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A WOODLAND LEAGUE APPEAL TO SAVE IRELAND'S TREES, WOODLANDS and WILDERNESS

At this Time of year when we should be enjoying Natures bounty of sweet scents, unfolding leaves, flowers, and bird song, we are instead witnessing the destruction of the main source of this beauty. This is of course our diminishing area of native trees, woodlands and regenerating forests.

The Woodland League have been highlighting this issue and continue to be contacted by distressed members of the public with fresh cases regarding this ongoing felling frenzy.

The trees have already borne the brunt of the fury of recent winter storms. While they have protected people from the majority of the effects, they now must contend with a man made fury.

This involves the indiscriminate felling of trees under the guise of health and safety for storm tree clean up operations, as well as the large scale removal and burning of regenerating native woodland on farms also known by the derogatory name of scrub. The latter is being ordered by the department of Agriculture under spurious and contradictory single payment rules.

Despite having the lowest tree cover in Europe as well as a commitment to increase our low forest cover at EU and UN levels, from 11% to 17% by 2030, the Forest Service tasked with this objective, who are also the state regulatory body for trees, have been found wanting.

A spokesperson for the Woodland League, Andrew St Ledger said: **“If trees could talk, they would be screaming blue murder right now, it beggars belief that this woodland degradation is continuing in 2014, destroying important habitat for so much wildlife. The Forest Service must intervene and insist that all unnecessary felling at storm damaged sites and scrub removal on farms must cease immediately.”**

The newly drafted forestry bill should provide the legal tool to stop this however it is short on environmental protection. It needs to be revised and strengthened to ensure this situation is legislated for and brought under control. We are calling for cross party political support for this action to ensure that some of the already proposed list of ecological amendments from Environmental NGOs, are now included in the bill.

It is also incredible that this wholesale destruction of our environment, aimed at trees, is happening so soon after the latest alarming IPCC Climate Change report. The debate focused on the report in Ireland appears to have been like more circulating hot air. The Woodland League would like to hear what Mary Robinson has to say about this unfolding Climate Change crisis on her own door step.

Native trees are surely our most significant defence against the continuing threats posed by Climate Change. They filter the air we breathe, lock up carbon, block the wind and sun, soak up floods, provide refuge for wildlife, control the flow of rivers and streams, prevent soil erosion, among their many other attributes.

On this the first anniversary of the Woodland League “Save Ireland's Forests” campaign Avondale event, when over 5000 people came

together to stand up for the trees. We call on the people once again to stand up and protect the trees.

The people are starting to learn to grow, plant, and nurture native trees in their gardens, villages, towns, cities, and schools. Politicians and corporations are not going to do it, it is up to the people to take this initiative to the next level and reforest Ireland with her native woodlands and to protect the trees we already possess.

Diana Beresford Kroeger, Irish born leading scientist, ethno-botanist, native tree advocate and best selling author, said in regard to her reading of the lengthy IPCC report: **"The density of thinking in the IPCC report would sink a battle ship. Why do they not just say, stop the consumer lifestyle based on the church of the holy dollar and pick up a shovel and start planting trees."**

Diana who is the Woodland league scientific consultant is also encouraging a world wide people focused tree planting campaign, via her upcoming tree-centred film for global release in 2015.

A culture," the poet WH Auden wrote, "is no better than its woods. A place without its trees and woods, has no roots, no strength and no shelter."

Below you will find links to relevant articles:

Grants forcing farmers to burn scrub

<http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/News/Grantsforcingfarmerstoburnscrub/tabid/1002/Default.aspx>

Illegal Tree-Felling at Kilrush Wood

<http://www.clarechampion.ie/?s=illegal+tree+felling+at+Kilrush+wood>

Forest service rejects "frenzy of tree-felling"

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/forest-service-rejects-frenzy-of-tree-felling-1.1769032>

West Cork farmers taking minister to High Court

<http://www.southernstar.ie/News/West-Cork-farmers-taking-minister-to-High-Court-13032014.htm>

FOREST HEROINE: Tree advocate Diana Beresford-Kroeger sets reforestation sights high

<http://blog.cifor.org/21558/foreforest-heroine-tree-advocate-diana-beresford-kroeger-sets-reforestation-sights-high>

<http://dianasjourney.com/tag/diana-beresford-kroeger/>

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