

Cork Environmental Forum

Position Paper 11 - Forestry Priorities



- 🌿 The draft map of Forest Sensitive Areas (FSA) for County Cork is welcome but incomplete. It should be refined and adapted to take account of River Catchment zones, potential restructuring of conifer plantations, and sites for new Native Woodlands.
- 🌿 Once this Forest Sensitive Areas Map has been finalised, it should be included in the County Development Plan.
- 🌿 The Forest Sensitive Areas Map should form the basis of a Indicative Forest Strategy (IFS) for the County, which should be encouraged in the County Development Plan.
- 🌿 County targets for forestry based on current Government strategy of 4:1 conifer to broadleaf ratio, would result in annual figures of 2640 ha conifers against 660 ha broadleaf planted. This balance is undesirable and should be discouraged in the County Development Plan, which should reflect landscape quality issues before sectorial commercial interests.
- 🌿 County targets for forestry should rather be based on the Heritage Council recommendations for a 1:1 conifer to broadleaf ratio. This would result in a more balanced annual planting of 1650 ha conifer to 1650 ha broadleaf in the County, with significant improvements in landscape quality, habitat and biodiversity creation, soil enhancement, amenity value, more varied timber production, and social acceptability.
- 🌿 With County targets established and adopted, the Planning Authority would be able to assess Forestry proposals referred to them against these targets, and discourage any proposals which maintain or increase the existing imbalance of conifer to broadleaf, while encouraging planting programmes such as the proposed Native Woodland Scheme.
- 🌿 The Local Authority should use the Forest Sensitive Areas Map, refined to a larger scale to scrutinise Forestry proposals and particularly Felling Licence Applications near Scenic Routes, Touring Routes, and Designated Areas.
- 🌿 Information on current Forestry legislation, regulation, incentives and programmes should be made more publicly available throughout the County.
- 🌿 Existing Coillte plantations should be inventoried, evaluated, and Management Plans drawn up for each site with public participation.
- 🌿 The management of existing Coillte plantations should particularly focus on more effective protection of riparian zones, and soil conservation / enhancement measures.

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To foster, promote & implement sustainable development within the Cork region