

Forestry and Wood Update………………….September 2010 - Volume 10 Number 9

## CONTENTS

Research Programme 2

Project update 2

Carbon sequestration potential of young Sitka spruce forests increases with forest age

Outline of new projects being funded by COFORD 2

CROW: Combined Research on Riparian Woodland

Information and support services 3

WoodWisdom-Net news 3

Update of WoodWisdom-Net activities

National demonstration: tending and thinning broadleaf woodlands 4

Dunmanway, Co Cork on Thursday 9 September

Carbon corner 4

An update on the international negotiation process on forestry and climate change

National and international news 5

Disease found in Japanese larch trees in Ireland 5

Monitoring the extent of infection and controlling the spread of disease

Seeking comment: Control Union FSC audit, IForUT 5

Comments sought on IForUT as regards compliance with the FSC standards regarding social, environmental, and economic aspects of forest management

Who says training doesn’t pay? 6

Proper training of site personnel can lead to substantial cash savings

Irish forestry may create new jobs 6

Good news regarding employment in the forestry sector

Seminar 'Bioenergy: The next renewables opportunity' 7

Dunadry Hotel, Co Antrim - 7 September

IEEM Annual Conference 7

2-4 November 2010 - Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Ireland

IUFRO Excutive Director position announcement 7

Prestigious post available – Vienna, Austria

Forest fires in Russia 8

More information about the devastation in Russia

UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review now available 8

Publication reviewing forest products market and policy developments

Global warming conference 8

24-28 September 2010 - Mayfair Hotel UK

Proceedings of the 18th European Biomass Conference and Exhibition 2010 9

Publication representing an up-date on the status and prospects of the global biomass sector

UNECE Timber Committee week 9

11-14 October 2010 - Geneva

European paper week 2010 9

16-18 November 2010 - Crowne Plaza-le Palace, Brussels

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# Research Programme

# Project update

*Each issue of the newsletter carries a short article on new and ongoing COFORD-funded projects. Feedback on the articles is welcome and should be addressed to the project leaders (contact details at the end of the article).*

## Carbon sequestration potential of young Sitka spruce forests increases with forest age

As part of the COFORD funded Carbifor II research project ([www.ucd.ie/carbifor/index.html](http://www.ucd.ie/carbifor/index.html)) eddy covariance (EC) techniques have been utilised to assess the carbon sequestration potential of young ‘Kyoto’ Sitka spruce forests in Ireland. A mobile EC tower was deployed across a series of chronosequence sites in the Irish midlands including a semi-natural grassland and 6- and 14-year-old Sitka spruce stands. The sites selected represented the typical land use prior to afforestation (grassland) as well as young afforested stands which included non-forest vegetation (6 years), through to canopy closure at approximately 14 years. The data show clear annual and seasonal patterns of carbon uptake and release during the growing season and winter periods respectively (Figure 1). Carbon uptake increased with age across the chronosequence and ranged from 0.89 t C ha-1, 3.15 t C ha-1 to 8.52 t C ha-1 at the grassland, 6- and 14-year-old sites respectively. The increase in the carbon sink strength with age was largely due to an increase in the gross primary productivity of the system associated with the transition from non forest to forest vegetation.

*Figure 1. The cumulative Net Ecosystem Exchange (NEE) of a semi-natural grassland and a 6 and 14 year-old Sitka spruce forest.*

*For more information contact Dr Matthew Saunders, email: matthew.saunders@ucd.ie*

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Outline of new projects being funded by COFORD

## Combined Research on Riparian Woodland (CROW)

Forest Service Guidelines state that buffer zones should be in place throughout the forest rotation. Buffers comprised of native riparian woodland can play an important part in protecting surface water resources, especially during high impact forest operations such as establishment, road construction and harvesting. These areas also play a role in conserving and expanding woodland and associated biodiversity and in connecting native woodland habitats. However, very little hard data are available to quantify these benefits in Ireland. Furthermore, there is little information on the success of riparian buffer establishment and subsequent vegetation development that has taken place, nor an assessment of how the current management of riparian zones can be optimised for habitat and water quality protection. The CROW research project will address these knowledge gaps. It is a collaborative effort between the School of Biology and Environmental Science, University College Dublin (Dr Mary Kelly-Quinn, email: mary.kelly-quinn@ucd.ie), Woodlands of Ireland (Dr Declan Little) and Coillte (Dr Philip O’Dea). It will run for three years commencing September 2010. The aim is to assess the current status of riparian buffers in an Irish context both in terms of design and composition but also their biodiversity contribution to components of the aquatic ecosystem and adjacent terrestrial ecosystems. The project will develop practical silvicultural recommendations for the future establishment and management of riparian buffer zones.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Information and support services

# WoodWisdom-Net news

## Update of WoodWisdom-Net activities

**Second Joint Call - Nine proposals recommended for funding**

At its meeting on 27 of May 2010 the 2nd Joint Call Committee of the WoodWisdom-Net Research Programme decided to recommend nine proposals for funding. The proposals total approximately €13.4 M with ~€8.4 M requested from public funding sources and ~€2.4 Million from industrial co-funding.

The call, entitled “Sustainable competitive processing and end-use concepts for forest based industries”, generated 38 proposals of which the 9 recommended for funding cover the following topics:

* Three proposals under the topic “Improving the performance of energy and resource efficient timber construction (massive or light-weight, new construction or renovation concepts) with new concepts, tools and processes considering total building performance (e.g. acoustics, serviceability, indoor climate)”
* Three proposals under the topic “Increasing the competitiveness of the forest-based value chain by strategic technology renewal, new business strategies and production systems (e.g. advanced technologies for primary and value-added wood processing, reduction of resource and energy consumption)”
* Two proposals under the topic “Creating new business opportunities through innovative wood and fibre-based products and composites with properties optimised to the end use requirements and sustainable use of resources. The development should be driven by potential users in relevant application areas (e.g. functional packaging, transport, construction, furniture, etc.).
* One proposal under the topic “Optimising end-of-life of wood based products considering their total life cycle (e.g. reuse and recycling, quality assurance, business concepts and societal issues)”

The projects accepted for funding will be published in detail on the WoodWisdom-Net website (<http://www.woodwisdom.net/>) after the respective funding organisations have taken their final funding decisions. This is expected to happen in early September.

**Third Joint Call to be launched in September**

The 3rd Joint Call of the WoodWisdom-Net Research Programme is in preparation: the Call for Pre-Proposals is planned to be launched on 15 September 2010, with a submission deadline of 1 December 2010. More information will follow soon.

*Alistair Pfeifer (email:* *alistair.pfeifer@agriculture.gov.ie**) is the WoodWisdom-Net representative for Ireland. For all the latest news and information about forthcoming events, visit* [*www.woodwisdom.net*](http://www.woodwisdom.net)*.*

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# National demonstration: tending and thinning broadleaf woodlands

## Dunmanway, Co Cork on Thursday 9 September

Convene at the Parkway Hotel, Dunmanway between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. Participants will be bussed to the nearby site. The demonstration will take approximately 2.5 hours. Please bring appropriate footwear and raingear. All are welcome and the event is free of charge.

This joint Teagasc/Forest Service/COFORD event is aimed at landowners who have broadleaf plantations at or near the age of first thinning. It will provide owners with the know-how to manage their woodlands for profit, including: growing quality timber; timing of first thinning; peparation for thinning and getting the job done; product end use (fuelwood, chips etc).

For further information see <http://www.teagasc.ie/forestry/events/broadleaf_thinning_demo_dunmanway.asp> or contact John Casey, Forestry Development Officer, Teagasc, Mallow at 087-2242283.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Carbon corner

## On to Cancun

### An update on the international negotiation process on forestry and climate change

Carbon Corner is back after a prolonged recess to present a synopsis of where the international negotiation process on forestry and climate change is headed for the rest of this year.

After the conclusion of the Copenhagen round - where progress was made on the rules for forestry in developed countries – it was back to Bonn for two meetings this year, the latest concluding on 6 August. Progress continued at the Bonn sessions, and a new, shorter draft decision text on land use, land-use change and forestry was issued by the Chair of the Kyoto Protocol negotiation track (see <http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/kp/application/pdf/kpawgcrp2.pdf>) as a draft proposal for discussion at the next session in Tianjin, China from the 4-9 October.

So what large issues remain to be resolved in the land use and forestry space, and when is a realistic time for them to be sorted out and agreed? First and probably foremost are the rules for forest areas that pre-date 1990 – the so-called forest management activity.

At an informal Dublin workshop in early 2009 an approach was proposed that used a reference level of net greenhouse gas emissions (growth minus harvest) in a given year or period as a basis for calculating the contribution of pre 1990 forests to national numbers. Over the period to the end of 2009, and leading up to Copenhagen, this reference level proposal gained momentum among developed countries, and was included in a number of EU and other Parties’ data submissions over the period and into 2010 (copies of data submissions, including Ireland, are available at <http://unfccc.int/meetings/ad_hoc_working_groups/kp/items/4907.php>).

How reference levels are established and reviewed prior to agreement are critical issues that remain to be agreed in the negotiations. Most of the developed countries have been arguing that a projected business-as-usual reference level, over the period to 2020, is the best way to deal with age class effects (whereby a country may have seemingly very large greenhouse gas emissions simply due to historic planting patterns leading to increased harvest over the period from 2012 to 2020). While NGOs and others argue for a historic reference level as the fairest and most transparent way of dealing with forest management, it is arbitrary, and does not take account of situations in a number of countries where forest cover has been recovered by afforestation prior to 1990. Other countries may propose other reference levels. Key issues for Carbon Corner are having reference levels and associated harvest plans reviewed prior to the final agreement and then to take into account the contribution from land use, land use change and forestry before agreeing emission reduction targets.

Other issues on the table include how to move from the current instantaneous oxidation accounting of harvested wood products to delayed emissions, based on when emissions actually occur from products. Good progress was made on this issue through 2009 and into the current year, and a settled developed country position was agreed at Bonn in August. It is now one of the two options dealing with the issue in the Chair’s text.

How to deal with greenhouse gas emissions from large natural disturbances such as forest fire and insect attack was also progressed at Bonn, at least in the sense of having consolidated text on options in the Chair’s text. This remains an issue to be resolved before year end.

Based on the two Bonn meetings this year there are reasons to be optimistic that the rules for forestry in developed countries can be agreed before the end of 2010. In order to engage the forestry sector the rules need to be structured in a way that enables additional effort in the forestry sector to reduce the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, through sequestration, materials substitution and use of wood fuels from sustainable sources.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# National and international news

# Disease found in Japanese larch trees in Ireland

## Monitoring the extent of infection and controlling the spread of disease

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is currently investigating a small number of cases of a disease affecting mainly Japanese larch trees in the Tipperary/Waterford region. The disease is caused by the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*, a fungus-like organism that can damage and kill trees and plants it infects.

Following findings of the pathogen in Japanese larch trees in Great Britain in autumn 2009, the Department, on a precautionary basis, initiated a special survey here of Japanese larch growing adjacent to areas where rhododendron infected with *P. ramorum* had already been detected. In addition to the findings in a small number of larch trees, beech trees which were growing in proximity to the infected larch trees were also found to be infected, as were two noble fir trees.

Japanese larch trees represent some 3% of the total forest tree population in Ireland. The bulk of the wood from infected trees can be used in the normal way, provided the necessary hygiene measures are taken at felling and in sawmills.

There has also been a finding in Northern Ireland and the Department is liaising closely with the NI Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Department is taking all necessary measures to establish the extent of the infection and to control the spread of the disease.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Seeking comment: Control Union FSC audit, IForUT

## Comments sought on IForUT as regards compliance with the FSC standards

 regarding social, environmental, and economic aspects of forest management

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) mark signifies responsible forest management. Certification by FSC means a forest is managed in accordance with FSC standards for forest management; which include environmental, social, and economic criteria for good forest management. Certificates are awarded by licensed certification bodies on FSC’s behalf.

IForUT holds an FSC forest management certificate (CU-FM/COC-806994) as they have been assessed as meeting FSC’s standard. Control Union is the licensed certification body that has made the assessment and issued the certificate. On the behalf of FSC, Accreditation Services International GmbH (ASI) monitors the compliance of both certification bodies and certificate holders with a series of audits every year. These audits are strengthened by interested parties sending in comments, both positive and negative.

This year, ASI will be monitoring Control Union by witnessing the audit at IForUT in Ireland. We would very much like to hear from you if you have any comments on IForUT as regards compliance with the FSC standards regarding social, environmental, and economic aspects of forest management.

We would also welcome any comments that you may have on the performance of Control Union as a certification body. For example, if you have made comments to Control Union before, do you consider that they dealt with your comments appropriately?

Any comments can be made in confidence by e-mail to s.bosbeer@accreditation-services.com, or, if preferred, over the phone (+49 - (0)228 - 367 6616). ASI welcomes comments with supporting evidence at any time, but they would be particularly useful if received by 3 September 2010. Pass on this request for input to any other interested parties; the more comment received, the better.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Who says training doesn’t pay?

## Proper training of site personnel can lead to substantial cash savings

An independent evaluator’s report of the Timber Frame Skillnet activities for the past 24 months has concluded that proper training of site personnel can lead to substantial cash savings. The report noted that Skillnet’s funding enabled the development of an accredited training course for timberframe site erectors and that the Irish Timber Frame Manufacturers Association (ITFMA) had become a City & Guilds approved training centre. Calling this course a flagship project the report went on to say that it had put training and certification in place in a key area.

The evaluator was also able to estimate the financial benefits of the course. The key benefit was a reduction in rework, broken down into two main classes: minor reworks requiring a one person day and major reworks requiring a full team for one or two weeks.

Companies who sent erectors on the course subsequently found that once personnel had been trained the number of reworks halved leading to an average cost saving of €1,500 per house. Even if a timberframe company was only producing 50 kits a year, savings of up to €75,000 could be achieved.

Commenting on the findings of the report ITFMA Manager Philip Mahony said: “Obviously the driving force for developing the course in the first place was to improve the quality of work on site. And even though most of the erectors who attended the courses were all experienced individuals they still stated that they had acquired much knowledge that was both new and practical. The old adage is that in recessionary times the training budget is the first to suffer. However the evaluator’s comments disprove that theory.”

The ITFMA has now received further funding from Skillnets to cover its training activities for the remainder of 2010. Under the banner of the Eco Construction, Skillnets training of timberframe site erectors will continue and a wider range of courses will also be rolled out. Details of these will be listed on www.itfma.ie as they occur.

The Eco Construction Skillnet is funded by member companies and the Training Networks Programme, an initiative of Skillnets Ltd. funded from the National Training Fund through the Department of Education and Skills. For further information contact: Philip Mahony – Manager, Irish Timber Frame Manufacturers' Association - (086 8037686); email: Philip@itfma.ie

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Irish forestry may create new jobs

## Good news regarding employment in the forestry sector

The Irish forestry industry has undergone a huge turnaround in recent months, as the price of timber has soared to unprecedented highs prompted by growing shortages internationally. The industry, which employs 16,000 people and is worth over €1.89bn to the Irish economy, is undergoing a revival as the price for logs paid by sawmills has more than doubled. The remarkable changes have prompted a significant boom in the Irish export market and there is now potential for major rural employment in the sector.

Donal Whelan, technical director of the Irish Tree Growers Association (ITGA), told the Sunday Tribune that Irish forestry is ‘a success story that hasn't been told’. “There is massive potential for creating new jobs because we need to more than double the volume of trees planted annually from 7,000 to over 15,000.”

COFORD states that if 15,000 hectares are planted every year, on average 490 direct jobs would be required annually to establish, manage, harvest and process that timber. “Currently approximately 44% of all forest in Ireland is privately owned and there has been a massive upswing in felling licenses, up 85% on last year. It's an excellent thing for the industry and for Ireland because it shows that good planning in the industry is now coming to fruition,” Whelan said. “The timber industry is crying out for more timber and we have over capacity in the industry here. The industry was hit very hard and a lot of harvesting operations closed down, but now the future looks very good for the sector.”

In 2007, 60% of the timber grown in Ireland was used in the home market; however, today over 90% goes for export, as major forestry operations worldwide have started to run out of wood. “We are currently importing roundwood to Ireland and this is a good thing in some ways because it adds value to those logs. It is regrettable that we do not have enough of this timber to supply our indigenous sawmills,” said Whelan. The current high prices paid by mills is good news for many Irish farmers, who own 44% of all plantations in the country. They indicate a strong market showing no signs of diminishing soon.

*Source: Sunday Tribune, 22 August 2010*

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Seminar 'Bioenergy: The next renewables opportunity'

## Dunadry Hotel, Co Antrim - 7 September

Energy Ireland is organising a seminar on the theme of 'Bioenergy: The next renewables opportunity' taking place in the Dunadry Hotel, Co Antrim on Tuesday 7 September. The seminar will examine the potential for developing bioenergy in Northern Ireland and will look at the opportunities for bioenergy to contribute to meeting Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets. Full details of the seminar are available online at <http://www.agendani.com/events/bioenergy/>. For more information, contact Sandra Dane, Conference Manager Tel: +353 (0) 1 661 3755; www.energyireland.ie

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# IEEM Annual Conference

## 2-4 November 2010 - Royal Marine Hotel, Dun Laoghaire, Ireland

The Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management conference addresses the theme “Biodiversity Beyond 2010: Missed Targets, New Opportunities”. In the International Year of Biodiversity, what Countdown 2010 targets have been met? How are new targets being identified and what tools will we have to meet them? This conference will cover biodiversity policies and legislation (including the Common Agricultural Policy, Fisheries Policy and the Marine and Coastal Access Bill), showcase biodiversity tools and methods, and review case studies of practical methods used in biodiversity projects. For further information and to book a place visit: http://www.ieem.net/2010autumnconference.asp

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# IUFRO Excutive Director position announcement

## Prestigious post available – Vienna, Austria

IUFRO is seeking to appoint an Executive Director to serve as its chief executive officer based at the Headquarters in Vienna, Austria, located at the Austrian Federal Research and Training Centre for Forests, Natural Hazards and Landscape (BFW), as of 1 November 2010. The position will be based on secondment or a specific donor grant. Applications should be sent to the IUFRO President elect no later than 30 September 2010. For more information, see <http://www.iufro.org>

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Forest fires in Russia

## More information about the devastation in Russia

There have been devastating forest fires in Russia, mostly in the Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod regions. Fires burnt down not only vast amounts of forests, but also villages, causing the death of over 30 persons. Thousands of people have lost their homes and a state of emergency has been declared as army troops have been deployed to fight the flames. These fires followed an unprecedented heat wave in Russia, temperatures in Moscow reaching 37.5 degrees. Is this a consequence of global warming? What are the underlying causes and reasons for the fires? For more information, visit the website of the Global Fire Monitoring Centre, which issues daily updates on the situation in Russia and beyond: www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/current/globalfire.htm. Johann Georg Goldammer, Director of Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) and Leader of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Fires, can be contacted at fire@fire.uni-freiburg.de

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review now available

## Publication reviewing forest products market and policy developments

The UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review 2009-2010 is available via the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission website: www.unece.org/timber. It covers forest products market and policy developments in the UNECE region of Europe, North America and the CIS. The Review's theme is ‘Innovation for structural change recovery’. The publication illustrates how a structural change has occurred in the forest sector, and how the sector is adapting and innovating for short-term survival and long-term growth. The Review is a key input for the UNECE/FAO Timber Committee Market Discussions scheduled on 11-12 October 2010 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The Timber Committee is meeting with the Society of Wood Science and Technology. The theme of their joint market discussions is ‘Forest products markets rebound in the UNECE region: Innovative wood products lead the way’. The Review’s main findings are available at www.unece.org/press/pr2010/10tim\_p12e.htm.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Global warming conference

## 24-28 September 2010 - Mayfair Hotel UK

WGGW Conference & Expo 10 themed “Impacts of the Global Recession on Sustainable Development, Global Warming Policy and Markets” will provide a platform to discuss the future opportunities and challenges related to the design, development and commercialization of low carbon innovation, technologies, products and services. The event will include invited and refereed papers from academics, consultants, entrepreneurs, investors, technology providers, designers, sustainability, environment and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) managers as well as other business functions. Delegates will come globally from companies, entrepreneurs, as well as academia, government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The conference is supported by an international Advisory Board. WGGW Conference & Expo 10 welcomes conceptual and research-based papers covering sustainable innovation, technology, product and service design and development. Papers focused on low carbon solutions and sustainable innovation are particularly welcomed. For more information on WGGW Conference & Expo 10 contact Dr Don Jack, Conference Chair - email: callforpapers@london.com.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Proceedings of the 18th European Biomass Conference and Exhibition 2010

## Publication representing an up-date on the status and prospects of the global biomass sector

The 18th European Biomass Conference and Exhibition in Lyon has been a successful forum for information exchange in the field of bioenergy for all delegates and exhibitors from 72 countries around the world. Conference proceedings jointly elaborated by ETA-Florence Renewable Energies and WIP-Munich are now available for purchase. The Proceedings on DVD contain contributions submitted and presented in Lyon: 441 papers, 176 presentations and 264 poster files. Given the broad range of topics covered at the Conference, these Proceedings represent a significant up-date on the status and prospects of the global biomass sector. For more information, visit [www.conference-biomass.com](http://www.conference-biomass.com).

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# UNECE Timber Committee week

## 11-14 October 2010 - Geneva

The Timber Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) meets on 11-14 October 2010 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, to discuss latest developments affecting the forest sector. Innovation will be a key theme of the annual UNECE Timber Committee Market Discussions (11-12 October), thanks to a first ever joint session with the international Society of Wood Science and Technology entitled “Forest sector rebounds in the UNECE region: Innovative wood products lead the way ”. This year’s discussions will also cover newer themes such as wood energy, carbon markets and certified forest products markets in addition to the market sectors sawnwood, roundwood, panels, pulp and paper. All interested participants are invited to attend these events. Admission is free, but advance registration is required. Attendance is limited to 300 people. More information on the Timber Committee session is available at http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=302. Background documents on the different topics are available at: <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=309>. To register, send an email to tc2010.timber@unece.org.

COFORD publishes an abstract of the annual UNECE Timber Committee meeting as part of the COFORD Connects series.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# European paper week 2010

## 16-18 November 2010 - Crowne Plaza-le Palace, Brussels

European Paper Week 2010 will take place on 16-18 November 2010 in the Crowne Plaza-le Palace in Brussels. European Paper Week is an important annual event that turns the focus of the paper industry to Brussels. The initiative, developed by the Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI), brings together the different industry sectors and other related organisations, providing a high-level platform for discussion between industry, related organisations and the EU institutions. The theme for 2010 is ”European Paper Industry - at the Core of Green Growth”. For more information visit [www.cepi.org/epw](http://www.cepi.org/epw).

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)