



Glenfarne Wood

Recreation and
Tourism

Development
Strategic Plan

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Rialtas
na hÉireann
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Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland

2040



Leitrim County Council
Comhairle Chontae Liatroma



COILLTE
GROW · TRANSFORM · SUSTAIN

This project is being Part-funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.

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Overview

Coillte owns the operational Wood and lands at Glenfarne Demesne, Co. Leitrim which lies on the shore of Lough Macnean the natural boundary between the counties of Leitrim, Cavan and Fermanagh. Glenfarne Wood has recently been the subject of detailed study and wide public consultation with regard to their potential and their development options as a recreational site.

The resultant 'Glenfarne Wood Options Report 2020', a joint venture in partnership between Coillte and Leitrim County Council, provided the foundation of future developments in the Glenfarne Demesne. This subsequent Recreation and Tourism Development Strategic Plan for Glenfarne Wood addresses the realisation of the Options Report and in particular the actions and the timelines required to realise the potential of the site.

Executive Summary

Glenfarne Wood is a 215 hectare Coillte forest on the banks of Lough Macnean in north Leitrim. For many years it has provided valuable recreation through a series of walking and family cycling trails (6.5 km) as well as water access and angling stands. There is further recreation potential in this ‘hidden gem’ as an immersive natural experience for locals and visitors. There are also opportunities for the small-scale commercial provision of activities which are appropriate for this setting.

An initial Glenfarne Wood Options Report in 2020, which included detailed local consultation, identified the potential of Glenfarne Wood for a range of nature-based activities which this strategic plan has refined into the following vision, three themes and five development stages.

Glenfarne Woods: a place to immerse in nature.

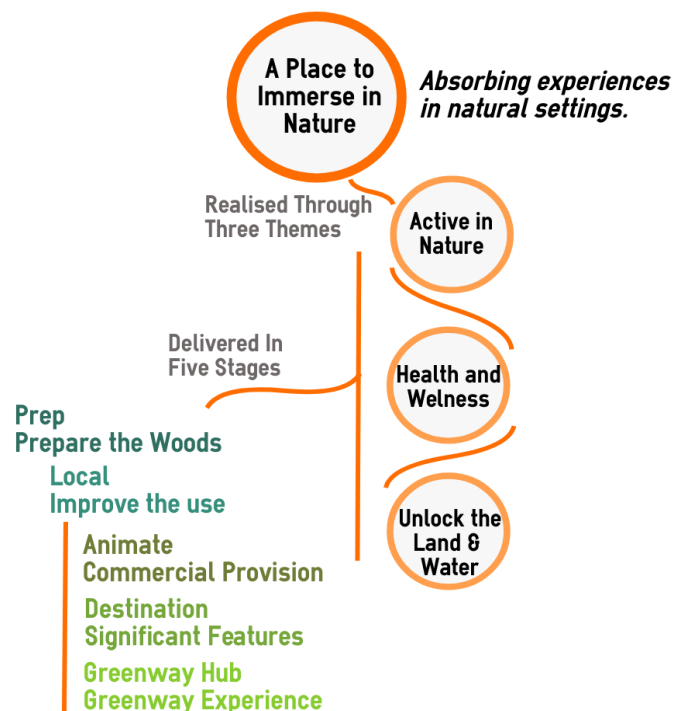
Realised through the themes of:

- Active in Nature: an immersive natural visitor activity hub for family fun and people of all abilities.
- Health and Wellness: supporting self-led, event and programme driven positive outdoor experiences.
- Unlock the Woods & Water: unlock slow adventure and activity experiences in the Woods and Lough, for locals and visitors with additional infrastructure including land and water trails, activity nodes, opportunities to read the landscape and relive the heritage.

This vision and its supporting themes will be realised over a series of five development stages commencing with the preparation stage which will initiate the statutory environmental, and planning requirements. The second development stage will enhance the use of the site through improved parking, initial small-scale play and sensory areas, and by capturing and telling the historic, local and contemporary stories of the Wood via interpretive signage.

The final three stages of developing destination scale facilities, animating the woods with small scale commercial activity and linking the Woods with the nearby Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Railway, will be actively pursued through funding applications and commercial provider engagement.

The Glenfarne Woods development will be an integrative process, vehicle access through the site will be maintained, existing walking trails and the lake’s recreation potential will be enhanced, the community will continue to enjoy the resource and have a say in its operation. Furthermore, the Wood will become a more substantial and a more visible resource within the region’s cross-border tourism and activity cluster.



Introduction

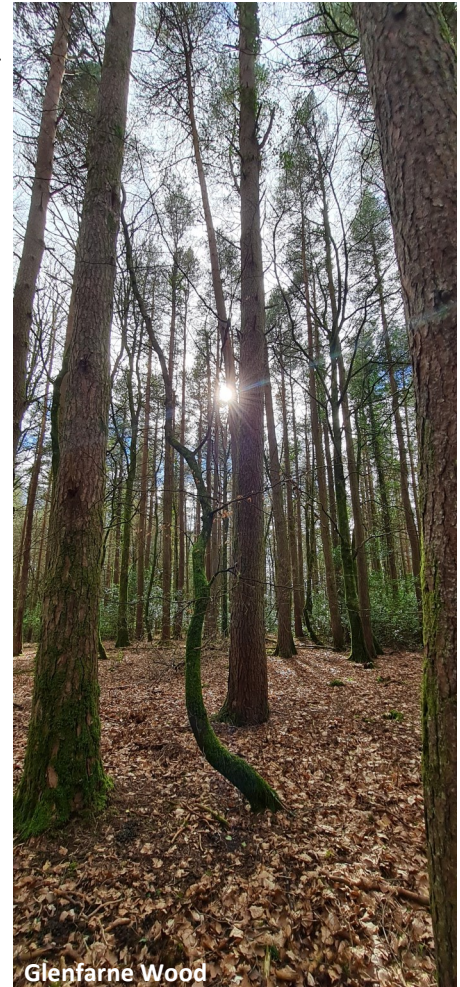
At the heart of the local rural community in North Leitrim bordering County Cavan and County Fermanagh in Northern Ireland, Glenfarne Wood, an operational Coillte commercial forest, has for several years provided valuable land and water recreation. There is further recreation potential in this 'hidden gem' as an immersive natural experience for locals and visitors. There are also opportunities for the small-scale commercial provision of activities which are appropriate for this setting. The project partners, Coillte and Leitrim County Council, have addressed the recreation and tourism potential of the site through this Strategic Plan which:

- Identifies the optimal spatial layout of recreation activities and facilities;
- Identifies and prioritises the critical and optional development actions;
- provides a base for future funding applications and strategic expenditure.

Context

Located in the Northwest of Ireland in County Leitrim on the banks of Lough Macnean Upper, Glenfarne Wood is close to the borders of Counties Fermanagh and Cavan.

Glenfarne Wood is within the Hidden Heartlands regional tourism experience brand which promises



“Activity and relaxation centred around rural communities and their lifestyles, that can be discovered across a lattice work of land and water trails.”

The wood is used extensively by residents for walking, as a launch point for angling craft, an angling venue especially for participants who with a disability¹, while the Ladies Rest site is an open water swimming venue and a location for a Lough Macnean sculpture trail. A small number of residents and farmers also use the lakeside road to access land and dwellings.



¹ Redeveloped fishing stands, under the Catchment CARE Community Incentive Scheme

Glenfarne Wood: Overview

Site Overview

Consisting of 215 hectares of mainly woodland, approximately 5 kilometres of lakeshore and two small islands, Glenfarne Wood in addition to providing valuable local recreation resource, the wood and the local community also have the potential to be part of the emerging tourism cluster of Leitrim, Sligo, Cavan and Fermanagh.

Currently, the Wood includes:

- A forest road network with two looped walks.
- The Glenfarne Wood section of the Lough Macnean sculpture trail including some sculptures located at various points within the Wood.
- A car park with space for approximately 10 cars. a small slipway, picnic tables and supporting information panels and directional signage
- A boat launch slipway and four fishing stands.

There are also some archaeological sites and monuments in the wood including a caiseal ringfort; two crannogs; and an adjacent alignment of three standing stones in private land.

Site Considerations

The following issues were considered when evaluating the potential of the wood.

Access

Access to the site is via four main entrances, the gatehouse, St Mary's Church carpark, the public road on the western boundary of the Wood, and the lower lake Tullytrasna spur of the R281.

- The Gate Lodge access likely hosts 90% of recreational traffic into the wood.
- There is year-round access into the wood for recreation, as well as for access to the private dwellings and farmland which are located within or adjacent to the forest.
- While the access points are mainly used for recreation, they are also pivotal for forestry harvesting (St Mary church entrance), resident and farm access. Any development at this location can not restrict this 'local access'.
- The forest is also used as a pass-through route via the lake road by a small number of adjacent residents.



² 32 km from Sligo, 23 km from Beleek 22 km from Enniskillen, 6 km from Blacklion and Belcoo and 39 km from Carrick on Shannon.

Glenfarne Wood

Topography

There are three main topographical features on the site:

1. The Glenfarne river valley delineates half of the Southern boundary of the site. This relatively shallow U-shaped valley is bounded to its west by relatively flat farmland to its East by undulating drumlin type land.
2. The foothills of Thur Mountain (496m), extend west to east across the site to the lakeshore. The gradient from this hill dominates the western landscape from the lake.
3. Lough Macnean Upper provides the eastern boundary of the site via a rocky shoreline. This freshwater lake is a popular angling site, and it also includes the border with Northern Ireland along its midpoint.



These features bring several challenges and opportunities.

- The significant gradient on the trails leading towards the lake, can be difficult for the less able walker.
- The lake is substantial, and it has a relatively accessible shoreline within the Wood as well as sections of poorly drained foreshore during high water levels.
- The river and the lake have the potential to flood sections of the wood during exceptional weather events, however, neither pose a significant threat to the fabric of the site or its use for recreation.

Trail Networks

The existing trail network of two looped trails, largely follow the forestry roads:

- The Glenfarne Cycle and Walk Loop, 12.5 km in length
- The Lough Macnean Upper Walk, circa 3.75 km

The Gate Lodge access road (tared surface) is also used as a recreation route for walkers and cyclists. This is a relatively quiet road for vehicles, and it has adequate sightlines and verges.

The two forestry trails are mainly used by visitors who park at the slipway, while the Gate Lodge route is mainly used by locals seeking a direct walk from Glenfarne. While one of the trails is sanctioned for cycling, walking is the primary recreation activity along these trails. Aside from the lower lakeshore section of the Glenfarne Cycle and Walking trail, these trails are less suitable for prams or wheelchairs due to the loose stone surface in places and the significant gradient to the southwest of the forest.

Community Voice

The local community are the most active users for both recreation and travel to a small number of residences and farms adjacent to the wood. The Options Report for Glenfarne Wood 2020, included in-depth client, community, and stakeholder consultation and identified that:

“The rural community and private sector are involved and committed to investment and developments in the area. For example, the development of the Rainbow Ballroom of Romance, the refurbishment of Cullentragh School, the development of a play area, a 2 km demonstration stretch of the Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Railway (SLNCR) Greenway.”

There is also a desire within the community for:

- A marketing and promotion plan to put Glenfarne on the map:
- The area be sympathetically developed to retain the natural heritage and the calm experience in the wood:
- Highlighting the history of Glenfarne Wood and its link with Belfast:
- A greater appreciation of the former big house of Glenfarne Hall:
- Glenfarne Wood as a sustainable, holistic hub:
- An opportunity for some economic growth for the area:
- The retention of Glenfarne Wood as a natural space and not to over-commercialise it.

The following are the main community preferences identified as part of the Options Report survey;

1. Developing and maintaining visitor facilities on site (26%):
2. Retention and enhancement of natural heritage to emphasis health and wellbeing (14%):
3. Improvements to signage and interpretation (12%):
4. Improvements to trails and provision of trails for walking/cycling and children (11%):
5. Increase awareness through the marketing of the wood (7%).

Additional community input was received over the course of this strategic planning process regarding the desire to highlight the built heritage of the wood, in particular the Sweat Houses and Fever Huts, the planting of some native woodlands and the opportunity for some community led initiatives within the wood such as a heritage audit. These desires and preferences have been incorporated wherever possible within this strategy.



‘New Beginnings’ part of the Glenfarne Lake Sculpture Trail at Black Island in Glenfarne Wood.

Glenfarne Wood Strategy

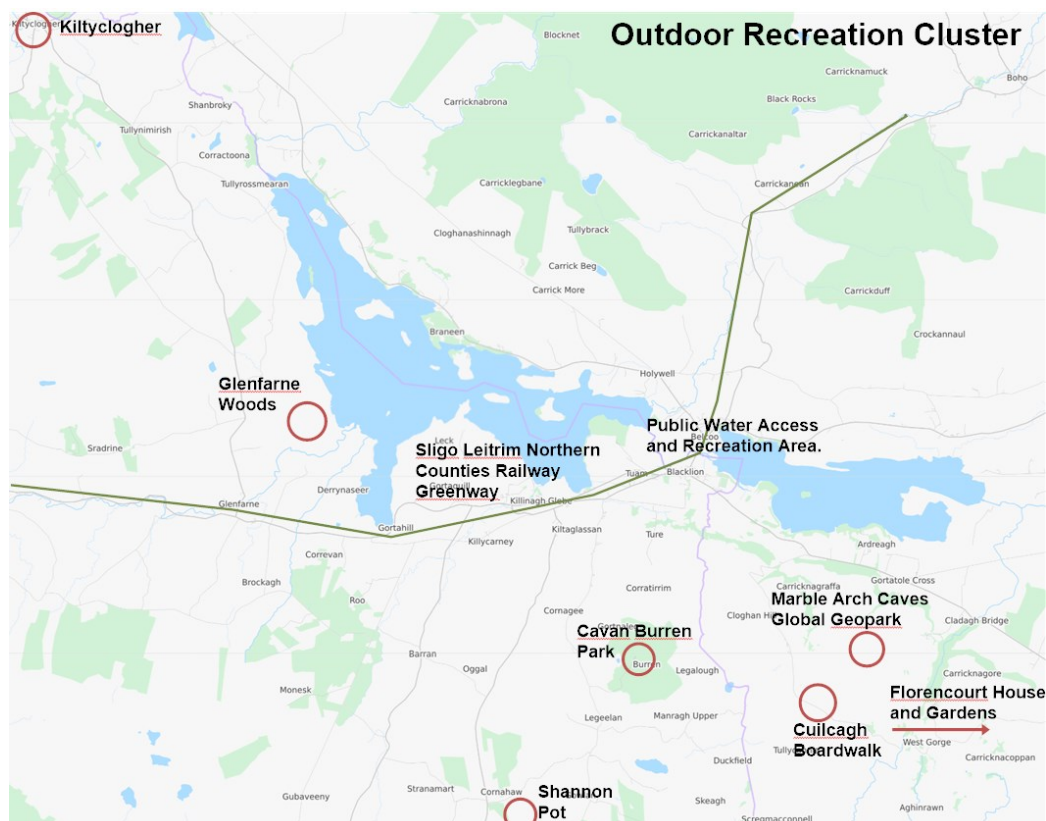
Strategic Relevance:

Relevant local, regional, and national planning and tourism initiatives include:

- Coillte, the owners of Glenfarne Wood, are partners in The Outdoor Recreation Plan for Public Lands and Waters In Ireland 2017-2021.
- The proposed recreation developments in the Glenfarne Wood are consistent with the Leitrim County Development Plan 2015–2021 and its Recreation, Sports and Amenity policies, the Leitrim Tourism Strategy 2016 – 2021 the Leitrim Local Economic & Community Plan 2015-2021, the Leitrim Recreation Strategy 2015-2021 and the Coillte Recreation Strategy.
- The wood is an asset within the scope of the Failte Ireland 2015-2021 Hidden Heartlands programme.
- The proposed developments on the site are consistent with the national Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.
- The Glenfarne Wood entrance is adjacent to the proposed Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Greenway.
- The Glenfarne Community Development Group are an active champion for local economic, recreation and tourism development.

Recreation and Tourism Cluster

Glenfarne Wood neighbours the Northern Ireland Fermanagh Lakelands, the Cuilcagh to Cleenish initiative and the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark. The Shannon Pot and Cavan Burren Park are also part of the cluster of outdoor recreation and tourism resources in the area.



There are also a number of indoor tourism resources in the area such as the Ballroom of Romance and the Seán MacDiarmada Centre. All recreation and tourism developments in Glenfarne Wood will where possible integrate with the promotion of this wider cluster of facilities.

Strategic Issues

Issues

In developing the strategy, the following key recreational and tourism facility development opportunities and challenges for Glenfarne Wood were identified and responded to, see also the map on page 12.

Issue	Approach
<p>Access to and within the Wood.</p> <p>Supporting vehicular access to residences, working farms and forest harvesting work while providing a safe, semi-wilderness pedestrian access onto the site.</p>	<p>Signage to the Wood from the N16 and at the Gate Lodge will be upgraded.</p> <p>All-access routes to remain open with the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocating the current slipway car park to a more central location. Signage requesting 'local only' vehicle movement between the relocated car park and the lake. Upgrading of the slipway area as a picnic and forest bathing access point, with parking for angling trailers alongside.
<p>Improved on site supporting facilities.</p>	<p>Providing a range of supporting services which will improve and diversify the use of the wood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger well defined car parking area. Service block with toilets. Office and storage space for additional service provision.
<p>Managing the balance of the quiet 'holistic and harmony' themes and the noisier 'active in nature' theme.</p>	<p>A set of three zones with geographic and topographic separation supporting the sought atmosphere for each of these thematic areas and their accompanying sound levels.</p>
<p>Manageable Amenity</p>	<p>Increasing the amenity value of the wood in a sustainable manner via the phased development of an arboretum, a sensory trail, Sit Spots and a children's play area.</p>
<p>Unlocking the Water Realising this Options theme effectively.</p>	<p>The development of a Lough Macnean Upper Blueway³ which connects the lake with the Arney River Canoe Trail has the potential to increase water recreation on and along the lake and support local engagement in water sports and cross border tourism.</p> <p>Sensitively improving access to the water for swimmers at Ladies Rest and minor upgrades to the seating and viewing area at this site.</p>
<p>Benefiting from and adding value to the proposed Greenway.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The clustering of amenities in Glenfarne village and at Glenfarne Wood makes it possible for the area to provide a hub of half to one-day activity itinerary for Greenway visitors. Physically link Glenfarne Wood with the proposed Greenway via a cycle trail. Provide opportunities for appropriate commercial recreation activities and dining services in the wood to support the local economy.

Table 1: Issues and Approaches.

Strategy Concept and Vision

Development Concept

This strategic plan builds on the Glenfarne Wood Options Report 2020 which was jointly commissioned by Coillte and Leitrim County Council to “identify feasible and practical options to develop the tourism potential of Glenfarne Wood”. The Options Report highlighted the potential and the need to protect the **natural** and **immersive** qualities of the wood for residents and the target tourism and recreation segments of **families** and individuals pursuing **health and wellbeing** outdoors and in nature. The optimum format for these experiences is through self-led or guided **slow and soft adventure**⁴.

The Options Report themes were further focused and amended as per the following table.

Themes	Objectives
Active in Nature	<i>An immersive natural visitor activity hub for family fun and people of all abilities.</i>
Health and Wellness	<i>Supporting self-led, event and programme driven positive outdoor experiences.</i>
Unlock the Wood & Water	<i>Unlock slow adventure and activity experiences in the Wood and Lough, for locals and visitors with additional infrastructure including land and water trails, activity nodes, opportunities to read the landscape and relive the heritage.</i>

Table 2: Amended extract ‘Glenfarne Wood Options Report’ by EMcG Solutions & Ethna Murphy Consulting.

Strategic vision: Glenfarne Wood, a place to immerse in nature.

The development of Glenfarne Wood will realise these three themes over five stages as illustrated below and overleaf.



⁴ Slow adventure refers to immersive journeys, living in and travelling through wild places and natural spaces – experiencing nature in its timeframe, its seasons and its weathers. ‘Soft Adventure’ is a type of adventure activity that requires little or no experience and is low risk.

Strategic Themes and Development Stages

Strategic Vision: Five Themes, Five stages.

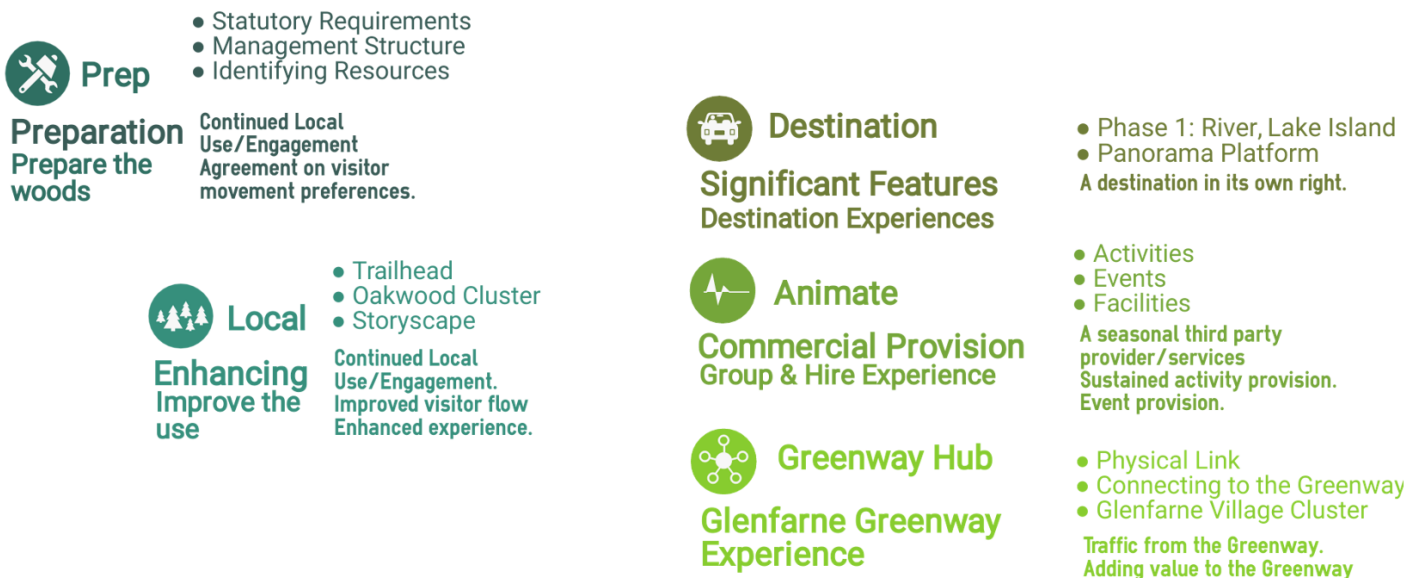
Glenfarne Wood will be developed to realise the three themes of:

- Active in Nature
- Health and Wellness
- Unlock the Wood and Water.

These themes will be realised through an outdoor recreation infrastructure development which enhances and links Glenfarne Wood with its environment and the surrounding outdoor recreation cluster. This infrastructure development will be realised across the five stages of:

- Preparation
- Local
- Creating a Destination
- Animating
- Greenway Hub

Glenfarne Woods Development Stages



The first two development stages phases are sequential while the Destination, Animate and Greenway Hub stages will be developed according to emerging demand and available resourcing. Further detail on these stages is provided in the following pages.

Strategic Mapping and Responsibilities

Themes, Elements and Stages

The following table maps the physical resources in the three development themes, across the five delivery stages of the project. This table also identifies the responsible agents (see page 14).

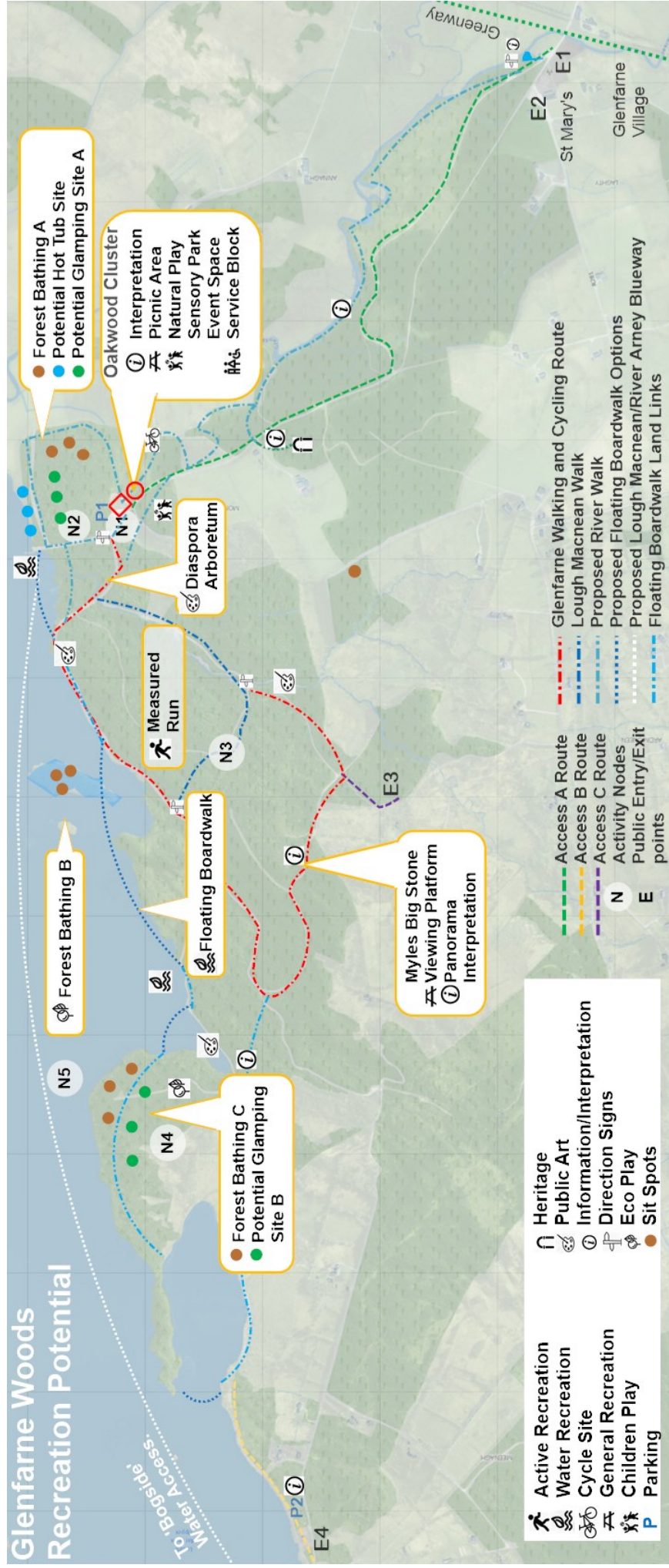
Themes	Elements	Stage	Responsible
ACTIVE IN NATURE	Natural Play Space	Prep (planning & environment) Local	Project Management Team
	Sensory Trail	Prep (planning & environment) Local	Project Management Team
	Parkrun Infrastructure	Local	Project Management Team
	Wild Swimming	Local	Individuals, Club
	Angling Experiences	Local	Individual, Clubs, Commercial Provider
	Adventure Sports Services	Animate	Commercial Provider
HEALTH & WELLNESS	Forest bathing	Destination	Project Management Team Commercial
	Events	Prep (planning & environment), Animate and Destination	Project Management Team, Club & Community, Commercial Provider
	Glamping, sauna, Hot-Tub	Animate	Commercial Provider
	Yoga, Mindfulness	Animate	Commercial Provider
UNLOCK THE WATER AND WOOD	Trailhead development and Visitor Flow.	Prep (planning & environment) Local (relocation of car park) Destination (Service Block, Camper Parking and Event Space) Greenway Hub (E bike charging).	Project Management Team
	Present the stories of the woods.	Local	Project Management Team & Community
	Panorama Platform (Long Tom's View)	Prep (planning & environment), Destination	Project Management Team
	Blueway and Water Activities	Local (Blueway) Greenway Hub/Animate	Community/Club, Commercial Project Management Team
	Boathouse event infrastructure	Prep (planning and Environmental) Destination and Animate	Project Management Team Commercial Provider
	Enhancement of Existing Trails	Local	Project Management Team
	New Trail Development	Prep (planning & environment), Destination and Greenway Hub (development phases of River, Lake, Island trail) Greenway Hub (link Greenway trail)	Project Management Team
	Diaspora Commemorative Arboretum	Destination	Project Management Team

Table 3: Themes, Elements and Stages.

Potential Recreation Sites and Infrastructure

Recreation Map

The following map identifies the locations of the potential recreation developments within the wood.



Development Stages: Preparation

Outline

The following section of the strategy presents additional detail on the content of the various development stages for Glenfarne Wood.

Preparation Stage

The following is an outline of the Preparation Stage actions:

- **Statutory Requirements:** An environmental assessment of the proposed developments will be undertaken as part of the planning and development process for the Wood. Additional statutory obligations will be identified and complied with as the project develops.
- **Resources:** relevant funding opportunities will be pursued for each of the Glenfarne Wood infrastructure development stages.
- **Management Structure:** Coillte and Leitrim County Council will put in place an appropriate management structure for the five development stages and for the future management of the wood. The following list indicates these likely structures, see also page 12.
 - **Project Management Team:** Coillte and Leitrim County Council.
 - **Community:** representatives from the local and nearby communities who have developed a memorandum of understanding with Coillte.
 - **Commercial:** activity or retail operators who are licenced by Coillte to provide specific services within the wood.
 - **Club:** sports club with an interest in an activity and the permission of Coillte.
 - **Individuals:** individual recreational participants.



Prep

Preparation
Prepare the
woods

- Statutory Requirements
- Management Structure
- Identifying Resources

Continued Local
Use/Engagement
Agreement on visitor
movement preferences.



Development Stages: Local

The following is an outline of the Local Development Stage of this Strategic Plan and three potential infrastructure components:

- A new trailhead with a landscaped parking area for 40 cars. Note that the service block and events space; is likely to be developed at the Destination phase but is included here for ease of understanding.
- An Oakwood cluster of a playground and a sensory trail.



- Trailhead
 - Oakwood Cluster
 - Storyscape
- Continued Local Use/Engagement.
Improved visitor flow
Enhanced experience.

Trailhead

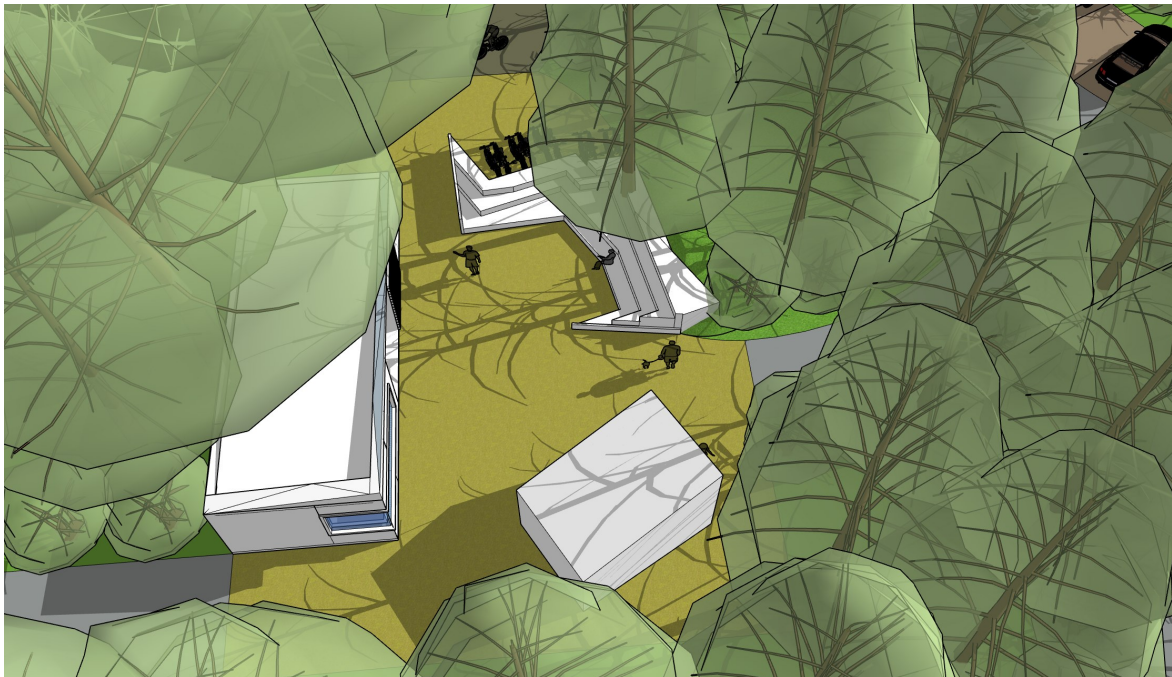
The trailhead is the centerpoint for the wood and it will connect to the existing trail network as well as the proposed multi access river, lake island trail. From the trailhead carpark the main off-road trail towards the lake brings the visitor via a proposed new service block and events area and then through the sensory trail before re-joining the existing road just before the slipway. A campervan site with water and washout facilities is also possible at this trailhead.



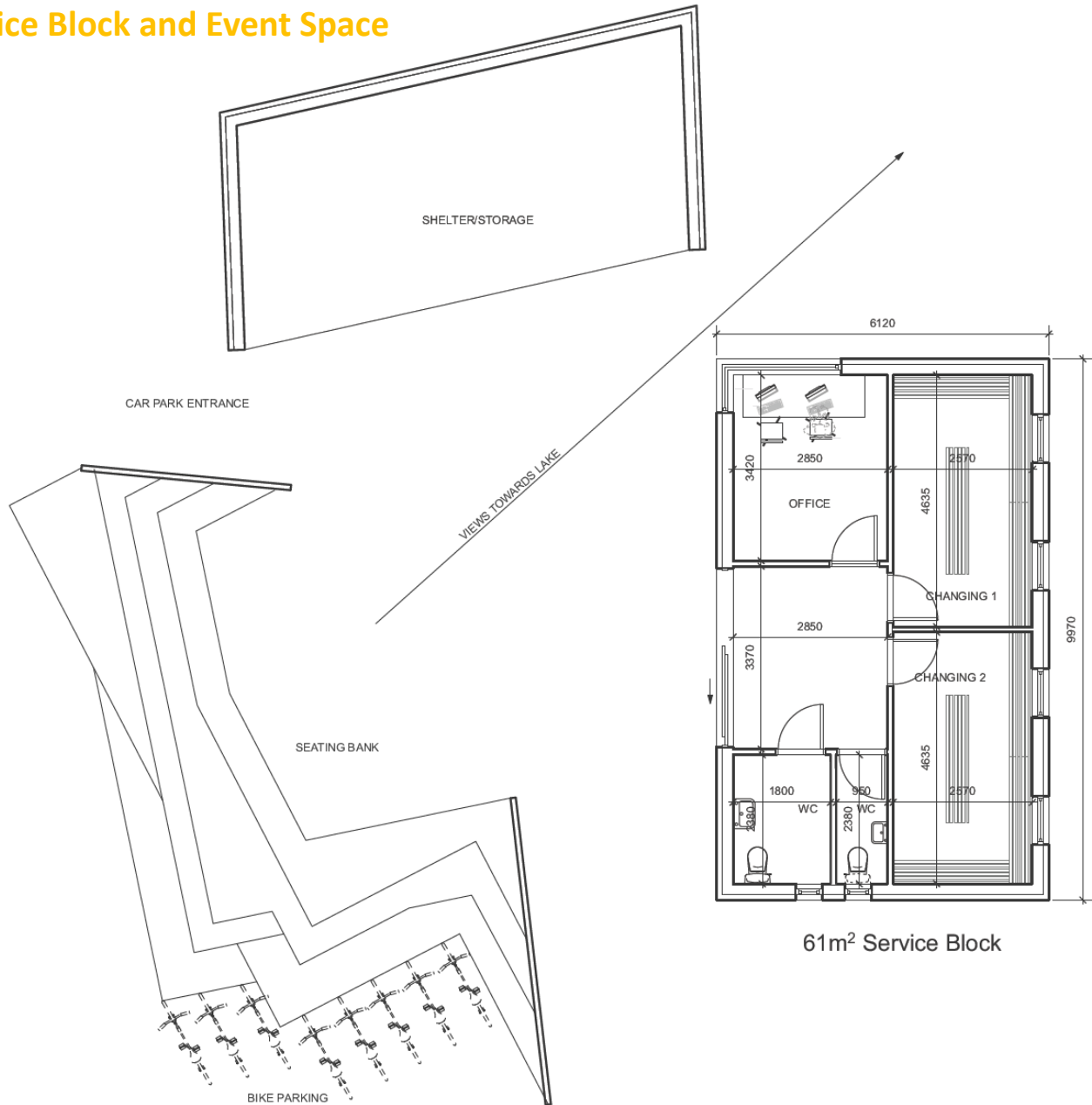
The Boathouse Event Space

The event space is suitable for small groups of circa 30 for a casual interaction area, a meeting point, a performance or outdoor lecture. The alignment of the event space with the service block and storage/shelter area provides electrical and other services for formal events and supports the use of this area as an adventure activities base.

With the ongoing harvesting of the trees close to the shore, it is likely that a view of the lake will emerge from this location and the buildings will be aligned to frame this. The rear of the raised seating area will be formed by creating a mound of soil and this area will connect with the proposed river, lake island multi use trail with bike parking and e-bike charging stations (Greenway Hub development stage).



Service Block and Event Space

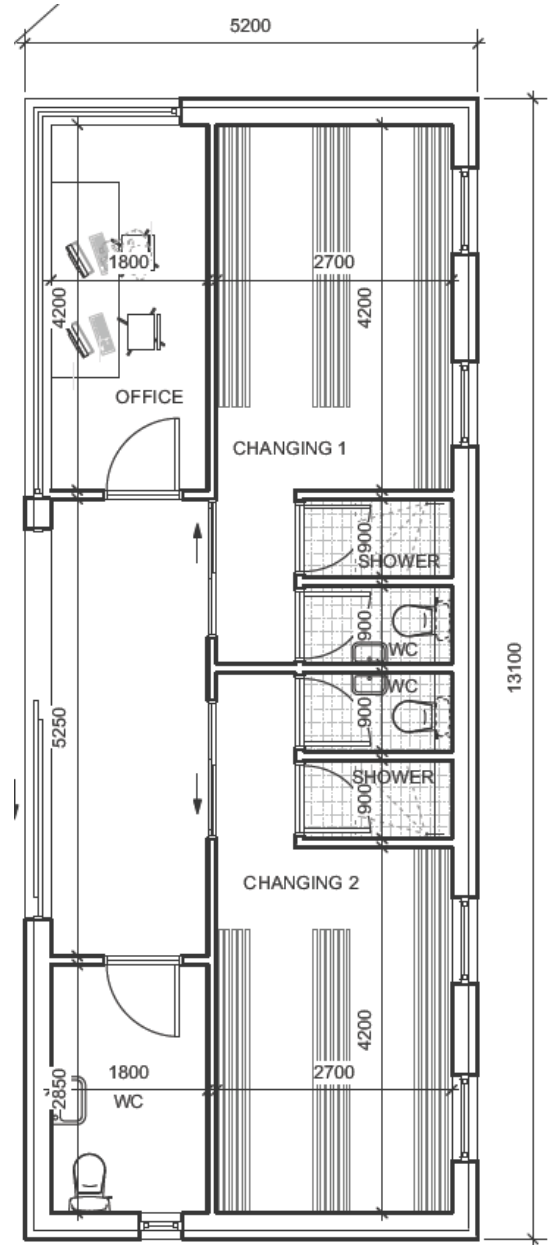
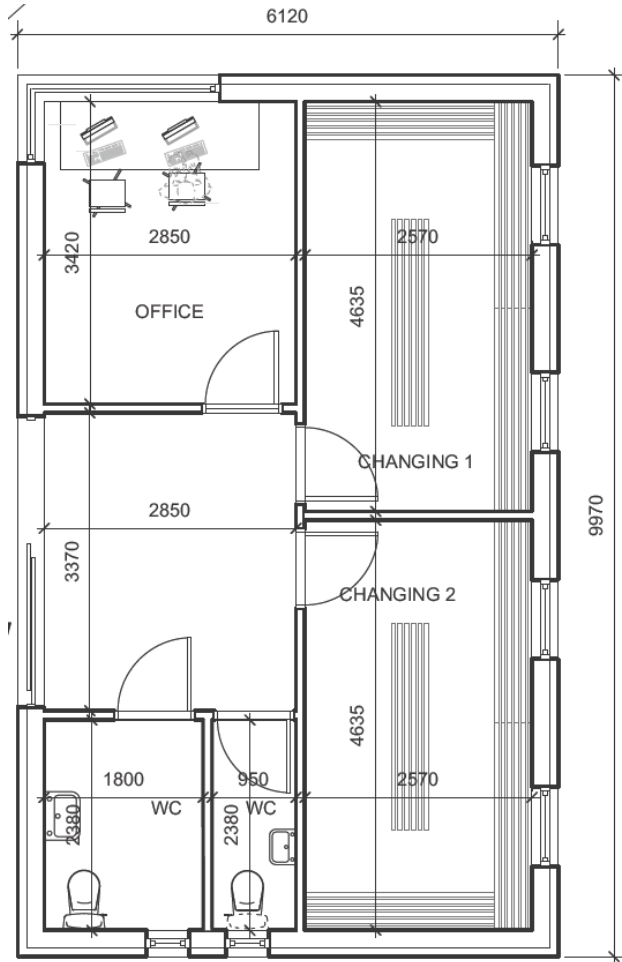


The shelter/storage can be developed as either a rudimentary shelter for participants in bad weather or as an indoor interpretive space like the Cavan Burren Park and the event space at The Hill of Uisneach illustrated below. This facility can readily be modified as a storage area for outdoor equipment such as kayaks, sailing dinghies and SUPs.



Service Block

The changing rooms and toilet block will also include a small office and two layout options for this facility are suggested. A brightly painted easy to maintain interior allied to a robust exterior will minimise management and maintenance costs .



Sample Images of the Service Block in Rathmullen Co Donegal, Cé Rath Maoláin, McCabe Architects

Oakwood Cluster

Located along the site of the old oakwood in the forest and linking the trailhead to the lake and the existing trails, the Oakwood cluster includes a playground and a sensory trail.

Playground

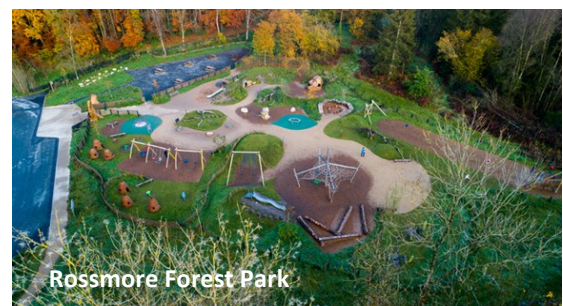
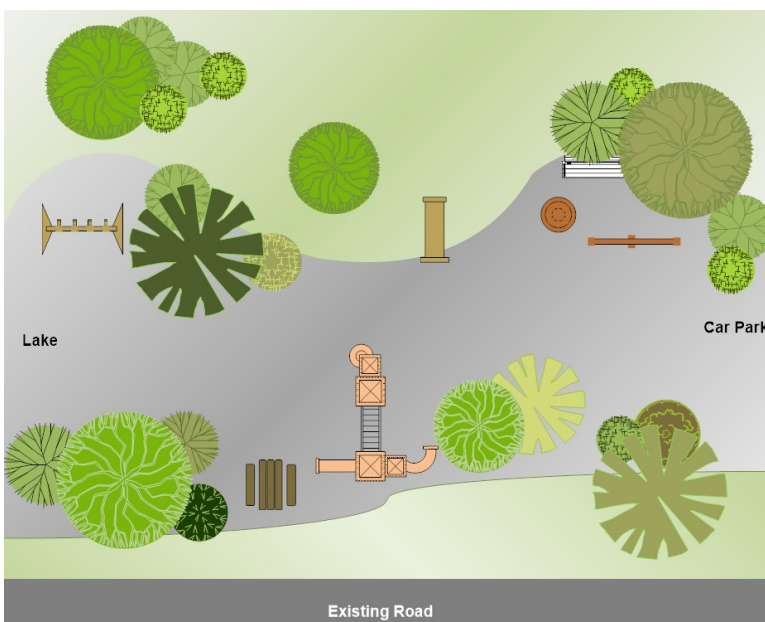
The playground will be visually and interactively appealing while also safe, sympathetic to its environment and robust. The playground design will be linear, and it will be located adjacent to the road between the proposed new trailhead and the slipway, parallel to the existing road and with open sightlines between the playground and this road. The playground features will blend between the trees, and they will be primarily manufactured from wood. The playground will be inspected regularly for safety⁵ and hence the playground features, materials and construction methods will minimise any significant maintenance or safety issues.

A peripheral fence will be installed to prevent child wandering, appropriate parental sightlines throughout and strategically placed benches for oversight will also be included.

Glenfarne Wood playground reference sites:

- Castlebar Country Life Museum: similar playground materials/design and linear layout in a forest setting.
- Shannon Pot carpark playground: A County Council site which uses a similar wooden construction playground designed as a single node layout rather than a journeying flow.
- Rossmore Forest Park: A Coillte site developed with Monaghan County Council, with similar suggested features and nodes/flow of participants, but a larger scale and a more open cluster rather than a tree lined layout.

Individual play items suggested include a see-saw, low ropes course, embanked slide, balance trail and a climbing frame.



⁵ Equipment and surfacing will comply with ISEN standards, and the specific design will be appropriate to the site and surrounding features. At the construction phase a post installation inspection and risk assessment will be carried out as well as at subsequent inspections. Equipment will be regularly maintained and replaced as required and annual independent inspections to be carried out as recommended in I.S.EN1176. The passages between and around the play structures will have a natural or semi-natural surface which is compliant with I.S. EN 1176-7:2020 and where possible is wheelchair friendly.

Sensory Trail

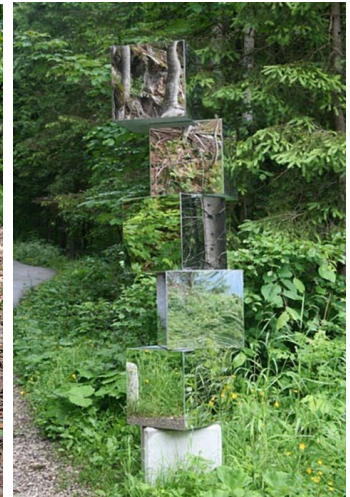
A sensory trails include features, surfaces, objects and plants that stimulate our senses. These trails can be calming with scented plants, a community area for growing food, wildlife friendly plants, a therapeutic space for people to recuperate, a learning zone with things to touch and smell or an accessible garden for people with sight loss or wheelchairs. They typically include elements of:

- Sound – Plants that make noise in the wind (bamboo stems) and sound-play features.
- Touch – Plants with textures that encourage touch such as a lamb’s ear and moss.
- Smell – Aromas that entice emotions such as gardenia, honeysuckle, wild garlic, herbs and spices.
- Sight –Plants that creep, climb, trail, bush, or stand upright, provide visual appeal.
- Taste – Edible fruits, herbs, and spices and vegetables.

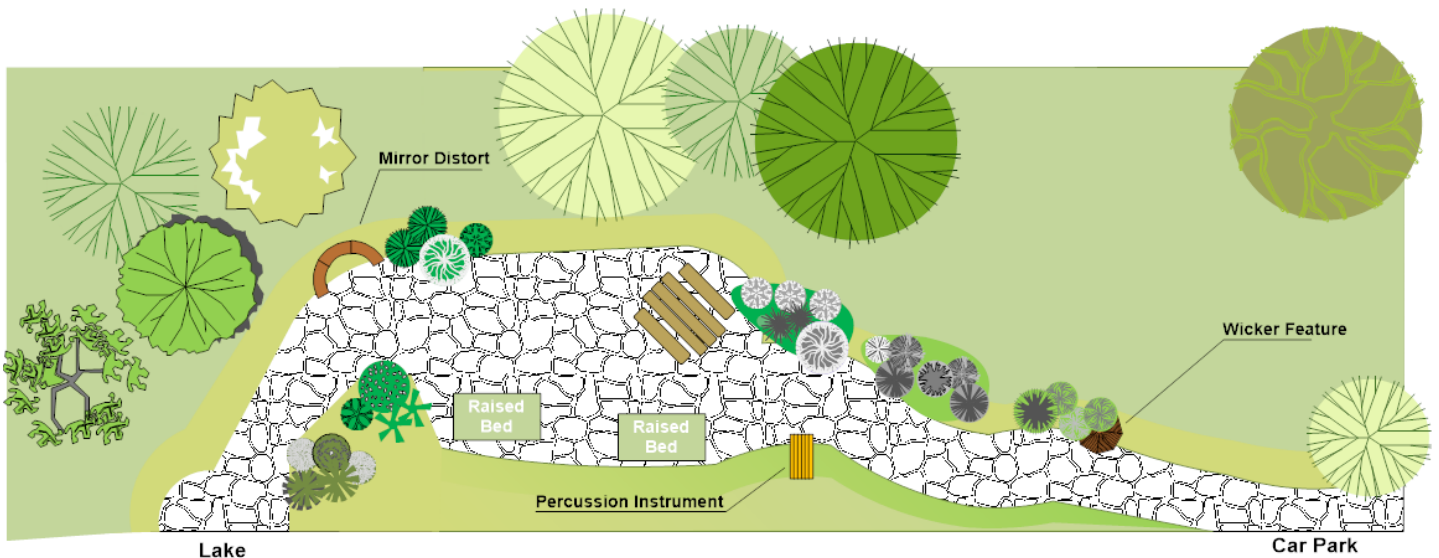


Most sensory trails as a result have a blend of often complex planting and features. However, a sensory garden in Glenfarne Wood will be open to public use and misuse and is reliant on volunteer development and maintenance. Hence such a garden requires both local ownership in its design and maintenance and the garden should also be accessible. With this in mind the following design is proposed

- A simple linear design (max 100 meters) sensory garden which is easy to reach, with level surfaces either close to the trailhead or within the arboretum area.
- The use of physical sensory features as well as planted ones.
- Physical sensory design features to supplement planting.



Sample Sensory Garden Features: sound, touch and light.



Development Stage: Local

Story and Process

To guide the visitor to the wood and to layer their experience with the social, natural and built heritage of the area, a small number of the stories of the Wood will be captured and presented.

There are three story categories associated with Glenfarne Wood:

- The **great house and historic events**: the background to the Tottenham family and Harland of Harland and Wolff/Belfast. The emergence of the nearby border.
- **The Locals**: the local community over the generations and their relationship with the wood and the local characters who are immortalised in folklore.
- The **contemporary story**: the forest as recreation, Blueway links and reconnecting with nature through forest bathing, or Shinrin Yoku.



Landlords and Locals will be the core storyline. The history of the various landowners from circa 1600 to the removal of the oak forest and the associated internal rail line in the early 1900s and the eventual demise of the estate.

The **'Horse of the Black Island'** stories provide an informal local narrative and insight. The Black Island and Landlord stories intertwine as a metaphor for the uneasy landlord local relationship, the gradual demise of the Glenfarne estate and the mirrored demise of landlordism nationally.

Stories such as:

- The development of the main estate road and gate lodge by the Lady of the estate to avoid passing the newly built local St Mary's church.
- The relationship between the local James Clancy (the Horse), and Sir Edward Harland, ending with the former single handed carrying the latter's coffin out of the house.

These stories are to be told via information panels at circa five key sites: each of which carries a simple narrative about the events and locations on the estate. These sites to be augmented via life-size steel cut outs as visual anchors along the various trails. For example a Sweat House⁶ structure profile to the side of the river section of the River, Lake, Island trail and a narrative on their role and usage.



⁶ This process might be informed by the Leitrim County Council Heritage Office 'Leitrim Sweat Houses Project' and by facilitating an audit of the sweat houses and fever huts which previously existed within the wood.

Development Stage: Destination

Glenfarne Wood: River, Lake, Island, Shared Use Trail

The Glenfarne Wood Options Report (2020), identifies several significant outdoor recreation

development opportunities and prioritises improved access to new locations and to the lake and notes the potential of the wood as a forest bathing facility. The proposed River, Lake Island Multi Access Trail provides the connecting spine to the various outdoor recreation resources within the wood.

Extending from the Gate lodge entrance to Black Island via Bilberry Island, a stone, boardwalk, floating boardwalk and stone trail will bring visitors of all abilities to the lake and into and around the periphery of the wood. The trail avoids gradients and will be suitable for recreational family cycling. The trail will ultimately connect the wood with the proposed Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Railway (SLNCR) Greenway, which passes two hundred meters from the entrance to the wood. This trial is to be developed in three phases:

Phase one (see map below B, C)

This core of the trail will link the Glenfarne Hall ruins with the car park trailhead and the lake, in so doing it will:

- Provide accessibility to the Boathouse woods as a Forest Bathing zone:
- Provide more visibility and improved access to Glenfarne Hall within the trail system:
- link the proposed Blueway on Lough Macnean Upper and the river Arney.

Phase two: (C to H)

- This section of the trail will provide a level and lakeside route which is suitable for all abilities. The feasibility of a floating boardwalk link to Black Island and potentially Bilberry Island as Forest Bathing areas will be examined. Sections of shoreside boardwalk will be developed to keep the trail user close to the water and these will integrate the proposed arboretum trail.

Phase three: (A, B)

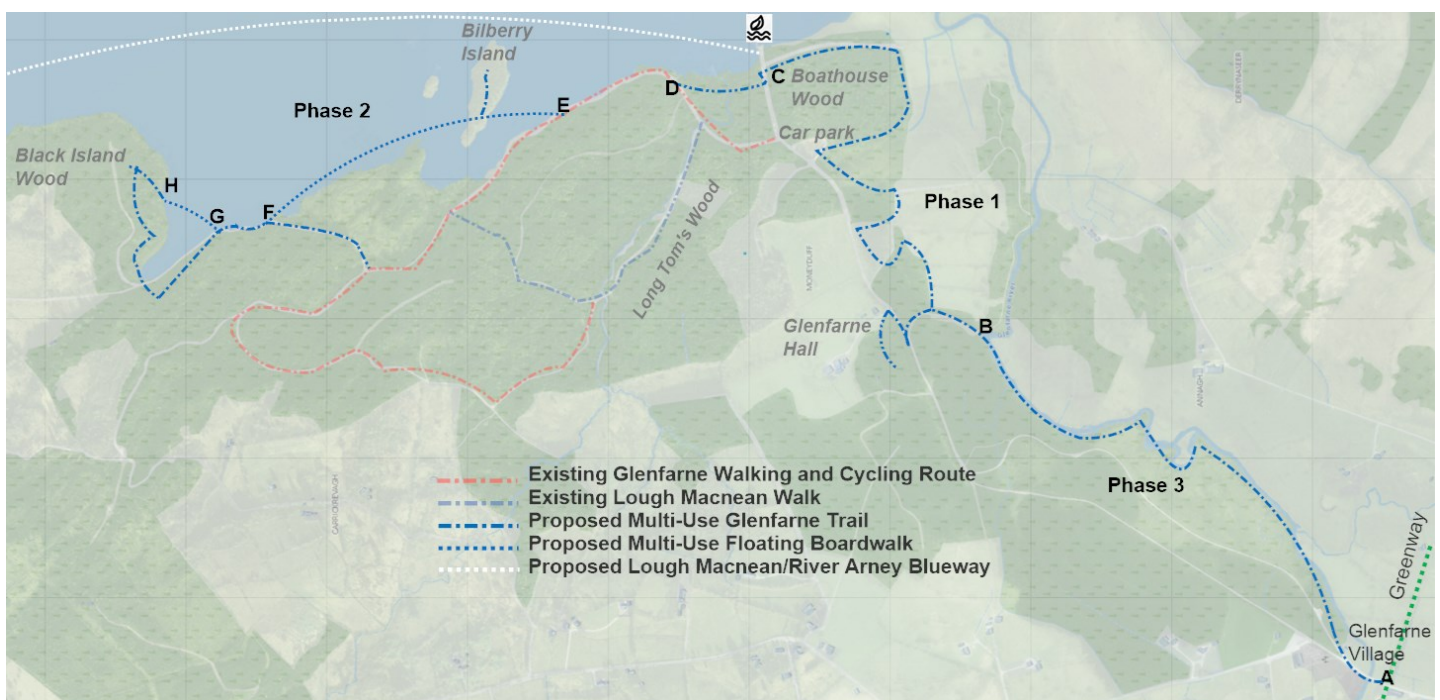
This section of the route will connect Glenfarne Wood and the Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Railway (SLNCR) Greenway when this Greenway is completed. This connectivity between the Wood and the Greenway positions Glenfarne as an important Greenway hub and adds value to the Greenway experience.



Destination

Significant Features
Destination Experiences

- Phase 1: River, Lake Island
 - Panorama Platform
- A destination in its own right.



Long Tom's View (Myle's Big Stone)

The existing Glenfarne Cycle and Walk Loop leads to one of the high points in the Wood known as 'Long Toms' where a glacial erratic boulder 'Myle's Big Stone' was deposited. The ground here falls steeply towards the lake and there is potential for a viewing platform extending out from the Myles Big Stone area to provide a panorama of the forest and the lake which can not be otherwise seen within the forest.

This wooden platform will stand above the treeline and will include two panorama information panels:

- Panel 1: the geological and social history of the area. This will be one of five such information sites within the wood.
- Panel 2: information on the Marble Arch Cave Global Geo Park and the associated nearby features at Cuilcagh and Enniskillen.



Development Stage: Destination

The Diaspora Arboretum

An arboretum is an outdoor living tree museum which can promote conservation and engage in public outreach and education to protect and preserve trees. The theme of the Glenfarne arboretum is primarily one of remembrance and the choice and layout of the trees will reflect this for example:

- Geographic: a section or series of native trees which represent various parts of the County.
- Temporal/numerical: the number of trees representing the number of years since the peak of emigration or the number of individuals who have left the area.

The following development elements are proposed:

- Where possible native Irish trees and reinstating of some oak species as a particular focus:
- Soil type, wind exposure, drainage will impact on planting choice:
- Further engagement with heritage groups and botanical or research organisations will determine the theme and specific planting plan for the site:
- A circa 2 meter wide boardwalk with alongside information and interpretive panels, will traverse the arboretum.

The arboretum will be located along the shoreside immediately to the West of the slipway and while the ground at this location is poor due to waterlogging in places, a mix of boardwalk and stone trail will make this accessible for all ages. Some drainage works will be required at this site.



Development Stage: Animate

Animation actions can generate interest, add variety, and signpost hidden gems. There are a number of passive and active animation options for Glenfarne Wood including commercial provision and itinerary awareness.



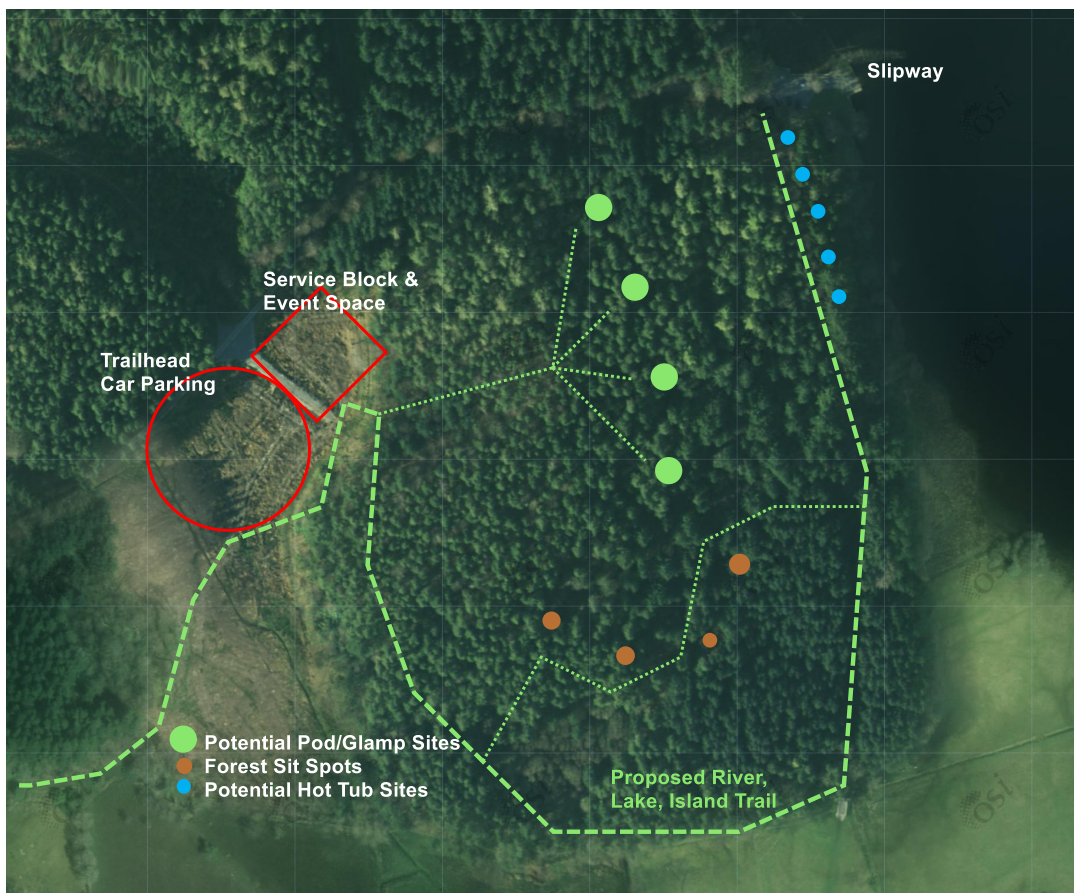
- Activities
 - Events
 - Facilities
- A seasonal third party provider/services Sustained activity provision. Event provision.

Commercial Provision

Most of the recreational use of Glenfarne Wood will continue to be through self-led activities such as walking, cycling, swimming or angling. However, there are a number of commercial opportunities⁶ to increase the recreational value and activity options in Glenfarne Wood, for example:

- Active Adventure: a range of water and land activities such as kayaking, Stand Up Paddle Boarding (SUP), raft building, dinghy sailing, orienteering and archery. Lifestyle activities such as yoga and forest bathing can also be delivered commercially.
- Passive Recreation: including Hot tub and glamping, accommodation pods, food/snack services.
- Events: 5k race, Blueway/raft race, open water swimming race.

These activities are likely to be seasonal and locations within and adjacent to the proposed trailhead and service block have been identified to potentially host⁷ these commercial activities subject to expressions of interest from third parties such as sports clubs, the local community and commercial activity providers.



⁷ Any events or commercial activities in Glenfarne Wood must be pre-approved by Coillte via their licencing process.

⁸ A number of contractual, environmental and planning obligations are required for such developments.

Sample Itinerary

The following is a sample outdoor recreation itinerary which will be possible with the development of this River, Lake, Island trail:

Oak Wood to Bilberry Island (1.6 km one-way).

Leaving the rear of the carpark following the River, Lake, Island trail to the edge of the Boathouse Wood, the participant then will take a side route along a smaller path into this Scots pine forest to one of a scattering of 'sit spots' to bath in the forest. When they enter this forest bathing area they will pass an information panel which explains the concept of forest bathing and the various methods.

Leaving the forest they will re-join the trail as it passes alongside the lake and from here make their way to the entrance to the small arboretum near to the slipway.

This arboretum will be developed to commemorate the people of North Leitrim who have emigrated, and tree sections will reference specific townlands in the county.

On leaving the arboretum they will connect with the lake road near Lady's view. This small sandy area continues to be used as a wild swimming location and hosts 'Reflectress' one of five sculptures along the Glenfarne trails.

A boardwalk links out from the lake shore and the short 200-meter section will bring the participant onto Bilberry island where they can experience this remote rocky island. A simple trail and three sit spots on the island shore will provide an opportunity for reflection and views across the lake.

The return journey can follow the lake road or take the higher trail to the top of 'Tom's Wood' via the Glenfarne Walking and Cycling route.



Existing Glenfarne Wood Sculpture



Existing Glenfarne Wood Sculpture



Sample Forest Bathing Sit Spot

Development Stage: Greenway Hub

Context

The Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway (SL&NCR) was a private railway consisting of one main line which traversed counties Cavan, Fermanagh, Leitrim and Sligo. Closed as a functioning railway in 1957, 72 kilometres of this line are to be reopened as a recreational Greenway for use by walkers and cyclists. This is a cross-border multi Council project (Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Leitrim County Council, and Sligo County Council, Cavan County Council), which will provide a recreational corridor that encourages linear cross border recreation as well as fostering the development of key recreational nodes along the route.



- Physical Link
 - Connecting to the Greenway
 - Glenfarne Village Cluster
- Traffic from the Greenway.
Adding value to the Greenway



SL&NCR Greenway Route, © The Impartial Reporter

Glenfarne Greenway Hub

The facilities within Glenfarne village and the proposed recreational developments in Glenfarne Wood will position the Glenfarne section of the proposed SL&NCR Greenway as a recreational hub. The Glenfarne Wood will be a key resource by physically connecting the SL&NCR Greenway with the Glenfarne Wood and Lough Macnean Upper. This Glenfarne Greenway Hub adds value to the Greenway user by providing a varied recreation resource and a largely looped side-route to the linear Greenway.

There are two development aspects to realising the Glenfarne Greenway Hub:

- **Connecting Infrastructure:** physically connecting the Greenway and the village of Glenfarne with the Glenfarne Wood. This will be accomplished through the development of the third phase of the River, Lake Island multi-use trail commencing at the entrance to the Glenfarne Wood and via a short greenway section between the Glenfarne Railway Station and the Glenfarne Wood entrance.
- **Market Positioning:** linking the cluster of resources via a promotional and animating process which includes Glenfarne Greenway activity and tourism itineraries and supporting promotional materials.

The recreational and tourism facilities of the Marble Arch Caves and Geo Park, the Ballroom of Romance, Culcaigh Mountain Boardwalk, Cavan Burren Park and the Shannon Pot will be augmented by this Glenfarne Greenway Hub element.

Timescale

The River, Lake Island Trail will be developed in phases within Glenfarne Wood as resources are available, while the connecting link with Glenfarne section of the Greenway will be undertaken as the SL&NCR Greenway is established.

Glenfarne Strategy: Next Steps

Within and Beyond the Trees

Glenfarne wood is not just an important recreation site but it is also a commercial forest supplying local and national sawmills. As such it is a multipurpose forest. The proposed recreation layout has been planned to zone recreation away from the commercial forest crops where possible. However, there will be certain areas where commercial forest objectives will need to be moderated to accommodate recreation through greater open space, species diversification, alternate silvicultural systems etc. Coillte's local management team will use this strategy to guide the changes needed, however, Glenfarne will continue to remain a working forest.



Next Steps

Following the initial Options Report this Strategy has distilled down the options into a set of viable stages and actions that combine practical, realistic and sustainable suggestions with a suitable level of ambition.

The delivery of these development stages will be on a phased basis over a number of years and dependant, for the most part, on successful funding applications to the various sponsors of tourism, rural development and outdoor recreation. As these funding opportunities arise, this strategy will be used as a guide to pursue recreational development in Glenfarne Wood.

The Preparation Stage is the crucial next step and Coillte and Leitrim County Council commit to continue to cooperate on realising this first stage and in actively pursuing any further opportunities which are consistent with this strategy.

