

THE IRISH FORESTER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF IRISH FORESTERS

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SIF Welcomes New Minister

As most members will be aware by now, the new Minister of State in the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources with Responsibility for Forestry is Mr. John Browne. The Society were represented at a "Get To Know You" session with the new Minister at Johnstown Castle on July 17th. Following this session, discussions were held between the Minister and IFIC representatives who briefed him on forestry in general and current issues of concern.

The Society of Irish Foresters and IFIC, with other forestry groups, continue to engage with the Forest Service re. a promotion programme aimed at increasing planting levels. It is proposed that letters will issue from Minister Browne to:

1. Forestry Applicants with approval that have not yet planted
2. Existing forest owners
3. REPS participants

A major review of promotion progress is scheduled for mid October, 2002.

SIF Development Strategy Review

At the 1999 AGM it was resolved that SIF accept a draft strategy document for the future development of the Society, as the development plan for the Society. In summary the development plan was as follows:

Mission Statement:

To lead and represent the forestry profession, which meets, in a sustainable manner, society's needs from Irish forests, through excellence in forestry practice.

Key Success Factors:

1. Leadership for the profession within the industry;
2. A satisfied membership;
3. Recognised status for the profession with policy makers;
4. Recognised role for the SIF in shaping national policies;
5. Established and recognised professional standards;
6. Consultation and involvement of stakeholders and local communities in shaping forestry.

Objectives and Strategies:

Four core objectives were set for the Society and for each objective a number of strategies were outlined by which that objective might be achieved. These are summarised in the adjacent panel.



Study Tour to South Africa, September 2001.
21-year-old Eucalyptus plantation owned by SAFCOL.

To promote a greater knowledge and understanding of forestry, in all its aspects, and to advance the economic, social and public benefit values arising from forests.

1. Define the benefits arising from forests;
2. Devise and establish appropriate strategies and lines of communication to influence policy makers;
3. Co-operate with other groups and organisations in the promotion of forestry, review and define the SIF role within the TCI and IFIC;
4. Review the range of current activities and develop and implement an appropriate range of activities and events targeted at the needs of members and other groups;
5. Nominate Technical Members for Directorships on appropriate bodies and seek increased representation on appropriate committees;
6. Utilise professional PR to promote SIF viewpoints and activities;
7. Provide a framework for the involvement of all stakeholders in SIF activities.

To establish, secure and monitor standards in forestry education and professional practice

1. Define a membership structure and set out levels of membership;
2. Set up a system for members' professional development in SIF, through an examination process;

3. Establish a code of professional practice, ethics and supporting systems;
4. Promote standards of professional practice - including a commitment to Continuous Professional Development;

To foster a greater unity and sense of cohesion among members and provide an appropriate range of services to members

1. Establish the needs of the members;
2. Set out the infrastructure and range of services to meet these needs (including Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme, specialist training courses etc.);
3. Represent the interests and needs of the members to policy makers;
4. Encourage equal employment opportunities.

To establish the SIF on an independent and self-sustaining financial basis

1. Increase revenue (increase membership, provision of services);
2. Monitor costs;
3. Establish and implement a financial management strategy to monitor costs versus revenue.



Michael Doyle and Michael O'Brien at Cape Point during the South African Study Tour.

Current Position

The SIF Council has been greatly helped in the overall management of the Society and the implementation of the development plan by the putting into position of:

1. Management Unit consisting of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Technical Director;
2. Six Management Boards dealing with Finance, Public Relations, Education, Professional Standards, Membership Services and Meetings, and Publication of the Journal;
3. A permanent office staffed with a Technical Director (part time) and Administrator (full time).

At a recent Council meeting a preliminary review was held as to how the development plan had evolved and was being implemented. Generally speaking, it was agreed that there was reasonable progress with the implementation of the objectives and strategies as set out in 1999. However, concern was raised regarding:

1. Issues raised in Questionnaire, 2001
2. A slight fall in membership;
3. Age profile of members;
4. Competition for membership with other forestry organisations;
5. Ability of SIF to meet with the ongoing expectations of technical and associate members;
6. Change in emphasis in SIF activity - moving away from the traditional role to a more "in-your-face" role, dealing with the complexity of forestry in a fast moving national and EU scenario;

7. A greater awareness and need for high professional standards in the practice of forestry;
8. Rolling out of CPD programme.

Allied to the above are national and EU forestry issues:

1. Ongoing failure to reach national afforestation targets, including the 30% broadleaf planting target, by 2006;
2. Timber quality of existing plantations;
3. Forest Certification;
4. Mid-Term Review, CAP and support measures;
5. Forestry Acts 1946-1988 - A Review
6. EU Presidency - 2004.

Next Step

Having considered the foregoing, Council have decided to set up a 'think tank' to discuss SIF Strategy and Development going forward. This group will be appointed at a Council meeting on October 17th. All SIF members are encouraged to review the Strategy from their own viewpoint, and comments, suggestions, and recommendations are welcome at the Society office.

Some Members Subs are Still Outstanding

There are still over 150 members whose subscriptions are outstanding, either fully or partially. All members are reminded to settle their accounts with the Society immediately. Clarification of any queries can be sought from Paula Lahiff in the Sligo office (Tel. 071 64434 or email sif@eircom.net). All members will have recently received a statement of their account. Many thanks to those who have recently settled.

TEAK 21 and the Sustained Supply of Tropical Hardwoods

Over the last 50 years, Ireland has imported tens of thousands of cubic metres of high-grade tropical hardwoods annually from West Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Many so-called teak windows, doors, shop fronts and interior décor of lounges and hotels that grace the architectural landscape of Ireland, are not made of true teak. True teak (*Tectona grandis*), known as Burma teak, is native to India, Myanmar, Thailand and Laos. It is also found in Indonesia where it was probably introduced. Its excellent wood properties include: strength with lightness; durability; dimensional stability; non-corroding properties; ease of working and seasoning; termite, fungus and weather resistance.

Today, natural teak forests cover almost 30 million ha. and there are over two million ha. of teak plantations worldwide. However, logging is banned in natural forests in Thailand and Laos and the demand in India far outstrips supply, so much so that Indian traders are buying plantation teak in East Africa and Latin America. Export of logs is negligible from Indonesia where high export duties have caused loss of overseas markets. Myanmar monopolises the export trade of naturally grown teak logs and is under pressure to increase supplies to near neighbours.

It is understandable, then, why most teak timber supplied onto the international market is readily sold. Indeed, it appears less

likely that teak will lose its markets than the markets will lose teak due to lack of supply.

The possibility of continued healthy demand for the species gains further credence from international statistics. Currently, most of the world's 90 million m³ per year high-grade tropical hardwood harvest is supplied from non-sustainable sources (deforestation and degradation). In the interests of sustainable forest management this must be replaced from new sources, but to do so from natural forests alone is not realistic. Therefore, new quality tropical hardwood plantations are vital. Because of the bright demand scenario, several international private enterprises are predicting very high future financial returns for anyone willing to investing in sustainably managed teak plantations. Unfortunately, many of the growth predictions are wildly optimistic and returns are highly speculative.

Of the two million ha. of teak plantations, a large number are created using inferior genetic sources. Others are planted on incorrect sites, leading to serious soil erosion. Many are unmanaged or badly managed after planting. Undoubtedly, teak is the lead high-grade hardwood plantation species in the tropics. Nevertheless, it will withstand poor treatment and survive. However, to obtain superior crops, all steps must be undertaken to the highest quality standards.

TEAK 21, an Irish initiative, was set up to enable growers to produce more and better quality tropical hardwood timber in an economically beneficial, socially acceptable and environmentally friendly manner. It was launched in October 1996 in Amsterdam. Coillte provided initial backing. In 1999 it gained the support of the Asian teak network (TEAKNET) for its mission. In 2000, AVINA (*Acción para Vida y Naturaleza*), a Swiss based foundation, provided finance to initiate the first local association in Central America, while in 2002 the National Association of Tree Growers of Panama (*Asociacion Nacional de Reforestadores y Afines de Panama - ANARAP*) adopted the initiative as a Special Programme within their organisation. TEAK 21 International, which is located in Ireland, is providing overall co-ordination for the mechanism.

Over the years Ireland has imported much high-grade tropical hardwood timber from natural forests that were not maintained on a sustainable basis. It is now time to put something back. An excellent way to do this is to assist in the creation of plantations, like teak and other top-quality hardwoods, that are developed to rigorous best-practice international standards and in such a way as to release pressure directly on natural tropical forests as suppliers of high-grade hardwoods. TEAK 21 has been designed to achieve this goal.

For more information on TEAK 21 contact Raymond. M. Keogh, International Co-ordinator, TEAK 21, Cabinteely House, The Park, Cabinteely, Dublin 18. or email rmkeogh@teak2000.iol.ie.

Provisional Dates for Your 2003 Diary

The following is a provisional schedule of SIF events for 2003, prepared by the Membership Services Management Board.

DATE	EVENT & VENUE
March 2 - 8	National Tree Week
March 5	Augustine Henry Memorial Lecture Prof. Michael O'Connell, NUI Galway RDS Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
March 28	Field Day in Association with ITGA Blarney Castle Estate, Blarney, Co. Cork
April 11	Annual Symposium
April 11	Annual General Meeting Following Annual Symposium
May 23	Field Day BOGFOR Project, Midlands
June 20	Field Day Castlewellan, Co. Down Educating the Public on Forestry
September	Annual Study Tour To be decided
September 19	Field Day Co. Wicklow Continuous Cover and Natural Regeneration of Sitka spruce
October 8	Sean MacBride Forestry Lecture University College Dublin

GriffnerHomes enters a joint venture with Coillte Teoranta

GriffnerHaus, a business active in Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, now has a presence on the Irish market, producing and selling prefabricated houses under the product name "GriffnerHomes". GriffnerHaus and Coillte Teoranta Enterprises in Dublin have entered into a 50:50 joint venture, known as Griffner Coillte, which is now based in Mullingar. GriffnerHaus will contribute its technical know-how to the manufacture of the Irish "GriffnerHomes" and adapt its design and architecture to Irish needs, and Coillte will handle the commercial management and sales. It is planned to produce 200 high-quality prefabricated homes per year in the medium term, with delivery of the first house planned for the second quarter of 2003. For further information, contact wthelian@griffnerhaus.com.

COFORD News

The following are three up coming COFORD events which may be of interest to members of the Society of Irish Foresters.

Managing Broadleaves and the Utilisation of Home-Grown Hardwoods

As part of its commitment to develop all aspects of the forest industry in Ireland, COFORD will hold a two-day event on managing recently established broadleaved woodland for

production of quality wood and its fullest utilisation. The overall objectives of the event are:

1. to bring growers and processors of hardwoods together so that each has a better understanding of the other's problems,
2. to demonstrate effective management techniques for the production of quality hardwood logs,
3. to develop a wood culture in Ireland and in particular a hardwood culture.

Earlier this year, a steering committee was established, under the chairmanship of COFORD, to examine ways to achieve these objectives. A number of meetings have already taken place and suitable sites are being sought at present. This first meeting will take place on October 10th and 11th and will be based at the Landmark Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon. To register, please contact COFORD in Dublin at 01-7167700 or email lauren.maclennan@coford.ie.



The Study Tour group enjoying lunch under the giant Baobab tree.

ITGA/COFORD Joint Annual Seminar

Following the success of last year's event, COFORD will once again co-host the ITGA Annual Seminar on 14 November 2002. The title of this year's seminar is "Forest Regulation - a threat to production forestry?"

The draft programme is as follows:

1. The impact of new and planned environmental procedures and regulations on afforestation and forest management in Ireland. *Kevin Hutchinson, Manager Sales and Marketing, Coillte Forestry Services.*
2. Forest Regulation in other European countries -possible lessons for Ireland. *Henry Philips, Consultant, Irish Forest Industry Chain.*
3. The impact of forest regulation and policy on the economics of forestry from an international investor's perspective. *Mike Mosman, Vice President of Resources at Port Blakely, USA, and New Zealand.*
4. Regulating our forest resource - where to from here? *Forest Service speaker (to be confirmed), Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.*

5. The importance of timber production within EU forest policy. *Joost Van de Velde, DG Environment, Nature and Biodiversity Section.*

Biodiversity Conference

BIOFOREST is a five-year project on forestry and biodiversity that has already been running for almost two years. It is being co-funded by COFORD and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The project is directed by Prof. Paul Giller and Dr John O'Halloran of UCC, in collaboration with Dr Daniel Kelly and Dr Frazer Mitchell (TCD) and Dr Aileen O'Sullivan and Pat Neville (Coillte). The three key components of the project are:

1. the impact of afforestation on biodiversity;
 2. the changes to biodiversity throughout the forest rotation;
 3. the enhancement of biodiversity in plantation forestry.
- COFORD, as joint funder of this project, will host a seminar on "Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement in plantation forests" on 24 October 2002 in Cork City. Further details will shortly.

New Members

The SIF would like to welcome the following new members:

Technical	Associate	Student
Martin Kelleher	Denis Dinneen	William O'Regan
John Galvin		

Sympathies

It is with deep regret that we record the death of four of our members, **Martin O'Neachtain, JJ D'Arcy, Cillian de Bhaldraithe and Pat Carroll.** The Society of Irish Foresters extends its sympathies to their families and friends on behalf of all its members.

Recent Publications

A further six information notes in the COFORD Connects series have recently being published. These are as follows:

Silviculture and forest management:

- The green spruce aphid - a pest of spruce in Ireland.
- Silviculture of broadleaves.
- Establishing broadleaves.

Socio-economic aspects of forestry:

- Wood as a renewable source of energy.

Wood processing and product development:

- The general principles of timber usage.
- Energy efficiency of timber frame housing.

The Society will be represented at the UEF General Council Meeting in Poznan, Poland on 9-13th October, 2002.