.

Forestry and Wood Update

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# COFORD publication launched

The proceedings of the COFORD conference “***Forest Research and Development in Ireland 2004 – Underpinning Industry Development***” are now available. This publication was officially launched by John Browne TD, Minister of State for Forestry in the Department of Agriculture and Food, at the COFORD Council meeting held on 9 December 2005 in Wexford. The publication is available from COFORD at a cost of €10 – it can also be ordered on-line or downloaded as a pdf on the COFORD website – www.coford.ie

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# Hardwood Matters

In January 2005 COFORD published the first issue of ***Hardwood Matters*** – a catalogue for advertising hardwood timber. The catalogue features “for sale” and “wanted” sections and is published twice a year and widely distributed in the forestry and wood processing sectors.

The third issue of ***Hardwood Matters*** will be compiled at the end of January 2006. To submit an entry – free of charge – please send the details to john.fennessy@coford.ie before 16 January using the form below. See the [COFORD website - www.coford.ie/hardwoodmatters/](http://www.coford.ie/hardwoodmatters/) for more information and to download previous issues.

**Hardwood Matters Submission Form**

If you would like to contribute to the next issue of Hardwood Matters, please fill in the form below and return it to COFORD, Arena House, Arena Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18. Fax; 01-2130611, Email: info@coford.ie

Hardwood Wanted ⁪ For Sale ⁪

Category Standing ⁪

 Felled ⁪

 Roadside logs ⁪

 Sawn ⁪

Access (to nearest national route)

 Suitable for all truck types ⁪

 Rigid and trailer only ⁪

 Rigid only ⁪

Species and quantity

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Species | Volume(m3) | No. of trees | DBH(cm) | Average timber height(m) | Area(ha) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

Quality Grade (see next page):

 First Grade ⁪

Poorer Grade ⁪

Unknown ⁪

Felling Licence[[1]](#footnote-1)

Granted ⁪ Felling Licence Number:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Applied for ⁪Not yet applied for ⁪

Directions to location/nearest town or village:

Restrictions of viewing: Please indicate preference for viewing (fixed times – please specify time and date; open viewing; appointment only)

Contact name:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Reserve Price (€ per m3 per grade, Optional)

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# Wood Modification: Opportunities and Challenges

COFORD and the University of Limerick are hosting a seminar on 9 February 2006, at the University of Limerick. The seminar will address the topic of wood modification, considering in particular the opportunities and challenges that it poses for the Irish timber industries. Wood modification through techniques such as acetylation and heat treatment, as an alternative to chemical preservation, is now well established in continental Europe and modified wood components are in extensive use in the construction industries. The major advantage of the modification approach lies in the elimination of potentially hazardous chemicals; but modification cannot be regarded as a simple alternative to chemical treatment and the processes introduce new technical and cost related challenges.

Topics covered in this meeting will be the scientific basis for wood modification, case studies of typical processes and modification plants, including cost-benefit balances, experiences with Irish timber and current European thinking on standards and norms for modified wood. The contributors have been selected to give a broad overview of these topics in the European context and to translate the opportunities and challenges of modification to the Irish situation.

Speakers include Callum Hill of the University of Wales who has many years of modification research experience; Boke Tjeerdsma from SHR timber research in the Netherlands who has been involved in the establishment of heat treatment plants and the evaluation of heat treated timbers; and Dennis Jones of the Building Research Establishment who has been evaluating modification for that organization. In addition, as there have now been a number of modification trials carried out with fast grown Irish timber, some of the results of that work will be described by Colin Birkinshaw of the University of Limerick.

There will be a strict limit of 30 delegates, so if you are interested in attending please contact COFORD as soon as possible. Cost of attending will be €50.00, and this will include refreshments and lunch.

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# CARBON CORNER

## Addressing deforestation in developing countries: thinking locally - acting globally

Montreal was the venue in November and early December last year for the conference of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The 2005 conference marked the first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (MOP1) since the instrument entered into force in February 2005. (Procedurally, the MOP is where all the draft decisions taken in relation to the protocol, including Marrakesh Accords, are formally tabled for adoption; as it transpired all decisions were adopted.)

An important milestone reached at Montreal was the agreement to address emissions from deforestation in developing countries (http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2005/cop11/eng/l02.pdf). This was a welcome breakthrough: no international process has been able to deal effectively with this environmentally disastrous situation. Not that there is any guarantee that the climate change process will be able to contribute to confronting it, but a new start has been made. Most importantly the initiative has come from developing countries - Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea made a joint submission to the UNFCC on ways to address deforestation in developing countries (http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2005/cop11/eng/misc01.pdf). In essence the proposal is to establish country specific baselines for carbon losses from deforestation, and to reward countries that reduce such losses over time.

During the conference the EU and many other parties expressed support for the overall proposal, and for a new process to address emissions from deforestation. Apart from the huge damage that it is doing on a daily basis to livelihoods and communities, deforestation in developing countries accounts for a massive 20% of annual greenhouse gas additions to the atmosphere.

While the *think globally – act locally* mantra puts the onus on the polluter, climate change is a global phenomenon that requires concerted global action. Unilateral action will have little effect, given the scale of emission reductions required. What is needed is precisely what Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea are advocating: global action linked to a local perspective.

It will be a long and difficult negotiation to arrive at workable systems to address unsustainable logging in developing countries, and not all the solutions lie in the climate change process, but it is worth a lot of time and effort, given the benefits that will flow. One of the main reasons for optimism is that the UNFCC process has an economic dimension, and thereby offers a platform to develop incentives to reduce emissions; the EC Emissions Trading Scheme being a good example.

Another example, taken from a perspective of failure to provide incentives, is forest certification, which began with the hope of addressing deforestation in developing countries. It has failed to do so, and, ironically, now operates almost exclusively in developed countries, in highly regulated forestry sectors, frightened of losing market share. These considerations do not weigh in most developing countries; certification is seen as a cost, with almost no transfer of benefit to the logger, and certainly none to local communities.

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# Significant development opens great opportunities for the forestry sector

The Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Noel Dempsey T.D., has welcomed the announcement by the Minister for Finance of a major multi annual financial package to support renewable energy across the electricity, heat and transport sectors. The package of measures includes a five year biofuels excise relief package costing in excess of €200m and funding for renewable energy schemes costing up to €65m. It will assist the large-scale deployment of renewable sources of energy over the next five years in these sectors.

The programme covers four critical areas as follows:

* Biofuels: An excise relief package for biofuels costing over €200m over a five year period from 2006 - 2010, together with funding to assist the development of indigenous biofuel plant.
* Biomass: A financial package for wood chip and wood pellet boilers, aimed at the business, commercial and service sectors.
* Grants for House-holders: A grant aid package for the domestic sector which will allow for individual grants to install renewable energy technologies such as wood pellet boilers, solar panels and geothermal heat pumps.
* Combined Heat and Power: A grant aid package to incentivise the installation of combined heat and power in the industrial, commercial and public services sector.

Minister Dempsey said that the measures he will be introducing early next year will build on the successful measures he has already introduced in the electricity sector and ensure that the heat and transport sectors use renewable technologies to become more energy efficient. As well as welcoming the Bioenergy measures, Minister Dempsey welcomes the extension of VRT relief for flexible fuel vehicles. "I am determined that energy will play its full role in ensuring Ireland meets its climate change obligations and we must ensure that all energy consumers adopt a more sustainable approach and use energy more efficiently. It is important that we move beyond the research and development stage in renewable technologies and take a more positive deployment approach going forward".

The initiatives will further enhance the ongoing programme of co-operation with Northern Ireland in the sustainable and renewable energy areas. North and South are in agreement on the need to respond collectively to the common economic and environmental challenges facing the island of Ireland and an open debate is taking place on how to plan for sustainable energy supplies through 2020 and beyond.

Enhancing the sustainability of the energy system on the island of Ireland requires a programme to progressively reduce dependence on fossil fuels by making a decisive switch to alternative sources, particularly renewables, and providing a significant boost for energy efficiency and conservation.

The programme will also provide much-needed support to the rural based agriculture, forestry and renewable technology sectors. "By lowering the cost to consumers, renewable energy technologies and cleaner fuels will be able to compete with more traditional fossil fuels." Minister Dempsey said.

Minister Dempsey said "This programme will provide an affordable means for householders, business and consumers to counteract spiralling energy costs. It will also stimulate awareness of the need for sustainable energy practices in the home, in business and in transport and will assist in developing the market for domestic renewable technologies, which have not been in a position to compete on a level playing field with fossil fuels."

Minister Dempsey said that he would now be developing a suite of measures to deliver on the programmes, with a view to launching a multi annual comprehensive package early in the New Year.

In a joint statement welcoming the announcement, the COFORD Chairman David Nevins and the Director Dr Eugene Hendrick said: "The announcement by Minister Dempsey of a budget package for renewable energy follows closely on the launch of the pilot scheme for bioheat being run by SEI. From 2006 there will be significant capital available to assist forestry and other sectors to become involved in the heat supply business. Individual forest owners, groups and companies in the forestry sector should look very seriously at what is on offer when the details of the schemes are announced early in 2006. CHP is also being targeted for support, and this measure should encourage sawmills and boardmills to revisit this option or to expand existing facilities. These measures coincide with a rapidly expanding supply potential from the private forestry sector and should result in additional outlets for a significant volume of material."

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# New Oak Provenance Trial

Of a total afforestation programme of approximately 10,000 ha in 2004, approximately 29% was broadleaves of which oak was one of the major components (20 – 25%). Based on the current grant support level for oak of €6,500/ha, this represents an annual investment by the state of somewhere between €13 and 20 million in 2004 in oak plantations. As oak is one of the most commercially important broadleaf species, and a native tree species, it is of critical importance that we use only the best and most productive seed sources available. Provenance trials will enable us to identify the very best seed sources, and play an important role in the conservatin of Irish oak genetic resources.

In 1984 the first major collection of acorns on a systematic basis for provenance experimentation with native oaks was made in Ireland. At that time 29 seed sources were tested on a number of sites across Ireland. As a consequence of a localised mast year in 2004 a new collection was made at 13 separate locations by Woodstock Seed and Coillte Nurseries. This new collection will shortly be tested on three sites in a provenance trial which is part of a new COFORD-funded project. Preliminary work on site preparation and experimental layout is under way and it is hoped that these experiments will be planted on three separate sites over the next couple of months. For further information contact John Fennessy (email john.fennessy@coford.ie)

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# Research Needs in Forest Recreation

Over the last year a working committee of practitioners in forest recreation and associated areas have prepared a report on research needs in forest recreation for Ireland, co-ordinated by COFORD. The study is being developed in the context of COFORD’s review of its own activities and is considered necessary in the light of an expanding forest resource in Ireland with a predicted doubling of the area covered by forest over the next few decades. The study is of great relevance considering that the increasing urbanisation of Irish society will place new demands on the forest and on the countryside generally and that forests are traditionally a popular and valuable locus for outdoor recreation. The future role of forestry in the countryside in terms of recreation, landscape values and sustaining rural life is paramount. This report is currently in final draft form and is expected to be published by COFORD early in 2006. For further information on any aspect of this study contact John Fennessy at COFORD (tel: 01-2130725 or email john.fennessy@coford.ie).

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# Coillte and the Irish Sports Council launch results of a study on forest recreation

It is now widely recognised that Ireland is fast becoming an urban society with access for recreation to open land an emerging issue. Coillte’s forests make a significant contribution to national well being and contribute to supporting Ireland’s tourism industry through an extensive recreational infrastructure network. Coillte permits access to over 440,000 hectares of forest land much of it located in some of the most scenic areas of the country.

Coillte and the National Waymarked Way Advisory Committee of the Irish Sports Council recently commissioned Fitzpatrick & Associates, Economic Consultants, to undertake a collaborative study on the economic value of trails and forest recreation and at a meeting in Dublin Jim Fitzpatrick presented the results of a study entitled *“The Economic Impact of Trails and Forest Recreation in Ireland”.*

The study involved extensive primary research work through postal and on site surveys and found that the direct economic expenditure by Irish trail users was valued at over €300 million while the non-market value of trails is estimated at almost €100 million. Some of the other key findings include:

* The majority of visitors to forest areas and trails are not specialist users and are unlikely to stay for more than three hours;
* The proximity of users residence to forest or trail has a major bearing on frequency of usage;
* The health benefits associated with trail usage are the primary motivation for one third of all visitors using the trail/forest while over two thirds of those interviewed stated that participating on trails was the main form of exercise they undertake or was an important component of a wider exercise regime;
* The lack of local availability was considered to be the most significant obstacle to usage.

For further information on Coillte’s recreation policy and for a copy of the reports *“Recreation Policy Healthy Forests, Healthy Nation”* or *“Economic Value of Trails and Forest Recreation in Ireland”* contact Coillte at01 2011111 or visit the web site [www.coillte.ie](http://www.coillte.ie)

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# Conference on delivering a countryside for health and wellbeing

This conference will take place on 26 and 27 January 2006, at the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, Co Louth.

The potential of the countryside to contribute to health and wellbeing is increasingly recognised. In early 2005, the Countryside Recreation Network of the UK and Ireland published the results of a major research study undertaken by the University of Essex which demonstrated that the outdoors can help in four areas:

* physical fitness through exercise
* mental health and well being, including reduced stress
* social interaction and friendship through shared activities and interests
* understanding of the natural world and the development of environmentally friendly lifestyles.

In addition, the economic benefits of accessible green spaces for physical and mental health are becomingly increasingly recognised as are the benefits of partnership working among a wide range of organisations with a countryside and health interest at local, regional and national levels.

The conference will specifically consider the results of the most recent research undertaken in the field of countryside recreation and health and wellbeing, the benefits and costs, how much activity is already underway, case studies of best practice from across the UK and Ireland, lessons to be learnt from current projects and initiatives and consideration of the most effective way forward for partnership working.

The conference is aimed at anyone who is interested in promoting and using the natural environment as a resource for health and wellbeing. Topics to be addressed include:

* Health benefits of physical activity
* Creating supportive environments for health
* The countryside as a resource for public health ad wellbeing: findings of the Countryside Recreation Network research study
* Health and National Parks
* The value of greenspace within urban environments for health and wellbeing
* The economic benefits of accessible green spaces for physical and mental health: fundings of a recent research study
* Physical activity and mental wellbeing
* There will also be four case study presentations.

For further information, contact Sylvia Watson – email sylvia@countrysiderecreation.com, or phone (from ROI) 048-90303930.

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# Environ2006

The School of Biological and Environmental Science, University College Dublin, will host the 16th Irish Environmental Researchers’ Colloquium from the evening of Friday 27 until lunch time on Sunday 29 January 2006. Oral and poster presentations relating to any aspect of environmental research, policy and management will be acceped. Indicative themes include:

* Ecology, biodiversity and conservation
* Marine and coastal environments
* Aquatic environments
* Terrestrial environments
* Society, policy and economy
* Environmental management
* Agriculture and forestry
* Aquaculture and fisheries
* Atmosphere and climate
* Agricultural and environmental meteorology
* Energy and noise
* Other

The colloquium is an ideal forum for postgraduate students to present and discuss their research findings or ongoing projects. For any additional queries contact environ2006@ucd.ie or visit the website www.ucd.ie/environ2006. To join the Environmental Sciences Association of Ireland (ESAI), go to [www.esaiweb.org](http://www.esaiweb.org).

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# The Nuts and Bolts of a Wood Fired District Heating System

Callan Renewable Energy Supply Company - CRESCO - will hold a conference in The Workhouse, Callan, Co Kilkenny, on Friday 13 January 2005. The theme is “The Nuts and Bolts of a Wood Fired District Heating System”.

With the price of oil and petrol rising, everyone knows that renewable energy is going to be a big thing – but how is it really going to work? Will it be back to the chainsaw and log piles? What will a modern burner look like? And what will be the most efficient and economical ways to organise our central heating?

The Callan Renewable Energy Supply Company is setting out to answer these questions through two conferences, the first of which takes place on the 13th January 2006 at the Workhouse Project in Callan, Co Kilkenny.

A state-of-the-art Austrian boiler will produce enough heat to warm more than 20 normal houses. That heat will be pumped throughout the complex of buildings, and the different users – the Kilkenny County Council Area Office, the new Health Centre, the new CEART rehabilitation centre, and the Camphill Community houses – will all get their heat without having their own boiler. A specialised meter will measure the amount of heat used, and bills will be sent via the Internet. And the fuel will be wood – not logs loaded by hand, but pellets or chips that will be blown in to a hopper from a lorry and fed automatically by computer controlled thermostats.

In years to come, these systems will become commonplace. The market for wood-fired heating systems and fuel has grown more than 100-fold in many European countries in less than 10 years. Market experts know that renewable energy is going to take off in Ireland, and people who make the changeover early might get the best advantage.

With the support of BNS Rural Development Co., the local LEADER+ Company, the Callan Renewable Energy Supply Co. conference in Callan will show interested people how the system is really going to work. Experts will give practical presentations about the best approaches to plumbing layouts, the details of boiler operation, metering and billing systems, and the pros and cons of wood chips and wood pellets. A tour of the new plant will provide a real-life view of everything that is involved.

The conference will be of direct interest for plumbers, engineers, plumbing suppliers, architects, house builders, environmentalists, planners, voluntary housing groups and community projects needing economical heating systems.

For further details and information please contact Gabrielle Carroll for conference bookings at 056 7752111 or gabrielle@bnsrd.com. For interviews and further information on the content of the conference contact Patrick Lydon, Camphill Community, Callan at 087 7972717 or p.lydon@camphill.ie.

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1. A felling licence must be obtained from the Forest Service before felling. Please phone (053) 60200 for further details. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)