

Maurus, Sonja

From: Byrnes, Emmet
Sent: Friday 5 April 2024 09:19
To: Maurus, Sonja; Kelly, Patricia
Cc: O'Neill, Marie; Dunne, Seamus; Delany, Barry; Fahy, Orla; Collins, Kevin
Subject: RE: Coillte Wild Western Peatlands (WWP) Project - Derryclare, Co. Galway - Galway County Council Planning Reference 23/60 - Refused - Follow up

Hi Sonja,

Frank Barrett has since brought it to my attention that the decision to refuse permission for the project is now getting some media coverage:

<https://connachtribune.ie/coillte-refused-permission-to-remove-850-acre-plantation/>

Coillte itself doesn't appear to have released a Press Release on the matter, as yet.

[Press Releases - Coillte](#)

Regards,

Emmet

From: Byrnes, Emmet
Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2024 10:25 AM
To: Maurus, Sonja <Sonja.Maurus@agriculture.gov.ie>; Kelly, Patricia <Patricia.Kelly@agriculture.gov.ie>
Cc: O'Neill, Marie <Marie.O'Neill@agriculture.gov.ie>
Subject: RE: Coillte Wild Western Peatlands (WWP) Project - Derryclare, Co. Galway - Galway County Council Planning Reference 23/60 - Refused

Hi Sonja,

Yes indeed – the core reason planning permission was refused very much seems to be because the mitigation measures contained in the NIS and the Construction & Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) were considered not to have been trialled and tested and thus there was a potential for issues to arise as regards the protection of European sites because of this uncertainty.

Kevin Collins said we will need to look into the decision and the mitigation measures contained in the NIS and CEMP to try to ascertain if there are wider implications.

He will also need to see what was actually proposed as mitigation measures, as Coillte would have had considerable experience with other smaller raised and blanket Bog Restoration projects undertaken in the mid to late 2000s, under the auspices of the EU LIFE Nature Programme. See:

[Peatland Habitat Restoration - Coillte](#)

[Raised Bog Restoration in Ireland](#) [Raised Bog Restoration In Ireland](#)

[Active Blanket Bog Restoration Project Ireland, restoring the wildlife habitat peatlands of the West of Ireland \(irishbogrestorationproject.ie\)](#)

The Derryclare site was especially sensitive as it was looking to deforest and undertake blanket bog restoration on a steep sided mountain with extensive and direct hydrological connections to two freshwater lakes (Lough Inagh and Lough Derryclare) which are part of the Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) /

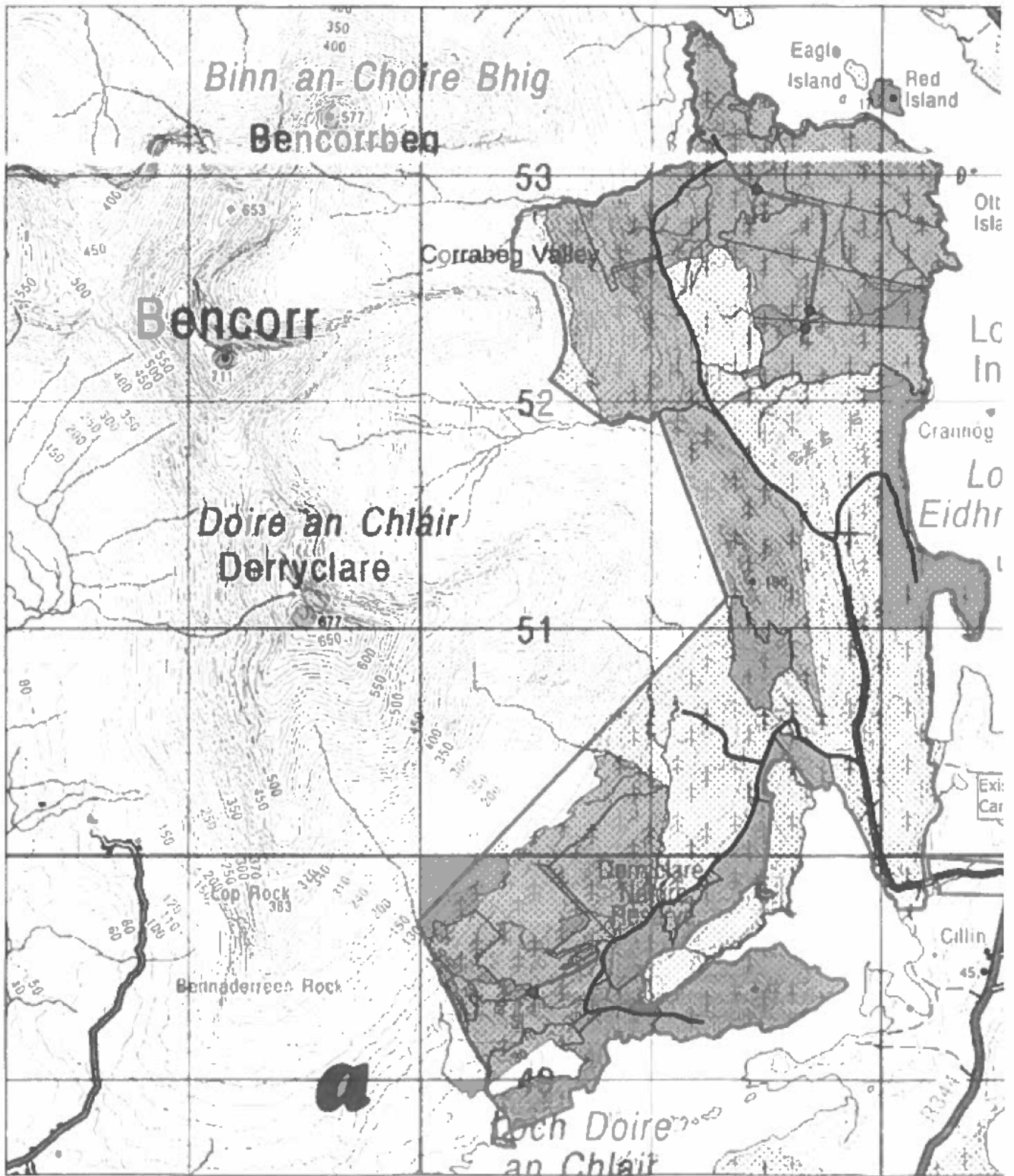
European site and where extensive drain blocking (manual and mechanical) and ground reprofiling was being proposed.

I am not aware of anyone working with Coillte on the Derryclare project or any other project directly. That would probably be inappropriate as DAFM is invariably going to be the 'second authority' for these projects (granting any required felling licences after planning permissions have been obtained) and the Minister's discretion including the appearance of his/her discretion as to whether to grant a licence or not needs to be unfettered.

However, I do understand that in the early stages Coillte had local information meetings and these were attended by local NPWS rangers and at least one District Inspector and Regional Inspector (Donal Keegan and Seppi Hona).

Regards,

Emmet Byrnes



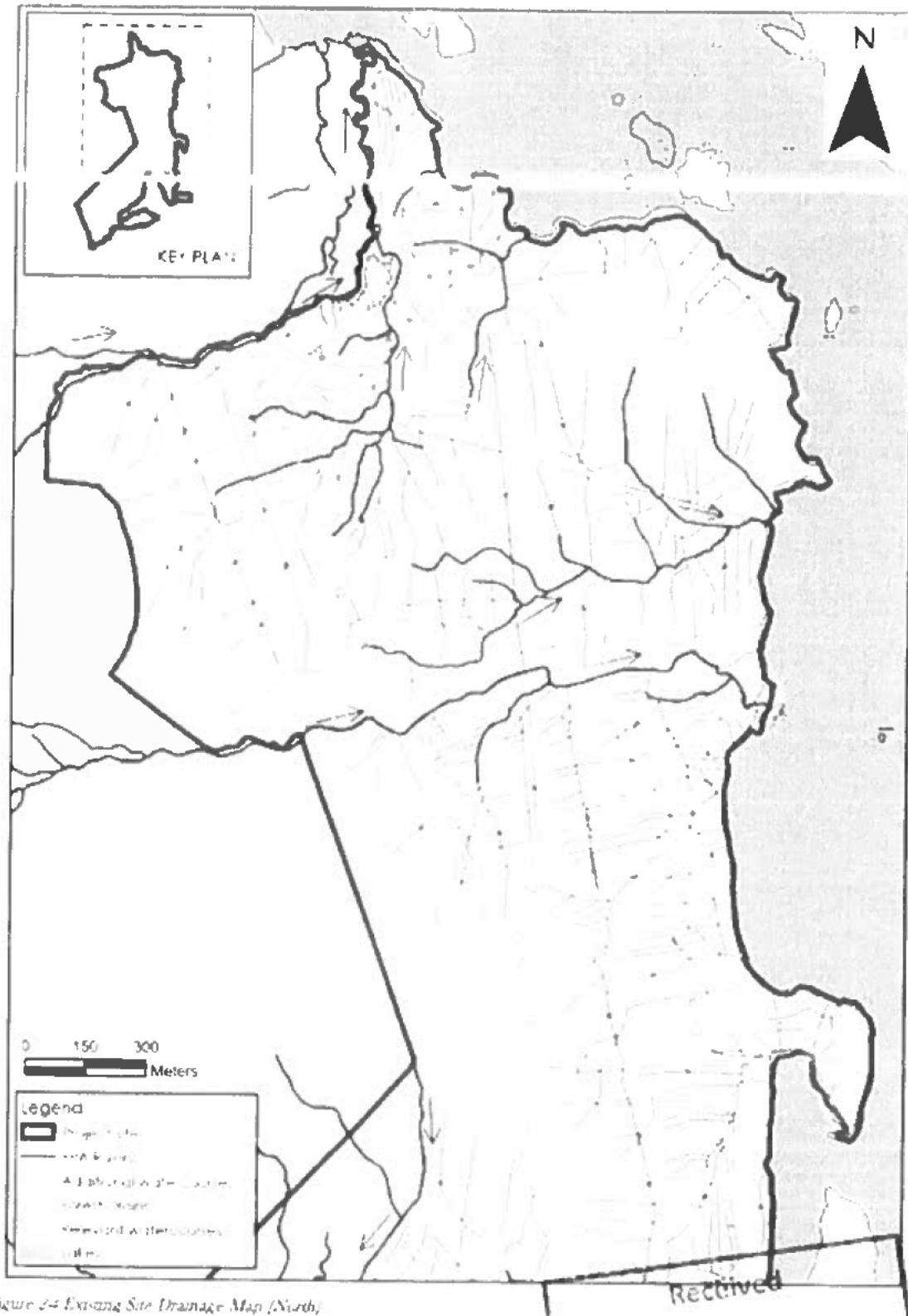


Figure 2-4 Existing Site Drainage Map (North)

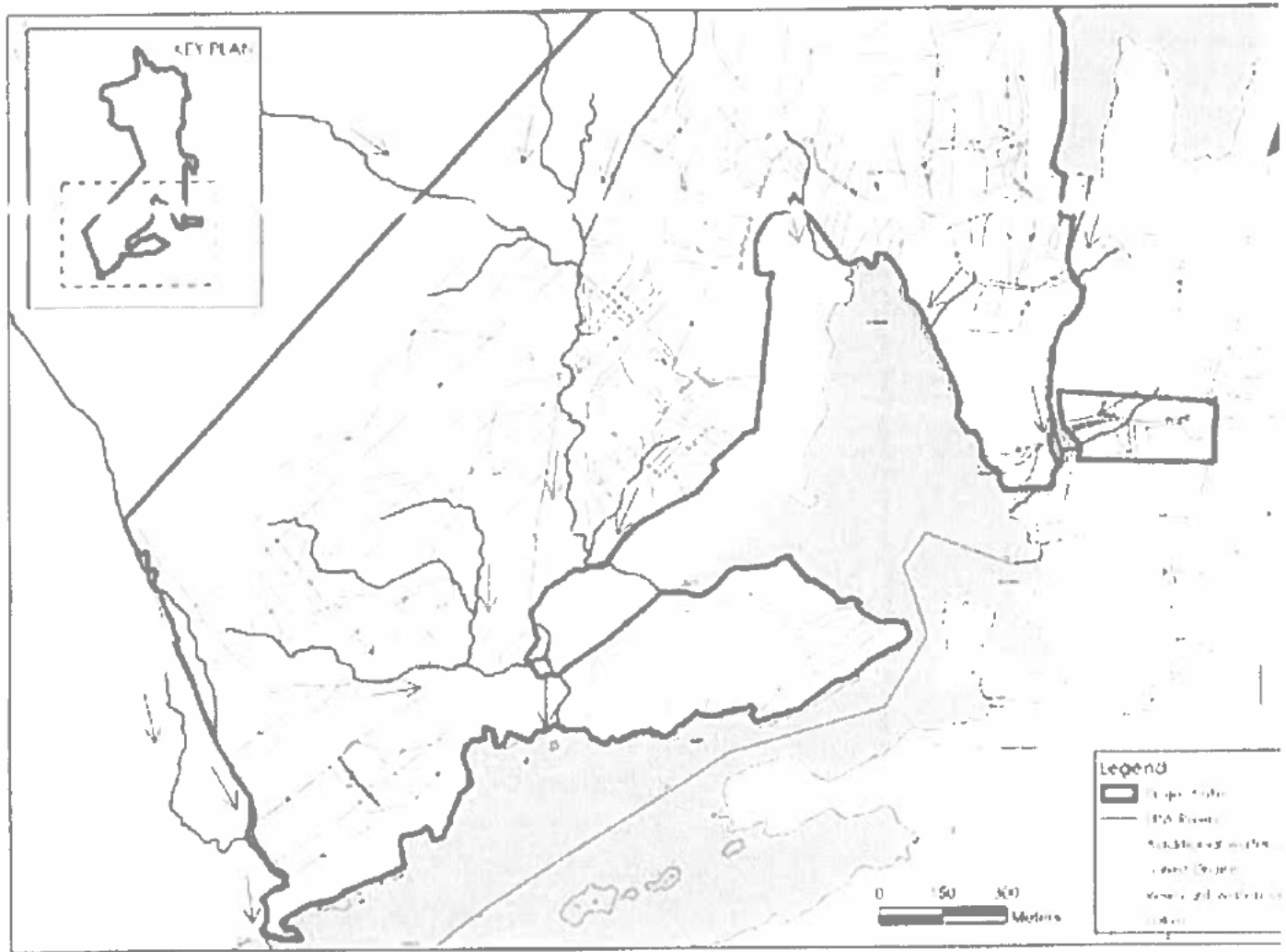


Figure 2.5 Easóg Site Drainage Map (South)

From: Maurus, Sonja <Sonja.Maurus@agriculture.gov.ie>
Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2024 9:55 AM
To: Byrnes, Emmet <Emmet.Byrnes@agriculture.gov.ie>; Kelly, Patricia <Patricia.Kelly@agriculture.gov.ie>
Cc: O'Neill, Marie <Marie.O'Neill@agriculture.gov.ie>
Subject: RE: Coillte Wild Western Peatlands (WWP) Project - Derryclare, Co. Galway - Galway County Council Planning Reference 23/60 - Refused

Hi Emmet,

Many thanks for below. The main point why permission was refused seems to be that the possible impact could not be fully assessed due to the lack of experience with such initiatives. It might be good if Coillte first tried the approach on a few trial sites to gain more evidence and then return to seek planning permission for a bigger area – this is just my initial reaction from reading the notice. Would you know if anyone in the Inspectorate has been working with Coillte on this project recently? Maybe Kevin?

Thanks,

Sonja

From: Byrnes, Emmet <Emmet.Byrnes@agriculture.gov.ie>
Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2024 9:33 AM
To: Kelly, Patricia <Patricia.Kelly@agriculture.gov.ie>; Maurus, Sonja <Sonja.Maurus@agriculture.gov.ie>
Cc: O'Neill, Marie <Marie.O'Neill@agriculture.gov.ie>

Subject: FW: Coillte Wild Western Peatlands (WWP) Project - Derryclare, Co. Galway - Galway County Council
Planning Reference 23/60 - Refused

Importance: High

Dear Patrica, Sonja,

For your information as well, from a Coillte governance perspective.

The Galway County Council refusal decision on the Derryclare Project (c. 281 hectares), if not appealed successfully to An Bord Pleanála or not appealed at all, will be a blow to Coillte's larger ambitions - via the Coillte Nature vehicle - to restore and rehabilitate approximately 2,100 hectares of Atlantic blanket bog and wet heath that is currently planted with commercial spruce and pine forests.

See: [Wild Western Peatlands - Coillte](#)

Regards,

Emmet Byrnes

From: Byrnes, Emmet

Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 5:07 PM

To: Delany, Barry <Barry.Delany@agriculture.gov.ie>; Dunne, Seamus <Seamus.Dunne@agriculture.gov.ie>

Cc: Fahy, Orla <Orla.Fahy@agriculture.gov.ie>; Collins, Kevin <Kevin.Collins@agriculture.gov.ie>

Subject: Coillte Wild Western Peatlands (WWP) Project - Derryclare, Co. Galway - Galway County Council Planning Reference 23/60 - Refused

Importance: High

Dear Barry,

Please be advised that PP Application for Coillte's **Wild Western Peatlands (WWP) Project at Derryclare, Co. Galway**, which proposed the restoration of c. 281 hectares of Atlantic blanket bog and heathland was refused planning permission by Galway County Council on Thursday, 28th March 2024.

Regards,

Emmet Byrnes

Emmet Byrnes

Forestry Inspector Grade 1/ Senior Archaeologist

Head of Section – Archaeology and Built Heritage

Forest Service Inspectorate

An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara

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