



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

Balancing the multipurpose benefits of forestry

National Forestry Conference
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Presentation Content



- Overview of the value of Forest Sector
 - Ireland forests
 - International policy direction
 - National policy direction
- Public vision for forests
 - Public attitudes survey – key findings
 - Shared Forestry Vision 2050
 - Forestry – *a social licence to operate*
- Timber benefits and “non – Timber” benefits



Overview of the value of the forest sector and policy drivers



Forest Cover
11.6%



9,000
Employment
(direct and indirect)

Recreation:
22 Million Day
Visits per Year

Forestry

Key Facts

Afforestation
1989 – 2022
300,000 ha



~ 3 MT Yr⁻¹



€ 2.3 Billion
GDP



Annual Harvest
~ 4 million m³

Forest Owners
23,500

International Policy Direction



Paris Agreement – limit temperature rise to less than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, pursue efforts to limit to less than 1.5 degrees

EC 2030 Climate Plan - to reduce GHG emissions by 55% by 2030

Fit for 55 Package of Proposals to make EU policies fit to achieve 55% reduction target

European Green Deal including a **Deforestation regulation**, **EU Forest Strategy**, **Biodiversity strategy**



climate footprint



food security



global transition



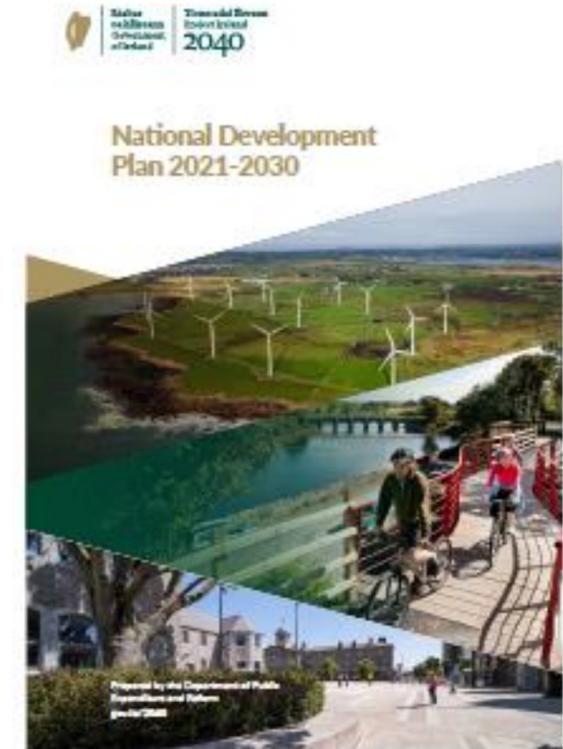
new opportunities



resilience

National Policy Direction

- Economy wide basis – step up in environmental ambition to align with **EU reduction target**
- **The Programme for Government 2018** – 51% reduction in GHG emissions
- **Climate Action Plan 2022** - sectoral emissions reduction targets
- **Climate Action and Low Development (Amendment) Act 2021** – objective to achieve ‘climate neutral economy’ by 2050
- **Ireland's new Forest Strategy**





Public Vision for Forests

What is a Forestry Programme?

Forest Strategy : VISION 2050

THE RIGHT TREES IN THE RIGHT PLACES FOR THE RIGHT REASONS WITH THE RIGHT MANAGEMENT SUPPORTING A SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING ECONOMY AND SOCIETY AND A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.

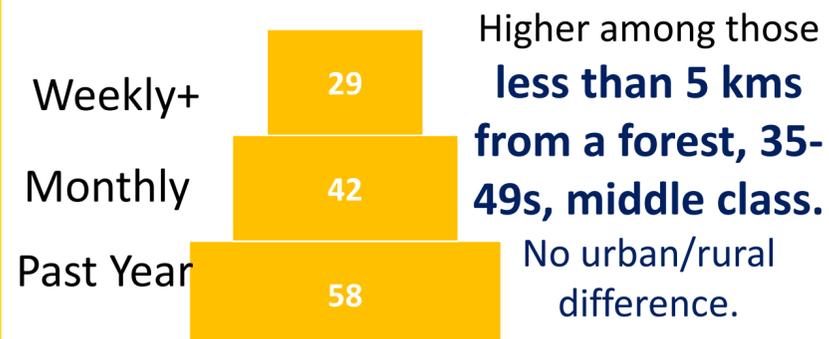




Attitudes Survey 1000 people

Key insights

WHO IS VISITING FORESTS?



WHY ARE THEY VISITING?



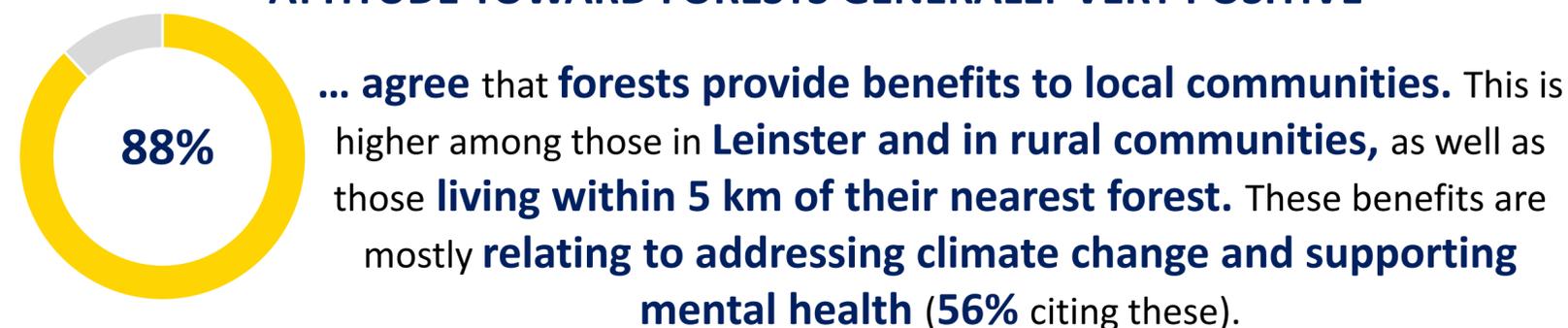
APPETITE FOR MORE FORESTS

3 in 4 would like **more forests** in their county and **more trees** planted in their nearest **urban area.**

2 in 3 state that they would like an **even balance of forests & agriculture in their ideal landscape**, while a further **quarter** would like a **forest-dominated** landscape.

Of those who want more forests, **7 in 10** want a mix between conifers and deciduous trees.

ATTITUDE TOWARD FORESTS GENERALLY VERY POSITIVE



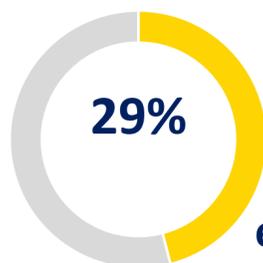
2 in 5 believe that the **most important reason for new forests** is for **combatting climate change**, followed by **58% citing nature & biodiversity.**

Meanwhile, the **main objective of forests** currently follows a similar trend **with 3 in 4** indicating they are for **providing habitat for wildlife**, followed by **62%** stating they are for **combatting climate change.**



HOW CAN WE PROMOTE FORESTS FURTHER?

1. Improve the level and effectiveness of communications and messaging in the area of forests and woodlands.



Only **29%** recall any media stories or messaging about Irish forests. Almost a quarter recall TV messaging, while only **4%** recall anything on social media. A **growing emphasis placed on social media**, particularly among young people and so this **should be a priority area**.

Broader considerations:

- Though economic factors not playing a major part in people's thinking on forests, the benefits here should be communicated to enhance support.

2. Communicate the importance of forests and woodlands

The key advertising recalled relates to initiatives and nature, but the key importance of forests are more secondary in recalling.

Combatting climate change is an important element alongside the mental health & financial benefits of forests for local communities. **These aspects could be beneficially communicated.**

3. Promote the use of renewable timber products in building & heating homes.

Only **10%** are currently living in a mostly timber home, but **a quarter** have an appetite to live in such a home.

Furthermore, only **2 in 5 use wood fuel** to heat their homes, with the more established **oil & gas** heating systems being used by over **4 out of 5** who don't burn wood.

4. A growing need for communicating the importance of forests outside of the local communities

There is a much **stronger understanding** of the benefits posed by forests within local communities with **94% of those living within 5km** of a forest agreeing that forest have been beneficial, **versus 75%** of those more than 10km away from their nearest forest.

If we can provide an understanding of the benefits there may be more support for additional forests.

Online Public Consultation 3,122 submissions

Right Reasons - Tackling Climate Change and enhancing Biodiversity

The survey asked if people agree or disagree with the following statements. The chart below shows the percentage of people that “strongly agreed” with the statements. As seen in other questions, the combination of Strongly Agree and Agree raised the level of agreement significantly.

1. “Ireland needs to create more forest to protect and improve biodiversity”

82%
Strongly agree

(n=3130)

2. “Ireland needs to create more forest to contribute to reducing carbon dioxide and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.”

80%
Strongly agree

(n=3122)

3. “Restoring and enhancing our native woodland habitats is important for biodiversity.”

79.9%
Strongly agree

(n=3116)

4. Both climate change and biodiversity improvements should be targeted when planning and managing forests.

78.6%
Strongly agree

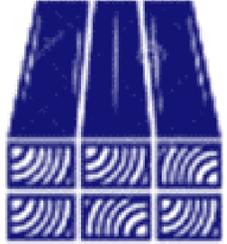
(n=3116)

5. Forest habitats should be allowed to generate naturally, where appropriate.

62%
Strongly agree

(n=3114)

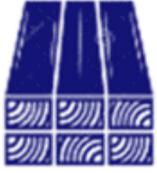
Ireland's National Forest Strategy

FOREST FOR CLIMATE	FORESTS FOR WOOD	FORESTS FOR PEOPLE	FORESTS FOR NATURE	FORESTS FOR ECONOMY
 <p>Forests sequester and store carbon. Irish forests and their soils currently store over 300 million tonnes of carbon</p>	 <p>Wood provides sustainable building materials and replaces materials made using energy from fossil fuels</p>	 <p>Forests provide places for recreation. Our public forests provide access on 400,000 ha</p>	 <p>Forests provide important habitats for plants and animals, protect water quality when established sustainably</p>	 <p>Forests produced 4 million cubic metres of timber in 2020, support a vibrant forest industry</p>
<p>Forest Strategy provides opportunities to identify actions to deliver on these 5 strategic themes</p>				



Timber benefits

FORESTS FOR
WOOD



Wood provides sustainable building materials and replaces materials made using energy from fossil fuels



FORESTS FOR
ECONOMY



Forests produced 4 million cubic metres of timber in 2020, support a vibrant forest industry





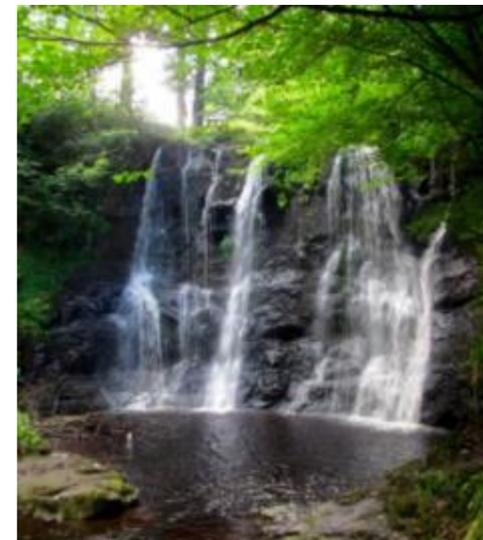
“Non – timber” benefits

Our forests make an important contribution to our Environment when established in the right places

FORESTS FOR
NATURE



Forests provide important habitats for plants and animals, protect water quality when established sustainably



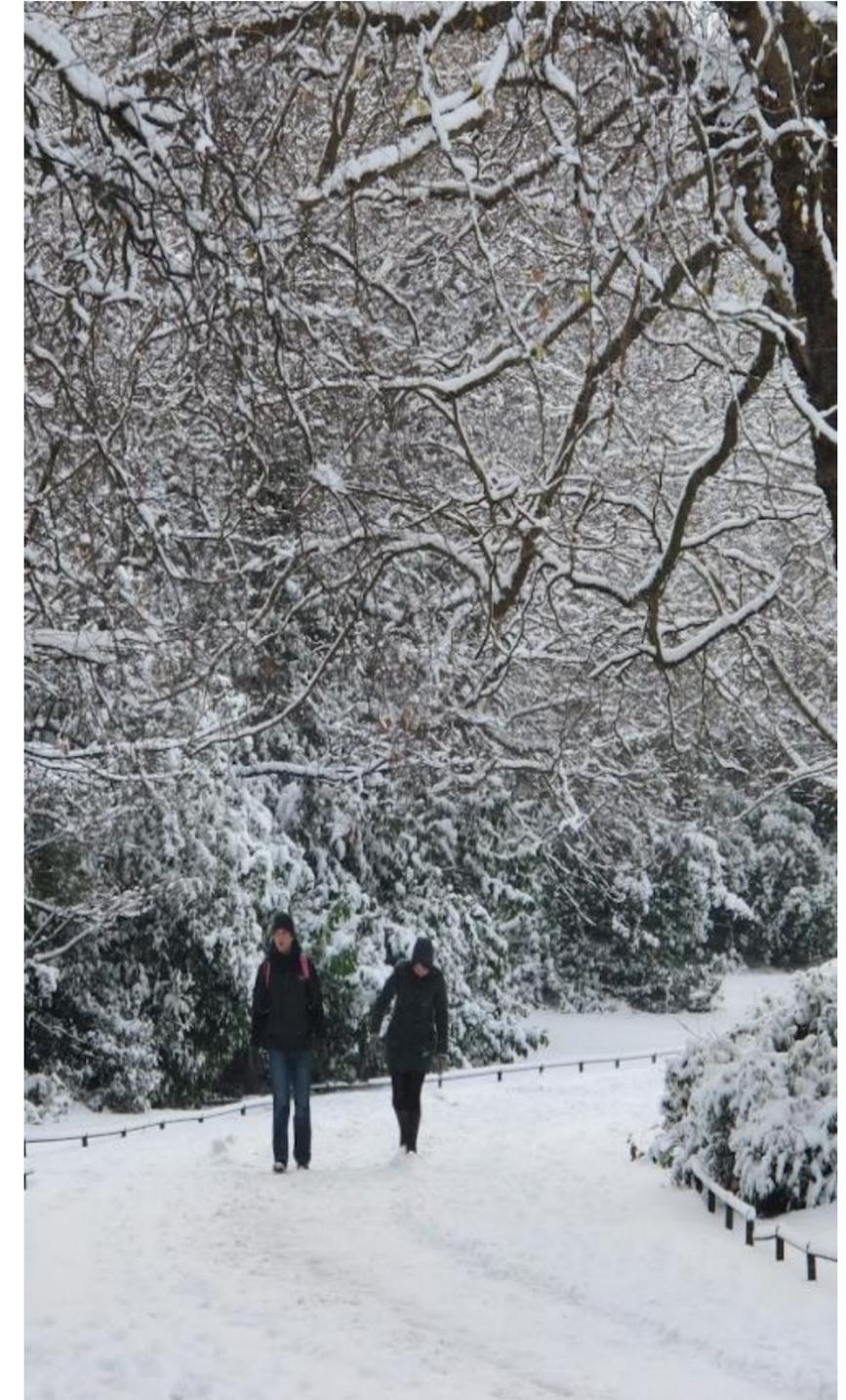
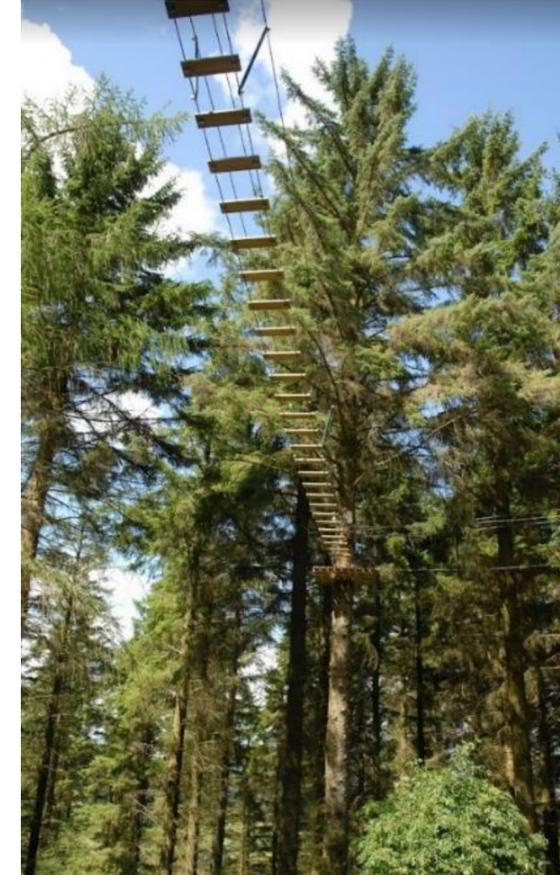
Our forests provide access for recreation and quiet places for us to enjoy

FORESTS FOR
PEOPLE

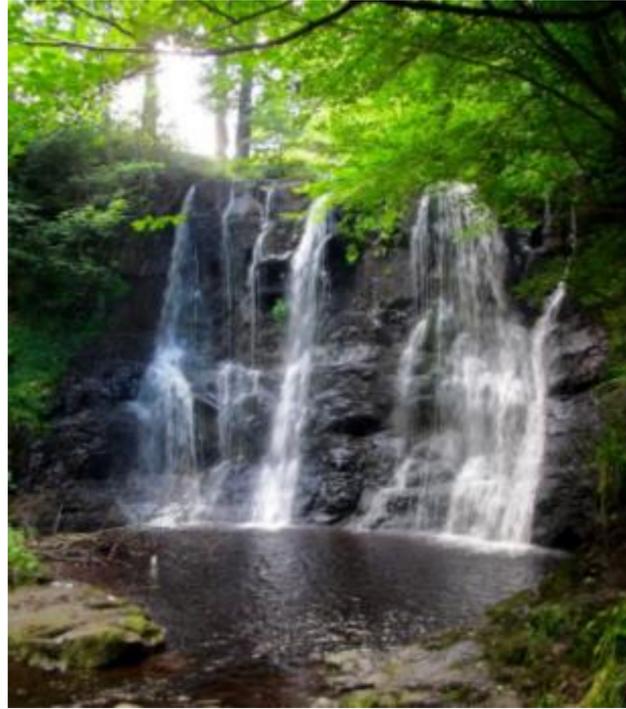


Forests provide places for recreation.

Our public forests provide access on 400,000 ha



Ecosystems Services



Water quality, need to protect by sensitive planting



Public goods e.g. recreation, carbon, landscape, health

- **Water**

- Reducing soil erosion along river edges
- Flood mitigation
- Increasing riparian woodlands

- **Habitats**

- Restoring woodland habitats
- Increasing species diversity
- Connecting wildlife corridors
- Enhancing Biodiversity

- **Recreation**

- Providing access to forests

- **Carbon**

- Sequestration
- Storage in timber products
- Substitution materials made from fossil fuels

- **Landscape**

Forestry - *A social licence to operate*



- Requires sustainable management of our forests
- Continued support from society, citizens and stakeholders
- Forestry practice and policy informed by evidence based science
- Compliance with the EU and national regulatory framework
- A licensing system that ensures good forest practice, legal compliance and protection of the environment



Forestry and Carbon



- Ireland account and report carbon emissions and removals from across all sectors of the economy as part of International reporting requirements
- Forest owners can partake in opportunities to trade carbon on voluntary markets
- EU will provide a regulatory framework for the certification of carbon removals towards the end of 2022
- DAFM will examine the EU framework and plan to hold expert round table discussions shortly in 2022/2023 to explore the development of a National Carbon Code
- There are examples in the EU where voluntary trading of forest carbon takes place and DAFM are keen to explore how land owners can financially benefit



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Thank you

