

# THE IRISH FORESTER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF IRISH FORESTERS

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## Planting Levels Down

Early indications are that the level of new planting in the Republic of Ireland this season (2001-2002) may be down by 10 to 15 per cent on last season (2000-2001). Reports from the country's two largest forest nurseries indicate that plant sales are down on this time last year by 10 to 15 per cent and are unlikely to recover by the end of the season. Both nurseries also report a reduction in demand for Sitka spruce.

If this is the case, and there is plenty of other anecdotal evidence to suggest that it is, then it raises further serious questions about the potential for the Irish forest industry to achieve critical mass as set out in the Strategic Plan for the Development of the Forestry Sector, Growing for the Future, in 1996. The strategic plan envisaged a total of 145,000 hectares being planted in the period 1996 to 2002 with a further 20,000 hectares being added annually until 2030. Approximately 82,000 hectares has been planted in this period and each season we, as an industry, are falling further and further behind the original target.

The Strategic Plan served a tremendous purpose and many of the strategic actions it outlined have been successfully completed. In addition, the Irish forest industry has successfully embraced the principals of Sustainable Forest Management and its independent certification, the scale of which was not, nor could not have been, foreseen in 1996. However, there can be no question that one of the mainstays of the Strategic Plan was the achievement of critical mass in terms of timber production and this, quite clearly, will not be achieved as planned.

There is therefore an urgent need to revisit the plan and to assess, based on progress to date and the current economic, environmental and social contexts, the best way forward for the industry from here.

## News from the Office

The office continues to be busy in the matter of membership subscriptions for 2002. As of January 1st 2002, there were 694 SIF members (494 Technical, 23 Retired Technical, 98 Associate, 74 Student and 5 Honorary).

The SIF will formally be ratified as a member of the Union of European Foresters at their next Governing Council Meeting to be held in Poznan, Poland in October 2002. The SIF will attend that meeting.

Recent activities of the Technical Director include:

- Attended Forest Service Information day in Raphoe.



*Launch of National Tree Week in Killaloe, Co. Clare on March 2nd 2002. Pictured from left - John McLoughlin, President of the Tree Council of Ireland; Alex Banahan - Spar; Ms Síle de Valera, Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and The Islands; and Gerry Egan, company secretary of Coillte.*

- Attended IFCI meeting in Tullamore.
- Attended IFIC AGM in Dublin.
- Attended IFIC Regional Group Meeting with Forest Service on Forest Biodiversity Guidelines in Athlone.
- Prepared submission to Forest Service on Pesticides Guidelines.
- Prepared submission to Forest Service on Forest Harvesting Machinery Grants.
- Prepared submission to SGS on Species Proportions Requirements for Forest Certification.
- Negotiated with Forest Service re. Funding
- COFORD-Road manual consultation, Athlone
- Forest Industry Forum meeting, Portlaoise
- IFCA dinner, Tullamore

## Forest Service to Appoint Five New Inspectors

The Irish Forester understands that the Forest Service in the Department of Marine & Natural Resources will shortly advertise five new technical positions. It is understood that these are to be as follows:

- ◇ Forest Ecologist

- ◇ Forest Landscape Design Specialist
- ◇ Archaeologist
- ◇ Foresters x 2

It is understood that these additional technical staff are being sought in order to facilitate the Forest Service in effectively carrying out an increased level of consultation and engagement with a broad spectrum of stakeholders as required under Sustainable Forest Management principals. These staff will also be necessary in the administration of the Native Woodlands Scheme and the ongoing administration of the other existing forestry schemes.

The Society of Irish Foresters welcomes this news and hopes that this will also result in an increased level of consultation with foresters and other industry members and representatives.

### **National Survey of Native Woodlands**

A number of parties recently tendered for the carrying out of a National Survey of Native Woodlands. The contract will be managed by a steering committee led by Dúchas and with representatives from the Forest Service and COFORD. The overall objective of the survey will be to describe Ireland's native woodland resource in terms of its type, extent and health. It is envisaged that this survey will form the basis of a future national strategy for the protection and enhancement of Ireland's native woodlands and will provide a valuable baseline data resource for state agencies, environmental interest groups, land owners, academics and the general public. It is understood that the survey will be carried out over a five year period and that the contract will be awarded before the end of March.

### **New Aerial Fertilisation Guidelines**

The Forest Service has recently published new guidelines on Forestry and Aerial Fertilisation. These guidelines join the existing suite of Forest Service Guidelines on matters such as Forestry and Archaeology, Forest Harvesting and the Environment etc.

Aerial fertilisation of forestry now requires prior approval of the Forest Service following consultation with the relevant statutory bodies, the relevant fisheries owner, the relevant Garda station, organisations responsible for any current research trials in the area and telecommunications, power generation and wind farm owners where relevant.

An approved forester must now submit, on behalf of the owner, an application (Form 1) including a map detailing the boundary of the area to be treated, all exclusion zones, aquatic zones and fertiliser storage areas. The application must also contain details of the type and concentration of fertiliser to be used and the rate at which it is proposed to be applied. This must be supported by results from a foliar analysis and the recommendations of a competent analyst. Exclusion zones are defined as follows:

- ◇ 100 metres from points of extraction of drinking water and reservoirs
- ◇ 50 metres from aquatic zones (as defined in Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines)
- ◇ 30 metres from SACs, pNHAs, SPAs, National parks, Dwelling Houses, Experimental Plots and other unforested land
- ◇ 15 metres from archaeological sites and monuments, old buildings, public, private and forest roads

A Global Positioning System (GPS) must be used to record the flight path of the aircraft and a copy of these flight paths must be submitted to the Forest Service within one month of completion of the operation.

### **Forest Roding Grants**

Society members may be surprised to know that although the Forest Service Procedures and Standards Manual states that a roding grant of up to IRP 22.50 (EUR 28.57) per linear metre are available, the old rate of IRP 14.00 (EUR 17.78) is still being paid. Apparently consent for the advertised increase has not yet been received from the European Commission. This approval has obviously been taking much longer than anticipated. The Irish Forester understands that the matter is being pursued at the highest level and that a decision is due shortly.

### **New Procedures for Acid Sensitive Sites**

The Forest Service have announced a new protocol for the determination of the acid-sensitivity of surface water in the context of afforestation. Anyone planning to afforest an area covered by a 6" OS Map on the Forest Service list of Acid Sensitive Areas must now submit an assessment of acid sensitivity along with their initial application (Form 1). The sensitivity of water to acidic inputs will be determined by the measurement of alkalinity on a minimum of four separate occasions in the period from February to May inclusive. The analysis must be carried out by an independent laboratory.

These procedures will significantly impact upon afforestation levels in the coming years. The timing of the announcement of the protocol means that the on-site collection of samples will now not be possible until 2003 with planting then only being potentially possible on these sites in the 2003-2004 planting season. From then on there will always be at least a seasons delay between deciding to commence sampling and actually planting, if that subsequently becomes permissible.

In addition to this, land owners will have to foot the bill for carrying out the water sampling with no guarantee that the cost will be offset by receipt of an afforestation grant. It is estimated that the cost of taking and analysing four samples will be in the region of 1,200 to 1,800 Euro.

The Society of Irish Foresters, through the Irish Forest Industry Chain (IFIC) are currently clarifying these issues with the Forest Service.

### **EU Proposal to Ban Arsenic Wood Preservatives**

The EU Commission have produced a Working Document and a Draft Directive on the use of arsenic in the preservation of wood. The proposal would essentially ban the sale of arsenic treated wood to consumers and restrict its use to a limited number of essential industrial applications. Arsenic is widely used in Ireland for the treatment of wood in the form of CCA (Copper Chrome in Arsenic). Typically it is used in fencing products and in constructional timber, particularly for outdoor applications. CCA is recognised as the most effective and reliable wood preservative on the market. In a recent submission to the EU Commission, The Irish Forest Industry Chain (IFIC) have sought to:

- ◇ extend the consultation period and the lead in period to any change;

- ❖ extend the list of acceptable applications for CCA to include agricultural fencing, roadside fencing and noise barriers, all of which present no discernable risk to the general public;
- ❖ encourage further research into the risk of CCA treated wood in certain applications and the safe disposal of these products.

## COFORD News

### Annual Report 2001

The COFORD 2001 Annual Report was launched in Dublin on February 28th. Over the coming weeks 4,000 copies of this comprehensive publication will be circulated. The report details all projects currently being funded by COFORD. The annual report will also be made available to download from the COFORD website at:

[www.coford.ie/reports/acrobat-pdfs/coford\\_annual\\_report\\_2001.pdf](http://www.coford.ie/reports/acrobat-pdfs/coford_annual_report_2001.pdf)

### Innovation in Wood Products workshop

COFORD and The Scottish Forest Industry Cluster have identified the importance of innovation in expanding markets for homegrown timber. To address this issue, both organisations are hosting a workshop on Innovation in Wood Products and Processes. The workshop will be held in Dublin on April 29th and Edinburgh on April 30th.

This **'Conceptualisation to Commercialisation'** workshop will cover topics such as funding and support available to foster innovation, the accreditation process, and - through a series of case studies presented by industry leaders from throughout Europe - details on how other new products and processes have been successfully commercialised recently. These case studies (which it is envisaged will cover I-beams, Parallam, LVL, Polymer-fibre composites, New Age Fitch Beams, timber preservation techniques and softwood joinery) will outline:

- ❖ how new market opportunities and suitable partners were identified,
- ❖ what testing was needed to satisfy Agrément Boards and Standards' Authorities,
- ❖ how intellectual property rights are protected,
- ❖ how the new process/product was integrated into existing businesses,
- ❖ what pitfalls were encountered and how they were overcome, and
- ❖ how the market was developed/supported.

The workshop is aimed at the processing sector, the timber trade, professionals and research/testing service providers. However, it will also be of interest to timber growers and foresters who are keen to learn more about new opportunities for wood and wood products. Further details will be circulated as soon as the panel of speakers is finalised.

Enquiries for the Dublin workshop (29.4.02) should be directed to Mr Joe O'Carroll, Operations Manager, COFORD, Agriculture Building, Belfield, Dublin 4. Phone (01) 7167700 or email [admin@coford.ie](mailto:admin@coford.ie)

## IFIC Delegation to Brussels

An IFIC delegation recently visited Brussels and met with representatives from DG Agriculture and DG Environment.

At both meetings the IFIC delegation emphasised the economic importance of forestry in Ireland and our strong record in terms of Sustainable Forest Management and independent certification. They stressed that there was a perceived over-regulation of the forest sector and that the anti-forestry lobby, although ill informed, appeared to receive more attention.

The main points in response from the EU were that Forestry is not seen by them only in economic terms and that the principal objective of forestry should be to restore the landscape. Indeed, it was pointed out that the EU view of forestry and associated policies were all "moving towards the environment". The EU have been concerned by Ireland's interpretation of EU regulations and although discerning of unjustified claims against forestry, have received a disproportional number of complaints from Ireland about Irish forest policy.

IFIC have requested a meeting with the Forest Service to discuss, inter alia, the issues raised in Brussels vis-à-vis Irish forest policy and broad leaf planting.

## Coillte National Fire Plan

The area burned by forest fires has increased in recent years on the Coillte estate. To combat fires, Coillte has a National Fire Plan, backed up by Standard Operating Procedures. Coillte is



*These photographs show the fire in Cloosh Forest on 7th June 2001. Approximately 200 hectares were burned. In addition to the fire brigade and the army, over 100 local volunteers assisted Coillte staff in controlling the fire. The fire was eventually brought under control through back burning.*

*Kevin Blehein took the photographs.*



calling on all landowners and foresters to adhere to the following:

In areas where vegetation is potentially hazardous or flammable, adequate fire line protection should be carried out at each site. A scarified or rotovated perimeter with a minimum width of six metres is necessary for adequate protection.

Landowners are reminded that it is an offence under Section 40 of the Wildlife Act 1976 (amended by Section 46 of the Wildlife Act 2000), to burn vegetation on uncultivated land from the 1st of March to the 31st August, subject to certain limited exclusions. Subject to permission being granted, protective burning (controlled burning of adjoining lands) may be done outside of this period.

If you see a fire you should:

1. Observe the fire at a safe distance.
2. Contact the local Gardaí or fire services
3. State location of fire preferably by townland identification
4. If possible, contact the owner of the plantation or the local Coillte Manager.
5. NOT attempt to enter the fire zone until the necessary support services have arrived.

Where a privately owned plantation adjoins or is adjacent to a Coillte forest, Coillte is happy to work with the forest owner to devise cooperative fire prevention measures. Landowners should contact their local forest manager or local Coillte office to arrange a meeting.

During 2001, Coillte lost over 550 ha (twice the national average per year), ranging in age from one to over thirty years old. The main reason for the increase was the exceptionally dry weather during the months of March/April 2001. Ireland frequently experiences short periods of very dry weather during Feb/March and in June; these are the periods are when forests are most at risk.

For more information, please contact:

Clíodhna Parker, Coillte Public Relations, Tel: 01-6635278, 086-2236493

John O'Sullivan Coillte National Fire Group, 0502-21617, 086-2579103

**New Members**

The SIF would like to welcome the following new members:

<i>Technical</i>	<i>Associate</i>	<i>Student</i>
Michael I Doyle	Mark Hogan	Aidan Burns
Barbara Maguire		

**On the Move**

The Society of Irish Foresters would like to congratulate the following members on their recent appointments:

Dr Declan Little has been appointed Director of Woodlands of Ireland. The Woodlands of Ireland was set up in 1998 to develop strategies aimed at securing the sustainable management of Ireland's semi-natural woodland and to facilitate the establishment of new woodlands consisting of indigenous species from indigenous sources. It is funded by the Forest Service, Dúchas and the Heritage Council. Declan was

previously the Project Ecologist in the People's Millennium Forests Project.

Dr. Miriam Ryan has been appointed to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies in the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Miriam was previously the Research Projects Officer in COFORD.

Dr. Marian Coll has been appointed Director of the Tree Council of Ireland. The Tree Council of Ireland was set up in 1985 to foster an understanding of trees in Ireland. It is an umbrella organisation for almost 40 different organisations involved with trees. The Directors post is co funded by Coillte and the Forest Service while other funding is provided by sponsorship. Marian was previously an Outreach Officer with the People's Millennium Forests Project based in Coillte's Newtownmountkennedy Office.

Jacques Hamel has been appointed as a forester with Purser Tarleton Russell Ltd. Jacques is a Canadian citizen and previously worked in both Quebec and British Columbia as a forest manager.

Barbara Maguire was recently appointed as farm forester with the Irish Farmers Association.

Marie Doyle was recently appointed as Continuous Education Officer in the Department of Crop Science Horticulture and Forestry in University College Dublin.

**Recent Publications**

Forestry and Aerial Fertilisation Guidelines (2001). Available from the Forest Service in the Department of Marine & Natural Resources, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co. Wexford.

COFORD Annual Report (2001). Available from COFORD, Agriculture Building, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4.

**Good Wood Policy Guide**

Architect and Television personality Duncan Stewart launched the Just Forests' Good Wood Policy Guide at the Plan EXPO exhibition in the RDS, Dublin on St. Patrick's weekend. The Good Wood Policy Guide is a 48 page full colour publication designed to help architects, local authorities, joineries, timber traders / importers, woodwork teachers and all timber and wood product consumers to source wood from independently certified forests worldwide.

