

Chairman's Statement



Preface

Since the establishment of Woodlands of Ireland in 1998, a wealth of practice, expertise and knowledge has been generated in relation to native woodland ecology and management in Ireland. Much of this has arisen through the experiences of the People's Millennium Forests Project and the Forest Service Native Woodland Scheme, launched in 2000 and 2001 respectively. This has resulted in the development of a solid foundation for the rejuvenation and expansion of native woodlands, a long-neglected cornerstone of our heritage, through active management with substantial financial backing.

Technical support for this process has been provided throughout this period by Woodlands of Ireland in partnership and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders involved with native woodlands. These include foresters, ecologists, woodland contractors, nursery managers and other professionals, landowners, environmental NGOs, the Forest Service (Department of Agriculture and Food), the National Parks and Wildlife Service (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government), the Heritage Council, Coillte, the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards, the Marine Institute, Teagasc, COFORD (the National Council for Forest Research and Development), and relevant departments in universities and institutes of technology.

Woodlands of Ireland provides technical advice and information, stages national events, and publishes supporting literature. The organisation plays an essential role in providing feedback and suggestions to the Forest Service from key stakeholders working with the Native Woodland Scheme on a day-to-day basis. This work has contributed significantly to the ongoing development and refinement of the scheme by the Forest Service, aimed at improving its efficiency and effectiveness.

Woodlands of Ireland also works with the Forest Service in delivering a training programme designed to support the Native Woodland Scheme. This programme includes annual 3-day training courses and regular 1-day training courses aimed at specific target groups. To date, approximately 600 people have participated in these courses, and further courses are being planned.

As a further step in developing the knowledge base, Woodlands of Ireland is developing a series of information notes addressing a variety of key issues relating to native woodland ecology and management, designed to complement the Native Woodland Scheme. A considerable amount of the material in these notes is derived from training course modules. Each information note, developed with input from relevant experts, contains

up-to-date information and best practice on its respective topic, together with further reading and useful contacts. The production of these information notes has only been made possible with the commitment of individual authors and with funding provided by the Forest Service under the National Development Programme (NDP).

As Ireland embarks on a programme of native woodland enhancement and expansion, it is both timely and appropriate that these information notes are published. These notes, to be released periodically, will accumulate to form an invaluable 'decision-support' library for landowners, ecologists and foresters and others involved with the Native Woodland Scheme, and with native woodlands in general. Given that the establishment and management of native woodlands require considerable input and attention to detail, it is clear that, over time, this collection of Native Woodland Information Notes will contribute enormously to the rejuvenation and expansion of Ireland's native woodland heritage.

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Coillearnacha Dúchasacha
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