



Irish Forestry Unit Trust

Belalt MU
By Pettigoe, Co. Donegal
MANAGEMENT PLAN
2023 – 2042 (Plan Period: 2023 -2027)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION, OWNERSHIP AND LANDUSE HISTORY.

Belalt Management Unit (MU) comprises 1 property totalling 228.8ha. Belalt is situated in south County Donegal. Prior to forest establishment, the primary land use was unimproved grassland and rough grazing and upland bog. The property is adjoined by three small lakes – Lough Avehy, Lough Laghtowen, Lough Namnamurrive – and agricultural holdings, and upland bog.

New properties to be added to the MU:

1. Belalt – 228.8ha. Established circa 1995/97 & 2003.

All forested land is owned by freehold title by the Irish Forestry Unit Trust (IForUT). Legal folios are held on file.

Elevation

- Belalt – 146 metres to 100 metres.

Statutory Land Designations

There are no IForUT properties situated in a NPWS (National Parks & Wildlife Service) designated area with protected status.

- **Tamur Bog SAC (001992)**
- **Tamur Bog pNHA (001992)**

Water/Fisheries Sensitivities:

The forest sites within the Belalt MU are in the following catchment(s) and sub-catchment(s):

- Erne Catchment
 - Billary_SC_010 sub catchment

Margaritifera (Fresh Water Pearl Mussel)

Belalt is situated within Erne–Waterfoot FWPM zone. IForUT will adhere to the Forest and Water Quality Guidelines - all ground operations are to take all precautions and mitigation to avoid ground damage, siltation, or any pollution entering watercourses.

Old Woodland Sites (OWS):

There are no OWS/potential OWS situated in the Belalt MU.

Archaeology/Historical/Cultural:

There are no features of archaeological, historical, and cultural significance situated in within the Belalt MU which are marked on all operational maps and will be protected. These features are recorded on the 'Sites and Monuments Record' (<https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/>).

The Forest Service gives advice on protection and outlines mitigation measures when IForUT applies for a license to carry out any harvesting operation in the vicinity of any monument. Also, as standard procedure, any old farmhouse/cottage or other buildings and stone walls/significant ditches are considered as more recent cultural heritage and are protected during harvesting and roading operations.

SOIL TYPES.

There one soil type across the Belalt MU Forest sites.

- Peat is the primary soil type within the MU.

SUMMARY OF THE LANDSCAPE VALUE OF THE FOREST.

Low Felling Impact with High Afforestation Sensitivity - Belalt is classed as low to moderate felling impact on the IForUT system due partly to the extensive forested landscape and small size of the IForUT holdings. Whenever felling licences are submitted the Forest Service will correspond with relevant local and statutory bodies to investigate any potential landscape sensitivities. The Forest Service Moderate Landscape Sensitivity class, as defined for afforestation planning covers property which will require some sensitivity given to the restocking planning in this MU.

To address the potential landscape impact issues caused by future clearfelling, the felling plan (Map 6) has applied a significant coupe restructuring plan to reduce clearfell size and introduce coupe separation. Long-term restructuring plan (Map 7) outlines future restructuring species which is limited to Sitka spruce and Norway spruce based on soil types and management objectives. Biodiversity enhancement in Map 7 is focused on the creation of additional open ground and expansion of broadleaf planting. Species choice being specifically matched to soil type and exposure.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES.

- 1) To maximise economic output from the forest at local and national level.
- 2) To manage FMU in accordance with the principals of the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and international benchmarks of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC).
- 3) To manage timber production in a sustainable way.
- 4) To maintain and enhance the landscape value of the forest.
- 5) To protect existing biodiversity and where opportunities arise enhance and further promote new biodiversity.
- 6) To manage forest activities with due regard to local, regional, and national stakeholder interests.
- 7) To promote continuous professional development at management level.

(IForUT's FSC licence code : FSC-C003194)

Summary of silvicultural systems to be used.

System	Conifers	Broadleaves
Clear fell	✓	
Selective fell		
Thinning to MTI	✓	
Line thinning only		
Non thin regime	✓	
Non intervention		✓
Natural regeneration		✓
Replanting	✓	✓
Other		

5 Year Monitoring Report Summary. **Belalt MU**

	Objective	Was it achieved?	How was this information applied to 5-year Management Plan review?
1	Economic Return	The conifer crop in every property within the MU has been partially thinned at least once.	Further thinning may be carried out Belalt subject to crop stability and access. Clearfelling is not planned within the next plan period.
2	Certification Standards	Certification standards and IForUT systems applied over plan period. Managers working off FMM	Continue as before and update FMM as required.
3	Timber production	Variable quality crop with variable YC overall. Timber production had been maximised through thinning where possible. There may be further thinning works across the FMU subject to access and crop stability.	Strong DBH growth in thinned crops and significant volume increment and the crop appears to be stable. There will be no clearfelling over the next 5-year period. Felling coupes have been designed to be as small as possible to minimise any potential landscape impacts. Felling coupes have also been separated out as much as possible to allow for time delays between felling coupes and to try to ensure that there is not a glut of felling in any five-year period. However, delaying felling or bringing felling forward any further would result in severe economic losses from either a too-small tree size or wind damage because of delaying felling beyond a critical top height.
4	Landscape	Two new landscape layers added to designations GIS layer. Forest Service layer taken off National Development plan for new planting and Landscape Unit appraisals based on Coillte LUs.	New landscape layer added to Sensitivities Map in MP. Belalt is classified as having Moderate sensitivity according to LU classification. Belalt is classified as Moderate in FS classification.

5	Biodiversity Enhancement	Biodiversity areas have been identified and classified within Belalt on IForUT's GIS system.	<p>Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement will continue to occur at the reforestation phase following the felling of the first rotation crops. Native broadleaves will be planted, and specific areas left unplanted to create a mixture of native woodland and open habitat. As per the new standard for Felling and Reforestation, there will be uninterrupted water/aquatic zone, habitat, archaeological, public road, and utilised building (i.e., dwelling houses) setbacks created where required, and native broadleaves and Scots pine planted where practicable.</p> <p>The enhancement and/or creation of biodiversity features will continue with all replanting operations as illustrated in the Long-Term Restructuring Plan for the New Belalt FMU.</p>
6	Stakeholder	General quiet locality. Good relationships with neighbours and RoW holders.	During plan review a more comprehensive stakeholder consultation has been conducted. See Stakeholder files.
7	Professional Development	██████████ managed. Forest Managers are members of SIF and attend lectures and field days as part of continuous professional development.	Retendering of whole portfolio into regional management units in 2010 to simplify overall forest level management and Certification compliance. New centralised network server ██████████ has been introduced for managing FMM and IForUT database.
8	Forward Planning	Continue with current standards and work practices and review on a continuous basis to implement industry best practice.	Carry out reviews of Forest Management Manual and introduce manager training and updating of best practice.