

Dear friends and Supporters,

The Woodland League wish to thank all of you for your support and give you an update as to where the campaign is at right now. Apologies for being off the radar for a little while, it comes with being a voluntary organisation....

Pressure to sell the forests continues as does the ongoing Coillte sale of trees to Private investor pension funds while retaining the land for the moment, exactly as the Fine Gael/Labour New Era proposal for the merger of Coillte and Bord na Mona suggests. This nonsense appears to have convinced many people that the sale of Coillte was no longer an issue, it was merely another smoke and mirrors act to distract and mislead.

This New Era means business as usual with the potential to sell off the whole of the forest estate for the benefit of private investors, which amounts to the same deal as the sale of trees and land being sold. Once the trees are owned by pension funds there is no benefit to the Nation from the land. Coillte announced 33million euros worth of trees sold last year in their annual accounts 2009-2010 at ten years old, so they will be clearfelled in 15 years tying in with pension pay outs, then replanted on the same land and the deal starts again. Meanwhile the Public have had no benefits from this land. This matches the same 33million euros worth of trees sold for the year before, allowing them to show a shallow profit for the second year running.

Coillte also continue their on-going land sales policy, the latest controversial sale being proposed for Ballinora wood in North Cork, against the wishes of the three local communities. We all know the consequences of the sale of the 400 acres to Shell in Mayo against the wishes of that local community. Notices have been appearing in regional newspapers like the Clare Champion announcing the granting of land based prospecting/exploration licenses potentially on Public forest lands. Please let us know of any information related to this in your area or unusual activity in your local woods.

Coillte carried out an extensive Geological survey when they were established in 1989 regarding minerals etc. A recent Dáil question by Sinn Féin demanding access to these Geological surveys was ruled out of order by the Ceann Comhairle....which tells its own story.

As Diana Beresford says we need to strengthen our mandate fast via the petition to have any chance of being able to influence whats coming down the line regards our Forests and natural resources. The many thousands of great statements left on the petition site broadens the mandate of the campaign to include Reform of current forest policy, and more Public participation in the managing of the Public forests to include the regeneration of the Great Oak forests of Ireland. This is reflected in the Three R's of The Woodland League.

Regeneration of the Great Oak forests.
Restoration of the Indigenous forest culture.
Reform of State forest policy.

Meanwhile enjoy, the Bealtaine hawthorn flower petals like confetti blowing in the wind in these stormy times.

Please read our latest Press Release "A request to the Queen of England regarding restoration of Irelands Forests." and keep the petition signing moving.

Best Wishes,
The Woodland League.

