

## Fun in the Forests

Forests are very important to us.

- They provide us with materials to build, furnish and heat our homes.
- They help to produce the oxygen we breathe.
- They are one of our most important wildlife habitats and provide homes for vast numbers of plant and animal species.
- They prevent air pollution by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- They stabilise the soil, helping to prevent landslides, and absorb excess ground water, helping to prevent flooding.
- Not only do they do all these things, but they also provide us with beautiful amenities for us to enjoy.



Coillte, Ireland's leading forestry company, welcomes over eighteen million visitors to its forests each year. There are ten forest parks and more than 150 recreation sites which provide lots of opportunities for outdoor recreation. You can enjoy such things as walking, hiking, mountain biking, picnicking, fishing and nature watching.

### Forest activities to get you outdoors

#### Walking & Hiking

All the trails across the country are graded. You choose an easy, moderate or strenuous route and information is also given on the length, expected time, expected climb and whether linear or loop of each trail. You can choose from numerous walks around the country, from the Salt Marsh Trail in Ards Forest Park, Co. Donegal to the Lake Walk in Castlefreke Woodlands, Co. Cork.



#### Cycling

Coillte manages many kilometres of walking and cycle trails which are all listed, along with a downloadable map with details of length and grade.



#### Orienteering

Coillte has a number of permanent orienteering courses in their forests for people to use (see page 15).



### International Year of the Forest 2011

2011 has been declared "International Year of the Forest" by the United Nations General Assembly "to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests". In other words, that people are made aware of the importance of using and protecting forests in such a way that they will be there for future generations.

### Leave No Trace

For everyone visiting forest, it is important to:

- Leave No Trace
- Plan ahead and prepare
- Be considerate of others
- Respect farm animals and wildlife
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Leave what you find
- Dispose of waste properly
- Minimise the impacts of fire



More information is available on [www.coillteoutdoors.ie](http://www.coillteoutdoors.ie).

### Tips for the Outdoors

Tips when using the forest parks & recreational sites:

- Be weather aware.
- Keep your gear dry on the trail.
- Keep warm with layers.
- Check out the website for a handy map tips and essentials you should bring.



Courtesy of Coillte