



FSC Ireland (IFCI) Field Trip Emo Court, August 2008

reported by Pat Neville

photos by Fran Igoe and Sasha Bosbeer

Members of the IFCI held their AGM in Portarlinton on Saturday 23rd August 2008. This event was followed by a visit to a nearby "working" forest to see examples of what forest certification means on the ground to forest practitioners. The forest picked was Emo Court, a large Coillte-owned forest property.

Fourteen hardy IFCI souls braved Ireland's best summer weather and donned their wet gear to head the short distance from Portarlinton to Emo Court. The area selected for the visit had recently been harvested and the group was introduced to the forest by Richard Whelan of Coillte, who is a District Manager in that area.

Mick Keane, head of Research and Environment for Coillte, briefly spelt out the importance of certification before Richard took the group through the steps that forest managers take ahead of any forest operations. The main tool, Richard explained, was the environmental impact assessment (EIA) that the forest manager uses to assess the area. This contains a detailed checklist which assesses the affect of forest operations on a range of receptors, both environmental and social. The EIA is completed against a range of headings including, people, soils, waters, landscape, cultural heritage and archaeology and material assets. The impact of the forest operation on each heading is then assessed, and mitigation measures if required are put into place.

Richard took the group through the harvesting site and demonstrated some of the mitigating measures which had been put in place in the forest. A large, dying pine tree had been retained as a source of deadwood and as a biodiversity feature in the forest. As Richard spoke, a pair of buzzards hovered over the tree.



Richard also showed the group where veteran native yew trees had been retained to be carried into the next rotation of the forest cycle. An active badger sett was also another feature observed on site, and Richard explained to the group how such features, once identified on the ground, are marked out and protected during operations.

While this discussion was ongoing Maria Cullen and Howard Fox were busy filling a wicker basket with fungal fruits of the forest, some large and delicious such as members of the *Agaricus* genus, while others lethal and deadly such as the death cap mushroom, *Amanita phalloides*. While a normal looking mushroom in itself and resembling to the untrained eye many an edible variety, Maria explained (cont. overleaf)



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(cont.) that this one death cap mushroom had enough poison to kill ten men and no cure is known to this day!! Maria also told the group the most frequent questions when out on fungal forays with the public was, "Is this mushroom good to eat?", "Will this one make me high?" and "Would this mushroom kill my husband?".

With that, and with the afternoon shadows lengthening into evening, Richard thanked the group and fourteen satisfied albeit somewhat rain-sodden souls turned in the direction of the gates of Emo Court.

Developing a National Irish FSC Forest Management Standard

IFCI is currently setting up a Standard Development Group which will draft a national FSC forest management standard. This standard will be developed based on past work in Ireland, submissions from stakeholders, and existing international and regional FSC standards. These will be reviewed and revised by the Standard Development Group to produce a standard which an appropriate benchmark for responsible forest management in the Irish context.

Consultative Forum

All interested parties can participate in standard development by registering for the Consultative Forum. This forum will give participants an opportunity to comment formally on the drafts of the forest management standard.

Registration is straightforward and is done via forms available at www.irishforestcertification.com or by contacting us at our address below.

FSC Ireland

IFCI Ltd. has decided to take on the trading name 'FSC Ireland'. This brings us in line with the other FSC National Initiatives the world over.

Illegal logging

Did you know that WWF estimates up to 219 million euro of wood products imported into Ireland is illegally logged?

Responsible forest management is as important abroad as it is here in Ireland, and buying FSC-certified timber is one way of ensuring that the wood you buy from the tropics or Russia or elsewhere, is from legal and responsibly managed sources.

Join FSC Ireland !

Membership of IFCI (FSC Ireland) costs only 5 euro a year and includes regular updates on the progress in promoting responsible forestry at home and abroad. Check our website for the membership form.

What is the Forest Stewardship Council?

FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. There are national initiatives in over 45 countries. FSC provides standard setting, trademark assurance and accreditation services for companies and organizations interested in responsible forestry. Products carrying the FSC label are independently certified to assure consumers that they come from forests that are managed to meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations.

Look for the tree-and-checkmark trademark logo to be sure you are buying responsibly harvested forest products.



More information about FSC in Ireland, to become a member or join the Consultative Forum:

IFCI c/o IFA, Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12. www.irishforestcertification.com Company No. 332496