



Irish Forest Owners

**WEBINAR & AGM**

**27<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**WELCOME**



8.00pm Meeting opened by Nicholas Sweetman, Chairperson, IFO

8.05pm **Guest Speaker:** Prof. Áine Ní Dhubháin

*University College Dublin*

**Barriers to participation in Forest Owner Organisations and Forestry Knowledge Transfer Events**

8.30pm Q&A

8.35pm **Guest Speaker:** Luke Dowd

*AdaptForRes project*

**Carbon Dynamics in Irish Forests**

9.00pm Q&A

9.15pm **IFO AGM**

9.35pm AOB

9.45pm Meeting End



Irish Forest Owners

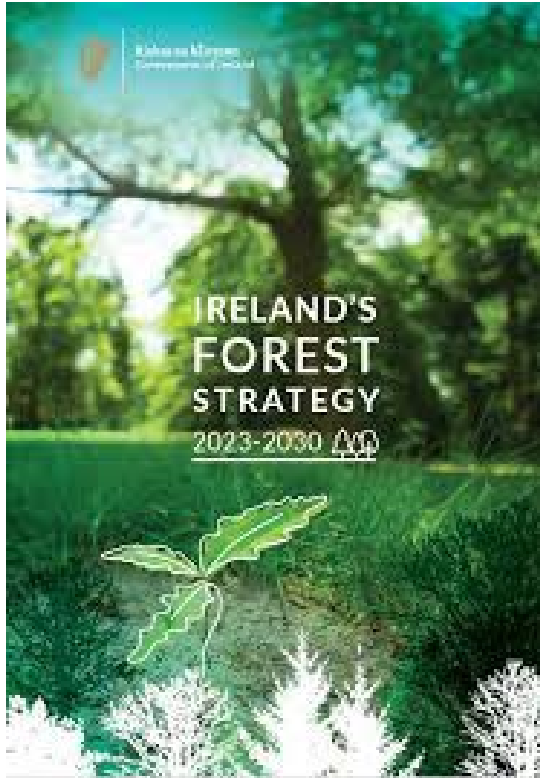
## **Secretary's Report**

# IFO steering group members



Member group	Steering group member
Donegal Woodland Owners Society	Charlie Doherty
Irish Wood Producers	Nicholas Sweetman
Laois Farm Forestry Group	Michael McEvoy
North East Forestry Group	John Sherlock
	Derek McCabe
North Midlands Farm Forestry Group	Olive Leavy
	Vincent Nally
Offaly Farm Forestry Group	Ann McIntyre
	Murt Connor
Waterford Forest Owner Group	Tom Hickey
Wicklow Private Woodland Owners	Sean Eustace





## New Forestry Programme launched September 2023

- New afforestation types and new forest management schemes
- Increased level of environmental restrictions and assessments for afforestation, felling and road licences
- Commitment for timelines on licence application
  - 6 months for licences that are *screened out* for appropriate assessment
  - 9 months for licences that are *screened in* for appropriate assessment

➤ *Ensure you read and understand any conditions that are included in your licence. It's your responsibility as the forest owner to ensure that the conditions are adhered to.*



## Report of the Independent Review Group into the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's response to ash dieback disease published Oct 2023

- Implementation plan due 'soon'
- Ash Dieback task force to oversee the implementation plan formed. No meeting date set

## Public Field Events to promote and educate on commercial farm forestry

A series of nationwide in-forest events open to the public that showcase commercial farm forestry in Ireland. *Focusing on the economic, environmental and social benefits of forestry*

## Small-scale sawmilling course: adding value to our hardwoods

A national peer-to-peer learning project to advance the technical skills and knowledge of forest owners in sawmilling, grading, drying and storing Irish grown hardwood timber.





# Knowledge Transfer Groups 2023-2024

---



IFO – two KTG groups in Donegal and Westmeath/Offaly

Six additional KTG groups throughout the producer group network





# Irish Forest Owners Group Certification Scheme



Forest Certification is a system that verifies forests are managed to the highest international social, economic and environmental standards, leading to a certificate issued by a recognised independent party

**IFO is offering dual FSC® and PEFC forest management certification**

20 forest owners now in scheme

Open for forest owners to apply to join



<https://irishforestowners.com/certification/>



[groupmanager@irishforestowners.com](mailto:groupmanager@irishforestowners.com)



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine



## National Working Groups

- National Deer Management Strategy Group
- National Group Certification Working Group
- Stakeholder engagement for the Ash Dieback Review
- Ash Dieback Task Force
- Plant Health Stakeholder Engagement Group (bark beetle)
- National Women in Agriculture Working Group
- Forest Strategy Consultative Committee (FSCC)

## European engagement

- CEPF monthly update meetings
- CEPF stakeholder working groups
- EU Forest & Forestry Stakeholder Platform - observer
- EU Forest Strategy 2030 Roundtable discussion with FII
- CEPF in-person working group meeting on EU Elections and ongoing EU policy proposals

## In Person Events

- Teagasc Talking Timber 2023
- IFA Farm Forestry conference, 2023
- CEPF General Assembly, Finland, 2023



## Press releases

Ash dieback 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023

CEPF membership 27<sup>th</sup> July

Bark Beetle Oct 2023

## Farmers Journal News articles

New Forestry Programme 6 Sept 2023

Ash Dieback report 11 Oct 2023

Department's Ash Dieback response a 'national disgrace'  
17 Jan 2024

Shortage of contractors hitting ash removals 31 Jan 2024

Ash Dieback task force 6 March 2024

## Irish Farmers Journal Forestry Focus

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024

IRISH FARMERS JOURNAL  
Saturday 23 March 2024

FOCUS 45

# Challenges facing Ireland's forest owners



Olive Leavy looks at how we can build a forest culture in Ireland that is seen as an active and rewarding part of land stewardship

Forestry can be a valuable asset to any farming enterprise, working as a pension, a college fund or a savings account, as well as a carbon store, a space for biodiversity and a legacy for future generations.

Since the early 1990s, Ireland saw a five-fold increase in the area of privately owned forests planted, the majority by farmers, with over 50% of the national forestry estate now in private ownership. But planting, particularly by farmers, has completely stagnated in recent years and only a proportion of those farmers who did plant are actively engaged in forestry.

Like all other parts of agriculture, there are ever-increasing demands being put on our forests to deliver more and more – for people, for the environment and for climate.

The sector has also been through a period of significant disruptions and delays that has damaged farmers' confidence. This has led to many farmers and forest owners being disillusioned and disengaged with forestry.

There are also many new and ongoing

challenges facing forest owners and the industry as a whole. These include an overly bureaucratic regulatory system that still does not deliver for forest owners, a shortage of skilled forest workers, fewer young people studying forestry, a

suite of new regulations coming from the EU, a lack of certified timber coming from the private sector, little to no succession planning, a need for professional standards in the industry and a lack of urgency in dealing with ash dieback disease.

But, equally, we need to engage more and more farmers and landowners in forestry to meet our legally binding climate change obligations, for the sustainable production of materials for our construction and energy sectors, for rural employment and development, and for our environment.

So, how do we start to tackle all these issues and build a forest culture in Ireland that is seen as an active and rewarding part of land stewardship?

First, the Department of Agriculture,



A section of the 20ha Leavy family forest, comprising 13.5ha Norway spruce and 6.5ha broad-leaves including sycamore, ash, beech and birch.

### \*Summary advice for forest owners

- Know what you have.
- Be involved with the management of your forest - it's your asset.
- Get independent advice and engage with what's on offer.
- Join a forest owner group.

Food and the Marine must place forest owners/landowners at the centre of all forest policy, with forestry fully integrated with all other agricultural enterprises on a whole farm basis. The Department also needs to deliver on all the recommendations in the numerous reports on forestry that have been commissioned over the past five years.

Second, farmers and forest owners must be supported and encouraged to be actively involved in the management of their own forests. Gone are the days of the land being planted with a single-tree species and the gate closed until it was near time to harvest. Indeed, forestry is the only land-use option in Ireland that does not require the landowner to undergo training. If we want to start building a forest culture in Ireland, and to better manage our forestry estate, we

need to properly engage and inform forest owners, starting even before the trees are planted. This early training should form part of a continuous learning and development programme that reflects the long-term nature of forestry and forest management.

Third, the economic viability of an evolving national forestry estate must be assured. Greater investment is needed in new markets for a wider range of timber types and sizes, better supports for the establishment of forests that require more than a generation to deliver financial returns are needed, and ecosystem service payments for areas of forests that cannot provide a return must be delivered.

Finally, forest owners themselves need to engage with the training, education and peer-to-peer learning that's already available. Forest owner groups are a great place to meet other forest owners and share knowledge, gain experience and receive support and advice. These independent, nonpartisan groups are run by forest owners for forest owners and require active membership to succeed.

It's up to us, as forest owners, to engage with, develop and protect our forestry asset.

Dr Olive Leavy, manages the family forest outside Kinnagord, Co Westmeath. She is national coordinator of the Irish Forest Owners and committee member of the North Midlands Farm Forestry Group.

# European Forest Owners



Extensive new EU legislations and EU legislative revisions are ongoing in relation to the EU Green Deal.

Relating to forestry are:

**EU regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR)**

**Renewable Energy Directive, third revision (RED III)**

**Regulation on Land Use Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)**

**Nature Restoration Law (NRL)**

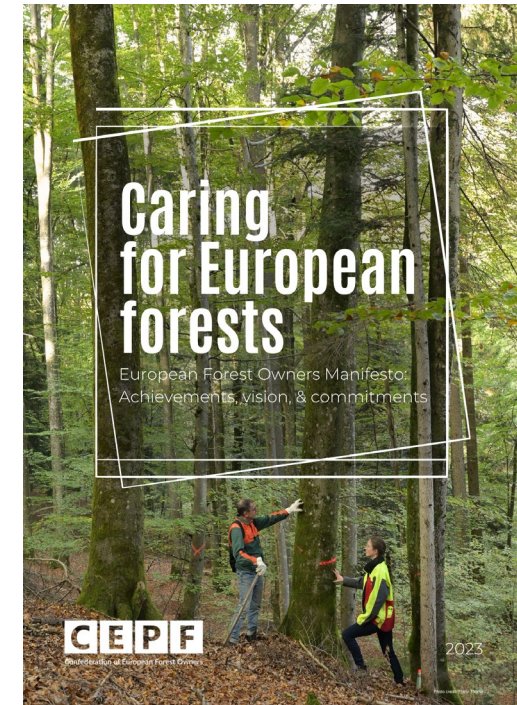
**Carbon Removal Certification**

**Forest Monitoring Law**

**Soil Health Law**

**EU Biodiversity Strategy**

**EU Forest Strategy**



<https://www.cepf-eu.org/page/manifesto>

**Newsletter**

**Group Certification**

**IFO and producer group events**



<https://irishforestowners.com>



[info@irishforestowners.com](mailto:info@irishforestowners.com)

