



**WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENTS ACTS 2000
(AS AMENDED) & PLANNING & DEVELOPMENTS REGULATIONS 2001 (AS AMENDED)**

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

SUGARLOAF REPAIR PROJECT

Description

Great Sugarloaf is a much loved and much used landmark in Wicklow. More than 20,000 climb it annually. The route is short but dramatic, giving the experience of a real adventure within a 90 minute timeframe.

Due to the heavy usage, the mountain has suffered severe erosion from the car park to summit. The approach trail is almost 50m wide and water damage to gullies means that parts of the route are in stone gullies almost 5 feet deep.

The landscape is damaged, as is the biodiversity of the area. This project aims to provide a sustainable, hard wearing trail surface to the upper shoulder of the mountain using various techniques outlined by UPAG (Upland Path Advisory Group – Scotland) from a reverse turn trail, to turf drains to stone pitching. These various techniques will be used as a showcase for trail building techniques in the eastern part of the country.

Access to the great Sugarloaf is currently unattractive, the car park entrance is uninviting, the surface in disrepair and no demarcation of parking spaces is in place. Additionally, there is very limited space for busses to park roadside.

The Sugarloaf has the potential to provide a high quality, sustainable, recreation experience for many years to come, but it requires immediate repair and attention.

The project has been discussed in detail with local grazing rights holders who are in full support of these plans.

Specification

Stage 1 – Car Park

Re fencing of car park with attractive timber. Upgrade of concrete archway with an overhead barrier. Demarcation of parking spaces. Squaring off of car park area. Separation of WCC depot materials from car parking area. Erection of a steel gate and removal of boulders at second entrance to car park. Erection of interpretative signage outlining the trail construction techniques involved and waymarking.

Stage 2 – Lower triangle adjacent to car park

Construction of simple trail through this section, compounded dust surface. Planting of native species and inclusion of natural picnic areas. This area will be suitable for families with small children and will be accessible to all.

Drainage to the side feeding into the car park drains.

Stage 3 – Bottom section

Construction of a 150cm wide reverse overlay trail with clear demarcation and drains each side. Planting to both sides of the trail with existing gorse and heather.

Removal of spruce saplings from the area. Reseeding the existing 50m wide path.

Stage 4 – Climb to shoulder

Blocking of all but one route option for this section using planting and placement of stone. Construction of stone steps along trail, no more than 100cm in width. Water bars and side drains throughout.

Stage 5 – Shoulder to cone

Hand pitching of stone trail with steps as required. The path will not access the summit as to construct at the gully section of the mountain would cause further damage to the core stability of the cone.

The techniques employed in this section will be as for the Croagh Patrick project currently underway in Mayo.

Stage 6 – Habitat Restoration

Spruce saplings and small trees will be removed from the mountain to encourage growth of native species. Heather and gorse will be protected.

Stone required for the project will be sourced from the mountain using “borrow areas” where no more than 15% of stone in each area is used.

Interpretive panels will be situated throughout the route alongside waymarking.