

MAPPING THE PAST, RESTORING THE FUTURE

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Woodland Trust Northern Ireland

Tuesday 1 October 2024



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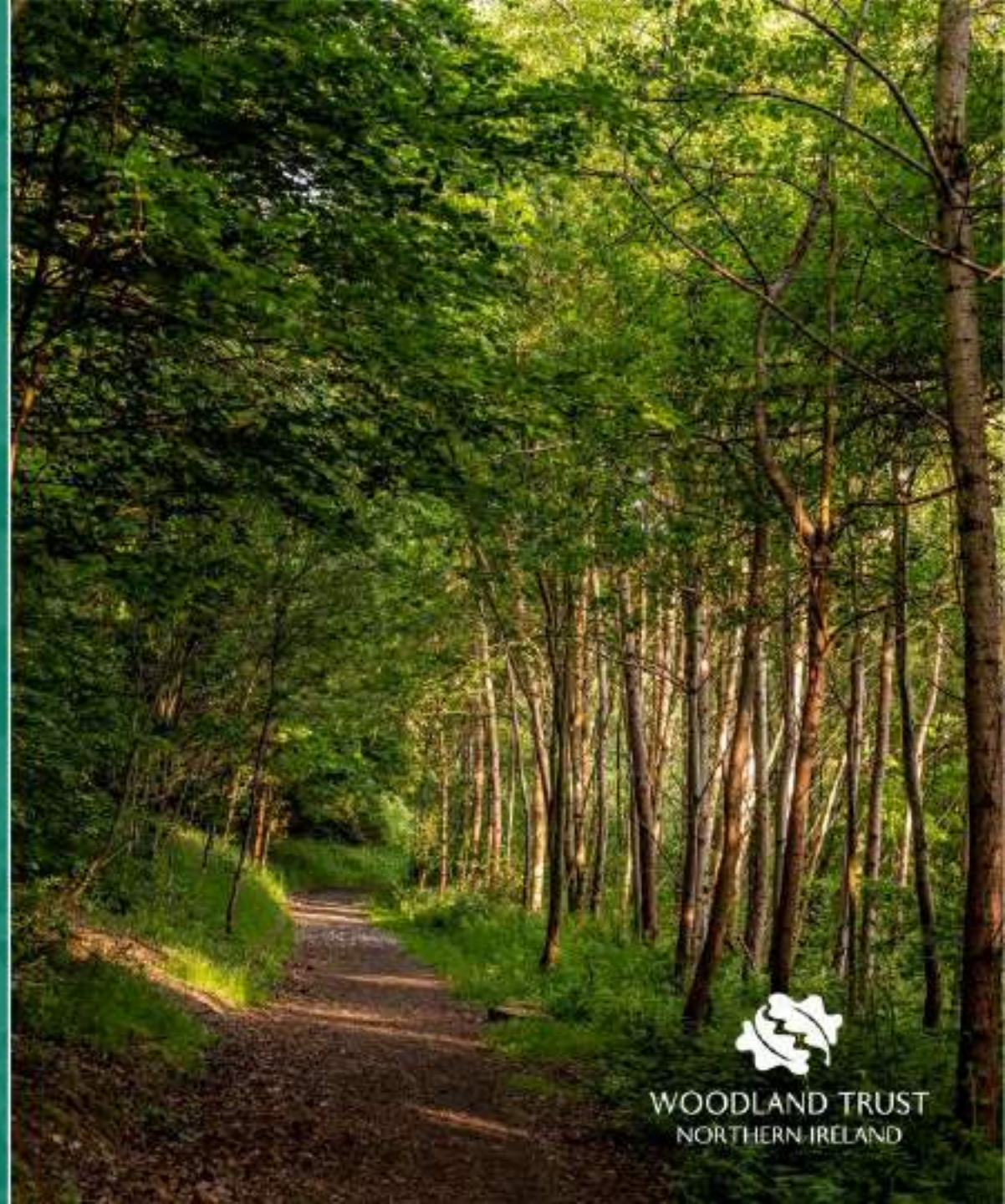
A WORLD WHERE TREES AND WOODS THRIVE FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE



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WHAT WE DO

- Create and restore woodland on our own estate.
- Support landowners to plant trees and restore ancient woodland on land outside our own estate.
- Advocate to decision-makers the valuable role that trees and woods play for people, climate and nature.



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WOODLAND TRUST NORTHERN IRELAND ESTATE

- 57 sites, approx. 630 hectares
- Major projects:
 - Mourne Park
 - Faughan Valley Treescape
 - Glas-na-Bradán Wood
- We only plant trees from UKISG certified nurseries



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OUTREACH

- In 2023/24, we supported landowners to plant over 300 hectares of new native woodland and 3.75km of hedging on land outside our own estate
- Key partnerships include:
 - NI Water –planting one million trees on their estate over a 10-year period
 - National Museums Northern Ireland – ancient woodland restoration at Cultra



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ENGAGEMENT

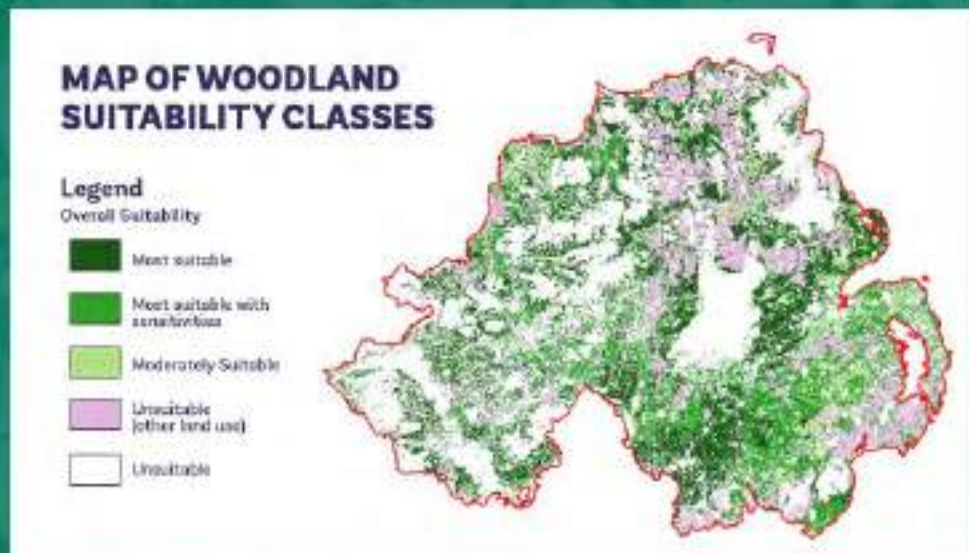
- Approx 500,000 visitors to Woodland Trust sites in Northern Ireland in 2023/24
- Volunteer Development Officer
- Community Development Officer at Mourne Park
- Volunteer & Outreach Officer at Faughan Valley



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EVIDENCE

- Evidence used to inform operations and policy/advocacy work:
 - UK Tree Equity Score
 - Woodland Establishment Mapping
 - Ancient Woodland Inventory



ADVOCACY

- Living Legends Campaign
- Tree Protection Bill:
 - Enhance TPOs
 - Living Monuments
 - Permitted Developments
- Local council Tree Strategies
- Northern Ireland Land Use Framework
- Northern Ireland Woodland Strategy
- Renewed tree and Woodland funding package



PROTECT



RESTORE



CREATE



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“What gets measured gets managed”

What gets mapped gets PROTECTED
RESTORED
CREATED



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BACK ON THE MAP

- Project carried out by the Woodland Trust between 2002 and 2007.
- Project aimed to identify and classify woods in Northern Ireland that have existed since the Ordnance Survey mapping in the 1830s. Woods were categorised as either ancient (existing since at least 1600) or long-established (existing since at least 1830 but not proven to be ancient).



Back on the Map

An Inventory of ancient and long-established woodland
for Northern Ireland

FULL TECHNICAL REPORT

S. Atkinson, G. Hunt, R. Smithers, A. Hill, P. Samson, R. Timmins



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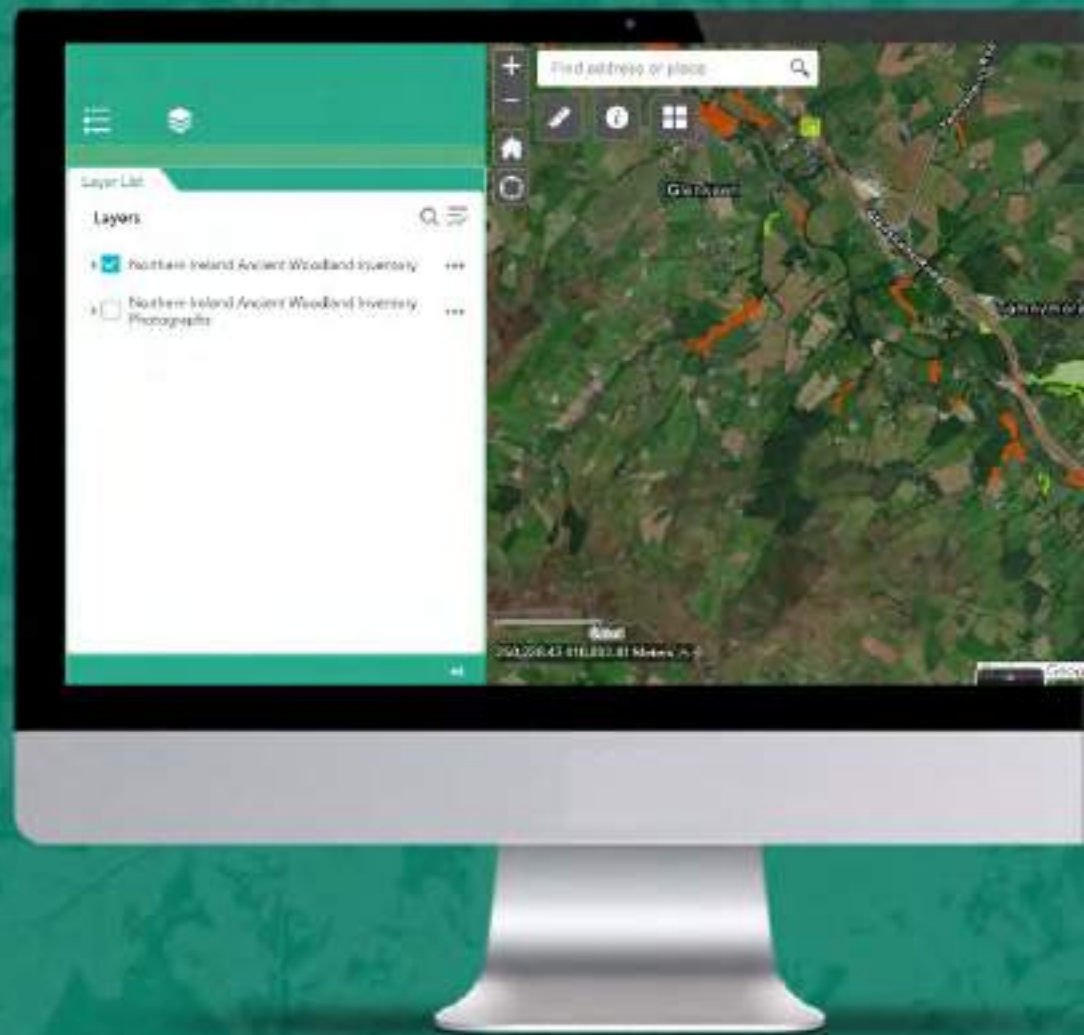
Classification	No. of sites	Area (ha)	% of NI's land area
Ancient Woodland (1)	6	151	0.01%
Ancient Woodland (2)	112	398	0.03%
Ancient Woodland (3)	532	2,147	0.16%
Long-established Woodland	1,694	7,268	0.53%
Lost since the 1960s	273	1,500	0.11%
Total	2,617	11,464	0.84%



NORTHERN IRELAND AWI

- Only 549 ha of woodland were classified as Ancient (1) or (2), i.e. could be shown with a high degree of certainty to be ancient this represents only 0.04 per cent of NI's land area.
- 13 per cent of ancient and long-established woodland has been lost since the 1960s.

<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/back-on-the-map/>



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PROTECT

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (2015):

“Planning permission should only be granted for a development proposal which is not likely to result in the unacceptable adverse impact on, or damage to known . . . ancient and long-established woodland”



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RESTORE

State of the UK's Woods and Trees:

“In Northern Ireland only 1% of woodland ASSI area is in favourable condition, with 61% in unfavourable condition.”

“Invasive species are a serious issue in Northern Ireland. Native plants like bracken and scrub species can become invasive, while non-native species such as rhododendron, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, and cotoneaster also pose threats.”

State of the UK's Woods and Trees 2021



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RESTORE

Trees and Woods at the Heart of Nature Recovery:

- A target for 3,000 hectares of ancient and long-established woodland in Northern Ireland to be in restoration by 2030
- A £21 million Ancient Woodland Restoration Fund to kick-start the restoration of Northern Ireland's remaining fragments of ancient and long-established woodland which are being damaged by non-native plantations and invasive species



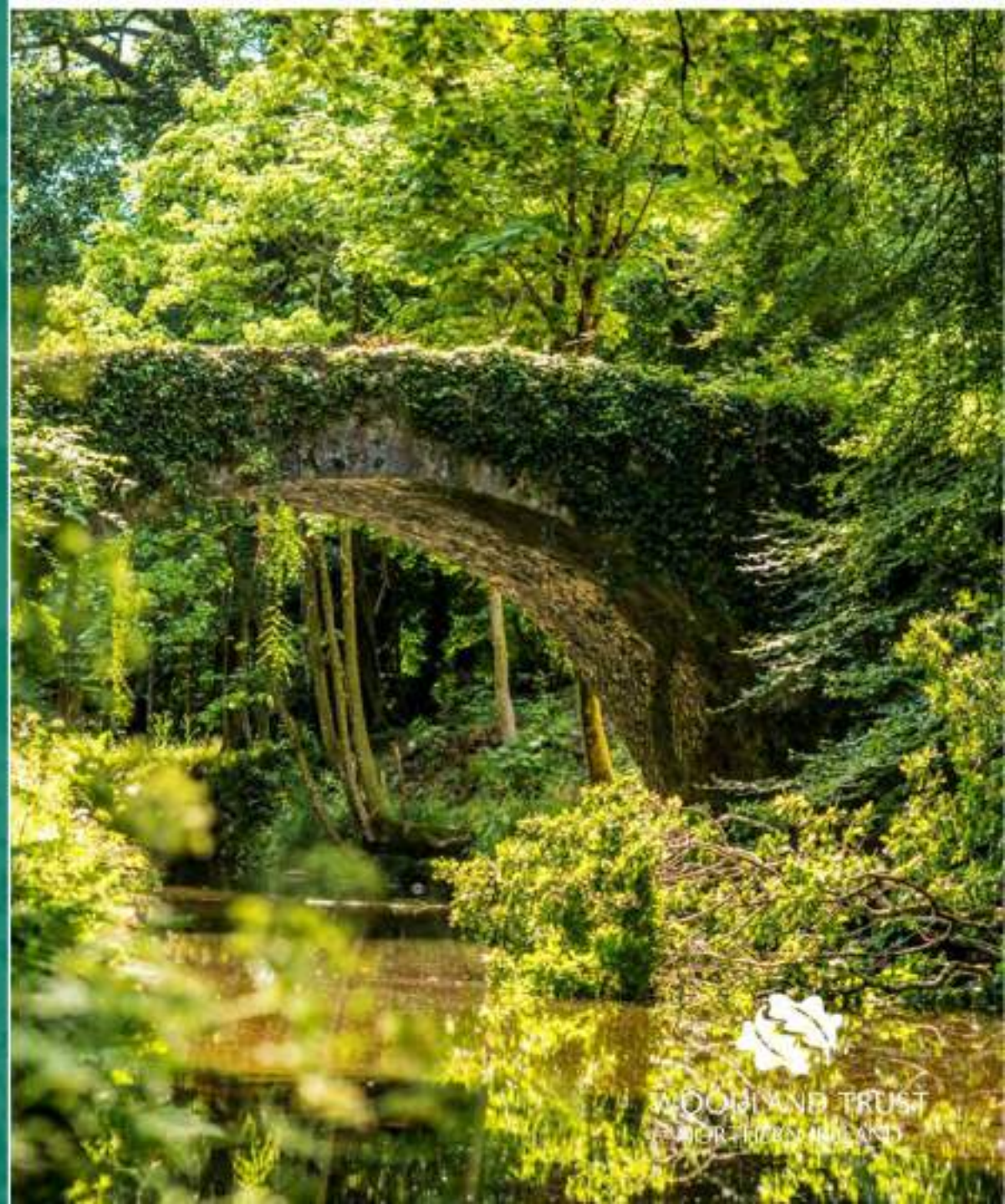
TREES AND WOODS: AT THE HEART OF NATURE RECOVERY IN NORTHERN IRELAND



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MOURNE PARK

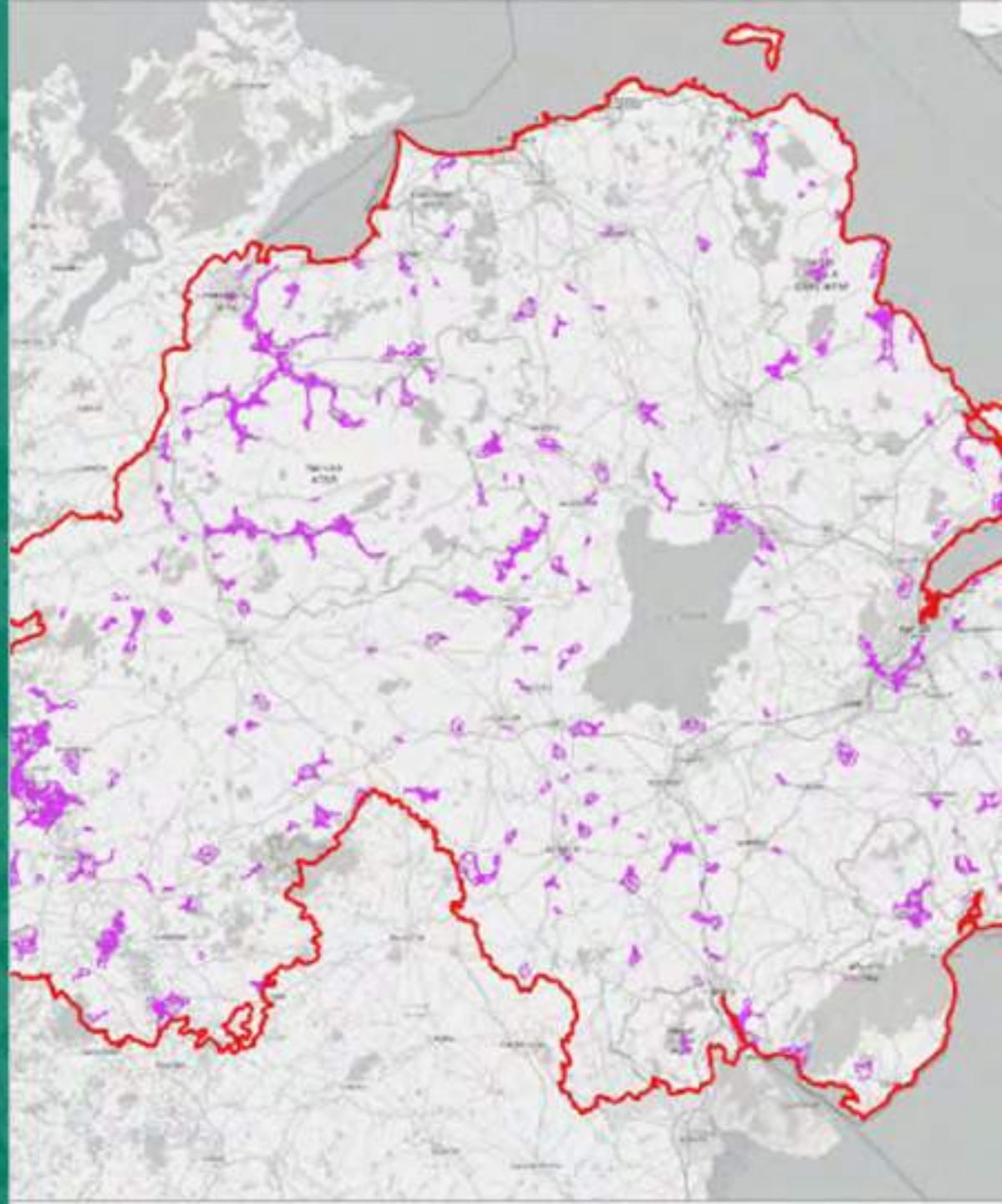
- Located near Kilkeel, County Down
- Acquired in 2021 from private ownership
- 156 ha site
- 73 ha of ancient woodland
- Approx 50 ha of invasive species has been cleared out of the 73 ha of rare ancient woodland
- Three new trails were completed in summer 2022
- 32 ha of neighbouring land acquired in 2023



CREATE

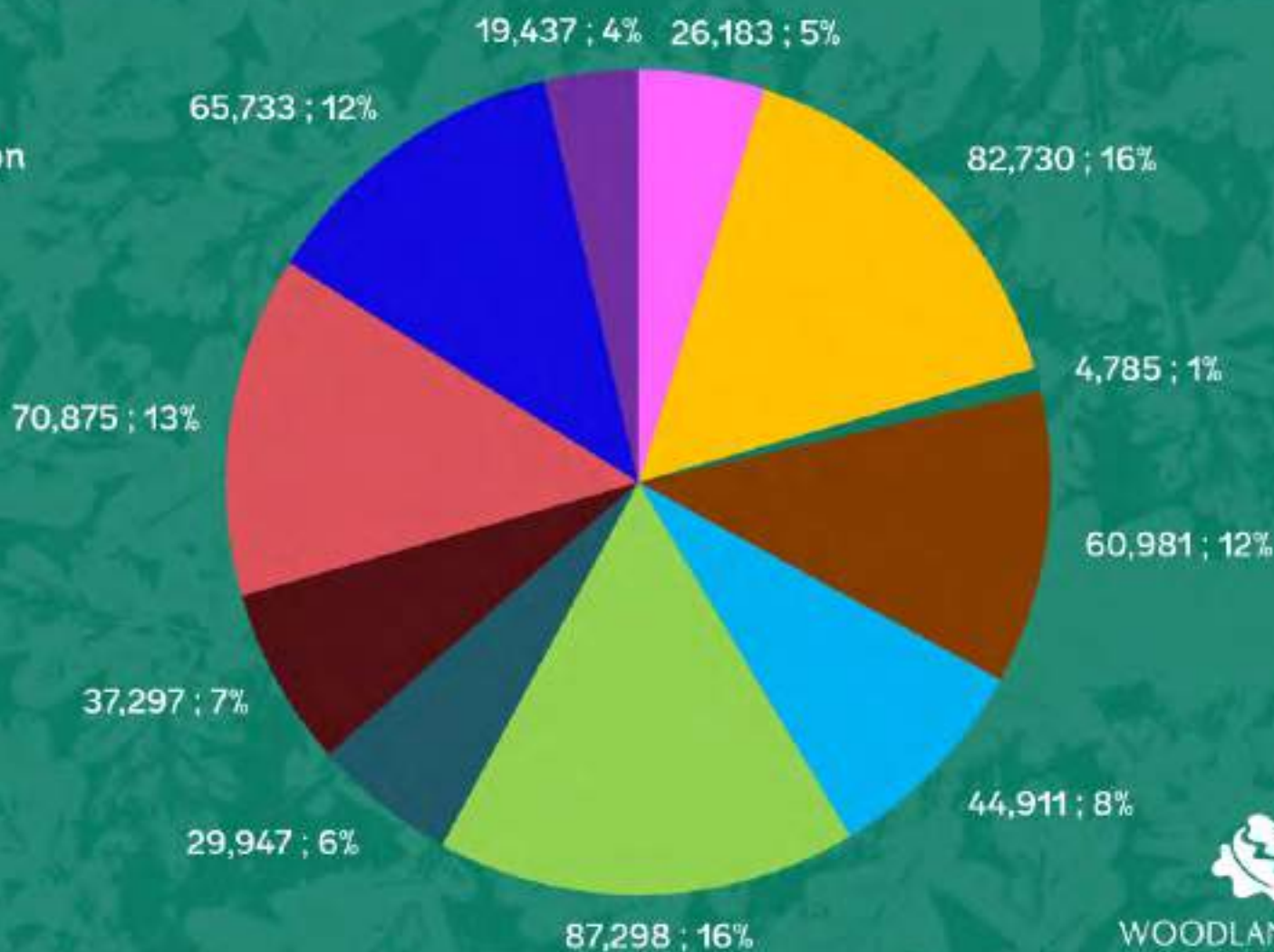
Woodland Establishment Opportunity Map (2023):

- *Northern Ireland has a total land area of 257,886 ha classified as the Most Suitable category for woodland establishment.*
- *4% of the most or moderately suitable land falls within priority areas to connect and buffer ancient semi-natural woodland .*



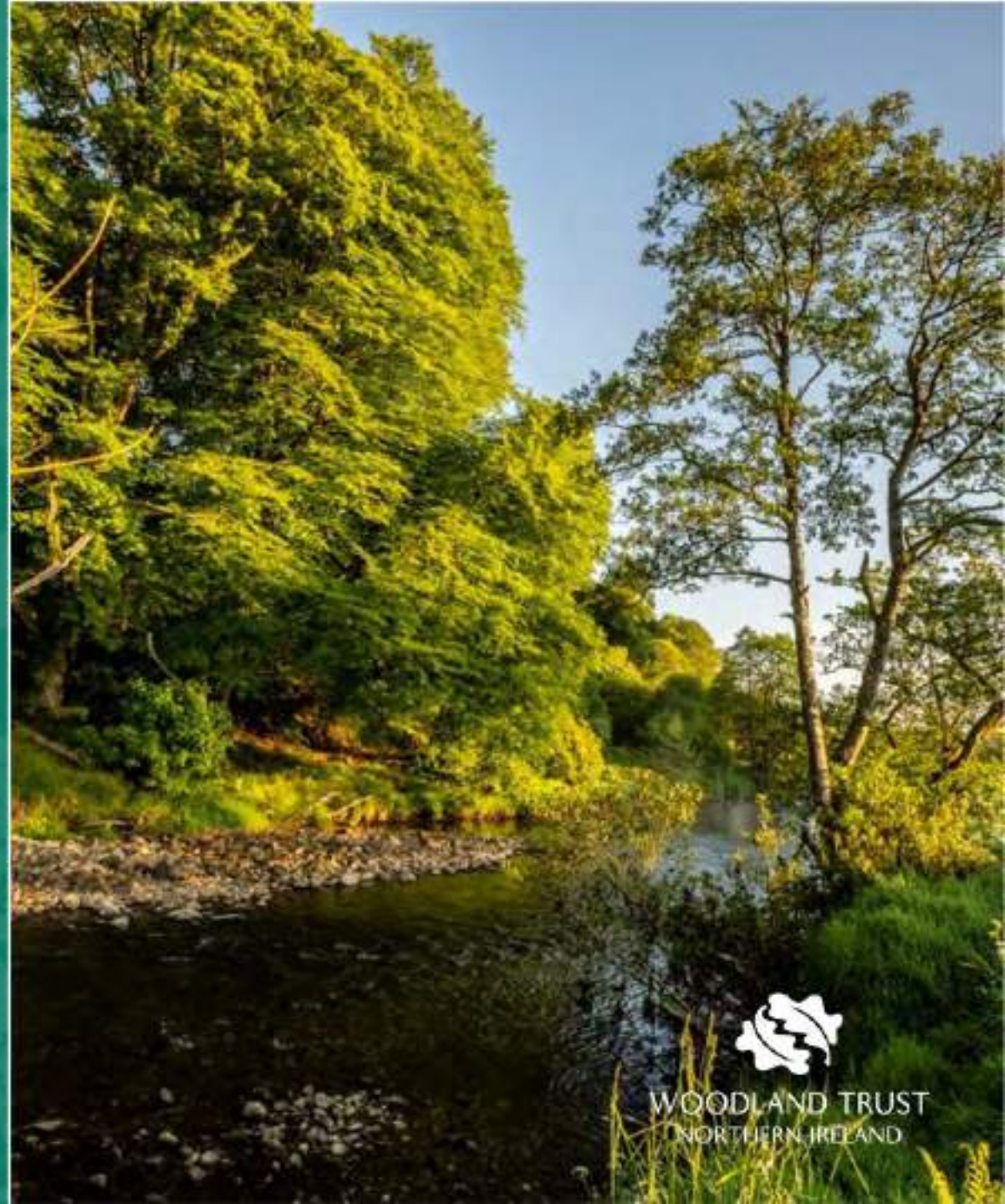
TOTAL SUITABLE LAND IN EACH COUNCIL AREA (HA)

- Antrim and Newtownabbey
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon
- Belfast
- Causeway Coast and Glens
- Derry City and Strabane
- Fermanagh and Omagh
- Lisburn and Castlereagh
- Mid and East Antrim
- Mid Ulster
- Newry, Mourne and Down
- Ards and North Down



FAUGHAN VALLEY

- Located 5 miles south-east of Derry/Londonderry
- Currently a total of 163 ha of woodland including:
 - Oaks Wood
 - Brackfield Wood
 - Red Brae Wood
 - Killaloo Wood
 - Burntollet Wood
 - Brackfield Bawn Wood
- Fragments of native woodland acquired by the Woodland Trust since 2000
- Project to connect these fragments for people, nature and climate completed in 2024



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THE FUTURE

- Ancient Woodlands Ireland project - updated Ancient Woodland Inventory for Northern Ireland
- Ancient woodland restoration targets and funding
- Ammonia Strategy
- Tree Protection Bill



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Thank you for listening

Not heard enough?
I can tell you more

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