

NEFG first forestry group to achieve forest certification

The North East Forestry Group (NEFG) has retained forest certification, which member John Sherlock said is a landmark achievement in Irish private forestry.

Certification is independent acknowledgement that members' forests and woodlands are managed, according to the principles of sustainable forest management (SFM).

Members of the NEFG have been sustainably managing their forests for decades but independent certification is required as proof of SFM. While certification is essentially an

environmental exercise, it also has economic benefits and costs. John Sherlock, who has been at the forefront of the NEFG certification drive, acknowledged Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine funding, but believes "greater support is required to achieve national certification which is the eventual goal".

The NEFG shared its experience and knowledge of certification during their recent Knowledge Transfer Group (KTG) events.

Forester Sarah Standish, who is the NEFG group facilitator,

led each course module while Donal Whelan and Mechteld Schuller worked with the group on certification.

"The KTG programme proved to be a fantastic opportunity for private forest owners who are thinking about certi-

fying their forest," said NEFG chair Derek McCabe. "It is an opportunity for private owners to take control of their investment as knowledge is power and knowledge in a group setting is even more powerful," he added.



Members of the NEFG: Madge Clarke, Kieran Clarke, Bob Gogarty, Des Drew, Hugh McMahon and John Sherlock.

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