SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: WILLSBOROUGH ESKER

SITE CODE: 000943

Willsborough Esker is situated approximately 9km north of Nenagh in Co. Tipperary. The main habitats at this site are scrub and woodland. Much of the esker is dominated by a dense scrub of Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) along with occasional Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) and Yew (*Taxus baccata*). An area of mature Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) woodland is found adjacent to Woodpark House at the western limit of the esker. Other habitats include patches of species rich dry calcareous grasslands. In these areas Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), clover (*Trifolium* spp.) and many grasses including Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) are common. A more detailed botanical survey during the growing season would yield many more species.

Although much of the esker has been improved, the remaining semi-natural habitat provides a good variety of species and habitats over such a small area. Set amongst highly farmed land this small pocket of wildlife provides an important refuge for local flora and fauna. It is important that every effort is made to ensure that the remaining habitats are kept intact.

13.11.2009