

The Forest Service and Woodland Conservation

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Restoring Priority Woodland Habitat
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Forest Service, DAFF

Ireland's national forest authority, responsible for forest policy, support schemes, felling control, forest health & protection, forest promotion, corporate governance

“Responsible for ensuring the development of forestry within Ireland in a manner & to a scale that maximises its contribution to national socio-economic well-being on a sustainable basis that is compatible with the protection of the environment”...

...a.k.a. SFM





Woodland conservation relevant to each 'pillar' of SFM – economic, social & environmental...

...so, what are the relevant activities of the Forest Service?

Schemes

Regulatory role

Support

Native Woodland Scheme

Focused specifically on native woodland biodiversity

Conservation (Element 1) & Establishment (Element 2)

Scheme underpinned by unique partnership

As with all schemes, FS consults with NPWS in key areas

Under Element 1, c.4,500 ha completed or ongoing

Restructuring, removal of non-natives & invasives, deer control, transformation (non-native → native, clearfell → CCF)

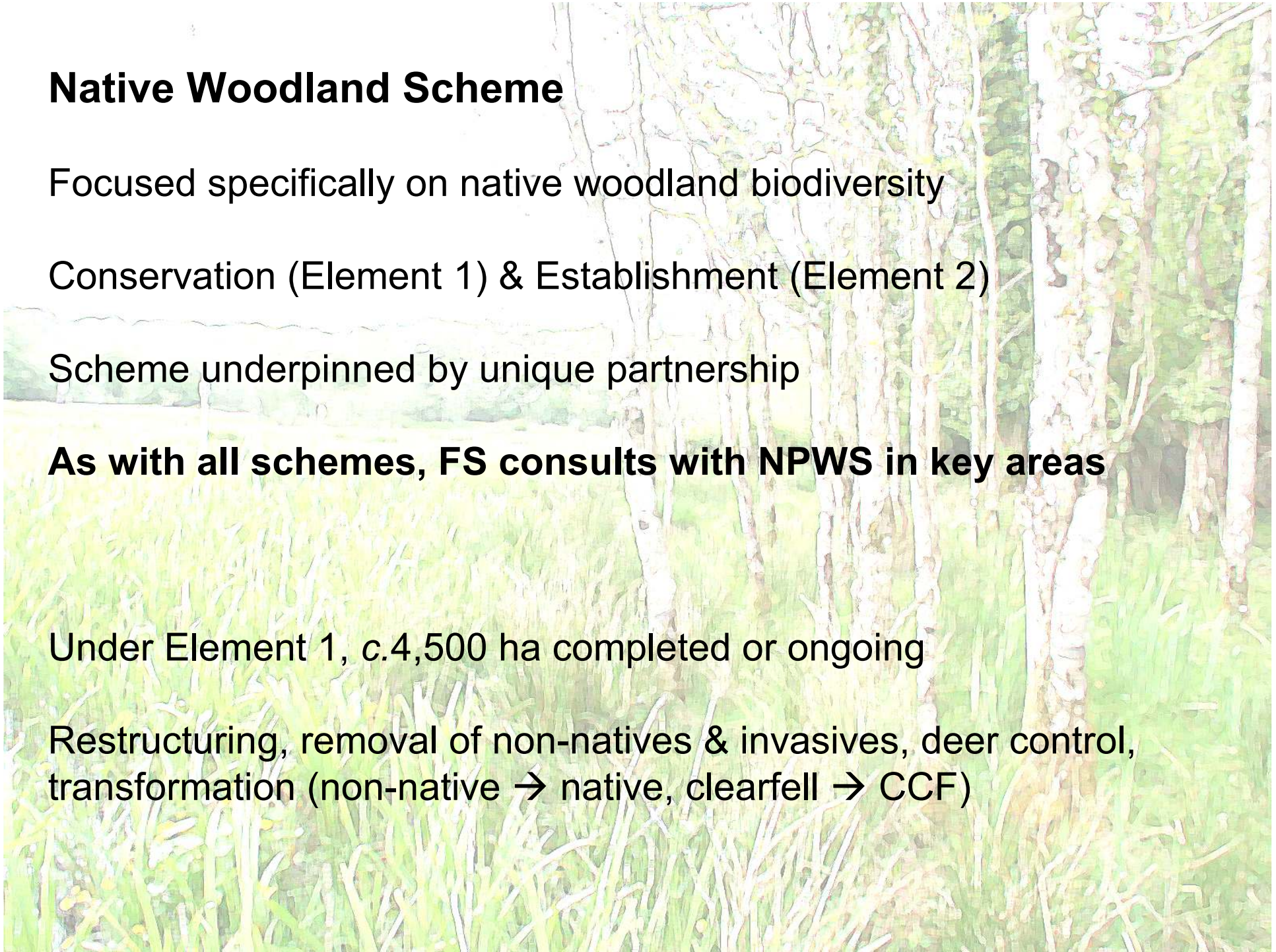






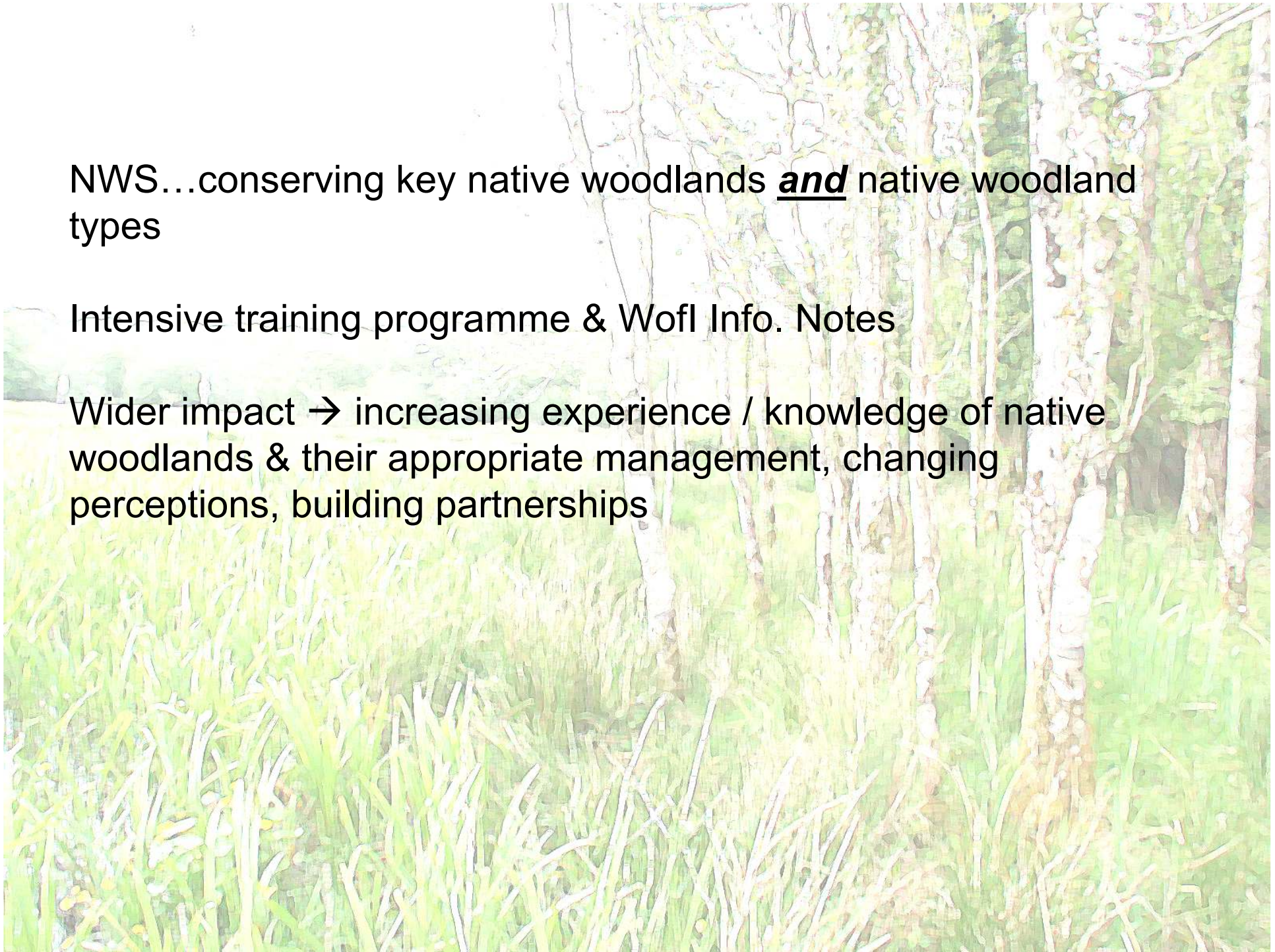


Photo: Michael Doyle

NWS...conserving key native woodlands and native woodland types

Intensive training programme & Wofl Info. Notes

Wider impact → increasing experience / knowledge of native woodlands & their appropriate management, changing perceptions, building partnerships







...other schemes, e.g. **NeighbourWood Scheme**

‘Close-to-home’ woodland amenities

Funding elements include ***enhancement of existing neighbourwood***

Local authority & community-led projects, often focused on (native) woodland restoration

40+ projects around Ireland...

...Balrath (Co. Meath), Courtown (Co. Wexford), Sandyford (Co. Dublin), Belleek (Co. Mayo), Poulgorm (Co. Cork), Newcastle West (Co. Limerick), Ballyseedy Wood (Co. Kerry)

Balrath Wood

Coill Bhaile na Rátha

Brief History of Balrath

Balrath Wood (also known locally as Knockcomra) was once part of the larger Somerville estate. It was a fine example of mixed broadleaf woodland. Some of the original trees still remain but most of this 50 acre (20 hectare) wood was replanted in 1969 with a number of species including oak, beech, ash and spruce. Currently it can be described as mixed conifer/broadleaf woodland. The Tree Council of Ireland and Meath County Council are now responsible for the woodland management and the upkeep of the wood as a place that everyone can learn from and enjoy.

The NeighbourWood Scheme

Balrath Woodland receives funding from the Forest Service (Department of Agriculture and Food) under the NeighbourWood Scheme. This scheme is available to encourage the planting and development of local woodlands for public access, recreation and enjoyment. These woods can then operate as 'outdoor classrooms'. People of all ages can appreciate and enjoy the trees and the various habitats created in woodland, and local schools can spend time learning about trees and other woodland species of plants and animals, and the importance of woodland management. The NeighbourWood Scheme is funded under the National Development Plan 2000-2006, with support from the European Union.

Common Sense Rules

Balrath Wood is open to the public all year round. Enjoy your visit. We ask visitors to respect the facilities, the flora and fauna, to keep dogs under strict control and to co-operate in keeping the woods free from litter, or lighting fires.
Leave only footprints and take only memories.

N.B.: A key is available from **Blacklion Stores** for those who require vehicle access to the Wood (Proprietor Donal Bownens, tel: 041 9825259).



For more information, please visit www.meath.ie



Balrath Wood is supported by





1946 Forestry Act

Primary mechanism for controlling felling

Assess felling licence applications...

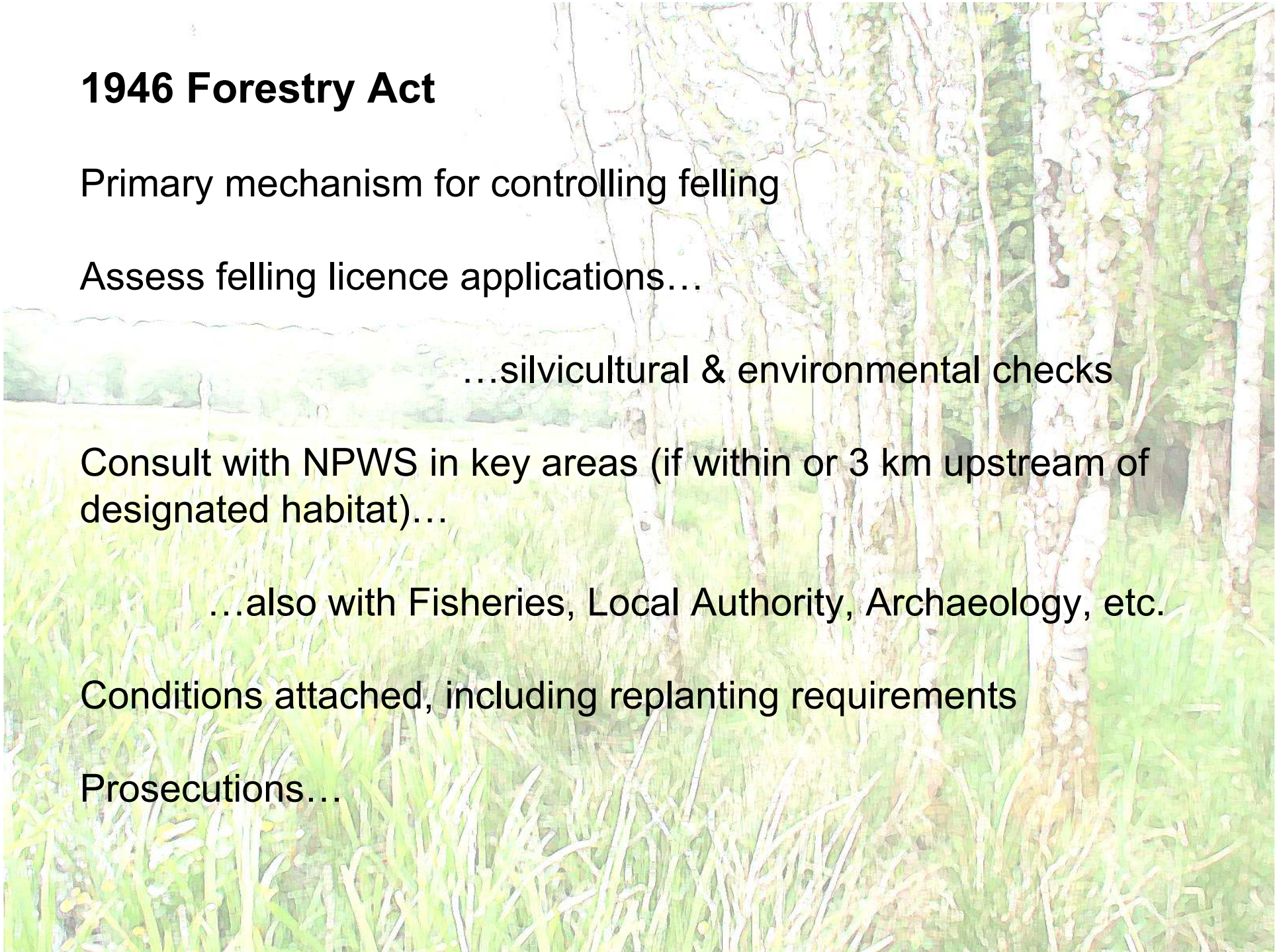
...silvicultural & environmental checks

Consult with NPWS in key areas (if within or 3 km upstream of designated habitat)...

...also with Fisheries, Local Authority, Archaeology, etc.

Conditions attached, including replanting requirements

Prosecutions...





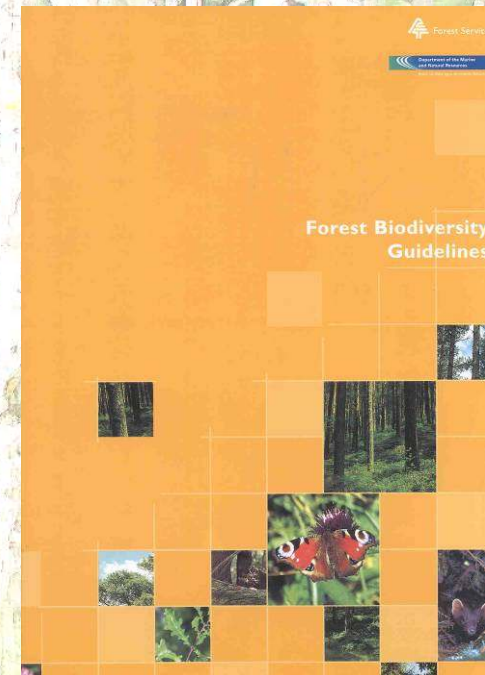
Environmental Guidelines

‘Guidelines’ **mandatory** for all grant-aided projects and activities associated with a felling licence

Forest Biodiversity Guidelines → requirements ref.

- ❑ species selection
- ❑ age & structural diversity
- ❑ overmature trees & deadwood
- ❑ areas for biodiversity enhancement
(open space, retained habitats)

Other guidelines also relevant, e.g. Water Quality, Harvesting, Archaeology





A photograph of a man in a light blue shirt examining a branch of a tree with clusters of red berries. The background is a dense thicket of similar trees with green leaves and red berries.

Genetic conservation

Implementation of EU Forest Reproductive Material Directive

FRM must originate from suitable sources **and** must be traceable
from seed collection to planting site

E.g. of importance – Brown Bud Ash

Registered seed stands listed in National List of Basic Material

Recent category – ***gene conservation*** – added

Growing network



Protection against pests & diseases

Responsibility to maintain relatively disease- & pest-free status of Ireland's forests

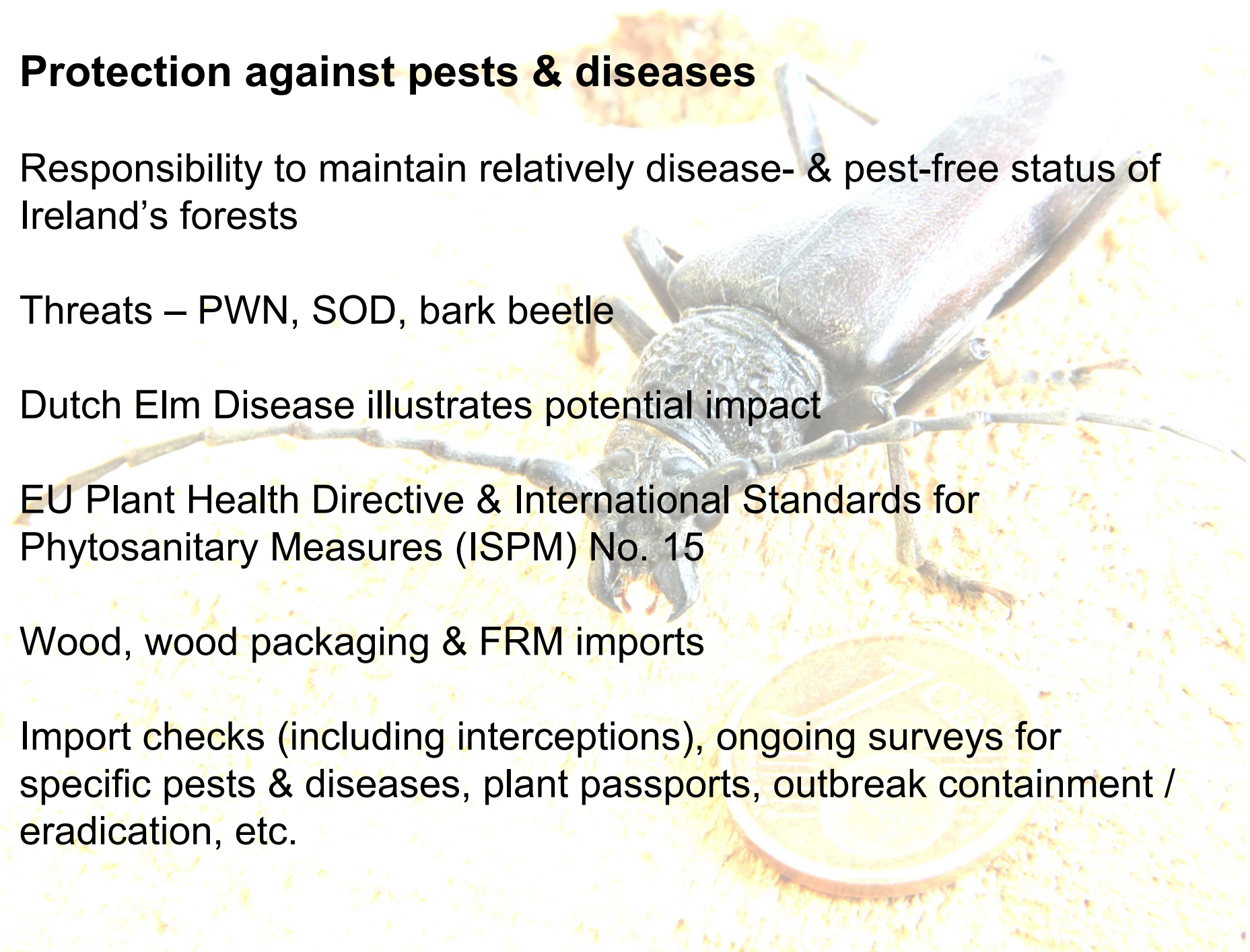
Threats – PWN, SOD, bark beetle

Dutch Elm Disease illustrates potential impact

EU Plant Health Directive & International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) No. 15

Wood, wood packaging & FRM imports

Import checks (including interceptions), ongoing surveys for specific pests & diseases, plant passports, outbreak containment / eradication, etc.



Funding related projects

Co-funded National Survey of Native Woodland in Ireland,
undertaken by NPWS

Co-funds Woodlands of Ireland

Wofl Native Woodland Information Notes, Silvicultural Guidelines

CRISIS – Combined Research & Inventory of Squirrels in Irish
Silviculture



