

## DAY 2 REPORT

The emphasis for the early part of Thursday was on **Research and Education**. Delegates were transported to **Ballycullen Forest**, which is home to a long-running research programme being carried out by UCD and Teagasc on transformation of early stage Sitka Spruce plantations to CCF. This study began in 2010 and has just entered its 3<sup>rd</sup> research phase, ContinuFor, which is scheduled to run until 2027.



*Photos: Ness Keeley*

The preliminary results of the 2<sup>nd</sup> research phase, TranSSFor, are informing 'best practice' standards in Sitka transformation efforts. After three thinning interventions, results indicate larger proportions of value-added timber can be produced, while achieving better structural differentiation and maintaining stand stability in CCF treatments compared with that of the conventional low thinning treatments.

Ballycullen is also used as a training facility to introduce forest owners and forestry professionals to CCF and is a key location for Pro Silva Ireland to spread the word about the economic viability of CCF management practices. Discussion on education and knowledge transfer was initiated with a detailed presentation of all CCF training and education initiatives in Ireland to date, and provided a unique opportunity for delegates to discuss the links between primary research and practice.



*Photos: Ness Keeley*

Lunch on Thursday was ‘al fresco’, in the magnificent **Cloragh Forest**, where delegates were joined by forest owners, contractors, deer managers and special guests and spent the afternoon being guided on a walking tour of the forest, with presentations along the way on the themes of ‘**Practice and Training**’. The weather was equally magnificent although at this point in the calendar, Ireland had essentially been 6 weeks without significant rainfall - a concern for those involved in silviculture in Ireland and across Europe, as much as it is for the agri- and horticulture sectors.



*In-forest lunch courtesy of Tipi Adventures. Photo: Ness Keeley*

The tour highlighted the productive potential of the forest and the rate at which transformation towards CCF can occur with our favourable growing conditions, something that was commented on by our European colleagues. Cloragh’s forestry team shared their experience of introducing CCF management to maintain a working forest that delivers value-added timber products and diverse ecosystem services.



*Photo: Ness Keeley*

Discussion points for the afternoon included topics such as adaptive forest management, timber production, deer pressures, regeneration, the role of mixed forests, the value of forest inventory via a presentation on AFI data and innovation in training and knowledge-sharing. Significant discussion was generated around the forests ability to produce both large dimension timbers and natural regeneration of multiple species, including conifer and broadleaf.





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The delegates will surely remember the ‘capital C’ Cultural highlight when they rounded a corner in the forest to be presented with their choice of a generous measure of Whiskey or Gin, both products of the nearby award-winning Glendalough Distillery! Guests were then ushered slightly further along the trail, to where the forest opens onto a ridge overlooking the Devil’s Glen, all to the musical accompaniment of a live uilleann piper. After an all-too-brief stop to admire the amazing view, delegates were then treated to an impromptu performance by the ‘Pro Silva musicians’.



*Photo: Ness Keeley*

The celebration dinner on Thursday evening gave Pro Silva Ireland the opportunity to present the history of the organisation and acknowledge key participants in its development over the past 23 years. Delegates heard speeches from Liam Byrne, Eckart Senitz, and past Pro Silva Ireland Chairs Jan Alexander and master of ceremonies, Robert Scott. The past Pro Silva Ireland Chairs were then presented with a small token of appreciation for all the work they have done since the formation of the organisation.

This event was somewhat bittersweet for Irish delegates; the last time the AGM was held here was only a short while after the passing of Pro Silva Ireland Founder, Robert Tottenham, who is still held in high regard and missed by all who knew him. Tributes were made to Robert and his family during the course of the evening for their services to CCF in Ireland and to Pro Silva International.



*Great friend to Ireland, forest consultant Phil Morgan (CCFG); and Pro Silva Ireland Committee members Jonathan Spazzi (Teagasc) and Janice Fuller (Coillte). Photos: Ness Keeley*