

THE IRISH FORESTER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF IRISH FORESTERS

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Professionalism in Forestry

The continued expansion of forestry in Ireland has meant that it has become more familiar to a broader spectrum of stakeholders. To the credit of the Forest Services both in Northern Ireland and the Republic, forestry has successfully managed to diversify itself and cater for economic, social and environmental interests. For example, in the Republic of Ireland there are now schemes for establishing and managing woodlands where commercial, community and environmental objectives are respectively prioritised. Of course, the key to sustainable forest management is to successfully integrate these three objectives on all sites. As a result of this expansion in its scope, forestry and foresters have never before been under such close scrutiny from other stakeholders. Those who have successfully worked so hard in Coillte and the Northern Ireland Forest Service in achieving FSC Certification know what it is like to undergo an independent audit of their everyday work. The demand for high professional standards is great and foresters must be aware of this now more than ever before.

The Society of Irish Foresters has an important role to play in the setting and maintenance of these standards. It fulfills this role in a number of ways, not least through its representation on behalf of members in the drawing up of industry procedures, standards and guidelines. It also continues to promote its "Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct" throughout the forest industry. The Society provides members with opportunities for professional development through the holding of seminars, study tours, field days, workshops and lectures on topical forestry subjects and the publication of its journal, "Irish Forestry". The Society also publishes position papers on relevant forestry issues and liaises with institutions offering forestry education and training.

As the demand for professionalism increases, it is likely that the Society of Irish Foresters will need to formalise, in some way, the manner in which members consolidate and develop their expertise and professionalism. A pilot Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme, whereby members continuously update their training in forestry through participation in educational activity, is underway. It is highly likely that some form of CPD will soon be extended to all Forest Service approved foresters and later to all technical members.

A recent survey of SIF members revealed that the majority of respondents favoured a CPD scheme for all members. At the same time, a majority of respondents were unaware of the fact that a pilot scheme was already in place. As already stated, the demand for professionalism across a broad range of areas within forestry has never been higher. Society members will need to embrace this demand and respond accordingly.

News from the Office

The office has been busy setting up the new Direct Debit system of membership subscription payment and settling member's accounts that have been in arrears. This involves close involvement with our bank and a computer specialist has being

involved in interfacing our database with bank records.

Recent meetings attended by the Technical Director include:

- Meeting with IFIC delegates, Minister Byrne and Officials re Environmental Guidelines;
- Briefing Meeting with Western Forestry Co-op re New Form 1;
- Teleconference with IFIC negotiating team re Environmental Guidelines;
- Interview with Nuala Ní Fhlatharta - Galway Bay Radio;
- ITGA Seminar UCD;
- Meeting with Students - Waterford Institute of Technology;
- Visit to OSB Factory - Waterford;
- Official opening of Ballintogher Enterprise Centre by Minister Noel Tracey;
- IFIC Council Meeting, Dublin;
- Forest Service Information session on Strategic Management and Environmental Procedures - Wexford.



Society members on the annual study tour which visited Hungary in September earlier this year.

The Society of Irish Foresters continues to play a very active role with IFIC in ongoing negotiations with the Forest Service. Some of the issues currently under discussion between the Society of Irish Foresters and the Forest Service are as follows:

3-Tier Afforestation Costings

Representatives of the Consultant Foresters' Regional Group met with the consultant accountant who is advising the Forest Service on the issue of allowable afforestation costings. This meeting was held to discuss feed-back from the group's submission in late July. The meeting was positive and a draft of the consultant accountant's report is expected to be with the Forest Service shortly. Progress has been slow on this issue but the Forest Service have indicated that the matter should be finally resolved before Christmas. The Consultant Foresters Regional Group have meanwhile compiled a list of other issues for discussion with the Forest Service and a schedule of quarterly meetings is being sought with the Forest Service to address these issues in the new year.

FS Strategic Management and Environmental Procedures

A full and very frank discussion took place on October 8th between Minister Byrne, his officials and an IFIC delegation, including the Society of Irish Foresters, in Wexford. The main issue on the agenda was the revised Form 1 (Application for Pre Planting Approval) which had issued without consultation on September 26th. The Form 1 was withdrawn at the meeting and it was agreed that an IFIC negotiating group would discuss with Forest Service representatives a revised Form 1. This discussion was long and arduous but laid down the bones of a revised Form 1. Continuing contact with the Forest Service over the following days put flesh on the bones. On October 22nd, a tele-conference of the negotiating group signed off on the revised Form 1. The revised Form 1 has since issued to approved foresters and the general public. During the negotiations excellent help and support came from right across the forest industry, including the SIF.

On the matter of acid-sensitive waters, the Forest Service has issued a list of OS 6" maps indicating potentially acid sensitive areas in various counties. A protocol dealing with water sampling in connection with same is in the process of completion by COFORD, in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Forest Service will then deal with implementation details. It is essential that consultation takes place vis-à-vis this protocol and that industry members are presented with a draft protocol before it is officially launched.

Various other issues arose and were included as part of the IFIC final submission to the Forest Service in late September. A response from the Forest Service is awaited.

Forest Biodiversity Guidelines:

The Forest Biodiversity Guidelines were the subject of two information sessions organised by the Forest Service in September and October in Athlone. Controversy emerged regarding a Forest Service information note on the actual implementation of the Guidelines and their impact on grant and premium payments. Henry Phillips (IFIC) and Tony Mannion (SIF) have had discussions with, and made a submission to, the Forest Service on this issue. A draft of the revised information note has been seen and, based on this, the SIF have advised IFIC to seek a meeting with the Forest Service to discuss the overall implementation of the Guidelines. Confirmation of this meeting is awaited.

Despite all of the meetings with the Forest Service over the last year and a half, there appears to be an amazing reluctance within the Forest Service to properly engage with and consult its own industry members before putting rules and regulations into position. This appears strange in an era which is characterised by the demand for openness, transparency and consultation. However, the Society of Irish Foresters will continue to seek proper engagement and consultation on behalf of its members with the Forest Service. In this regard the SIF, in conjunction with IFIC, is requesting the drawing up of a Forest Service customer charter which documents how organisations such as the Society can expect to engage with the Forest Service.

Important Changes in Rate and Method of Payment of Annual Membership Subscriptions

All members will have received notification in the post of the new annual membership subscription rates agreed at the last AGM. The new rates are as follows:

Technical Members	120 EURO
Associate Members	60 EURO
Student Members	10 EURO

From very humble beginnings in 1942, the Society of Irish Foresters has grown in stature through subsequent decades, to now being a significant partner in the development of forestry and the timber industry in Ireland. The objectives of the Society and its obligations to its members have been achieved by the following:

- Ongoing publication of "Irish Forestry" (journal) and "Irish Forester" (newsletter);
- Organisation of seminars, study tours, field days, workshops and lectures on topical forestry subjects;
- Preparation and dissemination of Policy Papers on relevant forestry issues;
- Advancement of forestry education at various levels;
- Representation of foresters and the forest industry in discussions with NGOs;
- Engaging with the Forest Service in matters of forest policy which impact on members and the industry;
- Establishment of a Continuous Professional Development programme in conjunction with the educational institutions;
- The upholding of Professional Standards, supported by a Code of Ethics.

The Society represents its members on the National Forest Industry Forum, the Irish Forest Industry Chain, the Tree Council of Ireland, the Irish FSC Steering Group and Millenium Woodlands Ireland. A director is employed to organise the day to day business of the Society and to keep abreast of developments, on behalf of members, in the industry. This director is supported by a full time office administrator. These services are costly to provide and it is in this context that the Society seeks your continued membership and support in maintaining and expanding the good work and excellent reputation it has earned over the past decades. The Society also relies heavily on the voluntary services of Council members and others who give of their time.

It has been decided to change the method of payment of membership subscriptions to direct debit. From January 1st 2002, the new rates and method of payment will apply. All members have been circulated with a direct debit mandate form. Please remember to complete this form and return it to the Society office in Sligo. Members must also **remember to cancel any existing standing orders to the Society of Irish Foresters** before the end of this year (2001).

The new direct debit scheme only applies for members who pay from a bank account in the Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland, U.K. and international members should continue to pay by cheque.

Anyone with a query about the new subscription rates and direct debit system of payment should contact Paula Lahiff in the Sligo office at 071 64434.

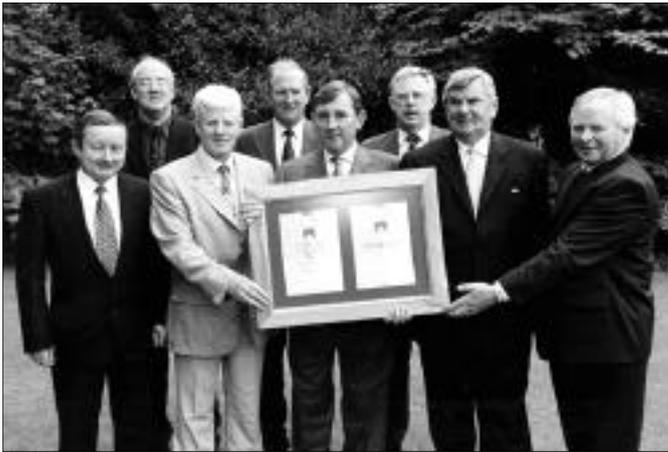
Coillte Presented with FSC Certificate for Good Forest Management

As most members will be aware, earlier this year Coillte were presented with the international Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certificate that its forests are well managed in accordance with strict environmental, economic and social criteria. The certificate was presented by SGS-QUALIFOR, the firm of FSC accredited auditors which carried out the audit of Coillte's operations. It was accepted on behalf of Coillte by its Chairman, Ray MacSharry and Chief Executive, Martin Lowery.

Speaking at the event Mr. MacSharry said "In Coillte, we believe that it is not only possible, but it is essential, to manage our forests in a way that is commercially successful, environmentally responsible and that delivers social benefits". Mr. Mac Sharry

went on to say that in the past two years Coillte has developed a much more structured approach to managing the environmental and social, as well as the commercial aspects of its business. This has enabled the company to put these issues centre stage and to ensure that they are addressed with the same attention as the commercial aspects. At the presentation of the certificate, Coillte also launched a social and environmental report entitled "A Vital Resource - A Report on the Sustainable Management of Coillte's Forests". This highlights some of the environmental and social aspects of the company's business and the steps being taken to address them. Coillte intends, in future, to report on progress in these areas on an annual basis in the same way that it reports on its business performance in its Annual Report and Financial Statements.

Achievement of certification means that Irish forest products companies certified by FSC will be able to carry the FSC label on their products thus providing consumers with assurances that the timber they buy comes from well-managed forests.



At an event in September to mark the Certification of Coillte's Woods were front row (left to right): D. Gallagher (Northwest Region Manager), M. O'Brien (Eastern Region Manager), M. Lowery (Chief Executive), R. MacSharry (Chairman) and P. McLoughlin (Western Region Manager); Back row (left to right): N. Ryan (Mid-Southern Region), T. Crowley (Southern Region Manager) and P. Hanrahan (Midlands Region Manager).

Coillte Chief Executive, Martin Lowery commented "As forests have matured, so have society's expectations in regard to the environmental and social functions which forests are expected to perform. The practice of forest management has evolved over the past century to meet society's expectations and it will continue to evolve in this century and beyond".

The Society of Irish Foresters congratulate Coillte and the Northern Ireland Forest Service, who were also awarded FSC Certification this year, on these achievements. Many members of the Society of Irish Foresters have been involved in many hours of hard work over the last number of years in the build up to certification. Their commitment has now been rewarded and the challenge is now to maintain the high standards in forest management that have been set this year, in the years to come.

COFORD News

Over the last few months COFORD has been busy finalising project agreements under the new research programme, funding for which has been made available under the Government's National Development Plan 2000-2006. In this issue of the Irish Forester updates on two of these research projects are presented as well as a summary of recent COFORD publications.

CarbiFor

The overall objective of the project is to provide data to determine carbon budgets for Sitka spruce forests in Ireland. The project is being led by Prof. Ted Farrell and the project team involves four departments in UCD: the Department of Environmental Resource Management, the Department of Botany, the Department of Zoology and the Department of Crop Science, Horticulture and Forestry.

Sites for the project have been selected in the Portlaoise area and equipment has been purchased. Postdoctoral and postgraduate researchers have been appointed for specific tasks and it is planned that fieldwork will begin in the new-year.

QualiBroad- Improving the Uniformity and Quality of Broadleaf Planting

Irish nurseries will be required to produce increasing amounts of broadleaf stock for planting in the coming years. Even though the proportion of imported stock has been decreasing in the last few years, it still takes almost two years for broadleaf stock to be produced in Irish nurseries. This project will focus on improving seed germination and plant growth in native broadleaf species such as common alder, birch, ash and pedunculate oak. (Native species have been chosen as they are often difficult to grow in the nursery). The objectives of the project are three-fold:

1. To develop pre-treatments that enhance seed germination in the nursery and improve methods of the storage of seeds;
2. To determine the optimum temperatures of seed germination and date of sowing;
3. To investigate means of improving seedling growth using cloches, mulches and bio-stimulants.

Results are expected to inform nursery managers about the effects of various seed pre-treatments on seed germination in the nursery and on the subsequent yield and quality of seedlings. The project will take place over four years and will be led by Dr Conor O'Reilly, Department of Crop Science, Horticulture and Forestry, UCD in partnership with Coillte Nurseries.

COFORD has recently published "Carbon Credits in Ireland: Issues and Potentials". The report is written by Conor Barry, Dr Peter Clinch and Professor Frank Convery of the Environmental Institute at UCD. It is the first work of its kind in Ireland and sets out the background to emissions trading, gives examples of some existing schemes, such as The Acid Rain Trading Programme in the US, and lists current developments in trading at EU Member State level. It also deals with the rules and definitions in emissions trading and the Single Market.

Another recent COFORD publication, "A review of relevant studies concerning farm forestry trends and farmers' attitudes to forestry" was written by Dr Brendan Kearney. The study was commissioned by COFORD following a request from the Irish Forest Industry Forum. Dr Kearney reviewed all research and studies which examined the trends of afforestation and the attitudes of landowners to forestry. This review was seen as a necessary step in investigating the range of factors militating against the achievement of the planting target of 20,000 hectares per annum from 2000 to 2030.

Copies of both reports can be ordered directly from COFORD and they are also available on the publications section of their web site (www.coford.ie). Further details about any COFORD projects, publications or activities can be obtained by contacting Dr Miriam Ryan, Research Officer, COFORD, Agriculture Building, UCD, Belfield, Dublin 4. Tel: (01) 7167700, Fax: (01) 7161180, Email: Miriam.ryan@coford.ie

IFIC News

The Irish Forest Industry Chain (IFIC) represents the Irish forest industry at National and EU level and ensures it receives the necessary support to allow it to develop as a major industry, particularly in rural Ireland where most of its members are based. IFIC also promotes the industry proactively through its national information initiative to ensure that it can develop in a climate that is conducive to growth. The Society of Irish Foresters is a member of IFIC.

In March of this year IFIC completed its second visit to Brussels, which incorporated meetings with the Irish Permanent Representative, the E.U. Commission and Irish MEPs. The delegation, which was led by the Chairman, Mr Donal Magner, made strong and detailed presentations, both to the Commission and in particular to Irish MEPs on developments in the forestry sector. They presented the forest industry position on the development of the sector and in particular on areas such as the environment, biodiversity and the future development of Agenda 2000.

Following the 30% grant and premium awarded in Spring 2000, IFIC lobbied extensively and, in the end successfully, for an increase in the premium available to those growers who planted pre-1999. IFIC have been involved in making extensive submissions to Government and the state agencies in relation to the variety of issues affecting the industry in general. A number of Position Papers and Response Documents to Government Departments and relevant bodies within the forest sector have been prepared and presented. IFIC is very grateful for the contribution of Forestry Consultant, Henry Phillips and to the IFIC Members who contributed through the consultative process that took place in the preparation of these documents. This work is an important part of IFIC's role of putting forward the industry's view on the issues and topics affecting the forest and timber industry in Ireland. Submissions included:

- Timber Industry Development Group;
- Strategic Management and Environmental Procedures;
- Aerial Fertilisation;
- Road Haulage of Round Timber: Draft Code of Practice;
- Wicklow Indicative Forest Strategy - Wicklow County Council;
- Department of the Environment and Local Government: Planning Guidelines on Landscape and Landscape Assessment - IFIC Reaction;
- Implementation of Government Climate Change Strategy - Summary of Submission by IFIC.

New Members

The SIF would like to welcome the following new members:

Technical Steven Burke Kieran O'Connell Tomas Hanrahan	Associate Declan Little	Student Roger Kenny
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The Executive Director had a very successful visit to Waterford Institute of Technology in early November where he spoke with 2nd and 3rd year students regarding the Society and its activities. Resulting from this, an additional 29 students have applied for and been accepted as student members. The leadership and drive of Tom Kent (lecturer at WIT) in getting students into SIF is very much appreciated. The Executive Director will be making similar visits to Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, University College Dublin and Ballyhaise Agricultural College in the new year.

Since the Autumn of 1998 when the Irish Forester was first published, the Society of Irish Foresters has recruited 70 new technical members, 19 new associate members and 54 new

student members. It is extremely important that the Society continues to recruit new members and all existing members are encouraged to urge their colleagues and friends in forestry to join. A recent survey of Society members revealed an imbalanced age profile. The survey showed that only 12 1/2 % of respondents were under the age of 35. The recruitment of young members is recognised by Council as being of high priority.

Recent Publications

Native Woodland Scheme. Explanatory Booklet available from the Forest Service, Department of Marine & Natural Resources, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co. Wexford.

Carbon Credits in Ireland: Issues and Potentials. (Barry, C., Clinch, P. and Convery, F.). Available from COFORD, Dublin.

A Review of Relevant Studies Concerning Farm Forestry Trends and Farmers' Attitudes to Forestry. (Kearney, B.) Available from COFORD, Dublin.

Dates for the 2002 Diary

The following events are planned for 2002. Members will note that many of these are actually rescheduled events that unfortunately had to be called off due to the Foot and Mouth crisis earlier this year.

DATE	EVENT & VENUE
March 3 - 9	National Tree Week
March 6	Augustine Henry Memorial Lecture "Trees in Irish Folklore" by Prof. Daithí O'hOgáin, Folklore Dept. UCD RDS Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
March 22	Field Day Dundrum Sawmills, Co. Tipperary - Hardwood utilisation. Young Broadleaved Plantations - Peter Alley
April 12	Annual Symposium "Farm Forestry" Stand Hotel, Curragh, Co. Kildare
April 12	Annual General Meeting Following Annual Symposium Stand Hotel, Curragh, Co. Kildare
April 26	Field Day Northern Ireland - Balcas Sawmill Joint Meeting with ITGA
May 17	Field Day Portumna / Woodford, Co. Galway Native Woodland Management & Continuous Cover Forestry
June 1-15	Annual Study Tour South Africa - details in the New Year
September 20	Field Day Co. Wicklow Timber Supply Issues
October 16	Sean MacBride Forestry Lecture University College Dublin