



## Update - Forest Fire at Cloosh Valley

**Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017:** The major fire incident in Cloosh Valley, Co. Galway is ongoing. A regional emergency response operation is now in place as Coillte staff, along with Galway Fire Service and the Air-Corps battle to fight the fire.

Coillte staff and fire services have been on site since 5.30am and civilian and army corps helicopters have been carrying out water drops since early this morning. Army personnel have been mobilised to assist in beating out flames, as the focus of this morning's activity is to control the fires on a number of fronts including fire events in the proximity of the 169MW Galway Wind Park construction site.

Coillte are urging the public stay away from any areas affected by these fires and to immediately report any uncontrolled or unattended fires to the Fire and Emergency Services.

Over 1,500 hectares of forestry and 2,000 hectares of bog land have been destroyed in the fire to date. Coillte greatly appreciate the tremendous assistance it continues to receive from the defence forces and emergency services.

While the cause of the fire at Cloosh Valley has yet to be definitively established, it is believed that the fire originated from deliberately set gorse fires, which subsequently spread onto Coillte owned forestry and the Galway Wind Park site.

Under the Wildlife Act, it is illegal to set fires to growing vegetation from 1st March to 31st August and those found responsible for deliberately starting fires can be prosecuted. Recent dry and windy weather has greatly increased the risk of gorse and forest fire, but deliberate fire setting has also been a significant factor in the cause of many of the fires on Coillte property around the country.

//Ends

### **About Coillte**

Coillte is a commercial forestry company, owned by the State, that manages approximately 7% of the country's land. Coillte operate three strong businesses from this land - their core Forestry Business, a Wood Panels manufacturing business MEDITE SMARTPLY and a Land Solutions business. Coillte export to over 30 countries worldwide and in the financial year 31 December 2015 generated revenue of €283 million and EBITDA of €90 million. Coillte's vision is to be the best Forestry and Land Solutions company in Europe. To find out more visit [www.coillte.ie](http://www.coillte.ie)