



The Stepping Stone Programme

Welcome to the Stepping Stone programme. We want to guide and inspire you on how to get more from your sustainability journey with us.

Our vision is to create a series of natural stepping stone habitats for Irish wildlife to live in and move through our urban environments. Your organisation has the opportunity to be a part of that community of stepping stones.

What is a Stepping Stone Forest

Stepping Stone Forests are small woodlands which are planted using native Irish species of trees and shrubs.



Stepping Stone Forest being planted in DSPCA

Stepping Stone Forests are planted very densely with three trees per square meter. Our forests absorb more than 30 times more carbon than grass lawns and they help to reduce global warming.

The Forest Steps

Agree The Forest Location - We'll work with you to agree the best location and layout for your Stepping Stone Forest

Perform A Site Survey - We'll review the site and nearby features to determine the best mix of native trees to plant in your forest.

Soil Preparation - Before we can put a tree into the ground, we must first prepare the soil correctly. This involves putting down sheets of cardboard and then cover that with a 5/6cm layer of wood chip mulch. Our volunteers will coordinate this event with you.

Planting Day - About six months after the soil preparation, we'll set a date for the planting day event. Using a mix of bare root and potted trees, we'll work with your community to plant your forest.

Aftercare - We'll provide you with a detailed but simple list of ways to care for your new Stepping Stone Forest for the first two/three years.

What is a Stepping Stone Pond

Stepping Stone Ponds are shallow bodies of water that gently slope from the edge towards a small central well that is not more than 80cm deep.

They are created to provide a home for our native wildlife and that is why they slope gently into the centre. If any creature enters the water it will be easily able to climb back out on to dry land.



Stepping Stone Pond in Scoil Oilibhéir, Coolmine

Under the guidance and watchful eye of Rob Gandola, Senior Science Officer of the Herpetological Society of Ireland, volunteers will create a wonderful wildlife habitat that'll be bursting with life within months of completion. We do not use mechanical diggers as we encourage volunteers to be fully involved in a safe environment in the pond creation process.

At all pond sites we usually incorporate a rain harvesting element to keep the pond topped up and to help to reduce pressure on local water drainage systems. This usually takes the form of a large water tank attached to a nearby downpipe.

The Pond Steps

Agree The Pond Location - We'll work with you to agree the best location and layout for your Stepping Stone Pond.

Perform A Site Survey - We'll review the site and nearby features to determine the best size, shape and aspect of your pond.

Pond Creation Days – Over two days we will excavate the pond area, transport the excavated soil to an agreed location, put down the pond underlay & rubber liner, add pond soil, stone & gravel, fill the pond, and add pond plants. Finally we will set up the rainwater tank.

Aftercare - We'll provide you with detailed but simple list of ways to care for your new Stepping Stone Pond.

Our Commitment to You

Funding - It's important to us that your resources are used where they're needed most, so we'll source the necessary funding for the project. This means your signs will display details of your forest / pond sponsors. Some employees of the sponsor may wish to come along to help with the preparation & planting events.

Materials and Equipment - We'll bring all of the materials, tools, and equipment to complete the project, although we can always use extra wheelbarrows if you have any to hand.

Support and Guidance - We'll be there at all stages of the planning and implementation of your forest and/or pond, and we'll also be available for any support and guidance.

Sponsor Acknowledgement – Commit to mention the support that the sponsor has provided in any media announcements and to include their chosen hashtags in any social media posts.

Stepping Stone Projects - What We Need From You

Forest Site – We require a site that is large enough to accommodate the forest. We will assess the site with you for suitability. The site must not be designated for any other purpose or development. The site must also be free of underground services / utilities or overhead wires or other obstructions.

Save Cardboard - Have the community save all of their large cardboard boxes and packaging (such as used to package white and electrical goods) to cover the planting area on soil preparation day.

Pond Site - We require a site that is large enough to accommodate the pond and receives adequate sunlight. We will assess the site with you for suitability. The site must not be designated for any other purpose or development. The site must also be free of underground services / utilities. We also require access to a ready supply of water.

Get Your People Involved – Encourage your own people, and the local community to get involved. Stepping Stone projects are most successful when the whole community is engaged and involved in creating them.

Reward the Volunteers – Our volunteers never seek payment. They offer their services freely because they care for our environment and wish to contribute to the wider community. All that we request is that you provide them with tea & coffee and sandwiches after they have completed their work. This is also an opportunity for everyone to meet and get to know each other just a little.



Tallaght Community NS, Dublin 24



St Mary's SNS, Clondalkin, Dublin 22



Scoil Treasa, Firhouse, Dublin 24



Hansfield ETSS, Dublin 15

For more information or to arrange for a site visit please make contact using the details below:

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www.steppingstoneforests.org