

WILDERNESS IN A MODIFIED EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE

Date: 14th - 16th May 2013

Location: Westport, County Mayo, Ireland

Coillte (Ireland's state forest company), in cooperation with the **National Parks and Wildlife Service** and **Mayo County Council**, and supported by Pan Parks and Wild Europe, are organising an international conference on - **THE POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPING WILDERNESS IN MODIFIED EUROPEAN LANDSCAPES**, to be held in Westport, County Mayo, Ireland, on 14th May - 16th May 2013 during Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The Conference will bring together experts, representing national and international organisations, to share information and exchange ideas on current and possible future approaches to rewilding modified landscapes particularly former plantation forests and other impacted landscapes.

Who should attend?

The conference will be of particular interest to large land owners (both public and private) who maybe considering re-wilding or wilderness projects in Europe. State Forest organisations and National Park authorities will find the programme of particular value as will nature conservation and advocacy organisations, both statutory and non governmental. Universities, outdoor recreation and ecotourism groups will also benefit and add much to the debate and discussions.

Registration and cost

Registration for this Conference will be €100 and will include the conference dinner and field trip transport. All other travel, accommodation and subsistence costs will be the sole responsibility of the delegates.

To register your interest in participating, go to the conference website

www.coillte.ie/wildernessinmayo/



An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



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WESTPORT PLAZA HOTEL, WESTPORT, CO MAYO, IRELAND
15th May - 16th May 2103

Day 1 - 15th May 2013.

The call for wilderness designation in Europe must deal with one significant issue - that much of Europe's landscape is modified in some way by human influences. This issue should not be seen as a solely European concern, North America too has many wilderness areas that were once severely impacted by human activities and now exhibit wilderness characteristics. What is our starting point and do modified landscapes have a role to play in Europe's wilderness system?

Modified landscapes are not the only issue of concern to advocates of wild land. There is an emerging debate on how long-term human global changes will impact on protected areas; the impacts of climate change for example. How will we deal with invasive species, what impacts will air borne pollutants have on habitats etc. and how will our management respond to these challenges.

In setting aside areas as wilderness in Europe we need to resolve these and many more issues. This conference aims to advance the discussion on how wilderness can be achieved in Europe given the impacted nature of our landscapes, the challenges of "managing" impacted lands towards wilderness and the need to balance nature conservation with the other attributes of wilderness such as large landscape protection and the provision of opportunities for real human interaction with the wild landscape through recreation.

We have an exciting list of speakers who will elaborate on their experiences of managing landscapes that have been impacted in one way or another and the daily challenges they face in managing their protected areas towards functioning wild landscapes. The conference will attempt to elaborate further on what we mean by "wild" and "natural" in the wilderness debate.

To advance the concept of wilderness in society we must also demonstrate its benefit to the modern world. The second part of the conference will look at the value of wilderness in Europe ranging from the local perspective and its contribution to local communities to a European Union level and its importance to the Natura programme. We will also consider its value to large land owning organisations who set aside lands into the future

Day 1 Evening - Conference Dinner -

Guest Speaker: Mr. Jimmy Dennyhan, T.D., Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage.

Day 2 - Field Trip

A field trip will also be part of the programme designed to look at a prototype wilderness in modified landscapes and how its rewilding can be achieved. Of particular importance will be a field visit to the *Wild Nephin Project*, a wilderness project being supported jointly by Coillte and the National Parks and Wildlife Service with the aim

of setting aside approximately 11,000 ha of remote and wild but modified landscapes in County Mayo as wilderness.

Speakers

Wild or natural- the challenges Europe faces in setting aside wilderness.

Dr. Mark Fisher, Wildland Research Institute, University of Leeds

Forever Wild - Lessons from Baxter State Park.

Jensen Bissell, Director Baxter State Park, Maine

Eco Parks - wilderness within a working forest - the challenges

Olof Johansson, Vice President, Sveaskog, Sweden

How wild is wild - managing towards wilderness in the Wild Ennerdale project

Gareth Browning, Project Manager, Wild Ennerdale

Video on the Wild Nephin Project

A short video presentation on the Wild Nephin Project

The value of wilderness in Europe within the NATURA programme and on a broader land basis

Micháil O' Brian, Deputy Head, Nature Unit, DG Environment EU commission

The Economics of Wilderness - Assessing the public good value of wilderness

Dr. Craig Bullock, Environmental Economist University College Dublin and Optimize Consultancy

Living our values - Wilderness in a commercial forest company

Gerard Murphy, Managing Director Coillte Forest

Wilderness and the National Parks.

John Fitzgerald, Director, National Parks and Wildlife Service

Wilderness and local communities

Mayo County Council, TBC

Wilderness as a tourism icon

Ms Ethna Murphy, Activities development manager, Fáilte Ireland - the Irish Tourist Development Board.

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