

Chairperson's Report 2022



Dear member,

It is a great pleasure to report on the many activities over the past Pro Silva year, to reflect on our achievements together and look to the future. Interest in CCF has never been greater, new members continue to join us and many projects are now taking shape.

Before going any further, I'd like to acknowledge our members. As a membership organisation we are dedicated to promoting the Pro Silva principles in Ireland. The support of our members is at the heart of our success and is what inspires our voluntary committee.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to the Forest Service for awarding us funding through the DAFM Woodland Support Fund. This is assisting us in delivering a series of field events and workshops, and creating a number of short video productions, all of which are further aiding Pro Silva engage with stakeholders and support our work.

Below is a brief outline of the activities of Pro Silva Ireland over the past year.

Pro Silva Ireland Field days

The Autumn Field Day took place on October 9th 2021, at Springfield Castle Estate, Co. Limerick. The focus of the day was on early thinning interventions in broadleaf forests. Pro Silva are grateful to our hosts Jonathan and Betty Sykes, to committee members Pdraig O'Tuama for leading the day and Jonathan Spazzi for his assistance.

The Spring Field Day was held in Cloragh Forest, Ashford, Co. Wicklow on 23rd April, 2022, where we visited a range of mixed stands under full and committed CCF practice. Cloragh is one of the more advanced CCF forests in the country, with good progression of regeneration and stand transformation. Thanks to our host Lucy Tottenham, and to the Byrne family, with the support of Paddy Purser, for leading the day.

Webinar on the Conversion to CCF in the era of climate change

In March, 2022, we hosted a webinar on the building of adaptive forests in the era of climate change. Dr Pavel Bednář, a researcher for the Forestry and Game Management Research Institute in the Czech Republic, gave a lecture entitled "Continuous Cover Forestry for resilient and productive forests under impacts of global climate change".

The webinar was well attended and we hope to run more during the winter season.

Project Woodland

Pro Silva Ireland have been an active participant in Project Woodland and are represented by committee member Paddy Purser in Working Group 2. This group is charged with developing a “Shared National Approach” to future forest policy, and recently “A Shared National Vision for Forestry 2050” has been published. Pro Silva Ireland hope that the great inputs of all stakeholders into Project Woodland results in a real and sustainable forest strategy that reflects the changing world we live in. We are very grateful to Paddy for his great work on this project.

Workshops

Pro Silva Ireland are running a series of field engagement workshops with various stakeholders to create awareness around sustainable forestry, including the potential and opportunities of CCF. Stakeholders who have participated in the workshops to date include members of Project Woodland Working Group 2, UCD forestry students, Forest Service staff, UCD Landscape Architecture students and members of the Association of Irish Forestry Consultants. Further workshops are planned for the coming months.

National CCF Training Steering Group

PSI continues to support and advance the National CCF Training Steering Group, which brings together key stakeholders engaged in forestry education and training. The aim of the group is to develop a national CCF training strategy, promote collaboration, reduce duplication and utilise resources. Thanks to all stakeholders for their commitment to this project.

International Pro Silva Meeting

Padraig O’Tuama, as secretary of Pro Silva Europe, and myself, as chairperson of Pro Silva Ireland, attended the International Meeting of Pro Silva in Luxemburg in June. This meeting was a great opportunity to reconnect in person with our European colleagues and we are privileged and excited to be hosting the International Pro Silva Meeting next year in Ireland.

Films

Pro Silva Ireland have engaged Crannóg Media to produce a series of short films showcasing CCF in Irish forests. We hope to launch these films before the end of the year. Thanks to Séan Hoskins and Manus Crowley for coordinating this project.

International Study Tour to the Black Forest

28 Pro Silva Ireland members travelled to the Black Forest in May 2022 to visit a range of forests managed under the principles of continuous cover forestry. The international study tours are a great opportunity for our members to learn from the extensive experience of our European neighbours. We wish to sincerely thank Rainer Wirz, German forester and Pro Silva Ireland member, for coordinating the visit. Also thanks to our dedicated treasurer, Séan Garvey, for handling the tour bookings. Our next International Study Tour is currently being planned for September 2023.

Woodland Festival 2022

Pro Silva Ireland were delighted to participate in Woodland Festival 2022, in Clonalis Estate, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon. Our stand was inundated with visitors, including Minister of State Pippa Hackett, the

Pro Silva House Band entertained the crowds in the live music area and we also had the opportunity to give a talk on CCF. We look forward to participating in this wonderful forestry event again next year.

WIS CCF Training course

Pro Silva Ireland, in conjunction with DAFM, ran the first WIS CCF training course in June 2022. This two-day course is designed to assist foresters in utilising the CCF element of the Woodland Improvement Scheme and to provide a greater insight into the practice of CCF. The course was held entirely in the woods, which was a refreshing change from the desk for many of those present. We hope to run a second course in November.

Collaboration and engagement

Over the past 12 months, members of the Pro Silva Ireland committee continued to participate in numerous collaborative endeavours with organisations such as DAFM, Teagasc, Coillte, Irish Forest Owners, other forestry stakeholders and individuals, all with a view to promote CCF throughout the country. An example of this is Pro Silva Ireland and Teagasc working together on a number of training activities, many of which were developed by committee member and Teagasc Forestry Development officer, Jonathan Spazzi.

Administrator

In order to meet the growing appetite for CCF in Ireland, Pro Silva Ireland have engaged the professional services of an administrator, in a part-time capacity, to support its effective voluntary committee. We are delighted to welcome Olive Leavy, forest owner and CCF practitioner, on board!

In closing my report, I'd like to thank my fellow committee members and our new administrator for their continued dedication and contributions to Pro Silva Ireland. It is a great pleasure for me to work with so many enthusiastic colleagues who share a common interest and commitment to developing permanent, diverse and resilient forests.

We have much to look forward to in the year ahead. A new Forestry Strategy & National Forestry Programme will be unveiled later in 2022, which will bring further opportunities for the practice of CCF. New initiatives are very much welcomed, and although they will put further demands on our voluntary committee, I have no doubt we will meet them.

Finally, we look forward to welcoming our colleagues to Ireland for the International Pro Silva Meeting in June 2023. This is an outstanding opportunity to showcase our forests, achievements and hospitality.

Regards,

Liam Byrne
Chairperson, Pro Silva Ireland