

## ProSilva Ireland AGM 2014, Baonscourt, Co Tyrone



### Chairman's Report by Pdraig O Tuama

October 2013 Forest day was held in Coillte properties in Ballyhooly, near Fermoy in Co Cork. The field day was held in conjunction with the Society Of Irish Foresters which resulted in an excellent turnout of more than 100 people attending including final year students from Forestry course in Waterford Institute of Technology. The field day was held in mixed conifer and broadleaf forests along the River Blackwater, that are designated as Old Woodlands Sites by Coillte and are to be managed under Lower Impact Silviculture Systems. The topic for the field day was Economics and CCF. Andy Poore from SelectFor and CCGF in UK attended as PSI invited foreign expert in UK and outlined the economic principles and benefits behind adopting CTN management. There was very good discussion as Andy outlined economic performance concepts primarily in relation to younger and more mature Douglas fir stands that we visited and how CTN practices align with these concepts. Thanks to Pat Roche of Coillte for helping organise the field day and to Coillte for once again hosting ProSilva on its field day. Thanks to Society Of Irish Foresters for agreeing to hold a joint field day with the Society members.

In April, for our field day we continued the concept of having themed field days and the April ProSilva Event was held in Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve in West Cork with the theme being Close to Nature management and Biodiversity. Faith Wilson, ecologist and ProSilva Committee member took the lead for the day. Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve covers some 300ha, with the dominant habitats being old oak woodland and young woodland which is regenerating in areas which have been cleared of non-native conifers over the last few years and the field day discussion was on the application of Close to Nature principles in the management of such bio diverse oak woodlands. We also visited an adjacent Sitka Spruce forest belong to Coillte where a primary management objective is for biodiversity and discussed how this might be achieved through transformation thinning. George Frank, From ProSilva Austria attended as PSI invited foreign expert and spoke on forest management and Biodiversity and application of CTN principles. There was very interesting discussion on the day even though the turnout was poor relative to recent field days at twenty five people. Thanks to Clare Heardman of NPWS for helping organise field day and to NPWS and Coillte for hosting us on our field day.

In April the Forest Service issued a consultation document on Ireland's Forestry Programme 2014-2020. ProSilva Ireland made a considered submission to the Forest Service outlining where we considered ProSilva principles could be applied within this programme. The Strategic Environmental Assessment report for this programme was published in September which outlined the main proposals of the Forestry Programme for 2014-2020 and unfortunately it appears that no element of or submission was taken into consideration. This is particularly disappointing as I considered that there may have been reference to Close to nature management in the Native Woodland Scheme or the Reconstitution of Woodlands schemes at least.

The PSI annual overseas study trip took place in the Lakelands District in England to coincide with the UK Continuous Cover Forestry Conference on June 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup>. This proved an excellent choice as we got to meet with wide range of foresters interested in CCF who were working in conditions and with challenges very similar to our own. There was the wide range of interesting papers presented at the conference and the multi-aspect and multi-site arrangements for the field visits that also covered a wide range of aspects of CCF. Congratulations are certainly due to CCFG for hosting an excellent conference.

Padraig O Tuama and Donal O Hare attended the Annual ProSilva Europe Convention and Annual meeting held in Switzerland. From the AGM ProSilva Europe will in future be known as just ProSilva as there are now affiliated organisations from outside of Europe. This required an amendment to the Constitution and this change along with other references to Europe were put to a vote in the meeting and adopted. Phil Morgan and Sophie Bertain from ProSilva France undertook a review of the ProSilva constitution and recommended various structural changes to how the organisation is being run. These proposals were put to the meeting and adopted. One of the changes is that record of the minutes of the AGM when the chairperson/president of the National ProSilva is appointed will have to be forwarded to ProSilva. That person is then one of the Executive members of ProSilva Committee with a right to vote. Donal O Hare has been appointed as secretary to ProSilva. This is a great honour for ProSilva Ireland and we congratulate Donal on his appointment. We also visited many wonderful forest where the multifunctional aspects of forest management were very evident and where discussions often focussed on "Plenterwald" forest or Daurwald forest type of management.

Tele-conferencing has been invaluable for all the organising of ProSilva Ireland events this year as members live so far apart. Thanks to Coillte for helping to facilitating this.

COFORD Research Project is very near its end with Padraig O Tuama, Paddy Purser and Liam Byrne involved in the Project Steering group. A database of sites being managed under LISS has also been gathered as part of the project. This is an opportunity to highlight and profile the real benefits of Close to Nature management practices and very significant project for ProSilva Ireland to foster credibility in the Irish context.

Padraig O Tuama

03/10/2014