



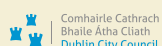
Dublin Mountains
Partnership

Annual Review 2022



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Cover Photo: Dublin Mountains Makeover Walk in National Tree Week 21.03.22. Photo Credit Joe Ladrigan.

Our Vision

The Dublin Mountains is an area of outstanding beauty and a place for sustainable outdoor recreation where people can enjoy the hills, learn about and care for their environment and culture whilst respecting resident communities, neighbouring landowners and other recreation users.



Upland Habitat
Walk with Joanne
Denyer of Denyer
Ecology, 03.03.23.
Photo Credit:
J. Lennon.

2022 Highlights

612



hours contributed
by **12** DMP Volunteer
Rangers

6



Meet & Greet events

31



DMP Events

Walks

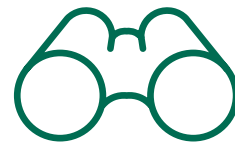
- 5 Biodiversity Themed
- 2 Dawn/Night Hikes
- 1 Dog training
- 1 Dublin Mountains Makeover
- 1 Easter Egg Hunt
- 13 Guided Walk/Hike
- 8 Hike – Public Transport Friendly

408



DMP Event participants

4



pairs of binoculars
and **2** hand lenses
purchased for events

43



'dogs on lead' patrols were carried out on Sundays, **41** by Coillte staff and 2 by DMP Volunteer Rangers

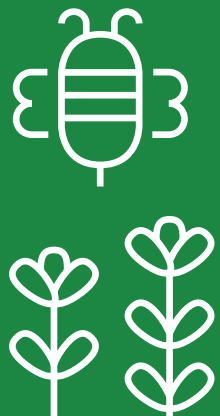
4



DMP Board Meetings Held

DMP Funding Spend in 2022 on:

- DMP Recreation Manager
- Ticknock carpark upgrade contribution
- Planning future improvements to Tibbradden, Kilmashogue, Carrickgollogan and Barnaslingan carparks
- Gritting and snow ploughing Ticknock carpark
- Trails upgraded: DMW at Cruagh, Mountain
- Dublin Mountains Makeover contribution
- DMW new trailhead signs
- Dublin Mountains Archaeology Project – contribution
- Events
- Woodlands for Health – contribution
- Leave No Trace Ireland – contribution



Welcome Address



As chair of the DMP, I am delighted to introduce our review of 2022. The review will present the work done by the DMP in 2022, some of the ongoing opportunities and challenges faced as well as looking forward to the work the DMP is planning, as set out in the DMP's Strategic Plan 2022–2026.

The DMP's achievements in 2022, in public engagement in particular, are due in a large part to the DMP Volunteer Rangers who led or supported all of the DMP's 2022 events and the programmes the DMP support; like the Woodlands for Health programme. On pages 11 and 12 we hear from two of our longest serving volunteers, Sam and Ken, on what volunteering with the DMP has meant to them and their hopes for the future. As Chair of the DMP I would like to thank all of our Volunteer Rangers for their contributions to the DMP in 2022.

The Dublin Mountains Makeover Project is a Coillte Nature managed long term initiative, part funded by the DMP, that is already transforming the look and feel of the Dublin Mountains. This review includes a dedicated section on what the Dublin Mountains Makeover Project has achieved in 2022.

A focus of the DMP Board's work in 2022 was completing the DMP Strategic Plan 2022–2026¹, the plan sets out 43 key actions under four Strategic Themes; Protect the Resource, Provide for Recreation, Partner for Success and Promote the Benefits. Throughout this review relevant actions from the plan are included to demonstrate the future direction of the DMP. The development of the strategic plan involved a considerable amount of public engagement and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who made contributions to the development of the strategy.

2023 will be an exciting time for the DMP; work has already started on planning how to deliver the plan's ambitious actions. This year we will be outlining how the public can get involved with the work of the DMP; either through volunteering or being part of the DMP's new Consultative Panels. I would like to thank the partner organisations for their dedication to the DMP, in particular the outgoing chairperson, Les Moore, and I look forward to working with our partners and stakeholders in delivering the ambitions within the strategic plan in the years ahead.

Suzanne Furlong

Chair, Dublin Mountains Partnership
June 2023

¹ https://www.dublinmountains.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Dublin_Mountains_Strategic_Plan_2022-2026_FINAL_SCREEN_16022023.pdf

2022 Events Programme

In 2022, the DMP hosted 31 events attended by almost 400 people. All the events were led or supported by the DMP Volunteer Rangers. The events held reflect the ambition of the DMP to promote the Dublin Mountains as a place to visit, respect and appreciate.

Biodiversity Walks

A series of five biodiversity themed walks were held over the course of the year, this included three walks led by ecologist Joanne Denyer exploring the important upland habitats and the bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) found in the Dublin Mountains. In March, David Lawton, an Education Guide from the NPWS based at Wicklow Mountains National Park, led a birdwatching walk along the Fairy Castle walking trail in Ticknock, along the way some of the key upland bird species were spotted including; Red Grouse, Golden Plover, Ravens and Meadow pipits.

At the end of September Enda Mullen from the NPWS led a bat walk in Ticknock, for this walk the DMP worked with the Coillte Nature team and Native Events and also partnered with Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Sports Partnership who promoted the walk as a European Week of Sport event. The Coillte Nature team commissioned a short video of our bat walk².

Public Transport Friendly Walk

Eight public transport friendly hikes were held in 2022, these walks started from Shankill or Tallaght both locations are well served by Dublin Bus, the DART or LUAS. In addition, the DMP Volunteer Rangers led a series of hikes starting from recreation carparks across the Dublin Mountains. DLR Tourism commissioned interactive map³ of recreation facilities across the Dublin Mountains.



Uplands Habitats
Walk 03.03.22.
Photo Credit: DMP



Evening Walk
in Cruagh.
06.06.2022.
Photo Credit: DMP

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kby1k0Oyilg>

³ <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1OvR9YT0dDi0vMUeW0d8jmfHDI0roFdrj&ll=53.22486531451917%2C-6.151955128294464&z=15>

Summer Evening Walks

To make the most of long summer evenings the Volunteer Rangers led six Wednesday evening walks, these proved to be really popular and will be in the 2023 DMP events calendar.

Dog Training Walk

To promote a theme of enjoying the outdoors responsibly with your dog the DMP linked with Enda Mullen, a senior dog trainer with the DSPCA, on a dog training walk in Tibbradden forest supported by the DMP Volunteer Rangers. We were delighted to meet Stella, Koby, Millie, Cooper, Murphy, Bleu, Teddy, Brody and their owners. This was a really informative event where dog owners got insights into their dog's behaviour and experience on a walk in the forest.

Astronomy Walk & Talk

In the third in the DMP's series of night hikes and outdoor astronomy talks we were honoured to have Dr. Susan Mullally

present a talk entitled 'Infrared Eyes on the Universe – The Science and Engineering of NASA's James Webb Space Telescope'.

Forester Walk

In June, on the longest day of the year, the DMP hosted a walk and talk in Carrickgollogan led by Richard Jack a Coillte forester then nearing the end of his 40 plus year career in forestry which had started in Carrickgollogan, on the walk Richard reminisced about his wonderful and fulfilling career in forestry in several different roles.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to our wonderful Volunteer Rangers for leading or supporting all the events! Thanks to NPWS, DLR Sports Partnership, South Dublin County Sports Partnership, DSPCA and Coillte Nature for partnering with us on events. Thanks also to everyone who attended our events, it was great to meet you.



Bat Walk Ticknock.
30.09.22
Photo Credit:
Joe Ladrián



Walk with Richard
Jack from Coillte
21.06.22. Photo
Credit: DMP

Looking Forward

Promote the Benefits



Profile the Dublin Mountains as a destination for outdoor learning.

ACTIONS:

- Develop an educational programme to enable volunteers, visitors, land managers and others to actively engage with the ecology and heritage of the Dublin Mountains.
- Work with youth groups/educational organisations to facilitate group learning for diverse/hard to reach communities.
- Identify/evaluate potential educational or learning facilities such as an outdoor field studies centre.
- Develop a suite of guided and self-guided educational programmes to increase visitors' knowledge and enhance their experience of the Dublin Mountains.



Winter Solstice
Dawn Hike
21.12.22
Photo Credit:
DMP



Night Walk
& Astronomy Talk
09.04.22
Photo Credit:
D. Murphy

DMP Volunteer Rangers

Volunteer Rangers Contribution

The DMP Volunteer Rangers play a vital role engaging with the public who visit the Dublin Mountains through guided walks and 'Meet & Greet' days. In 2022 our team of 12 Volunteer Rangers volunteered more than 612 hours, this saw the Volunteer Rangers lead or support all of the DMP's 2022 events. Our Volunteer Rangers also carried out a number of 'Meet & Greet' walks in the designated 'dogs on lead' area between Coillte's Ticknock, Tibbradden and Kilmashogue forests, this work was profiled in a case study in 'Embracing Ireland's Outdoors National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023–2027'.⁴

Woodlands for Health

Two of our Volunteer Rangers and the DMP's Recreation Manager supported the forest walks element of the Woodlands For Health programme co-ordinated by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Partnership in 2022. Woodlands for Health is a mental health initiative modelled on Scottish Forestry's Branching Out programme and brought to Ireland in 2012 by Coillte's Charlie Burke. Woodlands for Health is a woodland-based guided walking programme for adults availing of mental health services and supports in Ireland, it is an accessible and sustainable way to engage with nature, as part of a toolkit for supporting mental health and well-being. To find out more about the nationwide Woodlands for Health Initiative see Mental

Health Ireland's Woodlands for Health webpage⁵ where you will also find a virtual immersive tour set in Coillte's Barnaslingan Woods.

Thank You

In 2022, four of our Volunteer Rangers stepped down from volunteering with the DMP, between them they had volunteered 2,774 hours in the Dublin Mountains. The DMP acknowledges and thanks Jesús, Tom, Gary and Tom for their amazing contributions to the Dublin Mountains Partnership. Four trees have been planted in the Tree Council of Ireland's Tree Sponsorship Scheme in Aurora Co. Wicklow to commemorate the volunteering efforts of Jesús, Tom, Gary and Tom, they join trees planted to acknowledge other DMP Volunteer Rangers who have stepped down, as well as outgoing members of the DMP Board and one to remember a Volunteer Ranger who passed away while volunteering in the Dublin Mountains in 2014.

The Volunteer Ranger Experience

At end of 2022 there were eight DMP Volunteer Rangers including Sam and Ken who have both volunteered with the DMP since the Volunteer Ranger programme was initiated in 2009, together they have written a piece called 'Looking Back Looking Forward' to tell the story of their volunteering experience to date.

⁴ <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/240596/8f843f7b-c08c-42eb-bc5c-f31d6bdea38b.pdf#page=null>

⁵ <https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/woodlandsforhealth/>

Looking Back, Looking Forward



DMP Volunteer
Ranger Sam on a
litter pick at the Hell
Fire Club.
Photo Credit:
DMP

“

It's hard to believe that it has been thirteen years since I saw the advertisement for volunteer rangers for a new initiative named the Dublin Mountains Partnership. Having been lucky enough to live in the Dublin Mountains most of my life and having studied forestry in a former life, it seemed to be the perfect opportunity to offer other people the chance to experience what I am lucky enough to enjoy on a daily basis – 'the great outdoors'. The Dublin Mountains have so much to offer, an abundance of tracks and trails to discover, inquisitive wildlife – often so tame from years of living on the periphery of one of the busiest cities in Europe, and of course people, those that live off the land in a multitude of ways.”

— Sam



DMP Volunteer
Ranger Ken at
Carrickgollogan.
Photo Credit:
DMP

“

Being the outdoor adventurous type the advertisement immediately aroused my interest. The Dublin Mountains Partnership (DMP) were planning to recruit Volunteer Rangers (VRs). I thought that this might possibly fill a bit of a void for me having retired from the Reserve Defence Forces. My interest in the outdoors can be traced to the time when, as a ten year old, I was transported, along with my classmates from the concrete sprawl of Artane and arrived in the Pine Forest (AKA Tibbradden) on my first school tour. This was where I was introduced to the new sights, sounds and smells of nature and where we cooked our sausages and rashers by the stream and basically ran amok for the rest of the day in total freedom. This led me later in life to many a mountain in Ireland, the UK and beyond.”

— Ken



After induction, our training saw us role playing, taking turns as lost walkers or as obstreperous members of the public questioning the status of a VR. We undertook mountain skills training, Leave No Trace Awareness, first aid courses, were issued with first-aid kits and wet gear. Leading walks and hikes which are frequently oversubscribed and always greatly appreciated by the participants has always been a most satisfying duty. This was an element of VR service since inception and we have had the immense privilege of guiding so many amazing people on their journey, many of them only starting out on their discovery of hill walking and hiking. A phrase frequently uttered by them being 'I only live down the road and I never knew this was here!' Looking back, one can see a great deal has been achieved over those years: the installation of boardwalks, the mountain bike trails, the signage, the Dublin Mountains Way (DMW) and VR involvement with heritage walks to mention a few.

Then came 2020, a year full of change and challenge with restrictions on outdoor activity. However, it also provided a lot of us with the opportunity to slow down and rediscover the huge benefits of spending time outdoors and the importance of areas such as the Dublin Mountains.

As VRs we are the public face of the DMP and we often find ourselves tasked with communicating the message, often in challenging circumstances, that the recreational value of the area to the various user groups must be balanced with those who live there. Our interaction with the public and the feedback we can provide has and will be important to future planning. As with any volunteer service there can be a lot of coming and going of personnel. Unfortunately, in the case of VRs there has been more going than coming.

To maintain this vibrant and valuable service future recruitment to the VRs should be high on the list of priorities for the DMP when circumstances allow."

— Sam and Ken



The operation of the Volunteer Ranger Programme has been very positive. The public are generally happy to engage with the rangers and to see them out and about on the hills. The next phase of DMP volunteering will see more volunteering opportunities, along with greater monitoring of its impact on behaviour change in relation to the challenges faced in sustainable outdoor recreation."

Clodagh Duffy

Recreation Manager, Dublin Mountains Partnership

Looking Forward Partner for Success



Facilitate opportunities for volunteering and significantly expand its capability.

ACTIONS:

- Develop a consistent, sustainable and rewarding volunteering programme and grow its capability.
- Build public awareness, enthusiasm and commitment for volunteering with the Dublin Mountains Partnership.
- Implement best-in-class policies and practices in volunteering.



Volunteer Rangers
Sam, Paul, John and
Jesús Easter Egg
Hunt 2022



DMP Volunteer
Rangers Denis, Paul,
John, Michael
and Sam.
17.04.22

Walking Routes

National Long Distance Walking Routes

The DMP has responsibility for two National Long Distance Walking routes, the Dublin Mountains Way and the Wicklow Way. Each year work is done to maintain and promote both routes. Sport Ireland Outdoors website provides information on all of Ireland's National Way marked routes.⁶

Dublin Mountains Way

The Dublin Mountains Way is a 42.6km National Long Distance Walking Route that links Tallaght in the West of Dublin to Shankill in the East across the Dublin Mountains. The route crosses through a range of settings and habitats; urban, town park, reservoir, rural, open hill with heath and bog habitats, forest, village and urban again. The DMW traverses lands owned by Coillte, Local authorities and private landowners. The DMP's Planning & Operations Committee oversee the management of the trail, the DMP funds Sport Ireland's insurance of the private land sections of the trail.

As a National Long Distance route the trail was audited by Sport Ireland Outdoors in March 2022. The Sport Ireland auditor highlighted some issues with way-marking along the route, thanks to the co-ordinated efforts of Local Authority staff, Coillte staff

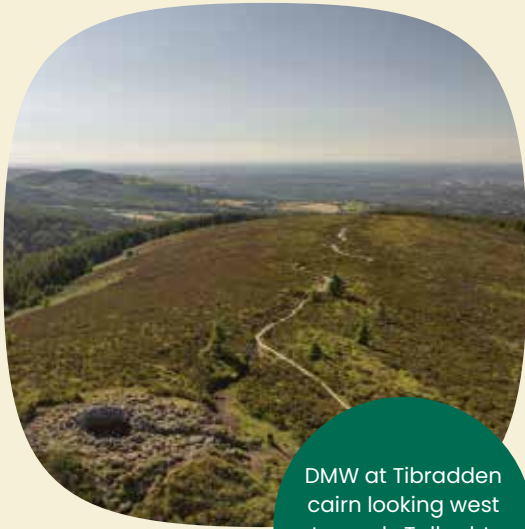
and contractors this was corrected in 2022. In addition, two new trailhead signs were put up in Shankill and Tallaght at the start/end of the DMW with updated text, photographs, and route map.

A guide to the DMW route is available as a downloadable pdf from the DMP website, paper copies can be requested by emailing your postal address to info@dublinmountains.ie. A DMW badge is available to all those who complete the DMW, feedback from walkers and runners who completed the DMW in 2022 was very positive. Barretstown run a charity event, the Dublin Mountains Challenge, their biggest fundraiser of the year, along the DMW route each May. This is a great way to try out the route and raise money for a worthy cause.

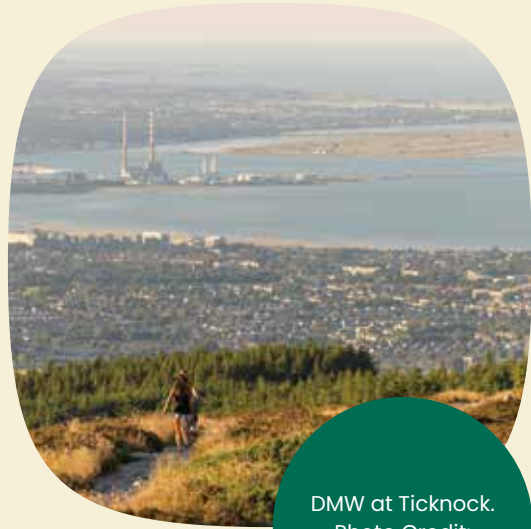
The Wicklow Way

Marley Park in Rathfarnham is the start/end of another long-distance walking route, the Wicklow Way (WW), at 132km it is much longer than the Dublin Mountains Way. Fourteen kilometres of the Wicklow Way is located in Co. Dublin, with a 1km overlap with the DMW trail west of Fairycastle. The DMP's Recreation Manager sits on the Wicklow Way Management committee who oversee the management of the WW. The DMP provides funding to the WW Committee for the upkeep of the WW.

⁶ <https://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/walking/trails>



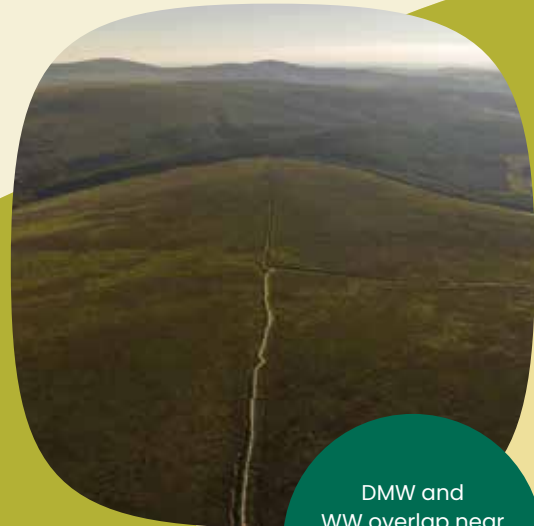
DMW at Tibbradden
cairn looking west
towards Tallaght.
Photo Credit:
Joe Ladrigan



DMW at Ticknock.
Photo Credit:
Joe Ladrigan



DMW and
WW overlap near
Tibbradden.
Photo Credit:
Joe Ladrigan



DMW and
WW overlap near
Tibbradden.
Photo Credit:
Joe Ladrigan

Looking Forward Provide for Recreation



Facilitate and manage the expansion, interconnectivity and accessibility of the trails network.

ACTIONS:

- Develop a comprehensive, accessible and integrated network of off-road trails.
- Develop connecting off-road routes from the urban fringe into the mountain trails network.
- Integrate existing/potential recreation hubs into the trails network.
- Move the Dublin Mountains Way fully off-road wherever possible.

Recreation Infrastructure Upgrades

Part of the funding received from the partner organisations (except NPWS, who do not provide financial funding to the DMP) was utilised in 2022 for the upgrade and maintenance works listed in the table below.

Location	Works Carried Out
Ticknock Forest	<p>Carpark Upgrade: Department of Rural and Community Development funding was matched with DMP funding to upgrade a large area of Ticknock carpark and access road, this included resurfacing in excess of 3,900 m2, deepening carpark spaces to facilitate bike racks mounted on car boots, line-painting including the marking of two additional accessible carpark spaces and the installation of a pedestrian crossing linking two walking trails. This work was undertaken by contractors.</p> <p>Winter Maintenance Programme: DMP funds are used to grit and when necessary, snowplough Ticknock carpark which due to its elevation can be prone to ice.</p>
Cruagh Wood	<p>Trail Upgrade: The Dublin Mountains Way at Cruagh on the Massy's Estate side was upgraded to manage erosion caused by overland flow following high rainfall events. This work was undertaken by contractors.</p> <p>Trail Upgrade: A section of the Dublin Mountains Way at Cruagh, also on the Massy's Estate side was upgraded by the volunteers from Mountain Meitheal Dublin Wicklow (MMDW), this is a section of the DMW trail that had been developed by MMDW in 2008 and one whose condition MMDW monitor annually. While in Cruagh the MMDW volunteers also installed new water control measures on a path running between the upper forest edge and an area of heath habitat. All these works were carried out in line with MMDW's instruction manual 'The Mountain Meitheal Handbook of Trail Design and Construction'. To find out more about MMDW, the trail upgrades they carry out, including instruction videos, and how to volunteer with them check their website: www.mountainmeitheal.ie.</p>
Carrickgollogan Wood	<p>Trail Upgrade: the volunteers from MMDW upgraded the mountain access path leading to Carrickgollogan summit.</p> <p>Signage: New Threshold signage was erected at Carrickgollogan. This work was undertaken by contractors.</p>
Multiple Sites	<p>Electronic Gates: the DMP funds the monthly charges and call-out costs for maintenance of the automatic electronic gates by a contractor at Hell Fire Club, Cruagh, Tibbradden, Ticknock and Barnaslingan carparks.</p> <p>Winter Weather Measures: DMP funded the installation of grit-salt bins at Hell Fire Club, Barnaslingan, Carrickgollogan, Ticknock and Tibbradden carparks. This work was undertaken by contractors.</p> <p>Maintenance: Across all sites ongoing monitoring and maintenance of way-marked trails and carparks was carried out by Coillte staff and contractors e.g. sections of the boardwalk at Fairycastle on the Fairy Castle Looped trail were replaced, some minor improvement works were carried out to manage drainage and to erect a post and rail fence.</p> <p>Carpark Planning: design work was carried out to plan upgrades of Tibbradden, Kilmashogue, Carrickgollogan and Barnaslingan carparks. This work was undertaken by contractors.</p>

Looking Forward

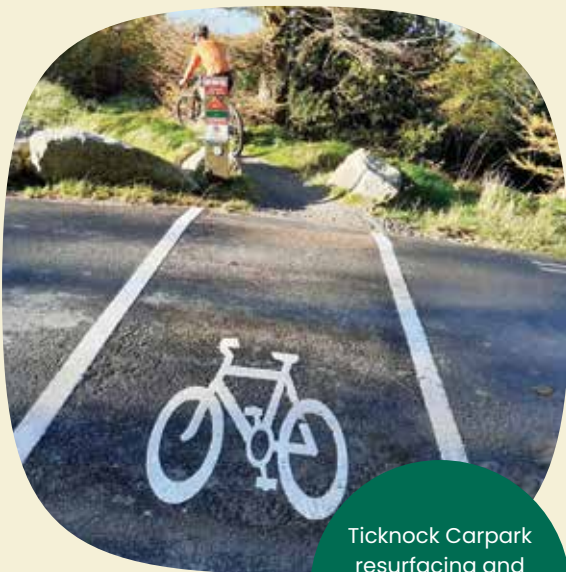
Protect the Resource



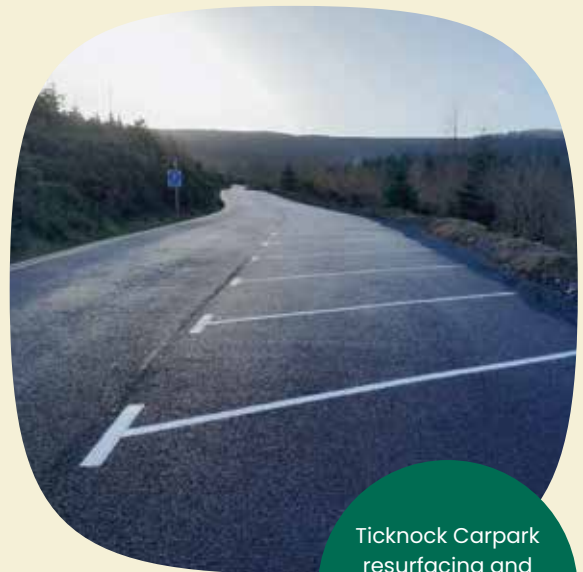
Promote sustainable access to the Dublin Mountains.

ACTIONS:

- Facilitate and promote multi-modal connectivity and sustainable access to the Dublin Mountains.
- Develop a number of shared-use routes into and around the mountains and promote these to members of the public.



Ticknock Carpark
resurfacing and
line painting.
Photo Credit:
Coillte



Ticknock Carpark
resurfacing and
line painting.
Photo Credit:
Coillte



Salt-Grit Bin
Carrickgollogan.
Photo Credit:
Coillte



DMW upgrade at
Cruagh by MMDW.
Photo Credit:
Joe Ladrigan

Dublin Mountains Community Archaeology Project

Community Archaeology Project

There is a rich archaeological heritage in the Dublin Mountains, one that needs to be both protected and appreciated. Starting in 2021, the Heritage Officers in South Dublin County Council and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown along with the DMP's Recreation Manager have worked together with two great teams of archaeologists on the Dublin Mountains Community Archaeology Project 2021 and 2022. The Community Archaeology Project is a Heritage Council funded initiative with match funding provided by South Dublin County Council, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and the DMP. Through working with the project partners, local communities and recreational users, the Dublin Mountains Community Archaeology Project aims to raise the profile of the archaeological heritage of the Dublin Mountains to ensure that it is protected for future generations to appreciate and learn from.

DMCA 2021–2022

In 2021–2022 the team at Abarta Heritage provided the archaeological services to the project. The outputs of the first year included Dublin's Monumental Mountains, a 64 page booklet that traces the archaeological story of the Dublin Mountains from pre-history to today, this wonderful resource is available in hard copy format from libraries in Tallaght and Dún Laoghaire and as a download.⁷ The Abarta Heritage team also led a guided walk at the Hell Fire Club Forest and hosted a public webinar, they also presented a 4-session on-line training course on archaeology, legislation and protection, attendees included the DMP's Volunteer Rangers. Two short videos were produced; 'The Story of the Dublin Mountains'⁸ and 'Dublin's Megalithic Mountains'⁹, they are well worth a look.

DMCA 2022–2023

In 2022–2023 the community archaeology services to the project were provided by Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd. Freed from most of the constraints of the pandemic the team were in a position to lead four archaeology walking tours for the public. The first walking tour looked at the industrial heritage landscape surrounding Carrickgollogan and the monument at Rathmichael, the second tour was to Two Rock Mountain and Ballyedmonduff to visit Fairy Castle and the Giant's Grave, the third tour explored the monuments at the Hell Fire Club and Massy's Estate, the fourth tour visited Tibradden Cairn and Fairy Castle.

The community archaeology team used social media;

Twitter:
@DMCA2022

Facebook and Instagram:
@dublinmountainsarchaeology

to present a series of educational posts about the wonderful archaeology heritage in the Dublin mountains.

#Know your Mountains Respect your Monuments

Through a campaign called 'Know your mountains, respect your monuments' the community archaeologists highlighted damage to some of the monuments in the Dublin mountains including vandalism, fire, erosion, and metal detecting. The Community Archaeology Project continued into February 2023 with stakeholder training webinars for DMP Volunteer Rangers, Hill Walking Groups and Mountain Biking Clubs along with an in-person training session for tour guides.

⁷ https://www.dublinmountains.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/dublins_monumental_mountains_2022.pdf

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xp9GoDcKIUI>

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GR-jmardCpQ>

Further Information

The Archaeology page on the DMP website has a wealth of information on archaeology in the Dublin Mountains.¹⁰

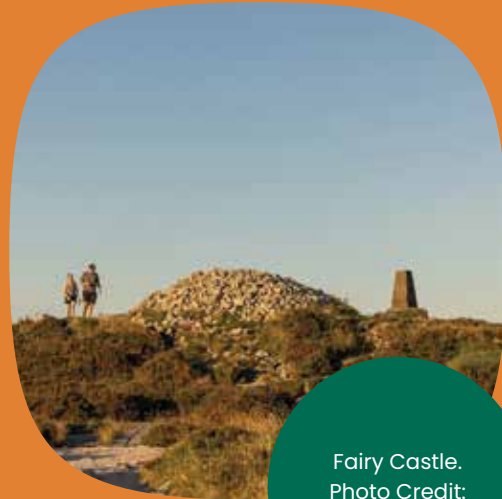


Tibbradden Cairn.
Photo Credit:
Joe Ladrigan

Carn na Leac

The Community Archaeologists sourced the Irish name for Fairy Castle, the cairn atop what is believed to be a Neolithic tomb at the summit of Two Rock Mountain for the new DMW trailhead signs. The Irish name for Fairy Castle that will appear on all signs from here on out will be *carn na leac* meaning the cairn of the flagstones, this name dates from before 1308.

In the Togail saga it is told that each stone used to build this cairn represents one of the reavers (border raiders) killed in the attack on Bruidne Da Derga. For more on the Togail saga see (Knott, E., 1936, *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*. Dublin).



Fairy Castle.
Photo Credit:
Joe Ladrigan

Looking Forward Protect the Resource



Protect the environment of the Dublin Mountains – its natural, built and cultural heritage and assets.

ACTIONS:

- Develop and implement an integrated ecological management plan for the Dublin Mountains.
- Deliver the actions in the Dublin Mountains Archaeological Plan.
- Ensure operational compliance with all relevant environmental and built heritage legislation.
- Use the Dublin Mountains Visitor Centre as a key resource to raise awareness of the environmental protection measures being implemented in the mountains.

¹⁰ <https://www.dublinmountains.ie/archaeology/archaeology/>

Dogs in the Dublin Mountains

The Dublin Mountains can be a lovely place to walk your dog, walking dogs is a great way for people to get active in the outdoors, explore new places and meet people. With dog ownership comes responsibility; to respect national legislation, other people encountered on walks, wildlife and livestock. Unfortunately, there have been a number of incidents of dogs attacking and maiming sheep on lands adjoining walking trails on Coillte lands in the Dublin Mountains. Coillte byelaws reflect the Control of Dogs Act, 1986, dogs are expected to be kept under effectual control at all times. Effectual control is not defined in national legislation, Coillte have defined it as a dog coming to its owner at their command or being kept on a lead/leash. In 2021, Coillte working with the DMP and following engagement with adjoining landowners and the IFA established a 'dogs on lead' zone in the open hill areas above Tibbradden, Kilmashogue and Ticknock forests. This open hill area adjoins commonage and enclosed farmland lands where sheep graze.

The open hill heath and blanket bog habitats are also home to wildlife including Red Grouse, Skylark and Meadow pipit, all ground nesting birds. The Dublin Mountains Way, the Wicklow Way and Fairy Castle Loop all traverse the 'dogs on lead' zone. The 'dogs on lead' zone is demarcated by signage on baffle gates. From February 2021 Coillte staff and DMP Volunteer Rangers have walked the 'dogs on leads' part of the Fairy Castle on weekends to engage with the dog walking public, records were kept of how many dogs were met, how many were on leads, how many were put on leads when asked, and how many people did not have leads with them. The data collected for 2021 and 2022 is presented below.

Between 2021 and 2022 there was an improvement in the number of dogs encountered that were off leads dropping from 51% in 2021 to 44% in 2022, there was also an increase in the number of dogs put on leads when requested. This work continues in 2023.

Fairy Castle Loop Dog Patrols Records 2021 and 2022

Year	Number of Dog Patrols	Dogs seen - average	Dogs seen - range	Dogs off lead average %	Dogs Off Lead - range	Dogs put on leads when asked %	Dogs put on leads when asked % -range	Refusal to put dog on lead	No Leads
2021	36	11	0 - 23	51%	19 - 100%	81	0% - 100%	5	7
2022	42	13	0 - 37	44%	11 - 75%	95	33% - 100%	2	7

Looking Forward Provide for Recreation



Promote and plan for responsible use of the recreation resource in the Dublin Mountains.

ACTIONS:

- In the strategic plan, adopt an integrated approach to visitor management, minimising user conflicts.
- Promote responsible visitor behaviour and personal responsibility by those accessing/participating in outdoor recreation.



DMP Volunteer Rangers Denis and John with GoGo the dog on a DMP Meet & Greet Day.



Training Walk with DSPCA.
05.02.2022.
Photo Credit: DMP

Dublin Mountains Makeover

New Native Woodlands

Work continues on the Dublin Mountains Makeover with a mix of Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) thinning and 'Remove and Replant' (R&R) operations taking place through 2022.

Three sites, Ticknock, Tibbradden and Ballyedmonduff, amounting to 11ha were felled in 2022. Here the mature conifer trees were felled and these areas will be replanted with native woodland. Ticknock has already been fenced and planted in Spring 2023. The other two sites will be replanted next season, when the Native Woodland Scheme grant is approved.

In 2022 three sites – 2 blocks in Ticknock and a large area in Carrickgollogan – were cultivated, fenced and planted with native woodland, increasing the area of native woodland by a further 25ha. The Ticknock sites were planted with a mix of birch,

Scots pine, oak, rowan and holly. Given the high deer populations in the area and that they love to eat our native tree species, deer fences were erected to protect the newly planted seedlings. Whereas in Carrickgollogan, which is at lower elevation and has more mineral based soils, we planted a higher proportion of oak and Scots pine trees, along with some birch, rowan and whitebeam. The Scots pine will also provide a preferred food source for red squirrels in the future. Access to welltrodden walking routes, used by locals and visitors, has been maintained with entry gates provided at a number of points.

To date 38ha (approx. 92,000 trees) of new native woodland has replaced conifer forests in the Dublin Mountains. It's well worth taking a walk along the new trail though the native woodland in Cruagh which is now starting into its 3rd growing season and doing really well.



R&R planting in Cruagh, August 2022 (2nd growing season)



Cruagh tree planting with Edmonstown NS, February 2022.

CCF Management

About 40ha of spruce and pine forests in Barnaslingan and Cruagh were thinned according to CCF principles, whereby individual trees were selected and felled to open up the canopy and create gaps for future regeneration. Work continues to finish the thinning in Barnaslingan and in a number of other forests in 2023. In Spring 2023 some of the areas thinned in 2021 and 2022 will be underplanted with a mix of conifer and broadleaf species to increase the diversity of species in the woodland and increase resilience of the woodland going forward. Maynooth University will be working with us to examine the growth and condition of the different tree species planted beneath the canopy under various light levels. This is part of wider CCF research project ContinuFor.



CCF thinning
Barnaslingan.

Biodiversity Monitoring

In 2021 we set up 32 long-term biodiversity monitoring plots across the DMM area focusing on the vegetation. In 2022, we initiated bird and mammal surveys to find out what species are using our forests.

A team of ecologists from Alan Lauder Consulting are using a range of survey techniques to assess population size and distribution of key species across the Dublin Mountains. Survey work commenced in 2022 and is continuing into the first half of 2023. A variety of survey techniques are being used including surveys for breeding birds of prey (raptors), point counts and transect surveys, and static acoustic recording of bats. During the winter (November 2022 to February 2023) surveys for species such as badger,



Pine Marten
captured on wildlife
cameras in the
Dublin Mountains.

pine marten, squirrel (grey and red), deer and small mammals have taken place. Wildlife cameras have also been deployed at various locations across the mountains.

Some of the species identified to date include seven species of bat, with the common pipistrelle and Leisler's bat being recorded most frequently. A total of 47 species of bird were recorded across the 9 forest properties between July–September 2022. Raptor species present include buzzard, sparrowhawk, kestrel, and long eared owl. Other bird species recorded include Great spotted woodpecker along with jay, coal tit, willow warbler, blackcap, goldcrest, treecreeper, spotted flycatcher, common crossbill, lesser redpoll and siskin. Nine species of butterfly were also identified.

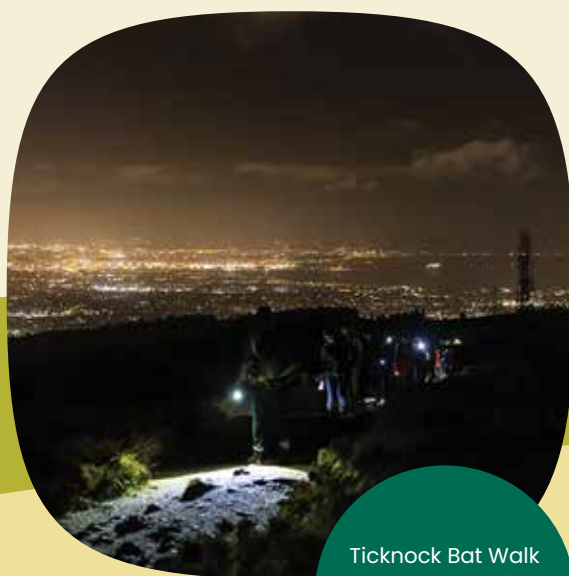
Communications and Engagement

The Coillte Nature team works closely with the Dublin Mountains Partnership (DMP) to ensure good collaboration among the various stakeholders.

In February 2022, a local national school Edmonstown NS joined us to plant some native trees in Cruagh, while later in the year in December, Rathmichael NS helped plant some native trees in Carrickgollogan. Some visitors out for a walk also enjoyed the chance to join in and plant some trees! For International Day of Forests in March 2022 Coillte Nature and the DMP held a walk in the Dublin Mountains. The team also hosted an Integreg Europe Progress project international meeting in Ticknock in June 2022. Twenty people braved the wind to listen and learn about bats for an evening Bat Walk and presentation by NPWS in partnership with the DMP, DLR Sports and Native Events.



Carrickgollogan tree planting with Rathmichael NS, December 2022.



Ticknock Bat Walk and presentation by NPWS. September 2022.



Cruagh Native
Woodland Trail.
Photo Credit:
Joe Ladrigan

Looking Forward Protect the Resource



Support the delivery of the Dublin Mountains Makeover.

ACTIONS:

- Work with Coillte Nature to develop a strong and clear communications programme for visitors and the wider public.
- Support Coillte Nature in managing the recreation/conversion operation interface.

The PURE Mile

The Pure Project¹¹ was established in 2006, Pure stands for Protecting Uplands & Rural Environments, the project raises awareness of the issue and impacts of fly tipping/illegal dumping and littering in the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains through a series of initiatives, including the Pure Mile, and through collecting and recording incidents of fly-tipping in the mountains. The Pure Mile initiative sees enthusiastic volunteers from local communities, recreation user groups and businesses adopt a mile/s of County Road, the groups keep their Pure Mile litter free through litter picks with bags, litter pickers and high-vis vests supplied by the Pure Project team. Look out for the Pure Mile signs along County roads. The Pure Mile

groups also research information about the local wildflowers, plants, trees, animals, and the built, cultural, and social heritage in their Pure Mile. In 2022 there were over 850 miles of road, mountains, woodlands, upland amenities, car parks and beaches in the Pure Mile initiative. The PURE Truck removed 139 tons collected by Pure Mile and other Pure Project initiatives in 2022. The DMP acknowledges the wonderful contribution the Pure Mile volunteers and the Pure Mile Project makes to protecting the Dublin Mountains. The PURE project is funded by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Wicklow, South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Councils, Coillte, NPWS, and the Wicklow Uplands Council.



Illegal Dumping
in the Wicklow
Dublin Uplands.
Photo Credit:
Ian Davis



Trekkers Walking
Group Pure Mile.
Photo Credit:
Ian Davis

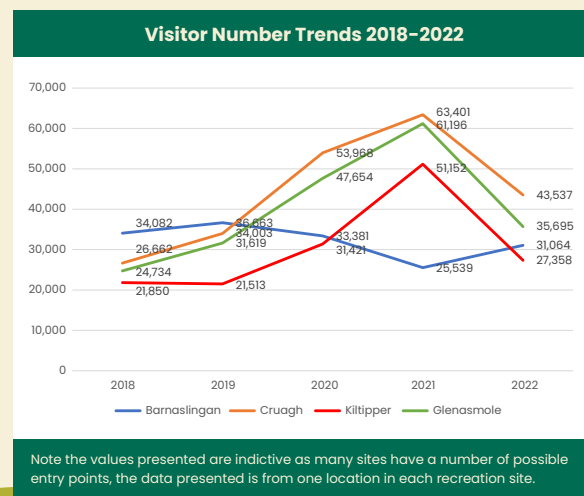
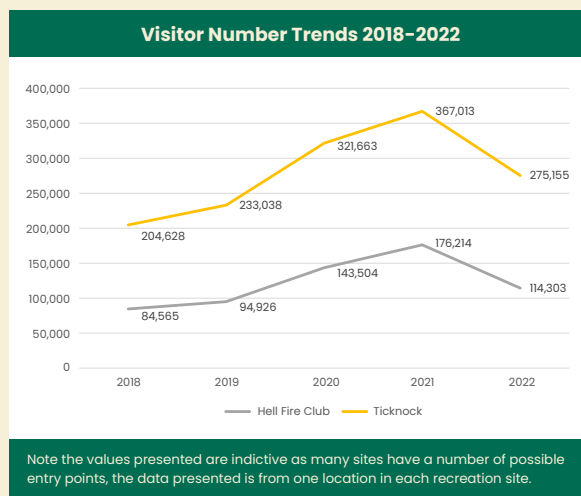
¹¹ <https://www.pureproject.ie>

Trends in Visitor Numbers

Visitor Counters

Numbers of people accessing the Dublin Mountains Recreation sites have been monitored for several years using counters in car parks (Hell Fire Club, Ticknock) and on walking trails (Cruagh, Kiltipper, Glenasmole, Barnaslingan), a factor is applied to translate the data recorded

into number of visitors. The trend for most sites has been a year-on-year increase in people accessing the recreation areas in the mountains. The impact of the pandemic years is visible through a jump in visitor numbers at all sites, except Barnaslingan, in 2020 and 2021 and a drop back in 2022 but to a higher level than in 2019.



Coillte Weekend Monitoring

In addition to static visitor counters since February 2021 Coillte staff have actively monitored Coillte car parks on weekends. This monitoring has highlighted issues at Cruagh, Tibbradden and Hell Fire Club in particular with cars parking along County Roads, causing issues for other road users and in some cases blocking access for larger vehicles such as emergency vehicles and farm machinery. The highest number of cars recorded along a County Road in 2022 were 107 cars at Cruagh on

January 9th, cars were parked along the side of County roads severely hindering travel by other road users, see photo. Cars parked where there are double yellow lines or a continuous white line central road marking (which has the same effect as a double yellow line) are in breach of the Road Traffic Acts. The DMP has liaised with the Gardai and County Councils on both road marking and the reporting of issues. Signage has been erected to remind visitors of the law and the potential consequences for breaking the law. Car owners have received fixed penalty notices.

The visitor counter data shows that Saturday and Sunday afternoons are the busiest times at car parks across all sites. The DMP reminds car users to never park along County Roads, farm gates or at forest entrances. Blocking a farm gate can prevent farmers going about their work. Blocking a forest entrance can prevent or delay emergency response crews reaching accidents and it prevents Coillte staff and contractors accessing work sites. Always think before you park.

If planning a trip to the mountains have a Plan B and a Plan C, the DMP website gives details of the recreational areas across the mountains.



Cruagh County Road at Cruagh carpark on 09.01.22



Walking in Cruagh Wood. Photo Credit: Joe Ladrigan.



Cruagh Carpark
Bikestand.
Photo Credit:
DMP



Hell Fire Club
Bikestand.
Photo Credit:
DMP

Public Transport

Public transport options are available at Tallaght, Barnaslingan and Shankill on weekends, the Transport for Ireland Journey Planner is a very useful tool when planning a visit to the mountains without a car. The DMP continues to raise the paucity of public transport links to the Dublin Mountains on forums on which it sits.

Bike Stands

There are bike stands in all of the Coillte recreation carparks, their usage is also monitored on weekends, it is great to see them being used. To check out the locations of bike stands in the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown area see link to their interactive map¹².

Looking Forward Protect the Resource



Promote sustainable access to the Dublin Mountains.

ACTIONS:

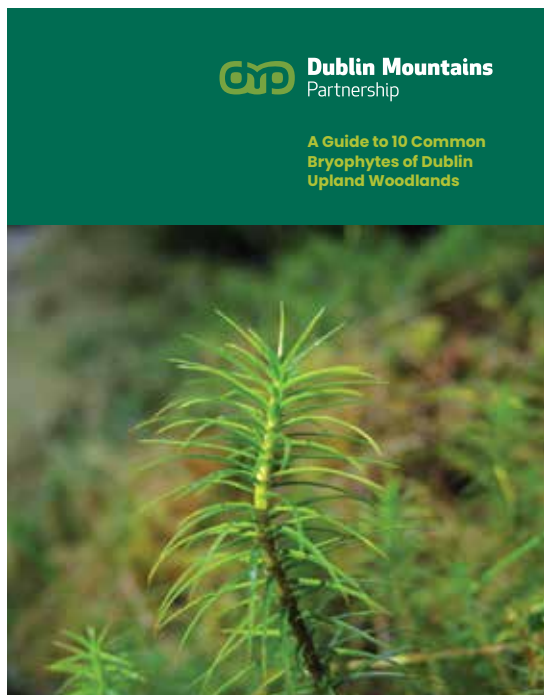
- Facilitate and promote multi-modal connectivity and sustainable access to the Dublin Mountains.
- Develop a number of shared-use routes into and around the mountains and promote these to members of the public.

¹² <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/bicycle-parking-stands-dlr>

DMP Biodiversity Actions

Bryophytes of the Dublin Upland Woodlands

In addition to the series of biodiversity themed walks organised by the DMP featured earlier in the review in 2022 the DMP published 'A Guide to 10 Common Bryophytes of Dublin Upland Woodlands' which was prepared by ecologist Joanne Denyer of Denyer Ecology. There was a soft launch of the guide through a series of guided walks led by Joanne in Cruagh and Ticknock. The Guide is available to download from the DMP website¹³.



Frogs Zones

Frogs are an important and threatened species found in the Dublin Mountains, they are protected under the Wildlife Act. There are a number of pools alongside walking trails in the Dublin Mountains that are used by frogs to spawn in. Disturbance by people and dogs is seen as a threat to the survival of frogspawn, tadpoles and frogs species.



Photo Credit:
Gillian Stewart
NPWS

In 2021 and 2022 hessian fences were erected at pools in Tibbradden, Ticknock, Cruagh and along the Wicklow Way and Dublin Mountains Way in Ticknock. Frog Zone Signage was erected with simple messaging for 'paws, hands and feet to stay out of the pools'. The pools were monitored throughout the summer as the frogspawn developed into tadpoles, the tadpoles got larger and then disappeared, when this happened the fencing and signage were taken down. If the pools dried out there was no intervention as this was considered to be a natural process. On the bat walk at the end of September we discovered that there were still tadpoles present in one of the pools along the Wicklow Way. Having engaged with staff from NPWS we discovered that 'tadpoles in upland pools can take a long time to metamorphose. This can be due to the low level of nutrients (and therefore food) in the water. In most cases though it just takes longer for them to reach maturity and in upland pools it is not unusual for some tadpoles to overwinter before emerging the following spring.' As a result, the fence on one of the pools along the Wicklow Way remained in place throughout the winter.

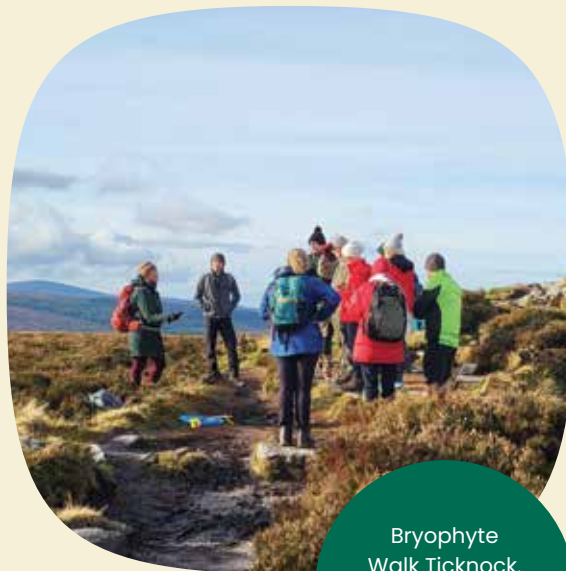
DMM Biodiversity Monitoring

Details of the DMP funded long term biodiversity monitoring being carried out as part of the Dublin Mountains Makeover Project are presented on page 23.

¹³ https://www.dublinmountains.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/DMP_Bryophyte_Guide_web.pdf



Pool at the
junction of the
Wicklow Way and
Dublin Mountains
Way in Ticknock.
Photo Credit:
DMP



Bryophyte
Walk Ticknock.
01.12.22
Photo Credit:
DMP

Looking Forward Promote the Benefits



Profile the Dublin Mountains as a destination for outdoor learning.

ACTIONS:

- Develop an educational programme to enable volunteers, visitors, land managers and others to actively engage with the ecology and heritage of the Dublin Mountains.
- Work with youth groups/educational organisations to facilitate group learning for diverse/hard to reach communities.
- Identify/evaluate potential educational or learning facilities such as an outdoor field studies centre.
- Develop a suite of guided and self-guided educational programmes to increase visitors' knowledge and enhance their experience of the Dublin Mountains.

The DMP Board

The Board of the DMP met four times in 2022. The make-up of the Board is presented below.

Partner	Board Member
Dublin City Council	Les Moore (DMP Chair 2022), Lorraine Bull
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Barry Dempsey, Ruairí O'Dulaing
South Dublin County Council	Suzanne Furlong (DMP Chair 2023), Ralph McGarry
National Parks & Wildlife Service	Wesley Atkinson
<p>Dublin Mountains Initiative (representative organisation of recreational users of the Dublin Mountains; in particular, it promotes the interests of the following organisations:</p> <p>Cycling Ireland Off Road Commission www.offroadcyclingireland.ie</p> <p>Irish Mountain Running Association www.imra.ie</p> <p>Irish Orienteering Association www.orienteering.ie</p> <p>Mountaineering Ireland www.mountaineering.ie</p>	Paul Schwartzman, Paul Barron
Coillte Nature	Karen Woods, Hedda Dick
Coillte	Daithi de Forge (DMP Vice-Chair), Ken Sweeney

Fáilte Ireland attend Board Meeting in an advisory role. The DMP Recreation Manager attends all DMP Board meetings.

Board members also sat on one or more of the DMPs Committees; Finance, Planning & Operations, Governance, Stakeholders & Volunteering and Strategy. The Board members oversaw the DMP budget and actions delivered by the DMP in 2022, the key deliverable for 2022 was the approval of the DMP Strategic Plan 2022-2026. A fixed agenda item at DMP Board meeting is updates from partner organisations which is a very useful knowledge sharing exercise for all of the partners.

Coillte act as agent for the DMP and provide procurement and HR services.

Looking Forward Partner for Success



Structure and resource the Dublin Mountains Partnership to ensure that its strategic objectives are delivered.

ACTIONS:

- Implement the structural changes identified by the Partnership to oversee its work and to ensure it is fit-for-purpose.
- Increase the funding provided to the DMP to deliver on the strategic plan objectives.
- Refresh the partners' Memorandum of Understanding to underpin the work of the Partnership.
- Incorporate Coillte Nature representation into the DMP to support the delivery of the Dublin Mountains Makeover.



Her Outdoors Walk,
13.08.23, with DLR
Sports Partnership.
Photo Credit: DLR
Sports Partnership.

DMP Recreation Manager

The DMP Recreation Manager, Clodagh Duffy, reports to the DMP Board and is also a member of Coillte's Recreation Team. The Recreation Manager organises the DMP work programme, co-ordinates the DMP Volunteer Rangers and DMP events, manages the DMP website and social media and works with partner organisations, in particular Coillte, on areas of mutual interest and on joint projects e.g., the Dublin Mountains Community Archaeology Project. Clodagh also represents the DMP on a number of forums including:

- Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Cycle Forum
- Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Rural Taskforce
- Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Tourism Committee
- Wicklow Way Committee

In 2022 the DMP was invited to attend a workshop and field day organised by the UCD Mountain Research Group. The DMP Recreation Manager represented the DMP at both events which were hugely enlightening in particular the field visit to Ticknock, which involved a walk on Two Rock and Three Rock Mountains led by an archaeologist and a geologist with an ecologist and a forester.

Looking Forward Partner for Success



Build alliances with key partners, neighbours and communities.

ACTIONS:

- Evolve the existing Consultative Forum into Consultative Panels.
- Build strong public and community-led participation.
- Develop the integration of DMP objectives and support for their delivery into the Partners' organisations.
- Work with Partner Tourism Strategies and Fáilte Ireland with respect to recreation in and promotion of the Dublin Mountains.
- Within the context of its Outdoor Recreation Strategy, work with Wicklow County Council on matters of mutual interest and benefit.
- Build a research initiative with third level education partners to inform future direction for the Partnership's aims.

Keeping up to date

The DMP's website provides information on recreation sites, recreation activities, archaeology, Leave No Trace Ireland Principles, upcoming events and news. Visit: www.dublinmountains.ie

Follow us on social

Facebook
www.facebook.com/dmpvr

Twitter
[@DubMountains](https://twitter.com/DubMountains)

Looking Forward Promote the Benefits



Develop an external communications plan to profile the importance of the Dublin Mountains as a destination for enjoyable, healthy and sustainable recreation activities and events.

ACTIONS:

- Develop and enhance the digital experience and develop a new website showcasing the recreation offer and events.
- Develop a media campaign to encourage the wider public to become more conversant and familiar with what the mountains have to offer.
- Promote responsible use of the Dublin Mountains through Leave No Trace Ireland principles.
- Develop an events programme to animate the mountains as a destination for a broad range of educational conservation, fun and enjoyable activities.
- Build a research initiative with third level education partners to inform future direction for the Partnership's aims.



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July 2023