

Challenges and future for CCF in Ireland

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Current CCF

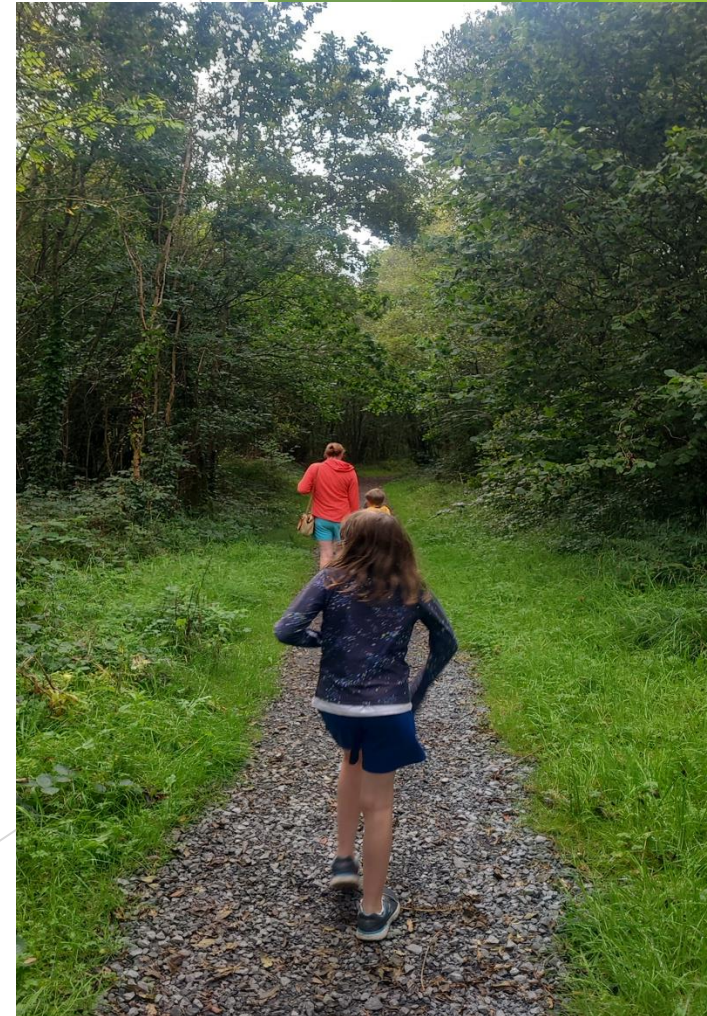


- ▶ All CCF sites in Ireland are in the process of transformation to CCF.
- ▶ A fully transformed site is a multi species , multi layered and multistructured forest
- ▶ This can be a long process

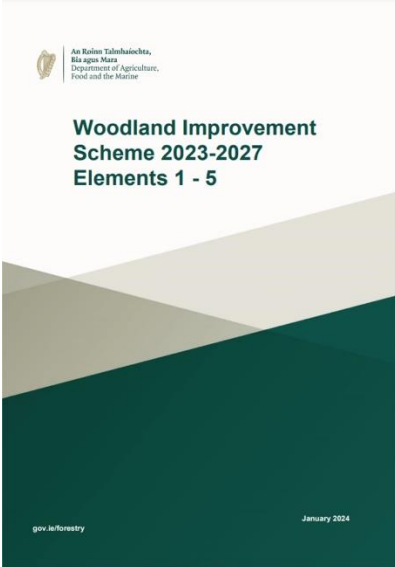


Future of CCF

- ▶ Greater expectations / Demands on our Forests



How do we achieve this?





- ▶ Challenges to CCF implementation
- ▶ Solutions



Challenges

- ▶ Wind, water and soils
- ▶ Legacy sites & historic practice
- ▶ Deer & invasive species
- ▶ Knowledge & Skills gaps



► **Wind, water and soils**

- Current & Future Climate
- Exposure to high winds and rain
- Wet heavy mineral soils, peat soils

- **Impacts on forest stability - transformation phase**
- Single structure - even aged

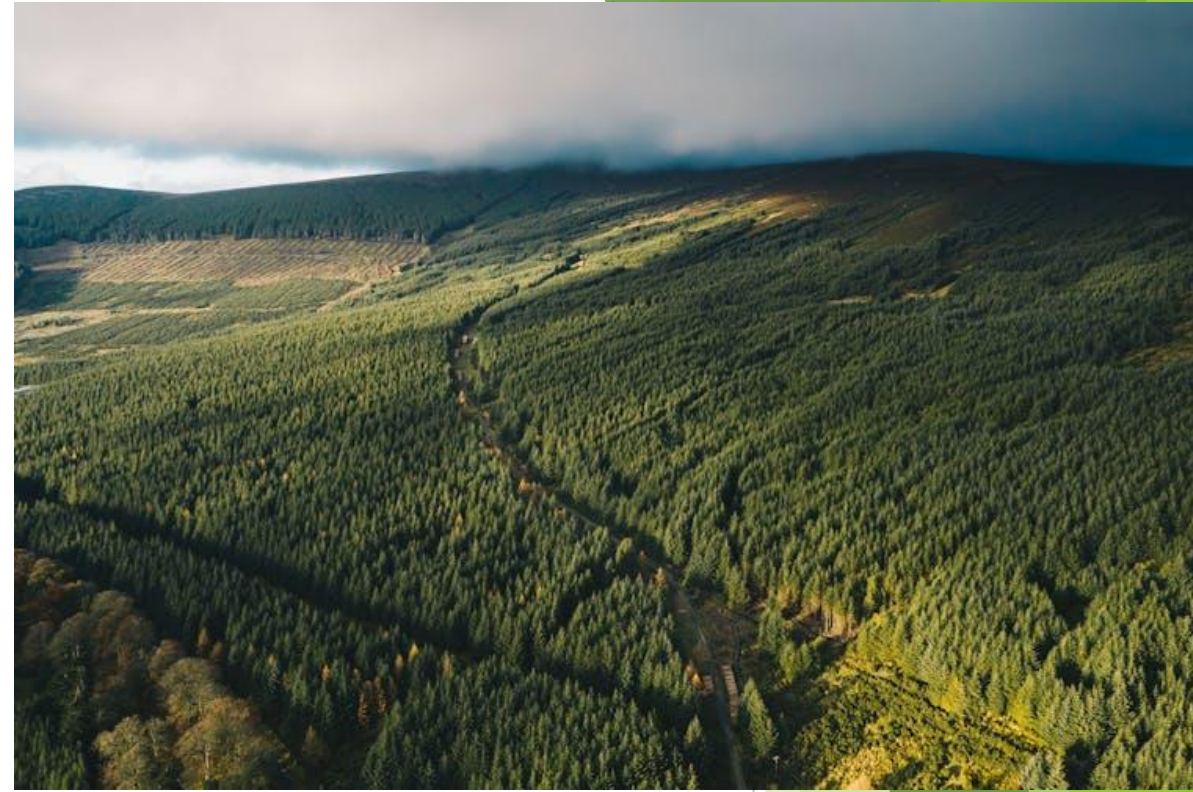
- Damage to sensitive sites through harvesting
- Seasonal felling restrictions

- Potential for drought - late Spring
- Cascade affects - Spruce aphid



► **Legacy:**

- Monoculture plantations
- Inappropriate soils, upland peats



► **Legacy:**

- Monoculture plantations - **vulnerability**
- Inappropriate soils, upland peats
- Low species diversity
- single structure
- Limited forest design
- Diverse species in blocks



Slow transformation and diversification process (40 years)





► Deer: Single greatest barrier to diversification of Ireland's forests

- Largely introduced species
- CCF relies on natural processes - regeneration
- Loss of biodiversity and wider woodland ecology



► **Invasive species:** -Present and potential

- Rhododendron & Laurel
- Old woodland sites
- Outcompete regeneration
- Difficult sites to manage - access / marking

- Potential pests : Spruce Bark Beetle





► Knowledge & Skills gap:

- Lack of widespread forest culture
 - CCF is relatively new to Ireland
 - Lack of skilled practitioners
 - Perception that CCF is difficult
 - Slow uptake by commercial foresters
 - Economics of CCF not understood
- Markets for large and diverse timber products



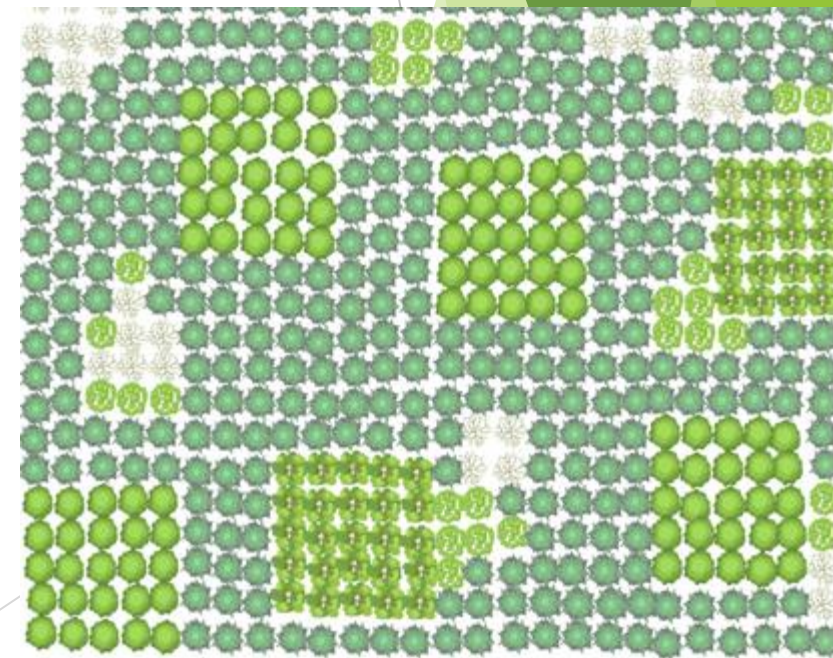
Solutions

- ▶ CCF Afforestation / Reforestation
- ▶ Legacy sites
- ▶ Support for CCF Management (WIS)
- ▶ Deer Management & Invasive control
- ▶ Education, Training & Research



CCF Afforestation / Reforestation:

- establishment of mixed stands from planting stage (since 2023)
 - result of direct engagement between PSI & DAFM
- Incorporate commercial conifers with more diverse long-lived species
- **Massive opportunity for diverse reforestation post Storm Éowyn**
- Continued research into appropriate mixtures for different sites
- Different ratios of conifers to hardwoods and native species

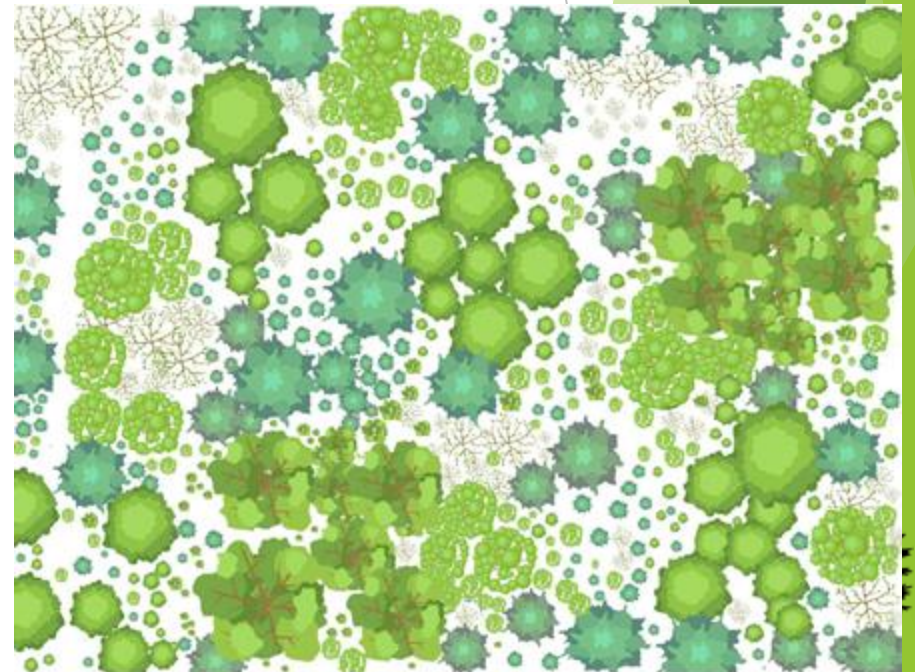


► CCF Afforestation / Reforestation:

- Forests with greater species diversity are more resilient
- Adaptation to Climate Change
- Greater resistance to pests and diseases
- Greater wind resistance - deeper rooting species
- Irregular structure

Slower spread of pests/diseases in mixed stands

- lower densities and irregular distribution of host trees
- healthier trees with large crowns



► Legacy sites: uplands

- Change our expectation of what these sites can deliver
- Protection forests for catchment management
- Lower timber production – Conifers with native species
- Increased areas for native woodland development
- Habitat restoration





► Legacy sites: wet soils

- Need for innovative harvesting methods
- Lower impact systems

- Use of large drone technology for timber extraction

- Review of seasonal felling restrictions on wetter sites





► Support for CCF Management (WIS)

- Continued support under the DAFM WIS: CCF scheme
- Expansion of eligible area (ha)
- All hardwood sites managed under CCF
- Increase (or longer duration) in ecosystem services payment (provision of public goods)



► Deer Management & Invasive control

- continued development of Irish deer Management Strategy Group
- Supporting hunter and landowner collaboration
- Local Deer Management Units roll out
- Venison markets
- Public awareness
- Research on laurel & Rhodo control
- Further supports for control





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► Education, Training & Research

- Increase roll out of targeted training workshops & courses
- Forest owners
- Practitioners
- Harvesting operatives
- Ecologists
- Policy makers

Education at all levels - Primary to 3rd level

- Schools
- Further research on CCF
- Increased Support for research
- Linking research to practice

- Build forest culture
- Wider understanding of forestry across Society



Result: Fully diverse transformed Forests





Go raibh maith agaibh