Appendix 1 – Correspondence relating to 1983/84 events



19 October, 1984

minister of Fisheries & Forestry Chairman, Cork County Council Chairman, Exectricity Supply Board TEL. 772941 EXT. x4471809

Re: The Gearagh Woodland

I write to you concerning the conservation of the native woodland of the Gearagh, near Macroom. This is the only surviving fragment of a formerly extensive forested area that was destroyed in the 1950's to make way for the R. Lee hydroelectric scheme.

The surviving woodland, in the vicinity of Toon Bridge, is of enormous scientific importance and educational value. It is unique in Ireland, and there is nothing like it in Britain either; its nearest parallel is in the forests of the R. Rhine, on the border of France and Germany. The Gearagh has attracted a lot of recent interest: the Young Scientist of the Year Award was given to Mr. T. Hickey, of Macroom, for his study of this area. A short account on the area (enclosed) appeared in the April 1984 issue of B.S.B.I. News, and at least two scientific papers on the area are to be published shortly.

It is therefore extremely dismaying to find that the surviving woodland has suffered severe damage in 1983 and again in 1984. A broad swathe has been bulldozed right through the wood below Toon Bridge, not only destroying the vegetation but threatening to affect the water-table, and hence threatening the very existence of this unique ecosystem. I ask you, sir, to do all that is in your power to prevent further destruction, and to ensure that an effective conservation policy is instituted for the area.

Yours faithfully;

Dr. D.L. Kelly Chairman, Irish Branch of the Botanical Society of the British Isles (B.S.B.I.)

c.c. Chairman, Cork Association, An Taisce, 9 George's Quay, Cork. Chairman, Wildlife Group, An Taisce. Convenor, Habitat Conservation Committee, Wildlife Advisory Group.

enc.

Correspondence 1: Letter from Dr Daniel Kelly, TCD, 19th October 1984



25 February, 1985

J.M. McCarthy, Room No. 901, Enforcement Section, Planning Department, Cork County Council, County Hall, UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN

TRINITY COLLEGE
DUBLIN 2. IRELAND

TEL. 772941 EXT. #149x 1809

DAMAGE TO GEARAGH WOODLAND

Dear Mr. McCarthy,

Thank you for your letter of 5th December 1984. I now enclose, as you requested, a map showing the location of recent damage to the Gearagh woodland.

Within the zone marked 'Area of woodland destruction', a swathe has been cut through the woodland through felling of trees and destruction of islets, by bulldozer or similar machinery. The length of destruction is at least one mile, starting below the 300-yard mark downstream (east) from Toon Bridge. This was carried out during 1983-84. I enclose a photograph taken in 1984 to give some impression of the seriousness of the damage to this unique woodland.

Besides the direct destruction and uglification, this damage affects a wider area; the artificial channels created have lowered the general water-table. I am informed that in mid-winter 1984-85 many of the natural stream channels in this area were still dry as a result of the interference described. Some of this damage to the wider ecosystem may be virtually irreversible. May I appeal to your Department to ensure that no further destruction of this kind is permitted.

I should add that extensive new barbed wire fencing has been stretched deep into this wooded area in 1983-84, perhaps to control livestock, or to 'stake out a claim' to the land; certainly not in the interests of conservation. May I ask that this too be investigated.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel L. Kelly, Ph.D., Lecturer in Botany.

cc. Chairman, Cork Association, An Taisce, 9 George's Quay, Cork.

Correspondence 2: Letter from Dr Daniel Kelly, TCD, 25th February 1985

Bord Soláthair an Leictreachais		Lower Fitzwilliam Street Dublin 2
Your rel:		Ård Oifig
Our ref:		Sráid MacLiam Íochtair, Baile Átha Cliath 2
	18th April, 1985	
	Mr. James White, Department of Botany, University College,	
	Belfield, Dublin 4.	
	Dear Mr. White,	
	Thank you for your letter of the 3rd April together with a copy of your paper about t Co. Cork. Unfortunately, Mr. O'Leary died	he Gearagh Woodland,
	The damage to the woodland below Toon Bridge in 1983 was caused by a man using a bulldozer in the mistaken assumption that he owned the land. The problem was brought up with him and he agreed not to cause further damage to the area. This man has also died.	
	You may be assured that the E.S.B. is part the preservation of the Gearagh.	icularly sensitive about
	Yours sincerely,	
	J.E. Williams, SECRETARY.	
	opundinat.	

Correspondence 3: Letter from J. F. Williams, Secretary, ESB, 18th April 1985