



**Irish Forest
School Association**

Conference Workshops Saturday 25th May 2019

'The Do's, Don'ts...and Maybe Knots!' Niamh Geoghegan and Peter Haferkamp

Creating a safe environment for fun learning through play is imperative for every forest school. Supported by Peter Haferkamp, participants in this workshop will work in teams to build natural play structures using rope. Drawing on their well-established partnership, Niamh Geoghegan will use this hands-on experience to demonstrate strategies for quality, collaborative workshop design including the development and testing of tools for creative boundary setting. The experience will wrap up with some group reflection so that participants can share what they have learned with each other.

Working with your Woodland - Sustainable Management & Biodiversity Lucy Bell

Learn more about your forest school woodland space and how you can manage it sustainably for the future, including looking at increasing its biodiversity, through learning about various native woodland trees; plants and their uses, including those you need to be careful of, so you can feel safe and empowered as an earth steward in your woodland. We will also look at the practicalities of setting up various native habitats such as wildlife ponds and wildflower meadows and how to plant a tree.

Telling Stories in the Forest Sean O Laoghaire

'Over the years, I've carved and sculpted not only stories, but methods to create stories and get participants in that "creating zone". Working with adults and children alike, makes my workshops universal and great fun for all involved.

I'm always weary of talking about the procedure, as it takes from the magic, but each participant will have a definite insight into their own individual storyteller and a way to inspire others to get in touch with theirs. Using Nature and the cycle of the seasons as our guide, we will work together, in the forest, to create a symphony of story.'

Deep Nature Connection For a Sustainable Practice Shane Furlong

A workshop on exploring and developing our own connection and sense of belonging as an anchor and sustaining force in our lives and our practice, as forest school leaders but also as agents of change and radical action in the context of navigating an uncertain future for ourselves, the children we work with and the animal and plant communities we work within. We will share stories of our existing connection and how it supports us and explore some techniques and practices we can bring into our lives to further build relationship with the natural world. Participants will be invited to take part in a 30 day sit-spot challenge after the Gathering which will be guided by weekly e-mails and an invitation to share themes and key noticings that are arising from this practice.



'Sustainable Leadership - The Acorn Model and Nature-Centric Forest School Programme design'

Ciara Hinksman

'Drawing from her experiences at the Art of Mentoring internationally, Ciara is offering a workshop based on the '8 Shields' model that has been the foundation of her Forest School and nature connection programme design and staffing. We will look at a holistic leadership model - 'The Acorn' and elements to be aware of in programme design and delivery. We will explore the 8 Shields adapted version of Joseph Cornell's 'Flow Learning' cycle and examine the attributes we can look for in the learners we work with. There'll be group-sharing practices, a song or two, games and some movement.

Natural Art in Forest School

Tara de las Casas

Being outdoors in a woodland setting can spark our imaginations and inspire our creative potential. Come and explore the wonders of nature and the possibilities that can unfurl from within your creative being. Using found and natural materials, we will be playing and making some land based art and sharing some simple ideas that can be used in a forest school setting.

Knifecraft - Fun With Knives

Shane Furlong

This year Shane has been using knives weekly with his after-school group and has really enjoyed finding new short and more complex projects that have allowed the children he works with to build competency and confidence using a knife and to explore their creativity through knifecraft. In this skillshare we will explore some short projects that can be completed in a 2 hour session and there will be space to chat about possibilities for longer projects too.

Sustainable FS practice - How do we know we have achieved what we set out to achieve? - Joan Whelan

Based outdoors, this skill-share is about how we assess our practice, so that it deepens and so becomes more sustainable over time? How do we know when we have achieved what we set out to achieve? Are we always clear about what we want to achieve for ourselves and others participating in the session? How do we discuss these issues with settings and schools? What kinds of ways are we using at the moment and how can we improve them, in line with the ethos of FS?