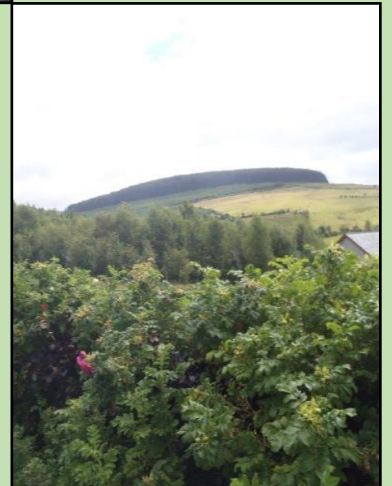


# Scoping a new Northern Ireland Woodland Register and Basemap



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

## 1. Monitoring woodland and forest cover

The UK is committed to international agreements on sustainable forest management and these require countries to report at intervals of approximately five years on indicators developed by the Global Forest Resources Assessment and Forest Europe (formerly the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe). These indicators show the extent and condition of forests and woodlands, together with social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainable forest management.

Monitoring woodland and forest cover in Northern Ireland is described in the [UK Forestry Standard](#), which is the national reference standard for managing our forests. Data derived from this monitoring, including forest area and timber production, are published annually in [Forestry Statistics and Forestry Facts & Figures](#).

## 2. The Northern Ireland woodland register and basemap

Section 6 of the Forestry Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 placed a requirement on the Department to produce a register of the location and size of woodlands in Northern Ireland and the types of trees they contain and publish the register at intervals not exceeding 10 years. Accordingly, a first [draft of the Forest Service woodland register and basemap](#) was published in 2013.

The Northern Ireland woodland register provides data in tabular format on the area of woodland type by county, Forestry Planning Area and Council (Local Government District) area and whether Forest Service managed or not.

The register also separates woodland types into the following categories: broadleaf, conifer, mixed conifer/broadleaf or short rotation coppice. In addition three further categories have been included, namely areas awaiting replant or natural regeneration, other open ground considered integral to the woodland and woodlands where the woodland type has not been recorded.

The chosen method to produce the register and basemap was to combine Forest Service and other DAERA Geographic Information datasets with data provided by partner organisations to produce a basemap showing the spatial distribution of all woodland meeting the Forest Service definition<sup>1</sup>.

The basemap is illustrated in Figure 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Woodlands must have a minimum size > 0.1 ha, a minimum average width > 20m and a tree canopy cover > 20% with trees capable of growing > 5m in height or must consist of trees which can reach these thresholds in situ.

### 3. Uses of the woodland register and basemap

The woodland register and basemap provide a dataset on the current extent of woodland and forest cover in Northern Ireland and as a benchmark which change in the area of woodland and forest cover can be measured against. This comprehensive spatial dataset will be the primary source for forest and woodland cover information in Northern Ireland and will provide, at a minimum, information on area of woodland and forest cover and type.

### 4. Benefits of contributing to the woodland register and basemap

The compilation and publication of this revised dataset may be of direct use to your organisation as it could be used to inform a broad range of forest and environmental policies and planning activities. It will also facilitate monitoring of forest resources and can be used as a means of ensuring a high level of protection for the environment.

### 5. How can you contribute?

Your organisation has been identified as having, or possibly having, a dataset which Forest Service considers useful in assisting us to create a new woodland register and basemap. Forest Service requests access to this dataset, or datasets, to facilitate the creation of our woodland basemap, subject to an appropriate agreement.

### 6. How will Forest Service use your data?

Using ArcGIS, the Forest Service GIS team will combine the data you supply with other datasets. As in other applications, spatial data can be further improved by reference to new survey information and remote sensing data as it becomes available.

Once completed, the basemap will be made available for consumption to users as a web service or in other formats on request.

### 7. Sharing relevant datasets

This scoping document seeks views about how information asset owners and decision-makers can contribute to the Forest Service register and basemap. Please reply to this scoping document and confirm if you are willing to share any relevant spatial datasets that could contribute to the Forest Service woodland register and basemap.

If you require further information or wish to comment on the proposals in this scoping document please contact Liam Donnelly on 028 9052 4064 or [Liam.Donnelly@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Liam.Donnelly@daera-ni.gov.uk).



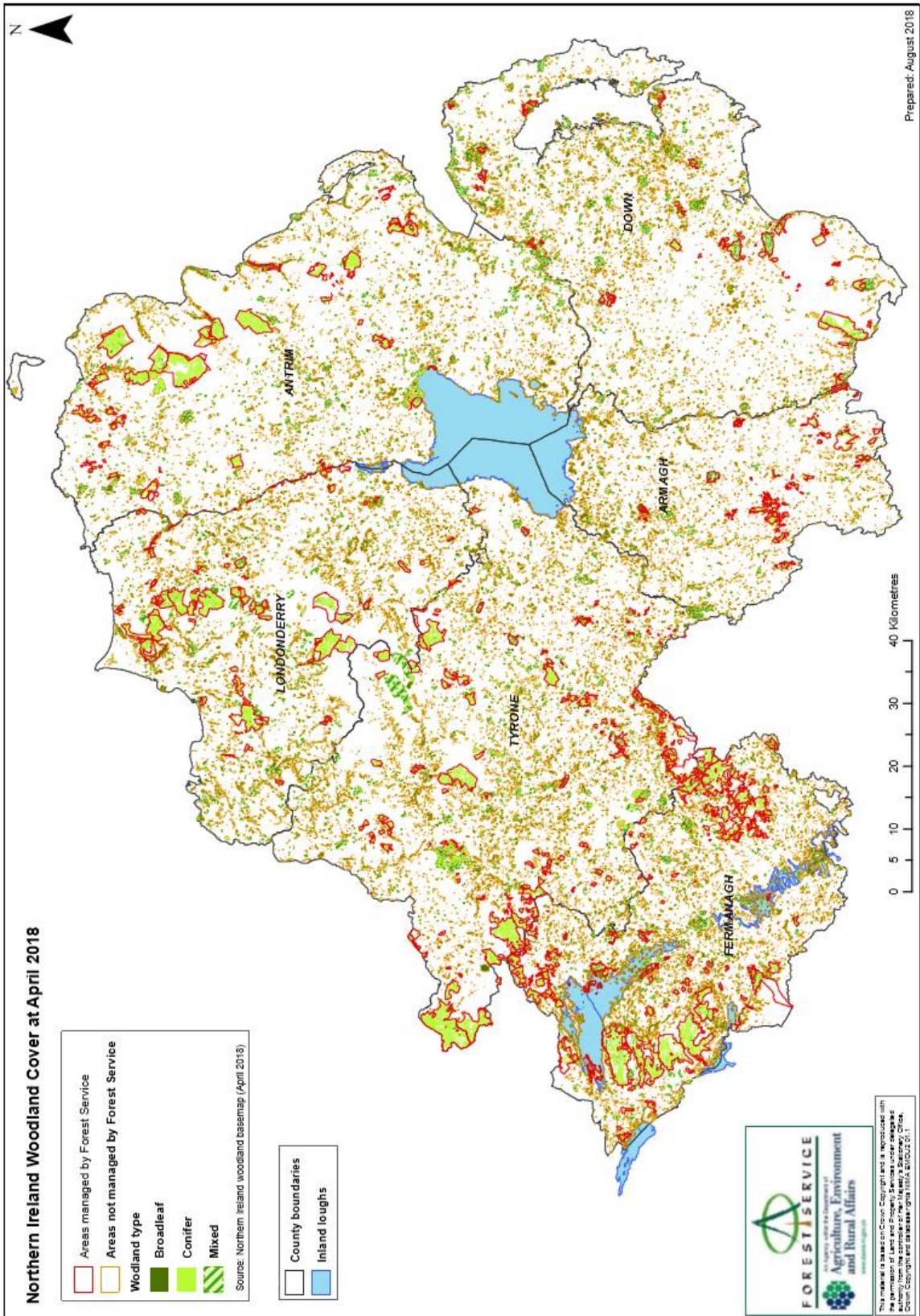


Figure 1. Draft Northern Ireland Woodland Register and Basemap