

## MAYO - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Westport (Talc)</b>
Other names used for site	Westport/Corrig Hill [Talc]
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH6 Mineralogy, IGH15 Economic Geology</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Killaghoor, Moyhastin</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Westport</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>500900E 782840N</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NO. 31</b>	<b>GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 10</b>
<b>GIS Code MO101</b>	

### Outline Site Description

The site comprises two open, abandoned surface quarries on elevated ground situated to the south of Westport.

### Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Talc schist rocks of the Deer Park Complex. Considered Cambrian-Ordovician, the age of the Deer Park Complex remains the subject of debate among geologists, though it is certainly pre-Silurian.

### Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

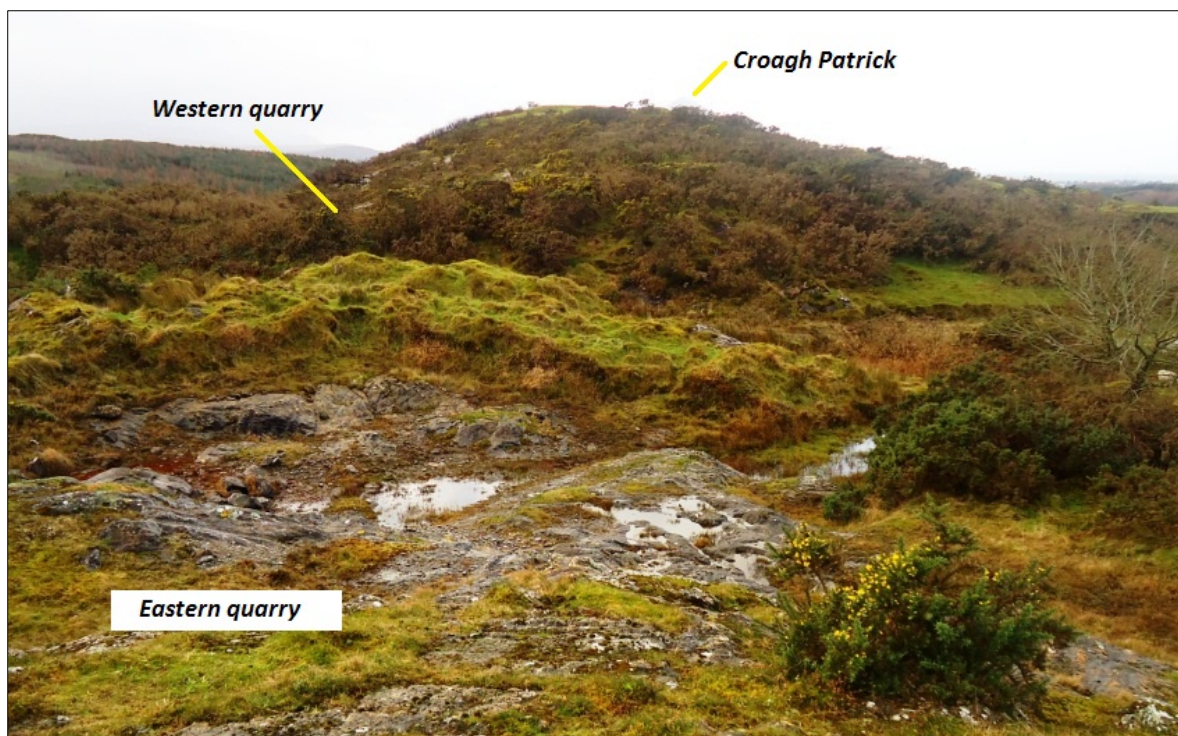
Exploration work was carried out at the site, the results of which indicated that there is an estimated 3.5 million tonnes of talc-magnesite in the townland of Killaghoor and the surrounding area. Talc-magnesite makes up 75%-85% of the bedrock at the site (the remainder consisting of serpentine and other minerals). The Deer Park Complex rocks stretch in an east-west direction for approximately 20km, roughly from Louisburgh to Westport. The site is listed as Mineral Location No. 1103 (Geological Survey Ireland Mineral Localities Database), and is noted for the 'interlayered talc/magnesite deposits bounded by serpentinites and talc, steatite, and pyrophyllite minerals'.

### Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

The site is significant for the potentially economic talc-magnesite deposits present. The talc-magnesite deposits were extensively evaluated in 1980s. Planning permission to develop and extract these deposits (open pit extraction) was not granted due to the potential damage to the landscape in such a scenic area, and the effects on the region's tourism industry. This site may be considered for designation as a geological NHA owing to the excellent exposures of talc schist in the open pits. The site is located within the Mayo-Curlew Basin, in which the gold (Au) deposits at Lecanvey and Cregganbaun, and Copper (Cu) near Charlestown are also located. The site is listed as Mineral Location No. 1103 (Geological Survey Ireland). This site is recommended for designation as a geological NHA.

### Management/promotion issues

This site is not at any significant or immediate risk, however dumping in disused quarries remains a threat. Development (e.g. housing) is also a minor threat, owing to the prominent elevated location of the site overlooking Westport. Access to the quarries is by a trackway leading from a local road situated ~300m east of the quarries. The quarries are relatively shallow, and surrounded by thick gorse and thick vegetation.



Talc quarry (diameter ~15m) at Moyhastin townland - looking west to Killaghoor townland. Croagh Patrick summit visible in distance. Western pit in centre-left (behind vegetation).



Path/roadway leading to talc quarries, looking west. Croagh Patrick visible in distance.



Talc quarry in Killaghoor townland looking NW towards Westport.



Talc outcrop in eastern quarry in Moyhastin townland.



Talc bedrock exposure in the eastern quarry.



