askaig Tillite, which forms a regionally important glacial marker that has been traced into Mayo and Connemara and northeast to Argyllshire in Scotland. The thin-bedded slabby quartzites at the base of the Slieve Tooley Formation are also easily recognized.

Elsewhere, the north Donegal landscape is dominantly occupied by intrusive granite bodies which were emplaced between around 420 and 390 million years ago. The intrusion of these granite plutons, collectively known as the Donegal Batholith, into the Dalradian rocks in north Donegal took place during the mountain building (orogeny) events of the late Silurian to early Devonian age. The granites were emplaced as molten rock that was squeezed up and into large faults and fissures in the crust. This molten material later cooled and crystallised at depths of several kilometres below the land surface.

Radiometric dating of the individual granite plutons (Thorr Granite, Fanad Granite, Toories Granite, Tullagh Point Granite, Trawenagh Bay Granite and Main Donegal Granite) in north Donegal indicates that they were emplaced at great depth between about 420 Ma and 390 Ma. Emplacement was followed by several kilometres of uplift and erosion. Of the north Donegal plutons, the Thorr Granite and Fanad Granite are the oldest. The Trawenagh Bay Granite and Main Donegal Granite are the youngest, with the Tullagh Point Granite, Rosses Granite and Toories Granite emplaced in between. Whilst all are referred to as 'granite', the plutons all vary in mineral composition, and each one is itself a complex body of varying mineral composition and structure. Each of the plutons is accompanied by numerous granitic dykes. When the Main Donegal Granite was intruded and crystallising, it was subjected to regional scale shearing, which resulted in the pluton being drawn out in an elongate shape (NE-SW orientation).

Minor occurrences of Palaeozoic sedimentary rocks are found in north Donegal, such as the Devonian sandstones and conglomerates on Knockalla Mountain (west side of Lough Swilly) near Ballymastrocker, and the Carboniferous sandstones at the southwest head of Lough Foyle. Minor intrusive igneous rocks ranging in ages from Neoproterozoic to Tertiary also occur in the region, however their extent is not sufficient to be included on Map 1 or on published maps such as the GSI Sheet 1 1:100,000 scale maps.

Late Cretaceous times saw the maximum transgression of chalk seas over Ireland. It is most likely that if these rocks occurred in Donegal, they were removed by erosion associated with thermal uplift and the outpouring of basalts fed through the Donegal dyke swarm around 62–61 Ma (Paleocene). This basalt plateau has also since been removed by erosion. These events culminated in plate separation and opening of the Atlantic along the northwest European margin at 53 Ma in the early Eocene. That series of thermal uplifts, beginning in the Paleocene, gave rise to the land-sea distribution observed today. A further very significant period of uplift began in the Neogene.

### ***South Donegal***

The oldest rocks in south Donegal are those of the Precambrian Slishwood Division (pre-Dalradian or very oldest Dalradian), a large inlier of paragneisses, or psammites, and other metamorphic rocks extending from Lough Derg to Ballyshannon. Originally deposited sometime after 1713 Ma as quartzofelspathic sedimentary rocks, they have undergone a complex series of episodes of deformation and metamorphism. Some psammites still retain evidence of their original sedimentary structures, although a typical Slishwood Division psammite has predominantly granoblastic textures. The rocks were subsequently folded into a regional antiform during the Caledonian orogeny.

The contact between the Slishwood Division and the Dalradian Supergroup is the Lough Derg Slide, one of a number of regionally important thrust planes in south Donegal. The Dalradian stratigraphy is subdivided into four successions in Donegal, two on either side of the Leannan Fault. A succession consists of a largely coherent stratigraphical sequence that may contain unconformities or disconformities.

Northwest of the Leannan Fault, earlier deposits of Dalradian Appin Group age form the Creeslough Succession, found in south Donegal mainly between the Gweebarra and Loughros Beg estuaries. This succession is separated by the Knockateen Slide from the Kilmacrenan Succession, comprising rocks of

later Appin and Argyll Group age. The Kilmacrenan Succession is found on the Slieve League peninsula and between the Main Donegal Granite and the Leannan Fault.

Both Creeslough and Kilmacrenan Successions contain quartzites, pelitic and psammitic schists, limestones and dolomites. The key correlation horizon within the Kilmacrenan Succession is the Port Askaig Tillite, which forms a regionally important glacial marker that has been traced into Connemara and northeast to Argyllshire in Scotland. The thin-bedded slabby quartzites at the base of the Slieve Tooley Formation are also easily recognized.

In south Donegal rocks of Devonian age rest on Slishwood Division rocks in the southeast.

The intrusion of the granite plutons in south Donegal took place after the Grampian orogeny and before the Acadian orogeny. Radiometric dating of the Barnesmore, Ardara, Trawenagh Bay and Main Donegal Granite intrusions indicates that they were emplaced at great depth between about 425 Ma and 397 Ma, i.e. during the late Silurian to early Devonian. Emplacement was followed by several kilometres of uplift and erosion, but the Barnesmore granite was only finally unroofed after the deposition of the Lower Carboniferous sequence several tens of millions of years later.

Deposition of the Lower Carboniferous Tournasian rocks of the Donegal basin began during subsidence. There then followed a marine transgression, with deposition across a carbonate platform with marginal marine deltaic sediments. This was succeeded by overlying deltaic progradation and retreat. There is evidence in the folds and faults developed in the Carboniferous of Largymore, Shalwy, Muckros, St John's Point and elsewhere that there was a phase of compression associated with the Variscan orogeny at the end of the Carboniferous period in south Donegal.

Late Cretaceous times saw the maximum transgression of chalk seas over Ireland. If these rocks existed over Donegal they must have been removed by erosion associated with thermal uplift and the outpouring of basalt fed through the Donegal dyke swarm around 62–61 Ma. This basalt plateau has also since been removed by erosion. These events culminated in plate separation and opening of the Atlantic along the northwest European margin at 53 Ma in the early Eocene. That series of uplifts, beginning in the Paleocene, gave rise to the land-sea distribution observed today. A further very significant period of uplift began in the Neogene.

The most significant force to shape the form of the county as we see it today was the Ice Age which ended about 10,000 years ago. Large ice sheets covered the county for thousands of years and eroded the rocks beneath. This gave rise to large areas of aurally scoured landscape with classic glacial features such as U-shaped valleys and corries. As the ice eventually melted away, the meltwaters deposited sediments as landforms such as moraines and drumlins. One example in south Donegal is the field of drumlins around Donegal and Inver Bays. This field is so large that it can only be fully appreciated using satellite or air photo images.

At the end of glaciation, relative sea level fell and the land of Ireland rose as the weight of the ice was removed. Raised platforms and other coastal features, such as sea caves located above the high-tide mark, record this process. In the Holocene Period, since glaciation, extensive coastal erosion has given

rise to the spectacular coastal geomorphology of south Donegal, including steep cliffs, sea arches and caves.

## **Quaternary Geology County Donegal**

### ***North Donegal***

The north Donegal landscape hosts an array of dramatically scenic landforms, many of which trace their formation to the glaciations of the Pleistocene Epoch of the Quaternary Period, or Ice Age, which occurred at irregular intervals over a period of 1.6 million years. With the end of the Ice Age around 12,000 years ago, the postglacial Holocene Epoch commenced, which was and continues to be characterised by the relatively warm climate.

Throughout the cold periods of the Pleistocene, glaciers formed in corries in the Derryveagh Mountains and eventually sculpted out the iconic Donegal landscape features such as the Poisoned Glen. The rock they ground down was deposited as till in thick blankets over much lower ground, now seen as drumlins around Mulroy Bay and Sheep Haven. The name “drumlin”, used internationally, comes from the Irish 'dromnin' meaning 'low hill'. Drumlins are mounds of debris left behind by melting ice sheets and are typically streamlined in the direction of ice-sheet flow. The ice sheet flowed generally south to north across north Donegal, a fact illustrated by the orientations of the crag and tails and drumlins, which are aligned south to north in general.

Glaciofluvial sands and gravels are deposited by meltwater issuing from a melting glacier. These deposits are usually well sorted, with the gravels often rounded. Outwash sands and gravels floor the Swilly Valley southwest of Letterkenny; these have been overlain by alluvium deposited by the modern River Swilly. Glacial meltwater erosion has cut some spectacular meltwater channels in north Donegal. The Pennyburn Valley north of Derry and the valley of the Glentogher River through which the L79 road runs are other good examples.

Towards the end of the last glacial period as the great ice sheets of the northern hemisphere melted, returning the vast amounts of water they contained to the oceans, sea-levels began to rise and from a level in excess of 100 metres below those of today. As they did so areas which had been depressed by the weight of ice and which had not yet recovered to their current height were inundated by the sea. As the land surface began to rise in response to the removal of the weight of the ice sheets, beaches which had been deposited in the inundated areas rose with the land and were left high and dry as raised beaches. Since the Ice Age, during the Holocene, the modern drainage pattern was superimposed on the deglacial channel network, resulting in some areas of haphazard drainage among the boulder clay, as well expressed along the Owenator River. At this time peat also formed across much of the Donegal landscape. Alluvial floodplains flank many of the larger rivers, for example the Foyle and the Swilly. During this time along the coast, headlands, bays, cliffs, sea stacks, arches and caves have been eroded by the sea, while beaches, bars, spits, tombolos, lagoons and windblown sand dunes have formed. The modern Donegal coastline began to develop after the postglacial sea-level stabilised at its present level more than 5,000 years ago. In that period the modern beaches (e.g. Kinnagoe, Ballymastocker) and low ground such as at Rosepenna and near Burnfoot were formed and blown sand collected in the form of sand dunes such as at Five Finger Strand.

### ***South Donegal***

The landscape in south Donegal area, dominated as it is by high Caledonian (northeast - southwest) trending mountains, is outstanding for its legacy of glacial features. The glaciations of the Pleistocene Epoch, which are responsible for the shaping of the majority of the Irish landscape, as well as the deposition of un lithified sediments over more than 90% of Ireland's bedrock geology, occurred at irregular intervals over a period of 1.6 million years. The end of the Ice Age, 10,000 years ago, marked the end of the Pleistocene Epoch and heralded the beginning of the postglacial, Holocene Epoch, characterised by the relatively warm climate that has continued to the present day.

The Pleistocene Epoch consisted of alternating climate of warm (interglacial) and cold (glacial) periods during which ice sheets expanded to cover large parts of the mid-latitude areas that are ice-free today. In Ireland, the ice sheet of the last cold period reached its maximum extent about 20,000 years ago. At this time ice covered the entire area of south Donegal. This ice belonged to the Donegal Ice Cap which coalesced with several ice domes situated further south to form an ice sheet which covered the whole country. During glacial maximum ice extended outwards from the ice shed at the centre of this ice cap in the Derryveagh Mountains. The ice shed ran north-south between Muckish and Lough Muck.

As ice moves over its substrate, pieces of rock are incorporated into its basal layers, making the ice very abrasive. It subsequently scours and erodes, polishes and moulds the land surface over which it flows into the forms visible today. Striae are grooves or scratches cut into bedrock by this abrasive ice and are therefore aligned with the flow direction of the ice. They therefore represent past ice movements. Striae are well displayed around Barnesmore Gap and in The Rosses, north of Dunglow. Roche moutonnées are moulded rock forms, generally polished on the up-ice side and plucked on the down-ice side, and are another good indicator of past ice movement. These forms are common across the sheet area but are particularly well displayed on the Glengesh Plateau and on the flanks of The Poisoned Glen. The ice also carried stones (erratics) far from their source; especially notable are the granite erratics strewn across the quartzite peak of Errigal and metasediments on granite bedrock around Drumfin. These also tell us of the direction of ice flow.

All these directional indicators demonstrate that in this area ice moved northeast and northwest from the ice shed. The northeast moving ice was forced to sweep gently northward along Inishowen, Lough Swilly, Mulroy Bay and Sheep Haven in north Donegal. Many of the distinctive ice-breached cols of the Errigal-Muckish ridge *e.g.* Muckish Gap were cut by ice moving from south to north at this time. During the final stages of glaciation as the ice grew thinner topography provided a much stronger control on ice flow, with ice flow channelled around the highest mountains and along the well-developed glaciated (U-shaped) valleys of the area, such as the Poisoned Glen. There are many well developed corries in the Derryveagh Mountains (*e.g.* Lough Maam and Lough Slieve Snaght, below Slieve Snaght, and Lough Feeane and Lough Nabrackbaddy under under Aghla Mor and Aghla Beg respectively). These deep basins, usually containing a small lake, were carved out of the mountain sides by glacier ice and were generally the first areas in which ice accumulated, and last vacated, during periods of glaciation.

The material incorporated into the ice was eventually deposited, either directly by the ice as till (boulder clay) or by meltwater, during deglaciation, as sorted gravel, sand, silt or clay. The glacial deposits are quite thin on the upland areas where bedrock dominates, but on the lowlands till thicknesses of over 30m are common in the areas dominated by drumlins. Drumlins are streamlined

hills generally composed of till deposited under a moving ice mass, and their long axes parallel ice flow direction. These drumlins are widespread below the 120m contour line around Donegal and Inver Bays. Therefore, in the areas where they are present in the map area they also provide valuable information on direction of ice flow.

As the ice sheet shrank during deglaciation fine examples of moraines were formed at the retreating ice margin. Particularly fine lateral moraines can be seen along either side of the Barnesmore Gap. The most impressive moraine in Donegal has been formed offshore, and is currently below sea level, where multibeam sonar soundings made in 2002 by the MV Celtic Voyager revealed the presence of a narrow subsea moraine bank extending across the mouth of Donegal Bay.

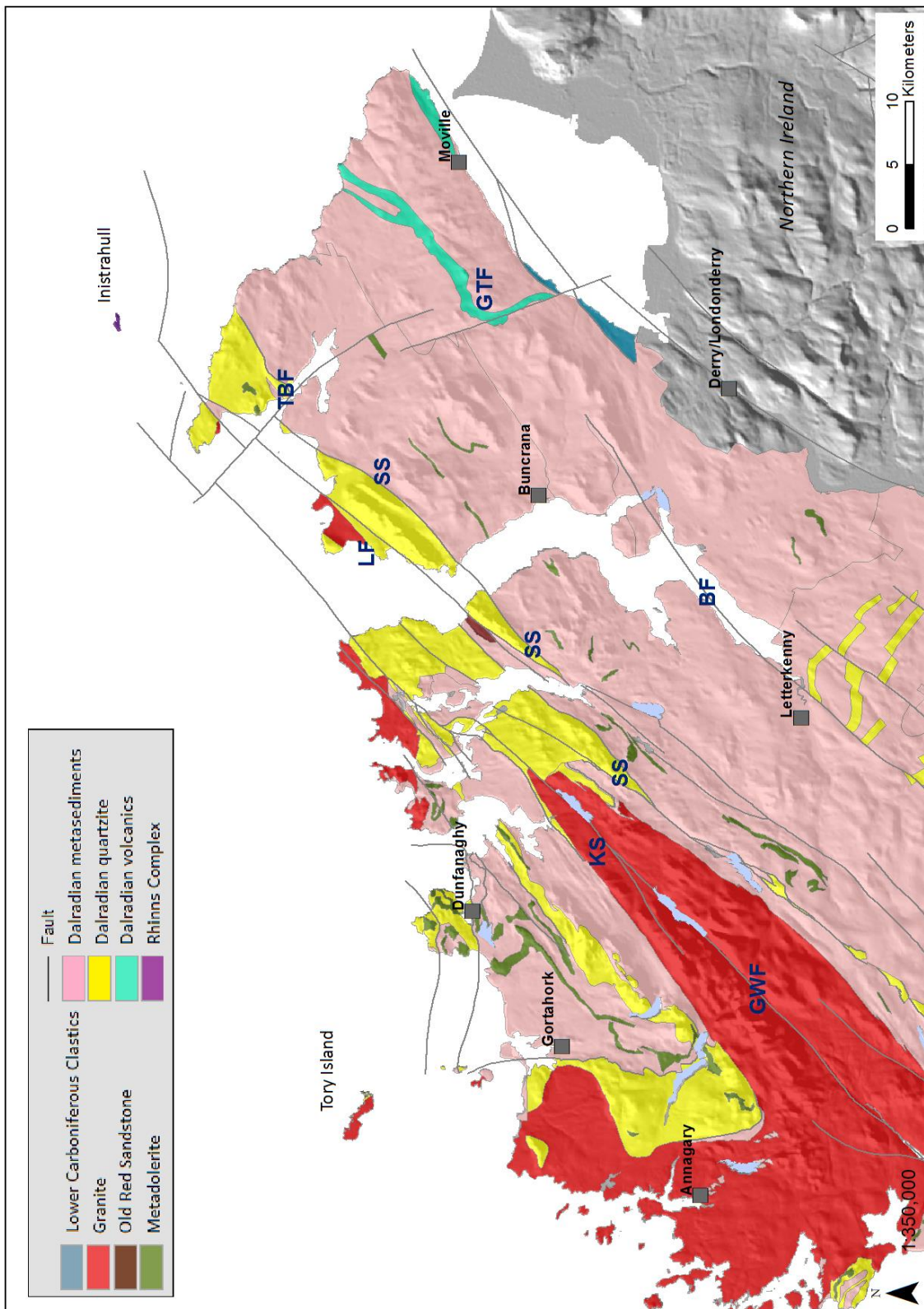
Glaciofluvial sands and gravels are deposited by meltwater issuing from a melting glacier. These deposits are usually well sorted, with the gravels often rounded. Outwash sands and gravels floor the Swilly Valley southwest of Letterkenny; these have been overlain by alluvium deposited by the modern River Swilly.

Glacial meltwater erosion has cut some spectacular meltwater channels in south Donegal. The Pennyburn Valley north of Derry and the valley of the Glentogher River through which the L79 road runs are other good examples.

Towards the end of the last glacial period as the great ice sheets of the northern hemisphere melted, returning the vast amounts of water they contained to the oceans, sea-levels began to rise and from a level in excess of 100 metres below those of today. As they did so areas which had been depressed by the weight of ice and which had not yet recovered to their current height were inundated by the sea. As the land surface began to rise in response to the removal of the weight of the ice sheets, beaches which had been deposited in the inundated areas rose with the land and were left high and dry as raised beaches.

The modern coastline began to develop after the postglacial sea-level stabilised at its present level more than 5,000 years ago. In that period the modern beaches (*e.g.* Maghera Strand) and spits (*e.g.* Loughros More) were formed and blown sand collected in the form of sand dunes (also at Loughros More). The accumulation of sand spits and blown sand is balanced by the erosion of other parts of the coastline, most spectacularly at the 600m high cliffs of Slieve League and the delicate looking sea arches of the Fairy Bridges.

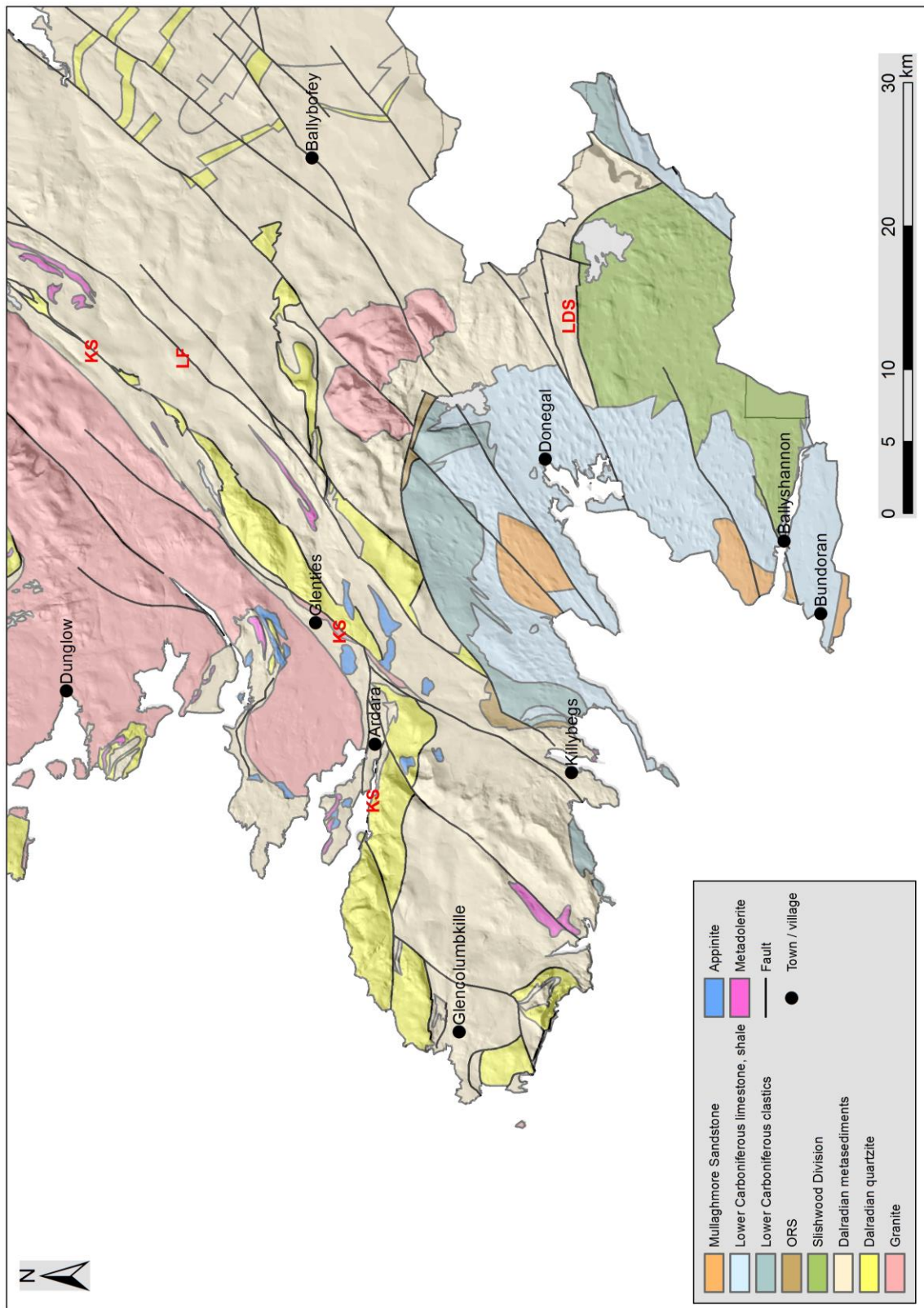
In the 10,000 years since deglaciation, in the Holocene Epoch, the warmer climate has effected a large change on the environment. Postglacial sediments in the map area include river alluvium and peat. Alluvial floodplains flank many of the larger rivers, for example the Foyle, the Swilly and the River Finn, where a fine set of meanders has developed, east of Fintown. Peat is common in south Donegal, particularly as blanket bog. This type of bog is associated with upland areas where poor drainage enables the build up of oxygen-starved, partially decomposed biomass. The development of blanket bog began about 4,000 years ago, and blanket peat is common flanking the Derryveagh Mountains, often covering extensive fields of *roche moutonnées*, *e.g.* Muckish Mountain. Estuarine silts and clays have been laid down in Donegal Bay and at Maghera Strand and Loughros More.



**Simplified Geological Map of North Donegal.**

LF: Leannan Fault; GTF: Glentogher Fault; GWF: Gweebarra Fault;  
 SS: Swilly Slide; BF: Belshade Fault; TBF: Trawbreaga Fault; KS: Knockateen Slide





**Simplified Geological Map of South Donegal.**

LF: Leannan Fault; KS: Knockateen Slide; LDS: Lough Derg Slide

## Geological heritage versus geological hazards

Ireland is generally considered to be a country with very low risk of major geological hazards: there are no active volcanoes, Ireland's location on stable tectonic plates mean earthquakes are relatively rare and its recorded human history is not peppered with disastrous landslides, mudflows or other geological catastrophes. There are of course risks of one-off events and this section briefly looks at the specific record and nature of geological hazards in Donegal and the relationship of the County Geological Sites to those hazards.

The difference between human timescales and geological timescales can be difficult to comprehend but, for many geological processes, there are periods of sudden activity encompassing major events, and then quiet periods in between. The sites in this audit represent evidence of past geological environments and processes, such as magmatic intrusion deep within the earth's crust, tropical coral seas, swampy deltas, glacial erosion of the land surface and so on. However, a few sites represent the active geomorphological or land-forming processes of today. These sites, generally upland or coastal in Donegal, are dynamic environments and can be subject to constant or intermittent, sometimes sudden, change.

### Landslides and bog flows

Geological Survey Ireland has been compiling national data on landslides since 2004 (<https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/data-and-maps/Pages/Geohazards.aspx#landslides>). Five such events have been recorded in north Donegal. In 2013 Geological Survey Ireland completed a landslide susceptibility mapping project as part of the Geoscience Initiative 2007-2013. This project was one of the main recommendations in the 2006 publication "Landslides in Ireland" published by Geological Survey Ireland and the Irish Landslides Working Group.

### Flooding

There are two types of flooding which need consideration.

1. River flooding occurs inland when the rainfall exceeds the capacity of the ground to absorb moisture, and the river channels cannot adequately discharge it to the sea. The OPW website, [www.floods.ie](http://www.floods.ie), can be consulted for details of individual flood events in County Donegal. Some 257 events are recorded across the entire county (as of November 2014). Many of these are in urban settings, such as Donegal, Ballyshannon, Letterkenny and Gweedore, where rainfall exceeds the capacity of the local drains.
2. Karstic flooding can occur when underground passages are unable to absorb high rainfall events. South Donegal has only very limited karst or known caves while north Donegal has none, so this is not an issue for the county.

### Groundwater pollution

Whilst not such an obvious hazard as physical collapses, flooding and landslides, the pollution of groundwater supplies carries a serious risk to human health. Large groundwater supplies in south Donegal such as at Ballyshannon and Pettigo and in north Donegal such as at Carndonagh, Culdaff, Fanad, and Magherabeg/Veagh require Source Protection Plans, which have been delineated for them by Geological Survey Ireland and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

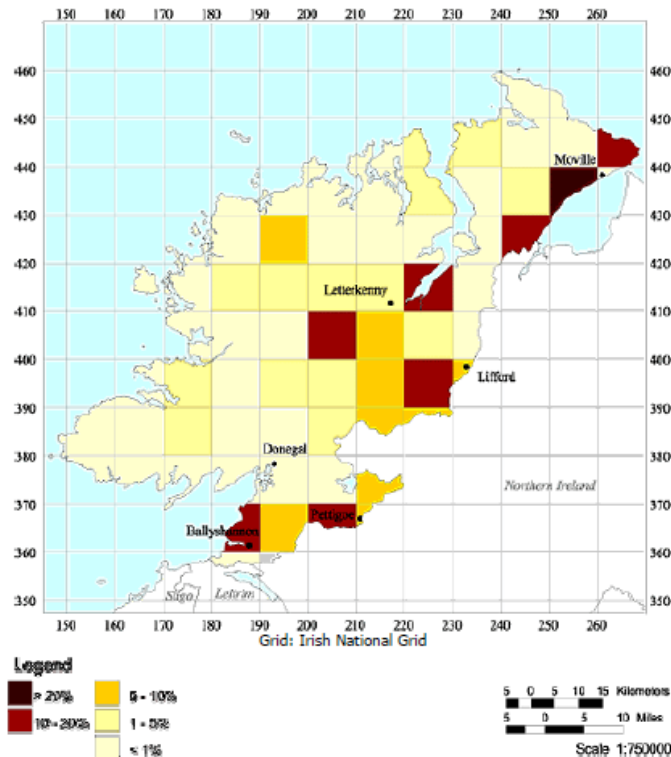
### Sea level rise, coastal erosion and sedimentation

Geological heritage sites in coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to wave erosion. The joint hazards of gradual sea level rise and high waves caused by increasing storminess need to be considered in any promotion of coastal geological heritage sites and in future planning. It should be remembered that coasts are dynamic geological environments, with changes to be expected in both erosion and deposition as normal features.

In south Donegal the records of Killybegs tide gauge show the effects on sea level by tides and storm surges. The most vulnerable places are the strand-lined coasts from Bundoran to Murvagh; Inner Donegal Bay from Laghy to Mountcharles; Inver; Loughrosbeg and Loughrosmore estuaries; Naran visitor car park and golf course and outer parts of Dungloe Bay. A complementary hazard is the silting up and dredging requirement of the navigation channels at Burtonport, Donegal Town and Ballyshannon.

### Radon

Radioactive minerals and gases at higher concentrations can be carcinogenic. Radon can seep into homes and workplaces and can be carried in water supplies. A map showing the areas predicted to be at particular risk from radon in Ireland, called High Radon Areas, can be seen on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website at <http://www.epa.ie/radiation/>. The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland was formerly responsible for this but has been merged with the EPA.



**Radon Map of Donegal**

Areas coloured light or dark brown on the map are High Radon Areas.

## Glossary of geological terms

Geological Term	Definition
<b>Adit</b>	a horizontal or only gently inclined mine tunnel dug to access coal or mineral ore, or to drain, ventilate or further develop a mine
<b>Alkali basalt</b>	basalt poor in silica (SiO <sub>2</sub> ) and relatively rich in sodium (Na) and potassium (K), compared to other basalts
<b>Aggregate</b>	crushed rock - raw material generally used in the construction industry.
<b>Alluvial Deposit</b>	unconsolidated clay, silt, sand and gravel, deposited by a body of running water
<b>Alluvial Fan</b>	a fan-shaped deposit formed where a fast flowing river levels out and slows, typically from the mountain foot onto the plain.
<b>Alluvium</b>	a term for unconsolidated clay, silt, sand and gravel, deposited by a body of running water
<b>Amphibolite</b>	a metamorphic rock rich in the minerals amphibolite and plagioclase
<b>Andesite</b>	a volcanic rock of intermediate composition (between rhyolite and basalt)
<b>Aplite</b>	a fine to medium-grained igneous rock found as veins within coarser-grained plutonic igneous rocks.
<b>Appinite</b>	plutonic igneous rock formed from hydrous magma of mantle origin, dioritic in composition, i.e. rich in hornblende, also containing plagioclase feldspar and/or alkali feldspar, with or without quartz; typically associated with breccia pipes in Donegal
<b>Aquifer</b>	a water saturated rock unit.
<b>Argillaceous rock</b>	rock composed of silt- or clay-sized particles
<b>Arkose</b>	sandstone containing 25% or more feldspar
<b>Basalt</b>	a dark fine-grained extrusive igneous rock (lava) composed mostly of the minerals plagioclase feldspar, olivine, pyroxene and amphibole
<b>Basic</b>	any igneous rock rich in iron and/or magnesium and containing little or no quartz
<b>Basic Rocks</b>	rocks which contain a relatively low percentage of silica, e.g. basalt
<b>Basin</b>	topographically low areas on the Earth's crust, of tectonic origin, in which sediments have accumulated
<b>Batholith</b>	large igneous intrusion (100 km <sup>2</sup> or more)
<b>Bedding Plane</b>	the contact between individual beds of rock
<b>Bedrock</b>	a general term for the rock, usually solid, that underlies soil or other unconsolidated, superficial material
<b>Bivalve</b>	mollusc with two hinged shells of similar shape and size
<b>Blanket Bogs</b>	bog covering a large, fairly horizontal area, which depends on high rainfall or high humidity, rather than local water sources for its supply of moisture
<b>Blowhole</b>	a chamber with a narrow cliff-top opening through which water is forced by waves driven against the base of the cliff
<b>Boudinage</b>	deformation of rock that leads to pulling apart of competent rock layer within it to create a series of separated fragments ( <i>boudins</i> ) enclosed by less competent rock layers
<b>Boulder Clay</b>	unconsolidated, unsorted glacial deposits consisting of boulders and cobbles mixed with very finely ground-up rock or silt. Also known as till
<b>Bouma sequence</b>	idealized sequence of sedimentary structures observed in sediments deposited by turbidity currents
<b>Brachiopods</b>	a marine invertebrate of the phylum Brachiopoda - a type of shellfish - ranging from Lower Cambrian to present
<b>Braided River</b>	a river that consists of a network of small channels separated by small and often temporary islands
<b>Breccia</b>	igneous or sedimentary rock comprising of large angular fragments within finer grained material
<b>Breccia pipe</b>	roughly cylindrical intrusion of brecciated material, linked to volcanism or granite intrusion; associated with appinites in Donegal
<b>Bryozoa</b>	invertebrates belonging to the phylum Bryozoa, ranging from Ordovician to present, often found as frond-like, net-like or stick-like fossils.
<b>Calc schist</b>	schist rich in calcareous material
<b>Calc silicate</b>	silicate mineral containing calcium as a major component
<b>Calcareenite</b>	limestone comprising sand-sized (0.006-2.0 mm) grains of either quartz or calcareous clasts in a calcareous matrix
<b>Calcareous</b>	containing significant calcium carbonate
<b>Calcite</b>	a pale mineral composed of calcium carbonate, which reacts with dilute hydrochloric acid
<b>Calc-psammite</b>	psammite rich in calcareous material.
<b>Caledonian</b>	relates to Caledonian orogeny that took place towards the end of the Lower Palaeozoic era,

<b>Carbonate</b>	affecting Ireland, Scotland, Scandinavia and Greenland
<b>Cave</b>	a rock (or mineral), most commonly limestone (calcite) and dolomite
	a natural underground space large enough for a human to enter, which is usually formed in either soluble limestone by karstic processes, or in exposed rock along the coastline, where the sea erodes natural rock fractures
<b>Clast</b>	an individual constituent, grain or fragment of a sediment or rock, usually produced by mechanical weathering (disintegration) of a larger rock mass
<b>Clastics</b>	sediments composed of clasts, fragments of pre-existing rocks
<b>Cleavage</b>	a flat plane of breakage caused by compressive deformation of rocks, e.g. the splitting of slate
<b>Clints</b>	tabular block of limestone in a limestone pavement
<b>Concordant contact</b>	where the margin of an igneous intrusion is parallel to the structure (bedding, schistosity, etc.) of the enclosing country rock
<b>Conglomerate</b>	sedimentary rock comprising of large rounded fragments in a finer matrix
<b>Corrie</b>	a horseshoe-shaped, steep-walled valley formed by glacial erosion.
<b>Cortlandite</b>	coarse-grained member of appinite series, consisting of olivine, hornblende and pyroxene
<b>Crag and tail</b>	a steep resistant rock mass (crag), with sloping softer sediments (tail) protected from glacial erosion or deposited as glacial debris on the crag's 'downstream' side.
<b>Crenulation/Crenulation cleavage</b>	small ascale folding, of the order of millimetres, superimposed on larger scale folding of earlier foliations
<b>Crinoid</b>	a variety of sea-urchin, with a long flexible stem, usually anchored to the sea-floor and a body cup with arms which may be branching (a sea lily)
<b>Cross-bedding</b>	layering in sedimentary rocks at an inclined angle to bedding formed by current-ripples
<b>Crust</b>	the outermost, solid, layer of the Earth
<b>Dalradian Supergroup</b>	thick late-Precambrian (c. 900Ma) to mid-Cambrian (c. 550Ma) sequence of sediments, limestones and volcanic rocks in Ireland and Scotland
<b>Debris flow</b>	a geological phenomenon in which water-laden masses of soil and fragmented rock rush down mountainsides, funnel into stream channels, entrain objects in their paths, and form thick, muddy deposits on valley floors. Also occurs on glacial ice.
<b>Decline</b>	inclined tunnel providing access to underground mine workings
<b>Deformation</b>	physical alteration of rocks and minerals under conditions of high pressure, e.g. orogeny
<b>Delta</b>	a usually triangular alluvial deposit at the mouth of a river, or a similar deposit at the mouth of a tidal inlet, caused by tidal currents
<b>Dendritic</b>	branching.
<b>Desilication</b>	alteration of rock resulting in removal of quartz
<b>Devolatilization</b>	loss of dissolved volatile compounds from magma as compounds pass out of solution into a free gas phase, typically in response to a drop in containing pressure
<b>Diamictite</b>	lithified, poorly-sorted deposits comprising clasts of various sizes in a mud matrix
<b>Diatreme</b>	volcanic vent formed by explosive action, typically filled with coarse angular fragments of rocks derived both from nearby sources and deeper parts of the crust
<b>Dimension stone</b>	stone that is quarried and cut to specific shapes and sizes
<b>Diorite</b>	coarse-grained igneous rock containing plagioclase feldspar, hornblende and biotite with or without minor quartz
<b>Dip/dipping</b>	when sedimentary strata are not horizontal they are dipping in a direction and the angle between horizontal and the inclined plane is measured as the dip of the strata or beds
<b>Discordant contact</b>	where the margin of an igneous intrusion is not parallel to or cuts across the structure (bedding, schistosity, etc.) of the enclosing country rock
<b>Dolerite</b>	dark fine-grained igneous intrusive rock, similar in composition to gabbro and basalt, found in dykes where relatively rapid cooling has prevented development of a coarse texture
<b>Dolomite</b>	calcium- and magnesium-bearing carbonate mineral; also a rock composed of the mineral
<b>Dropstone</b>	a clast or boulder that falls from a melting ice sheet into fine, soft sediment below
<b>Drumlin</b>	a streamlined mound of glacial drift, rounded or elongated in the direction of the original flow of ice
<b>Dry Oxbow</b>	caving term, where the river takes a more direct route through a cave and abandoning part of the stream, leaving it dry (see also stream oxbow).
<b>Ductile fault</b>	a fault along which rocks stretch and bend, rather than break brittly.
<b>Dune</b>	a hill of sand built by either wind or water flow.
<b>Dune slack</b>	lowlying depressions, often wet or water-filled, between sand dunes.
<b>Dyke</b>	a sub-vertical sheet-like igneous intrusion, typically in-filling a fracture in the earth's crust
<b>Echinoid</b>	echinoderm in which body of organism was enclosed in disc-shaped body made of interlocking plates covered by spines
<b>Eclogite facies</b>	metamorphic facies in which basic igneous rocks subjected to high pressure and intermediate

<b>Epidote</b>	temperature are characterized by the growth of pyrope garnet and omphacite pyroxene a calcium aluminium iron silicate mineral, often green coloured.
<b>Erratic</b>	a rock fragment, often large, that has been transported, usually by ice, and deposited some distance from its source. It therefore generally differs from the underlying bedrock, the name "erratic" referring to the errant location of such boulders. Tracing their source can yield important information about glacial movements.
<b>Exsolution textures</b>	some mineral phases are in solid solution together at high temperatures but during cooling of the host igneous rocks undergo unmixing, leading to separation of the phases and development of intergrowth textures
<b>Extrusive</b>	an igneous body emplaced (erupted) at the Earth's surface as lava.
<b>Facies</b>	the character of the rock derived from its original sedimentary environment and process of deposition
<b>Fan</b>	a usually triangular deposit of sand and gravel deposited by a glacial stream, either under a lake or under air
<b>Fault</b>	planar fracture in rocks across which there has been some displacement or movement
<b>Fault Zone</b>	a tabular volume containing many faults and fault rocks (rocks broken up by fault movement)
<b>Fauna</b>	collective term used to group all animal life
<b>Feldspar</b>	the most abundant mineral in the earth's crust, composed of variable proportions of potassium, sodium and calcium in combination with silicon, aluminium and oxygen
<b>Feldspathic</b>	containing significant quantity of feldspar
<b>Felsic</b>	containing at least one of the light coloured minerals feldspar, leucite, nepheline or silica
<b>Floodplain</b>	a flat or nearly flat land area adjacent to a stream or river that experiences occasional or periodic flooding.
<b>Fluvial</b>	pertaining to a river or stream
<b>Fold(ing)</b>	flexure in layered rocks caused by compression
<b>Foliation</b>	a finely spaced planar parting caused by compressive deformation of rocks
<b>Formation</b>	a formal term for a sequence of related rock types differing significantly from adjacent sequences
<b>Fossiliferous</b>	rich in fossils
<b>Fossils</b>	any remains, trace or imprint of a plant or animal that has been preserved in the Earth's crust since some past geological or prehistorical time
<b>Gabbro</b>	a dark coarsely crystalline intrusive (plutonic) igneous rock composed mostly of plagioclase feldspar, olivine, pyroxene and amphibole
<b>Gastropod</b>	a marine, freshwater or terrestrial invertebrate with a shell which has a conical or helical spiral shape (a snail)
<b>Glacial</b>	of or relating to the presence and activities of ice or glaciers
<b>Glacial striae</b>	markings left on the surface of pebbles / boulders / bedrock by moving ice sheets.
<b>Glaciofluvial</b>	pertaining to the meltwater streams flowing from wasting glacier ice and especially to the deposits and landforms produced by such streams
<b>Gneiss</b>	coarse-grained, banded rock formed during high-grade metamorphism where light-coloured and dark-coloured bands are produced by separation of dark minerals (e.g. biotite, hornblende) and quartz-feldspathic minerals into parallel bands
<b>Grading / graded bedding</b>	a sorting effect with the coarsest material at the base of the bed and finest grained material at the top.
<b>Granite</b>	a coarsely crystalline intrusive igneous rock composed mostly of quartz and feldspar
<b>Granoblastic texture</b>	metamorphic rock texture where minerals form a mosaic of equidimensional, anhedral (lacking crystal shape) grains
<b>Granodiorite</b>	an igneous rock similar to granite but containing more of the mineral plagioclase and also more iron and magnesium-bearing minerals
<b>Granophyre</b>	intrusive rock of granitic composition in which quartz and feldspar occur in characteristic angular interlocking texture
<b>Granulite</b>	coarse-grained, equigranular high-grade metamorphic rock containing quartz, feldspar and anhydrous Fe-Mg-bearing minerals such as pyroxene and garnet
<b>Greenschist facies</b>	metamorphic facies in which rocks subjected to moderate pressure and temperature are characterized by the growth of chlorite $\pm$ actinolite $\pm$ albite $\pm$ epidote $\pm$ quartz
<b>Greisen</b>	alteration of granite by hot, water-rich fluids to form rock dominated by quartz and muscovite , often in association with metallic mineralization
<b>Greywacke</b>	an impure sandstone, characterised by poorly-sorted, angular grains in a muddy matrix, that was deposited rapidly by turbidity currents (submarine avalanches).
<b>Grike</b>	a solutionally widened vertical fracture separating clints on a limestone pavement
<b>Grit</b>	historic term, synonym for sandstone
<b>Gully</b>	a deep valley created by running water eroding sharply into bedrock or subsoil.

<b>Horizon</b>	may refer to a single layer of rock such as a coal seam, an ash layer, or other geological 'event'
<b>Hornblende</b>	hydrous (OH-bearing) silicate mineral containing Ca, Fe and Mg as major components
<b>Hornfels</b>	massive, fine-grained contact metamorphic rock formed by recrystallization adjacent to an igneous intrusion
<b>Hummock</b>	a small hill or knoll in the landscape, which may be formed by many different processes.
<b>Ice margin</b>	the edge of an ice sheet or glacier
<b>Ichnofauna</b>	trace fossils, i.e. sedimentary structures formed by the behaviour of animals, e.g. burrows
<b>Igneous</b>	a rock or mineral that solidified from molten or partially molten material i.e. from a magma
<b>Interbeds (glacial)</b>	beds of glacial sediment deposited found between beds of non-glacial sediment
<b>Interglacial</b>	the time interval between glacial stages, or pertaining to this time.
<b>Intrusive</b>	an igneous rock emplaced within the Earth's crust, not extruded like lava
<b>Intrusive rock</b>	an igneous rock emplaced within the Earth's crust, not extruded onto its surface like lava
<b>Isthmus</b>	narrow strip of land linking two broader areas of land
<b>Joint</b>	a fracture in a rock, which shows no evidence of displacement
<b>Kame-kettle</b>	an irregularly shaped hill or mound composed of sand, gravel and till that accumulates in a depression on a retreating glacier, and is then deposited on the land surface with further melting of the glacier. Kames are often associated with kettles, and this is referred to as kame and kettle topography.
<b>Karst</b>	general term used for landscapes formed by weathering of soluble rocks, usually limestone, by surface water and/or groundwater
<b>Karstification</b>	the process of forming karst
<b>Kettle hole</b>	a shallow, sediment-filled body of water formed by retreating glaciers or draining floodwaters.
<b>Knock and lochan</b>	lowland area comprising alternating small hills ( <i>cnoc</i> , e.g. roches moutonnees) and hollows (often filled by water to form lakes, <i>loch</i> )
<b>Laminated</b>	the finest example of stratification or bedding, typically exhibited by shales and fine-grained sandstones.
<b>Lamprophyre</b>	uncommon, basic or ultrabasic potassium-rich igneous rocks occurring typically as dykes and small intrusions
<b>Lava</b>	magma extruded onto the Earth's surface, or the rock solidified from it
<b>Leucosome</b>	light-coloured quartzo-feldspathic band or zone found between dark-coloured melanosome in regionally metamorphosed or partially melted rocks; the leucosome represents the partially melted component containing quartz and feldspar, the melanosome the undissolved or unmelted mineral residue left over from original rock after removal of quartz and feldspar.
<b>Lherzolite</b>	ultrabasic rock, most common variety of peridotite
<b>Limestone</b>	a sedimentary rock consisting chiefly of calcium carbonate (CaCO <sub>3</sub> ), primarily in the form of the mineral calcite; it is mostly formed by the accumulation of calcareous shells, cemented by calcium carbonate precipitated from solution
<b>Lithology</b>	the description of rocks on the basis of such characteristics as colour, composition and grain size
<b>Lodgement</b>	process by which debris is released from the sliding base of a moving glacier/ice sheet and plastered or 'lodged' onto the glacier bed; also describes tills emplaced by this process (i.e. lodgement till).
<b>Mafic</b>	term applied to typically dark-coloured silicate minerals and rocks containing a relatively high proportion of iron- and magnesium-bearing minerals
<b>Magma</b>	molten rock that cools to form igneous rocks
<b>Mantle</b>	the main part of the Earth between the crustal plates and the core
<b>Marble</b>	metamorphosed limestone
<b>Massive bedding / texture</b>	a rock or rock unit, such as a bed, with no obvious internal structure
<b>Meander</b>	a bend in a sinuous watercourse or river which forms when moving water in a stream erodes the outer banks and widens its valley, and the inner part of the river has less energy and deposits fine sediment.
<b>Melanosome</b>	dark-coloured band or zone found between light-coloured, quartzo-feldspathic band or zone ( <i>leucosome</i> ) in regionally metamorphosed or partially melted rocks; the melanosome represents the undissolved or unmelted mineral residue left over from original rock after removal of quartz and feldspar
<b>Melt-out</b>	process by which glacial debris is very slowly released from ice that is not sliding or deforming internally; also describes tills emplaced by this process (i.e. melt-out till).
<b>Meltwater</b>	water from melted snow or ice.
<b>Meltwater channel</b>	a channel cut by glacial meltwater, either under, along or in front of an ice margin.
<b>Metabasite</b>	metamorphosed basic igneous rock
<b>Metadolerite</b>	metamorphosed dolerite
<b>Metagabbro</b>	metamorphosed gabbro



<b>Metamorphic</b>	referring to the process of metamorphism or to the resulting metamorphic rock, transformed by heat and pressure from an originally igneous or sedimentary rock
<b>Metamorphic aureole</b>	zone of country rock, in contact with an igneous intrusion, which has undergone metamorphism due to the heat of the intruding magma
<b>Metamorphic facies</b>	a set of mineral assemblages that are characteristic of specific metamorphic grade (or conditions of temperature and pressure)
<b>Metapelite</b>	metamorphosed pelitic or fine-grained sediments
<b>Metasediments</b>	metamorphosed sediments
<b>Metasomatism, metasomatic</b>	a variety of metamorphism where chemical components are introduced into and/or removed from a rock, typically via a volatile phase
<b>Micaceous</b>	mica-rich
<b>Microfossil</b>	a fossil too small to be observed without the aid of a microscope.
<b>Micrographic texture</b>	fine-scale intergrowth of quartz and feldspar in the groundmass of granite, formed as a late-stage growth from liquid trapped between earlier-formed crystals; characteristic texture of granophyre
<b>Migmatite</b>	mixed rock formed under very high metamorphic grade where partial melting produces a light-coloured granitic component (leucosome) that is mixed with the remaining, typically darker-coloured material (melanosome)
<b>Miospores</b>	A spore or pollen grain less than 200 micrometres (µm) in diameter
<b>Misfit stream</b>	a stream which is too small to have eroded the valley in which it flows, as is often the case with streams now flowing in meltwater channels.
<b>Monzodiorite</b>	plutonic, coarse-grained igneous rock with plagioclase feldspar, alkali feldspar, hornblende and biotite with or without minor quartz, in which plagioclase is the dominant feldspar; monzodiorite differs from diorite in having a significant component of alkali feldspar
<b>Monzonite</b>	similar to monzodiorite except that the proportions of plagioclase and alkali feldspar are broadly similar
<b>Moraine</b>	any glacially formed accumulation of unconsolidated debris, in glaciated regions, such as during an ice age
<b>Mudstone</b>	a very fine grained sedimentary rock, containing quartz and clay minerals. Similar to shale, but not as easily split along the plane of bedding
<b>Mullion structure</b>	a form of boudinage where parallel rods or prisms of competent rock, typically oriented parallel to a fold axis, are formed by stretching of a competent bed
<b>Mylonite</b>	rock produced in fault and shear zones where tectonic deformation causes mechanical crushing and grinding ( <i>cataclasis</i> ) of existing rocks; mylonite is typically a fine-grained, laminated rock
<b>Myrmekite</b>	irregular, worm-like intergrowths of quartz in plagioclase feldspar, generally developed at a late-stage during crystallization of granitic rock
<b>Nappe</b>	a large block of crust, typically sheet-like, that has been moved a large distance (several km or more) above a thrust fault from its original position
<b>Ore</b>	a mineral which is concentrated enough to be exploited by mining
<b>Orogen</b>	the part of the earth's crust affected by orogeny
<b>Orogeny</b>	the creation of a mountain belt by tectonic activity
<b>Orthoclase</b>	a feldspar mineral.
<b>Orthogneiss</b>	gneiss produced by metamorphism of original igneous rock
<b>Ostracod</b>	small crustaceans, typical arthropods whose bodies are enclosed in two shells, their fossils resembling tiny bivalves
<b>Outcrop</b>	part of a geologic formation or structure that appears at the surface of the Earth
<b>Outlier</b>	area of younger bedrock completely surrounded by older bedrock
<b>Paragneiss</b>	gneiss produced by metamorphism of original sedimentary rock
<b>Pegmatite</b>	a very coarse-grained igneous rock, generally of granitic composition but including intermediate and basic varieties
<b>Pelite</b>	a metamorphosed mudstone
<b>Peridotite</b>	coarse-grained ultramafic rock, made up of olivine (>40%) and pyroxene, derived from the upper mantle; includes variety <i>lherzolite</i>
<b>Periglacial</b>	very cold but non-glacial climatic conditions
<b>Perthite</b>	feldspar texture where plagioclase, typically occurring as parallel lath-like growths, forms intergrowths in alkali feldspar during cooling in a process known as "exsolution", i.e. unmixing of minerals previously in solid solution together
<b>Phenocryst</b>	a large mineral grain within a finer-grained igneous rock
<b>Phyllite</b>	foliated pelite.
<b>Planform</b>	an object's outline when viewed from above
<b>Plate Tectonics</b>	a theory that states that the crust is divided up into a number of plates, whose pattern of horizontal movement is controlled by the interaction of these plates at their boundaries with one another



<b>Platform</b>	a continental area of relatively flat or gently sloping, mostly sedimentary strata, overlying a basement of consolidated igneous or metamorphic rocks.
<b>Pluton</b>	an igneous intrusion formed at sufficient depths to allow for the slow growth (crystallisation) of large crystals
<b>Plutonic</b>	originating at great depth
<b>Porphyroblast</b>	a large well-shaped crystal within a finer-grained matrix that formed during metamorphic recrystallization
<b>Porphyry</b>	an igneous rock with large crystals set in a fine-grained matrix
<b>Psammite</b>	metamorphosed sandstone, arkose or quartzite
<b>Pseudomorph</b>	a mineral that replaces another but retains the form (morphology) of the original
<b>Pyrite</b>	iron sulphide, pale yellow/gold coloured mineral, commonly occurring as cubes and often called 'fool's gold'
<b>Quartz</b>	the second most abundant mineral in the earth's crust, composed of silicon and oxygen (SiO <sub>2</sub> )
<b>Quartzite</b>	a hard, metamorphosed sandstone, composed mostly of recrystallised quartz grains that are tightly interlocking; quartzite is formed through heat and pressure usually related to tectonic compression
<b>Raft</b>	large body of country rock entrained in an igneous body, such as a granite, during intrusion of the igneous rock, now visible as an isolated body separated from its original surroundings
<b>Retrograde metamorphism</b>	recrystallization of pre-existing rocks as temperature and pressure are reduced after the peak of metamorphism; retrograde metamorphism occurs where some fluid remains in the system to catalyze reactions and typically involves hydration of minerals in contrast to the dehydration that characterizes prograde metamorphism
<b>Ribbed moraine</b>	a subglacially (i.e. under a glacier or ice sheet) formed type of moraine that mainly occurs in Fennoscandia, Scotland, Ireland and Canada; ribbed moraines cover large areas that were previously overlain by ice and occur mostly in what is believed to have been the central areas of the ice sheets.
<b>Ribbon Lake</b>	a long, narrow and deep, lake occupying the floor of a U-shaped glacial valley
<b>Roof pendant</b>	vertically oriented block of country rock, projecting downwards into and enclosed by an igneous intrusion, a remnant of the roof zone of the intrusion
<b>Sandflat</b>	a sand-dominated intertidal area which is submerged at high tide and exposed at low tide, normally associated with inlets, estuaries or shallow bays
<b>Sandstone</b>	a fine to coarse sedimentary rock, deposited by water or wind, and composed of fragments of sand (quartz grains), cemented together by quartz or other minerals
<b>Sandur</b>	a plain formed of glacial sediments deposited by meltwater outwash at the terminus of a glacier
<b>Schist</b>	a medium to coarse grained rock, formed by the metamorphism of a sedimentary mudstone by heat and pressure; the minerals are aligned in parallel layers giving the rock a fabric known as schistosity
<b>Schistosity</b>	planar alignment of platy minerals in metamorphic rocks in response to pressure, giving rise to a strong planar fabric throughout the rock
<b>Scree</b>	loose debris or talus deposits comprising angular stones and boulders
<b>Sedimentary</b>	a rock formed by the deposition of sediment, or pertaining to the process of sedimentation
<b>Semipelite</b>	metamorphosed siltstone
<b>Shaft</b>	a vertical or inclined hole dug in a mine for access, ventilation, for hauling ore out or for pumping water out.
<b>Shale</b>	a very fine-grained mudstone, containing quartz and clay minerals, that splits easily along the plane of bedding
<b>Shear zone</b>	an elongate area or region where rocks have undergone intense deformation
<b>Sill</b>	a tabular mass of igneous rock that has been intruded horizontally between layers of existing rock
<b>Siltstone</b>	similar to mudstone but with a predominance of silt-sized (3.9–62.5 µm) particles
<b>Skarn</b>	calc-silicate rock formed by chemical reaction between limestone and adjacent rocks of different composition leading to replacement of original carbonate by calc-silicate minerals
<b>Slate</b>	metamorphosed mudstone, i.e. a fine-grained rock produced under conditions of high pressure, characterized by a cleavage along which the rock splits easily
<b>Slide</b>	in Donegal geology, a slide is synonymous with a <i>thrust fault</i>
<b>Solifluction lobes</b>	lobes of debris that have accumulated as a result of the slow, downslope movement of water saturated material under the influence of gravity.
<b>Spinel</b>	non-silicate mineral consisting typically of various elements, including Mg, Fe, Mn, Cr, etc., in combination with Al and O; the spinel series includes magnetite and chromite
<b>Stratabound</b>	confined to a single stratigraphic unit
<b>Stratiform</b>	(of a mineral deposit) formed parallel to the bedding planes of the surrounding rock [term used under Rejected sites/Pollan Bay]
<b>Stratigraphy</b>	the study of stratified (layered) sedimentary and volcanic rocks, especially their sequence in time

<b>Stream oxbow</b>	and correlation between localities caving term, similar to an oxbow lake at the surface where the river/stream takes a more direct route and cuts off a meander loop. A stream Oxbow occurs in caves where the river is flowing through the new direct route as well as the original meander loop.
<b>Stromatolites</b>	an algal deposit usually found in shallow water
<b>Sub-aerial</b>	refers to processes occurring above ground level, such as the weathering of rocks
<b>Syenite</b>	a coarse-grained grey igneous rock composed mainly of alkali feldspar and ferromagnesian minerals such as hornblende
<b>Subduction</b>	the sinking of one crustal plate beneath the edge of another through the process of plate tectonic.
<b>Syncline</b>	basin-shaped fold in which upper strata are younger than lower, underlying strata
<b>Syringopora</b>	colonial coral in which stem-like skeletal parts that protected the living organism formed mound-like accumulations
<b>Talc</b>	Mg-rich platy or sheet-like mineral (phyllosilicate), with the lowest hardness (1) on the standard Mohs scale (1-10) of hardness.
<b>Talc schist</b>	metamorphic rock composed mostly of talc in which schistosity is defined by alignment of platy talc crystals
<b>Tectonic banding</b>	banding in rock that is a consequence of deformation rather than reflecting original rock texture
<b>Texture of rock</b>	the sizes and shapes and interrelationships of particles in a rock
<b>Thrust fault</b>	a low-angle (< 45°) reverse fault
<b>Till</b>	unconsolidated, unsorted glacial deposits consisting of boulders and cobbles mixed with very finely ground-up rock as sand, silt or clay; also known as boulder clay
<b>Tillite</b>	also called diamictite and mixtite, is made up of till, later cemented to form rock
<b>Tombolo</b>	a narrow depositional landform such as a sand spit or bar that connects an island to the mainland or to another island (it has a beach on each of its sides).
<b>Tonalite</b>	an igneous, plutonic (intrusive) rock, of felsic composition, with phaneritic texture. Feldspar is present as plagioclase (typically oligoclase or andesine) with 10% or less alkali feldspar. Quartz is present as more than 20% of the rock.
<b>Tor</b>	a large, free-standing rock outcrop that rises abruptly from the surrounding smooth and gentle slopes of a rounded hill summit or ridge crest
<b>Transgression</b>	an incursion of the sea over land area
<b>Transpression</b>	a tectonic regime where compression is combined with movement along the strike (strike-slip movement) of a fault
<b>Trilobites</b>	extinct arthropods
<b>Turbidity Current</b>	underwater density current carrying suspended sediment at high speed down a subaqueous slope. The resulting deposit is called a turbidite.
<b>Ultrabasic rock</b>	an igneous rock with a very low (< 45%) silica (SiO <sub>2</sub> ) content, typically with little or no feldspar, and rich in one or more mafic minerals such as pyroxene, olivine and amphibole
<b>Ultramafic rock</b>	rocks in which >90% of the constituent minerals are dark-coloured (mafic) Fe- and Mg-rich minerals; partial synonym for "ultrabasic", a broader term that also includes some rocks that are not rich in Fe or Mg
<b>Unconformable</b>	a sedimentary rock that was not deposited in chronological sequence with the rock on which it rests but rather after a significant period had passed during which the underlying rocks had undergone erosion
<b>Unconformity</b>	a buried erosion surface separating two rock masses or strata of different ages, indicating that sediment deposition was not continuous
<b>U-shaped valley</b>	also known as a glacial trough, this is formed by the process of glaciation and has a characteristic U shape, with steep, straight sides and a flat bottom. Glaciated valleys are formed when a glacier travels across and down a slope, carving the valley by the action of scouring.
<b>Volcanic Rock</b>	any rock produced from volcanic material, e.g. ash, lava
<b>Volcaniclastic</b>	rock material, derived from a volcanic eruption, re-deposited as a sedimentary rock, e.g. a sandstone, as an aggregate of small particles.
<b>Xenolith</b>	fragment of rock of different composition enclosed in igneous rock during magma intrusion
<b>Zaphrentid coral</b>	solitary, cup- or inverted-horn-shaped coral

## Data sources on the geology of Donegal

This section is a brief summary of relevant Geological Survey Ireland datasets, to assist any enquiry concerning geology and to target possible information easily. Geological Survey Ireland has very many datasets, accumulated since it began mapping Ireland's geology in 1845. A Document Management System (called GOLDMINE) is freely available online, into which about half a million documents and maps have been scanned. This means that any user can search on screen for data of relevance to them.

**Data is available free of charge.**

### **GOLDMINE (GSI OnLine Document, Maps and Information Explorer)**

Geological Survey Ireland online digital archive enables visitors to search Geological Survey Ireland online data archive database and download full-size resampled pdfs and/or original high resolution TIFF image files. The data consists of: Scanned Capture of 450,000 pages and maps, including all of Geological Survey Ireland principal datasets, (Mineral Exploration Reports-Open File, Geotechnical Reports, boreholes & tests, Historic 6":1 mile and 1":1 mile Geological Maps, Geological Survey Ireland Publications, Bulletins, Published and Unpublished Reports, Groundwater Well Hydrographs, Marine Maps, Airborne Geophysical Maps, Mineral Locality Reports and Mine Record Reports and Maps). The database runs on Oracle© and the stored imagery is currently 1.4TB in size.

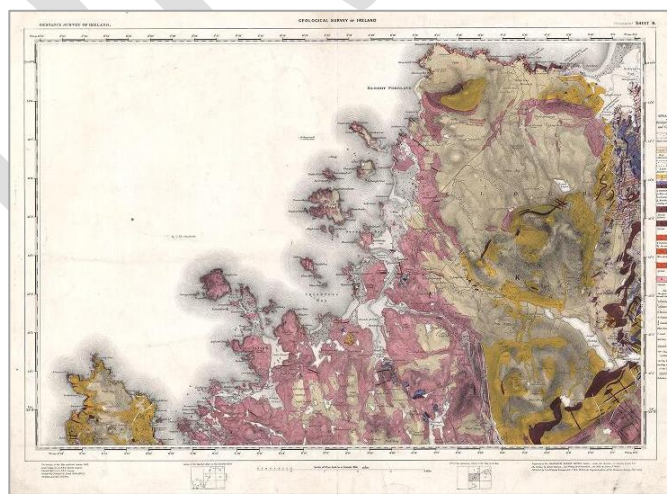
<http://secure.dccae.gov.ie/goldmine/index.html>

### **1:100,000 Map Report Series**

All historical, modern and other mapping has been compiled into very useful maps and reports that describe the geology of the entire country. Sheet 3/4 covers South Donegal while Sheets 1/2 and 3/4 collectively cover north Donegal.

### **19<sup>th</sup> century 6-inch-to-one-mile field sheets**

These provide an important historical and current resource, with very detailed observations of the geology of the entire country.



**Sheet No. 9 – Gweedore GSI 1:63,360 geological map. Published in 1889**

### **19<sup>th</sup> century one-inch maps and Memoirs**

Information from the detailed 19<sup>th</sup> century mapping was distilled into one-inch-to-one-mile maps, of which parts of Sheets 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31 and 32 cover South Donegal and parts of Sheets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, and 17 cover north Donegal. Each sheet or several sheets were accompanied by a Memoir which described the geology of that area in some detail. These still provide valuable records of observations even though interpretations may have changed with better geological understanding. Memoirs are in the Customer Centre library and scanned on the DMS.

Historical geological mapping is now available via a website:

<http://www.geologicalmaps.net/irishhistmaps/history.cfm>

### **Open File Data**

Each Mineral Prospecting Licence issued by the Exploration and Mining Division (EMD, currently of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment) carries an obligation on the exploration company to lodge records of the work undertaken, for public access. These records are held by the Geological Survey and are available as Open File Data, once a period of time has expired. They may include geological interpretations, borehole logs, geophysical and geochemical surveys and so on. Licences relate to numbered prospecting areas, and these are available on a map from EMD. See also

[www.mineralsireland.ie](http://www.mineralsireland.ie)

### **MinLocs Data**

The MinLocs Database records all known mineral occurrences, however small, from Geological Survey Ireland records, such as 19<sup>th</sup> century field sheets and Open File data. Also available on the Geological Survey Ireland online Viewer.

### **Historic Mine Records**

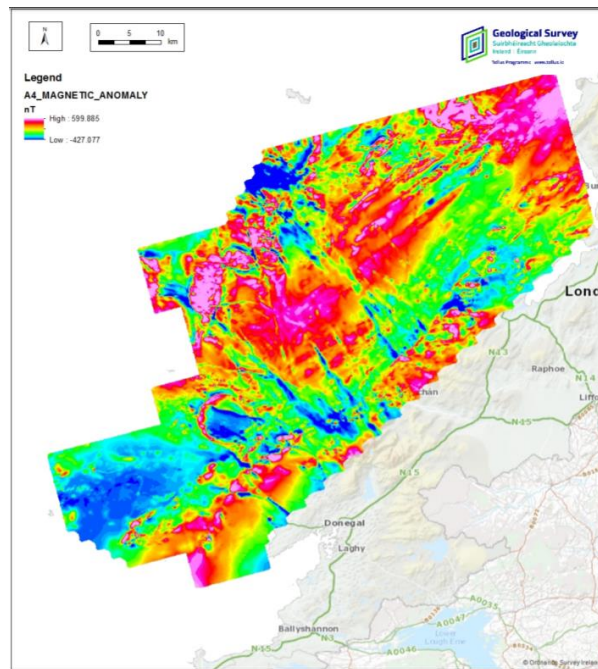
Abandonment plans and varied other material exists for the various mining ventures in the country, including Crohy head talc mine.

### **Subsoils Mapping**

Since a Groundwater Protection Scheme has been completed (revised 2012) for County Donegal by Geological Survey Ireland, a recently completed map of the subsoil types and depths across County Donegal exists, as well as the previously completed bedrock mapping. This provides a significant resource in general terms as well as for groundwater protection. Customised output is possible. Further more detailed compilation of glacial geology datasets, including a revision published by Geological Survey Ireland in late 2015, provides more options. Digital mapping of many different datasets is now available via the Geological Survey Ireland website: [www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie)

### **Tellus Data**

The Tellus survey is a Geological Survey Ireland national programme to gather geochemical and geophysical data, in order to examine the chemical and physical properties of our soil, rocks and water. Tellus involves two types of surveying – airborne geophysical surveying using a low-flying aircraft and ground-based geochemical surveying of soil, stream water and stream sediment. The EU INTERREG IVA **Tellus Border** project, which included County Donegal, was successfully completed in 2013.



**Residual magnetic anomaly for A4 Block Donegal (2017)**

County Donegal was surveyed during 2017 (A4 Block) and data was released in early 2018. All data from Tellus is freely available online at <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/data-and-maps/Pages/Geophysics.aspx>

### **INFOMAR data**

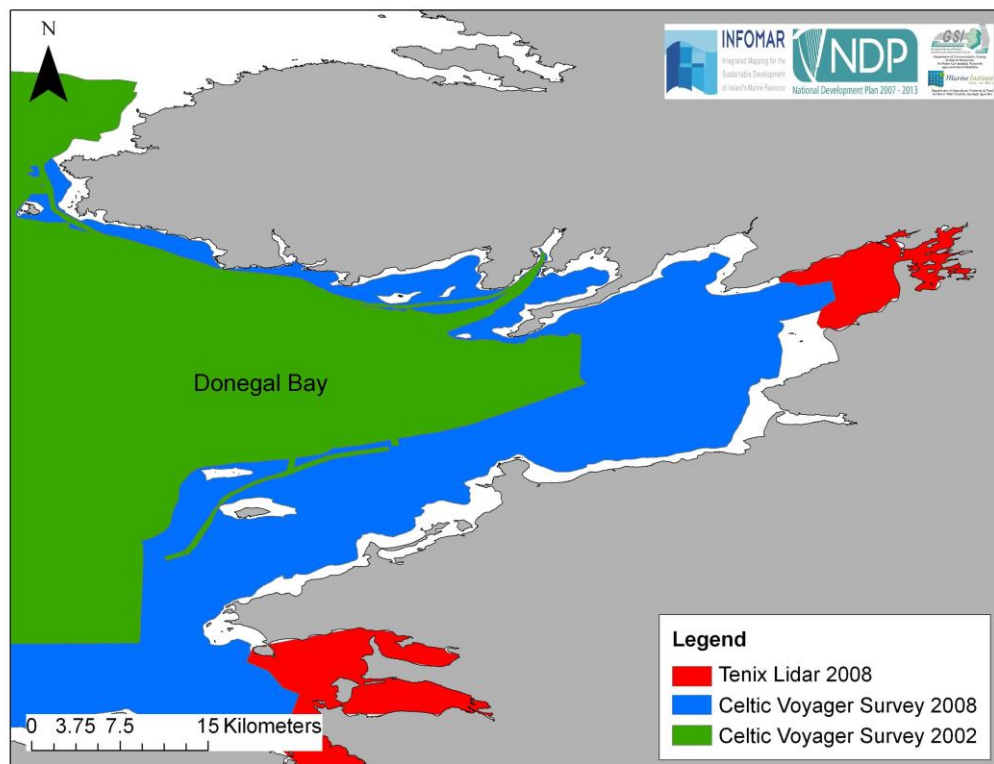
The original Irish National Seabed Survey, carried out by Geological Survey Ireland and the Marine Institute (1999-2005), focused on deep-water mapping at the outer margins of Ireland's territorial seabed, moving closer shoreward over time. Its successor programme, INFOMAR (*INtegrated mapping FOR the sustainable development of Ireland's MARine Resource*) is in the process of mapping inshore areas, identifying 26 priority bays, including Donegal Bay. It should be noted that Donegal's adjacent continental shelf covers at least twice the area of the county onshore. The INFOMAR survey operations have also been conducted at Sheep Haven and Gola Island.

INFOMAR survey operations for Donegal have extended Donegal Bay farther inshore from existing coverage. For more information about INFOMAR data, see: <https://www.infomar.ie/>

There may be scope for integrating 3D onshore and offshore INFOMAR data (see the EMODnet - European Marine Observation and Data Network <http://www.emodnet.eu>), as in the Copper Coast Geopark, County Waterford where it has been successfully used to develop various 3D films and video fly-throughs as tourism tools (in partnership with Geological Survey Ireland under the Interreg IVB ATLANTERRA project).

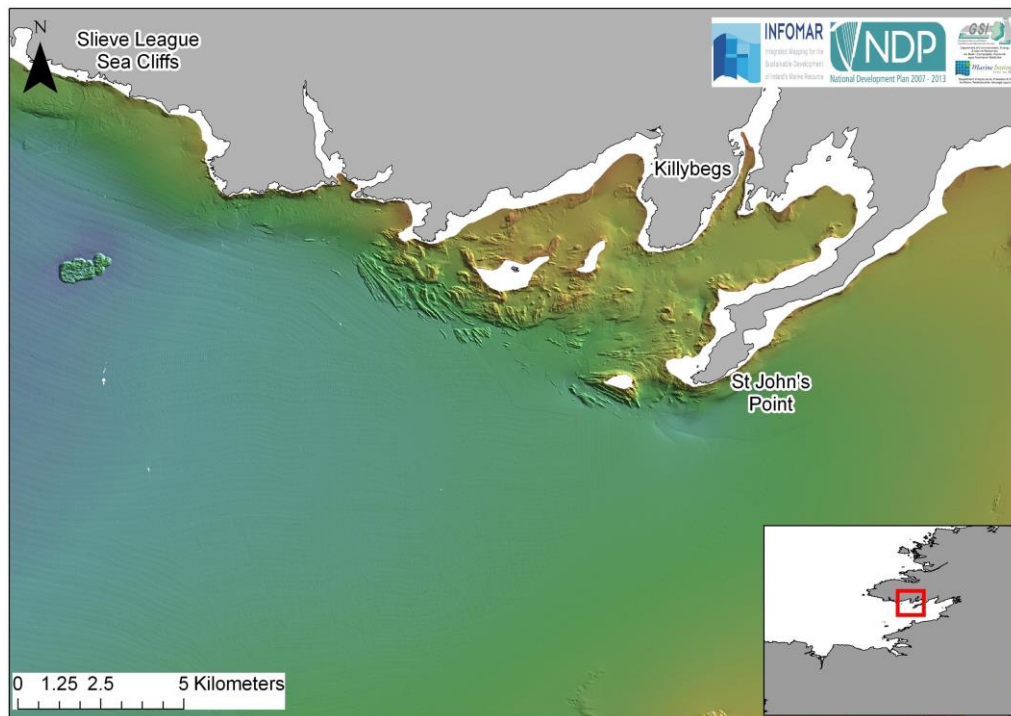


**Bathymetry LIDAR map of Donegal Bay**

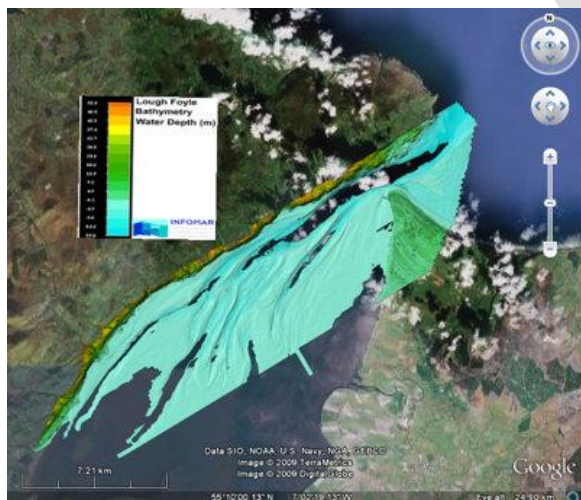


**INSS and INFOMAR surveys carried out in Donegal Bay, 2002-2008.**

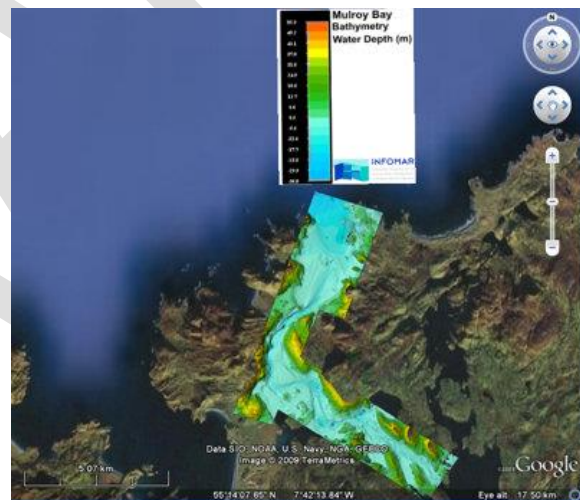




**MBES image showing a section of coastline from Slieve League cliffs in the west to St. John's Point in the east.**

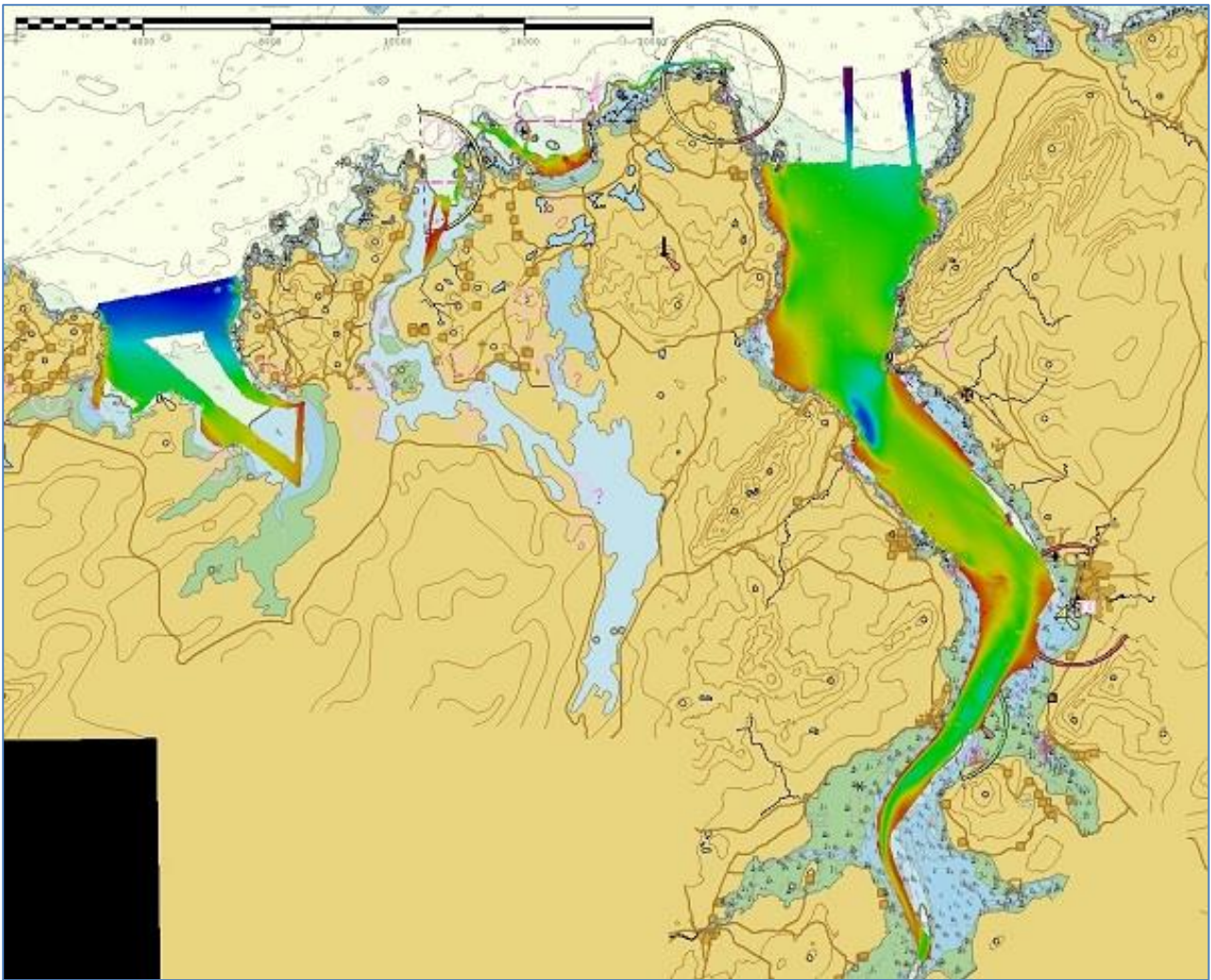


**Lough Foyle LIDAR Survey coverage**

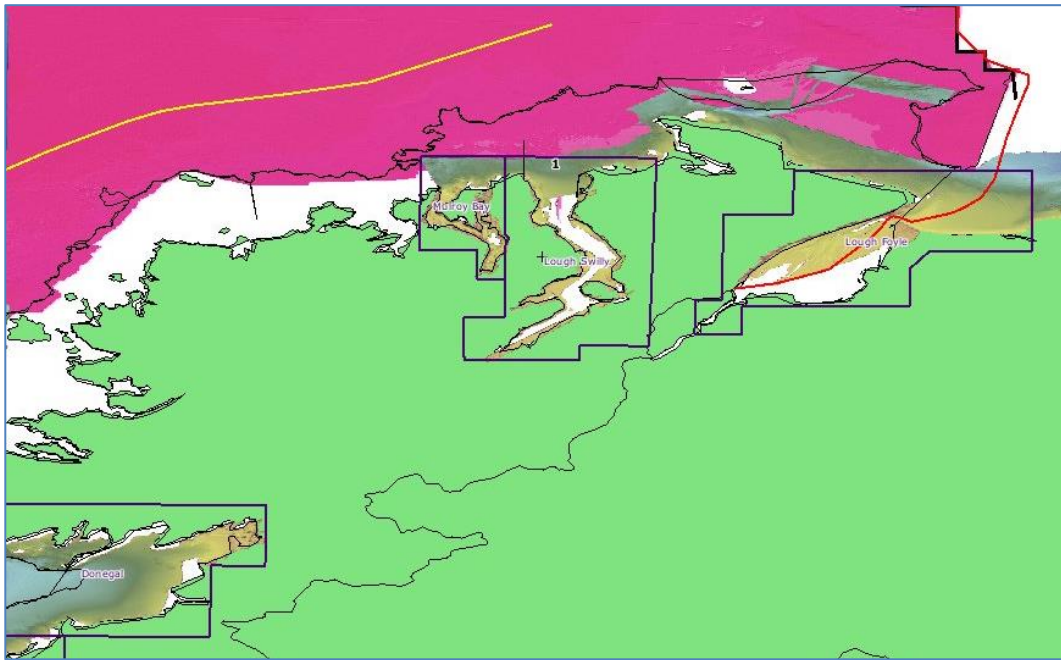


**Mulroy Bay LIDAR Survey coverage**





**Survey coverage of Lough Swilly, Mulroy Bay and Sheephaven Bay (RV Keary and the Cosantóir Bradán, Summer 2014)**



**INSS and INFOMAR surveys carried out off north Co. Donegal (2002-2014)**

## Shortlist of Key Geological References

### ***North Donegal Audit***

This reference list includes a few **key** papers, books and articles on the geology and geomorphology of north Donegal that are recommended as access points to north Donegal's wonderful geological heritage.

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HOLLAND, C. H. and SANDERS, I. (eds.) 2009. The Geology of Ireland. 2009 (Second Edition) Dunedin, Edinburgh. 568 pp.

Flowerdew, M. and McKeever, P.J. 2001. Walk Donegal. Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, Belfast.

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MITCHELL, G.F. and RYAN, M., 1997. Reading the Irish Landscape. Town House Press, 397 pp.

Mitchell, W.I. (ed.) 2004. The Geology of Northern Ireland: Our Natural Foundation (second edition). Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, Belfast.

Mitchell, I., Cooper, M., McKeever, P.J. and McConnell, B. 2010. The Classic Geology of the North of Ireland. Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, Belfast. 94 pp.

Pitcher, W.S. and Berger, A.R. 1972. The Geology of Donegal: A study of Granite emplacement and unroofing. Wiley-Interscience, New York and London. 435 pp.

### **South Donegal Audit**

This reference list includes a few **key** papers, books and articles on the geology and geomorphology of south Donegal that are recommended as access points to south Donegal's fabulous geological heritage.

Holland, C. H. and Sanders, I. eds. (2009) The Geology of Ireland. 2009 (Second Edition) Dunedin, Edinburgh. pp568.

Flowerdew, M and McKeever, P J. (2001) Walk Donegal. Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, Belfast.

Long, B. 2009. What you wanted to know about the Dalradian but didn't like to ask. *Earth Science Ireland*, Issue 6, pages 7-10.

Long, C.B. and McConnell, B. (1999) Geology of South Donegal. A geological description to accompany the Bedrock Geology 1:100,000 Scale Map Series, Sheet 3/4, South Donegal. Geological Survey Ireland. 116 pp.

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Pitcher, W.S. and Berger, A.R. (1972) The Geology of Donegal: A study of Granite emplacement and unroofing. Wiley-Interscience, New York and London. 435 pp.

### **Full Geological references**

See Appendix 2 for the full reference list of papers, books, articles and some unpublished reports etc. relating to the geology and geomorphology of County Donegal.

### **Quaternary References**

The references in Appendix 3 are all relating to the Quaternary, or Ice Age, geology of County Donegal.

### **Mining References**

The references in Appendix 4 are all relating to the Mining and Mineralogy of north Donegal. Assistance with locating these references may be provided by the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland if required.

## Further sources of information and contacts

Clare Glanville of Geological Survey Ireland, who is the Head of the Geological Heritage and Planning Programme, can be contacted in relation to any aspect of this report. Joe Gallagher, the Heritage Officer of Donegal County Council is the primary local contact for further information in relation to this report. Other contacts include the Conservation Rangers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, currently in the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The names and phone numbers of current staff may be found in the phone book, or at [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie).

### Web sites of interest

[www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie) - for general geological resources

[www.geology.ie](http://www.geology.ie) – the website of the Irish Geological Association who run fieldtrips and lectures for members, including many amateur enthusiasts

<http://www.iqua.ie> - for information, fieldtrips, lectures etc. in relation to Ireland's Ice Age history

<http://www.cavingireland.org/> - for information on caves and safe caving

<http://www.progeo.ngo/> - for information about ProGEO the European Association for the Conservation of Geological Heritage

### Acknowledgements

The authors of the south Donegal Audit would like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Joe Gallagher, Heritage Officer from Donegal County Council in the development of this project. Funding from the Heritage Council and Donegal County Council is also acknowledged. We also acknowledge the many members of the Geoheritage Programme (IGH) Expert Panels who helped define the sites which were considered for County Geological Site status. Barry Long is thanked for his considerable input and stimulating discussions that helped improve understanding of Donegal geology. Dr Brian McConnell is thanked for providing additional data and material. Dr John Graham is also acknowledged for his helpful comments. Dr Matthew Parkes is gratefully acknowledged for helpful suggestions and his ongoing support to the Geoheritage Programme.

Malcolm McClure acknowledges with thanks Helene Burningham of University College London for discussions on geomorphology of the west coast of Donegal; Darragh McDonough of Donegal County Council GIS section for help with mapping; Michael Philcox for providing access to his unpublished reports on the Carboniferous of the Donegal Basin; Ruth McManus, editor of Irish Geography, for permission to reproduce the map of glaciation on Slieve League Peninsula; Tim Cranley for providing background on mineral exploration in Donegal; and in particular Una McClure for practical support during the period of field surveys.

In addition the authors of the north Donegal Audit would like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Joe Gallagher, Heritage Officer from Donegal County Council in the development of this project. Funding from the Heritage Council and Donegal County Council is also acknowledged. We also acknowledge the many members of the Geoheritage Programme (IGH) Expert Panels who helped define the sites which were considered for County Geological Site status.

## **Appendix 1. Geological heritage audits and the planning process**

This appendix contains more detail on the legal framework behind geological heritage audits conducted by County Councils, and the process which operates as a partnership between the Geoheritage and Planning Programme of Geological Survey Ireland and the local authority Heritage Officer.

Geology is now recognised as an intrinsic component of natural heritage in three separate pieces of legislation or regulations, which empower and require various branches of Government, and statutory agencies, to consult and take due regard for conservation of geological heritage features: Planning and Development Act 2000 [e.g. Sections 212 (1)f; Part IV, 6; First Schedule Condition 21], Planning and Development Regulations 2001, Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 (enabling Natural Heritage Areas) and the Heritage Act 1995. The Planning and Development Act and the Planning Regulations in particular, place responsibility upon Local Authorities to ensure that geological heritage is protected. Implementation of the Heritage Act 1995, through Heritage Officers and Heritage Plans, and the National Heritage Plan 2002, allow County Geological Sites to be integrated into County Development Plans.

The chart opposite illustrates the essential process, established by the Geoheritage Programme (IGH) in Geological Survey Ireland, over the course of numerous county audits since 2004.

### **Geological Heritage in the Donegal County Development Plan 2012-2018**

The current County Donegal Development Plan includes many policies, actions and objectives that address the promotion and protection of geological and related heritage, as summarised below.

The SEA Statement on the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the CDP includes environmental vulnerabilities (section 2.3), under which areas of the County most sensitive to development were mapped, including Natura 2000 (SAC, SPA), Natural Heritage Area (NHA), Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA), Geological sites and Aggregate Potential areas.

Under section 6.1 (Natural Heritage) of the CDP there is reference to the preparation of a Landscape Character Assessment to provide a framework for the identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of the landscape (and seascape) of County Donegal (NH-O-7); and to the protection of the character of the landscape (NH-O-8).

Section 7.1 (Extractive Industry and Geology) outlines the Council's policy to protect County Geological Sites (CGS), with the requirement for an accompanying detailed report to ensure an informed decision where there is potential significant harm to the CGS. Planning permission will not be granted unless there are overriding considerations of public importance to the County.

The CDP Environmental Report (Appendix C) sets out the existing known and available baseline environmental data for the County that have contributed to configuring the Strategic Environmental Objectives as presented in Section 8.0. This provides an environmental picture of the County that all emerging policies and objectives of the plan must be assessed and evaluated against. Table 20 lists the 114 CGS (including those to be designated as geological NHAs), as originally identified by the IGH

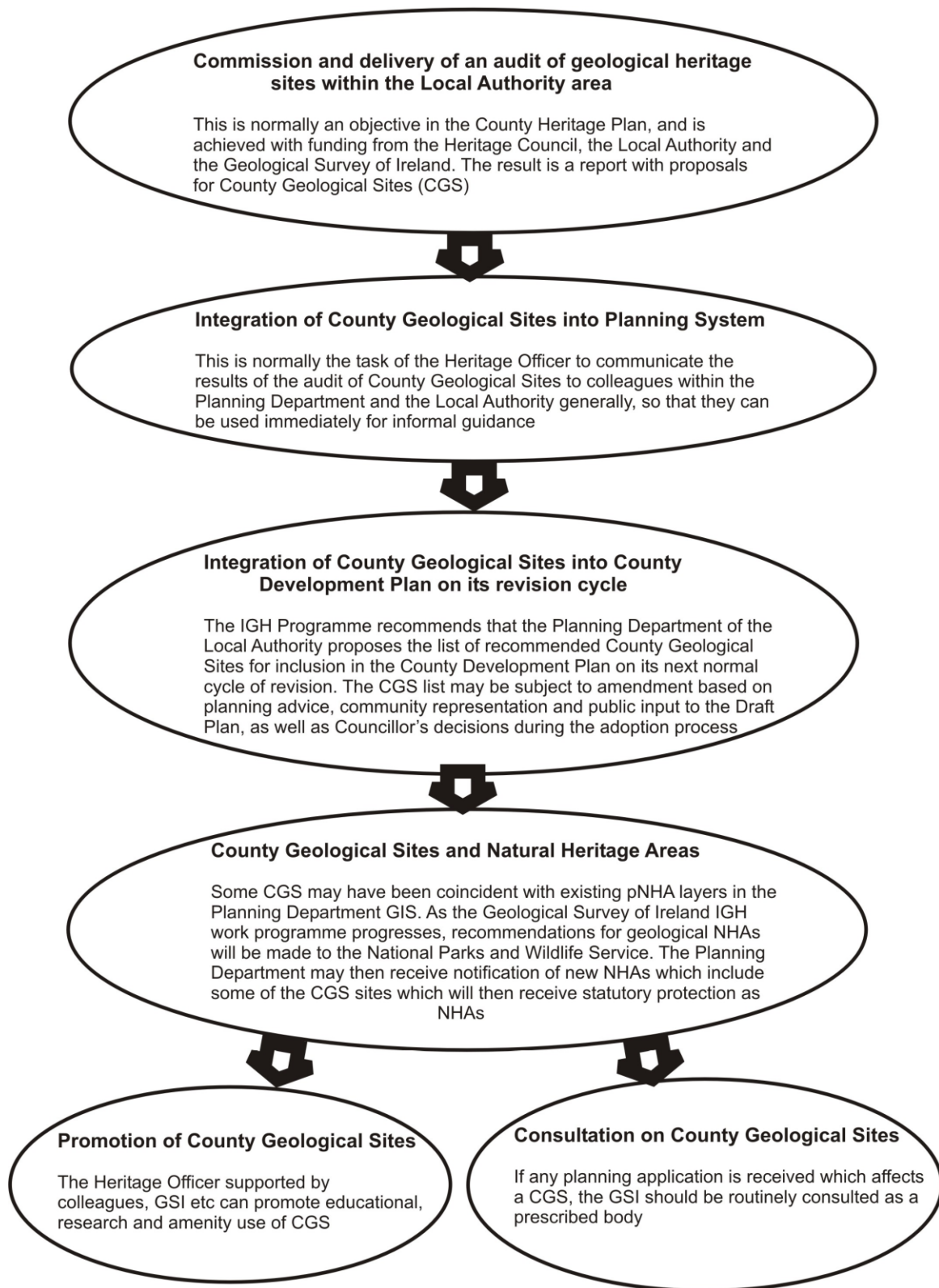
Programme for the whole of County Donegal, for information purposes. It is envisaged that this table will be updated with the latest site data available from both the south and north Donegal audits.

The completed audits for Donegal continue to contribute to and support the above policies of this and future Donegal County Development Plans.

DRAFT



## County Geological Sites - a step by step guide



## Appendix 2. Bibliography – Bedrock Geology

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## Appendix 4. Rejected sites and Renamed Sites

### NORTH DONEGAL AUDIT REJECTED AND RENAMED SITES

Based on the authors' expert knowledge of County Donegal's geology, and especially in the main mountain area, a range of sites, previously flagged for consideration in the IGH Master Site list, were assessed as unsuitable for County Geological Site status in this audit. The following sites were investigated as part of the audit on foot of the original recommendations of the IGH expert group. It was known, for example, that some quarry localities had not been adequately considered in the preparation of the IGH Master Site list. Other sites were visited on spec during fieldwork. The rejected sites are listed below with brief notes as to why they were assessed as unsuitable for inclusion.

#### **Bloody Foreland and Knocknafolla sites**

The Bloody Foreland and Knocknafolla sites, though listed as two sites, are actually the same locality. The site was listed as important for 'chemical weathering', which is present in a roadside quarry at the north of the ridge, but was not deemed worthy of County Geological Site status.



The 'Bloody Foreland/Knocknafolla' site, which is simply a granite quarry with some weathering in the upper portions of the bedrock.

**Note:** 'Bloody Foreland' was also listed as important in the Master Site List for 'moraines' and 'raised beaches'. The County Geological Site Reports for Altnapeaste and Altawinny Bay cover these features.

### **Falcarragh Flat**

The 'Falcarragh Flat' feature was included because of 'coarse grained gravels', which have been interpreted as having been deposited by a glacial efflux into standing water. However, the gravels are now very poorly exposed and the majority of the feature has been removed by quarrying; hence is not included as a County Geological Site.



The pit cut into the 'Falcarragh Flat', which is nearing the end of its life, has poor exposure, and has removed the majority of the feature itself.

### **Fanad Granite**

This site was nominated as a County Geological Site for intrusion breccia features. However, these are well covered by better known examples in south Donegal. No breccia was observed at this site when surveyed in summer 2014.

### **Glencrow Delta**

This feature is located approximately 1km WNW of Moville, in the proximity of the Glencrow townland, overlooking Inishowen's Lough Foyle coastline. The IGH Master Site List records Glencrow Delta as a Quaternary (IGH7) theme site for the occurrence of 'flat-topped, ice pushed deltaic gravelly deposits with interbedded red marine muds'. Stephens and Synge (1965) reported on the complexity of the features: the sections of outwash sand and gravel deposits, till deposits, and the red fossiliferous marine clays. However, these specific features are not readily apparent, and are nowhere exposed in easily-observable or accessible locations. Whilst the general moraine topography of the feature is observable remotely, from Moville and from the R238 Moville-Gleneely road, in comparison to other such Quaternary sites in



north Donegal, this site is not regarded as being of County Geological Site merit. The site is not deemed under threat of removal or damage, and will most likely continue to serve as productive farmland.



**View from Gort South, near Cooily Cross, looking east towards Lough Foyle from the high ground behind Carrownaff, Moville.**



**View from Glencrow, looking east down Breedagh River valley towards Moville.**

### **Lough Nacung, Dunlewy**

The lake was included in the IGH Master Site list as a pater noster lake, along with Dunlewy Lough, and comprising Lough Nacung Upper and Lough Nacung Lower. Pater noster lakes are formed in the upper reaches of glacial valleys, and are generally gouged out of bedrock and are usually dammed by moraines. Neither of the Loughs Nacung were formed in this manner, and Dunlewy Lough is separate from them only because of a man-made road and causeway. From this evidence, the lakes are not pater noster lakes and are rejected as a site.



**The man-made causeway and bridge separating Lough Nacung Upper from Dunlewy Lough.**

### **Lough Greenan**

Lough Greenan was listed under the IGH6 Mineralogy Theme due to the rare occurrence of the tungsten mineral, scheelite, prompted originally by a 10mm crystal of scheelite in the collections of Ulster Museum, although that may, in fact, have come from a different locality to the one examined in this audit. Tungsten localities around Lough Greenan were reported on by Barry Long of the Geological Survey Ireland. However, most of these were only identified with the aid of industrial ultra violet lamps used at night to detect the blue fluorescence of the scheelite mineral. Others were panned from shallow sediments in the lake shore. The mineral occurs in a variety of associations with the carbonate marble and schist and quartzite, and in veins. Given that this is really an exploration target area, without a clear site with visible mineralisation, and located in the specific mapped mineral localities where there is now no exposure, this site is not suitable for County Geological Site recognition.



**A lack of rock exposure is apparent at the two scheelite localities beside Lough Greenan.**

### **Rosepenna**

Rosepenna was included in the IGH Master Site list for a 'tombolo' feature. However, it is not certain that the peninsula at Rosepenna is definitively a tombolo and without detailed research into this (confirmation of the three dimensional geometry of the peninsula) Rosepenna should be rejected as a site.

It should be noted that a tombolo is present in the County Geological Site at Inishfree Bay.

### **Pollan Bay**

Pollan Bay was listed under the IGH15 Economic Geology Theme due to the occurrence of stratabound small, accessible, stratiform disseminations and bands of sphalerite, galena, pyrite along the contact of the Dalradian Slieve Tooey Quartzites and Termon Pelites. The green chloritic pelites with thick (<10cm) bands of buff-coloured weathered semipelites and psammities (Termon Formation) dip moderately to the southeast. Exposure is sporadic, with two minor localities near the foreshore showing stratiform sphalerite and pyrite interbanded with the dolomitic marble. Whilst the contact between the Slieve Tooey Quartzites and Termon Pelites is an important zone of deformation, the site is not deemed to be of significance as a County Geological Site. At Annagh, around 2km south of Pollan Bay, occurrences of barite (and haematite and quartz) have also been identified, and the minerals are also associated with the Slieve Tooey Quartzite and Termon Pelites contact zone.

## Renamed Sites

- Croaghan Head renamed to Croaghan Hill, as the site is a hill feature.
- Carndonagh (Infiltration Gallery) renamed to Carndonagh Well Field to make the site features easier to understand.
- Quigley's Point (Alluvial Gold) renamed Quigley's Point (Cabry River) as the features of interest occur in the river.
- Moville to Inishowen Head site name updated from its original listing in the IGH Master List to 'Moville to Greencastle' because the features of interest are sufficiently well represented along the 4km coastal section between Moville and Greencastle.

## SOUTH DONEGAL AUDIT REJECTED SITES

In addition to the documented sites, the following six sites were investigated on foot of the original compilation of the expert group, but assessed as unsuitable for inclusion, as outlined in the brief notes below.

### Barnesmore Gap (IGH 6 Mineralogy)

The Barnesmore Granite is radioelement-rich, i.e. it contains uranium in concentrations greater than 6 ppm and/or thorium in concentrations greater than 25 ppm. Disseminated, fine-grained to microscopic uranium mineralization is dispersed over wide areas. There is a number of showings of secondary uranium minerals (mainly autunite) and these are found mainly within the leucogranite/aplogranite facies (G3) of the granite, either on joint surfaces or at the margins of dolerite dykes. The mineralization has been explored but not exploited and there are no localities that could serve as type sites, as such, for the mineralization.

### Sheskinarone Site 1 (IGH6 Mineralogy)

This site is south of the main Sheskinarone beryl location (Sheskinarone Site 2) where large beryl crystals can be seen in quartz-pegmatite veins cutting greisenized granite. This site is on a small, low hill covered by thin but extensive blanket bog with numerous granite boulders (float). The beryl is at the centre of a quartz-feldspar pegmatite zone within a loose boulder of Rosses granite within the blanket bog. Examination of the entire hill area suggests that many of the granite occurrences at this site are also probably float. Field clearance at the eastern end of the hill has thrown up very large boulders (greater than 1 m<sup>3</sup>) of granite but further examples of beryl mineralization were not observed. As this is a relatively rare example of this mineral and there have been damaging attempts to collect it from other locations, there is a need to consider conservation and to avoid advertising its location, especially as this is a loose boulder that could be easily carried away. For this reason, it is not recommended to list this site as a CGS. An alternative approach might be to remove the boulder to a county museum or other public exhibition area, thus securing it against future attention from unscrupulous mineral collectors.





General view, Sheskinarone Site 1, looking east with mineralized boulder in foreground.



Beryl (green colour) in quartz-feldspar pegmatite (left) and close-up of beryl in quartz-feldspar pegmatite (coin diameter = 23 mm) (right).

### **Shalwy moraines (IGH 7 Quaternary)**

The 'Shalwy/Shalweg Moraine' site was not deemed worthy of inclusion, owing to its local interest only. Such small moraine features are very common across the country, and the majority are important at a local level only. In addition, there is no dated evidence to show that it forms part of the Killard Point readvance, which is what has been interpreted as giving the feature its scientific significance.



Lower Shalwy Valley (left) and Upper Shalwy Valley and Crownarad (right)

#### **Aghlem Bridge (IGH 8 Lower Carboniferous)**

Aghlem Bridge, on the southeast side of Lough Eske, was originally listed as a location for evaporate deposits in an incised stream but nothing of interest was observed during the site visit for this report.

#### **Clogheracullion (IGH 15 Economic Geology)**

This site, in upland moorland, is within the 9 km-long Main Radiometric Zone (MRZ) of the Main Donegal Granite. The MRZ is spatially associated with the distribution of biotite-rich pegmatites in the granite, although not all pegmatites are mineralized. Exploration in the early 1980s defined a 9m wide uranium-bearing zone with a mean concentration of 0.3 kg/tonne  $U_3O_8$  over a strike length of 500m. Uraninite is the main mineral present, occurring as small (0.1–1.75 mm) crystals in biotite-rich parts of the pegmatite. The disseminated, dispersed and very fine-grained nature of the mineralization means that it is not possible to define a specific site for the purposes of this audit. The site originally described by Legg *et al.* (1985) is now under forest.

#### **Mountcharles (IGH16 Hydrogeology)**

The Mountcharles Hand Pump site was originally included as of potential hydrogeological interest but its only local significance appears to have been as the venue for a local bard who told children's stories.



## Appendix 5. History of Geological and Geomorphological research in Donegal

In the 1830s the topography of County Donegal was amongst the earliest to be mapped in painstaking detail by the newly established Ordnance Survey of Ireland. At that time geology was a very young science and an arena for many heated disputes. In Antrim, some geologists argued that dolerites in the Portrush Sill were unusual sedimentary rocks, because adjacent layers contained ammonites. Darwin's momentous theory on the *Origin of Species* was published as late as 1859. In Donegal, the controversy about whether granites were igneous or metamorphic rocks would rumble on for another century.

The first geological map of Ireland was published by Griffith in 1839. It showed northeast-southwest trending metamorphic belts in Donegal and proved a stimulus to further research, which soon established that the geology of Donegal was particularly complex. It became apparent that its metamorphic and igneous rocks presented problems that were beyond the grasp of the best existing understanding. Geological Survey Ireland therefore took the wise decision to defer mapping Donegal until the rest of the country was largely complete.

Work on the geological survey of south Donegal by geologists Egan, Kilroe, Kinahan, McHenry, Nolan and Symes began in the 1880s and the results were published between 1888 and 1890 in a series of memoirs with sections and maps on a scale of 1:63,360 (1 inch to a mile) (Hull *et al.* 1891a, 1891b). These publications remain a very useful resource today and are now available for free consultation on the internet at [www.geologicalmaps.net/IrishHistMaps/](http://www.geologicalmaps.net/IrishHistMaps/). In this series, the sheet numbers covering South Donegal run as follows:

	15	16	17
22	23	24	25
30	31	32	

where sheet 15 covers the northwestern part (around Dunglow) and sheet 32 the southeastern part (around Pettigoe).

The next advance took place in the 1950s when a remarkable team effort was launched by young geologists based mainly at Imperial College, London. Under the leadership of Professor H. H. Read and lecturer Wallace Pitcher, Donegal was divided up into a series of blocks for thesis mapping by enthusiastic and competitive Ph.D. candidates. The blocks in South Donegal were mapped on a scale of 1:10,560 (6 inches to the mile) by Read, Pitcher, Gindy, Pulvertaft, Cheesman, Mithal, Akaad, Iyengar, French, Walker, Leedal, Elwell, Tozer, Anderson, Kemp, Oswald, George and Wood. These individual projects were integrated by Pitcher and Margaret Spencer into a geological map of Donegal at scale of 1:63,360 which, for the first time illustrated the continuity of the Dalradian stratigraphic succession and the detail of several granite plutons. This map was accompanied by Pitcher and Berger's book *The Geology of Donegal* (1972), which covered every aspect of metamorphic and igneous geology in the county and is still regarded as a classic work.

It shortly became apparent that the Dalradian succession in Donegal could be extended northeast into Islay and onwards through the central highlands of Scotland and, later, southwest into Mayo and Connemara. Thus Donegal became a global keystone in understanding several hundred million years of Earth history. Pitcher's descriptions of the granites in Donegal led to him becoming the leading global

authority in that field also, culminating in his *A Masterclass Guide to the Granites of Donegal* (Pitcher and Hutton, 2003).

Further advances in the understanding of Donegal geology came with descriptions of the key Port Askaig Tillite horizon (Howarth, 1971; Johnston 1993), and with contributions to the understanding of the structural geology by Hutton and Alsop (e.g. Hutton, 1982; Alsop, 1991; Hutton and Alsop, 1996a, 1996b, 2004). The accelerating advance in geological knowledge about Donegal up to the late 1990s was summarised in the Geological Survey Ireland booklet *Geology of South Donegal*, and its accompanying 1:100,000 scale map in the Bedrock Geology Map Series (Long and McConnell, 1999).

Establishing geomorphology as a discipline distinct from geology began only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although its components had been of critical interest to civil engineers in every previous age. The 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion of canals and railways required contractors to move vast quantities of rock and earth from cuttings to embankments. Additionally, their engineers had to consider the effects of flooding and erosion on their designs for bridges and viaducts. They soon found that structures developed in friable gravel and drift had a totally different character from those in solid rock. They realized that the superficial sediments had erosion and deposition characteristics that could not be explained by present day processes. These observations eventually led geologists to conclude that these deposits were evidence that thick glaciers had covered the country in the not very distant past.

The Swiss geologist, Louis Agassiz was amongst the first to recognize the extensive role of ice in shaping the landscape throughout northern Europe. He visited Britain and Ireland in 1840 and confirmed that similar structures to those he had observed in Switzerland were present in Scotland, northern England and in the north, centre, west and southwest of Ireland. However, the glaciological theories of Agassiz and Buckland had hardly entered the scientific repertoire in 1843 when Portlock published his comprehensive *Geological study of Londonderry and parts of Tyrone and Fermanagh*. In this book Portlock treated boulder clay and gravel in a short and tentative chapter entitled *Detritus*.

The Finn Valley Railway between Strabane and Stranorlar opened in September 1863. Four years later, in June 1867, William Harte, County Surveyor of Donegal, read a paper to the Royal Geological Society of Ireland entitled *On the post-Tertiary Geology (Recent and Post Pliocene Phenomena) of the County of Donegal, and part of the County of Derry, and its Connexion with that of Scotland*. Harte was a careful observer whose career he said, 'had brought him in contact with the contents of every quarry and gravel pit in the county'.

Harte became interested in the glaciological theories being put forward by Jamieson, Geikie and others to explain the boulder clays and gravels found in Scotland and Ireland and sought to contribute his own understanding to the debate. He suggested that ice accumulations in Donegal had been thickest on an old 'Central Range' extending from the Bluestacks through Derryveagh and Errigal to the Bloody Foreland. Valleys everywhere were initially filled with boulder clay, establishing a smooth plane for the ice to slide down. As the ice thawed, drainage sifted boulders and gravel from those valley deposits and a major proportion was dispersed eastwards towards Derry. As meltwater descended from the mountains it first produced boulder-clay ridges followed by crag and tail hills. Farther east the small hills accumulated valley gravels and all sediment components became finer as the Foyle was approached.



There have been several studies of drainage patterns along the northwest coast of Ireland (Pitcher and Berger, 1972). Others have written about Holocene sea levels and aeolian deposits. However the contemporary coastal geomorphology of the region remained relatively neglected until recent decades when geomorphologists from the University of Ulster at Coleraine studied Donegal's beaches, dunes, wave erosion and associated tidal and saltmarsh processes. As a result, Donegal's coastline, with the highest average wind speeds in Europe, has become a benchmark for international comparison. Burningham and Cooper (2004) examined west Donegal coastal morphology to evaluate historical change in this environment and to appraise the factors controlling coastal behaviour. These studies culminated with Burningham's study (2008) of Loughros Bay, which considers the interaction between all the causes that contribute to its rapidly changing shape.

## Appendix 6. Geoschol leaflet on the geology of Donegal



### DONEGAL

**AREA OF COUNTY:** 4,841 square kilometres or 1,869 square miles

**COUNTY TOWN:** Lifford

**OTHER TOWNS:** Bundoran, Donegal, Letterkenny, Stranorlar

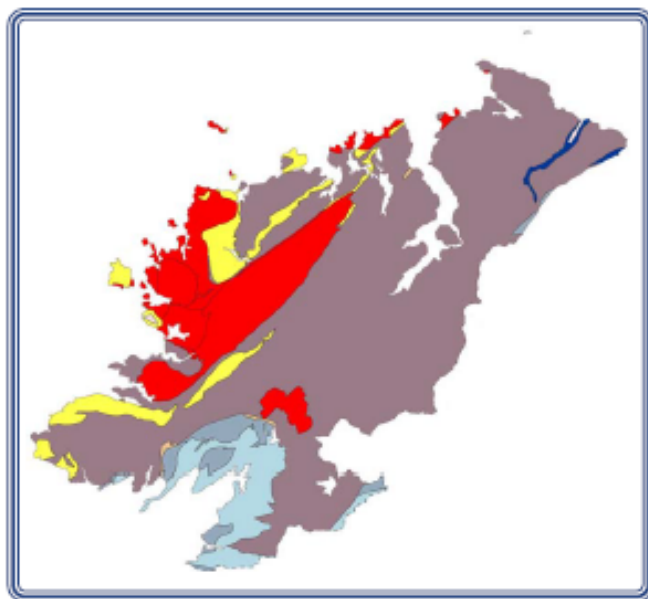
**GEOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS:** Precambrian metamorphic rocks, granites, Lower Carboniferous sandstones and limestones, building materials

**AGE OF ROCKS:** Precambrian; Devonian to Carboniferous



#### Malin Head

Precambrian metamorphic schists and quartzite at Malin Head.  
In the distance is Inishtrahull, composed of the oldest rocks in Ireland.



**Geological Map of County Donegal**

**Pale Purple:** Precambrian Dalradian rocks; **Bright blue:** Precambrian Gneiss and Schists; **Pale yellow:** Precambrian Quartzite; **Red:** Granite; **Beige:** Devonian sandstones; **Dark blue:** Lower Carboniferous sandstones; **Light blue:** Lower Carboniferous limestone.

### **Geological history**

The geology of Co. Donegal most closely resembles that of Co. Mayo, and the county contains the oldest rocks in Ireland, around 1780 million years old, exposed on the offshore island of Inishtrahull. 1000 million years ago [Ma] sediments were deposited in an ocean and an Ice Age that affected the Earth at this time produced glacial till of cobbles of rock set in a matrix of crushed rock. Between 470 and 395 Ma the whole area was subjected to a mountain-building event called the Caledonian Orogeny and the rocks were metamorphosed or altered into gneiss, schists and quartzites now known as the Dalradian Group. Errigal Mountain is composed of this quartzite which weathers to a 'sugarloaf' shape. The metamorphosed glacial deposits are called Tillites. In the late phase of the orogeny two continents collided and the north-east to south-west trend of the rocks in Donegal was produced. At the same time around 405 Ma a series of six granite masses were injected

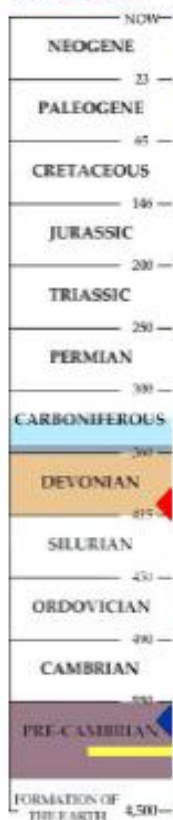




into the older rocks of which the Main Donegal Granite is the largest. Granite is an igneous rock which crystallised as it cooled down, and its constituent minerals - quartz (glassy), feldspar (white or pink) and mica (black or silvery) interlocked.

There are no Ordovician or Silurian rocks in Donegal and only a small patch of Devonian sandstones along the northern shore of Donegal Bay. In the

### Granites, Bluestacks Mountains



Lower Carboniferous (350 Ma) a warm shallow ocean migrated northwards very slowly. When it reached Donegal it resulted, firstly, in the deposition of sands and muds carried south by rivers that drained the old continent. This material was laid down close to the shoreline and now forms the sandstones and mud stones at Doorin Point (pictured below). These gave way to limestones that of ten contain corals and other fossils. The sea level fluctuated at this time and a shallowing of the sea saw further sandstones (such as the Mountcharles Sandstone) being deposited. Later limestones were deposited in the deepening ocean in which some reefs rich in organisms such as corals, cephalopods (squids) and bryozoans also grew. The Carboniferous rocks are found in a semicircle around Donegal Bay.

### Doorin Point, Layers of Lower Carboniferous mudstone and sandstone on the north shore of Donegal Bay



Geological timescale showing age of rocks in Donegal.

### Inishtrahull

Inishtrahull is a small island off the northern coast of Donegal. It once supported a reasonable population which had its own National School. It is also the site for a Lighthouse. Geologically the island is fascinating as it contains the oldest rocks in Ireland. These are igneous rocks called syenite and have been dated using radiometric minerals. They are 1,779 million years old.



### Dimension stones: Granites and the Mountcharles Sandstone

Stone is a most useful building material. In the past many small quarries exploited the diverse rock types of Donegal. Slates were quarried for roofing, weathered quartzite sands were used for glass-making, and talc was mined for lubricants and talcum powder. Several quarries still work some of the marble bands for agricultural lime and for decorative stone chippings or roadstone. The Donegal Granites were once cut into setts at Barnesmore Gap and transported from the quarries by rail for use as paving in Victorian cities. Now granite boulders are often used for headstones or commemorative stones. The Mountcharles Sandstone is a Lower Carboniferous yellow sandstone that was popular in the 1890s. It was used for the National Library and National Museum in Dublin but due to acid rain falling in the city between 1890 and 1930 it began to disintegrate. However elsewhere in Ireland where the air was clean it proved to be a hard-wearing stone and it continues to be quarried and used today. The photograph to the right shows one of the stone mine workings.



Map adapted with permission from Geological Survey of Ireland 1:1,000,000 map 2003.  
Image credits: Mike Simms 1, 3 (top and bottom), 4 (top); Matthew Parkes 4 (bottom).



## Section 2 - Site Reports

### Site Reports – General Points

The following site reports are brief non-technical summaries of the proposed County Geological Sites for County Donegal. These have been specially prepared for this report in order to make the information accessible to planners and other staff without geological training. For most sites more detailed reports and information files are held in the IGH Programme in Geological Survey Ireland. These are available for consultation if required. Further sites may become relevant as Geoheritage (IGH) Programme work develops.

Due to the large number of geological heritage sites in Donegal, the county has been divided into 'north' and 'south' areas for audit purposes. The northern extent of the south Donegal report area has been taken to roughly coincide with the Geological Survey Ireland 1:100K Bedrock Sheet 3/4 boundary, and runs approximately from Burtonport in the west to just south of Newtown Cunningham in the east.

Each site report has primary location information, a mention of the main rock types and their age, and a short description of the key aspects of scientific interest. A section outlining any particular management or other issues specific to the site is included, along with several low resolution photographs exemplifying the site. **A CD/memory drive accompanying this report will include further pictures of most sites at higher resolution, should they be required for a glossy booklet or leaflet for the general public.** Grid references are given for a central point in the site generated from the GIS mapping (a shapefile) of the site boundary. They are only indicative of the location, but the site extent is best shown on the included maps.

### Coordinate Projection System – IRENET95 ITM

Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM) is the geographic projection co-ordinate system now in use for Ireland, and has been applied to all site localities in the site reports. It is the standard co-ordinate system for OSI maps, including the new Discovery map series, but a coordinate conversion tool is available on the OSI website at: <http://www.osi.ie/services/geodetic-services/coordinate-converter/>

**A series of maps are provided with an outline of the site boundary. It is important to note that these boundaries have no legal or definitive basis. They are indicative only of the limits of exposure or of geological interest, and not based on detailed field and boundary surveys, which were outside the scope of this contract.** Boundaries are drawn to include the geological or geomorphological interest of the site, but are typically extended to the nearest mappable boundary, such as a field boundary, stream, road or edge of forestry. On a few sites, such as in open mountain terrain, it is impractical to find a boundary within a reasonable distance and an arbitrary line may be defined. County Geological Sites are non-statutory and so this is not problematic. If any such site is assessed for NHA status in the future, such a boundary may require small revisions.

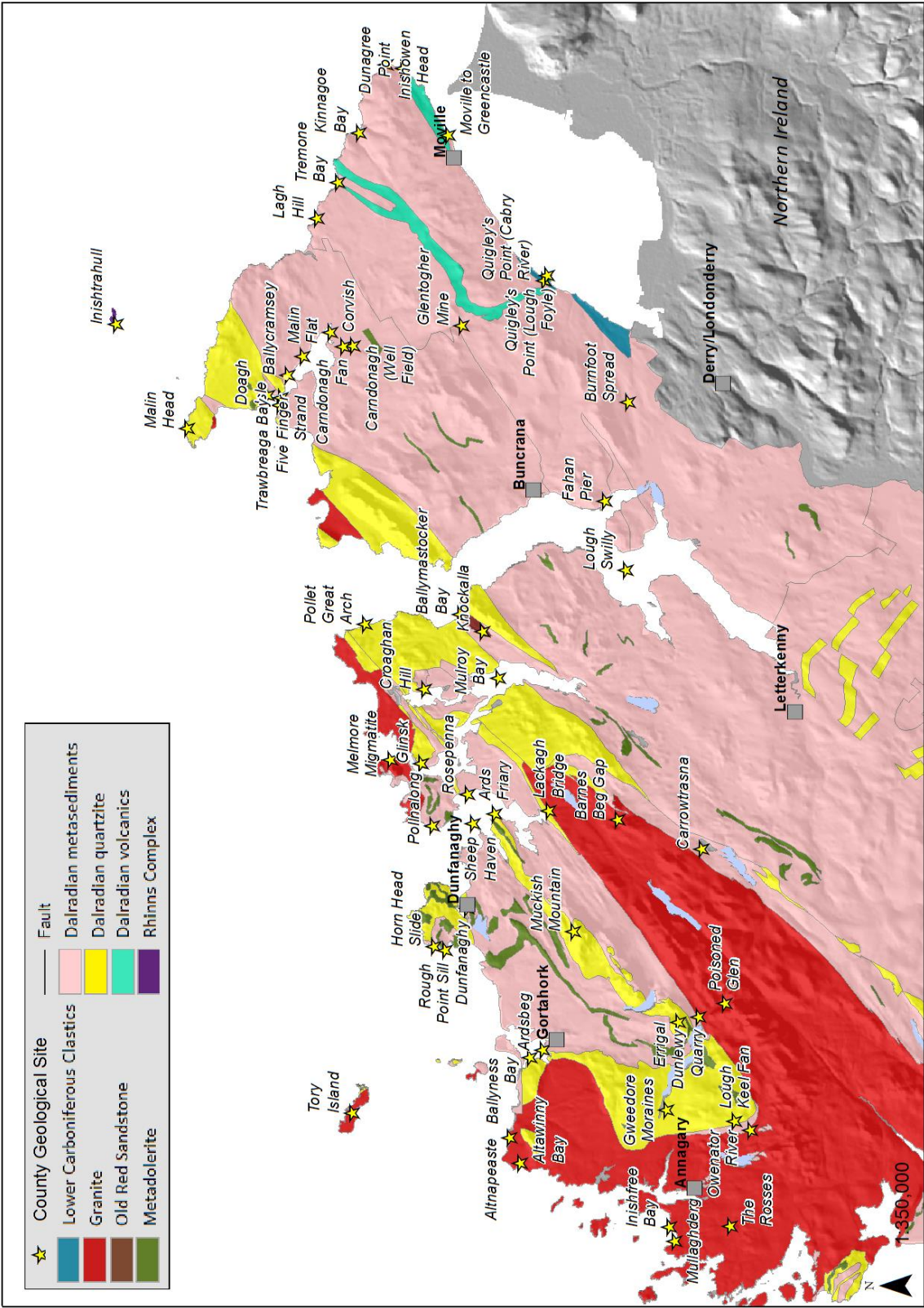
For sites that have been recommended or will be recommended for NHA designation, detailed site boundary maps will become available to the Local Authority, through NPWS, as the designation process is undertaken. Some areal extents may already be available if they are proposed NHAs (pNHA), under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. Areas which have been designated as Special Areas of

Conservation (SAC) under European Habitats Directives will also have statutory boundaries already determined. The geological interest may be included within the wider area of nature conservation.

**In terms of any geological heritage site designation as NHA, due process of site reporting, boundary survey and very importantly, consultation with landowners where they can be readily identified, will take place before Geological Survey Ireland finalises recommendations with NPWS on the most important sites to be designated. Any landowner within areas or sites identified in this report with concerns over any aspect of this project is encouraged to contact Clare Glanville, Head of the Geoheritage and Planning Programme, in Geological Survey Ireland, Beggars Bush Haddington Road Dublin D04 K7X4. Phone 01-6782837. Email: [clare.glanville@gsi.ie](mailto:clare.glanville@gsi.ie)**

DRAFT

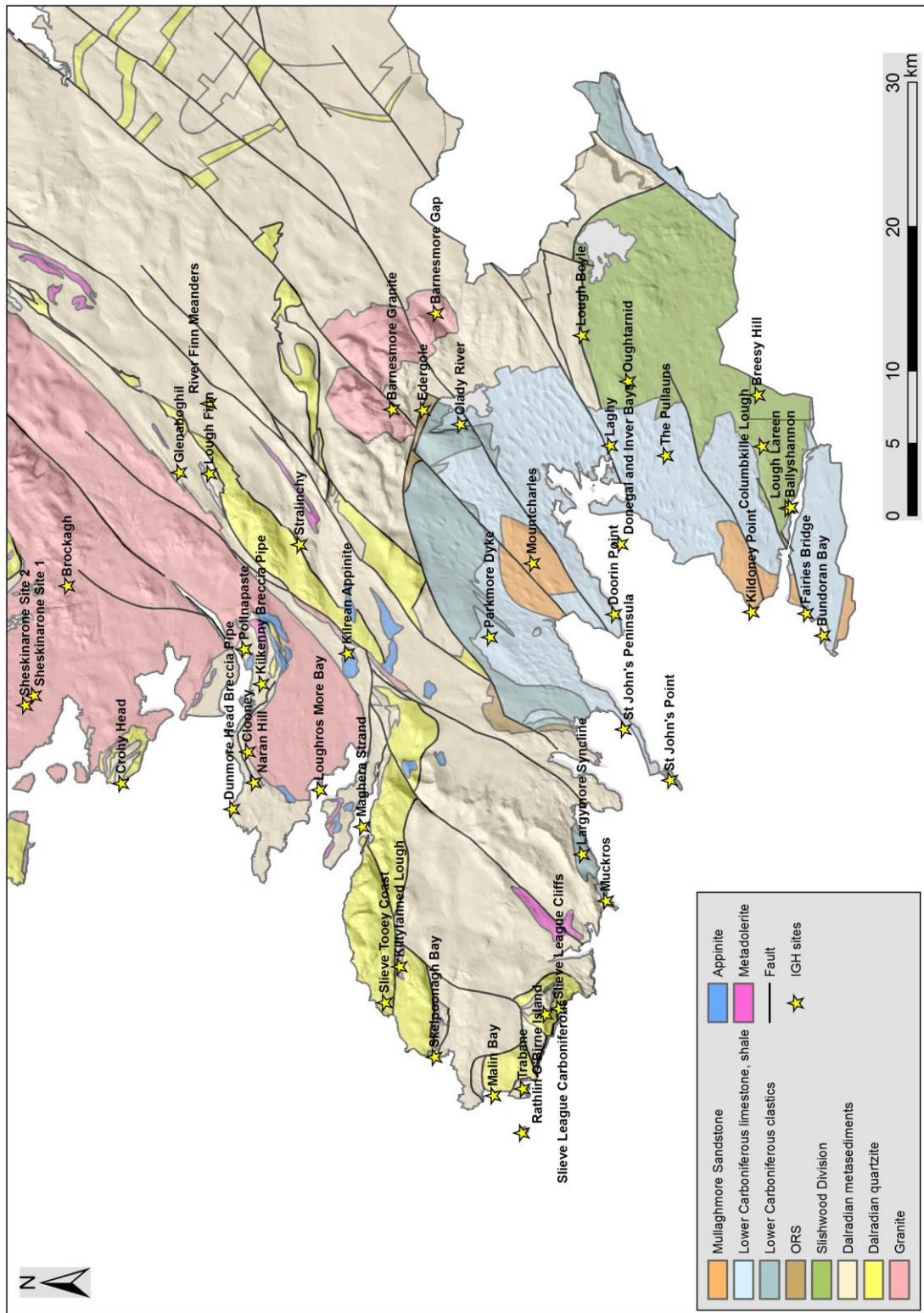
# Site Reports – Location Map North Donegal



Simplified Geological Map of North Donegal with site locations indicated.



## Site Reports – Location Map South Donegal Audit



**Simplified Geological Map of South Donegal with site locations indicated.**