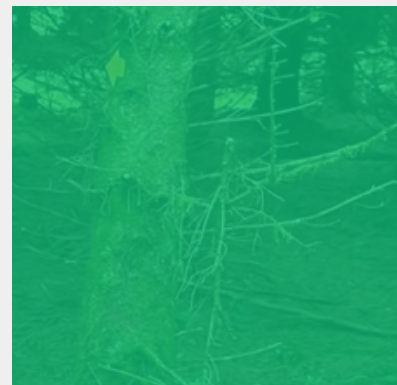


Emerging Initiative

Coill Chormaic

A Model for Community-Driven Forestry



Explore More



Introduction

To the Initiative

Coill Chormaic is a cooperative forestry project created to honor the memory of Cormac ó Braonáin, a sustainability advocate and community leader. Inspired by an article on native woodland planting, family and friends came together to establish a biodiversity-rich deciduous forest. This initiative not only preserves Cormac's legacy but also serves as a replicable model for community-driven sustainability and collective land ownership in Ireland.

How It Began, Objectives, and Key Actions

Origins

The idea emerged during a memorial gathering, where participants decided to create a sustainability project reflecting Cormac's values. Despite the challenges of land access, they formed a cooperative to collectively manage the project and ensure its long-term impact.

Objectives and Goals

- Secure funding and agree on the project's aims.
- Acquire land for the creation of a biodiversity-rich deciduous forest.
- Build membership and ensure collective commitment to the project

Sub-Aim:

- The project wasn't solely about planting trees but also about raising awareness of the feasibility of such initiatives.
- Coill Chormaic aimed to serve as a legacy trail and lighthouse project, proving that collective land ownership for sustainability is possible.

“

*Land ownership
in Ireland is
notoriously difficult.*

Lúghaidh ó Braonáin

Key Actions

- **Formation of a Cooperative:**
 - Established a framework ensuring biodiversity-focused land use, banning practices like clear-felling.
 - Membership grew to 40–50 people, each contributing financially to fund the project.
- **Land Acquisition:**
 - Purchased parcels of land in Leitrim, guided by a forester who supported the initiative's vision.
- **Tree Planting and Community Engagement:**
 - Planted 5,000 native trees over three weekends with community involvement.
 - Dug large freshwater pond on site to increase biodiversity impacts
 - Organized social events, such as barbecues, to celebrate milestones and foster connections.
 - Continue to maintain and develop land so that it can be suitable for public access

Impact and Achievements

- **Environmental Gains:**
 - Established a habitat supporting native flora and fauna, including a wildlife pond.
- **Community Building:**
 - Strengthened bonds among participants and built partnerships with local residents.
- **Innovative Model:**
 - Demonstrated the viability of collective land ownership for environmental projects in Ireland.
- **Inspiration and Awareness:**
 - Promoted sustainable practices and inspired other communities to explore cooperative forestry.

↑ 5,000

Native trees



Insights + Future Prospects

Challenges. Lessons Learned

- Overcame Ireland’s complex land ownership challenges through cooperative strategies.
- Aligned diverse participants around clear goals and rules for the project.
- Leveraged a cooperative model to create a democratic and sustainable structure.
- Designed the project as a replicable legacy initiative, proving that “this can be done.”

Partnerships and Support

- **Community-Driven Approach:** Entirely funded and supported by cooperative members, showcasing the power of self-organized action.
- **Local Engagement:** Built strong relationships with neighbouring communities to ensure the project was seen as a positive contribution.
- **Expert Guidance:** Collaborated with a forester to ensure ecological integrity and sustainable practices.



Future Directions

- **Additional Tree Planting:** Another 5,000 trees will be planted to complete the forest.
- **Safe Public Access:** Collaborate with local authorities to create pathways for community use without disrupting biodiversity.
- **Education and Outreach:** Share the project’s model and lessons to inspire similar initiatives.

Key Takeaway

Coill Chormaic is a testament to the power of community action and sustainable land use. It stands as both a tribute to a beloved individual and a beacon of hope for environmental and community-led initiatives. By fostering biodiversity and empowering collective ownership, Coill Chormaic provides a roadmap for others to follow.

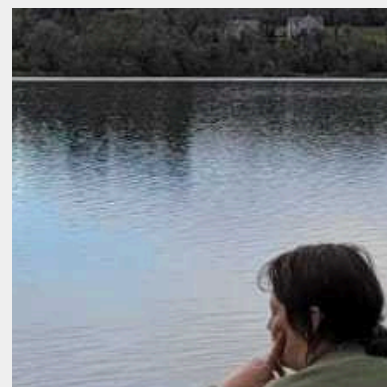
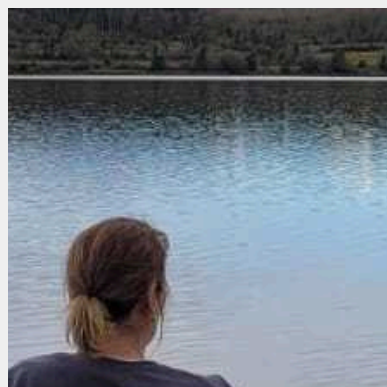
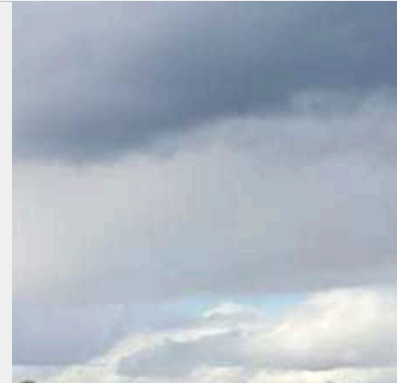
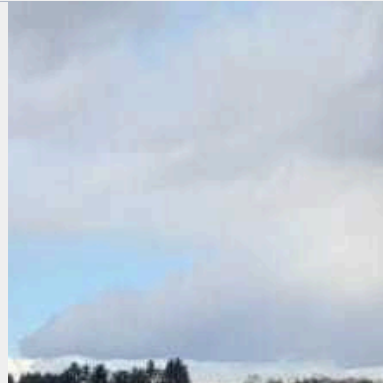


It's not just about planting trees. It's about building awareness around the possibility... creating a legacy trail, a lighthouse approach, which is basically: this can be done!

Lúghaidh ó Braonáin



Community Building



Cooperative Model for Land Ownership



Biodiversity and Environmental Health

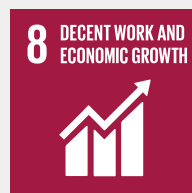


Relevant Links

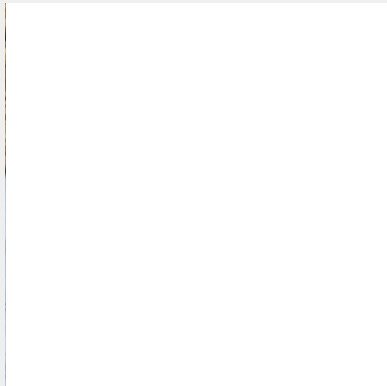
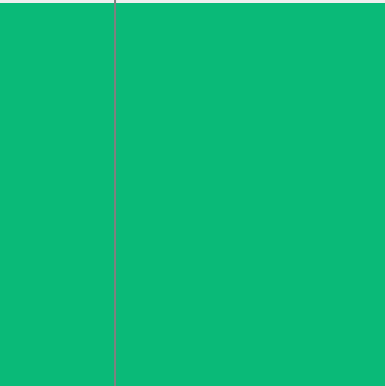
- [Native Woodland Trust Ireland](#)
- [Leave No Trace Ireland – Responsible Forestry Access](#)
- [Climate Action Regional Office – Community Engagement](#)

SDG Perspective

- **SDG 13: Climate Action** – Coill Chormaic aids climate change mitigation through tree planting and biodiversity enhancement.
- **SDG 15: Life on Land** – Promotes sustainable land use, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem restoration.
- **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities** – Strengthens community collaboration and creates shared green spaces.



THE GLOBAL GOALS



November, 2024

Get Involved. Take action.

Interested in creating a similar project in your community? The Coill Chormaic team is eager to share insights and lessons learned.

 lughobraonain@gmail.com

 [Coill Chormaic Website](#)

This story and case study were developed through the 'Connected' project and its partners, highlighting Irish community-driven solutions to environmental challenges. For more details contact a.alexandrov1@universityofgalway.ie