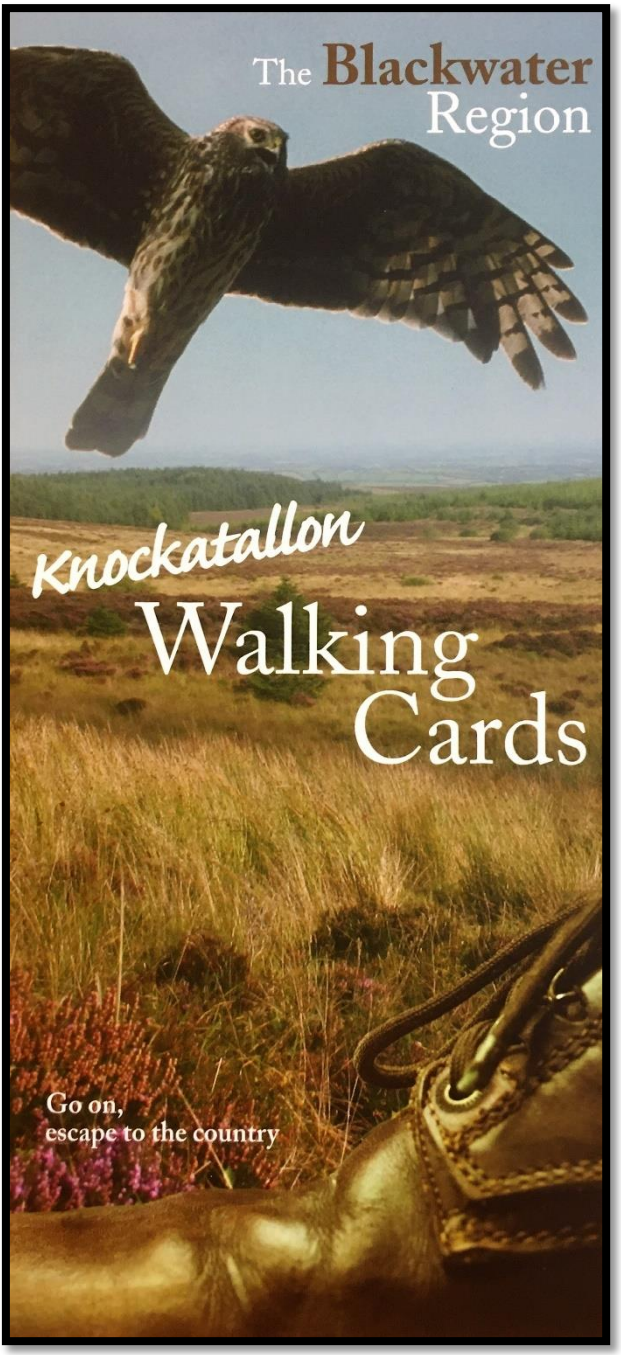

The Blackwater Region
Knockatallon
Walking Cards
Go on,
escape to the country

Welcome...

...to Knockatallon and an opportunity to explore the bogs and bye-ways of the starkly beautiful Sliabh Beagh Hills of north Monaghan. Here you will find one of the finest examples of blanket bog in Ireland, a special environment that supports some of our most threatened wildlife such as the Hen Harrier that we have adopted as the symbol for this series of looped walks.

Whatever your level of fitness or walking experience, we hope that you can select a walk that allows you to enjoy this wonderful countryside.

The series includes four looped walks ranging from 6 to 10 kilometres; two of which are on quiet country roads that are suitable for all abilities and two of which are over more challenging terrain such as forest tracks and open moorland.

All four walks are well way-marked using the colour-coded discs below and can be walked either clockwise or anti-clockwise, hence the use of double pointed directional arrows. Please note that sections of both the Tra and the Bragan walks coincide with the Sliabh Beagh Way* and Ulster Way* so that some of the way-marking posts will include a number of discs and arrows.

The Tra Walk	black	
The Rock Walk	red	
The Esh Walk	blue	
The Bragan Walk	green	

For further information on the Knockatallon Walks, and/or to contact the Knockatallon Rambling Club contact Sliabh Beagh Hotel & Tourism Centre Tel: 00353 47 89014

* for further information on these walks contact CAAN (Countryside Access & Activities Network) Tel: 0044 (0) 28 9038 3848

Go on, escape to the country

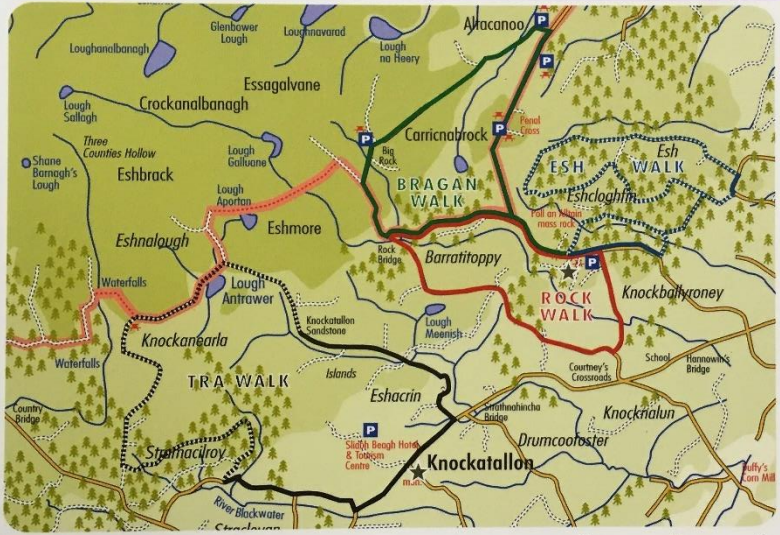
www.visitblackwaterregion.com

Blackwater Regional Partnership is the official tourism organisation for the River Blackwater area which traverses the districts of Armagh, Dungannon & South Tyrone, and Monaghan. It markets the Blackwater area through publications and the website www.visitblackwaterregion.com and is part financed by the European Union through the Interreg IIIA programme managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the ICBAN Partnership.

Note: Blackwater Regional Partnership is comprised of Armagh City & District Council, Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council, and Monaghan County Council. The information provided in this publication has been published in good faith on the basis of information submitted to the Blackwater Regional Partnership. Every effort has been made to ensure that it is accurate, but you are strongly advised to confirm prices, opening times and dates, and so on, prior to making final arrangements. All maps are for illustration purposes only - BRP takes no responsibility for any inaccuracies. All liability for any loss, disappointment, negligence, or damage caused by reliance upon the information contained in this publication, or the bankrupty, liquidation, or ceasing to trade of a party or individual mentioned or omitted herein, is hereby excluded. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Blackwater Regional Partnership.

75753 www.theprintfactory.com t: 048 6632 6960 f: 048 6632 8389

Knockatallon Walking Cards



ROCK Rock Walk

TRA Tra Walk

ESH Esh Walk

BRAGAN Bragan Walk

Minor Road

Dirt or Forest Track

Sliabh Beagh/Ulster Way

Start/Finish

Parking

Picnic Area

Lake

Forest

Elevation: 300 to 400 metres

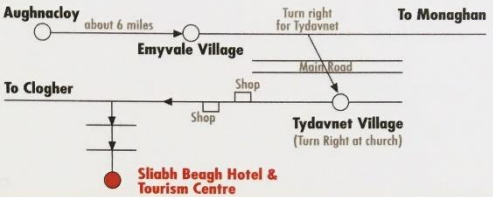
Elevation: 200 to 300 metres

Elevation: 100 to 200 metres

Elevation: 50 to 100 metres

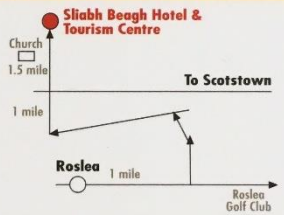
How to get there

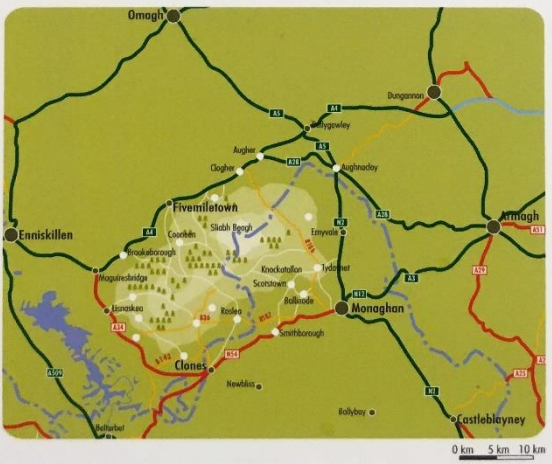
From Aughnacloy to Sliabh Beagh Hotel & Tourism Centre



From Monaghan to Sliabh Beagh Hotel & Tourism Centre

From Roslea to Sliabh Beagh Hotel & Tourism Centre





75753 www.theprintfactory.com t: 048 6632 6960 f: 048 6632 8389

The Eshcloghfin (Esh) Walk

Overview:

This walk follows mostly forest tracks, starting on the opposite side of the road from a small parking bay just over 4km from the main trailhead at the Sliabh Beagh Hotel. You can also choose to walk a short loop of just over 3km.
It is worth deviating briefly off the route to the left just 400 metres into the walk and following a small stream to 'Poll an Aifrin', the location where masses were said during Penal Days. A small memorial was erected here as part of the millennium celebrations.

Back on the main walk the route follows a small tributary of the Blackwater for a kilometre or so. Here in the open glen you might see a Kestrel swooping on field mice or vole along the banks of the stream or spot Squirrel or a Pine Martin. At this stage you can choose to return via the short loop or continue on the longer loop up a short but steep slope. Once you have your breath back you'll feel the peace of this secluded setting and possibly be greeted by the call of the Cuckoo moving echo-like around you as you move from one bird's territory to another.

Having reached a junction you can proceed around this longer loop in either direction. Up on the main body of the walk there are excellent views northwards towards Ballygawley and Aughnacloy. You'll also catch site of the Penal Cross where Fr Mckenna was shot in 1838. Southwards there are panoramic views of the midlands or 'uplands' as they are referred to locally, although the drumlin landscape looks remarkably similar North and South.

With the longer loop completed, you will retrace your steps back to the parking bay.

Points of Interest:

Panoramic views of the Drumlin landscape.
View of the Penal Cross.
Memorial of 'Poll an Aifren'

Distance:

Long loop – 9km
Short loop – 3.5km

Route type:

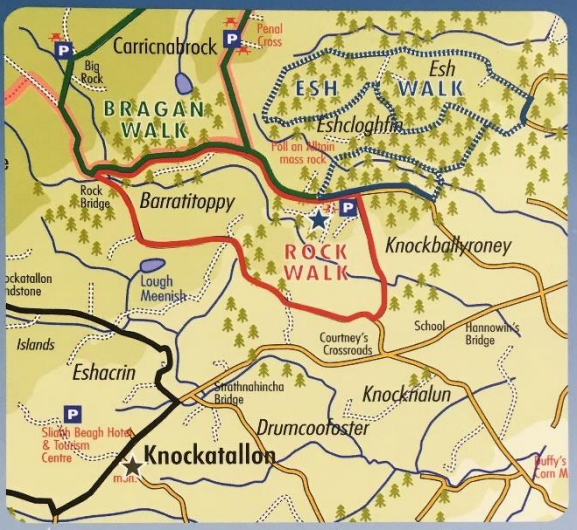
Off-road, forest tracks.

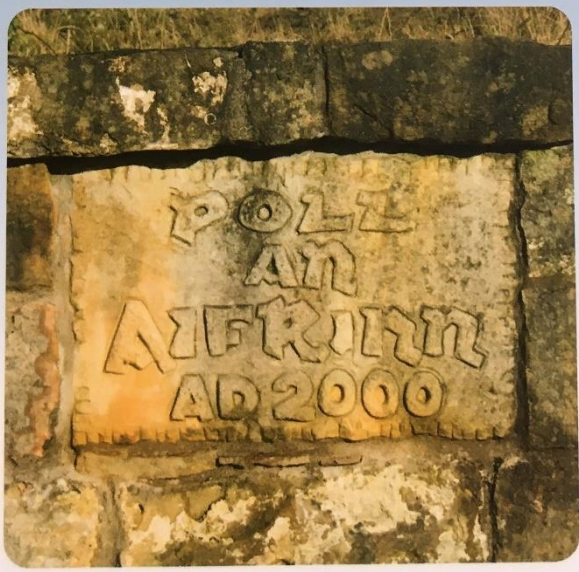
Go on, escape to the country

www.visitblackwaterregion.com

75753 www.theprintfactory.com t: 048 6632 6960 f: 048 6632 8389

The Eshcloghfin (Esh) Walk





The Antrawer (Tra) Walk

Overview:

This is the longest of the four walks and will take about two hours to complete. The loop begins and ends at the Sliabh Beagh Hotel and whilst it is mostly off-road, the stretches to and from the hotel are on-road for short distances and great care should be exercised where no footpath is available.

From the hotel you can follow this walk in either direction. The following account is based on an anti-clockwise direction, turning left from the hotel. Follow the road with great care for half a kilometre until the route turns into a minor country road that is closed to traffic (apart from agricultural access). The walk moves uphill past the small enclosed fields of the lowlands towards the blanket bog and open grazing of the uplands. As you climb the hill you will no doubt stop to catch your breath and enjoy the fine views southward into the midlands. Moving on you'll pass the local sandstone quarry from where the beautiful golden sandstone of Sliabh Beagh is cut for facing and ornamental work. Beagling or hound hunting is very popular amongst local hunt enthusiasts so you may hear the familiar bark of the hounds and shouts of huntsmen, particularly on a Sunday when drag hunts are often held.

Turning left at Lough Antrawer, the route shares part of the Sliabh Beagh Way, crossing two feeders of the lake and of the Blackwater. You are moving into turf cutting country from which the homes of the townlands below have been warmed for generations. Towards evening the calls of Grouse, Snipe and Skylark mingle across the heather tops in a final flurry of song before slowly giving way to the stillness of the night.

The path (or 'pad' as it's pronounced locally) continues on the far side of the cutting. If you're passing in early summer you'll see the white heads of the Bog Cotton plant bobbing in the breeze in the wetter cutaway areas. A picnic table has been positioned in a discreet location along this section in the townland of Knockanearla, so take a break. Just ahead of you, about 100metres, is the border with County Fermanagh into which the Sliabh Beagh Way continues. To the north lies the 'Three Counties Hollow' where the Ulster Counties of Fermanagh, Tyrone and Monaghan meet. Please remember to take your rubbish with you as you leave the picnic area. The path moves along past a very rich uncut blanket bog area and then down through forestry plantations towards the Fivemiletown Road. This area is popular with wild Goat and Deer as they are never far from forest cover. A short stretch of road brings you back to the Sliabh Beagh Hotel.

Points of Interest:

Fine views of the midlands · Golden sandstone quarry
Wild Goat and Deer · Bog Cotton plants in summer

Distance: 10km

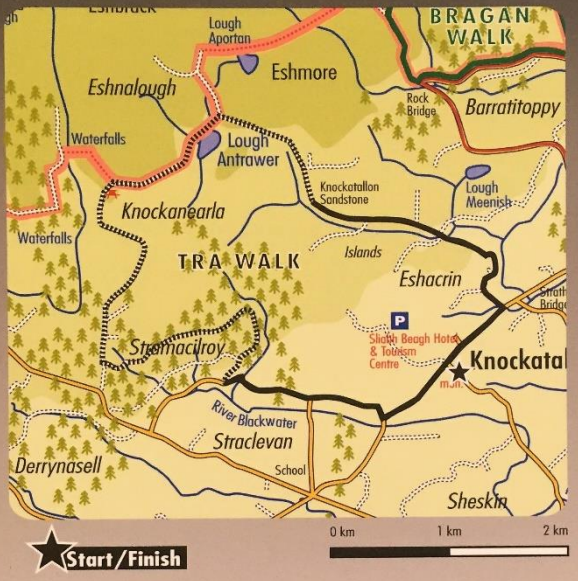
Route type: Minor roads, Bog and Forest tracks

Go on, escape to the country

www.visitblackwaterregion.com

75753 www.theprintfactory.com t: 048 6632 6960 f: 048 6632 8389

The Antrawer (Tra) Walk



The Rock Walk

Overview

This loop walk is entirely on minor country roads starting from a small parking bay that is also the trailhead for the Esh and BraganWalk, just over 4km from the main trailhead at the Sliabh Beagh Hotel. This is one of two on-road loop walks in this series and it is possible to extend this walk from 6.5km to just under 11km by combining the two (see details on the Bragan Walk card).

The Rock Walk can be completed in either direction and takes the walker towards the sandstone peaks of the Sliabh Beagh Uplands past the rushy farmsteads typical of the wet mineral lowland soils of the South Ulster and the West Midlands. Blanket peats associated with the Uplands and West of Ireland take over. Forestry plantations come into view and a range of 'Johnny come lately', wildlife species come centre stage: the Foxglove, Pine Martin, Kestrel and Buzzard. The purple flowering bell of the Foxglove now appear alongside the yellow Primrose, carpeting disturbed ground and well drained embankments during the Spring and early Summer. The Pine-Martin scurries in and out of the roadside ditches foraging for wildlife road victims, while deeper in the glen the Badger makes it set. The hawk-like Kestrel makes good of improved foraging opportunities as small voles, field mice and grey squirrel nest amid the developing ground cover and foliage. The Kestrel cry's a lonesome lilting whistle as it flies by in perfectly arced flight paths. Maybe the far larger Hen Harrier will put in a special guest appearance for you, hovering high above the glen with its fingered wingtips outstretched. The native Raven can also suspend itself in the sky similarly for minutes at a time but its distinctive blue-black colouring makes it unmistakeable. The telltale call of the Cuckoo may allow you to spot one of these impossibly crafty creatures and gain luck for the day. Above the picturesque Rock Bridge stand the higher peaks of the Sliabh Beagh Uplands notably Eshmore and Carricknabrock. The walk continues, skirting around this upland tributary of the Blackwater. This is the same River Blackwater that flows through Glaslough and into Lough Neagh. It forms the main navigation for the Ulster Canal as far as Middletown in Armagh. The restoration of this canal is now seen as the last vital link in connecting all of Ireland's main waterways. The views into the midlands, or 'uplands', as they are known locally, reveal a sea of Drumlins poking their heads above the landscape as if all jostling for position. Patrick Kavanagh would probably have appreciated the prospect and mused the point over a pint once back below amid the embraces of his beloved hedges, banks, stones "and every bloomin thing".

Points of Interest:

Blanket peats · Foxglove · Rock Bridge · Drumlins

Distance: 6.5km

Route Type: Minor Roads

Go on, escape to the country

www.visitblackwaterregion.com

75753 www.theprintfactory.com t: 048 6632 6960 f: 048 6632 8389

The Rock Walk

The Bragan Walk

Overview

The Bragan Walk is entirely on minor country roads where you can still get the sense of walking over remote upland bog while remaining on firm footing! This is a walk that is likely to appeal to the whole family and includes several quiet picnic areas. The starting point is a small parking bay, just over 4km from the main trailhead at the Sliabh Beagh Hotel, which is also the trailhead for the Rock and Esh walks. Turning left from here you will walk 0.7km before reaching the main loop that can be walked in either direction. Alternatively you can park at a number of locations around the loop, such as at the 'Big Rock' or at the picnic site close to the Penal Cross; you will soon come across a waymarking post bearing the green Hen Harrier disc, regardless of where you park along the route or whatever direction you walk. The loop can be extended from 7km to just less than 11km by combining it with the Rock Walk, the other on-road walk in this series. Please note that the two routes share a short stretch of this walk so don't be confused by the site of two different coloured discs on one post. A section of the walk is also shared with the long-distance Sliabh Beagh Way and Ulster Way routes – a testament to the popularity of this area for walkers.

A noteworthy landmark that is signposted off this route is the Penal Cross where Fr McKenna was shot in 1838. It is worth deviating off the road for 100 metres or so to visit the spot and take time to absorb the panoramic views of the drumlin landscape of the midlands that can be seen on a clear day. From a number of locations along the route you will see evidence of turf cutting. Don't forget to look towards the skies too as you might be treated to a sight of the Hen harrier putting in a special guest appearance, hovering high with its wing tips outstretched.

Points of Interest:

Penal Cross · Turf Cutting
Commanding views of Bogland and Forest Plantations

Distance: 7km

Route type: Minor road

The Bragan and Rock extended walk

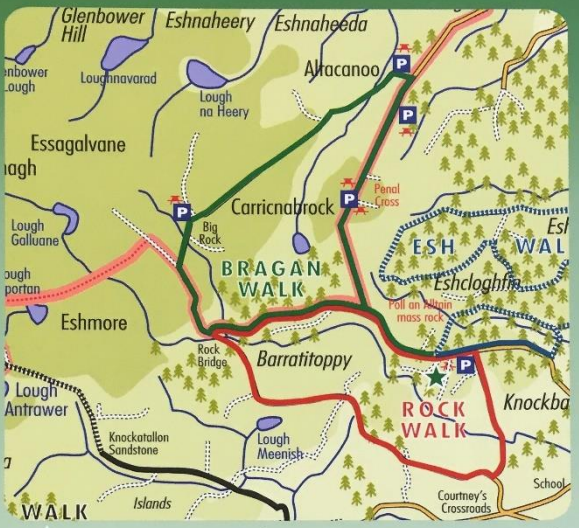
If you are feeling fit enough to tackle an 11km walk, you can combine these two road walks into one longer loop. Both loops fit together like a somewhat distorted figure of 8, allowing you the option of returning via the shortest loop if you change your mind on how far you wish to walk. The starting point can be at the parking bay that is the trailhead for the Rock and Bragan walks or at any of the parking points on the Bragan Walk. You can walk in either direction; if you start out on the Bragan Walk you will follow the green discs to the point where you pick up the red discs of the Rock Walk, following this route to where you once again pick up the green discs to return via the Bragan Walk.

Go on, escape to the country

www.visitblackwaterregion.com

75753 www.theprintfactory.com t: 048 6632 6960 f: 048 6632 8389

The Bragan Walk



Mountain of Sliabh Beagh

The curling smoke from a "fum turf" fire, it stains the sky of blue,
Where a mountain man cuts one turf deep on the face of Altnacanoo,
Over "Carraig Glass" the sweet skylark sings out a merry song,
While Will-o-the wisp curls over the heath the dragon fly is gone.
A harrier hovers over Keenans hill while away across the bog,
The wild red grouse calls out "go back", over Eshcloghfin there's fog.
From "Leac an Taggart" go "Poll na Scall" the golden plover flies,
Round "lough na Heeragh" the wild duck sweep and small trout gently rise,
Over dark Glenvan the curlews call; to the north a purple haze,
Near Johnny's well by the dark brown stream, the sheep and cattle graze
Eishbrack serene, that holds the cross where the priest was shot by yeos,
From Toneyday to Pepper's hollow the cuckoo's voice echoes.
The diving snipe whose wings do neigh, that rain is near fortells,
While fast across the heather tops the darting swift propels.

The wild hare hops across the moor, the beagle cries behind,
Eishmore looms high above it all, bedecked with spruce and pine,
On a moss clad swamp behind the lake, a moorhen shy is wadin',
While a bumble bee drones through the air with heather honey laden.
And "Carraig na Sladdery" guards Toal's Glen like a giant pike of hay,
These sights I see, these sounds I hear on the Mountain of Sliabh Beagh.
Its evening late and a gentle breeze across Lough Bhraden blows,
While homeward bound to distant nests fly flocks of noisy crows,
The cuckoo's song is silent now – the hen harrier has gone to bed,
The grouse calls out a last "go back", the beagle's cry is dead.
A bat appears like ugly specks upon a golden sky.
A distant bark from a cranky dog, a woodcock whistles by,
And hare sneaks back to a quiet den, the curlews call subsides,
And all return to Mother Earth, all to different hides,
I stand and gaze on this grand domain with awe and deep concern;
The heather bell, bogcotten white, sundew and trembling fern,
The smallest midge, the red moneog, the hue across the land;
My thanks to him for a chance to see the splendour of his hand.
These gems of nature, these simple things and I only hope and pray,
That these sights and sounds man will preserve
on the Mountains of Sliabh Beagh
(By Peter Keenan)

Go on, escape to the country
www.visitblackwaterregion.com

75753 www.theprintfactory.com t: 048 6632 6960 f: 048 6632 8389

Leave No Trace

The walking community in Ireland has adopted the principles of 'Leave No Trace'.

The 'Leave No Trace' programme is designed to help outdoor enthusiasts value the natural environment, to understand the impact of our activities, and to enable us to make decisions to minimise that impact we make, while still enjoying our activities with freedom.

1. Plan ahead and prepare. Check the forecast as the summit of Sliabh Beagh can become shrouded in dense mist
2. Be considerate of others
3. Respect farm animals and wildlife, avoid entering farmland with livestock
4. Travel and camp on durable ground
5. Leave what you find
6. Dispose of waste properly
7. Minimise the effects of fire, guard against fire in the forest
8. Leave the wildlife, plant life and archaeology undisturbed to help preserve the Sliabh Beagh

For further walks in the Blackwater Region visit www.visitblackwaterregion.com

While out walking, if you find yourself lost or require assistance contact Sliabh Beagh Hotel & Tourism Centre on 00353 47 89014. Each way-marked post has a number placed at the bottom, please state this when seeking help.

© Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland – Copyright Permit No. MP 003008 Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, ã Crown Copyright 2008. NIMA CS&LA 156"

Blackwater Regional Partnership

INTERREG IIIA

Project part financed by the European Union

Blackwater Regional Partnership is part financed by the European Union through the Interreg IIIA programme managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the ICBAN Partnership.