

SATELLITE AiR

UCD Parity Studios | Mayo Dark Sky Park

OPEN CALL



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páirceanna
Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife
Service



UCD Earth Institute
UCD Institiúid an Domhain

“No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced”

David Attenborough

Image: Josh Matthews

CONTENTS

INVITATION	4
WHO IS THIS RESIDENCY FOR	5
WHAT WE OFFER	6
TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION	6
TIMEFRAME	7
WHAT'S EXPECTED OF THE ARTIST	8
HOW TO APPLY	9
BACKGROUND	
Who We Are	11
Mayo Dark Sky Park	12
Wild Nephin National Park	14
Location Map	16
CONTACT	17

INVITATION

UCD Parity Studios is delighted to announce the inaugural SATELLITE Artist in Residence opportunity in partnership with the National Parks & Wildlife Service, UCD Centre for Space Research and UCD Earth Institute.

UCD Parity Studios SATELLITE residencies aim to increase the scope of the artists in residence programme to support site specific research and develop practical resources to support artists, organisations and researchers working in areas related to climate, environment and sustainability.

This residency offers an artist the unique opportunity to do field research in one of the best places in the world to view the wonders of the night sky. Mayo Dark Sky Park, encompassing Wild Nephin National Park, has some of the most remote lands in Ireland and covers a vast 15,000 hectares of uninhabited and unspoiled wilderness across Owenduff Bog and the Nephin Beg mountain range in northwest Mayo.

At night, the park protects some of the most pristine dark skies in the world, and is one of the last places at the edge of Europe that is still free from light pollution. Its main objective is to 'restore and protect the nightscapes of Mayo for present

and future generations of all living things', and as a result of its work, the Park was awarded the 2024 "International Dark Sky Place of the Year". In 2026, Mayo Dark Sky Park will celebrate its 10-year anniversary as an International Dark Sky Park and the residency will be part of shaping the focus of events and engagements to mark this milestone.

The artist will have access to a multidisciplinary network including National Parks & Wildlife rangers based in the Dark Sky Park, researchers at UCD C-Space - Ireland's leading centre for interdisciplinary collaborative space-related research and UCD Earth Institute - for environmental, climate and sustainability research.

This residency begins with a 6-week immersion stay in National Parks and Wildlife Services rangers' accommodation within the Mayo Dark Sky Park. Following this the artist will have the option to avail of the accommodation for further research visits throughout the year while supported in the UCD Parity Studios artists in residence programme.



WHO IS THIS RESIDENCY FOR

We welcome proposals by artists working in any discipline, including socially engaged, interdisciplinary, collaborative and co-creative arts practices. Artists can choose to develop their body of work individually, collaboratively, and or through co-creation with communities of place or interest during their residency.

This residency will suit an independent artist who enjoys wild nature and wants to develop their work through sensitive engagement with this unique environment.

The Mayo Dark Sky Park accommodation is in a remote location, 12km from the nearest town. The artist will need a car, driver's license and insurance, as public transport options are limited and the park covers a large area with significant distances between sites of engagement. A reasonable level of fitness is recommended, and weather-appropriate clothing and footwear are essential. On-site activity will primarily take place during the dark sky season from October to March.

The deadline for applications is Monday 18th August at 1pm.

WHAT WE OFFER

- An artist's stipend of €12,000. This is paid monthly through UCD payroll with PRSI and tax deducted at source
- A 6 month residency period with Mayo Dark Sky Park to coincide with the dark sky season from October to March
- A 6-week, on-site immersion stay in Mayo Dark Sky Park
- Studio space at UCD Parity Studios for the duration of the residency depending on the artists' needs
- on-site accommodation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Cross-disciplinary peer support through monthly artists in residence process meetings
- Access to UCD library, lectures and other university resources.
- Research support through the extensive network of UCD academics and National Parks and Wildlife Services.

This SATELLITE residency does not provide dedicated studio space in Mayo, however desk space is available during the 6-week immersion stay, and working/making space can be provided on an as-needed basis for research activities and project work, public or community events or workshops.

TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is provided at the NPWS Ranger's 2-bedroom cottage in Mayo Dark Sky Park for the 6-week on-site immersive period. It can also be made available for shorter periods of research during the year.

It includes a large private room, with a double and single bed. While the artist will be the primary occupier of the space, the second bedroom may be used on occasion by visiting NPWS staff. There is a bathroom with shower and a large kitchen / dining / living room. You will also have use of the desk workspace in the living area, with internet access.

Please note that phone reception is limited within the national park generally.

This residency is not suitable for children.

TIMEFRAME

18 July - 18 August 2025	Open Call
22 August 2025	Shortlist Notifications
25-28 August 2025	Interviews of shortlisted artist
29 August 2025	Final Notifications
1 Nov 2025 - 1 Nov 2026	Satellite Residency period
1 Nov - 12 Dec 2025	6-week on-site immersion stay in Mayo DSP



WHAT'S EXPECTED OF THE ARTIST

The SATELLITE artist in residence is expected to:

- Use the residency year to develop a body of work responding to Mayo Dark Sky Park and your on-site experience here
- Be on-site for the full 6-week immersion period and be open and available to meet with NPWS rangers and guides and engage with them for their activities
- Deliver a talk to introduce your practice and residency proposal to NPWS staff at the start of the immersion period.
- Liaise with UCD Parity Studios and Mayo Dark Sky Park to make the processes of your research and development of work visible through our websites and social media platforms.

- Be proactive in developing your body of work and research network:

Engage with NPWS rangers and guides for their activities within the Dark Sky Park, including fieldwork and on-site research and monitoring.

Participate in the monthly artists in residence peer support meetings online or in person at UCD Parity Studios.

Engage with relevant researchers and academics across UCD.

- Talk about the work developed during the residency at public events organised by Mayo Dark Sky Park in late 2026.
- Credit UCD Parity Studios, Mayo Dark Sky Park and relevant partners in any exhibition or documentation of your work arising from the residency.
- Submit a feedback report on completion of your residency.



HOW TO APPLY

Please email all information as 1 PDF document to paritystudios@ucd.ie

This PDF should include:

- **Name**
- **Address**
- **Phone**
- **Email**
- **Website**

Tell us about yourself (*Max 100 words)

Briefly describe who you are and outline your most recent artistic achievements.

Your process (*Max 200 words)

Briefly describe the approaches you take in developing your work, what materials you use and how you disseminate your work

(cont.)

Your proposal (*Max 250 words)

Why you want to undertake a residency with Mayo Dark Sky Park. Describe your proposed project including the key area of research/practice you're interested in and how you would make your process visible/known to others.

Existing Commitments

Please specify commitments you have to other work, residencies, exhibitions/performances, conferences, research/education in 2025/2026.

Will you avail of the studio space at UCD Parity Studios or will occasional desk space at UCD be sufficient to meet your needs?

Examples of previous work

- Examples of work: up to 10 examples of your work with one image per page. Please label each image clearly with title, dimensions, materials, gallery/site of installation /performance, date.
- List of images/work
- Links to video/sound pieces (max 3 minute clips or indicate which 3 minutes you recommend

The deadline for applications is 1pm Monday 18th August.

Please note applications submitted outside of the Open Call submission dates are not reviewed.

If necessary, the selection panel may contact you to ask for more information about specific details in your application.

We will confirm receipt of your application by email.

We will let you know by email if your application is successful or not.

The decision of the selection panel will be final.

Shortlisted candidates need to be available the week of 25th August for an online conversation with the selection panel.



BACKGROUND

WHO WE ARE

UCD Parity Studios
<https://www.ucdartistsinresidence.com/>

UCD Centre for Space research
<https://www.ucd.ie/space/>

UCD Earth Institute
<https://www.ucd.ie/earth/>

Mayo Dark Sky Park
<https://www.mayodarkskypark.ie/>

Wild Nephin National Park
<https://www.nationalparks.ie/wild-nephin/>

The National Parks & Wildlife Service
<https://www.npws.ie/>



Mayo Dark Sky Park



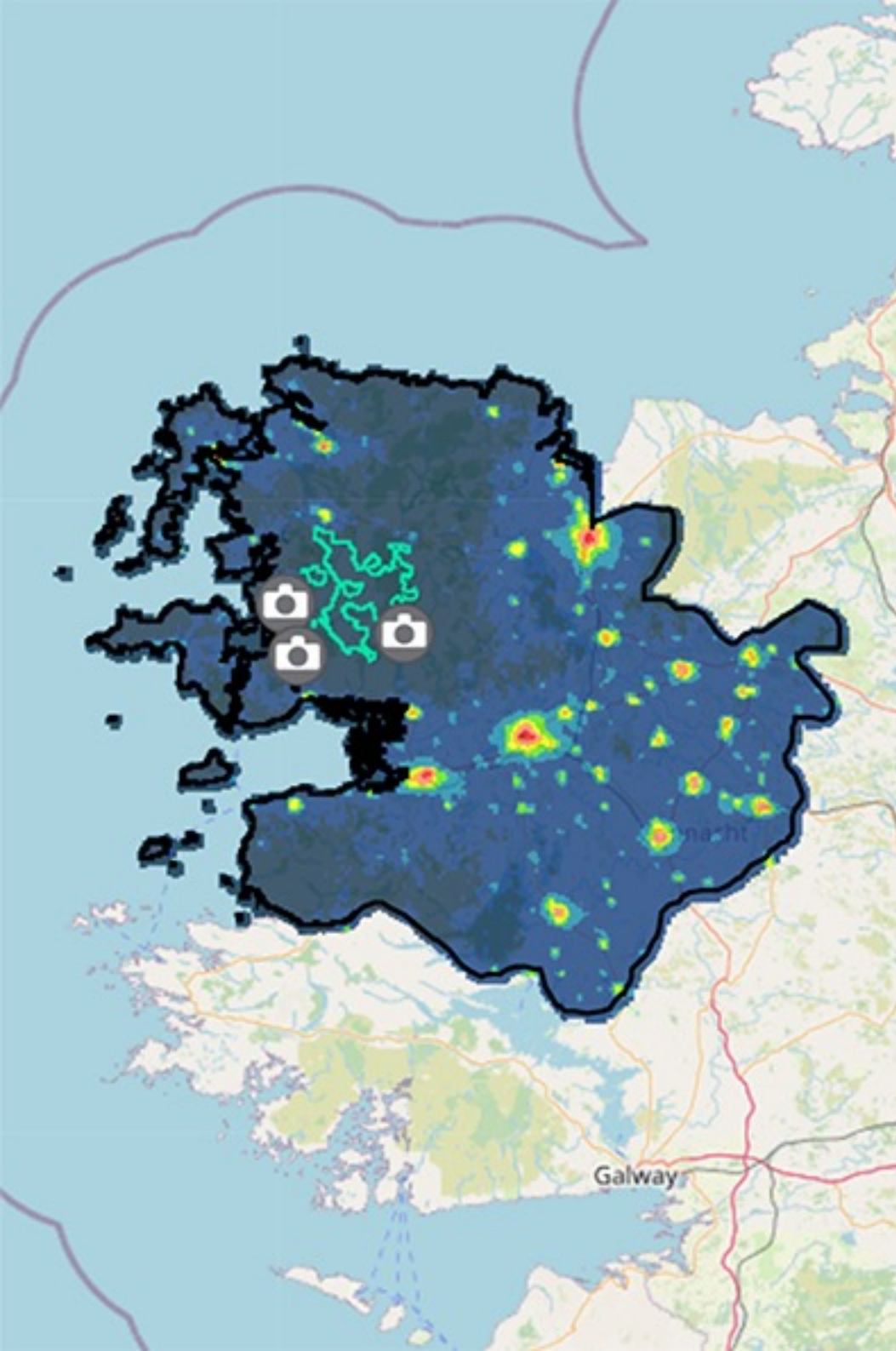
<https://www.mayodarkskypark.ie/>

After dark, Wild Nephin National Park becomes Mayo Dark Sky Park, Ireland's first International Dark Sky Park. Nestled between the remote Nephin Mountain Range and the unspoiled Atlantic coastline, the Dark Sky Park extends across an area of 150km² and its borders encompass the entire lands of Wild Nephin.



DarkSky
INTERNATIONAL

Mayo Dark Sky Park is officially certified as a Gold Tier standard International Dark Sky Park, the highest possible accolade, meaning it is internationally recognised as one of the best places in the world to view the wonders of the night. It showcases some of the darkest, most pristine skies in the world, and was awarded International Dark Sky Place of the Year 2024.



A Dark Sky Park is more than just dark, it is a place where exceptional starry skies are protected and valued as an important educational, cultural, scenic and natural resource. By protecting our dark skies we help ecosystems and wildlife, attract off-season tourism and reduce our carbon footprint.

Clear unpolluted skies are now a rarity - the Milky Way is so obscured by the effects of modern lighting that it is no longer visible to over 50% of Irish people - and that figure is even higher for North America and mainland Europe.

Mayo DSP holds the Mayo Dark Sky Festival each year on the first weekend of November. You can find out more on the festival website: <https://www.mayodarkskyfestival.ie/>

In 2025 Mayo DSP is also co-hosting the ALAN Conference, a multidisciplinary, international conference on artificial light at night and its impact on biodiversity, cultural science, and human wellbeing. (<http://www.artificiallightatnight.org/>).

And in 2026, Mayo Dark Sky Park will celebrate its 10-year anniversary as an International Dark Sky Park and the residency will be part of shaping the focus of events and engagements to mark this milestone.

WILD NEPHIN NATIONAL PARK



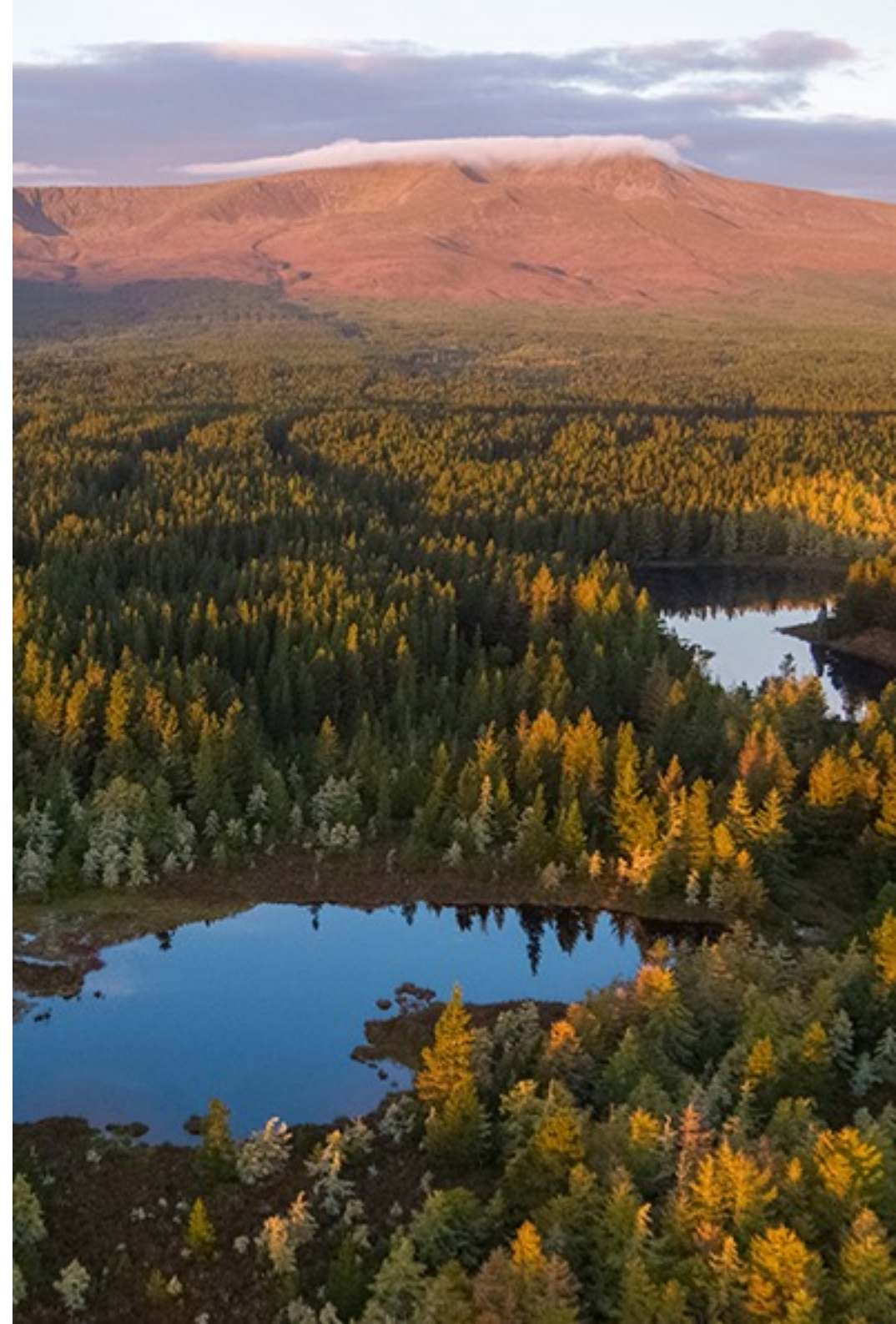
<https://www.nationalparks.ie/wild-nephin/>

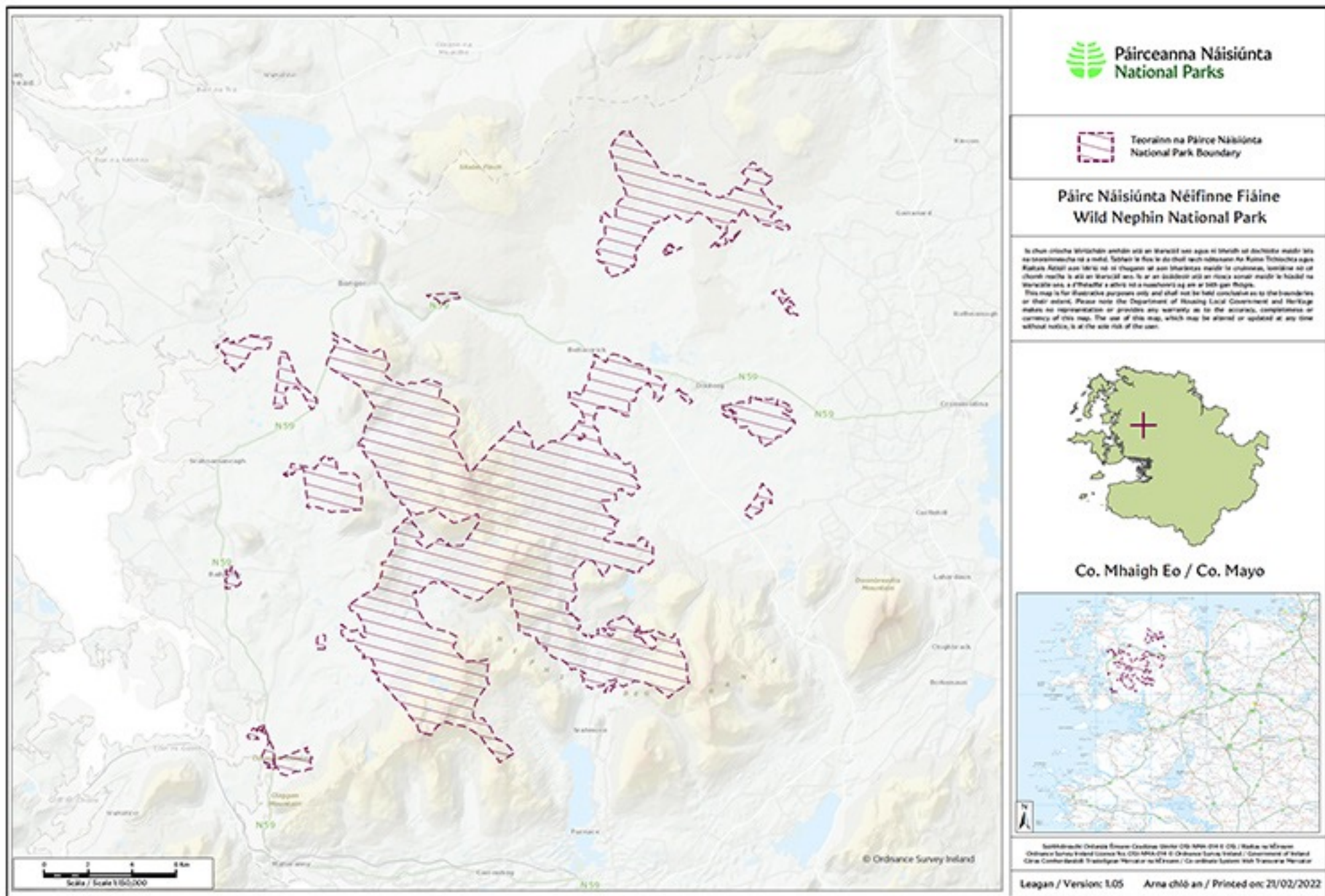
Described as “the very loneliest place in this country” (Robert Lloyd Praeger), Wild Nephin National Park has some of the most remote lands in Ireland. Located on the Western seaboard in northwest Mayo, Wild Nephin covers a vast 15,000 hectares of uninhabited and unspoilt wilderness, dominated by the Nephin Beg mountain range. To the west of the mountains is the Owenduff Bog, one of the last intact active blanket bog systems in Ireland and Western Europe, and an important scientific and scenic feature of the National Park. The park itself is part of the Owenduff/Nephin Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA).

Wild Nephin is part of the Natura 2000 Network, which protects rare and important habitats and species under the EU Habitats and Birds Directive. The park supports and protects habitats including

alpine heath, blanket bog, upland grassland, heath, lakes and river catchments, that are home to plants and animals of both national and international importance - at least 80 different species of bird, as well as many mammals, fish, insects and amphibians. To the east of the mountains is the Nephin Forest, which is currently mainly comprised of Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine, and was originally planted for commercial purposes. This area is now within the National Park and will be managed for biodiversity and recreation.

Prior to their purchase by the State, the National Park lands were used for turbary, agriculture and recreational uses including fishing, shooting, and hillwalking. There is evidence of previous human habitation along the Bangor Trail, near the Owenduff and Tarsaghaun rivers, where the remains of stone buildings and traditional cultivation ridges can be seen, along with a number of historical sites and monuments throughout the area, including promontory forts, crannógs, and the Lios na Gaoithe Bronze Age Ringfort near Letterkeen.





WILD NEPHIN NATIONAL PARK / MAYO DARK SKY PARK LOCATION MAP



CONTACT EMER O'BOYLE

Creative Director
UCD Parity Studios Artists in Residence programme
College of Science, University College Dublin

Email: paritystudios@ucd.ie
Website: <https://www.ucdartistsinresidence.com/>
Socials: [@ucdartistsinresidence](#)