

Woodlands of Ireland – A Decade of Progress

**Forging the Foundations for a
Vibrant Native Woodland Resource**

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Background & Objectives

- Woodlands of Ireland established in 1998
- Key objectives re native woodlands:
 - (1) to generate public awareness, and
 - (2) manage and expand the resource
- New Millennium seen as ideal platform
- Financial support from the Forest Service, the Heritage Council and National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Strong emphasis on training and technical support



Structures

- A non-formal entity comprising State, ENGO, professionals and individuals - in partnership!
- Steering Group: provides overall guidance and direction
 - 3 funding bodies plus 7 elected members
- Technical Advisory Group: provides wide-ranging expertise and advice
 - approx. 30 members
 - sub-groups address different topics
- One staff member - Project Manager



Key Projects & Initiatives

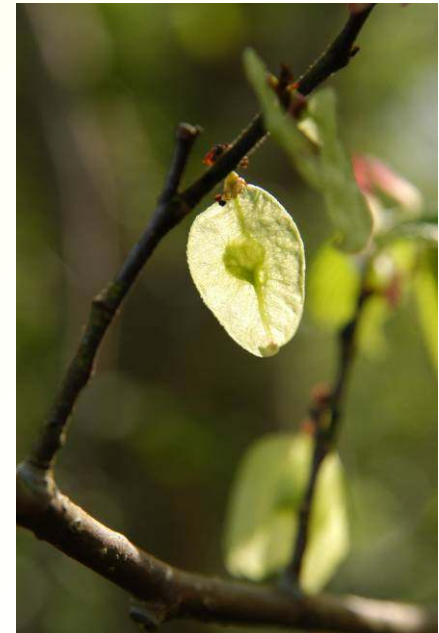
- Flagship Native Woodland Project - a Millennium project to engage the general public: 2000 to 2002 and beyond
- Develop an incentive to manage privately and public-owned native woodlands - a Native Woodland Scheme: 1999 to 2001
- Support measures to underpin and develop the sector: ongoing



Projects

People's Millennium Forests Project

- Developed early proposals in 1999
 - Resulted in a €6.35m project sponsored by National Millennium Committee, AIB Bank & Forest Service
 - Implemented by Coillte in partnership with Woodlands of Ireland
 - Family Tree Scheme: 1.3 million households
 - Major PR programme, Roadshow, Site launches.....
 - Restored 16 native woodlands totalling 600 ha, including 2 in Northern Ireland
 - Schools Outreach Education Programme
 - Training in woodland management and tree/shrub identification
- » increased awareness and management capability



Projects (contd.)

Native Woodland Scheme (NWS)

- Major developmental input via initial drafts
 - Further developed by Forest Service Native Woodland Development Group in 2000
 - Launched in November 2001 by Minister with responsibility for Forestry at Charleville Castle, Tullamore
 - Two Parts: Element 1 – Conservation of Existing Woodlands, and Element 2 – Creation of New Native Woodlands
 - Management Plan carried out by an approved forester and ecologist
- » Applications approved to date total over 5,000 ha worth > €25m from both public and private sectors



Projects (contd.)

Support Measures

- Co-ordination: relevant sectors, skills and personnel
- Training: 3 day and 1 day Native Woodland courses
- Publications: Technical: NWS Information Notes
Topical: National Press and Magazines
- Policy: consultation, submissions and development, i.e.
Heritage Council Forest Policy Review
- Research: promote and engage in key areas
- Conferences: Native Woodland Conference, 2004
- Seminar: 1 or 2 day events - in planning
- Funding: Small-scale projects to advance sector
- Committees/groups: Active participation
- Lobbying: policy change and funding



Current & future challenges

- Stop-start funding of NWS and related schemes
- Deer and Squirrel damage
- Further integration into forest sector, e.g. education
- Further integration into environmental sector
- Equal focus on conservation and wood production
- Development of value-added downstream hardwood products and processing
- Economic sustainability
- Implementation of native woodland policy in other sectors



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