.

Forestry and Wood Update

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## CONTENTS

Technical workshop: Developing cost-effective systems for wood procurement, harvesting and transport 1

National Forestry Conference 2

Bioenergy 2008 2

New Publication 2

Carbon Corner 3

Update on the 7th EU RTDI Framework Programme 4

Harvest Planning for Biodiversity 4

Preparing for Climate Change in the Outdoor Recreation Sector 5

Update on Mountain Pine Beetle Outbreak in British Columbia 5

Update on EUFGIS – A New Pan-European Project on Forest Genetic Resources (FGR) 5

The role of forest genetic resources in helping British forests respond to climate change 6

Norway’s Creation of a Global Seed Vault 6

Conference: Climate Change and Systematics 6

National Greener Ireland exhibition 7

Bioenergy - making it a sustainable reality 7

COST - Strategic workshop on global change and sustainable development in mountain regions 7

Communicators wanted 8

Vacancy for Technical Director at the Society of Irish Foresters 8

Research Scholarships for EFI Associate and Affiliate Members in 2008 8

Energy and the Irish Climate - Harnessing the Irish climate for energy 9

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# Technical workshop:

## Developing cost-effective systems for wood procurement, harvesting and transport

Cost-competitiveness along the wood supply chain is vitally important as labour, transport, and processing costs are continually rising and impacting on profitability and returns on capital. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have a proven role in controlling costs and improving efficiencies in the forest sector. At the same time, harvesting equipment is developing in tandem with ICT platforms, enabling linkages between log size demand at the mill, and assortment cutting in the forest. To highlight the potentials of such systems COFORD will be holding a technical workshop on the 22 February 2008 at the Killeshin Hotel, Dublin Road, Portlaoise.

The programme includes:

* *Applications and development of real-time GPS tracking systems and on-board load sensor technology for wood transport in Ireland* - Dr Gerard Devlin (UCD)
* *Developments in small-scale harvesting technologies in Scandinavia, with particular relevance to Ireland* - Pieter D. Kofman (Danish Forestry Extension)
* *Value maximisation in harvesting – results of the OPTIVAL project* – Professor Maarten Nieuwenhuis (UCD)
* *IT developments in tracking Coillte's timber movements* - John Lyons (Coillte)
* *Potential IT developments for wood sale from private forests* - Donal Whelan (ITGA)

Limited spaces are available, so if you wish to attend please contact COFORD (tel: 012130735, email: info@coford.ie)

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# National Forestry Conference

COFORD, the Society of Irish Foresters and the Irish Timber Growers’ Association are organising the National Forestry Conference, taking place on Friday 7 March 2008 at the Johnstown House Hotel, Enfield, Co Meath. The theme for this year’s conference is ***New forestry initiatives – opportunities for the sector***. It will be opened by the COFORD Chairman Michael Lynn (Woodfab) and will feature the following presentations:

* Keynote address: *Positioning the forestry sector to maximise its potential* – Prof. Gerry Boyle, Teagasc Director
* *Optimising returns from private forests – the thinning challenge* – Henry Phillips, Forestry consultant
* *Private timber sales – information and security initiatives* – Donal Whelan, ITGA Technical Director
* *Wood biomass – from forest to market* – Tom Kent, Waterford Institute of Technology
* *New grant schemes – new opportunities* – Seamus Dunne, Forest Service

If you would like to reserve a place at the conference, please contact the Society of Irish Foresters – tel: 071 9164434, Email: info@societyofirishforesters.ie or sif@eircom.net. [***Click here to download registration form.***](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/nfc2008.pdf)

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Bioenergy 2008

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

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# New Publication

## Mulch mats and their role in establishing forest and other tree crops

Successful establishment of young trees depends on suppression of competing weeds. While herbicide application is a cost-effective solution, environmental awareness and forest certification processes have led to a reappraisal of herbicide use.

A research team based at Waterford Institute of Technology, led by Dr Nick Mc Carthy, has pioneered work in seeking workable alternatives to herbicides. COFORD has funded the team to evaluate the effectiveness of mulch mats placed around the trees at planting for weed suppression. A range of materials have been tested over a 2-year period, at forest sites in south and in the south east.

Results from the trials have shown that the mats are as effective as herbicides in controlling vegetation and their use allows trees to get well established. The team’s work is summarised in the COFORD report ***Mulch mats and their role in establishing forest and other tree crops*** by Nick Mc Carthy, Claire Mc Carthy and Milo O Rathaille, present results for four forest crop types. Speaking at the launch of the report, author Dr Nick McCarthy said: “we achieved good vegetation control using a range of mulch materials in four forest crops, and while the cost of the mulch mats we investigated is more expensive than herbicides, they do have potential. We are continuing to pursue this line of research under a new round of COFORD funding, with the objective of coming up with workable, cost effective alternatives to current herbicides”.

Welcoming the report, COFORD Director Dr Eugene Hendrick stated: “Expansion of forest cover in Ireland is essential to national climate change and energy policies. Cost effective approaches to vegetation management in young forests need to be further developed and researched. The work done in this project goes some way to addressing this need, and the vegetation management expertise which has been developed at WIT is an important resource for the forestry sector”.

The names of brands and distributors of mulch mats can be found on the [FORVAMS website](http://www.forvams.org/Forestry.aspx?section=WeedControl&subsection=Other) – http://www.forvams.org/

To order a copy of the report please contact COFORD: phone 01-2130725 or email info@coford.ie, or order it on-line – [click here](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/product_info.php?cPath=1175&products_id=966609).

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Carbon Corner

## International and national developments underline role of forests in combating climate change

Tropical deforestation is one of the main causes of global warming, accounting for an estimated 20% of annual greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Losses of forest cover at this scale have huge knock-on effects on biodiversity and livelihoods of forest peoples.

A process to tackle the problem of reducing emissions from deforestation (RED) has been part of the UNFCCC negotiation agenda for the last two years. At the Bali conference in December, protracted negotiations on RED resulted in agreement that by the end of 2009, a framework and rules will be put in place to account for reductions in emissions from deforestation, and how they will be financed. This outcome was a major breakthrough and will provide a significant part of the solution to reducing global deforestation, but will it will not eliminate it, given the entrenched nature of the economic and social factors at play.

Many developing countries are also faced with overlogging and other unsustainable practices which, while not resulting in deforestation as such, reduce stocking in existing forests, and which can, over time, result in forest loss. Coming under the general term forest degradation, these processes also result in emissions of carbon dioxide. During the negotiation process, inclusion of degradation in the package of measures was strongly advocated by a number of countries, particularly sub-Saharan nations. Despite some reservations on definitional and methodological issues associated with measuring degradation, it was included in the agreement reached (now referred to as reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation – REDD).

Many challenges lie ahead in arriving at an agreed REDD mechanism by the end of 2009, however, accounting for reductions in emissions from the two sources (and deforestation in particular), can call on a very considerable body of knowledge and expertise in areas such as remote sensing, and estimation of changes in forest carbon stocks. An ambitious schedule of technical submissions and workshops to achieve the 2009 deadline is set out in the Bali agreement, with the first submission on how to address outstanding methodological issues related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries due on 21 March.

For those wishing to know more about the Bali agreement on forests the agreed text is available at <http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_13/application/pdf/cp_redd.pdf>.

On the domestic front, January has brought two announcements that provide a boost to wood energy use. First, a call for proposals for grant support to assist the deployment of CHP systems fuelled by biomass was announced by SEI. While the budget is relatively small (€ 5 million) it will stimulate projects with the potential to use wood biomass in a highly efficient manner (see <http://www.sei.ie/index.asp?locID=1348&docID=1279> for details.) The second, related announcement, made by Minister Eamon Ryan, is an increase in the feed-in tariff price under the REFIT scheme, from 7.2 to 12.0 euro cent/kW hour. Readers of Carbon Corner with good memories may recall in September 2006 the column advocated *an upward review of the* [REFIT wood biomass derived electricity] *price, to move close to 10 eurocent per kilowatt hour*. Naturally we welcome this announcement, with the caveat that the wood heating market will need to think seriously about securing its future supply, as demand is set to rise sharply as new large scale outlets come on stream.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Update on the 7th EU RTDI Framework Programme

The focus for the news supplement from InnovaWood is the Marie Curie Programme. This sub-programme of the PEOPLE Programme of FP7 can be used to support PhD students and early stage researchers. A call for proposals for 'Initial Training Networks', due to open soon will close in September 2008. The 'Marie Curie Actions' have long been one of the most popular and appreciated features of the Community Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development. They have developed significantly in orientation over time, from a pure mobility fellowships programme to a programme dedicated to stimulating researchers' career development. The 'Marie Curie Actions' have been particularly successful in responding to the needs of Europe's scientific community in terms of training, mobility and career development. This has been demonstrated by a demand in terms of highly ranked applications that in most actions extensively surpassed the available financial support - so competition is fierce. Contact InnovaWood (office@innovawood.com) if you are interested in this opportunity. [Click here for the News Supplement.](http://www.coford.ie/iopen24/pub/pub/cofordiwjanfeb08.pdf)

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Harvest Planning for Biodiversity

Increasingly forest managers are leaving a portion of live trees on site during the clearfelling of mature stands. This tactic, known by various names such as long-term retention, structural or green-tree retention, is designed to retain or accelerate development of forest structures and plant and animal species that are associated with older, multilayered forests. These retained trees are thought to ameliorate microclimate conditions and enhance habitat for plants and animals that would not survive in a traditional clear-cut.

To date the benefits of structural retention were largely speculative in the absence of scientific studies. However, a recent interdisciplinary study carried out by the Pacific Northwest Research Station in Oregon called Demonstration of Ecosystem Management Options (DEMO), is providing new insights into this practice.

Researchers tested six harvest treatments across six Douglas fir sites in Oregon which enabled them to contrast the effects of retention level (15 to 100 percent of basal area) with spatial pattern ( dispersed vs aggregated) for a variety of response variables.

 Implications for management from early results are:

* Retention levels greater than 15% may be needed to effectively retain sensitive plants and animals, ameliorate harsh micro-climate conditions and gain acceptance for clearfelling by the public.
* The amount of retention appears to have a greater influence on forest-dependent species than pattern of retention. By aggregating retained trees in unharvested patches of at least 1 ha, managers can provide refuges with ecological and microclimate conditions that enable many sensitive species to persist, at least in the short term, and serve as local sources of recolonisation into adjacent harvested areas as the new stand develops.
* A combination of intact patches and dispersed trees may be the best strategy for green-tree retention.

*(Science Findings, Issue 96, Sept. 2007, Pacific Northwest Research Station. Available at http//:www.fs.fed.us/pnw)*

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Preparing for Climate Change in the Outdoor Recreation Sector

The Countryside Recreation Network are organising a seminar on *Preparing for climate change in the outdoor recreation sector*, on Wednesday 30 January at the Priory Rooms in Birmingham. The event is targeted at people responsible for the provision or management of outdoor recreation facilities, including country parks, commons, woodlands, grasslands, uplands, urban green spaces, public rights of way and waterways, and who have a basic understanding of climate change. The objective of this seminar is to demonstrate the ways that climate change will affect their business and how they will need to adapt to this change. For further information on the programme email crn@shu.ac.uk or phone 0044 114 225 4494.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Update on Mountain Pine Beetle Outbreak in British Columbia

Recently a catastrophic outbreak of mountain pine beetles *Dendroctonus ponderosa* Hopkins (Coleoptera: Scolytidae) was reported in British Columbia’s lodgepole pine forestswhere approximately 7 million hectares of pine forest in the region had been destroyed at that time. A new report, entitled *Timber Supply and the Mountain Pine Beetle Infestation in British Columbia – 2007 Update,* reveals that the beetles have now destroyed more than 9 million hectares of pine forests and have wiped out about 40% of the infested regions marketable pine trees. While the insects have lived on lodgepole and ponderosa pine in Western Canada for thousands of years, nature has controlled major outbreaks by killing the beetles through extreme winter cold or forest fires. However, the area has not had the required cold temperatures in recent years due possibly to climate change and also through efforts to fight fires to protect the timber supply and area communities which have increased the number of older trees that are more susceptible to an insect attack. As a result the pine beetle infestation has spread unabated for the past ten years and, unless weather conditions change to keep these beetles in check, the amount of trees killed by 2015 in Canada’s largest timber exporting province is estimated to reach about 1 billion cubic metres. For further information see: www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Update on EUFGIS – A New Pan-European Project on Forest Genetic Resources (FGR)

The EUFGIS (Establishment of a European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources) project, co-ordinated by Bioversity International and co-funded by the European Commission has initiated the development of an information system for dynamic gene conservation units of forest trees in Europe.

The concept of dynamic gene conservation emphasizes maintenance of evolutionary processes within tree populations to safeguard their potential for continuous adaptation. In most cases this means managing tree populations at their natural sites, within the environment to which they are adapted to (*in situ*). In some case, artificial but dynamically evolving tree populations outside their place of origin (*ex situ*) also contribute to dynamic gene conservation.

A total of 34 European countries, including Ireland, have nominated a national focal point for the EUFGIS project. The national focal points are expected to compile national data sets on dynamic gene conservation units, following data standards which will be developed as part of the project in collaboration with the EUFORGEN Networks.

On 23-24 October 2007, the focal points met representatives of the EUFORGEN Networks, invited speakers and the project partners at a workshop held in Birkerod in Denmark. The workshop discussed the present documentation efforts of the gene conservation units in Europe, identified future needs in this regard and made recommendations for the development of the EUFGIS information system. For further information on the EUFGIS project, as well as the workshop presentations and outcomes see www.euforgen.org

 [Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# The role of forest genetic resources in helping British forests respond to climate change

A new Information Note from Forestry Commission on *The role of forest genetic resources in helping forests respond to climate change*, provides an overview of the issues surrounding the use of genetic resources in British forestry and presents possible strategies to help forests and woodland adapt to the effects of climate change through the use of genetic resources.

Ongoing discussion surrounds the choice of appropriate genetic resources for reducing the impacts of climate change on British forests and this uncertainty is leading to delays in the formulation of a definitive strategy. This document presents the issues surrounding this debate by providing responses to the most commonly raised issues and the information is based on summaries of genetic population theory, recent research findings and current ideas on these topics postulated by the European research community. For further information contact Dr Jason Hubert (email: Jason.hubert@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

 [Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Norway’s Creation of a Global Seed Vault

 In early 2007 the Norwegian government announced the creation of a Global Seed Vault on the island of Spitsbergen near the town of Longyearbyen in the remote artic Svalbard archipelagoat which is about 1,000 km from the North Pole.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault, or the Doomsday Vault as the media have nicknamed it, will be the ultimate safety net for the world’s most important natural resource. Permafrost and thick rock will ensure that even without electricity, the samples will remain frozen. The vault’s construction will be funded and managed by the Norwegian government as a service to the world community. The Global Crop Diversity Trust considers the vault an essential component of a rational and secure global system for conserving the genetic diversity of all our crops. The Trust is therefore committed to supporting ongoing operational costs, and will assist developing countries with preparing, packaging and transporting their representative seeds to the Arctic. The Seed Vault is managed under terms spelled out in a tripartite agreement between the Norwegian government, the Global Crop Diversity Trust and the Nordic Gene Bank (a co-operative effort of the Nordic countries under the Nordic Council of Ministers).

Genebanks are vulnerable to a wide range of threats - civil strife, war, natural catastrophes, and more routinely but no less damagingly, poor management, lack of adequate funding, and equipment failures. Unique varieties of our most important crops are lost whenever any such disaster strikes, and therefore securing duplicates of all collections in a global facility provides an insurance policy for the world’s food supply.

For further information see [www.seedvault.no](http://www.seedvault.no)

 [Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Conference: Climate Change and Systematics

A conference on climate change and systematics, organised by the Department of Botany, School of Natural Sciences, Trinity College Dublin on behalf of the Systematics Association and the Linnean Society, will provide a forum for systematists to present and discuss their research as it relates to the critical issue of global climate change. The meeting will examine the problems posed by global climate change and will centre on three themes: 1. Climate change and speciation/extinction; 2. Climate change and biogeography; 3. Climate change: documenting and conserving biodiversity. For further information, see http://www.tcd.ie/botany/ or email: climate@tcd.ie

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# National Greener Ireland exhibition

The National Greener Ireland exhibition will take place on 19 and 20 April 2008 at the RDS Dublin. The exhibition will demonstrate all the avenues available to improve our lives, while making a positive impact on our planet. In a society that is becoming more and more environmentally aware and 'green' conscious, it is important for people and organisations to understand the benefits of change - energy efficiency, recycling, offsetting individual carbon footprints and making lifestyle changes. National Greener Ireland will showcase the innovators, the environmentalists, the conservationists, the scientists, and the companies that will improve our world for a sustainable future. The exhibition will be open to the general public and to all parties interested in seeking out information on the various environmental services available to them and alternative methods to offset their carbon footprint. The idea behind the event is to show that even small changes can make a difference - and that, to make these changes in our everyday lives, is not only possible, will not only be good for our pockets - but can even be fun. For more information see www.greenerireland.ie.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Bioenergy - making it a sustainable reality

Teagasc and the Irish Bioenergy Association (IrBEA) are joint hosts of a conference on Tuesday 12 February 2008 at the Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co Offaly. The conference focus is on making the bioenergy supply chain work and the three sessions will discuss policy, vehicle fuel and solid biomass. For full details please see www.teagasc.ie or www.irbea.org or email: contact@irbea.org

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# COST - Strategic workshop on global change and sustainable development in mountain regions

Fifteen years ago the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) highlighted that mountains are an important source of water, energy and biological diversity. As a major ecosystem representing the complex and interrelated ecology of our planet, mountain environments are essential to the survival of the global ecosystem.

COST is organising a Strategic Workshop on 'Global Change and Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions' aiming at the identifying of future research needs in the context of the sustainable development in mountain regions. The outcome will provide rationales and guidelines for researchers, research managers, policy makers, as well as funding agencies.

This strategic workshop takes place on 7 - 9 April 2008 in Innsbruck (Austria), and will focus on putting research topics on mountain ecosystem services on the political agenda and will identify the implications of climate and socioeconomic change for current and future forms of land use. The workshop will deal with the impact on selected ecosystem services such as hazard protection, recreation, and natural resources.Scenarios of change and its implication for societies depending on these ecosystem services will be appraised.

The following topics will be discussed in detail:

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

For more information see <http://bfw.ac.at/mountain>.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Communicators wanted

The FAO Forest Communication Service is seeking a qualified communicator on a consultancy or secondment basis for the development of web-based educational materials about forests and forestry for schools and children, and advocacy for European Forests Week and other forestry activities. Interested candidates should contact Andrea.Perlis@fao.org

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Vacancy for Technical Director at the Society of Irish Foresters

The Society of Irish Foresters (SIF), founded in 1942, is the representative body for the forestry profession in Ireland. SIF aims to promote a greater understanding of all aspects of forestry in the country. It represents the interests of foresters through lobbying government and commercial organisations while maintaining professional standards and the continual professional development of its members. The position of Technical Director for SIF is currently available for application. The successful candidate will be required to:

* Implement SIF Council policy and develop work programmes for the delivery of Council policy and decisions;
* Manage the day-to-day administration of the SIF office including queries, correspondence, accounts, membership, etc.;
* Devise new streams of funding through specific projects from funding agencies, sponsorship and enhanced membership services with the ultimate aim of the Society being financially independent;
* Develop and manage the SIF CPD programme;
* Ensure timely delivery of the SIF Journal, newsletter and information updates;
* Develop a communication strategy for forestry promotion to the wider public;
* Provide administrative and technical support to SIF management boards and regional groups;
* Represent and promote SIF within delegations, meetings and functions at national and international level.

The post is part time, i.e. 4 days per week. The salary will be commensurate with the duties of the post and experience of the applicant. Travel and vouched expenses will be paid as appropriate. Location is Midlands/East or by agreement. Send application and CV, including the names of two referees, by email, to sif@eircom.net

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Research Scholarships for EFI Associate and Affiliate Members in 2008

EFI welcomes applications from young researchers or PhD students who are employed by, attached to or registered with EFI Associate or Affiliate Member organisations. The scholarships will be awarded on a competitive basis. The topic of the research work should fit in EFI priority areas in research: (i) forest ecology and management (ii) forest products markets and socio-economics (iii) policy analysis, or (iv) forest resources and information. More information on the research priorities is available at: http://www.efi.int/portal/research/

The selection criteria are the relevance of the research topic for Europe, multicountry applicability (i.e. the research addresses several countries or can be applied in several countries of Europe), the applicant's previous academic success and the quality of the research plan (cf. criteria described in the Guidelines for Applicants, please see attached below). The candidates should be PhD students or young scientists with maximum of four years' research experience.

Each scholarship will be for three to five months, and the successful candidate will be resident in Joensuu at EFI HQ for that time. The online application can be downloaded from <http://www.efi.int/portal/about_efi/human_resources/efi_scholarships_application_form/>. The deadline for applications is 31 March 2008.

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)

# Energy and the Irish Climate - Harnessing the Irish climate for energy

The Agmet group is please to announce a one day conference *Energy and the Irish climate - Harnessing the Irish climate for energy*. The conference will be held on 29 February 2008 in the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9. Four keynote speakers will deliver papers on the topics of: wind energy; biomass for energy; marine energy and solar energy;

* Rick Watson (UCD) on 'Wind energy and the Irish climate'
* Astley Hastings (University of Aberdeen) on 'Potential of bioenergy for the UK & Ireland and Europe for current and future climate'
* Glen Nolan and Eoin Sweeny (Marine Institute) on 'Marine Renewable Energy and the Irish Wave Resource'
* Brian Norton (DIT) on 'Solar Energy and the Irish Climate'

Agmet is an Irish based organisation, founded in 1984 to support agricultural meteorology in Ireland and to bring the knowledge of agricultural meteorology to a wider audience (see www.agmet.ie for more information).

[Back to List of Contents](#_CONTENTS)