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Forestry and Wood Update

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# COFORD News

# Building the future – Engineered Wood Products

A new COFORD publication [***Engineered Wood Products in Ireland***](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/product_info.php?cPath=1175&products_id=966619), edited by Bill Robinson, was launched on 27 March 2008 by Minister Mary Wallace, TD, Minister for Forestry at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Engineered Wood Products (EWPs) such as I-joists and glulam are manufactured from solid timber and board products for structural applications. As they have known strength properties they lend themselves to a wide range of domestic and multistorey construction applications. They provide an environmentally sustainable approach to building and the ability to address climate change by providing a carbon store over a long period of years.

The COFORD report outlines the growing market share that engineered wood products command and provides a valuable starting point for companies looking at the EWP market. Companies considering the manufacture of EWPs will of course have to consider and investigate the issues discussed in the report in more detail; particular types of EWP, the size of any investment – whether it should be for the Irish market or for a wider European market, the availability and size of the feedstock etc. but the report will be their starting point in considering these issues in depth. Michael Lynn, COFORD Chairman, stated “We must of course be mindful of the trends in building practice and particularly in the energy performance of buildings. The government’s policies of reducing the level of fossil fuel use and CO2 emissions can only be good for wood products in general and EWP’s should have their place in this positive outlook.”

Copies of the report can be purchased from COFORD – tel: 012130725, info@coford.ie

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# Joint COFORD/Teagasc/Forest Service Field Day

This event will take place at Crookedwood, Co Westmeath on Wednesday 9 April 2008, as part of the continuing Growing Quality Broadleaves programme, with the specific theme on the day being the ***Critical time for thinning, tending and respacing of young ash plantations.*** The day will begin with discussion on the best time for first thinning of ash, and important issues to be considered. It will be followed by a practical demonstration of first thinning, involving a number of plots which have been laid down at the site. Selection of ash for first thinning with identification of potential crop trees and subsequent marking of competitors to be removed wll be demonstrated and the session will conclude with a visit to a plot which has just been thinned.

Those wishing to attend should assemble at Ringtown GAA Club, Whitehall, Castlepollard, Co Westmeath, from 11:00 am to 12.30 pm (there will be a number of group departures from the GAA hall). Ringtown GAA club is in Whitehall, Co Westmeath (15 km from Mullingar and 7 km from Castlepollard along the R394). Ringtown GAA Club is on the left when travelling from Mullingar. Please watch out for Teagasc signage as you approach the Whitehall GAA hall. *(Because of parking limitations at the site access to the demonstrations is from the bus departing the hall only).*

For further details contact Teagasc staff Liam Kelly at 044 9340721, email: liam.kelly@teagasc.ie; or Kevin O’Connell at 049 4338300, email: kevin.oconnell@teagasc.ie

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# Seminar: The role of site classification in forest productivity and management

Good silvicultural decision-making and planning require knowledge of the growth of tree species across the full range forest sites in Ireland. While site classification has long been used in forestry as a means of species selection and for estimating growth and yield, no overall system has been adapted for widespread use. Soil classification has been used to estimate productivity and to aid species selection, while indicator species and vegetation type are used as secondary indicators of soil fertility.

Anderson’s site classification (1950) has been used to classify the fertility class and moisture of sites, based on plant communities. It remains in use but recent years have seen growth in the use of multifactor classifications in Britain and Canada. These systems work by focusing attention on ecological site quality and its relation to the ecosystem, and can provide a sound basis for the sustainable production of wood and for the conservation of wildlife. Ecological Site Classification (ESC), currently in use in Canada and Britain, recognizes different site types according to environmental variables and provides an ecological basis for silvicultural practices, given that understanding the role of species variability in forest productivity is one of the essential elements for sustainable wood production.

In order to better understand the role and potential of site classification in the choice of tree species, site productivity and forest management, Teagasc and COFORD are holding a seminar on 4 June 2008 on the theme ***The role of site classification in forest productivity and management*** at the Tullamore Court Hotel, Co Offaly. The seminar will be addressed by invited speakers, including a number of eminent scientists in the area of site classification in Ireland and abroad.

All those interested in silvicultural decision-making and planning, and forest ecology will find attendance at the seminar worthwhile.

The programme includes the following presentations:

* *Soil classification, soil maps and their use in site classification for forestry in Ireland -* Niall Farrelly, Ray Fealy and Toddy Radford (Teagasc Research)
* *Ecosystem site classification, principles, concepts and rationale and application in forest resource management -* Karel Klinka (Emeritus Professor, University of British Columbia, Canada)
* *Potential productivity concepts and productivity of forest tree species in Canada -* Han Chen (Associate Professor, Faculty of Forestry, Lakehead University, Ontario, Canada)
* *Site, soil and climatic factors and the productivity of Sitka spruce in Ireland -* Niall Farrelly (Teagasc), Áine Ní Dhubháin and Maarten Nieuwenhuis (UCD)
* *Site factors and windthrow risk assessment* - Áine Ní Dhubháin (UCD)
* *The problems associated with afforestation and reforestation with reference to site factors -* Michael Keane (Coillte)
* *Afforestation of cutaway midland peats – with respect to site classification and species success -* Florence Renou (UCD)
* *The impact of climate change on species selection in Ireland -* Kevin Black (FERS/UCD) and Duncan Ray (Forest Commission)
* *The use of GIS derived estimates of topographical exposure to aid species suitability and windthrow risk in Irish forestry -* Stuart Green (Teagasc)

[Click here to download the information brochure/booking form](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/programme040608.pdf).

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# Bioenergy 2008

Following on from the highly successful Bioenergy 2007 event, Teagasc, SEI and COFORD are organising Bioenergy 2008, on 20 June 2008 at the Teagasc Mellows Centre, Athenry. The day will feature outdoor wood energy exhibitions, as well as many trade and information stands. Bioenergy 2008 will be held in association with Teagasc’s national farming and rural development event, ***FarmFest.*** If you are interested in reserving exhibition space, please contact Paul Dykes, SEI – tel: 023 63393 or 087 9978723.

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# National Forestry Conference

COFORD, the Society of Irish Foresters and the Irish Timber Growers’ Association hosted the National Forestry Conference, on Friday 7 March 2008 at the Johnstown House Hotel, Enfield, Co Meath. Presentations can be downloaded from the COFORD website – [click here.](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/defaultarticle.php?cArticlePath=129_466_467)

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# COFORD R&D programme: project update

## GPSTrack – Fuel for Thought

*Each issue of COFORD’s 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).*

The GPSTRACK research project is providing the forest transport sector with new technologies to monitor vehicle movements across the Irish road network and beyond. The project has arisen as a result of a recommendation from the Forest Industry Transport Group to encourage closer co-operation between consignors and hauliers, to plan routes in an efficient and cost effective manner within the legal framework.

The project involved the installation of two GPS asset tracking providers, Bluetree and Fleetmatics, onto two timber haulage trucks – Scania 124 (400 hp – rigid + trailer + crane) and Iveco Stralis (530 hp – 6 axle artic configuration).

Both trucks have the GPS blackbox plus GPS satellite receiver installed from Blutree and Fleetmatics and the truck’s position is tracked across the road network using satellite location technology. This allows truck movements to be visually monitored in real time and these are displayed on a detailed road map of Ireland.

The accuracy of the GPS can define the location of the truck to within ± 2->5 metres. Accuracy is best on public roads, and although difficulties with the GPS signal can arise in forests due to tree cover, the technology has now advanced to the stage where trucks can be located within forests.

Using the coordinates of forest entry and exit points it is possible to:

* develop a full GIS routing map;
* integrate this information with a GPS tracking provider;
* insert co-ordinates into in-car satellite navigation systems to optimise directions for the truck driver; and
* reduce general driving time by 15% (GPS Ireland 2008).

The GPSTRACK study showed that increases in distance travelled per unit of fuel are possible from the current 9-10 kmpg to 14-15 kmpg. Taking the average annual kilometres per truck to be approximately 100,000 km, we can calculate a saving of €11,000 per truck per annum on fuel alone. Considering that the Bluetree system’s initial capital is approximately €2,500, then it is fair to say that, economically, these new information age asset tracking and diagnostic systems are a good investment.

*GPSTRACK was funded by COFORD and managed by Dr Ger Devlin and Dr Kevin McDonnell. For more information on the Bluetree and Fleetmatics systems and on fuel saving calculations, contact* *ger.devlin@ucd.ie* *(01 716 7418).*

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# Other News

# InnovaWood News

The regular supplement from InnovaWood contains information about events, courses and conferences, outlines a networking opportunity for young forestry researchers, and describes calls for proposals under the 7th Framework Programme – [click here to download.](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/iwapril.pdf)

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# Concern about introduction and spread of Chinese muntjac deer

There is widespread concern among foresters and woodland owners at recent reports of the illegal introduction of a species of Chinese deer into the south east of Ireland some three or four years ago. Reeve’s muntjac or Chinese muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) was introduced into Britain in about 1900 and feral populations have become established in south and central England and Wales causing serious browsing impact in woodlands. The species is native to southeast Asia and can be found from India and Sri Lanka to southern China, Taiwan and the Indonesian islands. A common name for muntjac is "barking deer" resulting from the repeated, loud bark given under a number of circumstances. Since these animals are tropical, there is no seasonal rut and mating can take place at any time of year, a behavior retained by populations introduced to temperate countries.

According to Dr Ruth Carden, a consultant zoologist with the Irish Wildlife Trust, the Chinese muntjac has already established itself in the southeast and has the capacity to cause enormous damage to habitats and crops and will be difficult to erradicate. They create the same problems as other deer species, and young trees are particularly vulnerable, especially at establishment phase. Recently the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government made an order under the Wildlife Act, 1976 to set an open season for the hunting of wild muntjac deer in Ireland.

For further information on the order and hunting open season see www.environ.ie.

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# SEI Combined Heat and Power Open Day

Sustainable Energy Ireland will be holding its first Combined Heat and Power Information and Demonstration Day at the Westwood Hotel, Galway on Friday 4 April 2008. The purpose of this first free CHP information and demonstration day is to update the market on the latest CHP developments and support mechanisms with a number of presentations and case studies from technology experts leading the CHP movement in Ireland. The day includes a CHP market place event with leading product and service suppliers sharing their expertise and experiences in showcasing the latest in CHP innovation. The day concludes with a chance to see two recent CHP installations at the NUI Galway campus. [Click here for more information](http://sustainable-energy-ireland.circulator.ie/OpenUrl.aspx?url=http%3a%2f%2fsustainable-energy-ireland.circulator.ie%2fContent.aspx%3fID%3d2087&NewsletterID=2049&SubscriberID=204341). To register for this free event contact Deirdre Farrelly on 01-8082087, email: deirdre.farrelly@sei.ie. For further information contact Paul Dykes on 023-63393, email pauld@reio.ie

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# Energy Show 2008

The Energy Show 2008, organised annually by Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), will take place at the RDS Main Hall, Dublin on 16 and 17 April. In addition to the comprehensive exhibition, the show also hosts an extensive professional seminar programme covering the practical aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy. This year the programme will provide an opportunity for anyone with a responsibility for, or interest in, energy in business, to interact and gain fresh insights into topical aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy.  Among the expected attendees will be construction and engineering professionals, energy, environmental and waste managers, architects, forestry and timber professionals and local authority employees. In addition to Irish-based attendees, an increased number of people from outside Ireland are expected to attend. For further information on the Energy Show 2008 including further details on how to register for exhibition and book seminars visit [www.sei.ie/energyshow](http://www.sei.ie/energyshow).

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# Feasibility study on means of combating forest damage in the European Union

Damage to forests causes significant economic and ecological losses in the EU Member States every year. A newly published feasibility study looks at the causes of forest damage and, furthermore, the effectiveness of EU legislation and instruments to prevent, mitigate and control it.

Threats to forest ecosystem health and vitality vary within European regions. Insects, storms and fire were regarded as the most serious threats in Northern and Central Europe, Western Europe and Southern Europe respectively. Climate change effects are becoming more visible in Europe, particularly through an increase in the frequency and intensity of storms, drought or changes in precipitation. Further damage caused by wildlife and also by domestic animals in the Mediterranean region, is often underestimated.

Regional differences in relation to damage types and intensity reflect the importance for particular regional, national and EU instruments to prevent mitigate and control various causes of forest damage. While there are several efficient and well established measures and instruments in place, increasing environmental pressures will require that they are further developed and tailored and effectively communicated to stakeholders and beneficiaries.

A major challenge will be to incorporate future patterns of forest damage, such as caused by climate change, into existing, amended or new measures. Only the triad of prevention, mitigation and control will put the EU into a position to maintain and enhance the multiple, beneficial functions of forests and their contribution to the quality of life.

The study was launched at the request of the European Parliament and based on an open call. The project was funded by DG ENV and carried out by BFH, Institute for World Forestry and EFI. The study was presented to the 103rd meeting of Standing Forestry Committee and EC DGs and was welcomed as a sound review with constructive recommendations which might stimulate further discussion and actions.

The report and its appendices can be downloaded from the DG Environment website at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/fpolicies.htm>. The final technical report is available in English and French. Further information: Dr Aljoscha Requardt, email: a.requardt@holz.uni-hamburg.de; Prof. Dr Michael Köhl, email: m.koehl@holz.uni-hamburg.de; Andreas Schuck, email: andreas.schuck@efi.int

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# COST Strategic Workshop on Global Change and Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions

On 7 - 9 April 2008 COST will organise a Strategic Workshop on *Global Change and Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions* focusing on the identification of implications and challenges of climate and socioeconomic change for the future development of mountain regions. Global warming, land use change, biodiversity and carbon sequestration, water, natural disasters, primary production as well as tourism, sustainable transport and socio-economic issues are identified as key questions for the future and dealt in keynotes and working groups.

The workshop takes place in Innsbruck, Austria. The objective is to provide rationales and guidelines for mountain research agendas and funding agencies. Target groups are researchers, project managers, sponsoring agencies, politicians and practitioners. The following topics are treated as cross-cutting issues and will be discussed in detail:

* Multifunctional land use in a global change context
* Challenges for sustainable tourism
* Demand and evaluation of ecosystem services
* Water: strategic resource, public good, ecosystem
* Sustainable transport
* Scenarios of global change
* Socio-economic aspects

Detailed information on the workshop is available at <http://bfw.ac.at/mountain/>

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# International Fellowships at the World Forest Institute, Oregon

The World Forest Institute Fellowship Programme brings forestry and natural resources professionals from around the world to work at the World Forest Institute for 6 to 12 months. Fellows conduct an independent research project developed in conjunction with his/her sponsor. Projects are typically either policy or marketing studies, and may be environmental, social or economic in focus. Activities involve information gathering through interviews, meeting with forestry organizations, and taking organised field trips. Fellows typically summarise their projects in a report and poster published by the WFI. A large component of the programme involves travelling and visiting with professionals in the Pacific Northwest forest sector. Fellows visit forestlands, research sites, manufacturing facilities, and NGOs. Additionally, Fellows gain valuable cultural experience and English language skills. Project proposals are now being accepted, and a matching grant is available to cover up to half of the Fellowship fee. WFI is located in Portland, Oregon. For more information visit <http://wfi.worldforestry.org> or email: adisalvo@worldforestry.org.

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# PhD Grant 2008 available - Foundation for European Forest Research

The Foundation for European Forest Research offers a PhD research grant to do research at the European Forest Institute (EFI) in Joensuu, Finland. The research topic should fit within the research and especially within the four research programmes of EFI (Forest Ecology and Management, Forest Products Markets and Socio-economics, Policy Analysis, Forest Resources and Information). The choice of university for the PhD degree is not restricted. The awarded grant is €16,000 per annum (full time scholarship). In addition, the grant holder will be awarded with a €1,000 travelling allowance. He or she is invited to do research within one of the EFI research programmes and groups. A scholarship is awarded for one year at a time, but the Foundation is committed to continue the scholarship period on annual basis up to 3-4 years, providing that the research work is progressing as planned and that the necessary funds are available. The deadline for applications is 30 April 2008. Full call for the proposals and the application forms are available at the website of the Foundation for European Forest Research: <http://www.fefr.org/awards.html>.

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# Global Forest Information Service

The Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) provides a framework to share forest-related data and information through a single gateway at <www.gfis.net>. It promotes the dissemination and sharing of forest and tree-related information and knowledge among the global forestry community. The information resources, accessible through GFIS, are freely available and provide direct access to the original information. There are around 120 upcoming forest events of which information is provided by CBD, EFI, FAO, IUFRO and UNECE/FAO available on a GFIS calendar at <www.gfis.net/gfis/calendar.faces>.

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