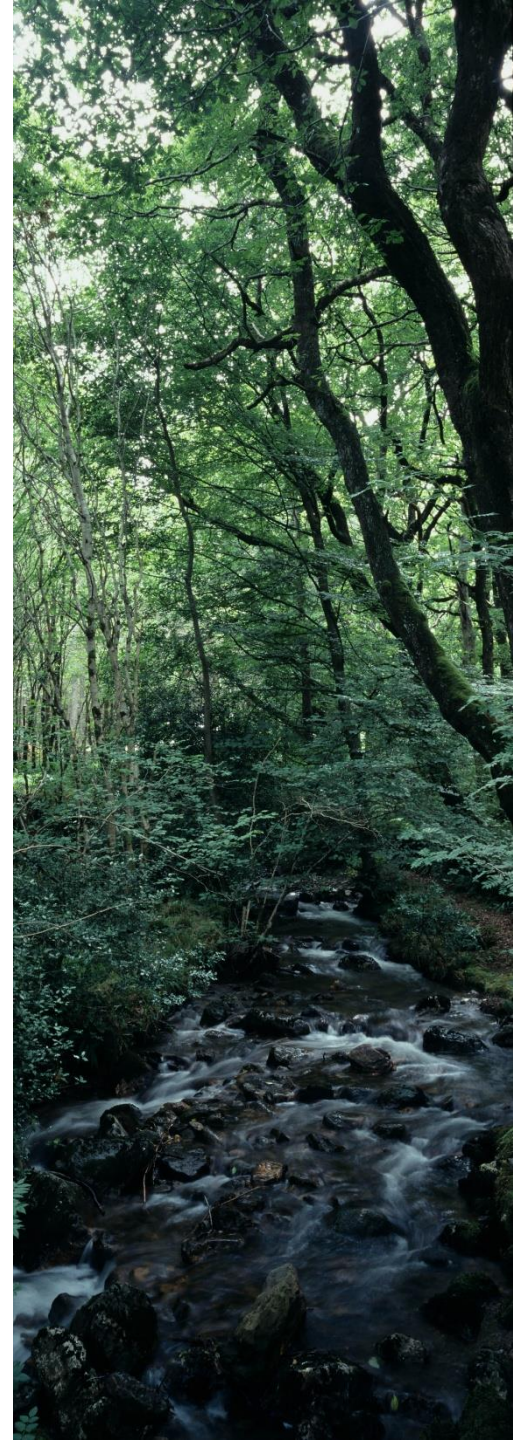


The KerryLIFE Freshwater Pearl Mussel Project: The Forestry Perspective

Kevin Collins, Forestry Inspector
Forest Service-DAFM

Presentation to the National Water Event
Galway Bay Hotel, 8th June 2016



Difficulties between forestry & water & FPM?

Yes, at different stages in the rotation & for different reasons:

- Sediment run-off
- Nutrient run-off
- Acidification
- Altered hydrological patterns
- Chemicals
- Difficulties exacerbated on upland conifer plantations on peat
- 'Legacy management' to address issues

However, properly sited & managed woodlands / forests can significantly benefit water quality, the aquatic habitat & Freshwater Pearl Mussel

Forestry well-positioned to deliver...



Forestry & water

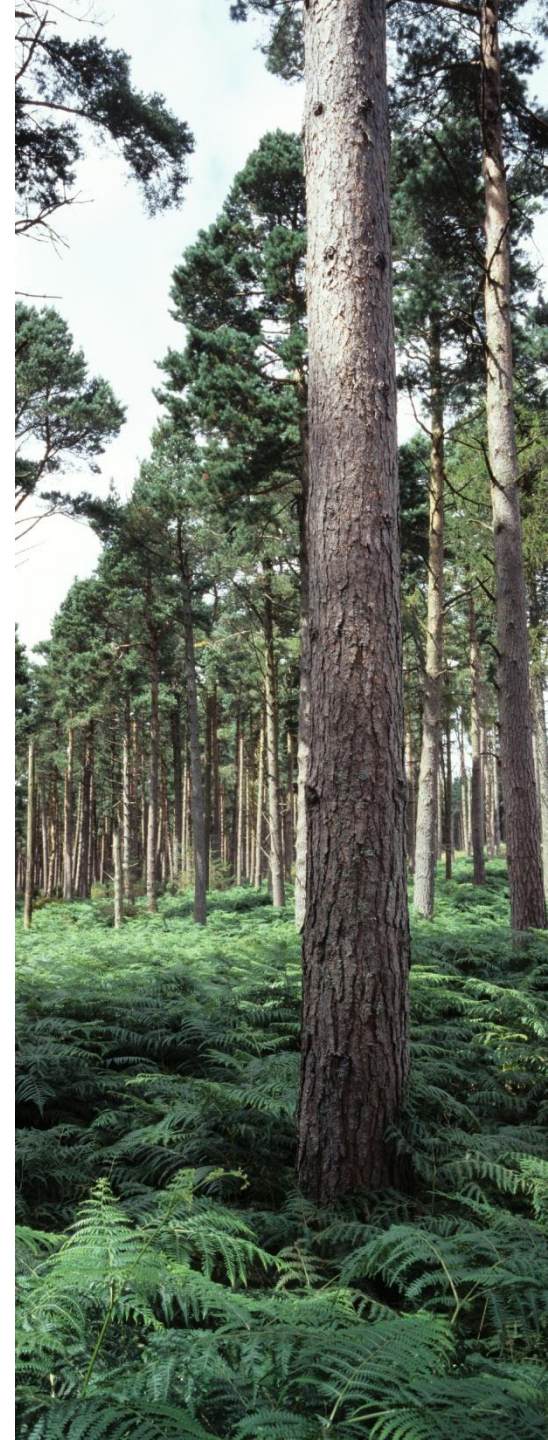
- Permanent landuse with long periods of stability & non-intervention
- Critical forestry activities regulated by FS-DAFM → undergo assessment (incl. EIA / AA screening, referrals) & subject to guidelines / requirements & other conditions
- Range of schemes to influence change, e.g. Native Woodland Establishment, Native Woodland Conservation, Environmental Enhancement of Forests Scheme (incoming)
- Well-established measures enable nuanced design, e.g. water setbacks, Areas of Biodiversity Enhancement
- Foresters ('engineers') have a good understanding of water issues generally
- Recognise the unsuitability of past practices & the need to step back from highly sensitive sites



New policy context

- Incoming 2014 Forestry Act → environmental protection & linkage with Habitats & Water Framework Directive
- Forest policy (*Forests, products & people*, 2014): environmental compliance → **contribution to the environment & provision of public goods & services**
- Direct role under Habitats Directive & WFD – FS-DAFM cannot approve inconsistent projects
- RDR & State Aid rules governing the Forestry Programme 2014-2020 : *“only afforestation consistent with the management objectives of the sites [i.e. SACs & SPAs] concerned & agreed with the Member State’s authority in charge of implementing Natura 2000 shall be allowed”*
- EU approval of the Forestry Programme based on (*inter alia*) protection of the environment & delivery of eco-system services

Forestry is a vital landuse option, an important employer & a strategic national asset → focus on the ‘right forest on the right site’



KerryLIFE

Sustainable land use management for the conservation of freshwater pearl mussel

Partners: Dept. of Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts & the Gaeltacht, Dept. of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Forest Service-DAFM, Coillte, Teagasc, POBAL, South Kerry Development Partnership

Network of stakeholders include local bodies, IFA, Woodlands of Ireland, Inland Fisheries Ireland

Aiming to address siltation, nutrient enrichment & hydromorphological impacts from farming and forestry, by:

- demonstrating effective conservation measures
- demonstrating sustainable land management
- enhancing awareness
- producing guidance for farming and forest land users

€5 million budget, co-funded under EU LIFE, runs to Dec.2019





- Targeting Coillte forests (485 ha) & private forests (30 ha)
- Aiming to:
 - establish 15 ha of new native woodland
 - manage 10 ha of existing native woodland
 - convert 15 ha of conifer forest to native woodland
- Concrete measures for forestry incl. drain management, stabilising riparian sediment, buffer strips, restructuring / transformation of commercial forest to permanent native woodland; firebreak management
- Trials to-date...





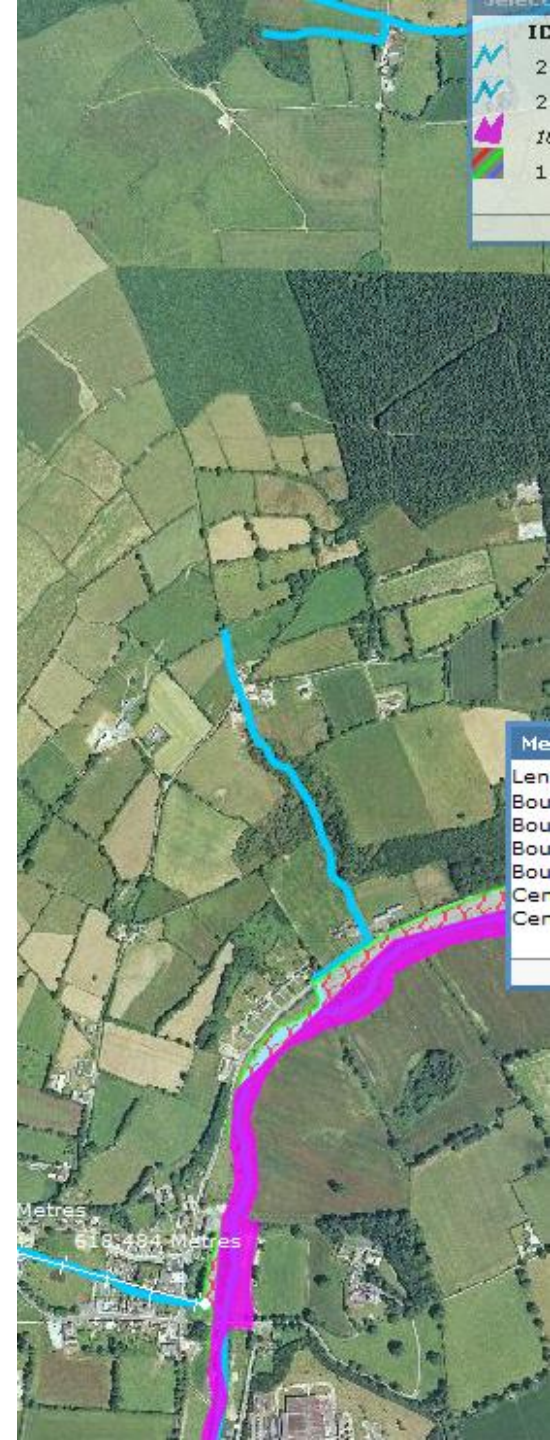
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- Trials to-date...

FS-DAFM, Coillte & wider forestry sector watching KerryLIFE with interest → will identify what works & what doesn't



Other water-related developments

- In addition to KerryLIFE...
- *Land Types for Afforestation* (March16) → no afforestation on a range of water-sensitive habitats (e.g. wet & dry heath, lowland blanket bog, raised bog)
- Existing mandatory 'guidelines' plus draft *Environmental Requirements for Afforestation* – new 'baseline' for protection
- Forestry & Freshwater Pearl Mussel Requirements
- Standard 'water' checks during all assessment, including: referrals, acid sensitivity protocol, EIA / AA screening, field inspections
- Environmental Enhancement of Forests Scheme – work during rotation, e.g. 'retro-fitting' buffers, drain blocking
- DAFM-funded research, e.g. HYDROFOR, CROW, FORMMAR
- Draft Plan for Forestry & FPM in Ireland – currently in SEA / AA
- Native Woodland Package...



Native Woodland Package

- Supporting the restoration & expansion of our native woodland resource & associated biodiversity
- Developed & implemented by the Forest Service-DAFM in partnership with **Woodlands of Ireland**, NPWS, Heritage Council, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Coillte plus wider native woodland stakeholders
- Targets up to 2020:
 - 2,700 ha under NW Establishment
 - 1,950 ha under NW Conservation
 - Potential €24 million investment



Native Woodland Establishment

- Creation - on 'greenfield' site - of the most appropriate native woodland type(s)
- Highest grant & premium available: €5,750 / ha grant plus €635 / ha / 15 years
- Nuanced design of new plantations



Native Woodland Conservation Scheme

- The restoration of existing native woodlands and the conversion of non-native forest (conifer) to native woodland
- Private, Coillte and NPWS
- Up to €5,000 / ha plus premium of €350 / ha for 7 years





Basic model for water sensitive sites?

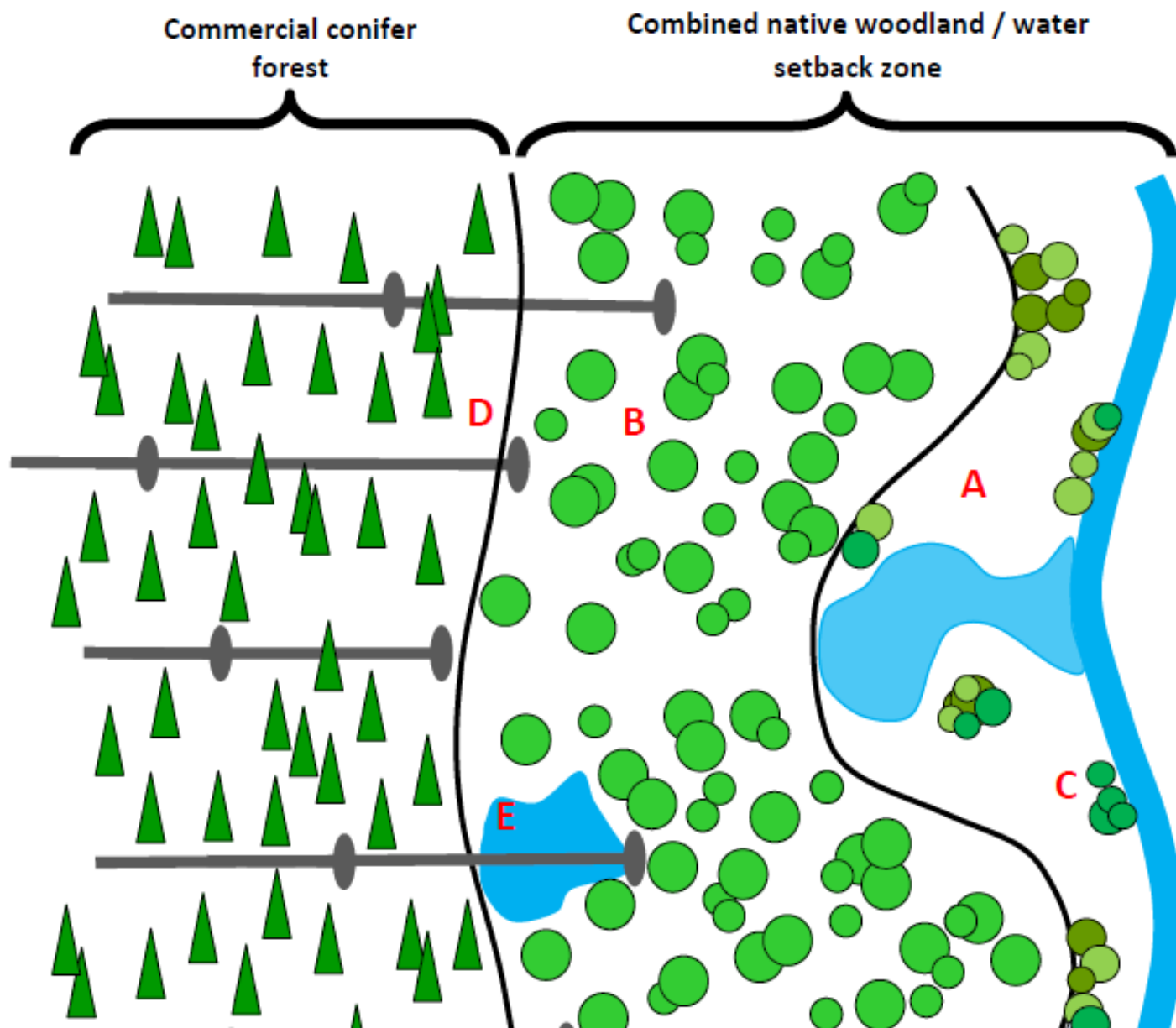
Key

A: Unplanted & undisturbed water setback

B: Low Impact Silvicultural Zone (native woodland under CCF)

C: Groups of suitable native riparian species created for direct in-stream benefits

D & E: Drain blocking (with silt traps) to reinstate natural drainage conditions



Only possible by mutual understanding, pooling knowledge & working together

Foresters working with other water stakeholders to identify & address problems and to realise opportunities where appropriately sited & managed woodlands are part of the solution

Approach underpins the development of the Native Woodland Package, the KerryLIFE Project & the evolving 2nd cycle of the WFD



Thanks!

For more information on KerryLIFE,
contact Project Manager Richard
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www.kerrylife.ie

For information on the Native Woodland
Package, see:

www.agriculture.gov.ie/forests-service/grants-and-premium-schemes/2015-2016/

