

**COFORD Forestry and Wood Update**

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# COFORD launches two new publications

*Forests and Water*, edited by Eugene Hendrick and Lauren MacLennan, comprises of the proceedings of a COFORD seminar held in Cork in 2000. The publication was officially launched by Dr Eugene Hendrick at our seminar *Managing our broadleaf resource to produce quality hardwood timber* held in Carrick-on-Shannon last month.

*Forestry and Bird Diversity in Ireland: A management and planning guide,* written by J. O’Halloran, P.M. Walsh, P.S. Giller and T.C. Kelly, is a user-friendly, full colour handbook. It was launched by Mr Pat Lehane, Chairman of the IFA Farm Forestry Section, at the COFORD seminar on *Opportunities for enhancement of biodiversity in plantation forests*, held in Cork last week.

These documents can be ordered online from the bookshop link on the COFORD website [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie), or downloaded from the same link in pdf format.

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# European Forest Genetic Resources Third Conifers Network Meeting

The number of native coniferous tree species in Europe is rather low when compared to the same latitudes in Asia and North America. In terms of collective species, without splitting into subspecies and varieties, the total number is around 25, of which only 10 have fairly wide distribution and commercial value as forest trees.

In EUFORGEN (European Forest Genetic Resources Programme), the Norway spruce network was created in 1995 with the main aim of promoting the maintenance of a broad genetic variation in the species to ensure the necessary evolutionary adaptability to a changing environment over many future generations. At a subsequent meeting, it was agreed to widen the scope of this network to include all European conifers. The third meeting of this network took place in Kostrzyca, Poland, from 16 to 20 October 2002.

Representatives from twenty-seven European countries attended this meeting. It was the first time that Ireland was represented at the Conifers network, and this role was given to John Fennessy, COFORD Research Programme Manager.

The meeting was opened by Jan Matras, the Polish representative. He welcomed the participants to Poland, introduced the programme and explained the organisational arrangements. Csaba Matyas, Chairman of the Conifers network, gave a brief introduction on the importance of conifers in Europe.

Jozef Turok welcomed the participants on behalf of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) and underlined how the presence of so many countries shows the importance of conifers in Europe. He presented a report on the outcome of the EUFORGEN Steering Committee meeting held in Sweden in June and gave a brief overview of the latest developments in the preparatory process for the next Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) to be held in Vienna in Austria in April 2003.

In order to streamline the discussion on the progress on the status of conservation made by the countries attending, it was proposed to divide the participants into four groups, representing major eco-geographic areas of Europe as follows:

Western Europe;

Mediterranean;

Northern Europe;

Central and eastern Europe.

Each group nominated a chairman who presented the group report. In concluding this session, the Chair summarised the main points of the discussion.

In the afternoon a visit was made to the Forest Gene Bank Facility at Kostrzyca. The aims and objectives of the facility were discussed and the equipment and facilities were shown. A nearby container nursery and arboretum were also visited.

The programme for the second day mainly concentrated on an overview of ongoing research projects. These included:

* Outcomes of the IUFRO Symposium on Population and Evolutionary Genetics of Forest Trees.
* A report on the Conference on the Dynamics and Conservation of Genetic Diversity in Forest Ecosystems (DYGEN).
* A report on the EU Sixth Framework Programme for research.

This session concluded with a discussion on research needs and priorities and possible new proposals.

The afternoon session was in the form of a seminar on genetic conservation and restoration programmes in areas affected by industrial pollution. Since the 1950s, industrial pollution has been a major problem in this part of Poland. This was due to the development of a (low quality) coal-based energy policy, with several power plants localised in the area where the Polish, German and Czechoslovakian borders meet. This area became known as the “Black Triangle of Europe” and regional forest decline occurred as a result of high concentrations of several air pollutants and a resulting rapid increase in soil pH. During the period 1986/1992 14,000 ha of forest were lost in the Sudeten forests. A number of papers were presented in the seminar, including:

* Genetic conservation and reforestation of forest areas destroyed by air pollution in the Sudeten mountains.
* Restoration of biological diversity in the Western Sudetens.
* Silver fir (*Abies alba* Mill) restitution strategy.
* A conservation strategy for yew (*Taxus baccata* L.) in Poland.
* Seed base for reforestation and gene conservation in the Sudeten region.

The afternoon session concluded with the presentation of country reports for countries participating for the first time in the Conifers network.

The programme for the final day consisted of a field trip to the Forest Districts: Swieradow, Szklarska Poreba, and Kamienna Gora. Topics covered included reforestation areas – problems and opportunities, natural re-generation of silver fir, seed orchards and gene reserves.

The final indoor session concluded with a draft report of the meeting and a proposal to hold the next meeting in Scotland in 2003 at the invitation of the UK representative from Forest Research.

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# CARBON CORNER

The eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, which has been underway since 23 October in New Delhi, will close on 1 November 2002. The seventeenth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) took place in parallel with the conference.

Two items on the SBSTA agenda addressed forestry related issues:

* item 4 (e) on land-use, land-use change and forestry; modalities for including afforestation and reforestation projects under Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol (the clean development mechanism - CDM);
* item 4 (g) on the special circumstances of Croatia under Article 4, paragraph 6 of the Convention.

The Croatian issue is related to base year emissions and the fact that it was part of Yugoslavia in 1990 and hence had no separate greenhouse gas inventory for that year. Discussions on the issue progressed and will come up again at SBSTA 18 in June 2003.

Since the agreement of the Marrakesh Accords in November 2001, work has been underway on the development of modalities for the inclusion of afforestation and reforestation activities under the CDM. This is because the accords were drafted with energy projects in mind and, until Marrakech, there was no final agreement that forestry projects could be included. The accords now allow CDM forestry projects in under-developed countries to be used to generate credits that allow developed countries to meet their emission limitation and reduction targets (limited to 1% of base year emissions).

As reported in a previous Carbon Corner, the SBSTA’s work has focused on the modalities of how CDM sink projects should be undertaken. One of the main issues is the definition of afforestation and reforestation under the CDM. This did not appear on the agenda at SBSTA in New Delhi as the views of the Parties were well known (the EU position is to use the existing definitions in the Marrakesh Accords) from the SBSTA at Bonn in June. Other issues were, however, discussed in contact groups, including how to deal with the potential for reversal of forest sinks (non-permanence). The EU tabled a paper on its temporary emission reduction units (TCER) concept. Essentially this proposes that credits generated from CDM forestry projects would be valid for a maximum period of five years only. After that time they would have to be replaced with other units. This would allow the buyer (the Annex 1 country with an emission reduction target) to achieve compliance, with the onus that units must be replaced during the following five-year period. Essentially it allows the party to delay emission reductions for a short period. It has a number of advantages, including the fact that any sink reversal will be fully compensated for within a maximum of five years. Hence the atmosphere will benefit from the emission reduction, even if the forest is burnt down or otherwise damaged.

A number of other issues were discussed at the contact groups, including socio-economic aspects of CDM forestry projects. An EU paper on this topic was also submitted.

The next phase in the work is that the FCCC secretariat will prepare a number of options papers on sinks in the CDM. These and later submissions will form the basis of draft legal text to be approved at the next COP in Italy in December 2003.

The EU sinks experts also tabled a paper on co-operation between the three Rio Conventions: climate, biodiversity and desertification. This was approved by the COP, and it is envisaged that a workshop will be held to facilitate co-operation.

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# Phytophthera threatening Californian redwoods

An article published in the New Scientist magazine on 14 September 2002 (page 9) describes a virulent new pathogen that is attacking California’s giant redwoods and Douglas fir trees. These are among with tallest and most long-lived trees in the world, and the two species account for half the timber harvested in California each year.

The fungus-like alga, *Phytophthera ramorum*, was discovered in 1995 and became known as the “sudden oak death disease” as it has killed thousands of oak trees in California during the past seven years. The alga has been found to infect 17 different tree species.

The *Phytophthera* genus includes about 60 species, including the pathogen that caused the Irish potato famine (*P. infestans*). *P. cinnamomi* has devastated some Australian forests, where it attacked the roots of about 20% of all the jarrah trees.

According to the Coillte report to the Forest Service[[1]](#footnote-1) (April 2000), a new disease of alder was reported in the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe in the mid-1990s. In 1999 some alder trees were observed to be suffering from crown die-back along the banks of the River Dodder in Ireland. The symptoms were similar to those of the disease of alder in the UK. Laboratory analysis of the samples confirmed the presence of *Phytophthera cambivora*-like organisms, consistent with that known to cause the disease symptoms seen in the UK. This was the first time that such an organism was recorded in Ireland.

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# COFORD SEMINARManaging our broadleaf resource to produce quality hardwood timber

The COFORD seminar held on 10 and 11 October 2002 attracted great interest. Delegates travelled from throughout Ireland, the UK and the US, reflecting the strong interest in home-grown hardwoods. COFORD will continue to fund research aimed at improving the quality of this resource that is set to increase in both area and economic importance over the coming years.

***Please note that similar events will take place in the Kilkenny region on 10 and 11 April 2003, and in the Meath region on 8 and 9 May 2003. Full details will be advertised at a later date.***

At the seminar it was emphasised that broadleaf crops must be managed intensively, particularly during the first ten years, if the full economic potential of the resource is to be realised. Mr Michael Bulfin of Teagasc told delegates that particular attention must be paid to stem quality over the initial years to ensure the greatest financial returns.

Dr Eugene Hendrick, COFORD Director, stated that merely planting broadleaves is not enough to ensure that the management of national forest estate meets Ireland’s commitment to sustainable forest management as agreed at the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. Plantation forests are not sustainable unless they generate sufficient income to enable continuous replanting and proper management. This can only be achieved by optimising the quality of timber produced.

Joe O’Carroll, COFORD’s Operations Manager, added that there is a ready market for quality hardwoods, illustrated by the fact that Ireland currently imports over €100 million of hardwood per annum. In addition we import veneers, window and doorframes, doors and furniture, most of which could be manufactured from Irish hardwoods if we had sufficient supplies.

The social and economic returns from broadleaves were illustrated by a visit to Breffni Furniture (Irl.) Ltd. in Carrigallen, Co Leitrim. Mr John Kenny, owner of the company, demonstrated a range of products that can be made from homegrown hardwoods. However, Mr Kenny expressed some frustration at being unable to source sufficient quantities of quality homegrown material and has had to rely on imported material. This view was shared by other hardwood users at the conference. Mr Kenny has a vision that products manufactured from Irish hardwoods would be available in all hardware stores around the country.

Stella Xenopoulou, a wood and furniture consultant, outlined results from a COFORD-funded project that showed that the employment creation potential of broadleaves exceeds that of conifers given the greater range of end-use applications that can be serviced by hardwoods.

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# New Council established to develop markets for Irish Hardwoods

Ireland currently imports over €100 million of hardwood timber per annum, in addition to the millions of euro spent annually on imported hardwood window frames, doors, veneers and furniture. The Irish Hardwood Council (IHC) has been established to champion the development of a market for homegrown hardwoods. The creation of this new organisation was announced at the COFORD seminar at Carrick-on-Shannon entitled ‘Managing our Broadleaf Resource to Produce Quality Hardwood Timber’.

The founding members of the IHC include well-known TV presenter Duncan Stewart, renowned hardwood sculptor Andrew St Leger, Mick Dunne and Frank Tormey (owners of two of the country’s most prominent hardwood sawmills) and Stella Xenopoulou, wood and furniture consultant. Speaking at the COFORD seminar, Ms Xenopoulou, outlined results from a COFORD-funded project, that showed that there are now over 200 businesses working with Irish hardwoods giving direct, full-time employment, despite the very small volume of hardwoods currently available. The employment creation potential of broadleaves exceeds that of conifers given the greater range of end use applications that can be serviced by hardwoods.

*Growing for the Future,* the Government’s Strategic Plan for the Forest Sector, outlines an annual afforestation level of 50,000 acres. Of this 15,000 acres per annum will be of broadleaved tree species such as oak, ash, sycamore, birch and beech – giving a total area of just under half a million acres of new broadleaved forests by 2030. These forests will supply increasing volumes of homegrown hardwoods for many years to come.

Mr Frank Tormey, who operates a sawmill at Mount Bellew, Co Galway, expressed some frustration at the increasing difficulty of sourcing sufficient quantities of quality homegrown material to keep his sawmill viable. Mick Dunne, who employs seven people at his sawmill in Tullamore, shared this view. Mr Tormey declared that many oak logs were being exported to England without Irish sawmillers getting an opportunity to bid for them. He called for the immediate establishment of a national hardwood auctioning system through which all forest owners could be assured of getting the best prices. Irish hardwood sawmillers would then be able to bid for all homegrown logs and Mr Tormey was confident that they could out-bid foreign buyers despite the current euro-sterling exchange rate. This would ensure that Irish sawmills could continue to use Irish hardwoods and secure existing jobs.

The bringing together of forest owners, timber growers and hardwood users will be one of the principle aims of the Irish Hardwood Council. Duncan Stewart, commenting on the establishment of the IHC, stated: “The vast majority of Ireland’s forest estate is independently audited to stringent international standards that certify the practice of sustainable forest management. This is a guarantee to all end users that the forests will be constantly replanted and optimised for a range of social, environmental and economic benefits. To see these benefits maximised, it is fitting that Irish hardwoods be processed in Ireland and thus help to recreate the wood culture that prevailed in Ireland many centuries ago.”

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# COFORD SEMINAROpportunities for enhancement of biodiversity in plantation forests

COFORD, as joint funder of the BIOFOREST project, hosted a seminar on *Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement in plantation forests* on 24 October 2002 at the Vienna Woods Hotel near Cork. Once again, the response to this seminar was very encouraging, with a record-breaking turnout of 112 delegates from a wide range of sectors and interest groups.

BIOFOREST is a project on forestry and biodiversity that is co-funded by COFORD and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The three key components of the project are the impact of afforestation on biodiversity; the changes to biodiversity throughout the forest rotation; and the enhancement of biodiversity in plantation forestry.

Presentations from Irish, British and Danish perspectives generated some interesting discussion While opinions on how best to enhance biodiversity varied, the basic goals of the stakeholders are clearly the same. Through seminars and debates, a better understanding of the issues can be gleaned from which mutually satisfactory solutions can be found.

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# ITGA/COFORD Joint Annual SeminarForest Regulation – a threat to production forestry?

COFORD and the Irish Timber Growers’ Association (ITGA) are the co-hosts of the seminar on *Forest Regulation - a threat to production forestry?* to be held on 14 November 2002, at the UCD Industry Centre, Belfield, Dublin. The information brochure and booking form can be downloaded in pdf format from [www.coford.ie](http://www.coford.ie).

The presentations will include:

* *The impact of new and planned environmental procedures and regulations on afforestation and forest management in Ireland*. Kevin Hutchinson, Manager Sales and Marketing, Coillte Forestry Services.
* *Forest Regulation in other European countries – lessons for Ireland.* Henry Phillips, Consultant, Irish Forest Industry Chain.
* *The impact of forest regulation and policy on the economic viability of forestry – an international perspective.* Mike Mosman, Vice President of Resources at Port Blakely, USA and New Zealand.
* *Regulating our Forest Resource - where to from here?* Gerry Cody, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.
* *Multifunctionality as the basis for the EU forest strategy and the 6th Environmental Action Plan*. Joost van de Velde, DG Environment, Nature and Biodiversity Section.

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# IFA Conference:Enhancing the asset value of farmer plantations

The Irish Farmers’ Association Farm Forestry Section will be holding the National Farm Forestry Conference on 8 November 2002 at the South Court Hotel, Raheen, Limerick. The theme of this event is *Enhancing the asset value of farmer plantations.* Presentations include:

* *Management programme to ensure optimum productive return from conifers.* Richard Lowe, Strategic marketing and business development manager, Coillte Teoranta;
* *Market development for semi-mature plantations.* Brendan Lacey, Chief executive, Irish Forestry Unit Trust;
* *National spatial strategy – potential for residential development in established plantations.* Michael Cregan, Principal, Michael Cregan and Associates;
* *Effects of EU and National Policy on the farm forestry industry.* Joe O’Carroll, Operations manager, COFORD;
* *Economics of farm forestry v other farm enterprises.* Jasmina Behan, Research officer, Teagasc.

Further information can be obtained from the IFA Farm Forestry Section, Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12. Telephone 01-4500266; Email postmaster@ifa.ie

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# Forest Research and the 6th Framework Programme - Challenges and Opportunities

This is an open seminar organized by the European Forest Institute (EFI) ECOFOR, to be held in Paris on 25 November 2002. One of the aims of the seminar is to encourage dialogue between the EU and the forest research community on the role of forest research in the 6th Framework Programme and the European Research Area (ERA), and to offer a platform for discussion and exchange of information.

The programme includes keynote addresses as well as panel discussions and a poster session. The keynote speakers and panellists include representatives of the European Commission, representatives of end-users of forest research, forest researchers of key research topics as well as researchers representing other fields of science relevant to forest research. Further information and an on-line registration form can be found at the website <http://www.efi.fi/events/>

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# Tracking logs and wood properties

The final seminar for the European project LINESET on ***Tracking Logs and Wood Properties – for sustainable profitability and satisfied customers*** will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, on 28 and 29 November 2002.

LINESET is an EU-funded project dealing with traceability in the forestry-wood chain. The acronym stands for Linking raw material characteristics with Industrial Needs for Environmentally Sustainable and Efficient Transformation process.

The seminar presents practical ways of dealing with communication problems between the forest and the end producer, and will provide ideas for using the technology of tracing wood along the forestry-wood chain.

Themes for the days are *Prerequisites and implementation* and *Profitability and environmental aspects*. Further details about the programme, and the registration form, can be downloaded from <http://www.tratek.se>

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# 37th International Wood Composite Materials Symposium

The Wood Composite Materials Symposium will be held at Washington State University, Pullman, WA, from 7 to 10 April 2003. The Forest Products Society, in co-operation with the Wood Materials and Engineering Laboratory, sponsor of the symposium, is taking applications for poster presentations, to be viewed at the Technical Forum poster session on 8 April 2003 at Washington State University. For further information about the symposium and requirements for submitting poster abstracts, visit the web site <http://www.woodsymposium.wsu.edu>.

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# Call for Applications:Government of Ireland Post-doctoral Fellowship Scheme

The Embark Initiative invites applications for research funding under a newly established Post-Doctoral Fellowship Scheme. The scheme will promote excellence in individual research careers by funding researchers to associate with established research teams of international reputation.

Candidates must have completed their PhD and must pursue their research work at qualifying research bodies in Ireland. Applications must be received on or before 6 November 2002. The scheme is open to applicants worldwide.

For further information on the scheme and to download application forms visit [www.ircset.ie](http://www.ircset.ie) or contact The Embark Initiative, Brooklawn House, Crampton Avenue, Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4.

Tel: (01) 231 5000; Fax: (01) 2315009; or email: info@ircset.ie

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# Definitive on-line forestry information resource launched by CABI Publishing

CABI Publishing, producer of Forestry Abstracts, TREECD and the Forestry Compendium, has launched a new website - ForestScience.info.

The web site contains comprehensive coverage of the world's scientific literature in forestry and related disciplines - dating back to 1939.

For 65 years CABI has synthesised the vast amount of primary research literature available from around the world, to provide researchers, scientists and forestry decision-makers with access to one comprehensive forestry database. The database now contains over 600,000 research summaries, with over 20,000 new research summaries added each year.

ForestScience.info includes the latest research summaries, enabling forestry professionals to keep up-to-date with current research. An email alert service is available for those who want weekly updates of new abstracts - in their areas of interest - sent directly to their email Inbox.

ForestScience.info offers both subscription-based access to full text articles and the option of single-article-purchase. It also contains links to CABI's forestry bookshop for reading and purchase, and access to the Resource Discovery Network enabling users to search important Internet resources in their subject area.

ForestScience.info is a subscription-based site, with competitive rates based on the size of the institution. Full details and a free trial are available at [www.forestscience.info](http://www.forestscience.info)

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# SCHWEIGHOFER PRIZE 2003

## European Innovation Award for Forestry, Wood Technology and Timber Products

The Schweighofer Prize is intended to motivate the implementation of new ideas and show appreciation of outstanding achievements. Another aim of the prize is to provide a communication platform for the European forest products sector.

Awards are presented for creative ideas in certain areas of forestry, wood technology and timber products, including forest product marketing, contributing to an increase in wood use and value adding in Europe. The Schweighofer Prize is endowed with a total amount of €300,000, divided into a main prize of €150,000 and three supporting prizes of €50,000 each. Detailed information and entry forms can be downloaded from [www.schweighofer-prize.org](http://www.schweighofer-prize.org)

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# Newman Scholar Award for COFORD Researcher

Dr Philip Owende of the Forest Engineering Unit at UCD has received the Newman Scholar Best Paper Award for 2001. Dr Owende co-authored the paper *Minimising distress on flexible pavements using variable tire pressure*, which was published in the Journal of Transportation Engineering 127 (3): 254-262.

Dr Michael O’Mahoney, one of the co-authors, was the previous Newman Scholar best paper award winner. His paper, entitled *Bearing capacity of forest access roads*, was published in the Journal of Terramechanics 37: 127-138.

This is the second COFORD-Newman Scholar award, and COFORD is very proud to be associated with researchers of such high calibre.

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1. Coillte (2000). Report to the Forest Service, Department of Marine and Natural Resources on Forest Research 1999. p24-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)