

TIER 2

ENVIRONMENTAL RISK ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX B

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

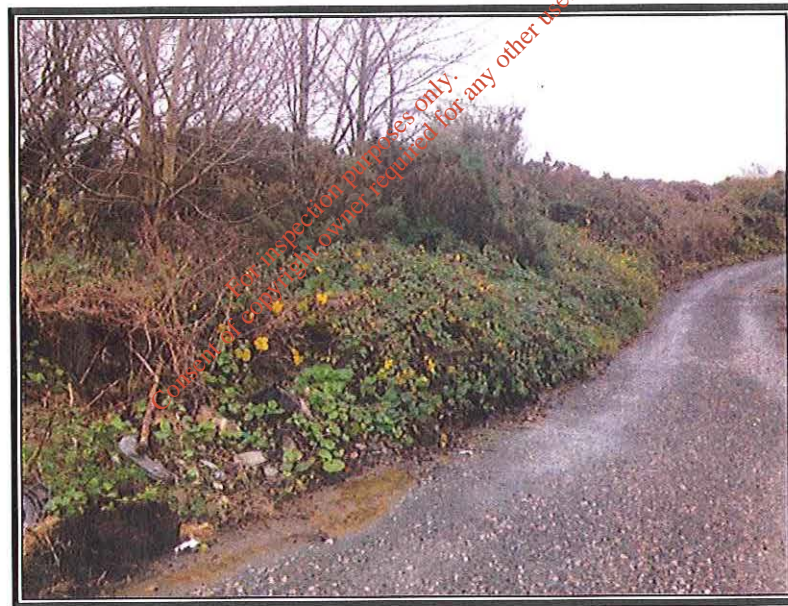
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**ECOLOGICAL REPORT OF A DISUSED LANDFILL
FACILITY AT DUNAREE,
KINGSCOURT, CO. CAVAN.**



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1: Introduction

A comprehensive assessment of the ecological status of an historic landfill was carried out in August 2013 by Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM of Whitehill Environmental. This assessment allowed areas of potential ecological value and potential ecological constraints associated with this landfill to be identified and it also enabled ongoing any ecological impacts associated with the site to be assessed.

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2: Site Location and Description

The site in question is located in the townland of Dunaree, just on the western outskirts of Kingscourt town, approximately 600m west of the town centre. It is located in an area that is mostly surrounded by residential land, much of which has been developed since 2005.

The OSI (Ordnance Survey of Ireland) 6 inch maps for Kingscourt, drawn between 1829 and 1842, depict the site of landfill as a quarry. Upon cessation of quarrying, the area was gradually filled in again with waste until the early 1990's.

The site is approximately 8 acres in area. Since the closure of the landfill it has been capped with soil and it has re-vegetated.

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3: Methods

The websites of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), the National Biodiversity Data Centre and the EPA were consulted for information on nature conservation areas and records of notable species within the area.

An ecological assessment of the landfill site at Drumree was carried out using aerial photographs, ground photographs and historical maps. There are no rivers or streams adjacent to the site, so biological water samples were not taken.

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4: Description of Existing Environment

4-1: Designated Areas

There are no designated sites adjacent to or close to the site of the old landfill.

4-2: Habitats

The main vegetated habitats on the site of the disused landfill occur on the lower area of the site, adjacent to the road. These habitats include hedgerows, treelines, scrub and un-improved grassland. Site boundaries consist of hedgerows and treelines and species such as ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and Leyland Cypress, *Cupressus x leylandii* occur. Scrub areas within the site are dominated by gorse *Ulex europaeus* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. Outcropping of rock occurs in various locations around the site.

The upper section of the site, further from the road, is devoid of any vegetation. Aerial photographs from c2005 show that this area was then comprised of pastureland, and there was a much greater area of scrub / immature woodland on the upper part of the site.

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5: Ongoing Impacts & Assessment

The lower part of the site closer to the road, is dominated by scrub and hedgerow habitats. A habitat like this in a residential / urban area would be considered of local importance for biodiversity, as it would provide shelter, nesting and feeding sites for local populations of small passerine birds and mammals. However, little ecological connectivity between this area and the open countryside now exists. Habitats have become fragmented due to disturbance and development.

The upper site that is devoid of vegetation has no ecological value, although its open nature may provide some foraging opportunities for birds of prey hunting small mammals.

Sites such as this are frequently colonised by invasive species. One of the most common invasive species in Ireland is now Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*. It can be spread vegetatively by tiny sections of root or stem, therefore it can colonise areas very rapidly, especially areas that have been recently disturbed.

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