SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: DARGLE RIVER VALLEY

SITE CODE: 001754

This site is located about 2km south-east of Enniskerry. It is a section of the River Dargle with steep wooded banks. At one point along the river a well exposed series of Ordovician volcanic rocks are faulted against well-exposed Bray group Cambrian strata. Such a clear exposed junction is not seen elsewhere in Co. Wicklow.

The area is dominated by mature Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) woodland, with some Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), birch (*Betula* spp.) and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). Pockets of mature conifers occur in places, as well as Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*). The ground flora is rather sparse and mainly of Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

The steep gorges over the river hold a luxuriant growth of mosses, while species common along the river bank include Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), Yellow Pimpernel (*Lysimachia nemorum*), Marsh Hawk's-beard (*Crepis paludosa*), New Zealand Willowherb (*Epilobium brunnescens*) and Giant Fescue (*Festuca gigantea*).

A Red Data Book species, Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon*), occurs along the river. This is a very localised species confined to eastern Ireland.

The importance of this site is that it is a fine example of a wooded valley. It is likely that this valley has been wooded for a long period and such habitats are becoming rare in north County Wicklow. The removal of the conifers would increase the interest of the site. The site is also of considerable geological importance.

25.11.2009