# WATERFORD - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

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| **NAME OF SITE** | **Mahon Falls** | | |
| Other names used for site | Coum Mahon | | |
| **IGH THEME** | **IGH7 Quaternary,** | | |
| | **IGH 14 Fluvial and lacustrine geomorphology** | | |
| **TOWNLAND(S)** | **Kilclooney, Coummahon, Comeragh Mountain** | | |
| **NEAREST TOWN** | **Kilmacthomas** | | |
| **SIX INCH MAP NUMBER** | **Waterford 6 and 14** | | |
| **NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE** | **230869 109230** | | |
| **1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER** | 75 | **1/2 inch Sheet No.** | 22 |

**Outline Site Description**
Mahon Falls are a series of cascading waterfalls, which flow down the backwall of a glacial corrie, situated along the southern flank of the Comeragh Mountains.

**Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type**
The corrie feature was formed during the Quaternary (Ice Age), by glacier ice scouring out a deep, armchair-shaped hollow at the edge of the mountains.

The majority of the corrie feature therefore comprises ice-scoured bedrock, which itself is Devonian Old Red Sandstone. The Mahon River, which rises from a series of seeps in blanket peat in the high plateau of the Comeraghs, flows down the backwall of the corrie creating a series of stepped waterfalls, or cascades, over each of the thicker conglomerate or sandstone beds.

**Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest**
This corrie has a very steep backwall up to 300m in height and the Mahon River has gullied the backwall, creating a shallow gorge along part of the stretch of waterfalls. Owing to this, the falls have a stepped appearance.

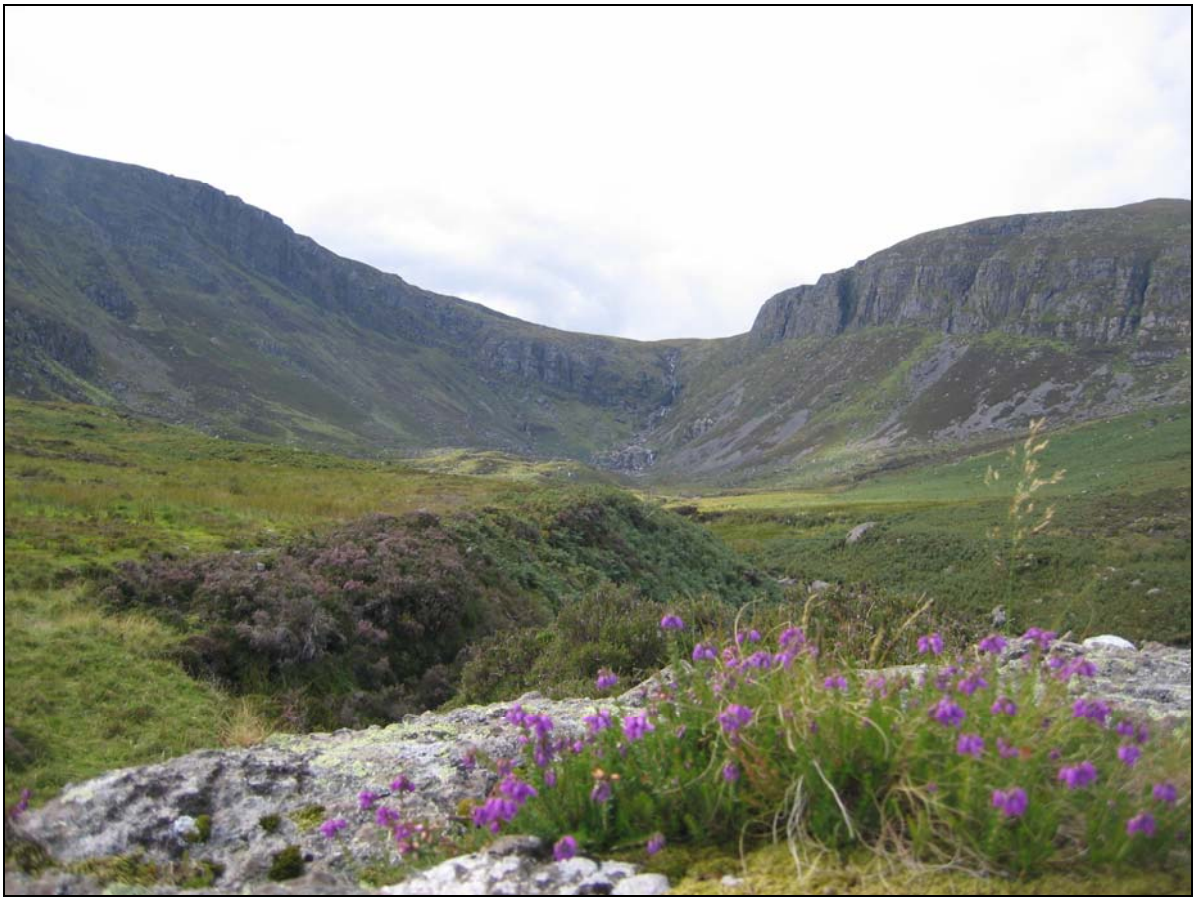
The base of the corrie hosts no lakes, but the Mahon River flows through the centre of this along a meandering path, which is initially surrounded by hummocks and boulder moraines, but further down-valley becomes a flatter, less stony, till plain. The moraines comprise well-drained material, which is strewn with erratic boulders, many of which are several metres across.

The eastern side of the corrie has some well-expressed scree slopes.

As corries usually only take flows of water from a relatively restricted up-gradient catchment, the waterfalls are unusual in that a sizeable stream happens to flow across the backwall. Owing to this, the falls can become a torrent in wet weather as the river swells.

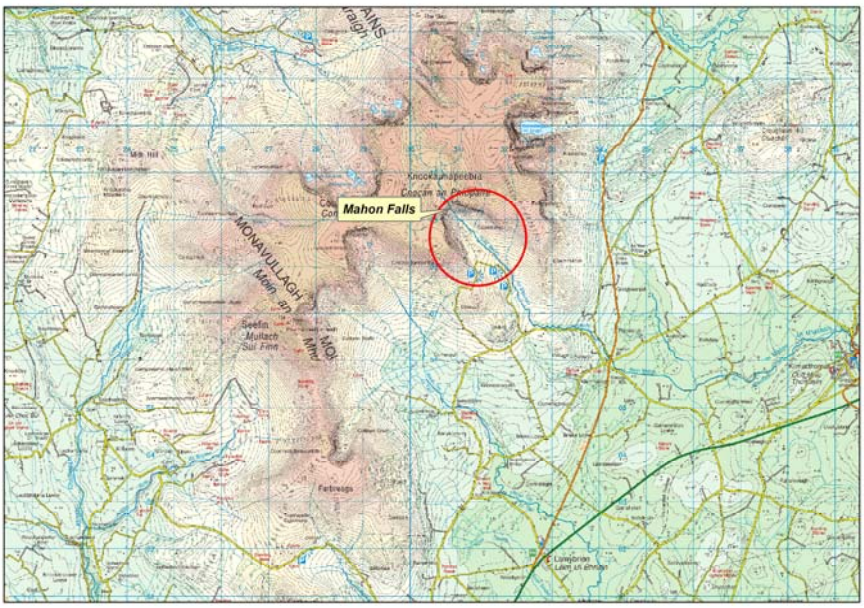
**Site Importance**
The site is of national importance and is arguably Ireland's finest waterfall. This site is part of a complex of Quaternary geology of national importance, and is of national importance in the fluvial and lacustrine geomorphology theme also.

**Management/promotion issues**
The corrie has a built pathway up to it and a well developed network of promotional signage in the general region surrounding. A discreet signboard at the falls themselves might prove a worthwhile addition. The site is already part of the Comeraghs Mountains Special Area of Conservation and pNHA (SAC – 001952).



Mahon falls, viewed from the south.

Mahon falls, viewed from the access path for visitors.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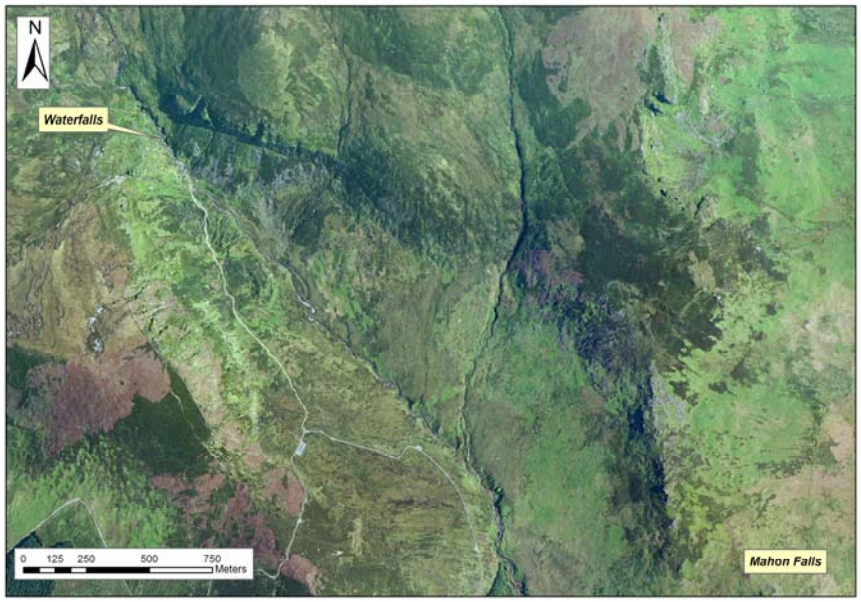
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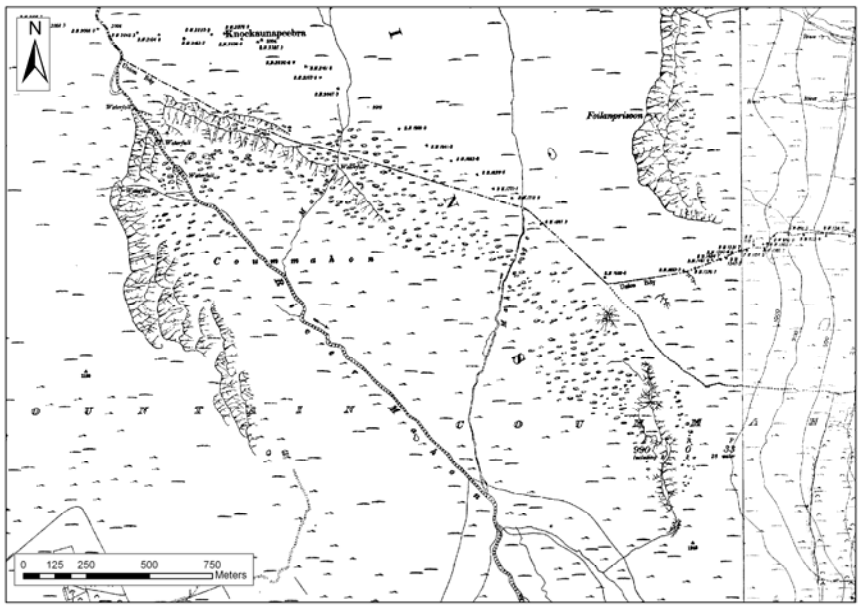
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