

Glenwherry Hill Farm
62C Glenhead Road
Glenwherry
Ballymena
Co Antrim
BT42 9RF

and

Irish Grouse Conservation Trust
2 Castle Lane
Glenarm
Ballymena
BT44 0BQ

25 May 2017

RE: Wildfires at Slieve Beagh ASSI/SPA and Gortin / Mullaghcarn ASSI

Dear Graham, Adrian, Laurence and Alex

I am writing to convey my thanks and appreciation to Glenwherry Hill Farm and the Irish Grouse Conservation Trust for providing key personnel and specialist equipment during the recent wildfires at Slieve Beagh ASSI/SPA and Gortin/Mullaghcarn ASSI. The loss of habitat and wildlife in these areas is devastating but the extent of the wildfires could have been a lot worse if it were not for the commitment, dedication and efforts of Glenwherry Hill Farm and the Trust and in particular Laurence and Alex. I appreciate that this included working long hours and into the night and I would personally like to thank Laurence and Alex for your contributions.

I am grateful for the partnership working that was demonstrated between NI Fire and Rescue Service, NIEA, Glenwherry Hill Farm, the Irish Grouse Conservation Trust and Mourne Heritage Trust to halt these fires in their track and prevent further damage and destruction. I was particularly pleased to learn that the first use in Northern Ireland of tactical burning proved to be successful in helping to stop the spread of the fire, to bring it under control and to put it out. I am aware that Laurence and Alex had roles to play in this action, so thank you again.

Recent wildfires have highlighted the significant damage that these fires can cause to habitats and wildlife. It is clearly impossible to predict when and where a deliberate fire might be started but we must continue with our efforts to educate people about the dangers and consequences of such actions and to initiate preventative measures.

Yours sincerely



Helen Anderson
Director, Natural Environment Division, NIEA