

Native Woodlands: Funding Opportunities under the Forestry Programme 2023-2027

Kevin Collins & Katharine Duff
Forestry Inspectorate

Woodlands of Ireland Conference 2024
Castle Saunderson International Scouting Centre,
Co. Cavan



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

1st to 3rd October 2024





Recap

Native Woodland Scheme launched Nov. 2001:

- **Establishment** Element (woodland creation on 'greenfield' sites) and
- **Conservation** Element (covered restoration, replacement & emergent)

Now, under Forestry Programme 2023-27:

- Establishment → Affor. Scheme FT1, **FT2 (water)**, FT3 (public land) & FT4 (new neighbourwoods, which typically involving native species) (FT = 'Forest Types', different grant & premium categories)





Native woodlands & water:

- intercept sediment & nutrient runoff
- bank stabilisation
- input food ('leaf drop') into the aquatic ecosystem
- provide shading / cooling of water
- restore riparian ecosystem



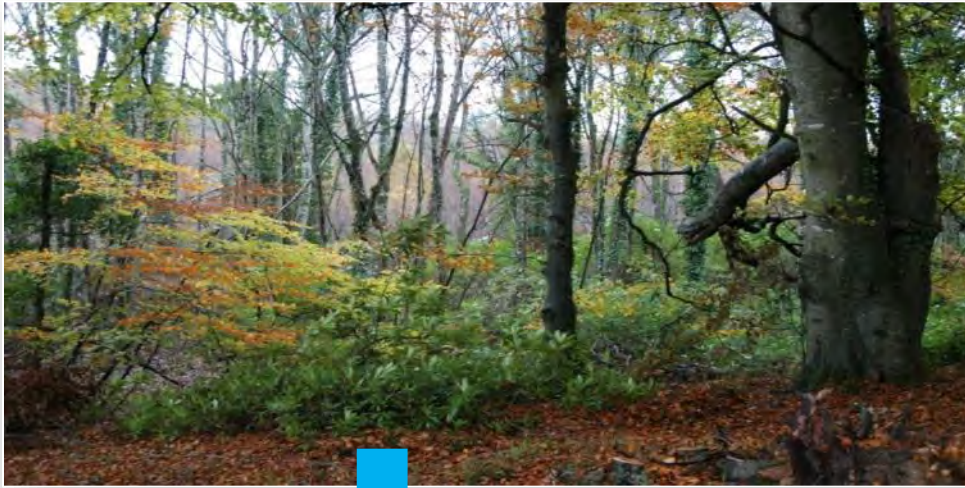
Recap

Native Woodland Scheme launched Nov. 2001:

- Establishment Element (woodland creation on 'greenfield' sites) and
- Conservation Element (covered restoration, replacement & emergent)

Now, under Forestry Programme 2023-27:

- Establishment → Affor. Scheme FT1, FT2 (water), FT3 (public land) & FT4 (new neighbourwoods, which typically involving native species) (FT = 'Forest Types', different grant & premium categories)
- 'Emergent' woodland → Affor. Scheme FT5
- 'Replacement' → Element 2 of Refor. for Climate Resilience Scheme
- Other supports also relevant, e.g. CCF Scheme, NeighbourWood Scheme, support for seed stands & tree nurseries...
- Woodland Environment Fund, **and...**



... 'Restoration' →
Native Woodland
Conservation Scheme
(NWC Sch.)



Recap

- Developed & implemented by DAFM in partnership with Woodlands of Ireland, NPWS, Heritage Council, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Coillte & other native woodland stakeholders (incl. foresters, ecologists & owners)
- Meaning...?
 - Scheme based on original Wol Millennium proposal
 - Direct involvement in scheme's evolution over c.25 years
 - Essential support – promotion, training, technical publications (e.g. Info. Notes), videos, national conferences
 - Scheme outreach, direct contact with owners & practitioners
 - Constructive criticism, proposed refinements, go-to touchstone



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

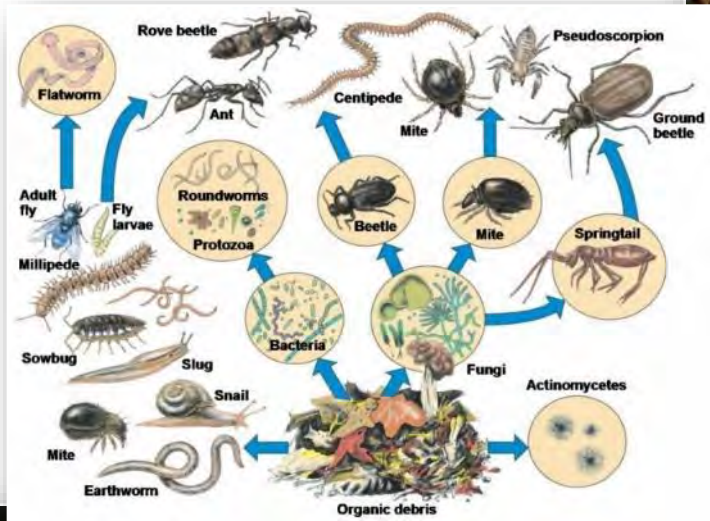
Objectives of NWC Scheme...

To encourage the restoration of existing native woodlands, thereby:

- promoting Ireland's native woodlands & associated biodiversity
- realising other valuable ecosystem services, including wider bio-linkage, reinforcing protected habitats, protecting water & soil, landscape, carbon...
- realising wood & non-wood products & services, where compatible with above & where sought by Owner...
 - a range of wood products (small diameter → sawlog) *via* CCF and non-wood products & services, e.g. foliage, recreational hunting, foraging, setting for holiday accommodation, public amenity, 'outdoor classroom'...
 - creates potential for onward funding for woodland management, beyond Scheme

Production isn't mandatory, and not always compatible...





Adrian Langdon



Need for restoration

Many native woodlands need restoration due to multiple factors, with varying severity...

- previous management poor / inconsistent, exploitation
- influx of naturalised species, e.g. beech, sycamore
- invasive exotics
- excessive grazing by deer, goats, livestock → suppressing ground veg. & regen. of trees, damaging stems
- senescent or moribund trees dominating canopy, little or no recruitment
- unmanaged recreational use
- localised issues, e.g. dumping, fire



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



Pic. Tim Burkitt



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Overall approach under NWC Scheme:

Assess the woodland ecology & identify the ecological priorities & related objectives. Then, decide how best to achieve these objectives, using appropriate silvicultural methods eligible under the Scheme



Key elements of the NWC Scheme: Eligibility

- Targeted at key areas, using criteria (Section 3)
- 15 ha max. per owner per year
- Ineligible if similar works grant-aided within last 15 years
- Non-native trees must not exceed one-third of upper canopy, and...
- ...must be removed by Year 4 (excl. veterans)
- Project must be 'do-able', e.g. not realistic if in deer or rhodo. 'hotspot'



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Key elements: Application process

- Application prepared by NW Ecologist & NW Forester and Owner
- Must follow Native Woodland Plan template, mapping requirements, and methodologies described
- List of eligible ops. (plus others, if DAFM deems appropriate)
- If felling licence needed*, secure & submit with scheme application, same footprint & consistent with NW Plan
- Detailed evaluation process by DAFM (incl. ecological input & AA procedure)
- Scheme now on iNET / iFORIS
- If approved, must adhere to silvicultural standards in Scheme doc. & any specific conditions in Approval Letter

(* As per *Felling & Reforestation Policy* document)

Key elements: Ecological principles

- Must promote the most appropriate native woodland type(s) (based on DAFM / WoI / NPWS framework):
 - Scenario 1: Podzols (*Oak-Birch-Holly Woodland*)
 - Scenario 2: Brown Podzolics (*Oak-Birch-Holly with Hazel Woodland*)
 - Scenario 3: Brown Earths (*Oak-Ash-Hazel Woodland*)
 - Scenario 4: Gleys (*Alder-Oak-Ash Woodland*)
 - Scenario 5: Highly Modified Peat & Peaty Podzols (*Pioneer Birch Woodland*)
 - Plus draft scenario for *Alluvial Woodland*
- If planting (e.g. underplanting, coupe planting), Irish provenance only (with periodic exceptions)
- Minimum site inputs ref. cultivation, fertiliser & herbicide use
- Future management *via* CCF only – clearfelling will not be permitted

Example...

If...

Location: Uplands (especially in the east), on shale & base-rich glacial till & at the base of free-draining valley & hillside slopes.

Soil: Brown podzolics (acid, moderately fertile soils), average pH c.4.9.

Main habitats & vegetation:

Greenfield containing gorse, bracken, bramble, coarse grasses (e.g. Yorkshire fog), or improved grassland.

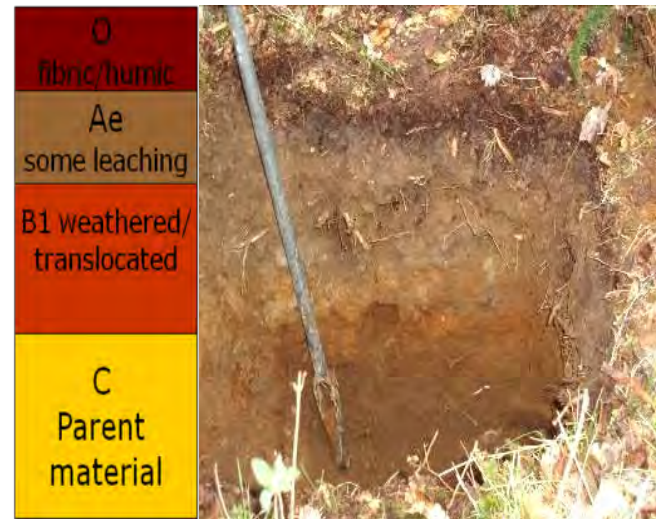
Semi-natural woodland dominated by / hedgerows containing: sessile oak, downy birch, ash, hazel, rowan & holly, with bramble, bluebell, violet, herb-Robert & wood avens.



Scenario 2:
Brown podzolics



Recently planted sessile oak/downy birch-dominated native woodland at the footslope of an upland landscape. Brown podzolic soils often occur at the foot slopes and/or where moderately base-rich till is a component of the soil parent material. Bluebell is present in the foreground.



A brown podzolic profile with a topsoil comprising a thin, acid, peaty, upper layer overlying a yellow-brown lower topsoil layer, which in turn overlies a red-brown, iron-rich subsoil. Beneath the subsoil is the parent material from which the soil is derived.



Most appropriate Major Native Woodland Type: QL3 Bramble–hazel (subtype of QL Sessile oak–woodrush).

Predominant trees & shrubs: Sessile oak, downy birch, ash, hazel, rowan & holly.

Predominant ground flora: Bramble, ivy, broad buckler-fern, wood sorrel, bluebell, violet, woodrush & wood avens. Dwarf shrubs largely absent.



Planting mixture: Sessile oak (65%). Downy birch (5%) & hazel (10%) scattered intimately throughout. Wild cherry (5%), planted in groups of 5 to 10 trees.

Minor species (15%) to comprise at least three of the following, positioned alongside planned woodland edges & glades: Scots pine (on shallow, more acid, rocky areas, if present), hawthorn, holly, rowan, crab apple.



A good example of the QL3 Bramble–hazel woodland type, Co. Cavan.



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Key elements: Funding

- €6,000 euro / ha if private, €3,000 / ha if public, PLUS fencing allowance
- Two instalments for private applicants, *c.75%* after initial operations & 25% 4 years later (If public: single instalment after initial operations)
- Success judged against stated objectives in the Native Woodland Plan, *so consider carefully*
- At Form 2 stage, submit costs to date plus estimated costs over next 4 years. The 75%:25% figures calculated on that basis, up to maximum allowed under the Scheme
- Annual Payment for Ecosystem Services premium of €650 / ha for private applicants, for 7 years
- Contract period of 7 years



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Native Woodland Plan & Maps

- NWC Scheme Manual on web*
- Application *via* iNET & uploading of prescribed docs.
- NW Plan & Maps are central → must follow templates / reflect examples given
- Focus on clarity, quality & consistency throughout
- Revised template, ecological assessment now reflects National Survey of Native Woodlands methodology
- Field sheets & guidance on completion provided in Scheme Manual

(* See Forestry Circular 1 of 2024, 12th Feb.)



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Big focus on quality maps:

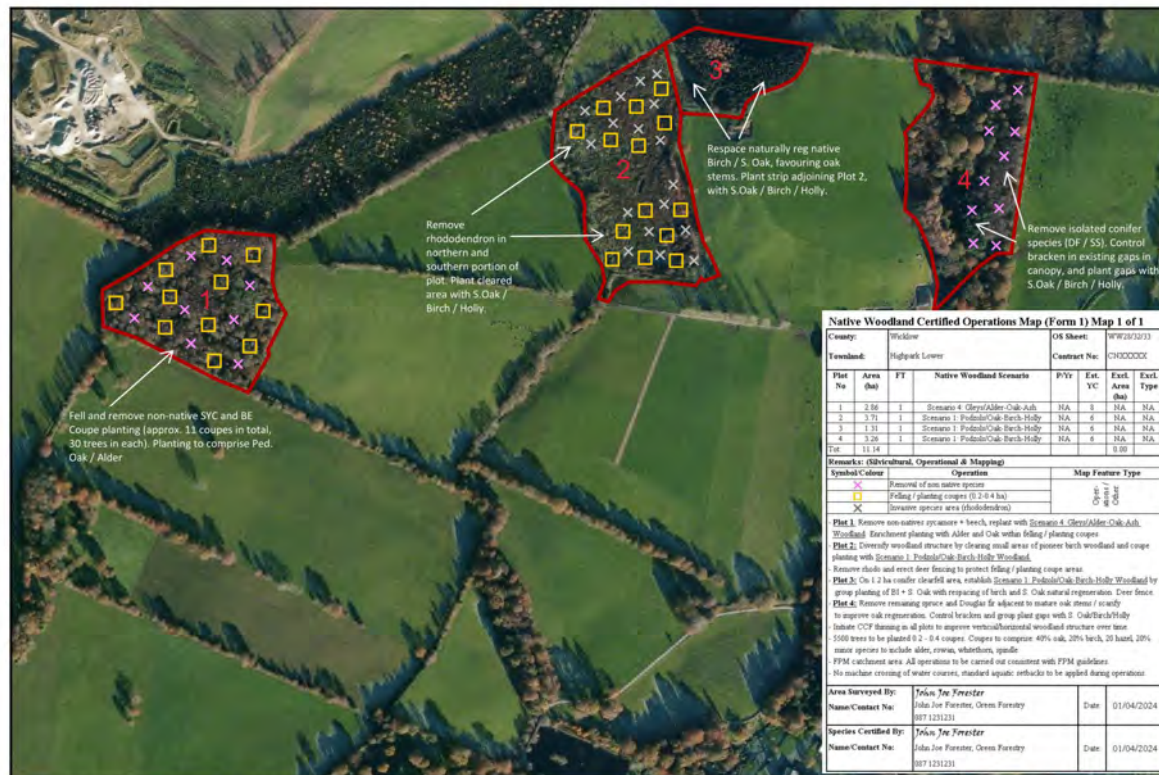
- Location Map
- Soils Map (if more than one)
- Current Habitat & Environment Map
- Proposed Native Woodland Type Map
- Certified Operations Map
- Fencing Map



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. EN 0076413. Copyright Ordnance Survey Ireland/Go
23 Apr 2024
Unauthorized reproduction is not permitted. This map is for Forest Service certified use only.

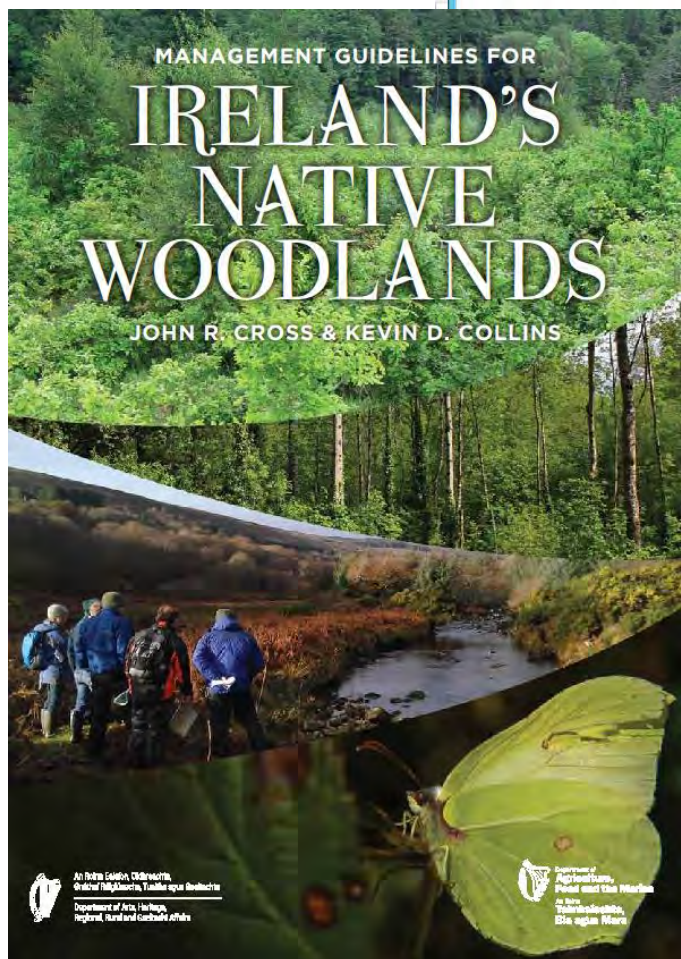


Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. EN 0076413. Copyright Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland
23 Apr 2024
Unauthorized reproduction is not permitted. This map is for Forest Service certified use only.

Contract:

Scale 1:5000

Management Guidelines



More recent Wol Info. Notes...

- No.7 The Management of Deer in Native Woodlands
- No.8 Native Woodland Scheme – Case Studies

Also, DAFM's NWC Scheme Manual



Thank you



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine