



1 - Enhancing Landscapes

“Through the appreciation and analysis of landscape context, forests and woodlands can be designed so that they make a positive contribution to the character of a local area, and in some areas create attractive new landscapes.”

[UK Forestry Standard, 4th Edition \(2017\)](#)

West Fermanagh Forestry Planning Area (FPA) contains a varied range of landscapes. The north and west of the FPA features forested limestone uplands and the valleys between them. To the north the Magho Cliffs overlook Lower Lough Erne, and form the northern end of a dramatic scarp which continues southward to Belmore Mountain and Benaughlin. To the west of the scarp is an upland plateau which comprises an extensive mosaic of [coniferous](#) forests that includes Ballintempo, Big Dog, Carrigan, Conagher and Lough Navar forests. These areas are intersected by moorland and small loughs. The remainder of the landscape is dominated by Upper and Lower Lough Erne as well as the lowlands and drumlins associated with the River Erne valley. The lough fringes are well wooded with [ancient woodlands](#) surviving on many islands.

Most (65%) of West Fermanagh FPA is in the Lough Erne Lakeland [Regional Landscape Character Area \(RLCA\)](#) with the remainder in Fermanagh Caveland RLCA. These RLCAs are themselves comprised of smaller [Landscape Character Areas](#). Forest Landscape Units reflect landscape similarities between existing Forest Service forests and are not always closely related to RLCAs or LCAs.

The majority (80%) of Forest Service managed forests within the FPA are located in the uplands of Fermanagh Caveland RLCA where they account for 28% of the area of the RCLA. The forests within this RCLA include Ballintempo, Belmore, Big Dog, Carrigan, Conagher, Garrison, Lough Navar and Marlbank, which collectively account for 15 % of the Forest Service estate in NI. Forest Service managed forests located in Lough Erne Lakeland RLCA include Castle Archdale, Castlecaldwell, Derrylin & Naan Island, Ely Lodge, Necarne, Riversdale, Sillees and Tullychurry forests.

Non-Forest Service forests and woodlands include the many fragmented small [broadleaved](#) and [mixed woods](#) scattered throughout the FPA. The broadleaved woodlands on the edges and islands of Lough Erne are distinctive features of the west Fermanagh landscape. There are a number of larger, mainly broadleaved, plantations around Crom Estate and on the islands and edges of Upper Lough Erne. Examples include [Reilly and Gole Woods Nature Reserve](#).

Forests and woodlands, therefore, contribute to the various features of the west Fermanagh landscape, and can enhance the experience of visitors to the area. Foresters acknowledge that the visual impacts of forests are important and these can be improved by modifying the design of a forest to compliment the local landscape. Harsh visual impacts can be minimised by removing straight lines or softening hard edges, and by encouraging more tree planting.

Opportunity: Identify where the appearance of forests in the landscape can be improved by modifying the shape of felling boundaries and carefully designed regeneration of felled areas.

Opportunity: Consider the potential for softening ‘hard’ forest edges by encouraging the afforestation of neighbouring agricultural land subject to the landowners’ long-term intentions.

Activity: Undertake visual assessments of Forest Service forests from key viewpoints in the surrounding countryside to determine the potential influence forest management decisions could have on the landscape.

Activity: Apply [UK Forestry Standard](#) requirements and forest landscape design guidelines using Geographic Information Systems tools to undertake assessments and present options.



Outcomes	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increased potential to demonstrate landscape improvements using the regeneration and design plans.- Illustrate forests' positive contribution to tourism in the West Fermanagh FPA.- Stakeholders can contribute to forest design planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Illustrate forests' positive contribution to tourism in the West Fermanagh FPA.

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