

## Our Native Glens



*The group at our first day out*

**Our Native Glens** is Leitrim's newest community led environmental group. Based in North Leitrim, we are very proud to announce the start of our group during our first open meeting on February 4th 2025 with 30 attendees. Our passionate cohort has since grown to over 40 willing volunteers.

Eager to get started, we had our first meitheal on February 22nd on Tommy Earley's property. We got a great tour of Tommy's great work with native woodlands and pond building. We even caught a beautiful newt, which the children adored. Then we helped with restoring a bog by pulling out over 200 trees. Whoever wanted them took some but we still have a lot that we hope to replant soon. We finished the day with well deserved cups for tea and snacks.

Our next day out will be afternoon Saturday 1st of March 2-5PM.



*Catching newts at Tommy's place*

Our Native Glens aims to create, restore and protect habitats in the North Leitrim area. The project will be community and volunteer led but with expertise and direction from NPWS, NBDC, Leitrim County Council, LAWPRO and IFI and external consultants as required.

By creating natural habitats by planting native species we will be combatting the biodiversity crisis by allowing more species to thrive. Through the restoration of habitats, we ensure a local stewardship of these habitats, allowing biodiversity to flourish for longer. The protection of the habitats will establish a sense of connection and pride which will strengthen and grow the public's appreciation for biodiversity which is one of the biggest threats.

As Sir David Attenborough said:

***“No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced”***





*Helping restore a bog by transplanting birch tree*

Another huge benefit to biodiversity will be the connection of biodiversity corridors and biodiversity hotspots. This is critical for the survival of many of our native species, since biodiversity relates to not only the diversity of species, but also the genetic diversity within a species. As more and more of our habitats are fragmented, our biodiversity is losing resilience through the loss of genetic diversity. The increase of biodiversity corridors and biodiversity hotspots will strengthen the adaptability of our native species, both flora and fauna.

### **Invasive Alien Species Management**

There are a number of IAS identified in the project area that include:

- Cherry Laurel
- Rhododendron
- Himalayan Balsam
- Lawson Cypress
- Winter Heliotrope
- Snowberry

The benefits of IAS management to biodiversity are enormous, as IAS are the second leading cause of biodiversity loss globally.

Milltown Woods is a very popular and beloved woodland near the town of Manorhamilton. In Ireland, forests are being choked out by IAS such as rhododendron and cherry laurel due to the lack of native understory surviving in affected areas. There is a small section of Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron growing in Milltown Woods that can and should be managed before it spreads to the surrounding native woodland.



*Volunteers helping transplant trees*

**Objective 1: To plant native trees on suitable and available land**

Tree planting will be carried out at suitable locations such as crucial riparian zones and biodiversity corridors as well as within towns such as church grounds and housing estates with permission from landowners

**Objective 2: To grow native trees from local seeds**

Starting a tree nursery of native trees of local provenance is more critical than ever to safeguard our native biodiversity. Plants of local provenance increase the survival rate of planting whilst supporting more species that have co-evolved along with it.

**Objective 3: To collect and sow local wildflower seeds**

Training will be provided to volunteers to demonstrate sustainable practices of harvesting and storing native wildflower seed. The wildflower seeds will be sowed at suitable local sites to help provide habitat and food for our pollinating insects. This action will support the objectives of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.



**Objective 4: To identify, record and map Invasive Alien Species in the project area**

A suitable project area will be chosen in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. A survey will be undertaken in the project area to map the locations of identified IAS. This map will be used to identify areas of IAS and will be used to help identify the areas and species of IAS that require practical management actions

**Objective 5: To remove Invasive Alien Species; Cherry laurel and Rhododendron from Milltown Woods**

Milltown Woods is a very popular and beloved woodland near the town of Manorhamilton. The benefits to biodiversity here are enormous, as IAS are the second leading cause of biodiversity loss globally. In Ireland, forests are being choked out by IAS such as rhododendron and cherry laurel due to the lack of native understory surviving in affected areas. There is a small section of Cherry Laurel and Rhododendron growing in Milltown Woods that can and should be managed before it spreads to the surrounding native woodland.

**Objective 6: To remove Invasive Alien Species; Himalayan balsam from identified riparian zones**

Mapping of the location of Himalayan Balsam will identify the source and locations of the IAS along the waterbodies. Safe and effective removal of Himalayan balsam will be carried out by volunteers following training by an IAS expert.

**Objective 7: To deliver and facilitate the following biodiversity workshops**

- Invasive Alien Species awareness and Identification
- Conservation actions for safe removal of IAS
- Pollinator awareness
- Bumblebee identification and monitoring
- Butterfly identification and monitoring
- Dragonfly/Damselfly identification and monitoring
- Citizen Science Stream Index (CSSI)
- Pond/Wetlands - awareness, creation and management
- Seed saving of local wildflowers and trees/shrubs



