FOREST SERVICE
An tSeirbhís Foraoisí

An Agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Gníomhaireacht de chuid na Roinne Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

An Agency wi'in the Depairtment o Fairmin, Environment an' Kintra Matthers

***Sustainability** at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.*

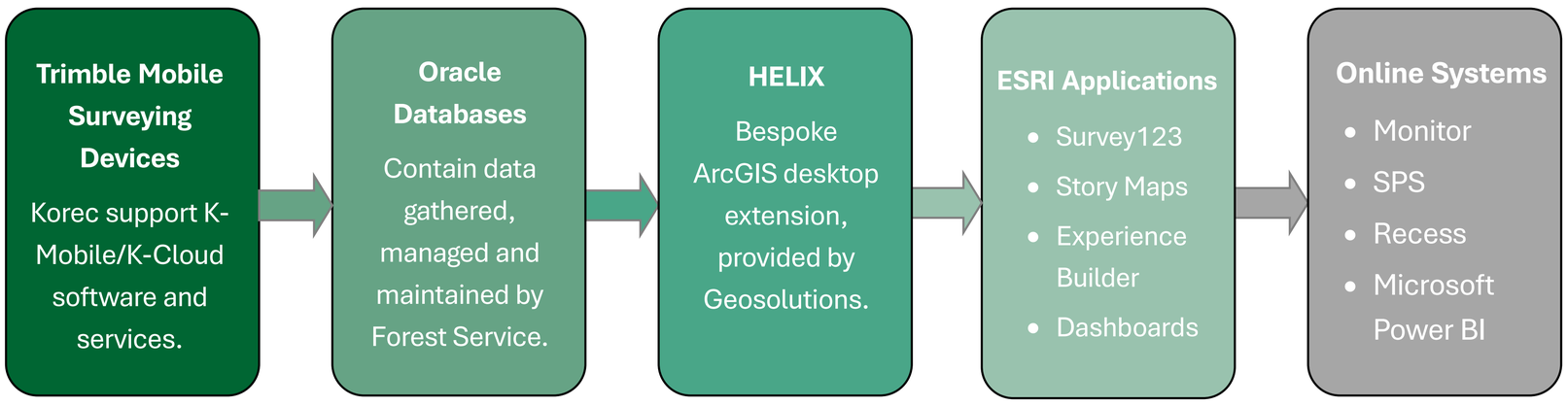
FOREST SERVICE

DATA INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATION

The **2024-25 Forest Service Business Plan** sets out **12 performance targets** which contribute directly to the Minister's priorities, in particular those to tackle climate change; protect our natural environment; and build strong, sustainable and diverse rural communities.

Achieving these targets requires collaborating with a range of internal and external organisations on innovative projects and forming trusted relationships that enable access to up to date information and creative solutions.

Forest Service use a range of devices and applications to provide GIS services to users. These enable data capture, data analysis and reporting and sharing of information. The GIS systems and applications are essential to Forest Service achieving its corporate and legal obligations. All services are interlinked from initial survey gathering to endpoint reporting.







PEATLAND RESTORATION

Forest Service have been working with a range of partners to restore peatland sites. So far work has been undertaken in five sites. Partnership arrangements have been entered for another five sites.

The example above is **Tullychurry Forest -** restored in partnership with Northern Ireland Water, funded by Source to Tap, Interreg and Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

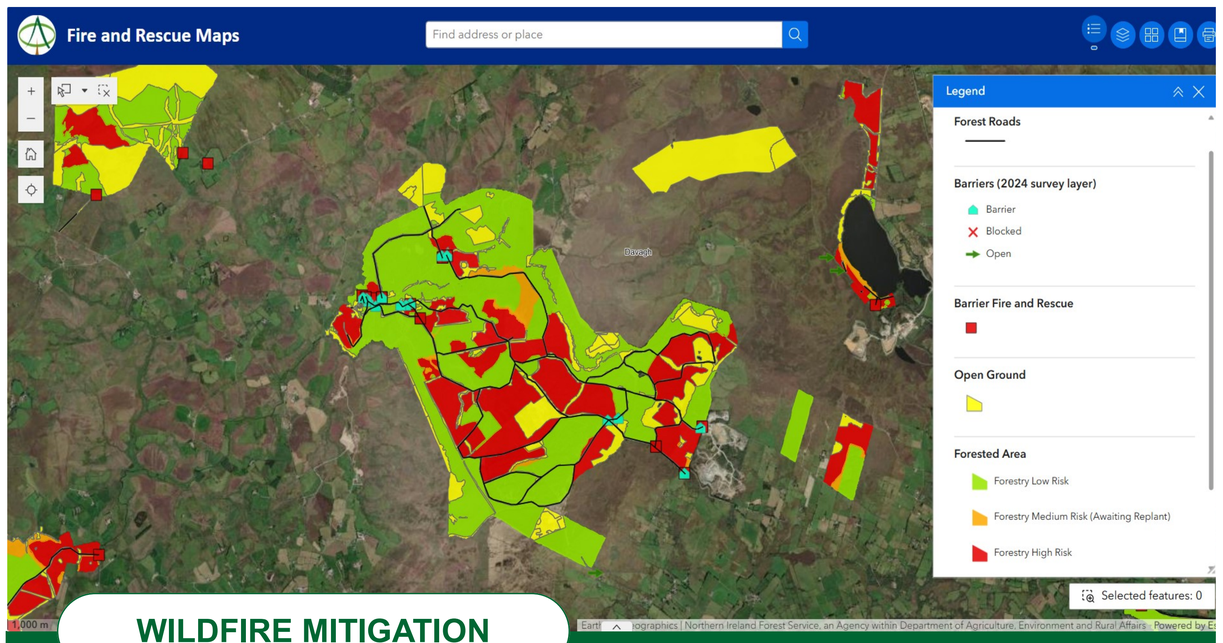
GIS analysis and processing identified afforested peatland areas that were potentially suitable for peatland restoration based on the following criteria:

- Slope
- Peat Depth
- Yield Class
- Stand Age
- Proximity to designated sites, priority habitats and approved restoration areas

Peatland Restoration Decision Framework - applied across peatland forest areas to help identify areas where a positive carbon balance is not achieved and are more suited to peatland restoration to meet climate change targets.

Partnerships - essential for delivering effective policy and legislation. They also open doors to funding, training and better understanding through research and pilots.

Stakeholder engagement - understanding concerns and listening to recommendations and advice is crucial in getting peatland restoration right. Public consultations and thorough planning help achieve this.



WILDFIRE MITIGATION

With a changing climate, woodlands and peatland habitats are increasingly vulnerable to wildfire risks. This could adversely impact on the capacity of our forests and peatlands to sequester and store carbon, with implications for the NI Executive's Green Growth strategy and commitments in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, to meet the net-zero target by 2050.

Over the past two years Forest Service have worked closely with Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service to improve our processes and procedures to rapidly identify, assess and mitigate wildfires in NI.

A mapping application was developed that is accessible by both Forest Service and NIFRS. Up to date data showing risk areas and surrounding features enables effective response planning and risk mitigation. A data sharing agreement allows processing of data to analyse the extent of damage and track fire patterns over time.

