SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH NAGLACK

SITE CODE: 000561

This calcareous lough is situated 2km south-east of Carrickmacross in Co. Monaghan. Together with adjoining limestone grassland, calcareous marsh and mixed woodland this area supports a very rich flora. The following information is based on the 1972 AFF site description: -

The most interesting part of the area is at the northern end where a marsh and small limestone slope are enclosed by two areas of woodland. The limestone grassland is small but the plant community is rich, being a fairly open sward with Quaking-grass (*Briza media*) the dominant grass. Pale Flax (*Linum bienne*) occurs here at its northern most Irish limit.

Nearby this patch of grassland is a calcareous marsh with an abundance of Common Spotted-orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*) and sedges (including *Carex disticha*, *Carex hirta* and *Carex rostrata*).

Most of the lough is fringed by trees. The woodlands to the north and east sides are planted. They are mainly Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) with some Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and conifers. One small wooded island, situated in the centre of the lough provides a nesting site for a family of Herons.

The lough, most of which is fringed by reed-beds, contains several stoneworts which indicate the calcareous nature of the lake. These are *Chara aspera*, *Chara desmacantha*, *Chara vulgaris* var. *contraria*, *Chara fragilis* var. *capillacea*, *Chara hispida*, *Chara hispida* var. *rudis* and *Chara pedunculata*. In addition Horned Pondweed (*Zannichellia paulstris*), a scarce species in Ireland, has been recorded from the northern part of the lake.

Several bones of the Irish Giant Deer (*Cervus giganteus*) have been found in the mud of the lough.

The Lough would make a good educational area, having several different ecological habitats and being within easy reach of Carrickmacross and Castleblaney.

There is a golf course stretching down to the lakeshore in the south and east from the Hotel Nuremore. Although further development may take place, the woodland and shoreline vegetation of the lough should remain as they add to the amenity value of the area.

In addition, the present survey showed the lough to be very popular with anglers. Bream is present in the Lough. Access to the lough is very good since it is bordered by secondary roads to the north and east.

Extremely serious pollution of the lough in recent years has resulted from organic enrichment and the fauna of the lough have been seriously affected. In 1991 the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board carried out an investigation into the water quality of the lough. They found Lough Naglack to be in a highly eutrophic state with nutrient levels extremely high and no oxygen present in the deeper part of the lake. Fish could only survive in the margins and on the surface. The present survey indicated that the situation should now improve as new work has started on the nearby sewage works for Carrickmacross. In addition there have been recent prosecutions against two polluters of the lough.

The importance of this site lies in its diversity of calcareous habitats supporting a rich flora. The presence of several stoneworts and a rare species of pondweed in the lake, as well as the presence of Pale Flax in the grassland at is northern most limit, adds significantly to the interest of the site. The site is rated as of regional importance.

6.11.2009