



# Forestry & Raised Bogs

Tim Crowley  
Managing Director  
Coillte Forest



8 May 2008

LIFE04 NAT/IE/000121  
"Restoring Raised Bog in Ireland"

**coillte**



# History of Forestry on Raised Bog

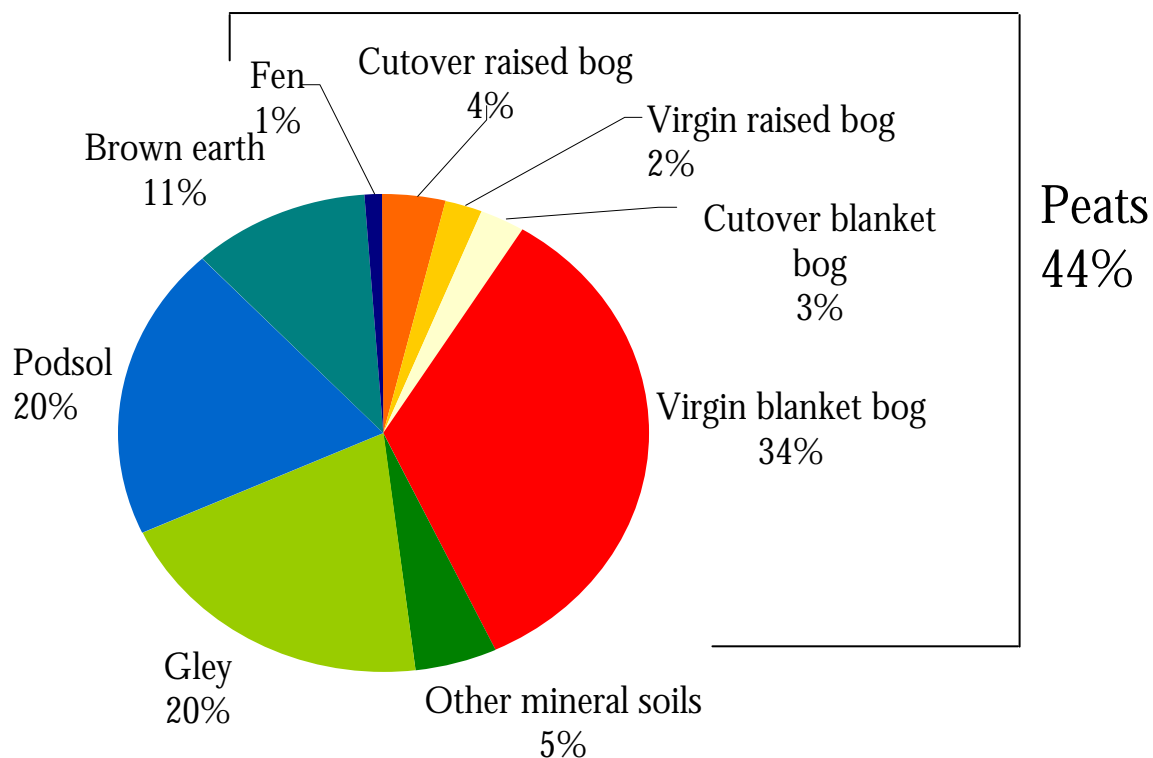
## Historical context for forestry and bogs generally

- Government policy 1950s – 70s to have annual 10,000ha afforestation programme mainly on impoverished soils unsuitable for agriculture.
- Forestry identified as a source of employment in remote and deprived rural areas particularly in the West and Midlands.
- Seen as waste land – unsuitable for agriculture.
- Major research – 1960s-80s to raise their nutrient status by drainage and fertiliser to enable tree crops to be grown.
- Mainly on blanket bogs in the West but also to a much lesser extent on raised bogs in the Midlands



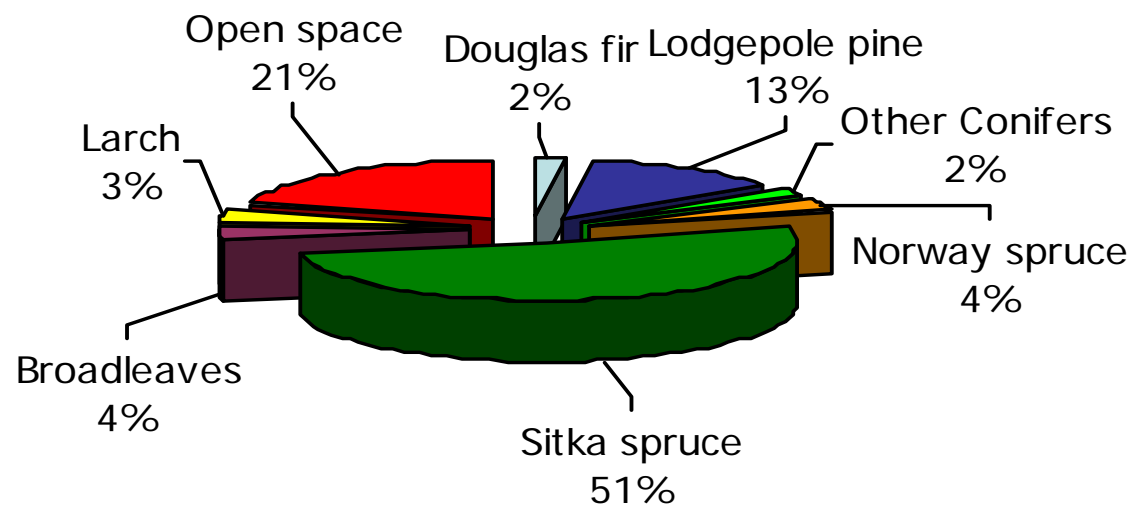
# Soil Types on the Coillte Estate

- Peatland soils are extensive on the Coillte estate
- A legacy of past policy of afforesting land unsuitable for agriculture
- Low productivity
- Some afforested SAC areas retain ecological value
- Coillte has an important role in peatland conservation





# Species Distribution





## NATURE CONSERVATION WITHIN COILLTE

- Coillte secured FSC certification for well managed forests in 2001, and has maintained this status since
- Ecological surveys took place to identify 15% of estate to be managed primarily for biodiversity which compliments objectives of LIFE-Nature
  
- Coillte LIFE projects:
  - Blanket Bog restoration near 2000ha
  - Raised Bog restoration of 571ha
  - Life Woodland Project of 550ha
  
- Native Woodland Scheme
- Millennium Woods
- Permanent riparian zones



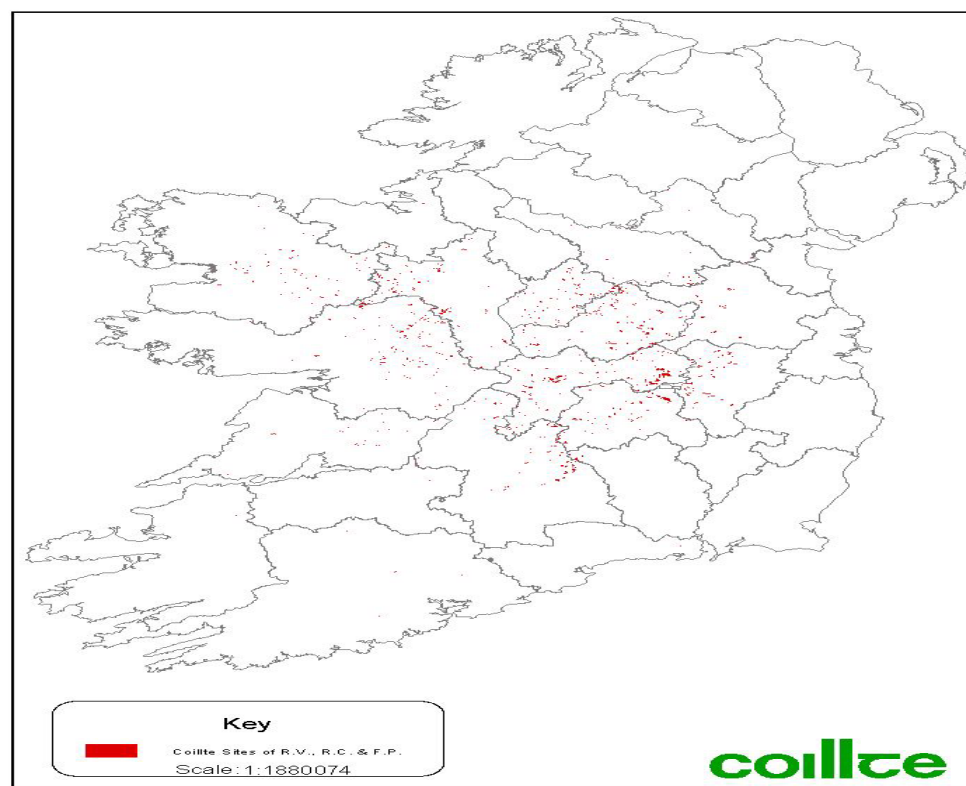
## Coillte Raised Bog Resource

→ Fen Peat	=	5,314.6ha
→ Raised Cutaway	=	20,004.2ha
→ Raised Virgin	=	6,496.4ha
→ Total	=	31,815.4ha
→ Of which bare	=	2,829.4ha





## Raised bog distribution: Coillte estate



8 May 2008

LIFE04 NAT/IE/000121  
"Restoring Raised Bog in Ireland"

The Coillte logo, which consists of the word 'coillte' in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, set against a dark green rectangular background.



## Coillte Raised Bog – Designated Areas

→ **48 designated areas** (NHAs and SACs) affiliated with Coillte property

▪ Planted	=	877.6ha
▪ Bare	=	410.9ha
▪ Total	=	1,288.5ha

→ Significance of LIFE04: has cleared 450ha (51%) of the 877.6ha of planted NHA/SAC





# Today

- Raised bogs are now recognised as being complex wetland ecosystems and are among the richest in Europe in terms of their plant and animal life
- Raised bogs in SACs no longer seen as wasteland
- Coillte has had a major change in attitude towards management of afforested raised bog in SACs – restored over 50% on its estate
- Their ecological and conservation value outweigh their economic importance



# Tomorrow

- Management suggestions for afforested raised bog SACs are wide ranging and include:
  - Blocking drains/Rewetting of former turf banks
  - Control of self-seeding conifers
  - Development into native woodland or other semi-natural habitat
- Consultation with Forest Service and NPWS to agree new management objectives for these sites



## Afforested raised bog – Killsallagh – Project Site 4



8 May 2008

LIFE04 NAT/IE/000121  
"Restoring Raised Bog in Ireland"

**coilte**



## The project you will hear about today – “Restoring Raised Bog in Ireland”

- Objective to restore 571ha of raised bog
- Total cost €2.5 million
- 75% funded by EU LIFE-Nature Programme
- 25% funded by Coillte
- Project duration 2004-2008
- 14 project sites
- All major stakeholders were represented either on the Project Management Group or the Project Advisory Panel



# Key Project Tasks

- Series of field operations
  - Tree removal
  - Drain blocking
  - Fencing
  - Removal of natural regeneration
  - Development of demonstration sites



The outcome you will hear about today

- Restoration of 571 hectares of raised bog
- An opportunity to demonstrate that with adequate funding large areas of afforested raised bog can be restored to favourable conservation status
- Establishment of an informal national and international network to exchange information on bog restoration techniques





## 60 Danish foresters visit Carn Park – Project Site 11



8 May 2008

LIFE04 NAT/IE/000121  
"Restoring Raised Bog in Ireland"

**coilte**



## Finally...the VALUE OF LIFE-NATURE

- Has aided Coillte's nature conservation programme
- Has changed how Coillte views the management of priority habitats
- Has demonstrated how much more could be done on Coillte's estate and elsewhere in Ireland
- Rural development regulation 2007-2013 – is there potential funding in the “non-productive investments” under article 46?