.

Forestry and Wood Update

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# Suite of Irish Dynamic Yield models – GROWFOR – now available

Following the successful launch last year of the Irish Sitka spruce dynamic yield model, the system – now referred to as GROWFOR – has been updated, with a number of new features added:

* in addition to Sitka spruce, four new species: Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, Norway spruce and Scots pine, are now included,
* net present value for different stands and management options can be calculated automatically,
* yield class as well as site index can be displayed if required,
* current annual increment and mean annual increment have been included in the stand projections screen.

This phase of modelling work, funded jointly by Coillte and COFORD since 2001, is now at an end, and is a significant milestone in Irish forest research, as it brings to fruition work which started over four decades ago - when the first crop structure field trials and permanent sample plots were established by the Research Branch of the Forestry Division – a good example of how the benefits of long term research can accrue, where there are clear objectives set out at the beginning of the work.

The models underlying GROWFOR were derived by Dr Lance Broad, with the collaboration Ted Lynch of Coillte. PTR Limited developed the user interface and carried out field validation of the models.

Licensed users of the Sitka spruce dynamic yield model will receive updates free-of-charge. To apply for a licence to use the updated GROWFOR please apply to info@coford.ie. A series of workshops on the models will be held in 2007 – details will announced here and on the COFORD web site.

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# Carbon Corner

## Renewable energy targets announced

Oil price shocks and growing public concerns over climate change are driving the renewables agenda at a faster pace than ever before. Many EU Member States have now set long term targets for renewable energy use over the long term. Recent days have seen the Irish government set its own 30% target, to be achieved by 2020. Given the fact that renewables currently contribute barely over 2% (most of which, incidentally, comes from wood combustion) to total energy demands (Sustainable Energy Ireland 2004 data), and the modest rate of growth in areas such as biomass and wind, achieving the target will require a greatly accelerated programme of measures. Over the 14 years to the end of 2020, and assuming no increase in energy consumption on 2004 levels (an unlikely scenario in itself), some 12.5 PJ of renewable energy generation capacity will have to rolled out each year, not far from the current total capacity of 14 PJ. The energy Green Paper, due to be issued shortly, will therefore make for interesting reading.

Achieving the target will require major changes in the fuel mix, and how homes and office buildings are constructed and heated. The extent to which these things will happen will depend largely on the price of fossil fuels, and on government policy and measures. A good start has been on the heating front in the SEI Greener Homes and Bioheat programmes, but these will need continued and expanded investment to target the heating sector, which accounts for one third of all energy consumption.

The next step for biomass is to start using wood fuel for power generation, preferably in CHP and cofiring. Government has already put in place the REFIT programme, based on a feed-in tariff price for renewables. At present the price for biomass-derived electricity has been set at 7.2 eurocent per kilowatt hour. Carbon Corner has questioned this price in a previous issue – and now – with the results of a COFORD-commissioned economic study to hand, advocates a an upward review of the price, to move close to 10 eurocent per kilowatt hour. This level is required to achieve an acceptable rate of return on commercial investment. If there is no price revision the ambitious renewables target will be compromised.

Policies to increase renewables use does not make sense in the absence of continued investment in afforestation programme. Investment in biomass based systems depends on a sustained supply of fuel, and this will only happen by continuing afforestation at around 15,000 ha per year up to 2020 and beyond.

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# The Local Project: revisited 2006

In 1993 the Forest Service funded a pioneering Crann project in Leitrim in which local people planted broadleaf woodland - this was the Crann 'local project'. This project is being revisited to celebrate the 20th anniversary of CRANN in 2006.

The Dock, Leitrim's new art centre in Carrick-on-Shannon, will present artist Cathy Fitzgerald's exhibition that documents the project to date. With Jan Alexander, founder of Crann, and 'local project' woodland owners, a short film has been created on the experiences of growing broadleaf trees in the local community. The public opening will take place at The Dock, St George's Terrace, Carrick-on-Shannon, on Friday 8 September. The film starts promptly at 6.30pm, with refreshments afterwards. There is no charge to visit the exhibition which will continue until Saturday 23 September. Information will also be on display on Crann's 20 year history and also the forestry survey results of these young broadleaf woodlands.

A seminar, with Jan Alexander and special guests, and field trip to 'Local Project' woodland site will take place on Saturday 9 September, at 10 a.m., also at The Dock. Booking is essential, and there is a cost of €30 to attend.

Phone the Crann office to book your place: 01 6275075, or visit [www.crann.ie](http://www.crann.ie) for further information.

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# See the Light 2006 Conference

This conference is organised by Sustainable Energy Ireland’s Renewable Energy Information Office in association with the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland. It takes place on 28 and 29 September 2006 at the Cavan Crystal Hotel, Cavan.

Given the inevitable prospect of increased electricity prices and heating costs, delegates attending the annual two-day conference will be offered a rare and in-depth understanding of the key principles and techniques in developing low energy buildings and learn how renewable energy can be used cost effectively to provide healthy and ecological buildings here in Ireland. Leading Irish and European experts from the UK, Sweden, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium will share their expertise and experience and familiarise delegates on sustainable buildings and renewable heating technologies.

The event offers a networking opportunity and will be of particular interest to the Building Industry, Architects, Engineers and Consultants interested in environmentally responsible design and construction of buildings, Developers and Installers, Local Authority Planners, Agenda 21 Officers, Housing and Building Departments, Housing Associations, Universities and Research Organisations, Government Departments and NGO's concerned with environmental issues, housing, energy etc. Suppliers and installers will also be attending to showcase and exhibit the latest in technology innovation.

Admission: €150 for one day; €229 for both days. For RIAI Members: €100 for one day; €179 for both days. For online bookings go to <http://www.phyxhost.ie/dev/reioshop/catalog/index.php> For further details email renewables@reio.ie

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# Symposium: Improving the Triple Bottom Line Returns from Small-scale Forestry

The first announcement and call for papers has been issued for the Improving the Triple Bottom Line Returns from Small-scale Forestry Symposium to be held in Ormoc City, Leyte, Philippines, 3-7 June 2007.

This symposium focuses on improving the economic, social and environmental returns from small-scale forestry. The conference is of relevance to both researchers and policy makers from developed and developing countries. There will be a particular focus on using systems-based approaches for improving returns from small-scale forestry and agroforestry.

The conference will be hosted by Leyte State University in conjunction with the School of Natural and Rural Systems Management at The University of Queensland. If you are interested in presenting a paper or a poster at the seminar you are most welcome to submit an abstract up to one page in length. The Scientific Panel will evaluate all abstracts and send acceptance notification.

For further information visit the symposium homepage: http://www.uq.edu.au/forestry or email: **iufro@uq.edu.au**

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# The Marcus Wallenberg Prize - 2006

The Marcus Wallenberg Prize for 2006 has been awarded to the French forest geneticist, Dr Antoine Kremer, for his discovery of the evolution, organization and distribution of the genetic diversity of Pan-European oaks. Dr Kremer’s study is seen as an outstanding model for the study of all other species. The prize will be presented by the King of Sweden, at a ceremony in Stockholm on Thursday 28 September 2006. The ceremony will be followed by a symposium around the subject of the prize-winner and its impact on the forest and forest products industries.

The annual prize was established in 1980 to acknowledge the lifetime activities and the memory of Marcus Wallenberg, the late Chairman of Stora Kopparbergs Bergslags AB (now Stora Enso). Each year the prize recognizes a single breakthrough research achievement of one scientist or a small group of collaborating scientists. In the view of the Prize Selection Committee and the Board of the Foundation, the selected breakthrough will have a significant effect on the industries. The prize is also intended to stimulate further research around the world.

Dr Antoine Kremer has worked for 28 years with the French national research organization, INRA, and has been a leader in both national and international research groups. His breakthrough is in the combination of information from a number of different sciences at their current level (from molecular genetics to evolutionary history of forests) to develop new knowledge about oaks at a continental scale. This knowledge will provide a major platform to facilitate decisions about the conservation and management of forests. It also allows prediction of likely future changes under the impact of climate and other environmental changes.

Dr Kremer’s research may be applicable to other species throughout the world including industrial indigenous conifers such as those in northern Russia. The techniques will also have relevance to the introduction, management, improvement and use of exotic species elsewhere. The prize recognizes Dr Kremer as an outstanding scientist and his work as a major contribution to human understanding, resource conservation and industrial development.

For further information on the Marcus Wallenberg Foundation e-mail info@mwp.org

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# 2007 – Forestry at the cross roads

This conference will take place on 9 February 2007 at the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin. Entitled ‘2007 – Forestry at the cross roads’, the Irish Natural Forestry Foundation’s first national forestry conference brings the foundation’s perspective to the CAP 2007 – 2012 changes in forestry funding. The theme of the conference explores how Irish forestry can deliver on the new multiple and varying demands on our forestry resources.

The conference will be chaired by Ronan O’Flaherty, the Principle Officer of the Irish Forest Service. Speakers include:

* Colin Price, Professor of Environmental and Forestry Economics, University of Wales: *British forestry policy: shifting cultivation of objectives*
* Dr Douglas Macmillan, Reader, Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), University of Kent at Canterbury: *Valuing the non-timber benefits of forests*
* Colin Edwards, Forest Research, UK Forestry Commission: *Restructuring/Transforming conifer forests*
* Declan Little, Chairman, Woodlands of Ireland and Irish Forestry Certification Initiative: *The value of native woodland timber*
* John O’Reilly, CEO Greenbelt, and Joe O’Carroll, Managing Director, OC Consulting: *Forestry beyond 2007 – finding common ground for private and public interests?*
* Ian Wright. Project Manager for INFF sustainable forestry project at the Manch Estate, Dunmanway, Co Cork: *The Lessons so Far*

The Irish Natural Forestry Foundation is a charity established in West Cork in 2002 to demonstrate and promote natural Irish forestry that is economically as well as socially and environmentally beneficial. The conference reflects the unique partnership developed at INFF’s Manch project of Greenbelt, the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, and the environmental NGO Irish Natural Forestry Foundation. The conference is funded by The Forest Service under its Sustainable Forestry Programne.

For further information contact Caroline Lewis (tel: 027 73208); email bookings@inff.ie or visit [www.inff.ie](http://www.inff.ie/)

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# BIHIP Annual Meeting, Field Day and AGM

The Annual Meeting, Field Day and AGM of the British and Irish Hardwood Improvement Programme (BIHIP) was held in Kildare in Ireland in 2005. This year the event will take place at Ampleforth Abbey in Yorkshire on 20 and 21 September.

BIHIP is a consortium of organizations and individuals working together to coordinate forest research in broadleaves and to fully develop the hardwood forest industry in Britain and Ireland. The objectives of BIHIP are to:

* Promote research into provenance testing, selection and breeding programmes;
* Support the establishment and management of field trials along scientific principles;
* Develop technologies to aid the rapid multiplication of improved material;
* Promote the use of improved material;
* Undertake education, publicity, fund raising and other support to further the above aims.

BIHIP working groups cover seven major hardwood species of economic importance in Britain and Ireland - oak, ash, birch, cherry, sweet chestnut, sycamore and walnut – and addresses the opportunities, potential and problems that these species present. In recent years Irish participation has increased in many of these groups and to date there are joint programmes in oak, ash, sycamore, birch, cherry and sweet chestnut.

The aims of this event are to discuss regeneration management for broadleaves and methods for the production of quality hardwood timber. This field-based seminar will be of interest to all growers, merchants, processors and users of hardwoods. More information about this seminar and latest news on BIHIP can be found on the website: [www.bihip.com](http://www.bihip.com)

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# New findings in the USA suggest other possible uses for birch bark

Recent findings suggest that the bark of the white birch tree contains a compound that might help fight prostate cancer. Based on research in mice, the compound, called betulinol, has not been tested on people yet. However, preliminary tests show that betulonic acid, made from betulinol, may discourage human prostate cancer cells from dividing, and spur those cells to die.

The tests were conducted by Dr Brij Saxena and colleagues who work in reproductive endocrinology at Cornell University's Weill Medical College. The study was partly funded by Marc Pharmaceuticals, says a Cornell news release. Cornell's research foundation and medical school collaborate with Marc Pharmaceuticals on research and licensing of betulinol derivatives.

For full story, please see: <http://www.webmd.com/content/article/125/116079.htm>

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# Iceland to host EUFORGEN Conifers Network Meeting

The Sixth Meeting of the EUFORGEN Conifers Network is scheduled to take place in Reykjavik from 6 to 9 September 2006. To a large extent, European forestry is based on sustainable use of native conifer species such as Scots pine and Norway spruce. However, exotic conifer species including some North American conifer species, and Sitka spruce in particular, are also used for wood production and protecting the environment in countries like Ireland, the UK and more recently Iceland. Despite the relatively short period of their use in Europe, several exotic conifers seem to have developed ‘landraces’ which are well adapted to their new environment. The Conifers Network has also decided to include conservation of such locally adapted genetic material as part of its activities.

The main issues in the meeting agenda will be discussing the Network activities and updating the work plan. The meeting will have additional sessions on the development of pan-European minimum requirements and information standards for dynamic gene conservation units of forest trees and the EUFGIS project (Establishment of a European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources). For further information consult the EUFORGEN website: <http://www.ipgri.cgiar.org/networks/euforgen/euf_home.asp>

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# Minister Wallace praises RDS wood-fired heating system

Ms Mary Wallace T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food with special responsibility for forestry, visited the Dublin Horse Show on 10 August and inspected the recently installed and innovative RDS wood-fired boiler system. This wood-fired system is providing heat for the Merrion Road building. A purpose-built timber building comprising a fuel store and a boiler house was built inside the Merrion Gate.

During the visit Minister Wallace reiterated her commitment to the development of wood energy as an alternative to fossil fuels and recognised the forward looking policy in this area of the RDS. She said that this new installation in the RDS serves as an excellent example for what can be achieved in this area and referred to the many new wood and biofuel energy projects now being put in place throughout the country including in her own Department offices in Wexford.

Minister Wallace praised the Committee of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the RDS for their initiative in promoting the use of wood for heating purposes, noting that the system was being closely monitored to ensure that the benefits were being delivered. “There are very obvious environmental and financial benefits to wood-fired heating systems,” the Minister said. “I believe that this project, along with the other public and private projects around the country demonstrate the attractiveness and suitability of wood as a form of renewable energy. During these times of rising oil prices and environmental concerns about fossil fuels it is imperative that we develop viable renewable alternatives beyond the demonstration stage and into widespread utilisation”.

“Government was playing its part with the new renewable energy grants schemes recently launched by my colleague Noel Dempsey and I urge all those in construction and in refitting to think renewable and wood when making such investment decisions”, Minister Wallace said. She continued “Forest thinnings were most suitable as an energy source and would provide alternative income for the farmer/planter long before the end of the forest rotation cycle. In the coming years a lot more forest thinnings would be coming available throughout Ireland arising from the big increase in forest planting in the last 20 years.”

*Source: Dept. Agriculture and Foord Press Release 10 August 2006*

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# Wood Energy Advisory Service

The free advisory service on [www.woodenergy.ie](http://www.woodenergy.ie) is available and queries are being attended to by Pieter D. Kofman via email. Queries about the harvesting and supply chain sector of the wood energy industry, can be submitted online. Pieter can also be contacted between 9 and 12 am via Skype – the free software can be downloaded from [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) and allows telephone calls to be conducted via your computer, free of charge. He can also be contacted by phone during the designated hours on +45 75 88 1519 or mobile +45 28 55 77 58.

Please note that queries about boilers, stoves or approved installers should be directed to Sustainable Energy Ireland, Renewable Energy Information Office, Shinagh House, Bandon, Co Cork. Tel: 023-42193, Fax: 023-29154, Email: renewables@reio.ie.

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