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An tSeirbhís Páirceanna
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Connemara National Park: *Supporting incomes in the local community*

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- Opened in 1980
- 300,000 visitors per annum
- 2,297 ha in size
- 18 staff
- IUCN Category II
- Scenic mountains, expanses of blanket bog, heaths, grasslands, rivers and woodlands
- Part of the Twelve Bens/Garraun Special Area of Conservation

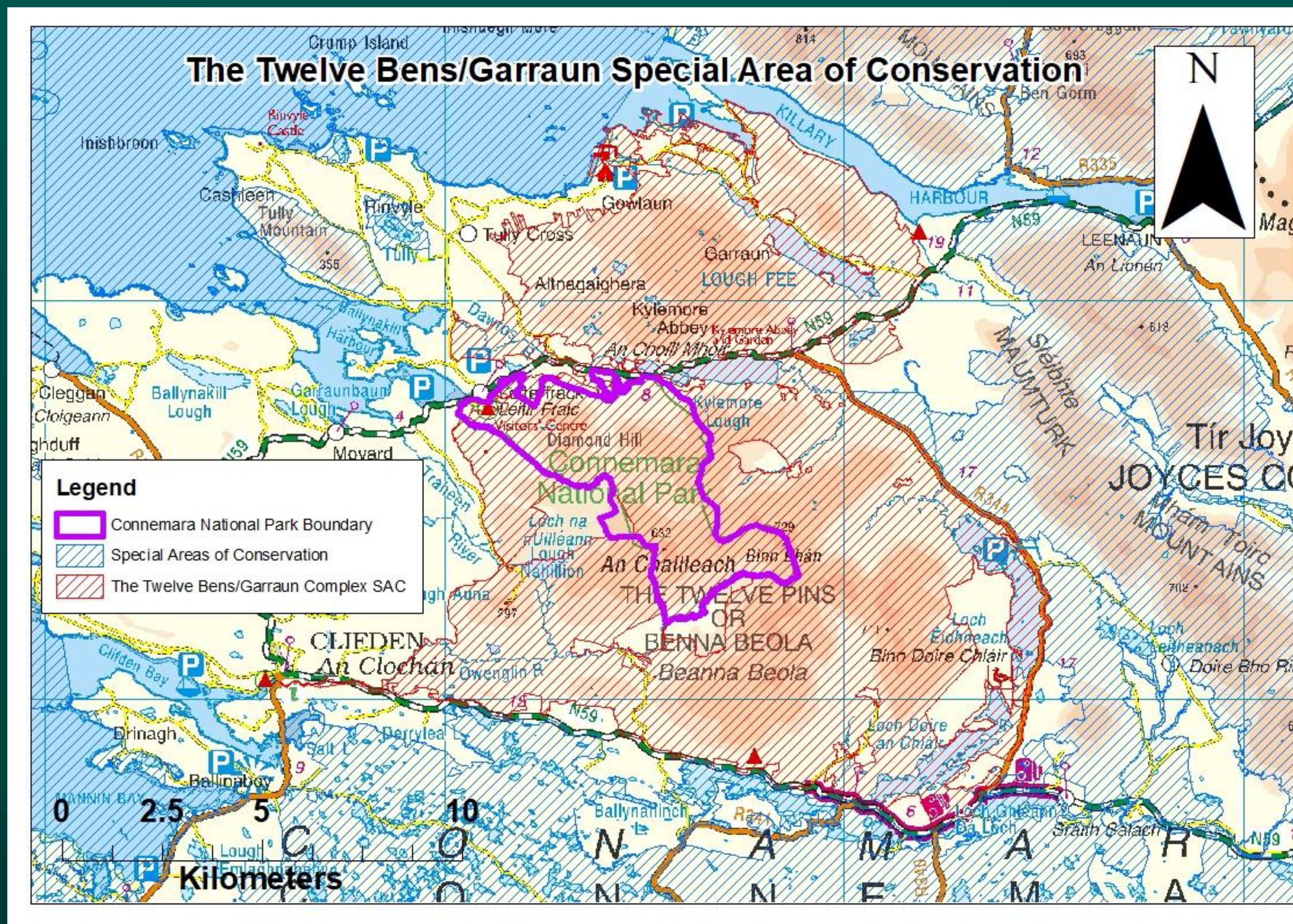




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- The Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex Special Area of Conservation
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011
- Nine Annex I Habitats – e.g. Blanket bogs, Old sessile oak woodland
- Four Annex II Species e.g. Otter, Salmon & Freshwater Pearl Mussel





OVERALL VISITOR PROFILE

Visitor Origin



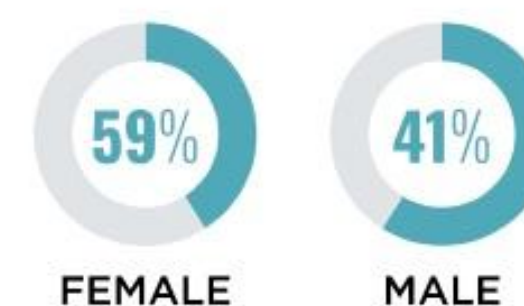
Age Profile



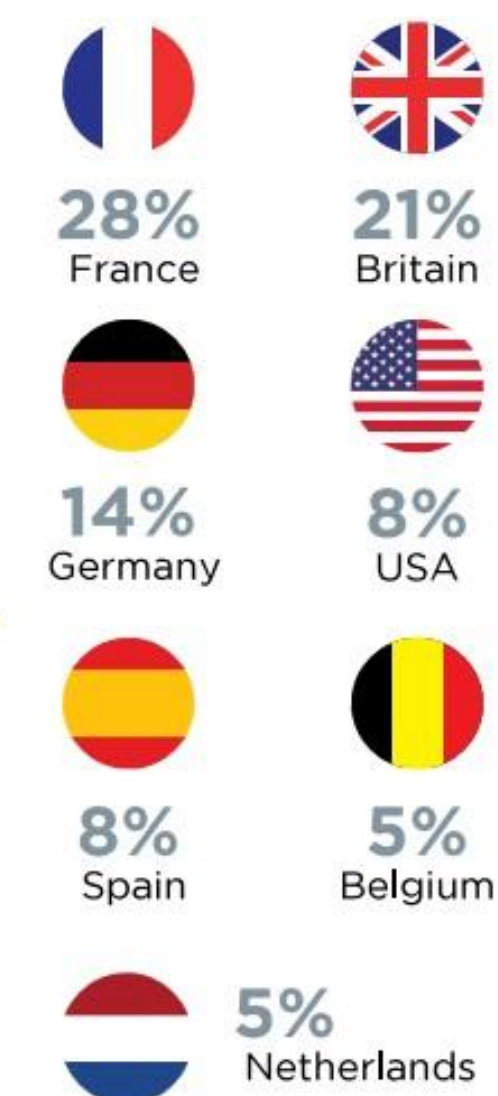
Group Composition



Gender



Overseas Visitors





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Visitor Experience

- Exhibition in the visitor centre
- Audio Visual show
- Connemara ponies
- Picnic areas
- Children's playground
- Café
- Nature trails including the 6.5 km iconic Diamond Hill Walk that brings visitors to the 442 m summit of Diamond Hill
- Natural habitats



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NPWS Review -2020/2021

- Implementation of an ambitious plan for organisational renewal and for nature
- Our National Parks became stand alone regions within NPWS organisational structure



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Connemara National Park – Staffing levels (17 additional)

| | 2022 | 2024 |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Regional Manager | Connemara NP, Wild Nephin NP and Mayo & west Galway | Connemara NP |
| District Conservation Officer | Connemara NP & west Galway | Connemara NP (Position Vacant) |
| Conservation Ranger | Connemara NP and Connemara | Connemara NP |
| Foreman | Western Division | Western Division |
| Administrative | Connemara | Connemara |
| General Operatives | 4 Permanent roles 3 Temporary roles | 11 Permanent roles |
| Supervisor Guide | Connemara NP & Wild Nephin NP | Connemara NP (Position Vacant) |
| Guides | Head Guide & 4 Visitor Guides (2 retired) | Head Guide & 6 - 8 (TBC) Visitor Guides |
| Education Officer | 1 Permanent roles | 2 Permanent roles |
| Ecologist | N/A | 1 (TBC) |



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Ongoing and future projects: *Employment opportunities*



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Invasive species management

- *Rhododendron ponticum*
- Montbretia (*Crocasmia x crocosmiflora*)
- Lesser knotweed (*Persicaria campanulata*)
- Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*)
- Fuchsia (*Fuchsia magellanica*)



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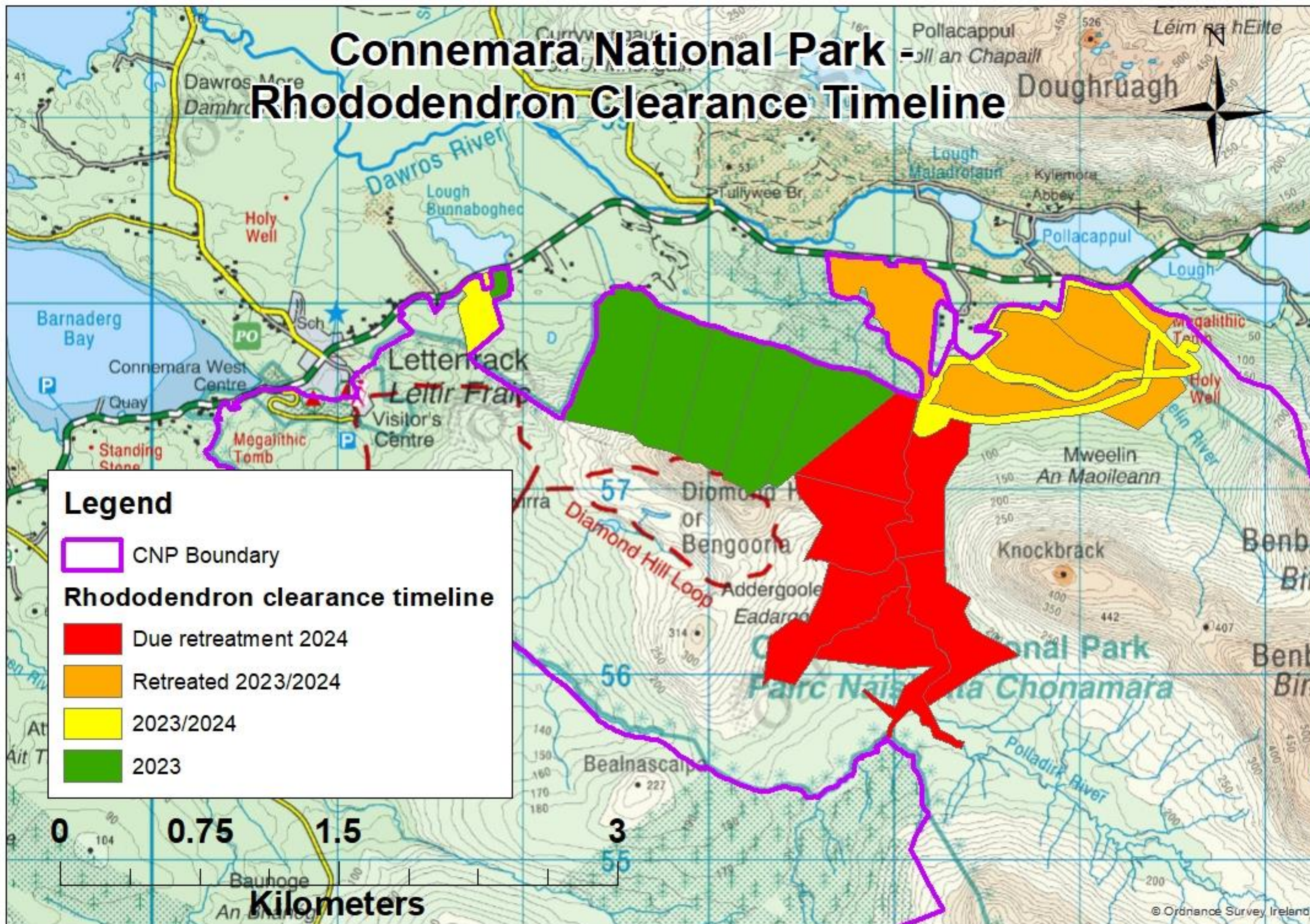
Invasive species management

- *Rhododendron ponticum*
 - *343.6 ha treated since 2020*
 - *Over fourteen people employed from the local area*



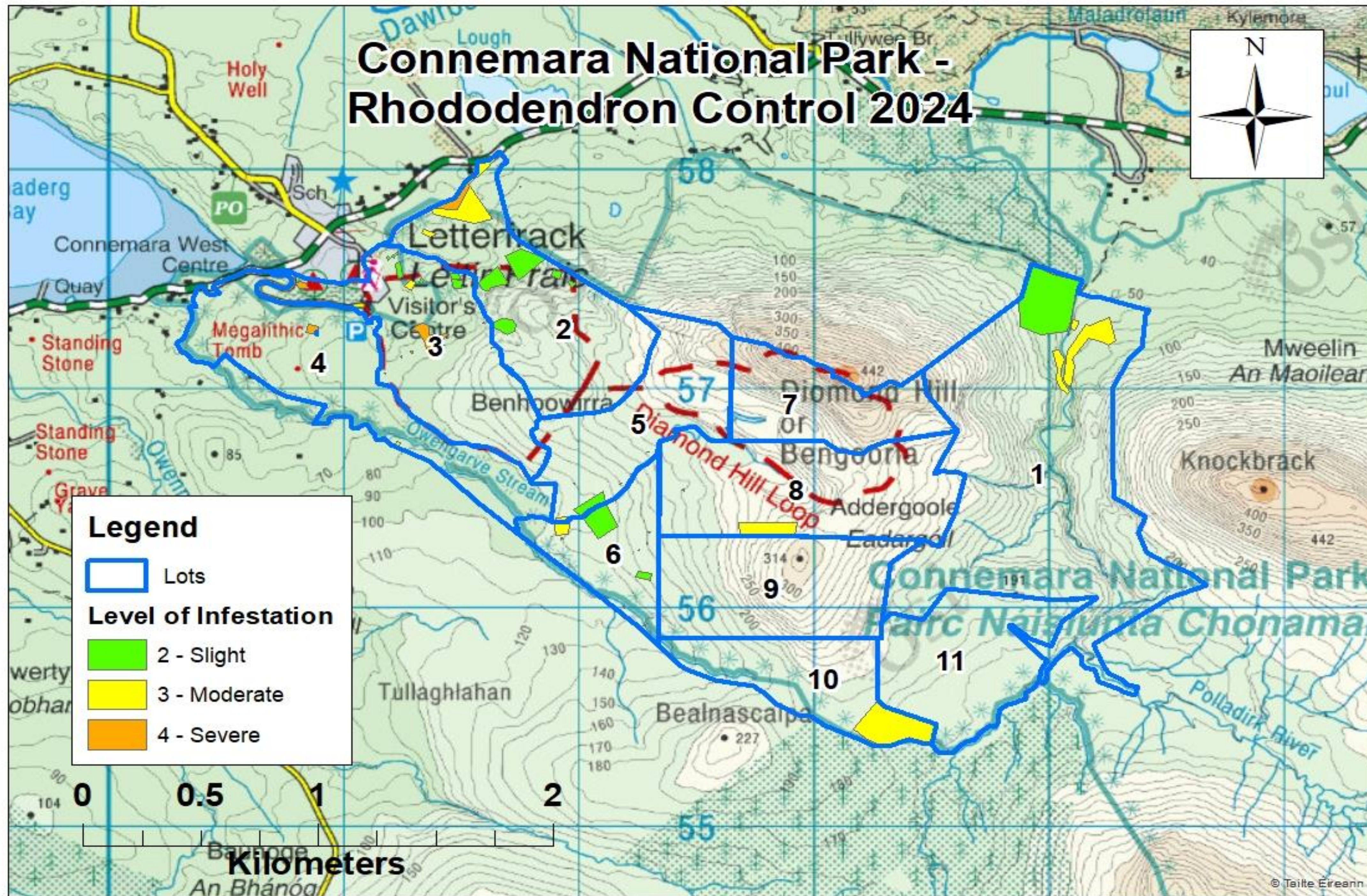


Connemara National Park Rhododendron Clearance Timeline





Connemara National Park - Rhododendron Control 2024







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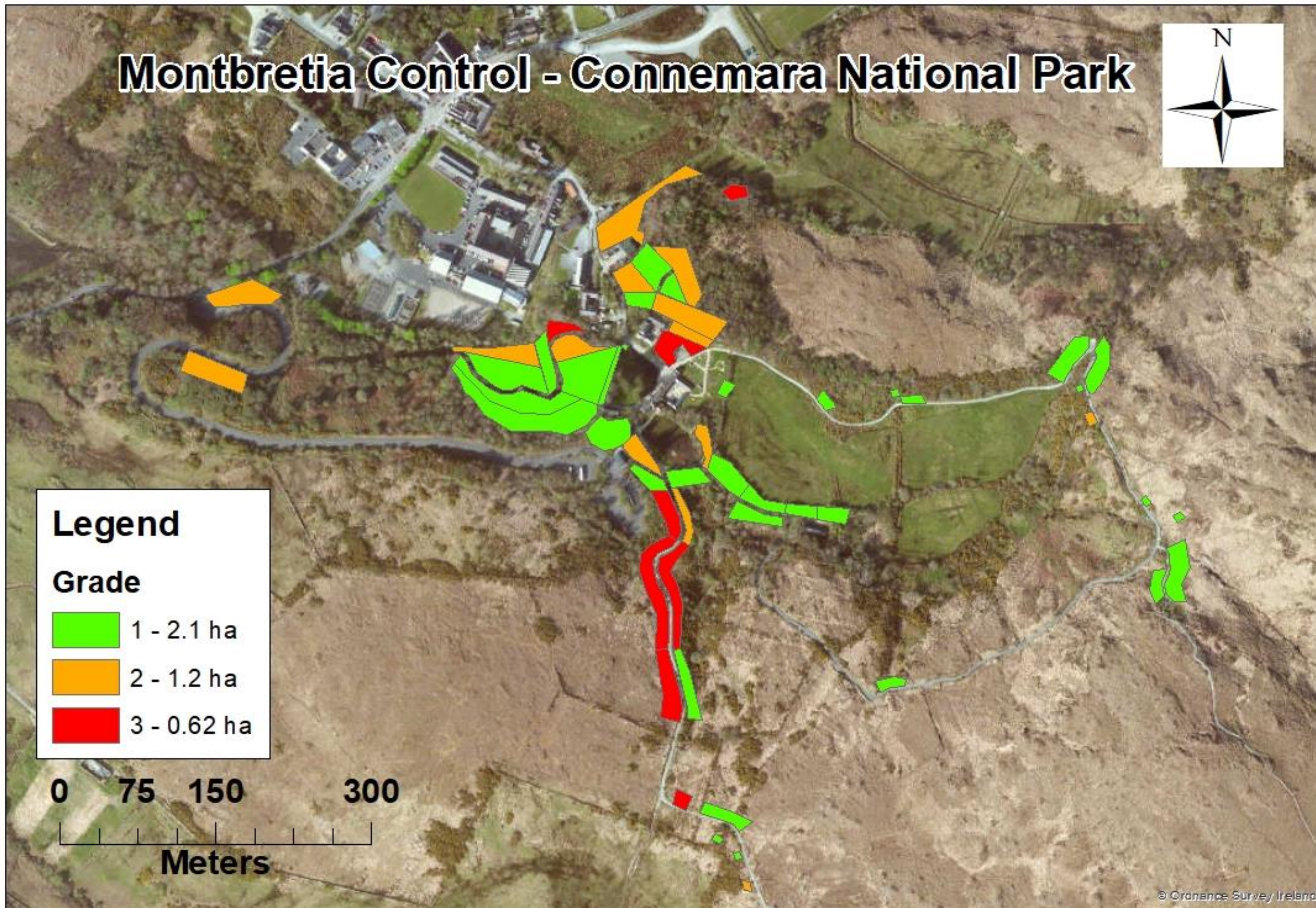
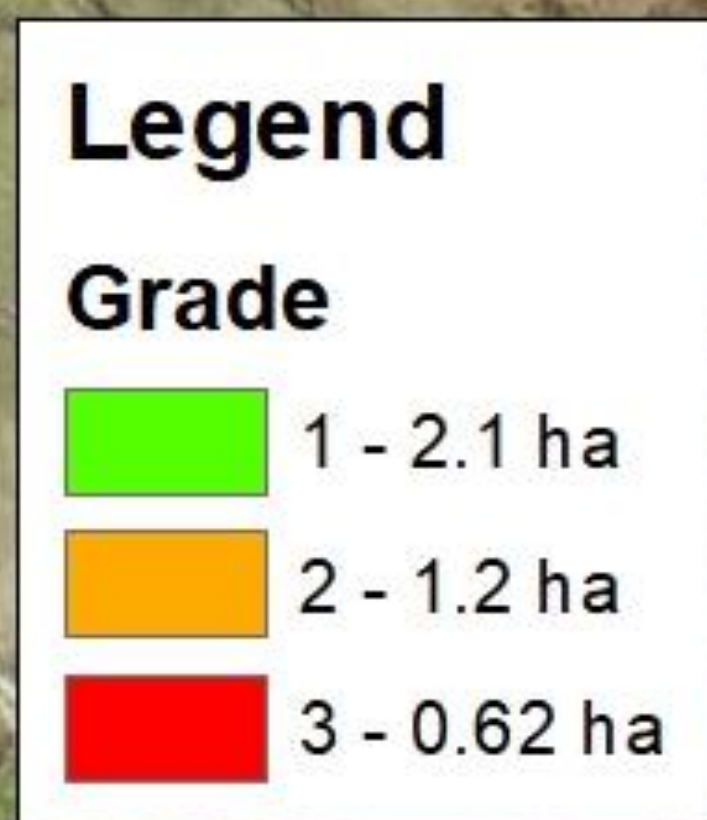
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Invasive species management

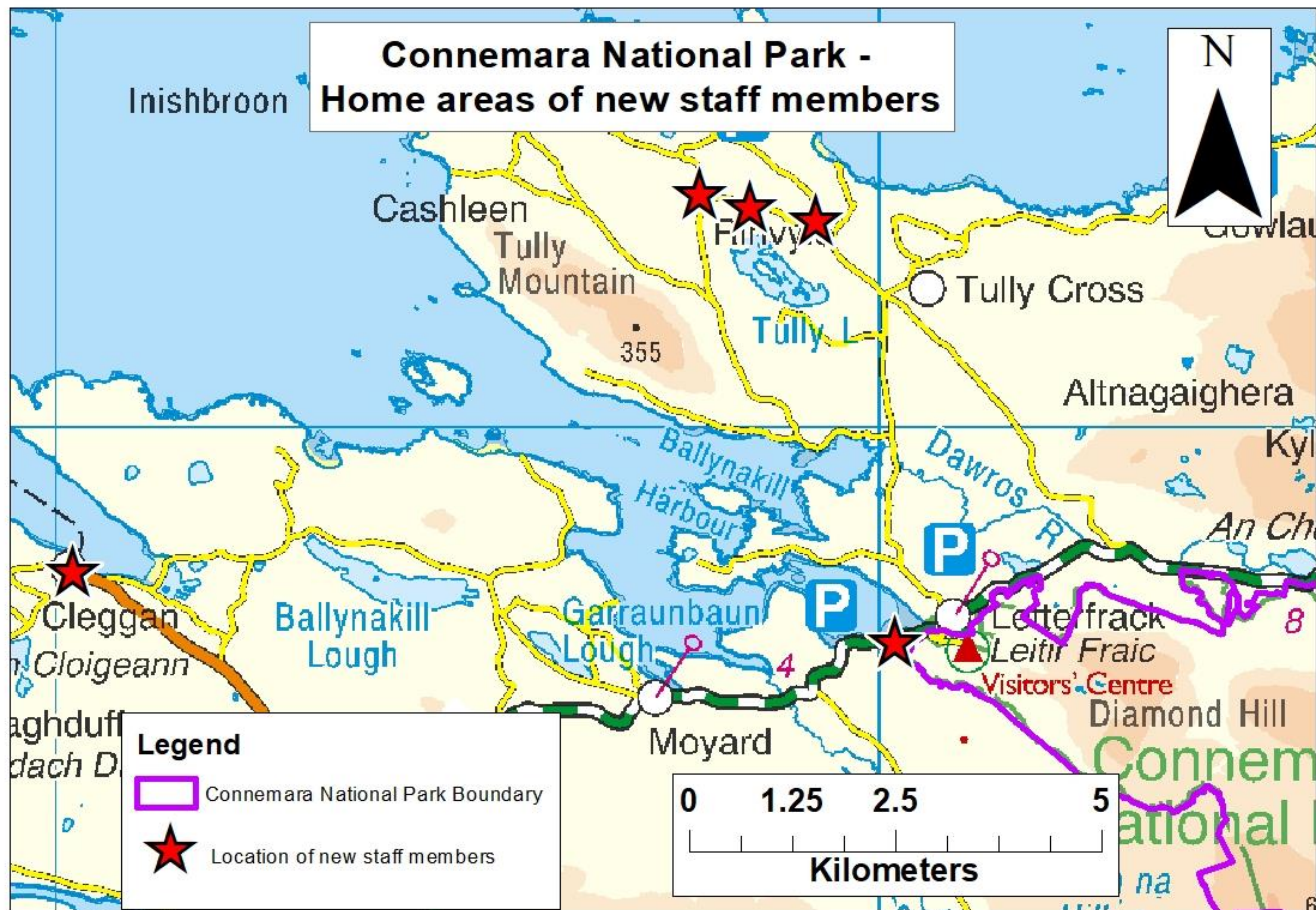
- Montbretia (*Crocasmia x crocosmiflora*)
 - *Control programme began in 2023, continued into 2024*
 - *4 ha of infected area treated to date*



Montbretia Control - Connemara National Park









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- Repair of stock proof fencing
- By year end 2024 over 16 km of fencing replaced
- 5 separate contractors



Photo: Eamonn McLoughlin

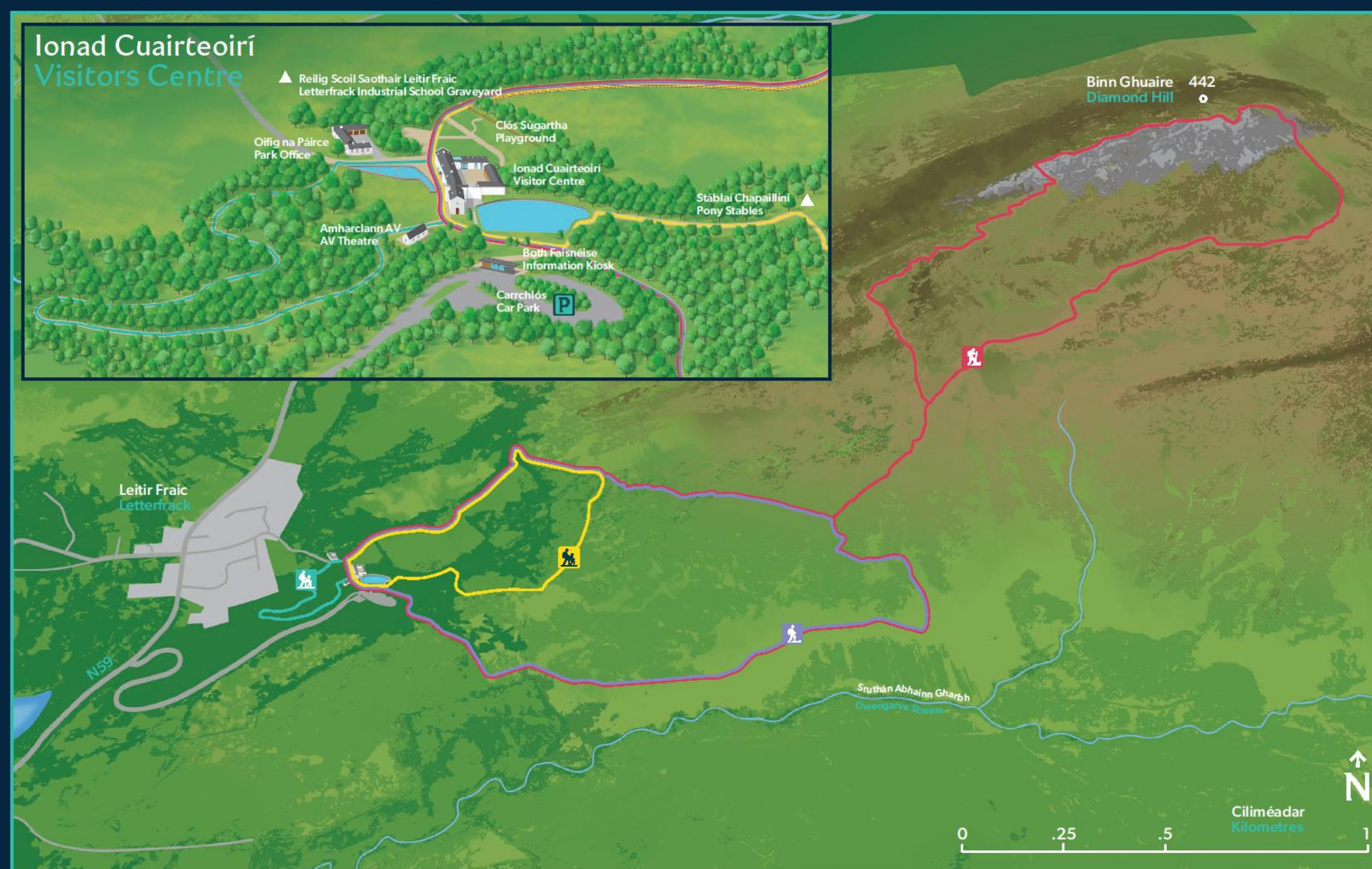


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- Over 8 km of existing trail network
- Requires constant maintenance
- Since 2023, two separate contractors have undertaken repair works

Treoir Conaire Pháirc Náisiúnta Chonamara Connemara National Park Trail Guide



Treoir maidir le Cosáin Trail Guide

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | Cosáin na Stráitheán Buidé Faoise Stratheden Bog Trail Easy | → 1.5 km → 80 méitir / 265 ft → 40 m → 130 ft |
| | Cosáin Dóirn Chail Eile Faoise Dóirn Chail Eile Trail Easy | → 500 m → 15 méitir / 49 ft → 20 m → 65 ft |
| | Cosáin Binn Ghuaire Umhórach Dian Upper Diamond Hill Walk Difficult | → 16.7 km → 2 uair / 1h 20 méitir / 130 ft → 350 m → 1150 ft |
| | Cosáin Binn Ghuaire Iomhórach Measúrtha Lower Diamond Hill Walk Moderate | → 3 km → 1 uair / 1h → 50 m → 165 ft |

Chloígh ar 999 nó 112 i gcás d'áiríochta
Call 999 or 112 in case of emergency

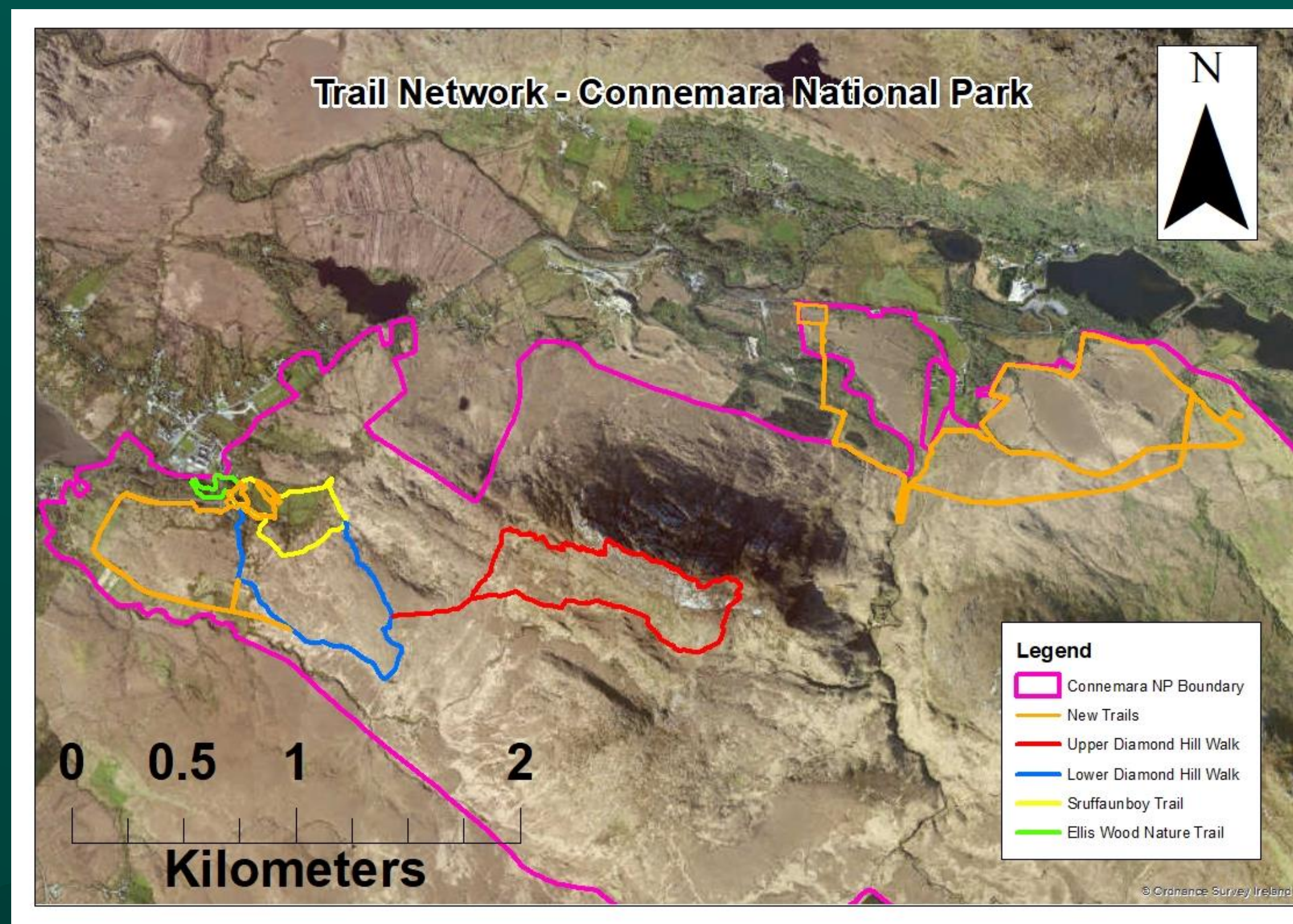




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- Fáilte Ireland Trail Project
- Over 8 km of additional trails
- €1.9 million awarded in 2019

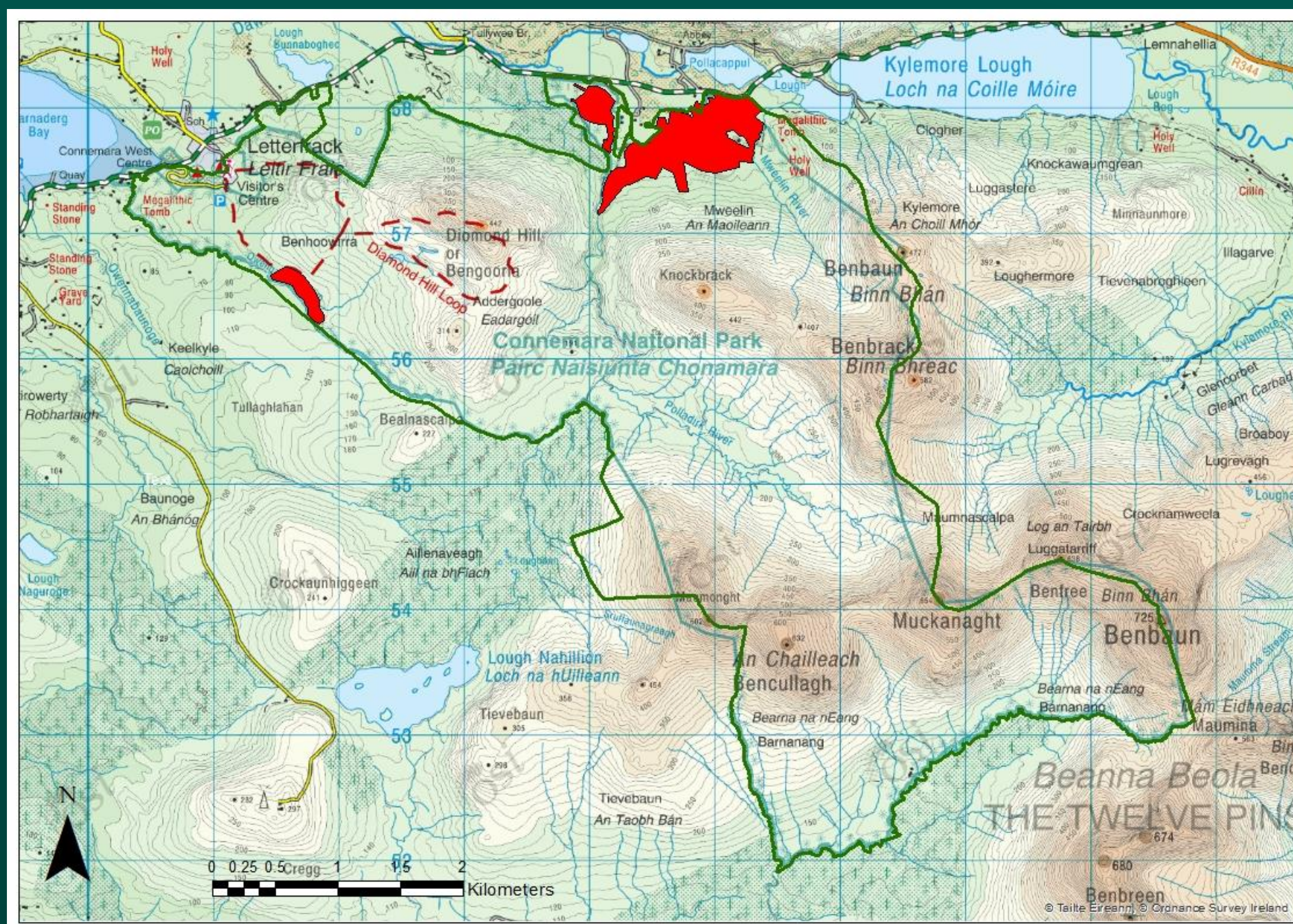




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- Peatland Restoration Project
- 75 ha of blanket bog to be restored in Connemara NP





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Development of a new/upgraded Visitor Centre and facilities at Connemara National Park?





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Indirect employment at Connemara National Park

- *Café (over 12 staff)*
- *Cleaning service (over 4 staff)*

Contractors, local suppliers, local businesses, tourism, accommodation etc.



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Thank you

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