

C7 Newsletter No. 7

Editorial

When we were in school, we learned the three rs. reading, writing and arithmetic. More recently, we learned a second set of three rs. reduce, reduce and re-cycle. But who would ever think that the three cs., the 'chainsaw, cow and car', could in a sense place 'homo sapiens' (you and me), in grave danger due to the effects of global warming on the health of the planet. Man is cutting down the life support systems of the forests at an alarming rate, (the chainsaw), methane gas is even more dangerous than Co2, (the cow being one of the culprits), and the car is a major cause of the rise in Co2 levels.

Yet the government, contrary to what was expected, and at the prompting of IBEC, (the strongest business lobby in the country), decided, contrary to the advice of the EPA and the ESRI to abandon the idea of a carbon tax.

It is now high time that our government adopted a policy of appropriate levels of investment in new forms of fast and efficient public transport systems, reduced the levels of methane gas emissions, and adopted a forestry policy of planting a diversity of native hardwoods which would obviate the necessity of importing large quantities of hardwoods from the rainforests.

It is time also that the present IFCI, (Irish Forestry Certification Initiative), were abandoned for the reasons set out in the letters to the editor, included in this newsletter issue, which include the following:

- ✧ Its composition has been loaded in favor of the status quo, i.e. a monoculture approach to forestry
- ✧ There have been serious conflicts of interests in its operation.
- ✧ The environmental non-governmental organizations have not been treated with parity based on a level playing field and adequate representation.
- ✧ It has not been operated on a proper professional basis.

Because of the serious inadequacies in the way this process has been conducted, a motion will be placed before the Forest Friends AGM to the effect that Forest Friends withdraw forthwith from the IFCI process. Our continued inclusion would help to give credibility to a process, which is not credible.

John Haughton
Chairman
Forest Friends Ireland

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Interpreting the FSC principles for Ireland has meant that

1. There is a second economic chamber (known as the "Woodland Owners/Small Growers" chamber), which tilts the playing field against the environmental and social chambers.
2. Coillte are certified to a standard that allows them to plant over 90% foreign exotic species.
3. Coillte are certified using a standard that allows them to use pesticides without addressing why pesticides are needed in the first place.
4. Coillte are certified to a standard that allows them to sell land for development of landfills, quarries, wind farms, etc. The majority of Coillte's profits come from these developments, and not forestry.
5. Coillte is the only people to obtain certification in this country.
6. All 438,000ha of Coillte's forestry is certified as "Semi-Natural and Mixed Plantation & Natural Forest". This is despite the fact that only 1% of Coillte land contains "mixed" forests, and only 2% broadleaves, by Coillte's own admission (Ref: Coillte: Slieve Aughty Forest Management Unit Plan 28/01/02).

Regards,

Ciarán Hughes

Irish Woodland League

Dear Editor,

Here's how I see things, with regard to the Irish Forestry Certification Initiative

EARLY DAYS OF IFCI:

Everyone on this list has heard ad nauseam about the inequality of Two economic chambers. However, there were other problems, some less tangible & difficult to demonstrate. For example, I witnessed members of the environmental chamber, plus inexperienced stakeholders, being railroaded and bullied at meetings. The late Dr. Anne Behan complained in writing of a campaign of innuendo and insinuation within IFCI.

Another massive problem lies in the way that the first draft was produced. The standard should have been produced from scratch, piece by piece, based on FSC Principles & Criteria. Instead, it was written in its entirety, effectively in private, and then produced as a de facto starting point. As the standard was so weak, every improvement would become effectively a concession from the economic chambers, which put them immediately in the driving seat. This was compounded by the refusal of IFCI to hold meetings on weekends or evenings to facilitate the many stakeholders and NGOs staffed by volunteers. This is a position from which the non-economic chambers have never recovered.

Yet another huge issue was the early certification of Coillte. Most members of the Social and Environmental chambers believed that certification could not take place until a standard was agreed. In fact, I wrote a letter to Coillte (co-signed by VOICE and Irish Wildlife Trust) asking what their intention was with regard to the draft standard. They responded 2 MONTHS later - after their certification had been completed.

It is clear that this process was at best completely inequitable and heavily weighted in favor of the economic chambers and those pressing for a quick draft standard at any cost.

FSC THEN AND NOW:

Regardless of the performance of IFCI in this saga, FSC International has proven itself morally bankrupt, uncaring and untrustworthy. In the wake of Coillte's certification, I accompanied two members of the environmental chamber to meet the FSC Executive Director (Dr.Muthoo) in London. At this meeting, FSC were informed that certification took place without the knowledge of IFCI Chamber members. They were also informed that the draft standard was produced "offline" by a single individual. Their response was that they assumed a large degree of consensus was involved in any draft standard. A large number of other complaints were made regarding process, the functioning of IFCI, and the validity of the end result

Dr. Muthoo promised to send an independent auditor to Ireland to Assess these complaints and promised that if ANY of the complaints were substantiated, they would have to be resolved by consensus or FSC Certification in Ireland would be revoked. This meeting was witnessed by representatives from The Woodland Trust (UK), the Rainforest Foundation, and others, including one of the original founders of FSC.

FSC subsequently replaced Dr. Muthoo and reneged on all of his promises. They refused to entertain any further comment on the subject. At a subsequent meeting in Portlaoise, Gemma Boetekees stated that "FSC did not know what to do" (obviously they did nothing) and claimed that she "never had any requests from Ireland". She also admitted that the IFCI standard was not properly arrived at, that the past performance of IFCI was "not good" and "not proper procedure". Ms. Boetekees further admitted that Coillte had chosen which sites SGS would be allowed to visit and that SGS spent too little time assessing Coillte because of financial constraints imposed by Coillte. This is a bit like taking your car for its NCT, and telling the mechanic he can only check your spark plugs and he's only got 5 minutes and you'll only pay €5.

Despite accepting all of the above as fact (not as one-sided opinion or disputed issues), FSC continues to stand idly by. My position since then has been that the source of the problems with FSC certification in Ireland lies with FSC.

Jim Lawlor
Native Woodland Trust

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I would like to complement your article and Mr. Higgins on what appears to me to be a solo campaign to protect our water quality. The people of West Galway are fortunate to have a representative of the caliber of Michael D Higgins. Unfortunately we in East Galway do not have anyone to represent us when it comes to our water quality. One-third of all rivers are now polluted, and there is a danger that the crisis could spiral out of control unless urgent measures are taken. The biggest culprits are said to be fertilizer runoff from farmland and discharges from municipal sewage. Both of these contain deadly phosphorus. A survey of 80 different rivers across the country found they were eutrophic, meaning they suffered from pollution caused by phosphorus. It causes massive algae and plant growth in rivers, which starves them of oxygen. Trout are either unable to spawn because gravel beds are covered, or die. More than 70pc of our drinking water is taken from rivers. While farmers are blamed there was also a significant problem with fertilizer spraying of young forest plantations on peatland, which is unable to absorb the phosphorus, which then flows into nearby rivers.

Despite the fact that several NGO groups and individuals complained about the amount of phosphorus used by Coillte (state Forestry Company) during the Irish Forest Stewardship Council public consultation process in 2000, Coillte continued to spray phosphorus on their plantations. The submissions given by anglers, Community Groups and individuals were ignored. I was told that verbal submissions were not acceptable.

I believe this is not acceptable and Coillte should be held accountable for the eutrophication of many rivers and should be made pay for the damage done on the polluter pays principle. I would also fault the government for not ratifying the Aarhus Agreement. Had this agreement been ratified, communities could have stopped Coillte spraying phosphorus in 2000 and saved years of uncontrolled environmental damage. If developers were made pay for environmental damage they do, developers would be slower to put superdumps, etc in areas totally unsuitable to the sites, It is also worth noting that instead of having native broadleaf trees that clean water, the state forest company insist on planting non native exotic trees that need phosphorus to grow and therefore destroying our water quality. Coillte appear to see short-term profit more important than water quality.

Is mise le meas,
Ann Marie Kelly.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I would like it if you would include a letter that was published in the Forest Network News of this week and has caused some of a stir judging from the emails I have gotten. It goes to the heart of the forestry problem in Ireland. The project has all the experts working to help Coillte claim its plantations are biodiversity-friendly. You should probably mention it was first published there. The letter is below.

Best wishes, Ray

Dear Editor,

I wish to comment on the letter of clarification from Bioforest. In it we read "The purpose of the project, broadly speaking, is to document the biodiversity of Irish forestry plantations using a range of indicator groups, to examine how biodiversity changes through the forest cycle, and to make recommendations as to how commercial forests can be managed to favour biodiversity. In light of the growing recognition of the importance of biodiversity, it is essential to provide real and scientifically valid information on this issue."

It is really quite extraordinary that the "Bioforce team" can on the one hand write of the "growing recognition of the importance of biodiversity" and on the other, totally ignore international practice concerning the priorities of identifying and protecting biodiversity. It is a well-established, international principle that the main biodiversity priority is to identify remaining ancient woodland, and having identified it, set out a legal framework to protect it. Why ancient woodland? Because it is the habitat that contains by far the most biodiversity of all others, and in addition the most threatened or Red Data species.

Unfortunately, Ireland, practically alone of all European nations, has not yet surveyed its ancient woodland, the scientific baseline that would allow us to evaluate the importance for biodiversity of other habitats such as ash plantations or exotic conifer plantations. And yet, Dr. Oliver Rackham of Cambridge University, the acknowledged international expert in these matters, specifically called on Ireland to, as a matter of the utmost importance and as the number one priority on biodiversity, identify and protect its ancient woodland before it became too late, (the Wood, Trees and Forests in Ireland Seminar, Dublin, 1994).

Why then are the acknowledged Irish university authorities on nature conservation and biodiversity, along with other experts, engaged in this long and costly research project, established to evaluate the biodiversity of Coillte's exotic plantations - a side road if ever there was one! Because for some time now the main driving force behind "forest" research is, not the public interest, but the private needs of industry and, in this case, the public relations needs of Ireland's uncompromising, money-mad commercial forestry. And nothing could be more welcomed to this exotic species plantation forestry than scientific research findings that could later be used to convince the public that Coillte's environmentally-damaging near monocultures somehow "enhance biodiversity".

It is a depressing fact that, in exchange for funding, more than one Irish university has increasingly allowed itself to become no more than the research annex of private business. Dead and deeply buried are the noble principles of Cardinal Newman and his Idea of the University, replaced by the absolute rule of cynical career self-interest. And buried deepest of all are his ideas that such institutions should serve the public interest and above all pursue the notion of truth.

Sincerely, Ray Monahan
Stakeholder, Castlegregory,
County Kerry.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

The following is an email sent to the secretary of IFCI, to which I await a reply

“Dear Secretary of IFCI Ltd

Please clarify the following points for me.

- 1 Is it FSC policy now that e-mail and verbal submissions are not valid?
- 2 Has the third draft been agreed by the TWG
- 3 Has the third draft been agreed by the SC.
- 4 Please list the NGOs that endorse this draft?
- 5 What is the minimum coup size allowed for clearfell?
- 6 What Pesticides are permitted and who agreed this?

7 How many of the issues raised were addressed i.e.. Monivea, Dartry Wood, Derrybrien, Balrath, Monivea, Murroe, Camolin, Bottlehill, Portumna, Sites in Cork and Waterford, Dunstown Wood, Lough Eske, Borlin Valley, Sliabh Luachra, Shipool, Motepark, Grants, EU regulations, IPF Guidelines, Burning of sedge, Animals been impounded, Turbuary Fishing and Sporting Rights, Ring Forts, Burial Grounds, Heritage Sites, Phosphate pollution in rivers and lakes in Clare, Galway and Mayo, Flooding at Burncourt, Dumping, Concerns re water quality and acid sensitive soils, FMUs not available, Coup size requiring an EIS, Soil erosion at Moycullen, Workers not told what chemicals been used, Nematodes, Research on Sitka Spruce, monitoring species mix, NHAs, use of Sludge, Fire belts, Fencing, Siltation at Loobagh River, Issues from Macroom District Environment Protection Group, Streams blocked at Kilfinane, Issues with South Western fishery Board, Eutrophication in many lakes including Lough Corrib,
Regards Brendan Kelly (stakeholder)”

RE-AFFORESTATION IN IRELAND

The planting our native hardwoods in the re-afforestation in Ireland offers an unprecedented opportunity to promote biodiversity, environmental conservation, eco-tourism, forestry employment opportunity, and added value in the medium and long term, as well as helping to preserve the rainforests, 50% of which has already destroyed, and which nevertheless are essential to the health of our planet.

Comments on the Bacon Report on Forestry

Forest Friends Ireland welcomes the recently published Review and Appraisal of Ireland's Forestry Development Strategy by Consultants Peter Bacon and Associates as an important step in the right direction. The report places much emphasis on the importance of diversity in forestry including strong market arguments and the non-timber benefits. This supports the views of organizations such as ours, which promote diversity, and the greater good derived from woodlands and forests. It is also welcome that the report sees greater potential for state-owned forests to create non-timber benefits such as recreation and that existing cut-away bogs could be used to plant trees for environmental and bio-mass energy benefits. For instance we would promote the use of mixed birch woodlands.

One thing is clear. It is very difficult to project the future financial returns from a forestry strategy such as exist now. But the public financial resources needed to subsidise it are easier to predict given a particular planting and management strategy into the future. We feel these resources or even a proportion of the current level would be more wisely spent on preserving and enhancing the non-timber benefits of trees and woodlands and, in particular, the threatened existing small areas of native woodland cover which provide the best diversity value.

However, if the recommendations of the report is followed then policy will be tailored to meet a target rather (i.e. to put necessary supports and industry development for new net afforestation of 20,000 ha/annum) than the original rationale for the 1996 Strategy which was to tailor the target (e.g. increase private planting) to meet the policy objective (To meet the development of a viable industry but in reality and an alternative income support for farmers).

Why are we the taxpayers continuing to fund new private plantations of Sitka spruce? The consultants themselves suggested that continued afforestation of new private land with state supports is not necessary for the viability of the present processing sector due to changes in industry structure, technology and marketplace.

The report suggests that it is not necessary from an economic rationale to continue to focus on targets of up to 20,000 hectares per annum of new forestry and in any case most private forests are neglected as landowners have little interest in maintaining the state's investment after they have secured the subsidies for themselves. If output is increased the report recommends further state supports to increase processing capacity.

The Report only really shows cost-effectiveness in the policy when non-timber benefits are included (we argue most of which are much better with broadleaf native trees even with carbon sequestration due to longevity of carbon retention). This could be used to support a less expensive programme of protecting and enhancing naturally diverse woodlands and other wildlife habitat. Benefits, especially to recreation and tourism marketing would accrue.

Comments on the Bacon Report on Forestry contd.

The report shows that supply of any timber product results in innovative products being produced. This is simple logic as supply creates a resource which innovation can exploit. This is a case for supporting the growing of alternatives to the current species mix, which could utilise resources from coppicing and other biodiverse broadleaf woodland management techniques. The consultants assume that the return from broadleaf is more or less equal to the cost of supports due to lack of available data. We argue that due to future shortfall in hardwood supply this is a somewhat conservative approach.

It is clear from the reaction to the report particularly from the farming organisations that growing high quality and value-for-money timber is not best served by the present arrangement whereby the taxpayer subsidises converting agricultural land to forestry. Very little benefit, if any, is derived by the taxpayer and even use of subsidised private forestry for recreation such as walking is denied. A rethink should focus on shifting resources to state subsidisation of environmental improvement projects for farms with proper supervision and conditional on some access for recreational purposes. The State could then focus on the National Forest Estate to provide for the multiple benefits of forests and woodlands and on protecting and enhancing native and natural biodiverse stands as well as looking to secure a future supply of hardwood. Also, Forest Friends Ireland vision for the creation of a Great Irish Forest could be advanced.

Some other comments we have on the Bacon Report are:

The greater emphasis on negative consequences of the past and present policy including landscape, water quality and biodiversity is welcomed.

There reference to other benefits of alternative tree growing initiatives with quicker returns on investment is minimal e.g. coppice woodlands, biomass production.

There is no reference to the probable future shortage of hardwood due to global deforestation of hardwood and other forests and the past depletion of our own native hardwood stocks.

It assumes that clear-fell forestry rather than alternative concepts such as continuous canopy forestry will be the preferred practice despite the negative impact of the current practice.

There is not enough emphasis on the potential risks of basing forecasts of future returns from forestry on international demand, transport costs and tightening of supply on hardwood and other primary forest products.

However, we hope this is the beginning of a more rational and balanced discussion on the long-term future of Irish forestry.

RECENT EVENTS

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Mansion House Event

Celebration of cultural Diversity and Species Diversity

On the 21st. of October 2004, courtesy of the Lord Mayor, Michael Conaghan, Forest Friends held a Samhain celebration of cultures and biodiversity. Those who attended were from many different countries, including Sweden and Bolivia. Some, interestingly, had the name tree in their surname, showing the close affinity of many forest friends with our culture of trees. We had music and song from many sources including a wonderful Sufi dance rendition. Those who attended were delighted with the event, which was held in the Oak Room. This was the third event that we have held in the Oak room over the last four years.

Ghanaian Volunteers

During the Autumn, we had five student volunteers from the Ghana Kumasi Polytechnic. They completed a detailed programme, which was organised by our volunteers, which included, environmental work in Glenree Reconciliation Center, working in St. Joseph's girls school in Finglas, a study of the Dublin Food Co-op, which they visited each week of their five week stay, participation in community radio at NEAR FM, 101.6. The programme was organised and administered by John Haughton, and Joseph Dunne supervised the environmental works in Glenree Reconciliation Centre.

Glenree Reconciliation Center

Forest Friends have developed a very good working relationship with the Glenree Reconciliation Centre, over the since we were founded in 2001. This has made it possible for us to develop an ongoing project there, which would include an organic garden and a plant nursery. This has been confirmed in principle, so we need some volunteers to work and implement a plan.

Volunteering with Forest Friends

Having had the experience of organizing volunteers from Ghana, as well as our other volunteering efforts to date, we feel that it is necessary to have a person dedicated to co-coordinating the efforts of volunteers. If you are interested in this role, please contact any of our committee members.

Also we run indoor and outdoor events and we need a member in addition to our committee members to help with the organization of events.

If you wish to volunteer regarding the above or other aspects of our work, please contact any of the following:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

William Maher – Treasurer/Secretary WilliamJMaher@Courts.ie or wjmaher@iol.ie
087 798 7576 lomeachair@hotmail.com

John Haughton – Chairman, Ph. 01 8325415 jjhaughton@hotmail.com

Bernie Magee - Committee member 087 950 3261 pbmagee5@eircom.ie

Paddy Magee - Committee member 01 8376402 pbmagee5@eircom.ie

Akeem Alabi - Committee member brothera1@hotmail.com 0857354808

Declan Dalton - Committee member 087 995 7277 declandalton@hotmail.com

Joseph Dunne - Training Officer 087 649 0573 greinefraoch@hotmail.com

Carol Jordan - Storyteller greinefraoch@hotmail.com

AGM/NOTICE AND WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

Forest Friends' AGM will be held in the Glenree reconciliation Centre, Glenree, Co. Wicklow at twelve noon, on Saturday the 18th of December.

This will be followed by a tree planting ceremony, and the launch of the first international tree- hugging challenge, approximate time 14.00 hrs.

At four o'clock we will have our Solstice fire ceremony, about 16.00 hrs.
After this we will have refreshments, followed by music, song, storytelling.

While the AGM is open to members of Forest Friends only, the other events are open to members and their friends. Please contact a member of our committee to confirm that there your friend or friends can be facilitated.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

December 18th. Winter solstice Celebration in the Glencree Reconciliation Centre:

- AGM 12.00
- 15.00 approx. Tree Planting
- 16.00 approx. Fire Ceremony
- 17.00 Refreshments followed by multi-cultural celebration with music, song, storytelling and poetry.

NB Each participant is expected to bring an item of food and or drink for the feast, (preferably non-alcoholic).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tree Plantings at Hollywood, Co. Wicklow on the following dates:

- January 23rd.
- February 20th.
- March 20th.

Meet outside the Hollywood Inn, Hollywood, at 12.00. If you need transport, please contact

Joseph Dunne, project co-coordinator at 087 649 0573

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Celebrating the Celtic festival of Imbolg, (the Spring). A multicultural celebration in music, song and dance performances, will be held during the first week of February. Exact date and venue to be decided. If you are interested in helping out with the organization of this event please contact John Haughton at 8325415 or email johnhaughton50@eircom.net

GLENCREE RECONCILIATION CENTRE – ORGANIC GARDEN PROJECT

Glencree Reconciliation has agreed that Forest Friends can develop an organic garden and plant and tree nursery at Glencree. This project is at the planning stage and volunteers are required dedicated to this project. For more information please contact, Joseph Dunne, project co-coordinator at 087 649 0573

Student Volunteers from Ghana

It was Céad Míle Fáilte to students from Ghana when they come to work with Forest Friends in September/October

These student volunteers of Kumasi Polytechnic S.R.C believe in developing and sustaining the environment and societal structures, putting The Environment First for the good of humanity.

The six volunteers; AMANFO, JAQUILINE; PREMPEH- BOATENG, FREDERICK; NSAFOA, YAW; OWUSU ASARE, EMMANUEL; SARPONG OWUSU, JOSEPH; BLANKSON AMESHER, LAWRENCE; set out to achieve the following:

1. To embark on the afforestation project forest friends are undertaking.
2. To experience the vegetation and forestry of Ireland.
3. To learn some Irish life-style and culture.
4. To establish pen pal networks.
5. To open forest friends chapter in our campus.

The students made a presentation on the state of the environment in Ghana at the Dublin Food Co-op, which showed that their rainforests are under threat and that gold mining is also causing major environmental problems in the so-called 'Ashanti Gold' region, which is the area where they live. There are at least two Irish companies involved including African Gold, a company located in Clontarf, Dublin.

SAINT JOSEPH'S SCHOOLS ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT

Following the success of the Ballyfermot Schools Forest Project and the publications of two poetry anthologies with the title of "The Forest of Children Dreaming", in response to a request from St. Joseph's girls primary school, we have initiated a similar project there. Its success will depend on our member's involvement. It is proposed that our volunteers would visit the school and work with the teachers and students at the outset one day per week. If you have any free time and would like to be involved please contact John Haughton at 01 8325415. The project will involve developing an environmental plan for the school, talking to the students, seed collection, planting and developing a small nursery.

FOREST FRIENDS 'NEART' PROJECT

FFI's 'Nearth' Project was launched in conjunction with the Ghanaian student visit. It is based on our working with volunteers in different countries and continents. It was launched in the Dublin Food Co-op at the beginning of October to coincide with their visit. It is based on the Irish word 'nearth' which means strength, on the old Irish saying, 'Níl neart go cur le céile', i.e. which roughly translated means there is no strength until people pull together. If you are interested in helping to develop the 'Nearth' project, please contact Bernie Magee at 087 950 3261

FOREST FRIENDS DIASPORA TREE WEEK

During the first week of each New Year, people of Irish origin throughout the world are encouraged to plant a tree. If this aspiration could be turned into reality, one hundred million trees would be planted in a single week. Why not join a sub-committee of Forest Friends to turn this dream into a reality.

This project was launched on the 1st. of January 2002, when an oak tree was presented to the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese.

WORLD TREE-HUGGING CHALLENGE

The world's first tree-hugging challenge will be launched at the Forest Friends Winter Solstice event, which will be held at the Glencree Reconciliation Centre, on the 18th. of December. It is an event not to be missed. For further details please contact any of our committee members.

CROSS BORDER PEACE TREE PROJECT

Some progress has been made with regard to the idea of a cross-border peace tree project. A meeting was held with Dundalk Urban Council, and they were supportive of the idea. Due to other commitments by our active membership, it has not been possible to progress the project further. It will be necessary to have a small dedicated sub-committee to develop this project, perhaps with the involvement of one of the schools in the south, possibly, St. Josephs, with whom we are running a project and a school from the north. If you are interested please contact a member of our committee.

SEEING THE WOOD AND THE TREES

This anthology of poetry was compiled to create a love of trees and forests and our environment. It is not a commercial project and any proceeds will be going into the planting of trees, which is part of our ongoing work in Forest Friends. It will help readers to see their environment as the poets see it.

Our poets are the 'keepers of the dream'. Primal cultures are the 'keepers of the earth'. So-called 'civilized' cultures tend to destroy the dreams and the dreamtime and to turn the earth into pocket change. Poets have a gentle way of telling us something, without forcing their ideas and thoughts. The question is who will listen?

Seeing the Wood and the trees costs €10. It is an ideal Christmas gift and a good stocking filler. If you require a copy or copies please contact William Maher at 087 798 7576

POEMS FROM SEEIG THE WOOD AND THE TREES

These poems were written by school children in Ballyfermot and were included in our anthology

PLEASE by Sarah Heffernan

Nature is the most glorious thing
So please stop killing the birds and bees.
I'm begging of you please.
I know this may not help stop those people
That just thinks about the rainforest
They are killing the habitat, they are destroying.
God made you, God made them,
So please live in harmony.

If we keep killing trees, we'll kill off ourselves,
Pretty careless, don't you think?
So please stop and think.
A tree resembles peace and we create havoc,
So I'm begging, please, stop killing, please.
The king of the jungle is crying for your help.
There's only one word I can say – "Please".

POEMS FROM SEEING THE WOOD AND THE TREES

THE TREE by Joanne Stapleton

There is something about a tree
That starts a glow inside me
The budding leaves in the spring
Are such wonderful things.

As summer comes, its colours glow
And its lovely different flowers grow
It is such a lovely thing
It makes the birds chirp and sing.

In autumn it turns golden brown
Its leaves they fall down to the ground
It starts to really look quite bare
But it's still a sight so wonderfully rare.

In winter its bare branches gleam
As snow and ice come on the scene
It really means a lot to me
That nature has given us the tree.

TREES I LIKE by Linda Foley

My name is Silver Birch,
My roots go down, down, down,
I'm a silvery, grayish, brown,
And you won't find me in town.

I am a brown-leaved beech
I live in chill brown soil,
And when birds come to nest,
I put it close to my chest

Down the road is a willow tree
In the wind it has witches' hair
It's only small, three years in all,
And most of the buds have green coats.

An evergreen is always green,
And acorns don't come from me,
In churchyards you might find me.

I am an oak; I wear a hard brown cloak
My leaves are green, I'm always seen
I'm very clean, I am an oak.

TREE WATCH PROJECT

Forest Friends have initiated a tree-watch project in Bayside, Sutton, Dublin. It is intended that this initiative will be a blueprint for communities throughout the country. The details are as follows:

Bayside Tree Watch (BTW)

Bayside Tree Watch was initiated by a number of concerned residents as a result of the felling of a large number of trees by Fingal County Council in 2003. Fingal have stated their objective of re-commencing the tree felling in the coming months.

BTW is an association of like-minded residents working in partnership with Forest Friends Ireland/Cáirde na Coille, with the objective of protecting the remaining trees, (particularly trees which are in the public domain), from being felled by any agencies public or private or by individuals. If you want to work towards this end, please provide details below. A meeting will be called, of all residents who sign up to this objective and a committee formed to work out a strategy to achieve it. Following this meeting and the inauguration of a committee, the initiative will be formally launched in the Community Center in Bayside.

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
PHONE (H).....(M)..... EMAIL.....
SIGNATURE.....

If you wish to serve on the committee, please tick here

If you wish your name to be forwarded on a list of signatories to Fingal County Council, requesting them to prune rather than fell trees and to ENGAGE IN FULL AND MEANINGFUL AND ON-GOING CONSULTATION WITH THE GROUP, please place your signature below also:

SIGNATURE.....

NB: If any forest friends wish to volunteer to help out with this project or start a similar one in your own area, please contact any member of our committee.

FORESTS OF THE FUTURE – FIFTEEN STEPS TO....

Forest Friends Ireland is at pains to show that a few simple steps can ensure high biodiversity even in economically viable forests. We submit the following concepts and criteria for inclusion in our National Forest Strategy:

1. A selective rather than clear felling policy
 2. A continuous canopy approach
 3. A Sylva culture approach based on best mixes of tree species.
 4. Block plantings based on the maturing time horizons of different species.
 5. The establishment of a properly weighted model of decision-making based on a multi-stakeholder approach.
 6. The establishing of some plantations based on the species naturally occurring in old growth forests.
 7. The development of a forestry strategy based on comprehensive plans which assist the renewal of declining rural villages and towns.
 8. The application of traditional forestry management systems, where appropriate, whereby local communities and local enterprise are the main beneficiaries.
 9. The development of, national, regional and local wood- based crafts plans based primarily on the utilization of native hardwood species.
 10. The development of models of best practice for integrating trees and woodlands into farming on a permaculture basis, preserving rather than supplanting the farming tradition, combining mixed farming, horticulture and Sylva culture
 11. Planting Native Trees
 12. Planting many different tree species
 13. Planting in stages.
 14. The development of a national Plan based on a hundred year time-scale.
 15. Planting in irregular densities
-

COMMEMORATIVE TREE PLANRING

It is our intention, when land becomes available, to plant trees for individuals who wish to commemorate an event in their lives, in remembrance of friends or family who have passed away. The idea is that it would be possible for persons sponsoring a tree for the occasion would be able to visit the site and identify their tree, whenever they would wish to do so. This will be a large undertaking and a dedicated sub-committee will be necessary to progress the project, which is still at the idea stage

The Use of Fertilisers

- Fertilizers reduce biodiversity by allowing a few species to dominate the ground flora. Resulting runoff reduces biodiversity in watercourses, rivers, streams, canals and lakes. The use of pesticides seriously damages biodiversity. Their effects are cumulative dangerous and life threatening as can be seen from case studies.

Selective Felling

- Selective felling can minimize disturbance in the forest. It can obviate the necessity to grade the timber because timber of the same grade is felled simultaneously.

Biodiversity and Cultural Diversity

- When biodiversity is lost, cultural diversity is also lost and vice versa. For this reason it is necessary to seek to preserve both in the face of globalization, industrialization and so-called 'progress', whereby cultures, communities, forests and sensitive environmental areas are jeopardized. Deforestation, wars, motorways, dams, pipelines, oil and mineral explorations, all these can be destructive of communities; their culture, values, languages and mores. It is necessary to examine ways whereby these can be conserved in the context of a modern world.
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Forest Friends Ireland Objectives

- To bring about a change in the present status quo, whereby forestry policy in Ireland is based primarily on a monoculture, a single species, namely Sitka Spruce. To work towards the achievement of a policy based on biodiversity and continuous canopy, in accordance with the principles announced in the Convention on Biodiversity, at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit 1992.
- Re-establish a culture of forests.
- Develop cross-border and cross-cultural projects.
- Use 100% native/near native, mainly broadleaf and native coniferous species from native seed stock.
- Promote ethical investment in forests including core funding.
- Protect Rainforests and other major centers of biodiversity and cultural diversity.
- Create a Great Irish Forest.
- Achieve a key stakeholder role for local communities.
- Use a Local Agenda 21 approach working with local authorities, educational and training agencies, communities, schools, commerce and those marginalized.
- Develop tree nurseries. Conserve native woodlands, develop new woodlands.
- Oppose clear felling.
- Promote forest trusts.
- Promote sustainable economic systems inclusive of the economies of nature.
- Promote the arts in the context of our environment.
- To create and preserve a center of excellence of biodiverse forest habitats/native woodlands, ideally in the context of existing native woodlands, demonstrating best practice in management, and including coppicing and the promotion and development of woodcrafts.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Forest Friends Ireland, P.O. Box 7814, Dublin 1. Ireland

FEES: Individual...€ 30 Family...€ 60 Schools...€6 Student /Unwaged/Senior Citizen...€ 15

(Please Tick)

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

EMAIL:

METHODS OF PAYMENT

CHEQUE/POSTAL ORDER

For the appropriate amount made payable to “**Forest Friends Ireland**” at the above address

OR

BANKER’S ORDER

I/We authorize you to payannual payments of €,commencing on the Day.....Month.....Year.....

To the account of :

Forest Friends Ireland Ltd.

Bank of Ireland

2 College Green

Dublin 2

Account no: 33721955

Sort Code : 900017

To the Manager (your bank)

Bank’s Postal Address

Name of Account

Account Number

Date

Signature(s)

Please return to: Forest Friends Ireland, P.O. Box 7814, Dublin 1. Ireland

Further information at www.cairdenacaille.org

Telephone: 353 01 8325415

jjhaughton@hotmail.com or wjmaher@iol.ie

Forest Friends Ireland, P.O. Box 7814, Dublin 1. Ireland

Petition to Minister Mary Coughlan

To Minister Mary Coughlan
Minister for Agriculture
Dáil Éireann, Kildare St., Dublin.

Dear Minister,

I wish to support the following campaigns of Forest Friends/Cáirde na Coille:

1. To reverse the present Irish Government's forestry policy of planting mainly a monoculture of Sitka Spruce in favor of planting Irish native trees. This is justifiable on economic, environmental and social equity bases. It is the only forestry strategy which is sustainable in the context of a national biodiversity approach based on the principles enunciated at the Earth Summit Conference in Rio in 1992:
2. To ensure that the forests of the Irish People, (at present managed by Coillte) are not privatized. This would be contrary to the national interest, to the principles of conservation and would create serious problems of public assess, such as are at present enjoyed by the people of Ireland.

Name.....

Signature.....

Address.....

Phone no.....

NB Please cut out and send the above request to Minister Mary Coughlan, Dail Eireann, Kildare Street, Dublin



FOREST FRIENDS – A GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP

Because we have not sought sponsorships, which could compromise our forestry ethos, we are largely dependent on member's subscriptions. For this reason, we are requesting existing members to try to recruit a friend, or to give a gift of membership to a friend, as a Christmas gift. In return, we will give you a copy of our poetry book, "Seeing the Wood and the Trees", or a Forest Friends t-shirt, or FF carrier bag, or specially printed FF high quality biro. To date we have planted thousands of trees and this will enable us to continue with our tree planting programmes.

NB PLEASE SEND A COPY OF THE FOLLOWING LETTER OR SIMILAR

Letter to
John Fitzgerald, Manager,
Dublin City Council,
Civic Offices, Wood Quay,
Dublin.

Dear Manager,

Forest Friends Ireland/Cáirde na Coille, are very concerned that the proposed felling of the remaining London Plane trees in O'Connell Street would be interpreted as putting the environmental aspects of our premier street in a very secondary place. These mature trees are now part of the heritage and history of the street and are a very strong statement as to the role, which trees play in countering the CO2 emissions from the burning of fossil fuels. Leaving the remaining trees central to the architecture of the street, rather than relegating trees to the margins of the streets, would be an important statement as to the value which the City Council places on their role and would be rightly interpreted as indicative as to the attitude of the council towards environmental conservation in the city in general.

We therefore request you, as manager of Dublin city, to revisit the issue and to follow the wishes of our elected representatives and the Right Honorable the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councilor Michael Conaghan, in this regard.

Name.....

Address.....

Signature.....Date.....