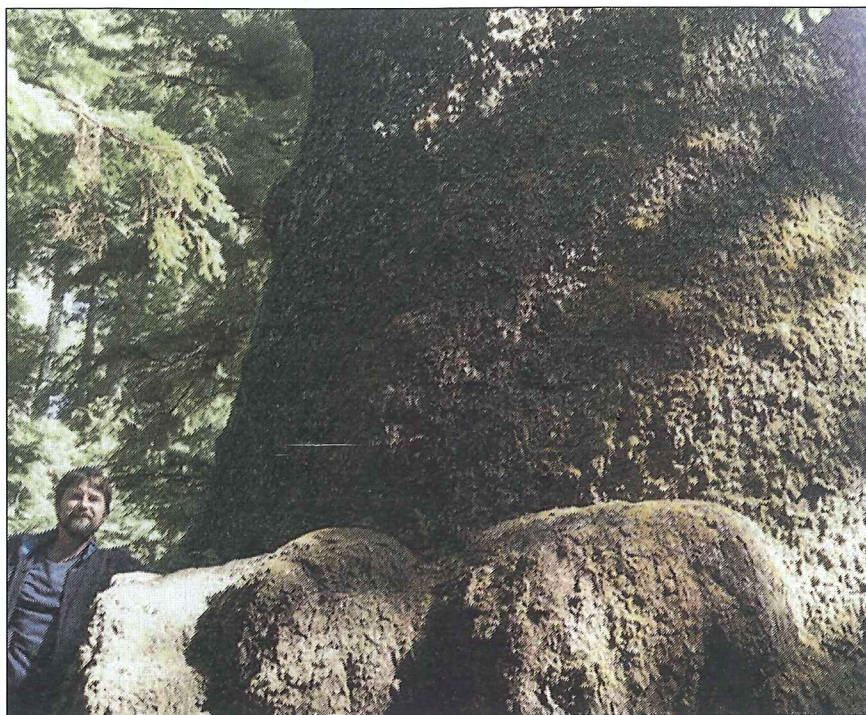


# World Forestry Center

Vincent Upton, Teagasc



*Vincent with Oregon's largest Sitka spruce which has a diameter of 4.7 metres and is around 800 years old.*

The World Forestry Center (WFC) in Portland, Oregon was founded in 1964 and aims "to educate and inform people about the world's forests and trees, and environmental sustainability". Part of the WFC is an adult professional development department, the World Forestry Institute (WFI) which brings forestry professionals from around the world to study natural resource management in the Pacific North West (PNW) for 6 to 12 months. This region has a long and complex forest history and the conflict between commercial forest harvesting and conservation over the spotted owl and other endangered species during the 1980s and 1990s is well known. This has left a legacy of tension in the region which is slowly dissipating but the production of timber from federal lands has been reduced to a tenth of what it was previously.

Reductions in harvesting has had a particularly negative impact on rural areas where alternative industries and employment are limited. The PNW also possesses a number of National and State Parks which house a fascinating diversity of plants and wildlife in addition to containing some of the most beautiful scenery in the country. For Irish foresters a visit to the PNW offers the opportunity to see many of our commercial conifer species, including Douglas fir, Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine in their native range.

In May 2014, Vincent Upton, a researcher with Teagasc, travelled to Portland to undertake a six month fellowship with the WFI. Vincent focused on examining how forest management and policies are accounting for ecosystem services in the region. An important part of the fellowship is site visits with forest owners, management compa-

nies, sawmills and federal and state forest and park employees. This presents an opportunity to meet people from across the forest industry and gain an insight into different perspectives on forestry.

The US has a range of innovative schemes that seek to balance development and conservation, including conservation banking and the use of green engineering on private lands to protect and

enhance water quality. Some large industrial owners have been proactive in measuring the services from their lands and using this information to identify new markets and to engage with the public.

From a federal or national perspective the Forest Service specifically included the term ecosystem services in their planning rule for 2012 which will require forest managers to account for them in management plans in the future.

The US benefits from a well-established set of environmental markets which are supported by legislation but interest in these approaches to conservation, particularly at an EU level, will likely make them of increasing relevance to Ireland. However, based on experience from the US smaller landowners may face a number of barriers to engaging and benefiting from these new markets.



*Mixed Douglas fir and western hemlock old growth in Olympic National Park.*

**More information about the fellowship can be found at <http://wfi.worldforestry.org/>. Vincent's fellowship was funded by the Harry A. Merlo Foundation, the COFORD funded ECOVALUE project and Teagasc.**



*A group of private forest owners examines a log placement project in Oregon that received co-funding and support from state and federal agencies. Recognition of the value of large woody debris in river ecosystems has seen a reversal of management practices from keeping rivers clear to deliberately adding logs and tree root wads in strategic locations.*