

DAY 3 REPORT

Day 3 started in **Knockrath forest** along the banks of the Avonmore River where the broad themes of '**Practice and the Environment**' were discussed, and how CCF could be adopted in terms of water quality management and recreational experience, while maintaining the production of high-quality timber.

Delegates were led on a walk through a stand of mixed species which are thriving in the soils of the Avonmore River Valley, while discussing external influences on the forest. These include increasing invasive deer populations, conservation forests, water and tourism, and how CCF management can address all of them.

An excellent presentation demonstrated the positive contribution that permanent forest management can make to sensitive river catchment areas. This was encouraging, as very often conventional clear-fell practices contribute negatively on important river catchments. Also presented was detailed inventory in the form of data from three AFI measurements of a mixed-species stand, and how this information could greatly assist future management decisions.



Phil Morgan (CCFG) and Paddy Purser (Pro Silva Ireland) presenting AFI data at Knockrath. Photo: ER Wilson

Another observation was how the prolific regeneration of mixed species would greatly assist the future resilience of the forest. The presentations, together with the excellent management at Knockrath, demonstrated how CCF can integrate the growing of quality timber with the protection of important habitats.

A couple of hours later and a short transfer to Tipi Adventures, delegates attended a stimulating in-forest panel discussion with the theme '**Can CCF serve Industry, Environment & People Equally?**'. Contributing panellists represented a cross section of the forestry sector and this session highlighted the challenges, complexities and opportunities in meeting the ever-increasing demands placed on our forests today. Our international colleagues were very impressed with the maturity of the debate and the respect afforded to differing views, but what really stood out was the value of engagement.



In-forest panel discussion at Tipi Adventures camp. Photo: ER Wilson

After lunch in the forest, delegates visited the wonderful **Ticknock Forest** in the Dublin Mountain to demonstrate the role of CCF management in facilitating “**Forests and People**”. Ticknock has as important recreational value to the nearby Dublin City, but until as recently as 2020 the lands were managed primarily for commercial forestry, with recreation and biodiversity as secondary concerns. A long effort from recreational users and local authorities calling for change in these practices resulted in the formation of the Dublin Mountains Partnership, and in 2020 a new model of forest management was established by Coillte Nature, called the Dublin Mountains Makeover Project.



Karen Wood, Coillte and Pro Silva Ireland committee member, addressing the group in Ticknock forest.

Photo: O Leavy

Ticknock showcases Coillte’s approach to transitioning nine forests in the Dublin Mountains Makeover project towards being multi-generational forests managed under CCF principles. The aims of the project include enhancing habitats for wildlife by reducing non-native species and replanting with native species, enriching the forests recreational appeal for people, and improving the wider landscape’s aesthetic value.

Our hosts also shared the challenges of actively managing forests while minimising disruption to local residents, visitors and wildlife. The visiting delegates were very interested in Coillte’s approach to communications and public relations around the project.



PRO SILVA

Annual Meeting
Ireland 2023



Research plots at Ticknock and a final treat for the delegates. Photos: ER Wilson

The day (and the event) formally ended with dinner in Wicklow Town, and the discussions continued long into the evening!