

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND  
DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT NESS WOOD,  
COUNTY LONDONDERRY. ARTICLE 24 OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION AND AMENITY LANDS  
(NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1985.

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (the Department), having consulted the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside and being satisfied that the area delineated and described on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the flora and fauna and accordingly needs to be specially protected, hereby declares the area to be an area of special scientific interest to be known as the 'Ness Wood area of special scientific interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its woodland flora and characteristic associated fauna. The majority of the woodland on this site is semi-natural, although some felling of native trees and replanting with non-native species has occurred in the past. The semi-natural wood exhibits a markedly calcifugous character, with a wide diversity in structure and plant communities present. The site is notable for its rich bryophyte and epiphytic lichen community, and is the only known Northern Ireland location for the moss Fissidens celticus.

The woodland covers both flanks and floor of the deep Burntollet Glen, along a length of nearly 1 km. In addition to woodland, the site contains a range of physical features including a high waterfall "The Ness", a deep gorge, cliffs, rock faces and scattered boulder scree, all of which contribute to the overall diversity of the site.

The canopy on the free-draining slopes is dominated by Sessile Oak Quercus petraea but this is occasionally replaced by planted Beech Fagus sylvatica. The understorey is mostly formed by Hazel Corylus avellana with Holly Ilex aquifolium, Downy Birch Betula pubescens and Rowan Sorbus aucuparia the common associates. The calcifugous ground flora is characterised by a mixture of locally dominant Greater Wood-rush Luzula sylvatica, Bilberry Vaccinium myrtillus and bryophytes. Localised base enrichment results in the presence of a more calcicolous woodland on flushed slopes, characterised by the predominance of Ash Fraxinus excelsior in the canopy and Lesser Celandine Ranunculus ficaria, Bluebell Hyacinthoides non-scripta and Wood Anemone Anemone nemorosa in the ground flora. This calcicolous woodland, along with pockets of wet woodland occurring on the waterlogged valley floor, increases the overall diversity of the wood.

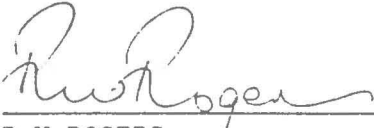
#### SCHEDULE

The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the flora and fauna of the area:

1. Any change in the present annual pattern and intensity of grazing including any change in the type of livestock used or change in livestock feeding practice.
2. The disturbance or modification of the vegetation, land surface, sub-surface, geomorphological features or water levels, whether by engineering works, drainage works, the application, spreading or storage of any material whatsoever on or to the vegetation or land surface, or by any other means.
3. Burning.

4. The introduction or release into the area of any wild, feral or domestic animal, plant or seed. "Animal" includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate.
5. The killing or removal of any wild animal other than those notified as pest or quarry species under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. "Animal", includes any mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish or invertebrate.
6. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, other than that carried out as part of the current woodland management.
7. Changes in the current tree or woodland management, including afforestation, planting, clear or selective felling or coppicing.
8. The use of vehicle or craft likely to damage the vegetation or disturb the wildlife.
9. Recreational, educational or research activities likely to damage the vegetation or disturb the wildlife.
10. Changes in game, fish or waterfowl management.

Sealed With the Official Seal of the  
Department of the Environment for  
Northern Ireland on 7 October, 1993

  
R W ROGERS  
Assistant Secretary

Joanne Stockman  
Civil Servant  
Both of Stormont  
Belfast

#### FOOTNOTES

- (a) Please note the consent by the Department to any of the above operations or activities does not constitute planning permission. Where required, planning permission must be applied for in the usual manner to the Department under Part IV of the Planning (NI) Order 1991. Operations or activities covered by planning permission are not normally covered in the list of Notifiable Operations.
- (b) Also note that many of the operations and activities listed above are capable of being carried out either on a large scale or in a very small way. While it is impossible to define exactly what is "large" and what is "small", the Department would intend to approach each case in a common sense and practical way. It is very unlikely that small scale operations would give rise for concern and if this was the case the Department would give consent, particularly if there is a long history of the operation being undertaken in that precise location.



An Agency within the Department of the  
**Environment**  
www.environment.ni.gov.uk



## **NESS WOOD**

### **Views About Management**

#### **The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Article 28(2)**

#### **A statement of Environment and Heritage Service's views about the management of Ness Wood Area of Special Scientific Interest ("the ASSI")**

This statement represents the views of Environment and Heritage Service about the management of the ASSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the area's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Environment and Heritage Service has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of the ASSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the ASSI and there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. It is also very important to recognise that management may need to change with time.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation or activity. The written consent of Environment and Heritage Service is still required before carrying out any operation or activity likely to damage the features of special interest (see the Schedule on pages 1 and 2 of the attached document B for a list of these operations and activities). Environment and Heritage Service welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the ASSI to ensure that the management of this area maintains and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

### **MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES**

#### **Management principles for the Woodland**

Woodland is an excellent habitat for wildlife. It provides food and shelter for a wide variety of mammals, birds and invertebrates. Environment and Heritage Service would like to see the habitat and its species continue to be conserved and enhanced.

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the woodland, through the development of its structure and the conservation of its associated native plants and animals. Specific objectives include:

Encourage the woodland to become more “mature” by avoiding disturbance to the trees. The structure of the wood will gradually become more diverse, with well-developed canopy, shrub and ground layers, and an abundance of species like Ivy, mosses, liverworts and lichens that live on the trees themselves.

Encourage the retention of dead wood, both on the woodland floor and still standing in the canopy. Dead wood is a very important habitat for some of the less conspicuous woodland species, such as fungi and invertebrates.

Encourage regeneration of woodland and discourage damage to trees and shrubs through the control of grazing and browsing. In general, natural regeneration is preferable to planting.

Discourage non-native species, especially those that tend to spread at the expense of native wildlife.

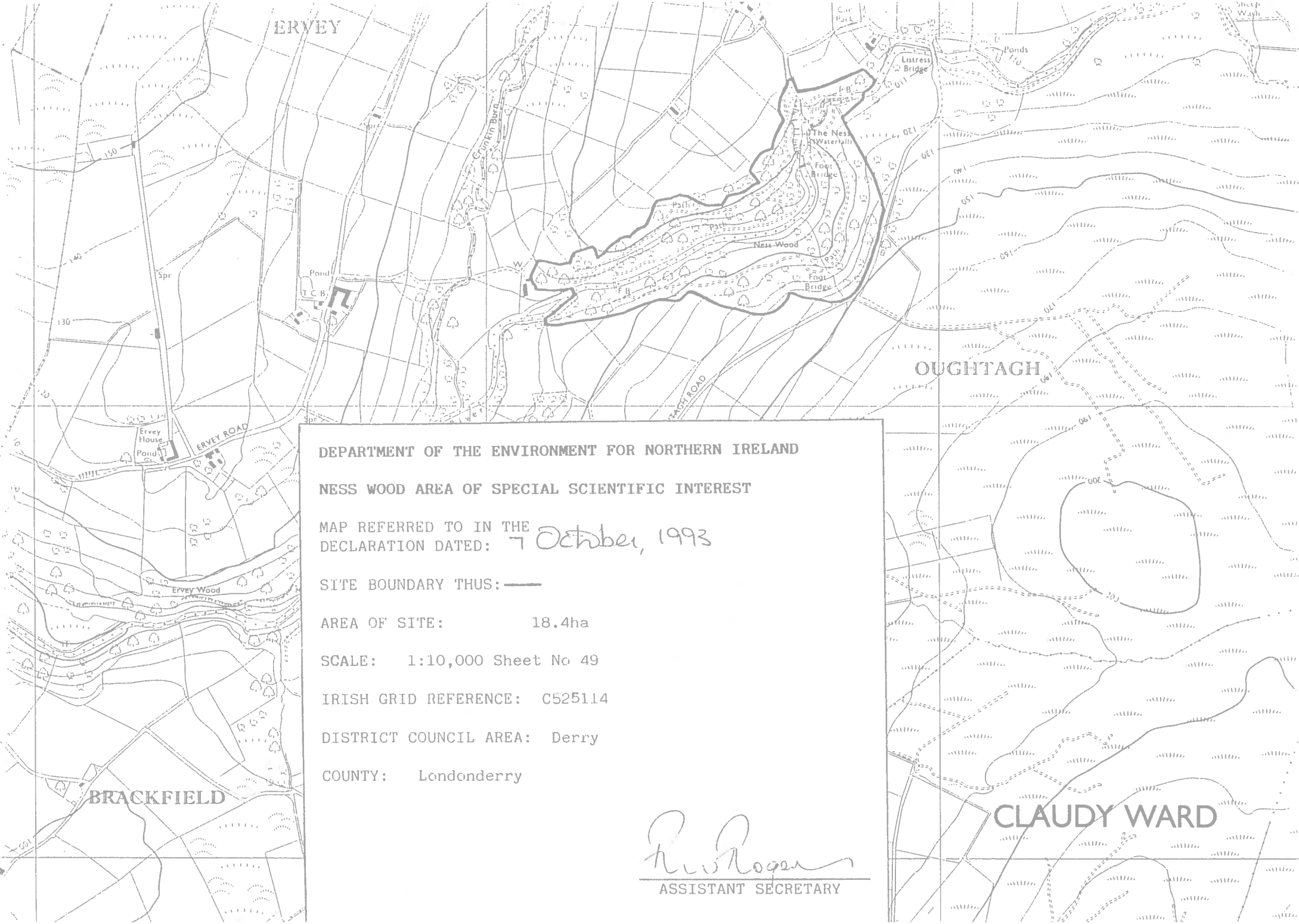
Maintain the diversity and quality of habitats associated with the woodland, such as scrub and grassland. These adjoining habitats can often be very important for wildlife.



---

**C McParland**  
Authorised Officer

Dated the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2005



ERVEY

OUGHTAGH

BRACKFIELD

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND  
NESS WOOD AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

MAP REFERRED TO IN THE  
DECLARATION DATED: 7 October, 1993

SITE BOUNDARY THUS: ———

AREA OF SITE: 18.4ha

SCALE: 1:10,000 Sheet No 49

IRISH GRID REFERENCE: C525114

DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA: Derry

COUNTY: Londonderry

*R. W. Rogers*  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

CLAUDY WARD