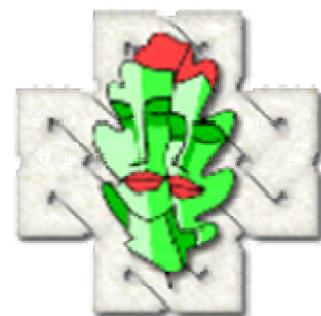


FOREST FRIENDS- CAIRDE NA COILLE NEWSLETTER



Issue 12, April 2009

EDITORIAL by John Haughton

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2009– the year began with an exciting development as members of Forest Friends Ireland have begun the use of their new office at number 20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin. This has been the result of a lot of effort and members are now invited to volunteer and become involved in all aspects of our work and the business of running an office and developing our programmes and projects.

Irish Forestry policy, to date has been based almost entirely on one non-native exotic species, Sitka Spruce.

This monoculture based forestry policy has not only seriously damaged our visual landscape, it has resulted also in forests that are dark and forbidding, densely planted so that there is little or no growth of native flora at ground level.

Persistent, cancer-causing pesticides which affect the immune system are used together with high concentrations of fertilisers, causing water pollution, acidification and damage to fish-spawning grounds. Clear felling of forest areas has scarred the landscape and harmed wildlife. Disturbance of upland peatlands has caused serious landslides in Mayo, Galway and Kerry. The strongest case can now be made for planting our native Irish hardwoods on economic, aesthetic, touristic and ecological grounds maintaining a continuous woodland canopy based on the different maturing times of native species.

Planting on the basis of biodiversity and best Sylvaculture principles means that local communities can better participate in sustainable forest management. Local crafts, coppicing and other woodland skilled enterprises can be linked in with agriforestry where farming communities stand to benefit also.

If you wish to become involved please contact:
Etaine: 0868828038

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IMPORTANT NOTICES AND EVENTS:

Forest Friends Ireland Biodiversity Programme details 2009

KING AND QUEEN OF THE FORESTS: THIS IS A CHALLENGE FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO WISH TO TAKE PART IN OUR BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMME 2009. A QUESTIONNAIRE WILL BE ISSUED AT EACH EVENT AND THE SCORES ADDED UP AFTER THE FINAL EVENT ON THE 24TH. MAY. THE KING AND QUEEN WILL BE CROWNED AT A PUBLIC EVENT- DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED ON WEBSITE.

Sun/April 12: Tree identification at Newbridge House, Donabate, Fingal, North Dublin. Starts at 11.00 from the public car park –

Duration two hours/approx

Wed/April 22: Earth Day: Everyone to plant a tree or shrub.

Sun/April 26: The biodiversity of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin. Meet outside the main entrance at 11.00. Divide into small groups for self-conducted tour. Bring tree/plant/flower identification books– Duration two hours/ approx

Sun/May 10: Walk in the National Park, Glendalough, Co. Wicklow and Clara Vale. Meet at the steps of the Custom House, Liffey side at 11.00 or outside the interpretative centre in Glendalough at 12.15- Duration three hours approx. Bring walking boots and rain gear.

Sat/May 16: Tree identification in Farmleigh House, Phoenix Park. Meet outside the front entrance of Farmleigh House at 11.00 – Duration two hours/Approx.

Sun May 17: Glenree Valley landscape, County Wicklow. This event includes a stop in Enniskerry village, and visits to Knockree and the Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation. It will examine the environmental effects of monoculture Sitka Spruce plantations in the valley in terms of clear felling, pesticide and fertiliser use and their effects on wildlife, biodiversity and fish life due to acidification of spawning grounds in rivers and lakes. Meet outside the Custom House at 11.00 or at the monument Enniskerry at 12.15. Event finishes in Glenree at 5.30/Approx. A bus will be provided if the numbers warrant it. Apply early so that this can be decided upon soon.

Mon/18 May: Special ENVIRO radio programme on NEAR 90 FM, 3.30-4.30,(90.3 FM). Climate change and biodiversity. Discussion of the full programme for National Biodiversity Week.

Tues/May 19: Deerpark Howth – Evening woodland walk. Meet outside the train station at 6.30 or outside the Deerpark Hotel, located in Deerpark public Golf course, Howth Castle Estate at 7.00 pm

Wed/May 20: Canal Walk – Evening – Meet at Baggot Street Bridge, Ballsbridge at 7.00 pm

Thurs/May 21: Evening walk in grounds of Malahide Castle – Meet in front of main entrance to the castle at 7.00 pm

Fri/May 22: Evening tree identification walk in the Millennium Arboretum, St. Anne's Park, Raheny, Dublin. Meet at the entrance to the rose garden at 7.00 pm

Sat/ May 23: The Flora and Fauna biodiversity of the Bull Island, Dollymount/Clontarf, Dublin. Meet at the interpretive centre at 11.00 – duration two hours/approx.

Sun/May 24: Visit to Mt. Usher Gardens, Ashford, Co. Wicklow. Meet at the Custom House Dublin at 11.00 or at Mt. Usher Gardens at 12.15. There is a fee for entry to these gardens.

Mon/May 25: ENVIRO radio programme – Climate change and biodiversity. Forest Friends project, “The Global Forest and Climate Change” Near 90 FM 90.3 FM Mon. 3.30-4.30

NOTE: This programme may be subject to change. Check details close to the events.

ENQUIRIES: about the programme Etain Feeley 086 8828 038 – Tatiana Gomez 087 682 7551 , Joseph Sasrpong–087 750 5550 John Haughton 01 83235415 (evenings).

Bring protective clothing, walking boots, identification books, binoculars, and refreshments.

Wicklow Mountains National Park event: Sat. 25 April: Explore the nature and history of the woods of Clara Vale Nature Reserve. Booking needed for this event- 0404 45656 or 0404 45425 – www.wicklownationalpark.ie (Free of charge)

Note: All events with the exception of Mt. Usher Gardens where there is an entry fee are free of charge. There will be a car pooling arrangement for events. Enquiry details above. For the Mt. Usher Gardens, Glendalough and Glenree Valley outings a bus will be provided if the numbers warrant it. For this reason it is essential to book well in advance, so that the booking of the bus can be made in time. There will be no charge to the individual for any of the bus outings.

www.forestfriends.ie

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED :

Forest Friends now have an office and we need volunteers to man it on a rotation basis. Please contact Etain Feeley at etainf@gmail.com

COMMUNITY TREE NURSERIES: " Forest Friends are looking for land to develop small community based tree nurseries in different parts of Ireland, to grow native trees for planting out in order to increase the numbers of native hardwood trees. Parcels of land with or without existing trees size one acre or larger. It is envisaged that local volunteers would develop each project. PLease contact John haughton at jjhaughton@gmail.com

INAUGURATION OF TEN FOREST FRIENDS SCHOOL CLUBS-BALLYFERMOT

By Emmanuel Nsor Kwesi.

The Ballyfermot schools forest project took place between October and December 2008. Lawrence Blankston, Joseph Sarpong and Ato Prah organised the project initially and during November and December, Emmanuel Nsor Kwasi and Frank Asamoah Boateng developed it further and presided over a grand celebration in the Ballyfermot public library.

As part of Forest Friends objectives to carry out a global forest and climate-change project, the organization (in collaboration with the Dublin City Council) have successfully instituted ten forest friends schools clubs in the Ballyfermot community. The following are details of the schools and new Forest Friends clubs:

1. De La Salle Primary 1 Forest Friends club.
- 2 De La Salle Primary 2 Forest Friends Club.
3. St.Louise's Primary Forest Friends Club
4. St Dominic's Secondary Forest Friends Club.
5. St.Michaels' Primary Forest Friends Club.
6. St. Raphael's Primary Forest Friends Club.
7. Kylemore College Forest Friends Club.
8. St Gabriels National School Forest Friends Club

9. Mary Queen of Angels School 1

10. Mary Queen of Angels School 2
Their inauguration follows an intensive two month schools' awareness campaign on Action against deforestation and climate change. Awareness was raised in the schools and on radio programmes with students from different schools on West Dublin Access Radio, W.D.A.R.96.FM which go out every Friday 4: 30pm to 5:00pm.

The inauguration ceremony of the clubs took place in Ballyfermot on Thursday, 18th December, 2008 in the community library. Artists performing at the event included singing group Voice of the Planet which was formed as part of awareness creation by the multi-talented singer and speaker, Emmanuel Nsor Kwesi (Environmental Pastor from Ghana and Educational and Projects Development Officer for FFI), with students from the music school in Ballyfermot and other musicians. Voice of the planet comprises Emmanuel Nsor, Anda, guitarists and Juana from Music College in Ballyfermot; as well as Gladies-a French singer, and students from various schools. The final recording and mastering of their song entitled 'Join Hands' took place at the Base studio with Darren, the sound Engineer. A first live performance of this song took place at the inauguration ceremony. Some of the

students also took part; reciting poems, performing environmental raps and presenting art works on environmental themes.

The project is sponsored by Forest Friends Ireland in association with the Dublin City Council and supported by: West Dublin Access Radio, Ballyfermot Community Schools and the Base studio.



NEWS NEWS NEWS

COMMENT BY GM-FREE IRELAND- Contamination by Wind-blown GM pollen

12 December 2008

According to the recent statement by the European Commission, their bureaucrats have finally "discovered" that farmers can be contaminated by wind-blown GM pollen from remote as well as nearby fields! One of these decades, they may even "discover" that wind-blown pollen can travel over hundreds and thousands of kilometres. In the meantime, the Commission continues to promote the totally unscientific claim that GM maize can safely "co-exist" with conventional and organic farming. Who do they think they're kidding?

The Emperor has no clothes! Everyone in Spain knows that the release of GM maize in Cataluña and Aragon – the only EU Regions where GM crops are still grown on a commercial scale – has created so much contamination that local farmers are now unable to grow any kind of natural maize; contaminated maize must carry the GM label; and organic maize farmers have gone out of business. To make matters worse, both conventional and organic seeds have also been contaminated. But no-one has been held accountable for the economic losses, and for the loss of consumer choice.

Instead of wasting EU tax-payers money for more "research" involving further open field releases of GM crops which create even more contamination, the Commission must stop funding junk science, stop spreading the discredited myth of "co-existence", and accept the democratic right of Member States and Regions to implement blanket bans on GM crops if they so choose.

Failure to do so will provide another reason for Ireland to reject the Lisbon Treaty.

THE BIGGER PICTURE: GM CONTAMINATION ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE

European Commission, Environment DG, 11 December 2008.

Ensuring the purity of conventional crops grown in the vicinity of genetically modified (GM) crops depends on understanding both short and long distance pollen flows. New research shows that current guidelines on the safe isolation distances for GM maize may not adequately prevent cross pollination of conventional crops.

Contamination of conventional crops can occur where GM pollen cross-fertilises non-GM maize. The proportion of cross-contaminated seeds in the conventional field is the 'impurity rate' for that crop. Under European Union rules¹, if the accidental proportion of GM to non-GM seeds exceeds 0.9 per cent then the crop must be reclassified and labelled as GM. Existing safe distances were largely established using 'paired field' comparisons, where contamination from a GM field is measured in a specific nearby field. The distances between the two 'paired' fields can then be adjusted to determine a 'safe' distance between fields. However, on a landscape level, other GM or non-GM maize crops in the vicinity may have an effect on pollen flow.

French researchers modelled the spread of pollen in a landscape containing a patchwork of GM and non-GM maize fields, as well as other non-maize fields. By taking into account the pattern of both short and long distance dispersal of GM pollen, the study explored the additional impact of more distant GM maize fields (i.e. not the closest GM field) on the impurity rate of the non-GM maize. For comparison, the impurity rates in a conventional field were also calculated using only the distance to the closest GM field.

Overall, the study showed that pollen from GM fields closest to conventional fields and the size of the conventionally planted fields have

the greatest impact on the degree of contamination. However, as the proportion of GM maize to non-GM maize increases within the landscape, the impurity rate of conventional fields also increases. This increase was caused by long distance pollination from GM fields further from the conventional fields and suggests that if GM maize becomes more widely adopted by farmers, then existing models will underestimate the 'safe' distance between GM and non-GM crops.

"New research shows that current guidelines may not adequately prevent cross pollination of crops"

Importantly, the level of underestimation increased as more GM maize was included in the modelled landscape and when the isolation distance between GM and non-GM fields increased.

The researchers therefore suggest that, as long-distance dispersal of GM pollen can contaminate fields of non-GM crops and potentially raise the impurity rate above 0.9 per cent, pollen from all GM fields in the landscape needs be considered when setting isolation distances between fields of GM and non-GM crops. Further research is required to determine how to model these effects at the landscape level.

IENT (Irish Environmental Network) Dáil Question 10 December 2008

To the Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Food

Public Participation

Can the Minister identify the individual permitting processes within his Department that are not in line with EU Directive 2003/35/EC on public participation in environmental decision-making and inform the house when and how he intends to bring them into compliance with this Directive to enable Ireland to ratify the Aarhus Convention?

Parliamentary Question No.565

To ask the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will identify the person permitting processes within his Department that are not in line with EU Directive 2003/35/EC on public participation in environmental decision making; and the action he will take to bring them into compliance with this Directive to enable Ireland to ratify the Aarhus Convention.

- Tony Gregory.

WRITTEN answer on Wednesday, 17th December, 2008.

Ref No: 46540/08
Proof: 567

REPLY The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food: (Brendan Smith)

The Public Participation Directive (PPD) was issued

by the European

Commission in order to provide members of the public with opportunities to participate on the permitting and ongoing regulation of certain categories of activities within Member States. Such opportunities are provided through access to information, justice, and through consultation on certain key documents.

The transposition of the EU Public Participation Directive 2003/35/EC will include consents granted under the Foreshore Act 1933-2005 where an Environmental Impact Assessment is required under the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 1999 (S.I. No.93 of 1999).

My Department is currently putting in place the necessary measures to ensure that the Foreshore Acts 1933-2005 fully complies with the Public Participation Directive 2003/35/EC.

The Government decided on 2 October 2007 that responsibility for certain foreshore functions under the Foreshore Acts 1933-2005 would transfer to

the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

My Department is currently putting in place the necessary arrangements to

ensure the efficient and effective transfer of the appropriate legislation

and associated functions.

My Department will continue to work closely with

the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in the context of progressing the various elements required to fully transpose the EU Public Participation Directive 2003/35/EC in the context of the Foreshore Acts 1933-2005.

“My Department is currently putting in place measures to ensure that the Foreshore Acts comply with the public participation directive”



Forest Friends Global Forest and Climate Change Project– GHANA

The Global Forest and Climate Change Project developed out of Forest Friends visit to Ghana in January 2008. While the objective of the visit was to help set up the Ghana Branch, it became clear that the little remaining tropical rainforest was being felled at an alarming rate. At regular intervals along the main road from Accra to Kumasi, Ashanti, tropical rainforest timber as well as bush meat was widely and illegally on sale. In Kumasi itself, the capital city of Ashanti, the unrelenting transport of giant logs to a local processing plant, in huge trucks was an everyday sight. This plundering of the rainforest which goes under the heading of 'sustainable forest management' is a misnomer and must be stopped. Much as we would have liked, we could not have mounted a protest outside the sawmill and processing plant of 'Logs and Lumber limited'

Forest Friends Ireland estimate that the felling of the tropical and old growth forests account for approximately 25% of annual emissions of CO₂ more than the total emissions from the entire transport system. Ghana has just about 6% of its tropical rainforests left and we must try and do something effective to stop the felling.

Yet Ireland, per capita, imports more hardwoods from rainforest sources than any other EU coun-

try because government policy has been not to grow our native hardwoods. Irish Forestry policy has to change in order to help to preserve the rainforests.

Our aims are:

- 1.To bring the Irish and Ghana branches of Forest Friends together to develop joint strategies
- 2.To plan the future development of the two branches
- 3.To create public awareness of rainforest destruction and gain support for joint action.
4. To organise interviews in the media and newspaper articles before, during and after the festival.
5. To initiate serious fundraising for clearly specified strategies.
6. To promote the conservation of biodiversity
- 7.To promote the conservation of cultural diversity and interculturalism.
8. To lobby the Irish Government to change its policy and influence EU and governments internationally, by growing mainly native hardwoods in order to help to preserve the tropical rainforests.
9. "To organise a major

world forests conference in Ghana to address all the problems of deforestation, and to set out conservation and replanting proposals".

The Global Forest and Climate Change Project was launched by the well known environmentalist, Duncan Stewart, in the National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin Dublin at Forest Friends annual festival in October 2008

PEACE CALL AT FOREST FRIENDS IRELAND(FFI) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AT GLENCREE CENTRE FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

At the Forest Friends AGM on 21st December, 2008, Emmanuel Nsor Kwesi (Of the Ghana branch of the organization), restated the motto of '*Worldwide Unity, environmental conservation, forest wisdom, peace, love and understanding*'. At Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, Co. Wicklow, where the AGM was held, Nsor Kwesi joined fellow forest friends in celebrating the Winter Solstice. This Forest Friends initiative began at Bobiri Forest Reserve and Butterfly Sanctuary of the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, FORIG, Kumasi, Ashanti Region, in January 2008.

Before that time Emmanuel carried out a series of campaigns on conservation and peace maintenance in Ghana. He has held several leadership positions at various levels of his academic career, directing the youth towards the pursuit of purpose in life and inculcating in them the idea of

nature conservation. Thus educating a new generation in high environmental consciousness. Emmanuel has a clear message for parents, Chiefs, Elders, Religious leaders of all faiths, Heads of States, and ordinary Citizens: Emmanuel's message is an intercultural one and it is best expressed by Lucky Dube of South Africa in his song: 'Different colours one people'; The growing Environmental crises respect no national boundaries, or social classes. We all have a unique role to play, in care taking the earth, which is the garden we live in. Without knowledge and education, there is no understanding, without understanding there is no wisdom, without wisdom there is no co-operation, without co-operation, there is no conservation and without conservation there is no sustainable futures on planet earth.

It is time to live the Forest Friends motto, *Worldwide Unity, environmental conservation, forest wisdom, peace, love and understanding*.



Forest Friends Ireland Biodiversity Programme details 2009

AGRIFORESTRY

Forest gardens – an environmentally friendly way forward for all landowners

There is a simple way to save money, save energy, store carbon, provide local fresh produce and enhance biodiversity all at the same time – it is known as agriforestry. This is an internationally accepted term referring to the combination of agriculture and trees.

Not the usual system of separate areas of land used for separate tree plantations, food crops and grazing areas - agriforestry combines agricultural and forestry technologies to create more diverse, productive, profitable, healthy and sustainable land-use systems. It derives from the ancient system of forest gardens whereby the trees provide shelter, shade, 'sun-traps' and nutrients (drawn up through their roots from the sub-soil). Meanwhile, the vegetables and herbs and / or animals using spaces between and amongst the trees thrive and produce their own nutrients derived from the top-soil. Thus the need for fertilisers is reduced, if not eliminated. The increased biodiversity of the combination means more natural predatory insects and birds to eat the pests – thereby eliminating the need for chemical pesticides. The whole system can be any size from a small back garden to a vast estate.

Unfortunately current Irish Forestry Policy does not cater for agriforestry, although it is mentioned in Green Party forestry policy which is under review. It is also not catered for in the Rural Environment Protection Scheme, the Forestry Environment Protection Scheme or the Native Woodland Scheme. Irish Forestry Policy, the Forest Service and the timber industry do not even distinguish native trees, instead using the ambiguous terms 'broadleaf' or 'deciduous' which of course include monoculture plantations of non-native Sycamore, Beech, Maple, Sweet Chestnut, Walnut and Larch. Whilst these non-natives are undoubtedly useful for timber, they do little to benefit biodiversity because they have no history of association with our native insects, birds, plants or animals.

Agriforestry systems can be either 'Silvopasture' or 'Silvoarable'. Silvopastures combine livestock grazing on forage crops or pastures within actively managed tree or shrub crops. Part of this management would involve regular rotation of fenced off grazing areas with protected trees. Silvoarable agriforestry comprises widely-spaced trees or groups of trees intercropped with arable crops. This builds on recent

findings that indicate that modern silvoarable production systems are very efficient in terms of resource use, and could introduce an innovative agricultural production system that will be both environment-friendly and economically profitable. Growing high quality trees in association with arable crops may improve the sustainability of farming systems, diversify farmers incomes, provide new products to the wood industry, and create novel landscapes of high value.

Agriforestry systems increase species diversity within farming systems, providing for human needs while supporting wildlife, soil microorganisms, rural communities, farmers, economic interests, watersheds, clean air concerns, biodiversity, and more. Economic viability is an important aspect of the success of agriforestry projects. Knowledge, careful selection of species and good management of trees and crops are needed to optimize the production and positive effects within the system and to minimize negative competitive effects.

The objective is to provide a balanced environment, sustained yields, biologically mediated soil fertility and natural pest regulation through the design of diversified systems and the use of low-input technologies. Agricologists are now recognizing that agriforestry mimics natural ecological processes, and that the sustainability of complex systems lies in the ecological models they follow. By designing farming systems that mimic nature, optimal use can be made of sunlight, soil nutrients and rainfall.

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) asserts that, worldwide, agriforestry has the potential to remove 50 billion tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which is equivalent to replacing 1,400 large coal-fired power plants with gas-fired facilities. Meanwhile, the World Agriforestry Centre (ICRAF), based in Nairobi, Kenya, asserts that, if farmers were allowed to sell that carbon on global carbon markets, it could generate billions of dollars each year for poor people in rural areas. "Rewarding poor farmers for planting more trees would put money in their pockets while also helping to protect our environment and fight climate change," said Prof. Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and founder of the Green Belt Movement International. "These long-term investments would truly benefit the entire global community." The World Agriforestry Centre is the world's leading research institution on the diverse role trees play in agricultural landscapes and rural livelihoods. As part of its work to bring tree-based solutions to bear on poverty and environmental problems, centre

researchers – working in close collaboration with national partners – have developed new technologies, tools and policy recommendations for increased food security and ecosystem health. See www.worldagriforestry.org. The Agriforestry Research Trust is a non-profit making charity, registered in England, which researches into temperate agroforestry and into all aspects of plant cropping and uses, with a focus on tree, shrub and perennial crops. See www.agriforestry.co.uk. In County Clare, the Centre for Environmental Living and Training (CELT) are working to encourage agriforestry as a way forward for all landowners. They especially encourage the combination of native trees and shrubs with organic vegetables and herbs. A native tree nursery has been established along with a small forest garden area producing fruit, nuts, vegetables and herbs. Also CELT have, in association with Just Forests, at Rhode, County Offaly, planted over 300 native trees and shrubs on half an acre as a wildlife area surrounding a vegetable garden. This will be carefully monitored as an example of what can be done on any small plot of land. There are now plans to develop larger areas of land that could also include coppice management of trees such as ash and hazel for a range of timber uses. See www.celt.net.org

This article was kindly made available by Bob Wilson (founder-member of CELT and a director of Clare Biodiversity Group)

The following are draft proposals following discussions between Forest Friends Ghana and Forest Friends Ireland. These drafts are printed here for examination by the membership of Forest Friends:

Forest Friends was set up in 2001 with a global remit to help to save the rainforests (the lungs of the world), and to empower indigenous peoples to play their part in the process, providing for adequate food and shelter, water, sanitation and education, and to campaign for the growth of local hardwoods in biodiversity. We are now working with our new branch in Ghana which was set up in 2008. Ghana has rainforest and mangrove forests under constant threat. Only 7% of the original rainforests of Ghana now remain. There is now a very small window of opportunity, five to ten years to arrest the accelerating destruction.

Ghana and Climate Change:

In Ghana, Climate change will result in a rise in sea levels, altered rainfall, storm dynamics, and ocean acidification. Their impacts span all of the coastal and marine sectors. Serious damage to coral systems as well as increased occurrences of algae bloom are consequences of climate change. Increased water temperature will affect the distribution of native and exotic species. Mangrove lagoons need protection, remedial action, restoration and replanting. Accra is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to its low topography, concentration of residents and assets along the coast, and strong dependence on coastal and marine ecosystems to support its economy. The funds requested will support the necessary research to have local communities who are informed about climate change and that collectively takes strategic, reasoned and effective actions to minimize impacts. This project will develop the information, policies, and social awareness necessary for communities to make informed science-based decisions regarding adaptations to climate change. It will also promote the incorporation of the socio-economic and environmental benefits of factoring in climate change into policy decisions including the costs of present precautionary action versus delayed action.

Forest Friends Ireland/Cáirde na Coille launched the “Global Forest and Climate Change Project” in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin, in October 2008. The modules of the Global Forest and Climate Change Project are as follows:

1. **A Centre of Forest Biodiversity**, based on best practice in Silva culture and Permaculture, a centre for sustainable forest management, of environmental education, incorporating; visitor centre; existing native woodlands; new tree planting, using 100% native hardwood species; commemorative trees; woodcrafts, with local community involvement.
2. **A Woodland Cross-border Project with Northern Ireland**, developing forest skills, capacity building and community development.
3. The **"Neart" ["Strength"] Project**, involving capacity building, environmental education, community development, with volunteer, educational, training and cultural exchange elements, for the preservation of the rainforests of Ghana.

The Neart project was begun in 2005 when four Ghanaians were accepted by Forest Friends to undergo training in development and environmental education. This was followed up in 2008 by John Houghton's fact finding visit to Ghana. *The summary of his report of the visit follows on page 10.*

Within the 'Neart' initiative, projects will be developed in association and partnership with local communities, public service agencies; including the University of Kumasi, Kumasi Polytechnic, The forestry research Institute of Ghana, UNESCO, Irish Aid, Trocaire and other local and international environmental and human rights organisations operating projects in Ghana and private ethical enterprises. Forest Friends propose to develop the following initiatives:

- The setting up of a **rented office/charity shop/environmental information centre** in Kumasi, with up to date equipment and staff and a vehicle capable of negotiating forest terrain.

- The development of a **centre of forest biodiversity** with the local community in the vicinity of the Bobiri nature preserve close to Kumasi.
- To develop a **tree nursery** in the vicinity of the Bobiri Nature Preserve, concentrating mainly on the growing of the greatest variety of food producing trees, to be planted out to produce food for local communities. To identify a whole range of food producing trees and to plant them with the communities providing for the maximum of biodiversity.
- To develop an **eco-tourism** project in the Western Region
- To investigate the extent of **child labour in different sectors including, the exploitation of children, in street selling, in the cocoa fields, mining and the fishing industry** and make recommendations with regard to the following: a) providing for the educational needs of children b) elimination of child labour c) Investigate the feasibility of and promote the growing of cocoa within the forest as opposed to felling forests.
- To promote best practice in the **involvement of the community in the management of rainforest** areas in Ghana
- To develop proposals for **irrigation and tree planting in the Northern Region** where increasing desertification has made large areas barren.
- To develop proposals for **improved sanitation** methods in a number of pilot areas.
- To initiate a campaign to halt the remaining tree felling in the Ghana rainforests. To achieve this we **propose to lobby** the Government of Ghana, the EU, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation, the G8, the G20, the OECD, the Bilderbergers.
- To use a **multi-media approach** to environmental education including cultural song and dance to get messages across. The use of local and national radio and TV, local exhibitions and festivals to get messages across.
- To examine the effects of **open cast mining** on the environment.
- To examine the extent of the **use of pesticides** in the cocoa and plantation forest areas, which are persistent and carcinogenic and which damage the immune system.
- To educate communities to eliminate the consumption of **bush meat** and to provide for alternative food sources.
- To inform communities of the adverse effects of **burning the forests**.

This proposal is for a five to ten year rolling programme. The first two years will provide for : (1) The **rented office/shop** in Kumasi, with up to date equipment and staff and a vehicle (2) The **centre of forest biodiversity** with the local community to teach best practice in community based sustainable forest management. (3) **tree nursery** in the vicinity of the Bobiri Nature Preserve, concentrating mainly on the growing of the greatest variety of food producing trees, to produce food for local communities. Also, identifying a whole range of food producing trees and to plant them providing for the maximum of biodiversity. The first year will also provide for the carrying out of feasibility studies for the remainder of the projects listed. The cost of providing these two centres, over the first two years, each with staff will be in the region of €100,000. The staff have third level qualifications from the University of Kumasi and Kumasi Polytechnic and include members with forestry qualifications. Some of them have been provided with training with Forest Friends Ireland. They will operate as two teams: Kumasi based team; Joseph Sarpong, Lawrence Blankson and Yaw; Bobiri based team; Emmanuel Nsor Kwesi, Frank Asamoah Boateng, Frederick Opoku. The project will include paid staff and volunteers. The projects will be overseen by Forest Friends Ireland and administered and carried out by Forest Friends Ghana. Eighty percent of the funds will be made available to the Ghana work and twenty per cent for the service provided by Forest Friends Ireland. In the case of the forest modules, the emphasis throughout these initiatives will be on the development of demonstration projects which provide for Sustainable Forest Management systems and the use of organic methods for the maintenance of continuous canopy, selective felling as opposed to clear fell, the practice of coppicing, development of woodcrafts and the development of eco-tourism

“My visit to Ghana on behalf of Forest Friends Ireland/Cáirde na Coille, lasted from Friday January 11th-Sunday 20th. 2008. The purpose of the visit was to promote Forest Friends Ghana branch and to help to register the branch. Both of these objectives have been achieved.

I arrived in Accra on the morning of the 12th of January and was met by Joseph Sarpong, one of the founder members of Forest Friends Ghana branch. Frederick, another member drove us to Kumasi, where I was based for most of the visit. Kumasi is the main city in the Kingdom of Ashanti region which is noted for its gold, 'AngloGold Ashanti'

On Sunday the 13th. I met the members of the group at their new premises in Kumasi. It is located opposite Logs and Lumber Limited, which is a main logging company in this region and all through the day I witnessed trucks with huge lengths of logs coming down the main street and into the large timber yard, where the wood is processed. There were two large chimneys emitting smoke, polluting the city. The fact that this was so obvious shocked me and indicated the enormity of the problem of trying to halt the destruction of the tropical rainforest which is the main objective of the Ghana Branch. The parade of trucks continued each day. We had a meeting with over twenty members and I explained my vision. Benjamin, who is an administrator in the University of Kumasi also spoke and some of the other members. Our ideas were very similar.

On Monday we met with Kwame of the Forest Research Centre, part of the Forestry Department. He gave a short address and we had a discussion. Later on in the week, on Thursday he gave a talk to the group. He will also be involved in the development of the branch.

On Tuesday we visited Bobiri Arboretum which is part of a larger tropical forest preserve. We found that it was from this forest that the logs were coming. We spoke to the guide who explained that there was a sustainable forest management policy whereby certain trees were culled, on a planned basis. It was difficult to understand how the rate at which the trees were being felled as witnessed by the frequency of the truck movements could be regarded as sustainable.

Ashanti has a king and on Wednesday we visited the palace museum and the heritage centre.

On Thursday we travelled to the Cape Coast, which is in the south western corner of Ghana. On the way we visited the Kakum National Park which is managed by the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, Cape Coast. We also drove through the centre where the AngloGold open cast mining takes place. The Kakum National Park has an elevated walkway which makes it possible to see the four layers of the tropical rainforest, i.e. The forest floor vegetation, the sub-canopy, the canopy and the emergent trees. Apart from the logging of the tropical rainforest, palm tree plantations, cocoa plantations and the killing of animals for bush meat are all apparent. Our guide in Kakum was Emmanuel Nsor, who has joined Forest Friends Ghana as a result of our visit and has very ambitious plans which are contained in an annex to this report. On Friday we had a lecture from Kwame from the Research section of the Forestry Department and a discussion with the members of the branch.

On Saturday we drove back to Accra where I stayed overnight to fly out on Sunday morning the 20th. Although Ghana is regarded as a model of democracy in Africa, it is not so long since this was not the case. However, the President Kufuor has developed a constitution whereby he has to retire in December and a new president appointed. The elections in December will be the litmus test as to whether true democracy will persist in Ghana. Kufuor, is seen as a main influence in West Africa and in Africa in general and is president of the African Union. When the riots erupted in Kenya, at the time of my visit to Ghana, he visited that country to begin a process of resolution, which has been further developed by Kofi Annan.

There are many problems in Ghana, including child labour, especially in the Cocoa plantations, prostitution, HIV/Aids.

Significant commercial oil deposits have been discovered off the Cape Coast. Gas has been piped into Ghana from the East. There are proposals for the development of nuclear power, whereas with the permanent sunshine, alternative energy would appear to be the better alternative”.

GROUPS UNITE TO CHALLENGE THE DEFINITION OF FORESTS UNDER UNFCCC/REDD

Global Forest Coalition, 11 December 2008.

Global Forest Coalition, The Wilderness Society, World Rainforest Movement, Global Justice Ecology Project, Via Campesina, the International Youth Delegation and the STOP GE Trees Campaign united today to challenge the UN/REDD definition of forests.

Currently the UN considers industrial tree plantations as forests. This is, simply put, an egregious error. Plantations are not forests. Forests are diverse ecosystems and plantations are void of biodiversity. The UN definition endangers Indigenous Peoples, forest dependent people, peasants, small farmers, biodiversity and exacerbates climate change.

The groups held a media conference this morning and several actions occurred on the theme of calling on the UNFCCC to change the definition of forests so it distinguishes between native forests and plantations.

"We have united to challenge the definition of forest under the UNFCCC to ensure that agricultural tree crops, or plantations are not defined as a forest", said Gemma Tillack, an international youth delegate and campaigner for The Wilderness Society in Australia.

"The conversion of native forests to plantations is bad for biodiversity, people and the climate. Human rights, especially women's rights, are being violated where there are plantations, and they should not be defined as forests. In addition, industrial tree plantations impact the climate--tropical forests and grasslands store significantly more carbon than tree plantations", said Ana Filippini from World Rainforest Movement (Uruguay) and member of the GenderCC Network - Women for Climate Justice.

"Schemes such as REDD allow companies to prevent family farmers from using the land to produce the food that is needed to feed their communities and their countries", said Luis Muchanga of Via

Campesina in Mozambique. He continued, "Deforestation, which is a major driver of global warming, is not made by peasants and indigenous peoples, but by large companies that are given the right to convert the forest to tree plantations".

The groups are proposing that the definitions are changed so:

Forests are defined as 'a terrestrial ecosystem generated and maintained primarily through natural and ecological and evolutionary processes that are home to most of the world's biodiversity'.

Plantations are defined as a crop of trees planted and regularly harvested by humans that do not provide habitat for biodiversity.

"The definition of forests under REDD is utterly ridiculous", stated Sandy Gauntlett, a Maori indigenous rights activist from New Zealand, and representative of Global Forest Coalition. "It leaves wide open the ability of countries to destroy their natural forests and replace them with industrial tree plantations-which destroys wildlife habitat and displaces indigenous and forest dependent communities. New Zealand is an example of the disaster of tree plantations-and now we are in the process of developing genetically engineered trees for plantations", he continued.

"Commercial release of genetically engineered Franken-trees in plantations poses a very serious threat to the world's forests and peoples", added Anne Petermann, Co-Director of Global Justice Ecology Project in the U.S. "GE insect resistant trees, for example, can contaminate water and soils and the pollen may be toxic to people that inhale it or wildlife that ingest it", she stated.

The groups in this joint press release agree that: "If it is not resolved, and REDD applies this definition of forests, the global com-

munity could miss the chance of avoiding dangerous climate change and the 1.6 billion people who depend on forests for their survival will continue to be negatively affected".

FSC- Regaining Credibility and Rebuilding Support

Changes the FSC needs to make to ensure it regains and maintain its credibility

**A joint statement by FERN, Greenpeace, Inter-African Forest Industry Association (IFIA), Precious Woods, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and Tropical Forest Trust (TFT)
30 October 2008**

Background

In January 2008 a group of NGOs and companies from the FSC environmental and economic chamber met to discuss their concerns regarding the performance of FSC. They agreed that the problems with FSC are so severe that supporting FSC threatens their own organisations' credibility. They identified key areas of concern where they felt the FSC system needed to be changed to regain or maintain credibility. These included:

- the lack of performance of the certification bodies;
- the controlled wood policy;
- the complaints mechanism.

Continued support for FSC from these organisations will depend on decisive action being taken to improve the performance of FSC in these three areas.

The group recognises that improvements to the FSC system are largely driven by constructive criticism from its members and thus have identified pivotal recommendations to address these three areas. Continued active support of the FSC will depend on it advancing these recommendations swiftly and demonstrating improved performance.

1. Performance of Certification Bodies

The quality of the certificates issued in FSC's name by certification bodies is highly variable and, in too many cases, simply not good enough. This is the most visible and dangerous threat to the credibility of FSC. Too many forest management certificates do not meet FSC standards; there is confusion about which standards certification bodies use and there is a lot of evidence that both the process of certification of forest management units and of chain of custody frequently fall short of FSC standards. These problems relate mainly to the performance of the certification bodies, but also to a lack of strength, competence and sufficiently stringent procedures within FSC Accreditation Services International (ASI).

Both of these problems are very difficult to overcome when the certification bodies are in a position of considerable influence in the system and are able to resist efforts to drive up minimum performance levels.

A number of critics and supporters over the years have suggested that the direct financial relationship between the certification bodies and their clients was at the root of the problem and that if this could be changed a lot of the problems would be solved. The group commissioned a study to look at alternative models used by other certification schemes across different sectors to oversee the process of certification. The study did not find another model on any significant scale in any other sector that could be easily implemented by the FSC. The study also indicated that moving the responsibility for selecting and paying certification bodies to the FSC would be difficult, but more importantly, would not necessarily solve the problem.

Taking into account the outcome of the study, the group concluded that a range



of other actions would be more effective than focusing on the contractual relationship between clients and certification bodies. This approach aims to reverse the current situation where cutting corners is more profitable than delivering a consistently high quality service. The group concluded that:

FSC (ASI) must be in control of FSC certificates. Certificates issued are FSC certificates and are directly linked to FSC's reputation. FSC-ASI must be able to suspend certificates if it believes the certificate is not warranted. We therefore recommend the follow-

"The problems with FSC are so severe that supporting FSC threatens credibility"

ing actions:

- ASI must have the right to audit (review) certificate holders, forest management and chain of custody, if and when it deems this necessary and must have the right to suspend the certificate immediately if it finds it to be non-compliant with FSC rules.

Public summary reports should be published one month prior to a forest management certificate being issued. This would allow for stakeholders to raise concerns. In cases of significant documented evidence of non-compliance with FSC certification requirements and procedures, ASI could then audit and if needed halt or delay a certificate before it is issued, thereby significantly reducing the damage to FSC's reputation.

1.2 The race to the bottom among

certification bodies must be halted and reversed. At the moment there are no real consequences for certification bodies for poor performance, and few incentives to do better. This leads to corners being cut to compete for contracts and to increase the number of clients a certification body can take on. It is cheaper to do a poor quality audit and consultation than a high quality one, and the system fails to address this. Improvements in the system need to focus on rewarding high performance and driving out poor performance by making poor performers uncompetitive. We therefore recommend the following actions:

- ASI should establish a publicly available rating of certification bodies, so companies and NGOs can easily see how different certification bodies are performing globally or in different regions and companies can select for quality as well as price.
- The agreed but never implemented system whereby ASI audits certification bodies more or less intensively, depending on how many Corrective Action Requests they received in the previous year must be implemented. The cost of any additional audits is paid by the certification body thus providing a very real incentive to maintain high standards. As a first step ASI must increase the baseline level of 'sample' audits to at least 3 per cent of all forest management unit certifications and to 1 per cent of all chain of custody certificates.
- To avoid FSC always being on the "back foot" when poor quality or controversial certificates are issued, ASI must have an overview of all assessments and pre-assessments in the pipeline, and must develop a screening mechanism to identify high-risk cases. Provision of this information must be written into the contracts with the certification bodies.
- ASI must have the right to participate in main assessments if and when it deems necessary.
- All full accreditation reports by ASI should be published on the internet so that poor performance cannot be hidden.

- Certification reports produced by the certification bodies should be consistent and based on a clear template to be developed by FSC, which makes it very clear how an operation meets the FSC Principles and Criteria.

- ASI should establish a register of FSC lead auditors and a mandatory training programme for them, which includes specific training on stakeholder consultations to be carried out jointly with NGOs.

FSC shall develop requirements to ensure that companies conduct proper stakeholder consultations and that certification bodies audit this properly.

1.3 Certification bodies should not be members of FSC. Certification bodies are and should be 'service providers' to the FSC, providing technical expertise, but should not be part of the governance of FSC system and should therefore not be voting FSC members. Additionally they should not put themselves in the position of representing the interests of their commercial clients as this undermines confidence in their independence as auditors. The group recommends:

Certification bodies and staff working for certification bodies should not be voting members of FSC and should not carry proxy votes for their clients.

2. Complaints Mechanism

The previous FSC complaints mechanism clearly did not function. The new, not yet adopted system, may be a great improvement but is not yet operational and it is unclear what its status is. We therefore recommend that:

FSC must as a matter of urgency im-

plement a simple and effective complaints mechanism to be operational without further delay.

3. Controlled Wood

The controlled wood policy is not working for companies or for environmental or social NGOs. It puts FSC in a difficult position because the policy allows too much scope for company self auditing (notably in their risk assessments) and because of the sheer scale of the problem; out of the 10,000+ FSC chain of custody certificates more than half include controlled wood. We therefore recommend that;

FSC phases-out the controlled wood policy as soon as possible.

The above organisations urge FSC to immediately begin implementing these recommendations to strengthen its credibility and retain or regain the active support of these organisations.

Could green jobs be the heart of a modern-day Civilian Conservation Corps?

Wilderness Society says yes!

The economy is in deep decline. The environment needs serious help. Could it be time for the nation to revive Franklin D. Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps with a new 21st Century mission?

In light of the recent economic crisis — and the deep benefits such a corps would provide — that's exactly what The Wilderness Society and others are proposing to Congress. Only this time, the modern-day CCC would help fight global warming. Instead of pollution that lasts, we need solutions that last, putting people to work and putting our country on a path to clean sources of energy.

Inspired by Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps, The Wilderness Society is spearheading an effort that would create needed jobs while ensuring funding for the vast backlog of work on our refuges, in our parks and in our national forests.

Joining with six national environmental organizations, The Wilderness Society has proposed to Congress that it include in any economic stimulus package a proposal called [Green Jobs Restoring the Land](#). This proposal would restore critical ecosystems in the face of global warming. It would also create thousands of jobs in communities across the country.

As Congress crafts an economic revitalization plan for the nation's ailing economy, part of its focus is on creating "green jobs" — jobs weatherizing homes, installing solar hot water systems and rooftop solar electricity, and building wind turbines. However, this is also the moment where we need jobs that directly protect our land, watersheds and fish and wildlife habitat to restore and maintain the health of critical ecosystems. Impacts from global warming are already being seen across the country as wildfires increase and hurricanes get more intense, glaciers rapidly shrink and droughts grow — placing critical ecosystems in harm's way. Our economy, our public health, and the viability of many communities depends on protecting these natural resources.

The Green Jobs Restoring the Land proposal strives to achieve similar goals to Roosevelt's CCC, which created more than 2.5 million jobs from 1933 to 1941 conserving natural resources and wild lands, and lessening the nation's considerable unemployment.

The green jobs proposal would create upwards of 37,000 jobs, many in rural areas; not to mention the related positive economic impacts associated with job-related spending such as purchasing supplies, renting equipment, and increased local spending.

Among the many important jobs to be done, workers employed through these funds will remove invasive species, restore watersheds, repair fish culverts, remove damaged and unwanted roads in forests and plant native trees.

Human health depends on the health of our forests, parks, wildlife refuges and other public lands and open spaces. Our economy is also dependent upon thriving natural systems. Economic sectors tied to outdoor recreation contribute over \$700 billion to the U.S. economy every year. More broadly, ecosystems also contribute to trillions of dollars of economic benefits through services they provide, cleaning our air and water, pollinating our crops and trapping and storing greenhouse gases.

The Wilderness Society will continue to press Congress to boost employment by creating jobs that defend against global warming — a wise choice for the economy, the environment, and the nation.

<http://wilderness.org/>

Petition to Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Brendan Smith Smith T.D

To Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Brendan Smith Smith T.D
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 favour 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.....

Email.....

NB Please cut out and send the above request to:
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Brendan Smith Smith T.D.
Dail Eireann,
Kildare
Street,
Dublin

A Tale of Two Forests by Etain Feeley

Before ...

There are very few chances these days to appreciate 'Nature' we all live in such a fast paced, frenetic and hostile environment, where everything evolves around that awful word 'convenience'.

My childhood years from the age of about five to twelve was spent in the peaceful tranquility of 'Aughavanagh' Co Wicklow. I was 'privileged to live there and it is only now that I realise the extent of that statement. Not many children get the advantage of spending their youth amongst such 'unspoilt wilderness'.

Living in 'Paradise', fresh clean air, long lazy summers, listening to the steady drone of bumble bees, pollinating, overburdened flowers and the unbelievable stillness of crisp chill winters. These are the hallmarks of living in the picturesque 'Garden of Ireland', purple/lilac heather rich smells of coconut scented gorse bushes.

To an unbiased childlike eye, everything appears 'gigantic' giant Oaks, Larch and many other native species dominating the skyline, a vast canopy of trees, stretching endless miles.

All swaying gently in the breeze, alien like, tentacles stretching, swaying and entwining.

The incredible.....'silence of the woods'

Occasionally, whilst treading gingerly on the pine clad carpet, ' a winged avenger' takes flight, sqwaking uncontrollably.

Sickly sweet smells of sap oozing its residious treacle like qualities, covering small sticky fingers, lichen and fhungi grow abundantly in the 'damp moistness of the forest' and fallen decomposing deadwood provides a safe and secure habitat for numerous 'creepy crawleys'.

Each evolution of season brings with it new wonders, a pristine clear stream trickles into the wooded glen. Nature is plentiful, a rabbit hops steadily along a forest track, whiskers atwiltch, scenting the air. Epitomising sheer elegance Peregrine Falcons, with their distinctive plumage, circle and hover, then dive one by one, talons unfurled, snatching at rodents and other small prey.

Feral goats, rummage through the undergrowth, tearing greedily at the sparse vegetation, mothers calling to their young.

A lone red stag, cheekily trots out, majestic in his glory, trumpets a challenge to an imaginary adversary and seemingly unphased by my presence, stands for one breathtaking moment, before vanishing into the dense, dark undergrowth.

In the late evening badgers frolic in the light of the moon, along the long avenue of oak trees and pipistrelle bats sweep quickly up and down , darting into the twilight in a most frenetic fashion.

In the woodland, a vixen's harsh beckoning call breaks the silence and her long sleek, elegant body vanishes from sight.

After

The above account of a somewhat idyllic childhood, was based on memories from my distant past, since writing the above article, things have changed and not for the better it seems. Gone are the beautiful native oak trees and frolicking badgers.

A war on nature has taken place, the incredible silence of the woods has gone and is now replaced by the never ending sound of chain saws, vast felling has occurred and is still occurring. Tree stubs, litter the ground, resembling fallen soldiers on a chessboard, as do plastic bags of every type and description, not to mention other forms of refuse thrown carelessly from car windows and passers by alike.

The once beautifully clear streams are now littered with rubbish, mainly fertiliser bags, thrown away without a care, rainwater dissolving their carcinogenic contents and washing poisonous hazardous waste into lakes and rivers.

In some areas, hidden away on forest tracks lie, the burnt out wrecks of vandalised or abandoned cars, their shells left in a ghostly array, old fridge freezers and other electrical paraphernalia abandoned carelessly.

The criminal destruction of our wonderful hedgerows, that provide protection for so many species of animals and birds alike, torn down by over zealous developers, irreplaceable and unique in their natural construction.

Wicklow is fast becoming a dumping ground and the phrase 'respect for nature' will become a somewhat forgotten epitaph, only used by those in the know or with a vested interest.

However there is some light at the end of the tunnel in this respect, conservative efforts have been made and are being made even as I write this article, to address the situation by several like minded individuals and Environmental Organisations. The Wicklow Co Council, and various N.G.O's such as 'Pure' which helps to report illegal fly tipping, not to mention the many community activists who are facing an uphill battle, working towards a common environmental, cause, who deserve every encouragement they can get, so all is not a doom and gloom scenario in this aspect.

Sadly, forestry practises in Wicklow leave a lot to be desired, the whole practise, ill conceived, an agricultural mess. It seems that Coillte are no longer adhering to Natural Biodiversity Guidelines which encourage the planting of native broad leaf trees. Instead the organisation has adopted a somewhat narrow minded approach, which favours a policy of 'monoculture' this in turn damages 'the cycle of nature' and brings with it, endless environmental problems.

Does anyone care?

Where have we gone wrong and is it too late to reverse this impending disaster? Now is the time to make a difference. We can start here and now by encouraging Coillte to rethink their agricultural policies, to plant mainly 'native species' and eventually overtime, the benefits of our actions will be appreciated by future generations and when our beautiful native woodland habitat is finally restored to its former glory, we can thank those who:

Spread the word ' a new type of revolution has begun'

'An Environmental Revolution'

EU WATCH

The Global Water Cycle is an integral part of the Earth System. It plays a central role in global atmospheric circulations, controlling the global energy cycle (through latent heat) as well as the carbon, nutrient and sediment cycles. Globally, the supply of fresh water far exceeds human requirements. However, by the end of the 21st century, these requirements begin to approach the total available water. Of course, regionally, the water demand - for agriculture, and domestic and industrial use - already exceeds supply

This Integrated Project Water and Global Change (WATCH), funded under the EU FP6, will bring together the hydrological, water resources and climate communities to analyse, quantify and predict the components of the current and future global water cycles and related water resources states; evaluate their uncertainties and clarify the overall vulnerability of global water resources related to the main societal and economic sectors. WATCH provides policy makers with a consistent and clear assessment of flows, floods and droughts for present and future scenario's.

Pesticides Use in Irish Forestry

The control of the Pine Weevil is being achieved in Irish forestry through chemical control and the continued use of persistent carcinogens which damage the immune system. From the late 1950's until 1975 DDT was the insecticide of choice. From 1976 to 1998 Coillte used Lindane.

In 1999 Coillte replaced this with permethrin, a synthetic pyrethroid which was used up until 2003. Permethrin is named on the FSC highly hazardous chemical list; From that time Coillte have been using alpha-cypermethrin and cypermethrin. Alpha-cypermethrin and cypermethrin are also named on the FSC highly hazardous pesticide list.

Coillte Teoranta has now applied for a derogation for cypermethrin. Like permethrin, cypermethrin is a synthetic pyrethroid.

The World Health Organization explains that all synthetic pyrethroids are neurotoxins acting on the axons in the peripheral and central nervous systems by interacting with sodium channels in mammals and/or insects. The impact on the nervous system is toxic.

This approach gives a forestry company 5 years to phase the pesticide out. If this is the case and this trend/ loophole continues Coillte could continue to use what is fundamentally the same chemical with the same side effects and environmental impact for some considerable time.

Coillte appear not to appreciate the hazardous properties of synthetic pyrethroids. There is no scientific doubt about the toxicological effects of permethrin (or other synthetic, pyrethroids). This is why it is named on the FSC highly hazardous pesticide list.

The continued use of synthetic pyrethroids also appears to contravene FSC principle 6.6 which states 'Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides.'

The problems associated with pine weevil are inextricably linked to Coillte Teo.'s forestry practice of conifer clearfell followed by reforestation with more conifers. The immature pine weevil lives in dead pine roots. The adults live in the forest canopy on shoots without significant economic effect.

Following clearfell the pine weevil no longer have their normal food source so they feed on the young plants, causing mortalities leading to economic failure of plantations. However the pine weevil is not a significant problem where LISS is practiced, e.g continuous cover forestry, as the canopy remains relatively intact. Yet Coillte have only designated approximately 1% of their forest estate for continuous cover forestry and 1% for LISS

A Guide to Brazilian Ecosystems by Tatiana Oliveira

Everybody has an idea that Brazil is a big forest, a BIG RAINFOREST. Actually, Brazil is a tropical country situated in South America and contains one of the most important ecosystems of the world:

the Amazon Rain Forest. However, that is not the only ecosystem that it has.

Brazil is divided into five main ecosystems: Tropical Rain Forest, Pantanal, Tropical Semi deciduous Forest, Thorny Scrub and Savannah.

There are other formations that are also important but not quite as big, for example: Pine Forest, Grasslands and Coastal Ecosystems.

Tropical Rain Forest or Brazilian Amazon :

The best known Brazilian ecosystem. It is also known as "The Lungs of the World". It's located in the Northern part of Brazil and comprises 47% of the national area. The huge variety of species make this forest the most important Rain Forest in the World. The climate is humid and equatorial and has also diversity in its vegetation physiognomy from dense forest to grassland

Savannah:

This is located inside the Plateau Region of Central Brazil. The climate in this ecosystem is well-defined in two seasons: very dry and very wet. It comprises 22% of the Brazilian national area with some parts in the Amazon and other smaller areas in the Tropical Semi deciduous Forest and Thorny Scrub.

It has different physiognomies from shrubby vegetation to grassland. This formation also includes some riparian woodland that follows watercourses.

Thorny Scrub:

It is located in the Brazilian northeast and comprises 11% of the national area. It is a very dry area with a very sparse vegetation and it is in a region called Sertao Nordestino. The east part, where it meets with Mata Atlantica, is called Agreste with quite dense vegetation and in the west part, where it meets the Amazon, the area is called Mata de Cocais or Meio-Norte (Middle-North).

Tropical Semi-deciduous Forest:

This was once one of the biggest forests in latitudinal extension from 6 to 32° S of the planet. Before the Portuguese colonization it made up 11% of the national area but now it comprises just 4%. The climate varies along its forest from very humid temperate in the south to humid and semi-dry tropical in the north. The biodiversity is also increased by the rugged ground with dense vegetation in the valleys and grassland at the summits.

Pantanal :

The biggest continuously flooded plain on the planet comprises 1.8% of the Brazilian national area. It has a big variety in its vegetation because of the different micro-climates and flooded areas.

Grassland:

In the temperate climate area in the south extreme of Brazil, this area has a wide variety of species as well as seasonal forest and grassland with isolated woody formations. It comprises 2.4% of the national area.

Pine Forest:

In the Plateau Region of Meridional, 500m above sea level, there is a variety of pine vegetation existing within a temperate Climate. Ages ago, it comprised 2.4% of the national area and now it suffers from deforestation because of its huge economic value.

Coastal Ecosystems:

Usually associated with the Tropical semi-deciduous Forest, it is comprised of the Restinga, Dunas and Mangrove regions. It is disappearing because of the spread of the Urban Centres along the seaside.

Invasive Species

Invasive non-native plant and animal species are the second greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide after habitat destruction. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy.

The Invasive Species Ireland project is a joint venture between the [Northern Ireland Environment Agency](#) and the [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#) to implement the recommendations of the 2004 Invasive Species Ireland Report.

This website acts as gateway to the Invasive Species Ireland project. From here, users will be able to find information on a range of species, policy related to individual species or groups of species, and strategies to deal with species that threaten the biodiversity and economies of Ireland.

You are encouraged to join the [Stakeholder Forum](#) and get involved in tackling invasive species in Ireland. Invasive species are one of the greatest threats to the environment but with your help we can make a difference.

Recent Alerts:

The “bloody-red shrimp” *Hemimysis anomala*, is a new aquatic invader and is now reported in Ireland from Lough Derg and Lough Rea. It is a small shrimp-like crustacean (order Mysidacea) native to the low-salinity margins of the Black Sea, the Azov Sea and the eastern Caspian Sea and most likely was brought into Ireland via boats.

Watch out for *Hemimysis* and [report all sightings](#). Please report all incidence of river and lake water appearing deep red in colour.

Muntjac deer are small deer, weighing up to 19kg and approximately 50 cm high at the shoulder and chestnut brown in colour. Muntjac are selective browsers of shrubs and woodland ground flora preventing seed regeneration of important conservation species such as our native blue bell.

Muntjac have recently been recorded in Ireland. Watch out for muntjac and [report all sightings](#), suspected tracks, and collisions with vehicles.

Information from: <http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com/>



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

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

FEES: Individual...€30 Family...€60 Schools...€60 Student /Unwaged/Senior Citizen...€15
(Please Tick one of above)

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:EMAIL:

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)

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

Further information at www.cairdenacoille.com

Telephone: (01) 8325415 Email: jjhaughton@gmail.com or wjmaher@iol.ie

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

