

Removal of rhododendron at Hazelwood



Goat damage to trees at Camcor



EXPECTED RESULTS
During the life-time of the project a significant improvement in woodland habitat quality is expected. The aim is to put in place conditions which will allow priority woodland to regenerate in future years.

Three of the sites have been selected as LIFE Project Demonstration Sites, with a special focus on public awareness and education - a yew woodland at Cahir Park, Co Tipperary, an alluvial woodland at Hazelwood, Co Sligo, and a woodland associated with limestone pavement near Clonbur, Co Galway/Co Mayo.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Four native woodland habitat types found in Ireland - yew woodland, alluvial woodland, woodland associated with limestone pavement, and bog woodland - are recognised under the EU Habitats Directive as being critically rare. These woodlands are restricted in their distribution, not just in this country but also across the entire EU. Under Annex I of the Habitats Directive, these habitat types are given "priority" status. This four year project targets the restoration of 550.8 ha of these priority woodlands, which have been impacted in various ways by human activities in the past. There are nine sites included in this project, all owned and managed by Coillte. These are all designated as special areas of conservation and are located in nine different counties around Ireland.

INTRODUCTION

- remove non-native trees and shrubs
- control invasive non-native species to facilitate natural regeneration of native woodland habitat
- block forest drains within alluvial woodlands
- fence project areas to protect habitats
- from grazing where appropriate
- extend yew woodlands through natural regeneration and planting of local native stock
- promote favourable conservation status of rare bog woodland
- raise public awareness

- past afforestation of non-native tree species
- spread of invasive non-native trees and shrubs
- drainage of alluvial areas and bog woodland
- overgrazing and animal trespass
- undervalued perception of priority woodland

PROJECT ACTIONS

Irish priority woodland habitats have been threatened by a range of activities, including:

- This project aims to remove invasive non-native species and reinstate natural water regimes, in order to restore natural woodland habitat. Specific aims are:
- to restore habitat quality across the four priority woodland types targeted by the project
- to enhance 550.8 ha priority woodland habitat in Ireland
- to develop and promote woodland restoration techniques
- to demonstrate the relevance and value of priority woodland habitats and raise public awareness

OBJECTIVES

THREATS TO HABITATS



PRIORITY WOODLAND HABITATS

RESTORING PRIORITY WOODLAND HABITATS IN IRELAND

LIFE05 NAT/IRL/000182



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www.woodlandrestoration.ie

Useful Links

- LIFE Programme www.ec.europa.eu/environment/life
- Natura 2000 www.ec.europa.eu/environment/nature
- Coillte Teoranta www.coillte.ie
- LIFE04 Raised Bog Restoration www.raisedbogrestoration.ie
- LIFE02 Blanket Bog Restoration www.irishbogrestorationproject.ie

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www.leavenotraceireland.org



Limestone pavement woodland at Clonbur

A nature conservation project jointly funded by EU DG-Environment and Coillte Teoranta (The Irish Forestry Board) under the EU LIFE-Nature Programme. The project is managed by Coillte Teoranta and focuses on the restoration of nine Coillte owned sites within the EU Natura 2000 network, running from January 2006 to December 2009.

www.woodlandrestoration.ie



LIFE
LIFE, the financial instrument of the European Commission for the environment introduced in 1992, is one of the spearheads of the European Union's environmental policy.

The specific objective of LIFE-Nature is to contribute to the implementation of Community nature protection legislation: the "Birds" Directive (79/409/EEC) and the "Habitats" Directive (92/43/EEC), and in particular, the establishment of the "Natura 2000" network for the *in situ* management and conservation of Europe's most remarkable fauna, flora and habitats.



The Birds and Habitats Directives aim to protect wildlife species and habitats. Each Member State is required to identify sites of European importance and to put in place a special management plan to protect them, combining long-term conservation with economic and social activities, as part of a sustainable development strategy. These sites make up the Natura 2000 network - the cornerstone of EU nature protection policy. The Natura 2000 network already comprises more than 18,000 sites, covering over 17% of EU territory.



Coillte Teoranta (The Irish Forestry Board) is a state-owned forestry company. The Coillte forest estate comprises 445,000 hectares of land, including in excess of 10,000 hectares in Natura 2000 sites. Strong emphasis is placed on achieving balance between commercial, environmental and social objectives in managing company operations. Coillte has been recognised as achieving this balance by the international certification body, Forestry Stewardship Council.

PRIORITY WOODLAND HABITATS

ALLUVIAL - Sites 1, 3, 4 & 9

Alluvial woodlands are under increasing threat in Europe. They occur in areas that are subject to periodic flooding. This wet woodland environment provides a home for many specialised plant and animal species.

Typical tree species include birch, willow, alder, ash, oak, hazel, bird cherry and buckthorn.



Hazlewood (site 3)



catkins



primrose



willow warbler



coillte



LIMESTONE - Sites 1, 2, 5, 6 & 7

Woodlands associated with limestone pavement occur only where pockets of soil exist. This creates a mosaic of habitats with shrubs, larger trees and occasional dwarfed species interspersed among open limestone pavement.

Typical tree species include hazel, yew, whitebeam, buckthorn, blackthorn, ash and spindle.



Attyslany (site 2)



water rail



great fen sedge



peacock butterfly



mountain avens

DEMONSTRATION SITES

Three of the project woodlands have been selected as demonstration sites due to their unique ecological characteristics and proximity to population centres. At each of these sites, visitor information panels describe the overall LIFE project and features particular to that site.

Clonbur (SITE 1) is one of the largest areas of limestone pavement found outside the Burren, and perhaps the most remarkable. At more than 290 hectares, this is by far the largest site in the project.

Hazelwood (SITE 3) is within walking distance of Sligo town. The hydrology is relatively intact, making it an excellent prospect for priority woodland restoration despite the invasion of non-native species.

Cahir Park (SITE 6) is a fine example of yew woodland. This woodland has a very long history of continuous forest cover since before the 1830s. Removal of non-native tree species will allow expansion and natural regeneration of native trees and shrubs.

Location of Project Sites

LEGEND

- + Demonstration Sites
- Other Project Sites



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9	Camcor	17.1

Total Project Area 550.8

ACHOIMRE AR AN DTIONSCAL

Oibreoidh Coillte chun 550.8 heactair do thimpeallach choille ar naoi suíomh ar fud na hÉireann a fhágáil ar ais ina riocht nádúrtha. Seo an tionscnamh choille is mó a tosaíodh riamh sa tír seo.

Aithníonn Coillte an cúnamh airgid a fuarathas Fheachtas Saol-Dúlra an tAontais Eorpaigh.

BOG - Site 8

Bog woodland is a wet woodland occurring on intact bog or fen peat. These woodlands grow in permanently waterlogged soils and, as a result, have a very specialised flora and fauna. They are rare in Ireland.

Typical tree species include birch, willow, alder, ash and rowan.



Aghnaguig (site 8)



grey heron



woodcock



mature willow

YEW - Sites 1, 2, 5, 6 & 7

Yew woodland occurs mainly in limestone areas on rocky or shallow calcareous soils. In Ireland, these woodlands generally form as small yew-rich pockets within other woodland habitat types. Like other priority woodland habitats, yew woods are extremely rare.



Curraghchase (site 5)



yew



violets



whitebeam

PROJECT SUMMARY

Coillte will work towards restoring 550.8 hectares of priority woodland habitat on nine sites around Ireland to a near natural and sustainable condition. This is the largest woodland project of its kind to be undertaken in this country.

Coillte acknowledges the funding received from the EU LIFE Nature programme.