

To: Clíodhna Parker

From: Breda Lyons

Re: LIFE Blanket Bog Restoration Project
IALE 2007 Landscapes for LIFE Congress held Wageningen, Netherlands
8th – 12th July 2007

Project Contribution: A-0 POSTER AND BROCHURE DISTRIBUTION

Attached is a list of the delegates and countries present at the Congress.

Over 750 delegates attended the one week conference. The topics concentrated on development and planning of landscape ecology, the integration of people and human contribution in the landscape design, policy and decision making and the landscape and many aspects of biodiversity from around the world.

150 posters from around the world were on display for the duration (20% of these were other LIFE projects). Any questions on the project from delegates were addressed at the time. Brochures were distributed and there was a good opportunity to network with other similar projects.

Ladislav Miko (Director of Natural Resources EU DG Environment spoke at the plenary sessions and discussed the general nature of the LIFE projects in Ireland.

There was an interesting session on the 15 year history of the LIFE projects in Netherlands and discussion on the LIFE + programme.

Next IALE world congress will be held in 2011 in Beijing.

Caroline White

C/ file

From: Gillian Conroy
Sent: 15 October 2007 15:48
To: Coillte Users
Subject: Coillte in the media: LIFE projects on Mooney Goes Wild

Coillte on the radio!

Coillte featured prominently on the RTE Radio 1 "**Mooney Goes Wild**" programme last Friday, 12th October, with a very positive piece with Pat Neville, our company ecologist, talking about the 3 EU LIFE projects which are restoring raised and blanket bogs and native woodlands.

Pat was in studio with Derek Mooney and show regulars Eanna Ni Lamhna and Richard Collins and spoke for about 15 minutes about the projects.

The piece will be available on the RTE website in the coming days - see the link below. This feature is part of a concerted effort to tell the positive stories about what we do in Coillte.

<http://www.rte.ie/radio/mooneygoeswild/archive/index.html>

For more info on the LIFE projects themselves see the 3 individual websites:

[Visit the Irish Bog Restoration Website.](#)

[Visit the Raised Bog Restoration Website.](#)

[Visit the Woodland Restoration Website.](#)

Regards, Gillian.

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Bogland restoration - back to the future

Coillte restores 2,571 hectares of blanket & raised bog habitat



DONAL WAGNER
FORESTRY



Kevin Donnellan, Manager, EU/Coillte LIFE project 'Restoring Active Blanket Bog in Ireland'.

and Sitka spruce. Excellent forests were established in areas such as Ballycastle, Cloosh Valley and Crossmolina where yield classes of between 14 and 20 (cubic metres per ha per annum) were achieved. However, low value crops were also established, and unlike forests on mineral sites they provided few commercial, environmental or aesthetic benefits.

In recent years, planting has shifted from bogs to mineral soils as better quality land is now being made available for afforestation by farmers.

PEATLAND FORESTS

Coillte has been reevaluating the performance of their peatland forests since the 1990s. A recent conference in Westport, Co Mayo heard how the company has been working to restore 2,000 hectares of forested land to its natural wetland condition of blanket bog. The conservation project and conference are part of the EU/Coillte-funded LIFE project, 'Restoring Active Blanket Bog in Ireland'.

According to Kevin Donnellan, project manager, the initiative has been in operation for five years and repre-

Large tracts of blanket bogs were planted in Ireland from the 1950s to the late 1980s with mixed results both commercially and environmentally.

Planting on blanket bogs was carried out when social forestry was a major objective in State forestry policy. This resulted in employment in rural areas where few job opportunities existed. Silvicultural and commercial objectives occasionally took a backseat to fulfil this policy objective. The existing Coillte forest estate — in terms of soil types and species — reflects an era when forestry was the land use of last resort. By the early 1990s, 49% of Coillte's forests had been



First stage of western blanket bog restoration — felling of Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine and windrowing 'lop and top' at Belleveaney, Co Mayo.

Photo: Neil Warner

seeded trees from the open bog.

The overall aim is to create conditions, which will allow regeneration and preservation of active raised bog habitat.

Raised bog formation began over 9,000 years ago while blanket bogs began later, becoming widespread 4,000 years ago. Although the Coillte project is scarcely five years old, the first visible signs of restoration can be seen. Kevin Donnellan said: "In the extremely poor forestry sites, the reversal to blanket bog is very obvious as canopy often didn't close in original tree crop. How-

with wildlife ranging from red deer to golden plover and migrating Greenland white-fronted geese "are specially adapted to the wet and nutrient poor conditions that prevail on blanket bogs".

RESTORATION

Both raised and blanket bogs are recognised as major restoration habitats by Coillte, but in the wider context they are enormously important ecosystems and are listed as priority habitats for conservation under the EU Habitats Directive. In addition to the blanket bog project, Coillte is also restoring 571 ha of raised bogs in 14 midland sites.



Golden plover nests in blanket bog habitats.