

# The Landscape Geology (Physical Character) of the Tara-Skryne area

Dr. Robert Meehan

Consultant Geologist

*talamh@ireland.com*

*www.talamhireland.com*

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**Meath County Council Tara-Skryne  
Landscape Project Breakfast Briefing**

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# Structure of talk ...

- **Introduction – how to define natural landscape units?**
- **What's so special about the Tara-Skryne Natural Landscape?**
  - The basic topography ...
  - The bedrock element ...
  - Glaciation in the area - what went on underneath the ice?  
Subsoils and depth-to-bedrock ...
  - Deglaciation across the Tara-Skryne landscape - what happened when the ice started to melt?
  - Since glaciation ... soils in the Tara-Skryne landscape.
  - Drainage patterns and land use

# Defining the Tara-Skryne landscape



*Newgrange*



*Tara*



*Balsaw Hill*



*Map of  
Central Meath*

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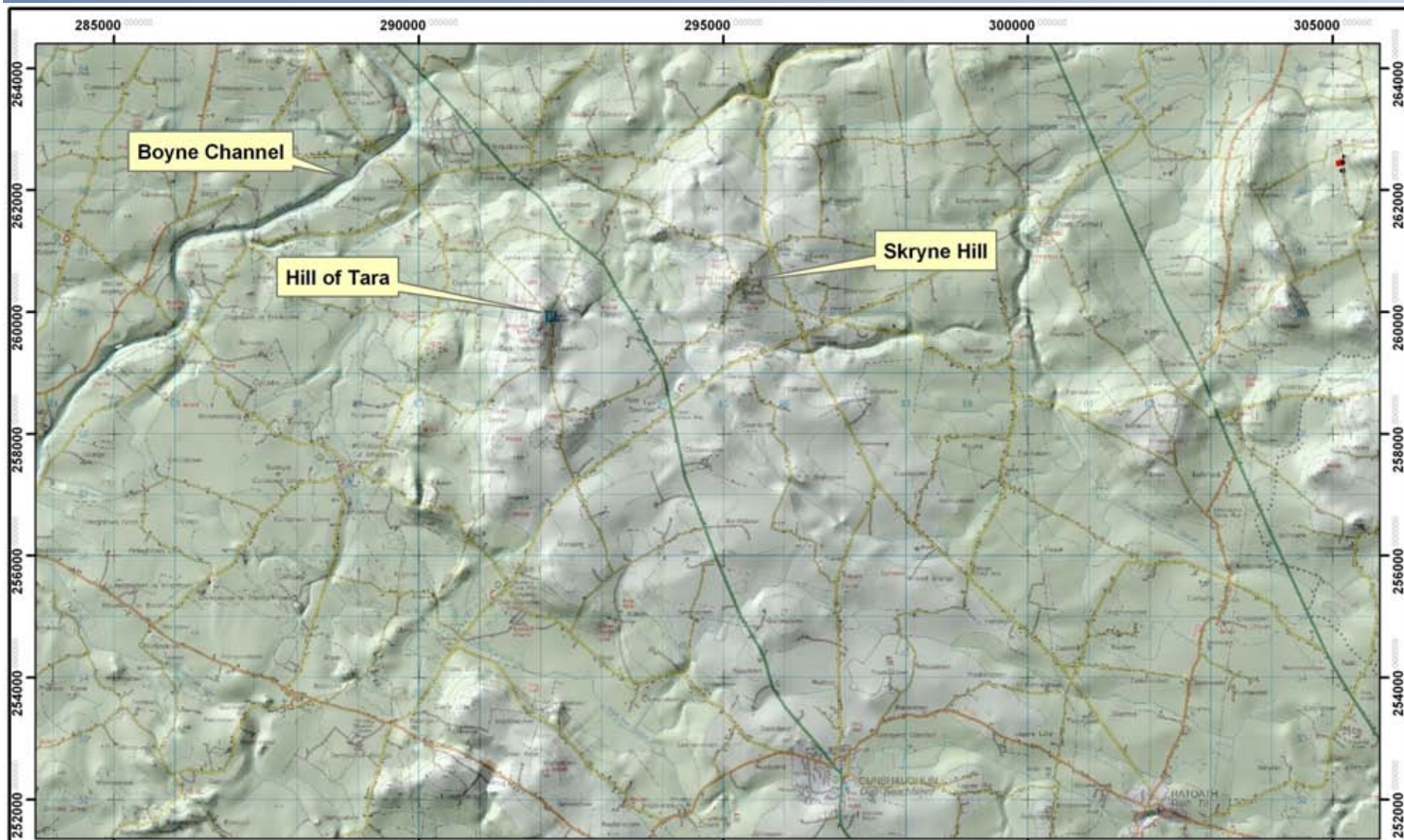




# The hills of the Tara-Skryne landscape





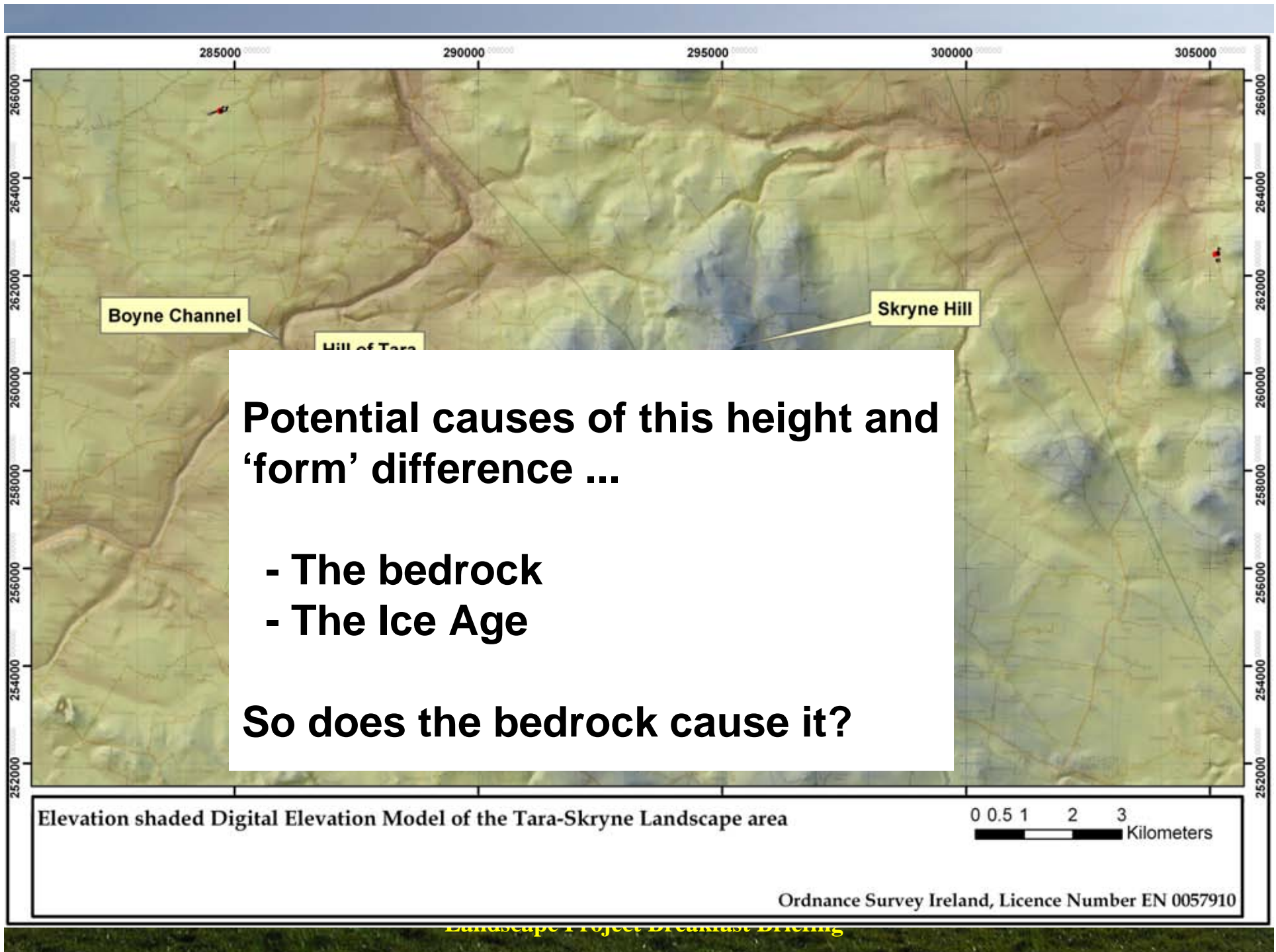


Topography of the Tara-Skryne Landscape area

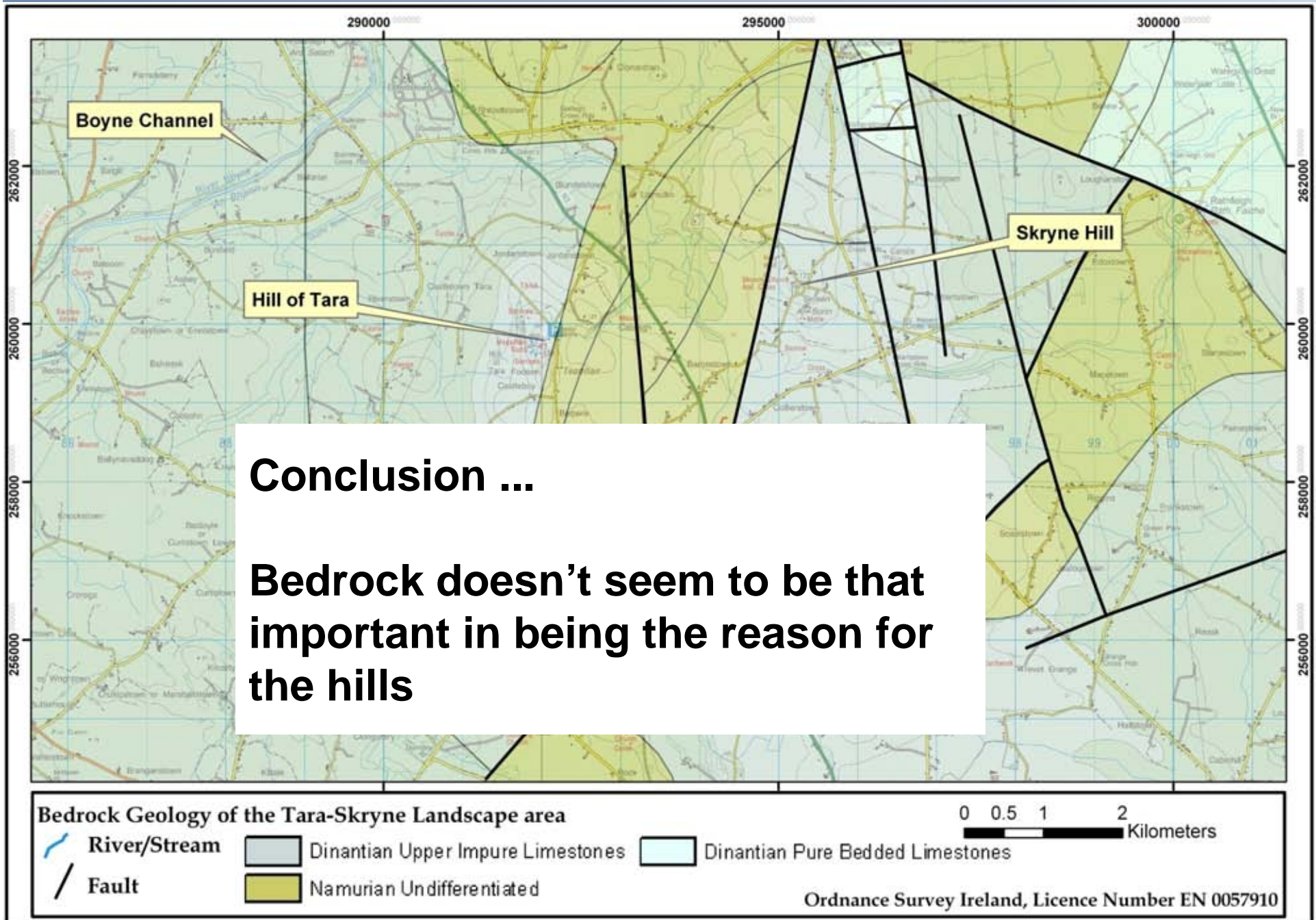
0 0.5 1 2 3  
Kilometers

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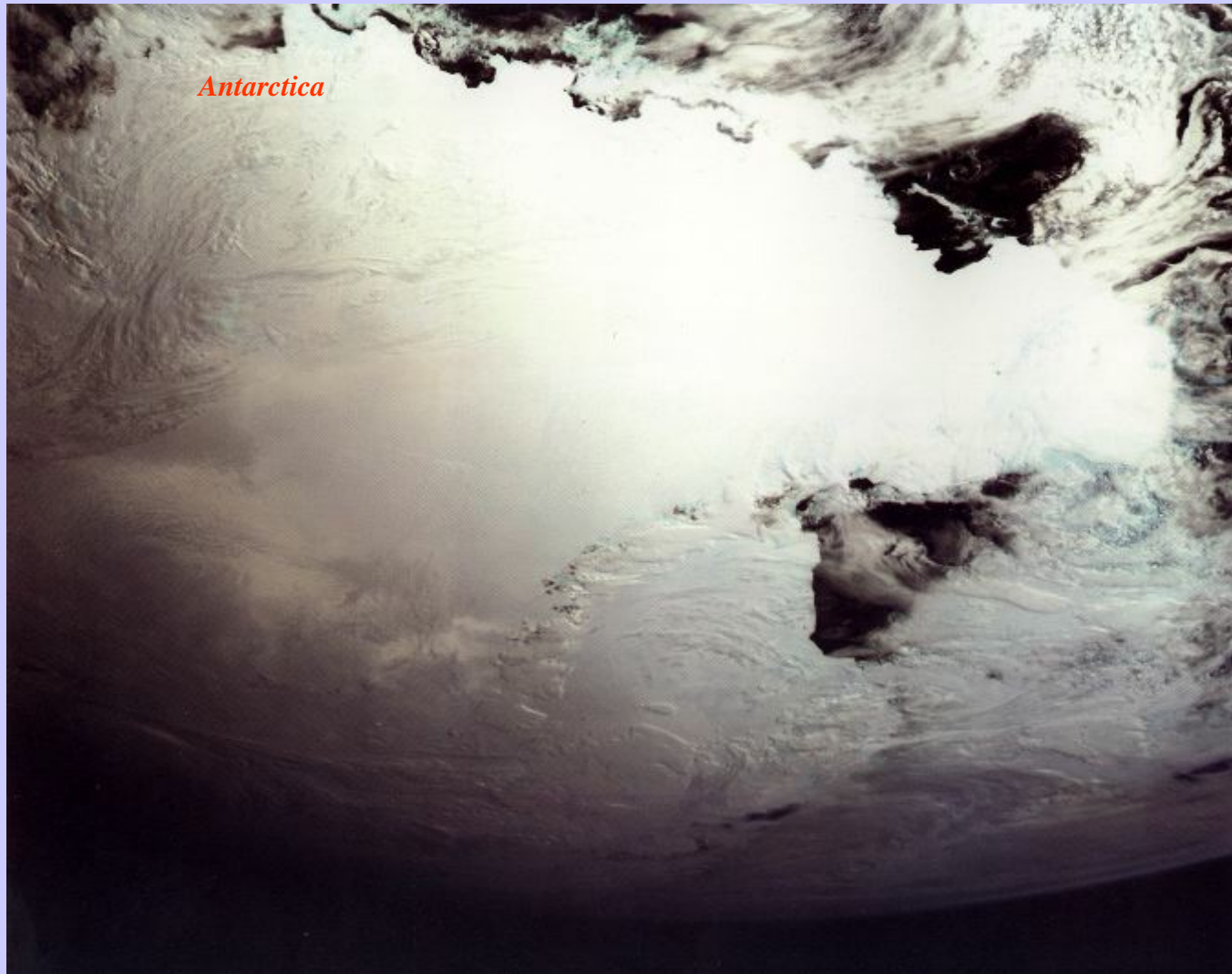








## What about the last Ice Age ...?



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# Ice Movement



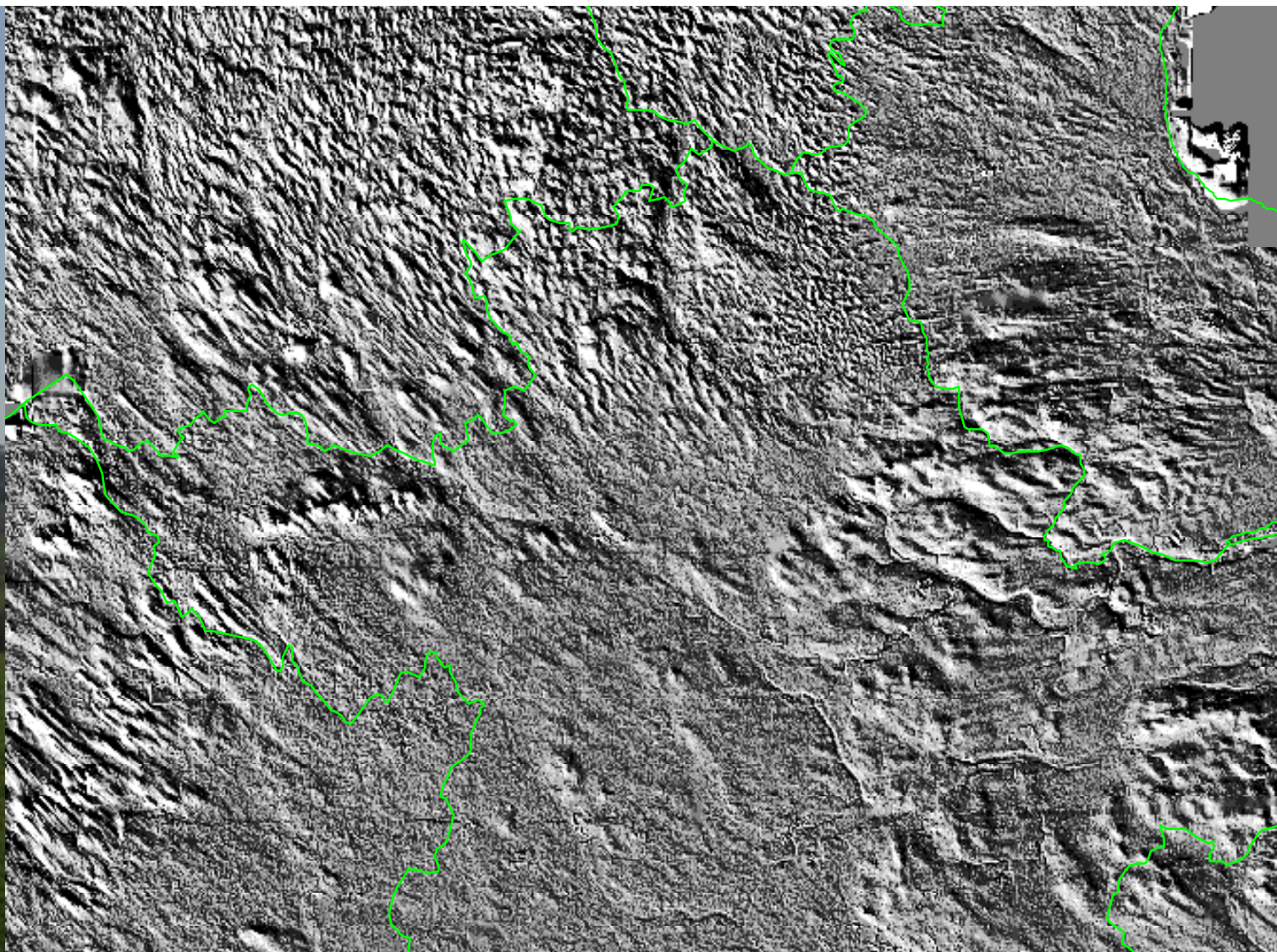
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# Landscape form of all of Meath



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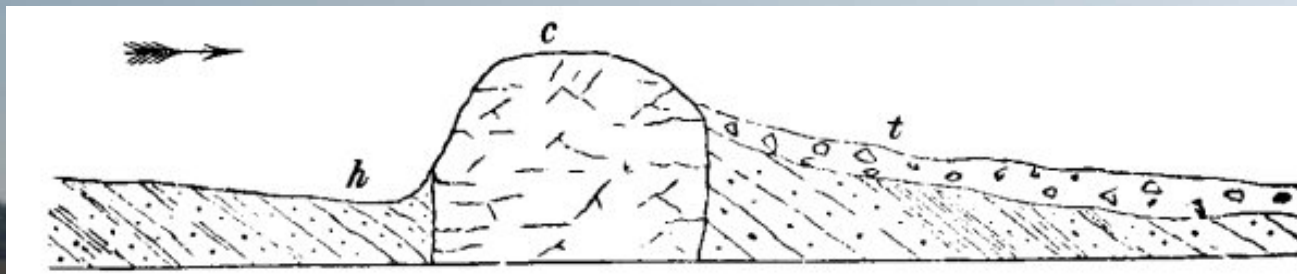
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# Activity under the glaciers of the last Ice Age in Meath is often recorded as ...

- Crag and tails



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*Hill of Skryne*

*Hill of Tara*

## **Conclusion ...**

**Glacial erosion and deposition seems to have played a part in shaping the landscape of Tara-Skryne**

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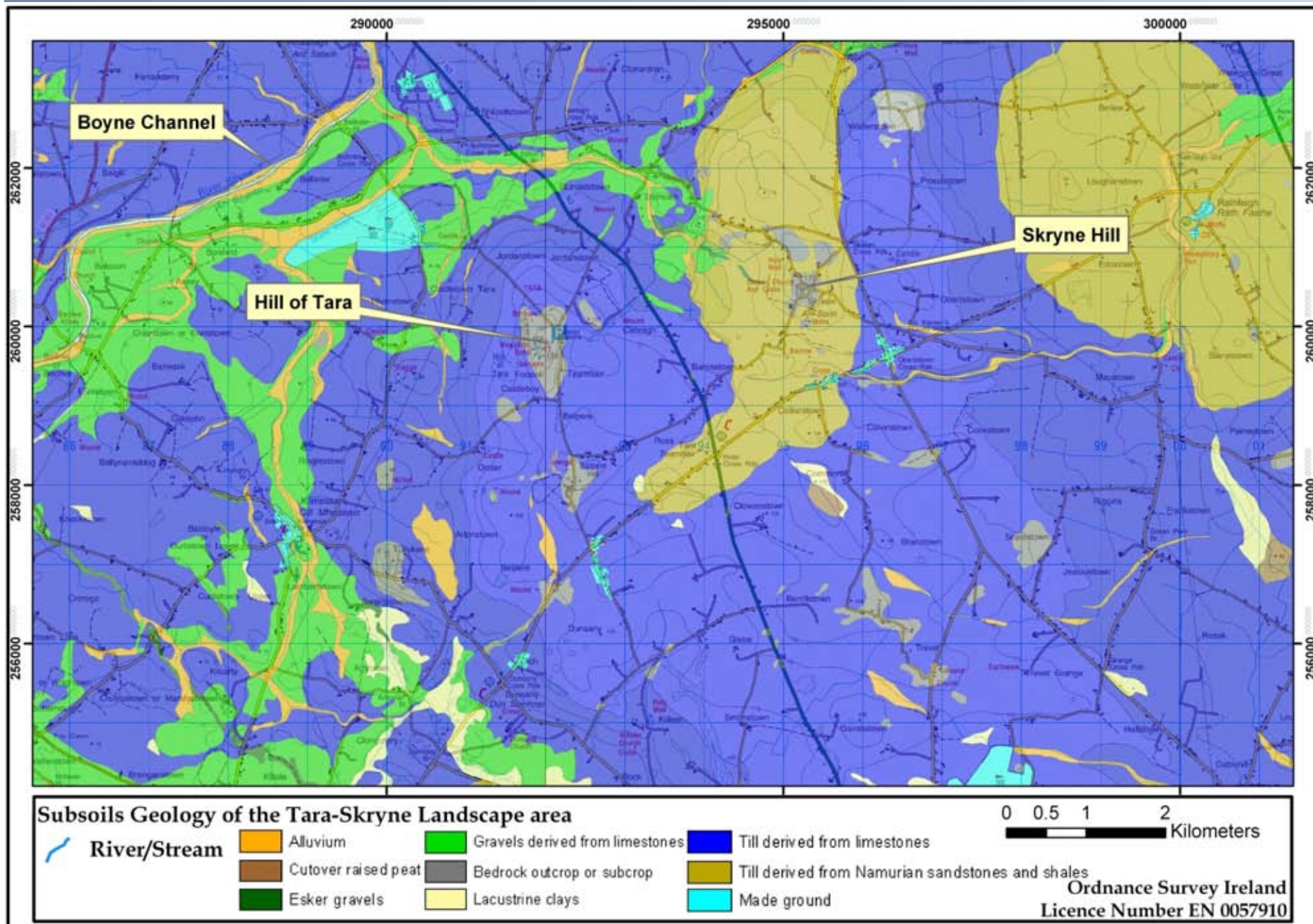
## Glacial deposits in the area



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Meath C  
Landscap





# Sands and gravels: the Gabhra Valley

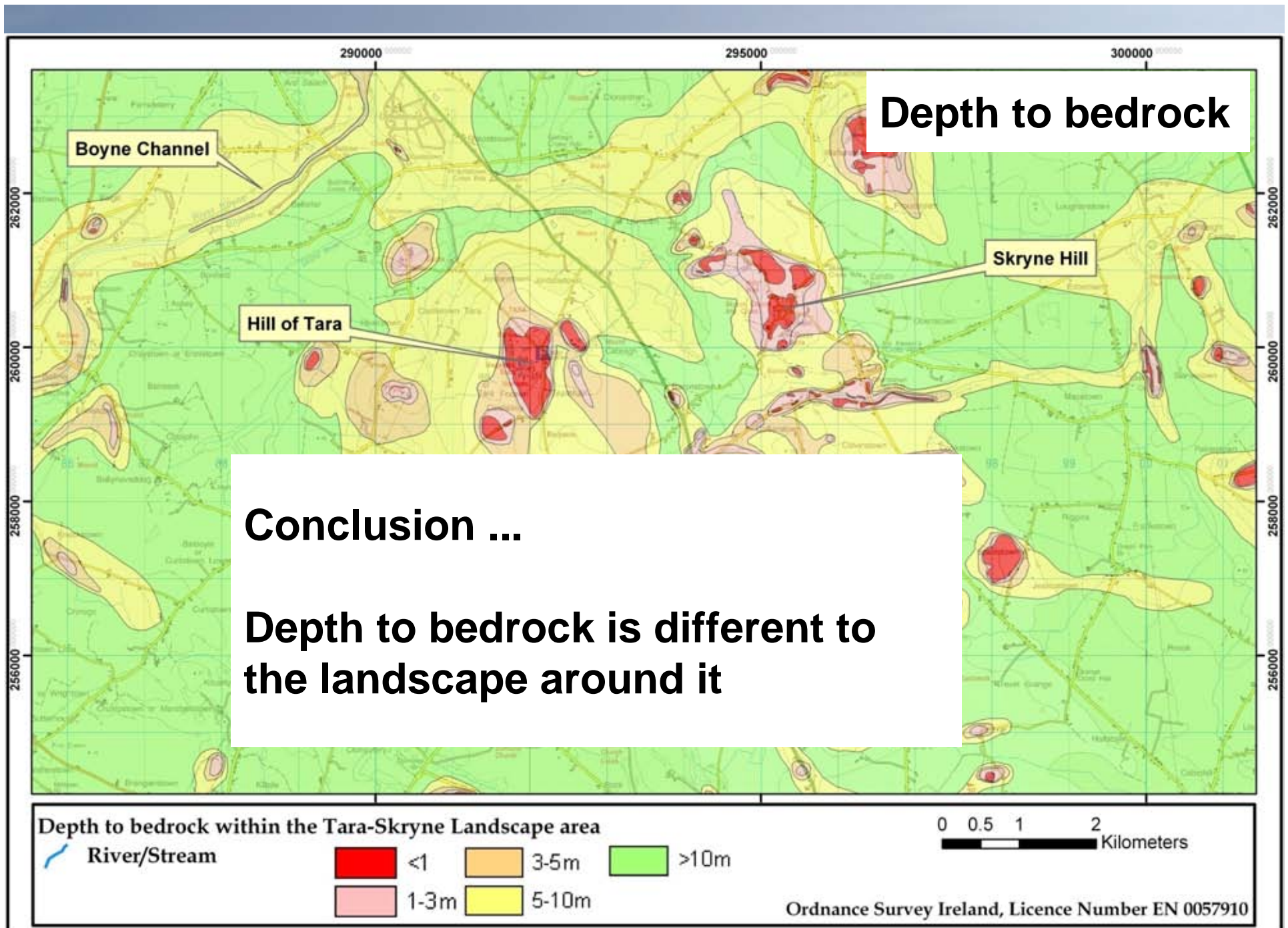
*Lismullin*

## Conclusion ...

**Glacial deposits themselves are not that unique in the landscape of Tara-Skryne ... Similar to the rest of Meath and the surrounding area ... but less sands and gravels**

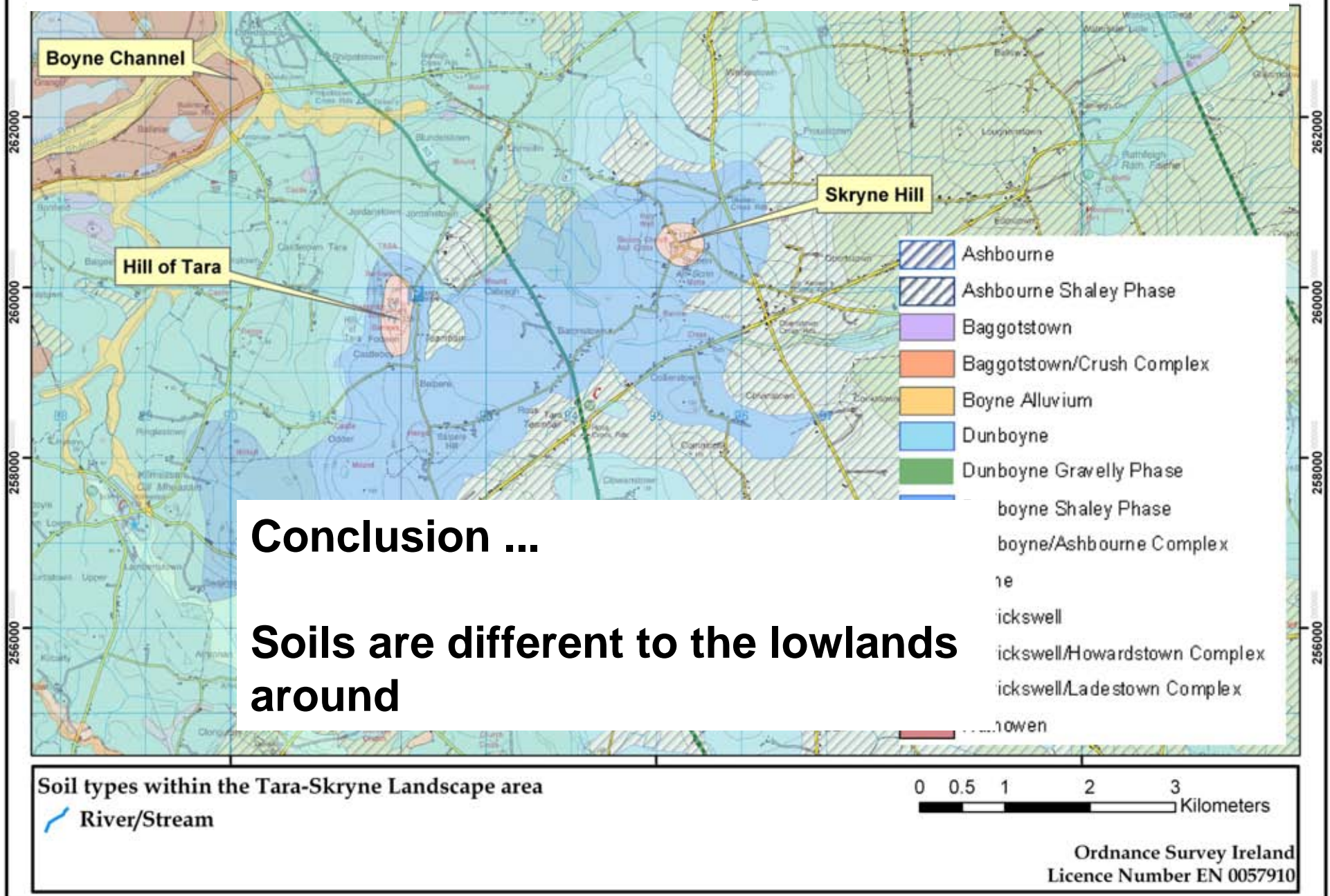
*Skryne*







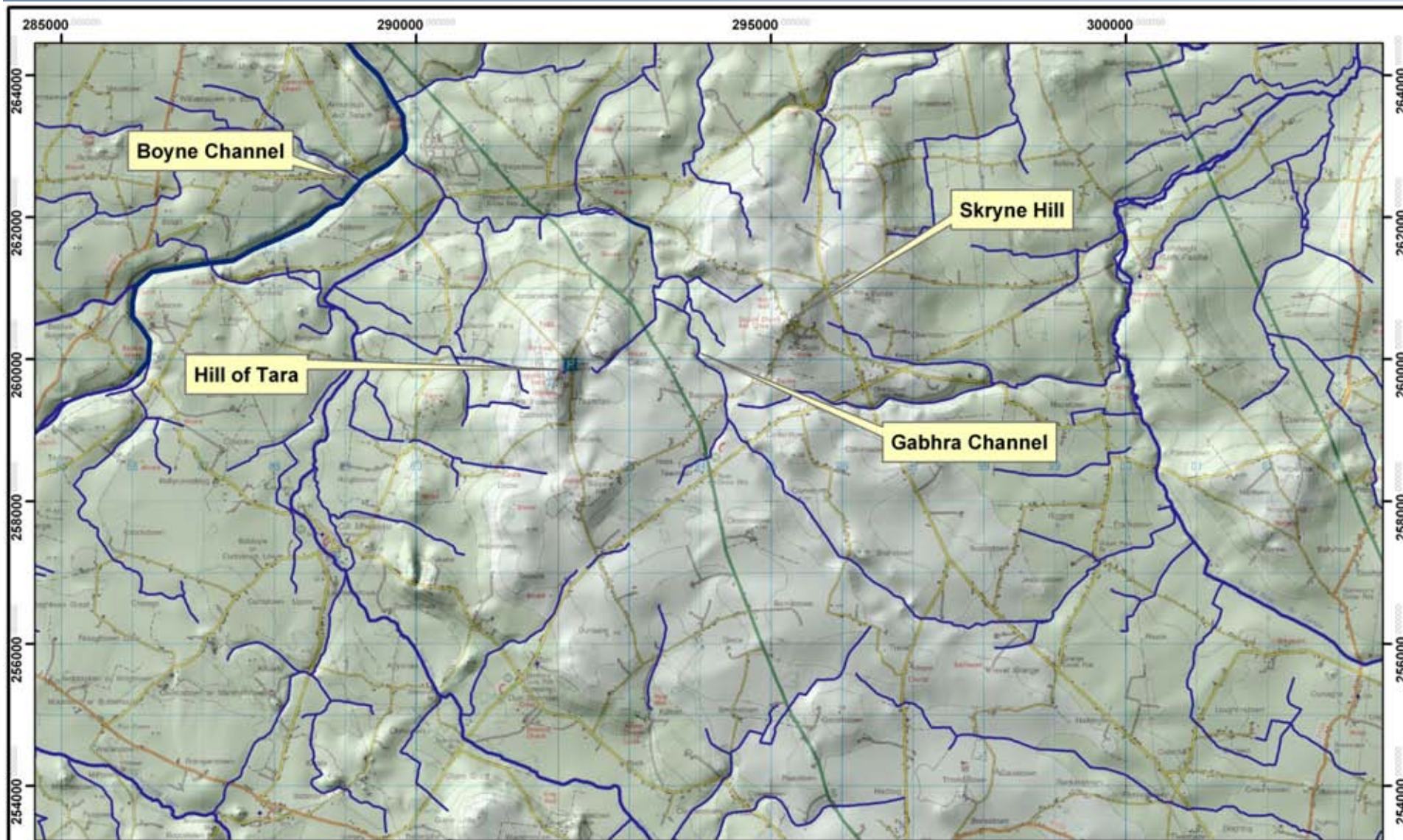
# What do the subsoils and their depths mean for the soils ?



**Conclusion ...**

**Soils are different to the lowlands around**





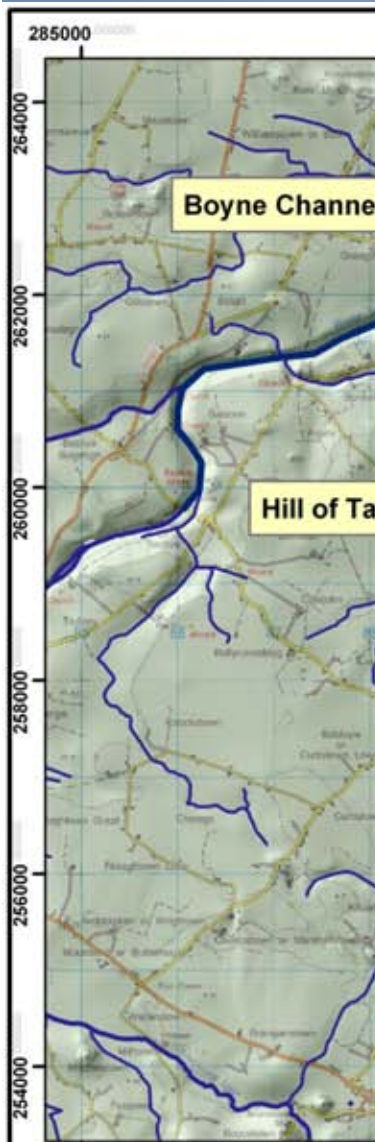
Drainage pattern of the Tara-Skryne Landscape area

0 0.5 1 2 3  
Kilometers

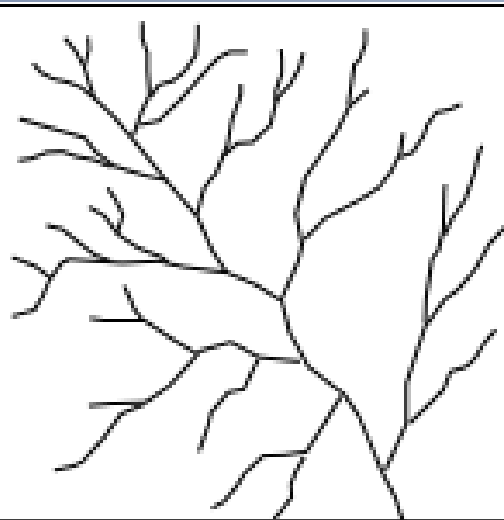
**And for the drainage ...?**

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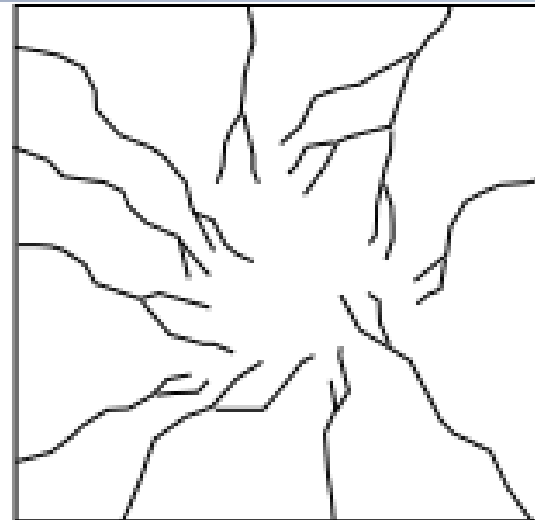




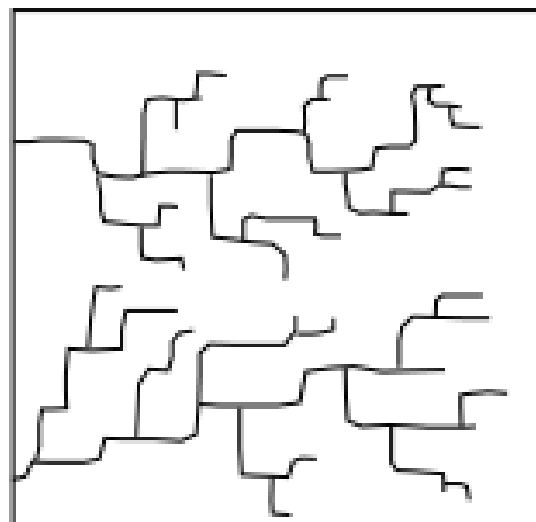
Drainage pattern of the



Dendritic Drainage



Radial Drainage

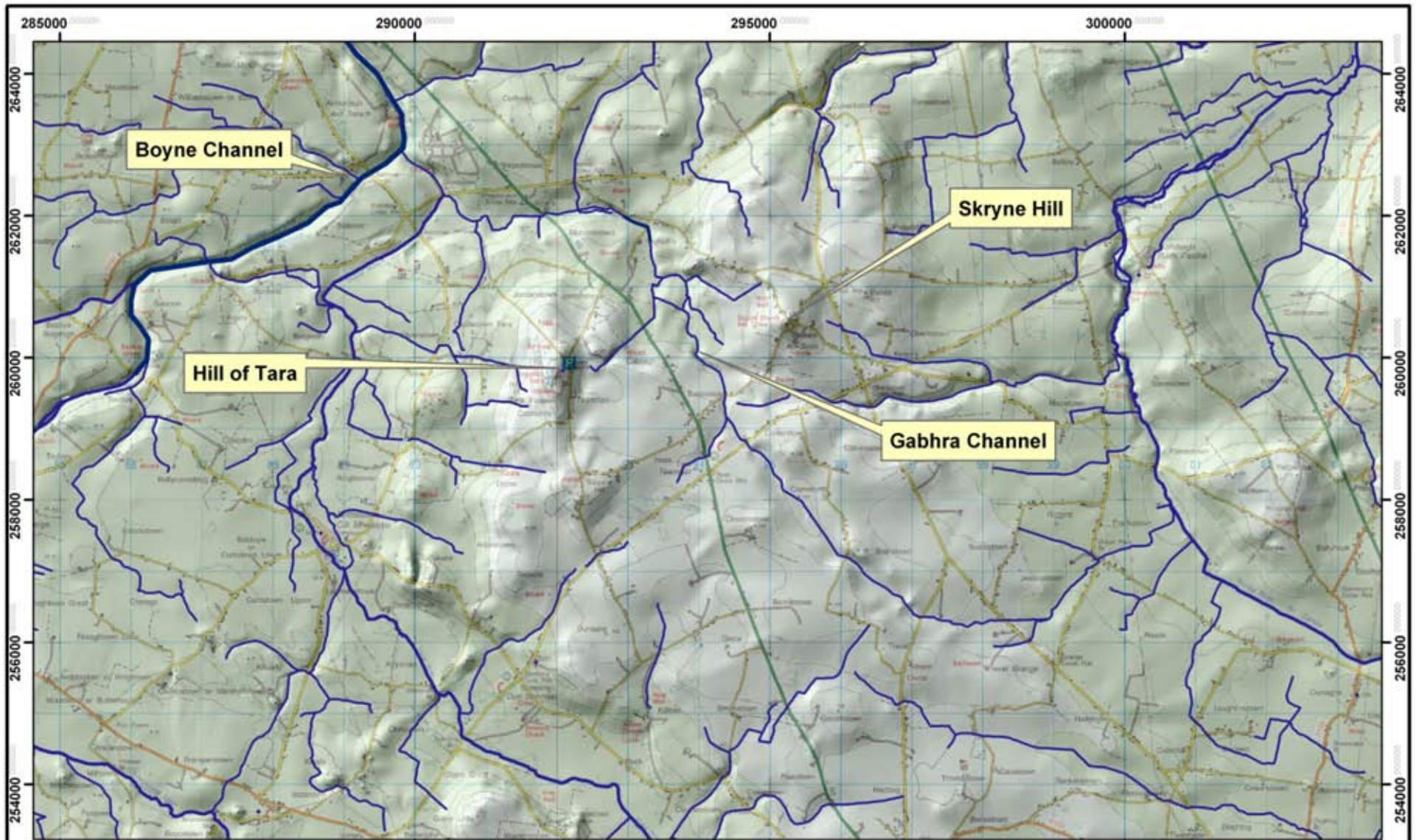


Rectangular Drainage



3  
Kilometers

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Drainage pattern of the Tara-Skryne Landscape area

**Which means the landuse ...**

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# Conclusions

- Landscape characterised by high 'crag and tail' ridges, with generally relatively shallow depths to bedrock.
- Less proportion of deeper subsoils (those greater than 10m).
- Bedrock indistinct, similar to rest of Central Meath.
- Subsoils dominated by glacial tills ... less sands and gravels than area to the northwest, west, southwest ... much more bedrock outcrop and subcrop than anywhere surrounding.
- Dominated by grey brown podzolic soils ... well drained, but have very heavy 'B' horizons. More shallow brown earths to northwest, more poorly drained gleys to east and southeast.
- Topography, bedrock, subsoils and soils results in a radial drainage pattern, completely distinct from surrounding patterns, and a relatively low drainage density, owing to the shallow depths to bedrock and dominance of well drained soils.
- So, well drained landscape capable of supporting good quality pasture, but owing to the heavy 'B' horizons is often not used for tillage as much as, for example, the brown earth soils to the west and northwest.
- Summarising, the topography and depth and character of subsoils, which leads to a distinctive soils and associated drainage pattern, sets the Tara-Skryne landscape apart when compared to the terrain surrounding it, within the wider Meath landscape.*