

Forestry Commission

Corporate Plan

for

England

and Great Britain

Activities

2004/05-2005/06

# The Forestry Commission England and Great Britain Activities Corporate Plan for 2004–2006

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## Ministerial Foreword

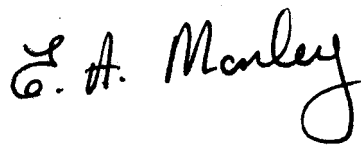
This Corporate Plan describes the current activities of the Forestry Commission in England and the functions it performs at a Great Britain level on behalf of the Westminster Parliament. The distinction between England and Great Britain activities is consistent with the Forest Devolution Review which also recommended better integration with Defra and the Government Offices for the Regions.

It also sets out the strategic direction of the Forestry Commission's work in line with the 2002 Spending Review and the specific tasks to be undertaken in 2004/05.

In **England**, we recognise that trees, woods and forests have an important role in improving the living and working environment of everyone. Delivering and sustaining public benefits from woodlands is, however, a long-term enterprise. While we must continue to pursue these long-term goals, it is important that the work is undertaken in a manner which is both responsive to and integrated with the Government's wider programmes for sustainable development. This approach is well demonstrated through the plans of the Forestry Commission in 2004 to:

- update organisation arrangements to ensure the Forestry Commission is well equipped to operate as an effective delivery partner in the modernised rural delivery landscape;
- facilitate the completion of Regional Forestry Framework led by Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies to ensure that the role of woodlands and forestry is clearly responsive to the distinctive needs of each region within the national enabling framework set by the England Forestry Strategy;
- undertake a study of the public forest estate to support Ministers in considering how best to develop its remit to serve future needs in the C21;
- further develop the role of woodlands in helping to improve the quality of life in our urban areas as set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan, the "Growth Areas" and the "Northern Approach".

In our **international** work, we will continue our efforts to promote sustainable forestry ensuring that actions taken in the UK are an exemplar of sustainable development to others.



**Elliot Morley**  
Minister for the Environment



**Ben Bradshaw**  
Forestry Minister for England

# Introduction

## The Forestry Commission in Great Britain

As the Government department for forestry throughout Great Britain, we provide advice and support to the UK Government and to the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales. We develop policy, set the standards for sustainable forest management and encourage good forestry practice. We conduct forestry research, provide information and offer grants for managing and expanding woodlands and forests. We have statutory duties to regulate forestry through the control of tree felling and to protect forests from pests and diseases. We manage the public forest estate in England, Scotland and Wales, providing recreation for many millions of visitors, producing more than 5 million cubic metres of timber each year and making a major contribution to the conservation of our natural heritage.

The Forestry Commission operates across Great Britain as a cross-border public body. This allows England, Scotland and Wales to benefit from the economies of scale that a GB-wide body is able to offer. This includes support services such as finance, personnel and IT skills; expertise on matters such as climate change, biodiversity, forest protection and industry development; and access to shared resources such as economic, statistics and supporting forest operations.

The Forestry Commission answers separately to Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales for the development and implementation of forestry policy. The Commissioners' programmes to deliver each country's forestry strategy are set out in Corporate Plans for England, Scotland and Wales. These programmes are directed and financed by the three administrations to which the Commission is directly accountable. In addition, a number of the Commission's functions are funded directly by Westminster and operated on a GB basis. These include:

- *European and International Forestry Policy* – the Forestry Commission's international policy staff (working with other departments) formulate UK policy in international negotiations, develop the UK's national forest programme and advise on implementation of international and European obligations.
- *Plant Health and Forest Reproductive Materials* – the Forestry Commission's Plant Health Unit operates throughout GB with the vital task of preventing entry of harmful pests and diseases from overseas. We also control the marketing of forest seed, cones, cuttings and plants by approving basic material (eg stands, seed orchards), certifying reproductive material and inspecting the nursery trade.
- *Forest Research* – the Forestry Commission's Executive Agency is a centre of excellence for scientific expertise in forestry. We will spend £10 million in 2004-05 through our Agency and external providers looking at issues such as sustainable forest management, climate change, biodiversity, inventory, forest condition and threats to tree health, ways of measuring the social and environmental benefits of woodlands and improving the economic potential of home-grown timber.
- *Setting and Monitoring Standards of Sustainable Forest Management* – the Forestry Commission is responsible for developing the UK Forestry Standard<sup>1</sup> setting out how the principles of sustainable forest management will be delivered in practice against international agreed criteria. This work includes monitoring the state of the UK forestry sector against Indicators of Sustainable Forestry

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<sup>1</sup> *The UK Forestry Standard*. The Government's Approach to Sustainable Forestry. Forestry Commission and the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland. 1998.

published in 2002 and supporting the UK Woodland Assurance Standard<sup>2</sup> which provides for the independent certification of forest management in the UK.

Forestry Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales meet from time to time to review issues of common interest. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has overall responsibility for forestry interests within the European Union and for international negotiations on forestry, including the formulation of UK policy. The Secretary of State consults with Scottish Ministers, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly on UK-wide issues.

The Forestry Commission's executive agency Forest Research operates on a GB basis. Its programmes reflect priorities as expressed in the country strategies.

## **The Forestry Commission in England**

The Forestry Commission's National Office for England is based in Cambridge and is responsible for leading implementation of the Government's Forestry Strategy for England. The National Office is supported by 9 Conservancies (regional offices) which are responsible for carrying out our regulatory and grant support functions and connecting the England Forestry Strategy to the distinctive needs of the Regions.

Forest Enterprise England, an executive agency of the Forestry Commission England is responsible for managing the public forest estate which amounts to 257,400 hectares in England and contains 19% of England's woodlands. It has its head office in Bristol and 11 Forest Districts.

Forest Research has a major research station at Alice Holt near Farnham and several field stations.

## **Corporate Plan**

This Corporate Plan describes our current activities for Great Britain and England, the strategic direction of our work up to 2006 and the specific actions we are taking forward in 2004-05. It also includes the Corporate Plan for Forest Enterprise England, which manages the public forest estate.

The Corporate Plan includes performance against the performance targets set by Ministers as part of Spending Review 2002.

Anyone with comments on this Plan, or suggestions for future Plans, is welcome to write to:

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<sup>2</sup> UK Woodland Assurance Scheme. UKWAS Support Unit c/o Forestry Commission, Edinburgh. 2000.

# **POLICY**

# **INFLUENCES**

## Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development was defined<sup>3</sup> in 1987 as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' Although the idea is simple, the task is substantial. It means meeting four objectives at the same time, in the UK and the world as a whole:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources;
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

**Sustainable forestry** recognises the same wide objectives and the importance of linking the **economic**, **environmental** and **social** values of forests. At its simplest, it means making sure that today's forests are still here for our children and grandchildren. But we also have to be careful of the quality of the inheritance that we pass on to future generations. They will rightly expect that their forests and woodlands will offer the same benefits and opportunities (or if possible more) as we enjoy. The Government's commitment to sustainable forestry is set out in the UK National Forest Programme<sup>4</sup>, published in February 2003. Sustainable forest management forms part of the Government's wider strategies for sustainable development set out in "A Better Quality of Life"<sup>5</sup>. Our approach to sustainable forest management starts at page 17. The Forestry Commission is leading the Government's efforts to implement the forestry commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The Government is working with the forestry industry, environmental groups and the devolved administrations in the UK Forest Partnership for Action to promote sustainable development in the forestry sector. The Government is working with the Partnership on tackling global illegal logging, Government procurement of timber and timber products, promoting wood as a sustainable raw material through greater uptake of forest certification and forest restoration and protection. The Forestry Commission is supporting the forestry industry in maintaining and monitoring its sectoral sustainability strategy covering the whole wood chain.

## England Forestry Strategy

In December 1998, the Government published the first forestry strategy for England<sup>6</sup>. The Strategy, which can be downloaded from our Internet website ([www.forestry.gov.uk/efs](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/efs)) sets out the Government's strategic priorities and programmes for forestry in England. It is founded on 4 guiding principles: **quality, integration, partnership and public support**, which will frame our work on implementation. The Strategy is based on 4 interrelated programmes which reflect the Government's wider policy aims:

- **Forestry for Rural Development**
- **Forestry for Economic Regeneration**
- **Forestry for Recreation, Access and Tourism**
- **Forestry for Environment and Conservation**

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<sup>3</sup> *Our Common Future*, 1987; report of the World Commission on Environment and Development

<sup>4</sup> *The UK National Forest Programme 2003*

<sup>5</sup> *A Better Quality of Life. A Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK*. Cm 4345. The Stationery Office. 1999.

<sup>6</sup> *A New Focus for England's Woodlands*. Strategic Priorities and Programmes. Forestry Commission, Cambridge. 1998.

This Corporate Plan explains how the Forestry Commission intends to lead the implementation of these programmes with partners over the next few years.

## **England Forestry Forum**

At the same time as publishing the Strategy, the Government established a Forum to share ideas and review progress with the Strategy's implementation.

In 2000 the Forum established 8 Working Groups to examine specific issues. The Working Groups submitted their reports in January 2001 and the Government published its response in October. A further Working Group on Biodiversity reported in April 2003. Papers and reports of the Forum's work, including progress reports on implementation of the various Working Groups recommendations are available on our Internet website at:

[www.forestry.gov.uk/englandforestryforum](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/englandforestryforum)

## Recent Legislation and Policy Development in Government

The years 2000-2003 saw the launch of new statements of Government policy and a major piece of legislation which set the wider context for forestry policy. These developments include:

- **Rural White Paper**<sup>7</sup> whose overall aim is to “sustain and enhance the distinctive environment, economy and social fabric of the English Countryside for the benefit of all”;
- **Urban White Paper**<sup>8</sup> whose vision is that of “towns, cities and suburbs which offer a high quality of life and opportunity for all”;
- **England Rural Development Programme**<sup>9</sup>; which redirects some support for agriculture and forestry, enabling land managers to adapt to changing markets and adopt sustainable production systems which both enhance the countryside and support the wider rural economy;
- **Countryside and Rights of Way Act**<sup>10</sup>; which makes new provisions for access to the countryside; amends the law relating to nature conservation and the protection of wildlife and makes further provision for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- **UK Energy White Paper**<sup>11</sup> which sets out the Government’s approach to Energy Policy and the role of renewable sources of energy.
- **England Biodiversity Strategy**<sup>12</sup> which establishes a ‘route map’ for biodiversity, covering all sectors and stressing the economic importance of biodiversity and its contribution to quality of life in both urban and rural areas.
- **Sustainable Communities: building for the future**<sup>13</sup> which sets out a long-term programme, building on the Urban and Rural White Papers, to create more liveable cities and sustainable communities.
- **Game Plan**<sup>14</sup> which establishes targets to get 70% of the population physically active by 2020.

2002 saw the publication of the Government’s responses to the Policy Commission on Food and Farming and the Urban Green Space Task Force<sup>15</sup>. These responses set out the next steps in securing a sustainable countryside and improving the quality of life in urban areas. The Forestry Commission has engaged actively in these

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<sup>7</sup> *Our Countryside: the Future; A Fair Deal for Rural England*. CM 4909. The Stationery Office, 2000

<sup>8</sup> *Our Towns and Cities: the Future; Delivering an Urban Renaissance*. CM 4911. The Stationery Office. 2000.

<sup>9</sup> England Rural Development Programme 2000-2006. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Stationery Office.

<sup>11</sup> *Our energy future - creating a low carbon economy*. CM 5761 The Stationery Office, 2003

<sup>12</sup> *Working with the Grain of Nature A Biodiversity Strategy for England*. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> *Sustainable Communities: building for the future*. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003

<sup>14</sup> Game Plan: a strategy for delivering Government's sport and physical activity objectives, The No.10 Strategy Unit, 2003

<sup>15</sup> *The Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food*. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2002

reviews and our specific further contributions will be set out in relevant chapters of this Corporate Plan.

### **Connecting to Regional and Local Agendas**

It is vital that the England Forestry Strategy sets down strong roots in every part of the country so that it may respond effectively to the distinctive needs of different regional and local agendas. The English Regions White Paper<sup>16</sup>, provides the wider mandate and context for this approach.

Since 2000 we have:

- aligned our Conservancies with the boundaries of all the Government Offices for the Regions and taken steps to encourage closer working between our respective staffs, including secondments;
- modernised our Regional Advisory Committees, constituted one for each Region and ensured that their expertise better reflects distinctive regional priorities;
- set up a Regional Support Unit for England to lead the development of our culture and capacity in response to the evolving regional agenda;
- commenced the development of Regional Forestry Frameworks in support of Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies.

### **Tasks for 2004**

#### **Through the GB Forestry Commission we will:**

- Continue to support the UK Forest Partnership established at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, taking forward the issue of Forest Restoration in 2004/05.
- Work with the forestry industry sector to implement their Sustainable Development Strategy published in February 2004.
- Assist Defra in the development of UK negotiating positions for those parts of the Kyoto Protocol dealing with terrestrial carbon sequestration.

#### **Through the Forestry Commission in England we will:**

- Contribute to the Modernising Rural Delivery Review and update organisational arrangements to ensure that the Forestry Commission is equipped to operate as an effective partner in the modernised rural delivery landscape following decisions by Secretary of State Efra;
- Undertake a study of the public forest estate to support Ministers in developing its remit to serve future needs;
- Support Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies to complete Forestry Frameworks for all regions;

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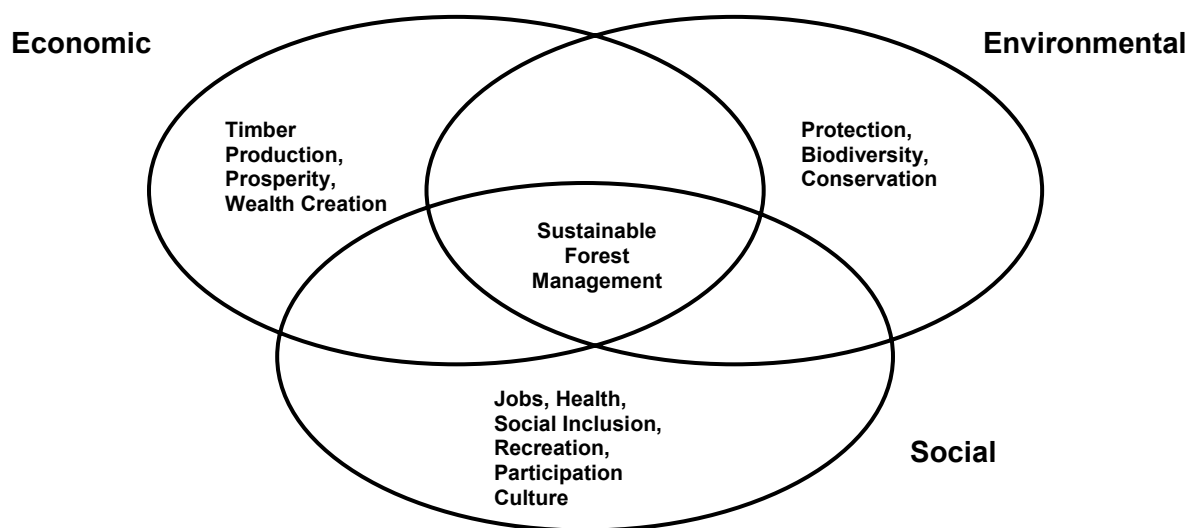
<sup>16</sup> *Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions*. Cm 5511. The Stationery Office. 2002



**SUSTAINING AND  
EXPANDING OUR  
WOODLANDS**

## Sustainable Forest Management Principles

Sustainable forest management is achieved when the social, economic and environmental functions of a woodland are interacting in support of each other. This interaction is represented in the following model:



The precise point of balance between social, economic and environmental functions will vary in every woodland in response to local circumstances and priorities.

Sustainable forest management is secured when the following pre-requisites are in place:

- **a woodland resource** which is able to provide the goods and services which individuals and society require in the long-term;
- **public and private support** which provides the mandate for any necessary management operations;
- **a workforce** which is willing and able to manage woodlands;
- **secure income** which pays for work to be undertaken.

## Implementing Sustainable Forest Management in the UK

The United Nations has established a **Forum on Forests** with the aim of promoting the implementation of sustainable forest management world-wide. In close consultation with other Government departments, the aim of the Forestry Commission is to ensure that the UK is both a leading proponent and a leading exemplar of sustainable forest management through its contributions to key international events, in particular the United Nations Forum on Forests, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe.

The UK has made international commitments to the principles of sustainable forest management which are set out in the **UK National Forest Programme**, published in 2003 and in the **UK Forestry Standard**, first published in 1998 and revised and republished in 2004. The Standard explains what our commitments mean in practice and provides a mechanism for ensuring that they are consistently applied. The Forestry Commission is responsible for monitoring the state of UK forestry against

criteria and indicators in the Standard and refining guidance on our regulatory framework where this proves necessary. The UK Forestry Standard also provides a flexible framework for enabling a range of approaches to sustainable forest management which respond to the specific needs of country forestry strategies.

The UK is a signatory to the **UN Convention on Biological Diversity** and in 2002 the Forestry Commission represented the UK in negotiations of an expanded international work programme for forest biological diversity. This has set the direction for collaborative work which aims to help halt and start to reverse the trend of losses of forest biodiversity by 2010. The UK is committed to help implement this programme and the Forestry Commission is leading an analysis of how current and planned actions within the UK could contribute.

**The UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)** launched in 1999 and chain of custody certification provide the opportunity for woodland owners to demonstrate to consumers that timber comes from sustainably managed forests. Over 1.1 million hectares of woodland have now been certified against UKWAS in Great Britain including the entire Forestry Commission estate. In recognition of the work of the Forestry Commission in this area, we were presented with a Gift to the Earth award by the Worldwide Fund for Nature in 2001. The Commission has successfully funded work to develop cheaper audit procedures for woods of 100 hectares or less. This should make certification more accessible.

The Government published its **UK Climate Change Programme**<sup>17</sup> in 2002 setting out the policies for adapting to climate change and measures to mitigate its effects.

The Forestry Commission has a long-standing research programme into the impacts of climate change on woodland and on the part forests and forest products play in carbon cycles. We published **Climate Change: Impacts on UK Forests**<sup>18</sup> at the beginning of 2002. Building on this, the Commission will be examining potential impacts and adaptation strategies at regional level in England, Scotland and Wales. A start has been made on this with a report on Eastern England. Woodland expansion and the management of existing woodland make a significant positive contribution to the UK's greenhouse gas balance through sequestration of carbon. As a source of renewable energy and materials, forests have the potential to make even greater contributions through replacement of fossil fuels and more energy-intensive materials.

The increased use of timber in construction is recognised as a highly desirable objective in sustainable development. Wood is a renewable and recyclable resource. Its production and use in building reduces atmospheric carbon while providing great advantages to the energy efficiency of buildings throughout their lives. Yet, despite the increasing availability of supply from UK woodlands, wood has been losing out in competition with less sustainable materials. The Forestry Commission is a partner with UK and overseas producers in '**wood. for good**', a commercial campaign which aims to increase the market for timber by promoting the advantages of using wood from sustainably managed forests, and providing information to consumers and to people involved in specification, design and building.

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<sup>17</sup> *Climate Change: The UK Programme*. CM 4913. The Stationery Office. 2000.

<sup>18</sup> *Climate Change: Impacts on UK Forests*. Bulletin 125, Forestry Commission. 2002

**The Forestry Commission's Plant Health Service** operates throughout GB. With support from Forest Research it has the vital task of preventing entry of pests and diseases from overseas which could harm our woodlands and controlling the spread of any that may become established. Specific threats include:

- Wood Packaging Material

Following widespread recognition of the risk of introducing pests via this pathway, a new international standard<sup>19</sup> to regulate wood used in the transport of goods was adopted in 2002. Steps are in train to implement the standard in the EU by March 2005. A number of other countries have either already implemented it or are in the process of doing so. In preparation for this major development the Forestry Commission and the Forest Service in Northern Ireland has worked closely with the wood packaging industry in the UK to develop the UK Wood Packaging Material Marking Programme. Wood packaging produced, treated and marked under the Programme enables exporters to access products that will comply with the import requirements of countries as they implement ISPM 15.

- *Ips typographus*

The Eight-toothed Spruce Bark Beetle is considered the most aggressive pest of spruce. We will continue to be vigilant at ports to ensure that this insect is not introduced. We will also maintain our monitoring programme of forest health survey plots required under EU legislation to preserve our "Protected Zone" status and thus maintain our import controls on relevant goods from other EU Member States.

- Pine Wood Nematode

There have been no further findings in the EU since the outbreak in Portugal in 1999. The nematode has, however, been detected in imported wooden packaging material arriving in Finland, Sweden and France. As a consequence, the EU introduced emergency measures in 2001 for the treatment of coniferous wood packaging from Canada, China, Japan and the USA. EU Member States have also been required to increase monitoring of such imports. These measures will be superseded by the implementation of ISPM 15.

- Asian Longhorn Beetle

This insect is also associated with wooden packaging material and is a serious potential pest of many hardwood trees and some fruit trees. The first recorded outbreak in Europe was reported in Austria in 2001 followed by a second in France in 2003. The EU emergency measures introduced in 2001 against this pest will also be superseded by ISPM 15.

- *Phytophthora ramorum*

This pathogen, which was first reported in April 2002 on a Viburnum plant in a Sussex garden centre, has been made subject of emergency EU legislation. In November 2003 the first record of this disease in a tree outside the USA was in an exotic species of oak in Sussex. Subsequently, in December a further nine cases were confirmed in a beech, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, turkey oak and holm oak at two historic gardens in Cornwall. It has also been reported in two red oaks in the Netherlands. A survey was carried out targeting over 1,000 sites in

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<sup>19</sup> ISPM 15: Guidelines for regulating wood packaging material in international trade, FAO 2002

that part of GB identified from climatic data as being at high risk. No occurrences of the disease have been identified. Monitoring will continue in 2004.

- Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner,

This has gradually spread across continental Europe. It was recorded in Wimbledon in June 2002 and had spread to a number of other London Boroughs and locations in Surrey, Kent, Buckingham and Oxford by 2003. It defoliates but does not kill its host. No control measures are available but research in Europe may provide an effective control.

We shall review our legislation to implement changes to the EU Plant Health Directive required by Council Directive 2002/89/EC. One of the major changes will be the introduction of charges for import inspections of wood packaging material. This will compliment our existing regime for import inspections of controlled wood products. We shall also be re-introducing charges for the issue of phytosanitary certificates for exports of forest products. Charges were suspended in May 2000 pending legal review. That review completed in early 2004 concluded that the Forestry Commission, along with other departments, lacked the legal powers to charge for this work. New legislation will be brought in during the summer to remedy this. It has also been decided that charges collected between 1 October 1996 and 14 May 2000 have been collected unlawfully and must be refunded with interest. This exercise will be completed in the summer.

Following consultation, new GB wide regulations on the marketing of **Forest Reproductive Material** were introduced on 1 January 2003 and are being widely promoted.

## The Context for Sustainable Forest Management in England

England is one of the least wooded countries in the world and our woodland resource is one of the most intensively used.

International comparisons of woodland areas are:

	Woodland Area (Millions of Hectares)	Percentage of Total Land Area	Population (Millions)	Area of Woodland Per Person (Sq Metres)
England	1.1	8.5	49	225
UK	2.8	11.5	59	476
EU	116	37	375	3085
World	3869	30	5978	6472

Of the woodland resource in England 19% is owned or leased by the Forestry Commission and managed by Forest Enterprise. The remainder is owned by a diverse range of other public bodies, charities and private owners. Half of the woodland area is currently the subject of active management plans agreed with the Forestry Commission. The potential of woodlands to contribute towards sustainable development priorities has not yet been fully realised.

**The four key programmes of the England Forestry Strategy are designed to tackle these challenges.** Their effective interaction in accordance with the principles of sustainable forest management will support more woodlands across England, producing a diverse range of public benefits.

### Strategic Priorities

#### **We will:**

- seek to increase awareness about the contributions which new and existing woodlands can make to sustainable development and sustainable communities;
- support the active management of woodlands where this is necessary to deliver public and private benefits;
- seek to increase understanding with partners about the potential for woodlands to contribute towards protecting the wider environment;
- promote awareness amongst woodland owners and agents about sustainable forest management principles and the UK Forestry Standard;
- seek to involve more woodland owners and wood users in helping to implement the England Forestry Strategy;
- promote the preparation and implementation of long-term woodland plans;
- use the public forest estate as an exemplar of sustainable forest management and expand its role wherever it is able to add value to existing arrangements.

## **Tasks for 2004**

### **Through the GB Forestry Commission we will:**

- work in partnership with WWF and IUCN on an international initiative on Forest Landscape Restoration;
- publish an updated UK Forestry Standard;
- prepare a UK implementation strategy for the UN Convention of Biological Diversity's expanded programme on forest biodiversity;
- facilitate the revision of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard;
- review the higher education sector that supports forestry employment and also the needs of employers in the sector;
- continue to advise National Offices on UK-wide environmental issues that affect forestry such as climate change, protection of soil and water, pesticide usage and atmospheric pollution;
- revise the Forestry Commission Research Strategy to accommodate the strategic priorities identified from consultations at country level and the need to maintain a strategic GB capability in forestry science and commission the resultant research;
- develop partnerships with other research funders in order to advance the Forestry Commission's engagement in the wider UK research effort devoted to sustainable development;
- agree and implement a Plant Health strategy for *Phytophthora ramorum* following the survey for the extent of infected sites in 2003/04;
- review UK legislation to allow implementation of changes to the EU Plant Health Directive;
- carry out work associated with the suspension and re-introduction of charging for phytosanitary certificates for export of forestry products.

### **Through the Forestry Commission in England we will:**

- Continue to implement changes agreed in the Sustaining England's Woodlands Review<sup>20</sup> for the future relationship between FC and private woodland owners in light of the biennial review of progress;
- Establish the research requirements necessary to progress the England Forestry Strategy and contribute these to the revision of the FC research strategy;
- Maintain certification of the public forest estate.

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<sup>20</sup> Sustaining England's Woodlands: Report and Forestry Commission response to it, published October 2002



**IMPLEMENTING  
THE ENGLAND  
FORESTRY STRATEGY**

# Forestry for Rural Development

## Setting the Context

Woodlands provide significant income and work opportunities in many rural areas. Over 14,000 people are currently directly engaged in forestry and related wood-processing industries, woodland recreation and wildlife conservation work. Many more jobs are sustained in the tourist industry supporting visitors to woodland attractions.

We use large quantities of sawn timber, boards, paper and other wood products in England amounting to the equivalent of about 50 million cubic metres of wood every year. However, less than 5% of this demand is currently supplied from England's woodlands and forests. Prices for domestically produced timber remain low, having aligned with world market conditions. Domestic production is unlikely to rise as many private woodland owners continue to defer plans for forestry operations and UK forestry businesses restructure and adapt their activities in response to this ongoing economic pressure. In the longer-term domestic wood production in England is unlikely to rise significantly without a substantial increase in the level of new woodland creation, which currently averages about 5000 hectares per annum.

New markets need to be developed for wood products, particularly for lower value broadleaves, if the long-term management of woodlands is to be assured. Wood for renewable energy production presents a significant opportunity. Biomass is the next most significant renewable resource after wind and can be used for electricity, heat and liquid fuels. Forestry woodfuel is available now and can fill the supply gap while energy crops are grown. Woodfuel can be secured in long-term contracts to provide financial security to energy projects as energy crops are developed.

Non-timber income streams from game management, holiday accommodation, and recreational opportunities are becoming increasingly important to woodland owners and the local economy. This was recognised in the 2004 review of the White Paper which noted that the opportunities woodlands provide for employment, education, health and recreation need to be exploited, along with efforts to diversify the range of economic goods they provide.

We currently support a wide range of regional and local partnerships which aim to improve markets for wood, help forestry businesses and provide opportunities for farmers to diversify. Examples include: the South West Forest in Devon, Cumbria Woodlands and the Heartwoods Initiative. We will continue this work with the support of the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) which includes the Woodland Grant Scheme, the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme and the Energy Crop Scheme.

The ERDP 2000-06 was approved by the European Commission in September 2000. This makes additional resources available to support forestry through:

- an extra £4 million per annum from 2002 to support woodland management and new woodland creation through the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS);
- the Energy Crops Scheme which supports the establishment of short-rotation coppice;
- increased funding for the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS).

The Energy Crops Scheme (ECS) and the FWPS are both DEFRA schemes but are jointly administered with the Forestry Commission. They have strong connections with our work because ECS will contribute towards the development of the woodfuel market and over 60% of current new planting under the WGS is undertaken with the support of annual FWPS payments.

Forest Enterprise has an important diverse role to play in supporting rural development through:

- sustaining forest management operations and related opportunities for employment;
- developing the public forest estate as a major resource for tourism, particularly in areas with vulnerable rural economies such as Kielder in Northumberland, the Lake District and the Forest of Dean;
- identifying opportunities for providing more affordable homes on land surplus to the public forest estate.

## Government Policy

The Rural White Paper seeks to facilitate the development of competitive and sustainable economies in the countryside and the tackling of poverty in rural areas. The 2004 Review of the White Paper identifies the need for better integration and understanding of the way the countryside relates to economic and social conditions in rural areas.

The Energy White Paper seeks to encourage the development of a viable biomass energy sector. It also supports the development of a strong biomass supply chain offers diversification opportunities for farmers and foresters, as well as creating related job opportunities which can support rural communities.

### Strategic Priorities

**Our aims are to increase the contribution of trees, woods, and woodland based businesses to the sustainable development of rural areas.**

**We will work closely with partners in DEFRA, the Countryside Agency, Regional Development Agencies and representatives of the industry as we advance our aims through the following approaches to our work:**

- reviewing our policies and practice to ensure that they continue to contribute towards the implementation of Government priorities;
- supporting the national and regional Rural Affairs Fora in promoting a broadening of the rural economy base as recognised in the Government's Sustaining Food and Farming Strategy<sup>21</sup> (2002); and endorsed in the Review of the Rural White Paper (2004)<sup>22</sup>
- fostering the development of new markets for wood and wood products;

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<sup>21</sup> *The Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food: Facing the Future*. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. London. 2002.

<sup>22</sup> Review of the Rural White Paper. Our countryside: the future. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. London. January 2004.

- fostering the use of wood as a source of renewable energy, particularly for smaller-scale community and district heating schemes and combined heat and power plants;
- helping woodland-related businesses by providing advice, business and technical training to serve their needs;
- helping farmers and other land owners to utilise farm woodlands and diversify into forestry;
- using Forest Enterprise as an exemplar of diverse and sustainable approaches to rural development.

We will sustain our programmes across the country, but will increasingly target resources for rural development where woodlands are best able to contribute towards the regeneration of the most disadvantaged rural areas. We will be particularly active in considering the potential for woodlands to address the needs of under performing rural areas identified by Defra as part of their focus on rural productivity.

### **Tasks for 2004/05**

#### **We will:**

- Support the development of the England Forestry Industry Partnership and a programme for action to build the capacity of the industry to support sustainable development;
- Launch a pilot forestry harvesting, processing and marketing grant within the England Rural Development Programme;
- Undertake evaluations of the South West Forest and the Forest Futures programme which supports rural development in Cumbria;
- Support the Greenwood Trust to develop training and co-ordination for the greenwood and coppice sector;
- Publish a review of consumer awareness and best marketing practice of sustainable woodland products as part of a joint programme of work with the Countryside Agency;
- In the South West, develop a woodfuel action plan and explore the potential for a woodfuel co-ordination group;
- Bring 1.4 million cubic metres of certified timber to the market from the public forest estate.

# Forestry for Economic Regeneration

## Setting the Context

The Economic Regeneration Programme supports the Government's wider policies for the regeneration and sustainable development of urban areas.

Woodlands can perform a diverse range of roles in the urban context such as:

- restoring brownfield land to beneficial public use;
- providing an attractive setting for new development;
- improving the quality of life and creating sustainable communities in disadvantaged areas;
- improving the environment as a basis for attracting investment;
- filtering noise and atmosphere pollution.

The Economic Regeneration Programme has been developing through a comprehensive research programme and practical demonstrations such as:

- the 12 Community Forests;
- the National Forest;
- the Forestry Commission Land Regeneration Unit;
- the work of Forest Enterprise in establishing over 2500 hectares of new woodlands in priority areas.

## Government Policy

The Rural and Urban White Papers seek to:

- bring brownfield land back into sustainable social and economic use in order to regenerate communities disadvantaged by industrial change or decline;
- promote more open space to provide an attractive setting for future urban development.

Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future<sup>23</sup>, sets out the Government's programme to support the creation of more liveable cities, including a step change in housing supply, new growth areas, more attractive built and green environments and more sustainable communities.

Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener<sup>24</sup> complements the Sustainable Communities Plan and sets out the Government's vision for public space including open green space and woodland.

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<sup>23</sup> *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future*. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2003

<sup>24</sup> *Living Places, Cleaner, Safer, Greener*. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2002

Ministers have transferred lead responsibility in Government for community forestry to the Forestry Commission with effect from 1 April 2005. To take forward this new responsibility, the Forestry Commission will develop proposals which will address the Government's response to the recommendations of the England Forestry Forum's Working Group on community forestry.

### Strategic Priorities

**Our aim is to use woodlands to support Government policies for regeneration by:**

- increasing awareness about the potential of trees and woodlands in and around towns and cities to improve the environment of disadvantaged areas; to enhance health, well being and quality of life of urban communities and to provide a green setting for future development;
- seeking ways to highlight the potential of woodlands in planning guidance;
- adding value to the programmes and existing resources of the Government's regeneration agencies;
- promoting the value of community forestry, and continuing to support existing Community Forests by building on their expertise and experience in urban areas;
- promoting the importance of long-term support and management in order to secure enduring public benefits;
- using Forest Enterprise as a major instrument for implementation where appropriate land holdings can be secured;

Our work is brought into the mainstream by working closely with other Government Departments including Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the main bodies working on regeneration issues such as: English Partnerships, Regional Development Agencies, Countryside Agency, Environment Agency and Groundwork.

In order to reflect current policy, we have refined our priorities to focus on those areas where we can be most effective:

- the top 20% of the most deprived wards based on the Government's Indices of Deprivation 2000;
- the Coalfield wards – as defined by ODPM;
- brownfield land;
- land currently being worked for minerals or landfill.

### Tasks for 2004

**We will:**

- Develop our role within ODPM initiatives in the Growth Areas and the Northern Approach;
- Work with English Partnerships, Groundwork and the Environment Agency to establish the pilot phase of the Land Restoration Trust;

- Support the development of the Public Benefits Recording System as a tool to prioritise restoration;
- Support the 12 Community Forest partnerships to prepare and implement succession strategies which will guide their work after 2007.

# Forestry for Recreation, Access and Tourism

## Recreation

England's forests and woodlands are a major resource for recreation, tourism and sport. Over 300 million visits are made each year and a recent survey showed that 70% of people in England have enjoyed a visit to a wood during the year. Woodlands are the largest focus for land-based recreation in the countryside.

In addition to the public forest estate, about 350,000 hectares of woodland currently provide access as part of plans agreed with the Forestry Commission.

**The public forest estate**, managed by Forest Enterprise, is the largest resource available for informal access and recreation in England. Visitors have freedom to roam over 200,000 hectares. Additional facilities provided by Forest Enterprise include walks, cycle ways, nature trails, car parks, picnic sites, children's play and adventure trails, camping and caravan sites, holiday cabins and visitor centres. The forests are also used for a wide range of specialist activities such as challenging downhill mountain bike courses, car rallies, horse riding and orienteering. The Forest Park network is a major focus for tourism, attracting millions of visitors to areas such as the New Forest, Forest of Dean, Thetford and Kielder. A wide range of maps and guides is published to help people enjoy the public forest estate and Forest Enterprise is working with Ordnance Survey to ensure that their maps provide information on access opportunities to woodlands which are dedicated as access land.

The Forestry Commission also encourages **private landowners** to provide access opportunities to woodland. This is promoted through management grants, Woodland Improvement Grants and the Community Woodland Premium.

Many challenges, however, remain:

- The evidence base to demonstrate the wider social benefits that trees, woodland and forests can provide is developing but further practical demonstration is still required;
- many woodlands are located in relatively isolated rural areas and there is a need to provide quality access opportunities close to where people live and as part of a mosaic of greenspace;
- information on access opportunities remains fragmentary;
- young people, disadvantaged and minority groups are currently under-represented amongst those visitors using woodlands for recreation;
- most existing access provision lacks long-term security;
- there is a shortage of advice on providing and managing safe public access to woodlands;
- there is insufficient information available to landowners on developing commercial opportunities which will help to support the costs of providing recreational facilities.

## Community Participation

The creation and sustainable management of woodlands can present significant issues and opportunities for society. The active early involvement of local communities will often improve plans and enable woodlands to make a valued long-term contribution to sustainable development.

The Community Forests, the National Forest and the Woodland Trust, amongst others, are making valuable contributions to the fast-developing field of community involvement in countryside and peri-urban land management.

Forest Enterprise is committed to increasing the involvement of people and communities in the sustainable management of the public forest estate and in 2000 published its approach to working with communities<sup>25</sup>.

## Education and Life-Long Learning

The Forestry Commission also has an important role in promoting a better understanding of the role of woodlands in sustainable development and the contribution played by wood products and the forestry industry.

We undertake this role by:

- working directly with the formal and informal learning sectors through education rangers and forest classrooms provided by Forest Enterprise and other woodland managers;
- working indirectly through our support for the Forest Education Initiative (FEI) which is a partnership between the forestry industry, environmental NGOs and educationalists seeking to maximise the use of woodlands for learning;
- supporting the development of Forest Schools across England by working through FEI and supporting the practitioners and trainers forming the Forest School England network.

## Health and well-being

The contribution that green spaces can make to health and well-being are now better understood and researched. Forest and woodlands offer many opportunities for active recreation, which the Government is recommending to increase the public's health and wellbeing.

We will continue to develop our contribution to the wider health agenda by:

- Developing a range of demonstration projects, using the public forest estate and working with health professionals
- Develop a health and activity campaign to promote the public forest estate for a range of health benefits

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<sup>25</sup> *Forests for people - working with communities in Britain*. Forest Enterprise 2000 and *Forests for people - working with communities in England*. Forest Enterprise 2000

- Continue to develop the evidence base, through research and sharing best practice to demonstrate the role of woods, forests and greenspaces in health promotion.

## **Government Policy**

The Rural White Paper seeks to:

- increase opportunities for people in all sections of society to get enjoyment from the countryside;
- encourage people to be fully involved in influencing and shaping the decisions that affect them.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides new measures to open up public access to mountain moor and heath and will enable landowners and some long term tenants to dedicate their woodlands for public access in perpetuity.

### Strategic Priorities

**Our aim is to use woodlands to help deliver the Government's access and recreation policies realising the wider benefits from these activities through the following strategies:**

- increasing access opportunities to woodlands closer to where people live, as part of strategic greenspace provision;
- securing more convenient access to woodlands and providing recreational opportunities for all;
- enhancing the contribution to recreation made by the public forest estate;
- improving the quality and usefulness of information about access and recreational opportunities;
- encouraging community participation in the planning, creation and sustainable management of woodlands;
- promoting a better understanding about the diverse benefits of trees, woods and forests for example in relation to health and wellbeing and education and lifelong learning.
- Helping to provide advice to landowners on the development and management of recreational opportunities in woodlands.

We will concentrate our resources upon providing access and recreation opportunities which are closer to urban areas and more convenient for disadvantaged communities.

### Tasks for 2004

#### **We will:**

- Identify priority areas for woodland access using the Woods for People (accessible woodland) database which is maintained by the Woodland Trust with FC support;

- Support the development of existing and new Forest Schools, through a pilot scheme in East of England; by supporting the development of the Forest School England network and developing an accreditation scheme for Forest School through FEI;
- Support 4 health outcome demonstration projects in woodlands with the health sector including Primary Care Trusts across England;
- Support 'The Diversity Review' being conducted by the Countryside Agency with particular reference to the evaluation framework and reasons for non-use of the countryside;
- Develop an outreach service for private woodland owners to support their provision and management of access and recreation;
- Put in place arrangements for FC to act as the Relevant Authority for dedicated woodlands arising from access provisions in the CroW Act.
- Dedicate selected woodlands on the public forest estate as exemplars of dedication for continued public access.

# Forestry for Environment and Conservation

## Setting the Context

Trees and woodlands play a critical role in our environment. They absorb carbon dioxide, provide habitats for wildlife, contribute to distinctive landscapes and provide wood – a renewable and sustainable resource for our everyday needs. Managing existing woodland, and creating new woodland can help to protect vulnerable habitats and species, contribute to our finest designated countryside and improve the wider environment.

The Commission's objectives for this area are to conserve and improve the biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage of our forests and woodlands. The UK Forestry Standard<sup>26</sup> and its associated Guidelines set out the detailed environmental standards for forest and woodland management and creation.

## Biodiversity

There are no truly natural forests left in England, but over half of our woodlands are of either ancient or semi-natural origin. Many of the new woodlands created last century were established on open semi-natural habitats and some ancient woodlands were converted to plantations. England also has a remarkably rich heritage of ancient and veteran trees, some within woods and some scattered in parkland and across farmland.

Conserving the biodiversity of woodland requires action at a variety of scales. We need to protect and conserve the total area of native woodland. However, we should make particular efforts to enhance the condition of our most precious 'designated sites', the SSSIs. It is increasingly recognised that we also need to consider the needs of woodland at a landscape-scale, focusing on large-scale processes and interactions between habitats. At the other end of the scale, we must be aware of the needs of individual species, particularly those which are rare or threatened. And finally, there are circumstances where conserving the genetic diversity within a species becomes a priority.

The Government's priorities for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity are set out in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP). At the heart of the Plan is a range of Habitat and Species Action Plans which will guide nature conservation efforts over the next 10-15 years. In 2002 the Government also published ***Working with the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England***. Woodland and forestry is one of key sectors covered by the strategy.

The Forestry Commission has the lead responsibility for taking forward Habitat Action Plans (see below) for native woodlands and the action plans for some species associated with woodlands. We have been working closely with English Nature and other partners to prepare and implement strategies for the restoration and expansion of native woodland habitats and for bringing them into a favourable condition.

We work in close partnership with English Nature, the Government's statutory adviser on nature conservation, and have recently renewed our Joint Statement of Intent with them.

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<sup>26</sup> *The UK Forestry Standard*. The Government's Approach to Sustainable Forestry. Forestry Commission and the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland. 1998.

**The public forest estate** is a key biodiversity resource. It incorporates 66,600 ha of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), including the New Forest, the largest in England, all of which are managed in accordance with management plans agreed with English Nature. 71% of SSSIs on the estate have been assessed as being in 'favourable or recovering condition'. Forest Enterprise is a leading agency for delivering the UKBAP in England and is implementing plans for key habitats such as lowland heath, upland oakwoods, pasture woodland, limestone pavement, red squirrel and butterflies.

## **Landscape**

Woodland is a key component of the English landscape. Woodland is an important feature of many Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and forests and woodland make a special contribution to most of our National Parks.

In 2002 we renewed our Accord with the Association of National Parks and this now covers the full contribution which woodland can make to National Park purposes. We are closely involved with the work of the Countryside Agency in designating proposed new National Parks in the New Forest and the South Downs. We also have an Accord with the Association of AONBs, and with the Countryside Agency we are jointly funding 4 new woodland officers to help increase the contribution of woodland to the environment and the economy of AONBs.

We are committed to safeguarding the distinctive variety of landscapes across England and will continue to support the Countryside Character Programme as a framework to guide our consideration for the management and creation of woodland.

## **Heritage**

The character of the countryside today owes much to the activities of previous generations, and the remains of their settlements, burial sites, fortifications and field systems are all around us. Industrial archaeology is often well preserved within woodland, and both trees and woodland are important elements of many designed landscapes. Areas of ancient woodland often contain features that relate to earlier woodland management as well as archaeological sites which have been lost to developments in surrounding agricultural areas. Ancient trees are the oldest features in many parishes, and have rich historical and cultural associations, as well as being landscape features. Such trees need protection from damaging activities, and in some cases also need specialist treatment to ensure their longevity and safety.

It is vital that such sites are managed in a way that conserves and enhances this cultural heritage and all applications are assessed to ensure compliance with our Archaeological Guidelines. We also consult local authority archaeological services about all applications for creating woodlands to avoid adverse impacts on archaeological remains.

The public forest estate contains a wide range of archaeological sites. These include 732 Scheduled Ancient Monuments which are actively conserved through management plans agreed with English Heritage. Many archaeological sites are also equipped with interpretation as part of forest recreation provision. Recent detailed surveys, such as those carried out in Northamptonshire, are revealing a remarkably rich heritage within the ancient woodlands on the estate.

## Government Policy

The Government's priorities for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity are set out in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP). At the heart of the Plan is a range of Habitat and Species Action Plans which will guide nature conservation efforts over the next 10-15 years. The conservation of these 'priority' habitats and species was given legislative weight by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act in 2000. In 2002 the Government also published ***Working with the Grain of Nature: A Biodiversity Strategy for England***. Woodland and forestry is one of key sectors covered by the strategy. An 'England Woodland Biodiversity Group' has been established to assist and guide the FC in implementing both the Strategy and the UK BAP in England.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act<sup>27</sup> reinforces the importance of SSSIs, and places a duty on all public bodies to 'to further the conservation and enhancement' of the special features of SSSIs.

The CROW Act also places a similar obligation to contribute to 'conserving and enhancing the natural beauty' of AONBs<sup>28</sup>. This is matched by an obligation on all public bodies 'to have regard to the purposes' of National Parks (the Environment Act, 1995). The Forestry Commission's Accords with both AONBs and the National Parks are an expression of these duties and our commitment to further our shared aims.

### Strategic Priorities

**Our aim is to ensure that woodlands play a full role in delivering the Government's environmental policies through the following strategies:**

- protecting the existing woodland resource, particularly ancient or semi-natural woodland, from external threats and gradual decline;
- enhancing the ecological 'condition' of woodland, and conserving priority species associated with it;
- improving the contribution of forestry and woodland to the conservation of biodiversity in the wider landscape, including to non-woodland habitats;
- increasing the contribution of woodland to people's quality of life, and in particular their access to and appreciation of woodland which is rich in wildlife;
- increasing understanding of the role of woodland in protecting the environment and providing environmental services;
- strengthening the contributions which woodlands make to the environmental, social and economic objectives of National Parks and AONBs;
- ensuring that both new and existing woodlands play a positive role in conserving and improving landscape character;
- raising awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage associated with woodlands, and avoiding any adverse impacts on archaeological sites,
- developing the public forest estate as an exemplar for Government policies on the environment, biodiversity and the cultural heritage.

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<sup>27</sup> Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The priorities for our environmental programme are SSSIs, ancient and native woodlands, National Parks and AONBs.

#### Tasks for 2004

We will:

- lead implementation of the woodland component of the England Biodiversity Strategy and of the native woodland Habitat Action Plans;
- develop and consult on policy and practice for ancient and native woodland, including plans for the restoration of ancient woodland on the public forest estate;
- develop and consult on policy and practice for the restoration of open ground habitats through removal of forest cover;
- prepare and implement the Government response to the joint Defra/FC consultation on the sustainable management of wild deer;
- continue research into the causes of decline in woodland birds, with specific studies on willow tit and nightjar and a pilot for National Conifer Woodland Bird Survey;



**EFFICIENT  
USE OF  
RESOURCES**

# Financial Resources and Efficiency Measures

## Source of Funds

Funding for our activities in England and our GB functions comes from Westminster, from the EU (which contributes to the cost of woodland grants) and from income from the public forest estate managed by Forest Enterprise.

External resources are levered in through partnerships with others whose aims and objectives coincide with those of the FC but whilst these resources contribute to our outputs and outcomes, they do not pass through the accounts. In the main these come from those working within the urban and regeneration agendas.

**Westminster** funding for the Forestry Commission was decided as part of the Government's 2002 Spending Review. Table 1 shows the planned sources of income and expenditure up to 2005/06.

In November 2000 the Government announced that, as a consequence of modulation arrangements introduced in the England Rural Development Plan, additional **EU** funds would be available until 2006/07 to support landowners in sustaining woodlands and creating new woodlands for public benefit. This support is provided through the Woodland Grant Scheme (FC), and the Farm Woodland Premium and Energy Crops Scheme operated by DEFRA. Additional EU support is also potentially available through the Structural Funds. The Forestry Commission is currently actively engaged with partners in connection with Objective 1 funding in Cornwall, Merseyside and South Yorkshire and Objective 2 in most of the northern counties, the Welsh Marches and Devon.

Income from the public forest estate is used to support programmes on the estate. Income from timber sales, which is closely linked to the strength of the round timber market, is an important part of that the total income. Over recent years, there has been a major decline in the price of round timber. Measured in pounds in real terms, prices remain at the lowest levels ever encountered. Factors such as the strength of sterling, increased recycling and high sawn timber production levels in Sweden and the Baltic States have contributed to the fall in prices. There is no sign of an early recovery and this Plan assumes that prices will continue at their present depressed level.

## Use of Funds

At the GB level, our resources support work which benefits all three countries. The largest component is research and development carried out by our executive agency Forest Research (about 90%) and by other providers (about 10%): almost all research results are applicable to more than one country. The remaining expenditure is on protecting Britain's trees from pests and diseases, representing British interests on the international stage, and other GB-wide work including the costs of the Board of Forestry Commissioners, the development of the timber market, and the development and promotion of standards for sustainable forest management.

Resources in England are used to sustain and expand woodlands and woodland services in accordance with the England Forestry Strategy. We plan to spend approximately 53% of grants on woodland expansion and 47% on the management of existing woodlands over the period of the 2002 Spending Review.

TABLE 1

**Sources of Finance**

£m	2002-03 Outturn	2003-04 Estimated Outturn	2004-05 Budget	2005-06 Plan
<b>Provided by Parliament</b>				
– Grant	52.2	57.8	56.8	58.7
– Capital Modernisation Fund	10.6	3.3	–	–
- Invest to Save Budget	0.6	0.5	–	–
<b>Total Cash Funding Provision</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>56.8</b>	<b>58.7</b>
Other Resource Provision <sup>29</sup>	43.8	20.7	20.7	20.7
<b>Total Parliamentary Resource Provision</b>	<b>107.2</b>	<b>82.3</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>79.4</b>
<b>EU Co-financing of Woodland Grants</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>6.0</b>
<b>Forest Enterprise England</b>				
– operating receipts	24.1	26.1	24.0	24.0
– recreation, conservation and heritage	7.5	8.4	8.1	8.0
– sales of surplus assets	2.7	1.5	5.4	2.0
<b>Forest Enterprise Cash Receipts</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>34.0</b>
<b>Additional resources to be secured</b>				<b>3.0</b>
<b>Total Cash Funding/Receipts</b>	<b>103.9</b>	<b>103.6</b>	<b>99.8</b>	<b>101.7</b>
<b>Total other resource provision</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>20.7</b>
<b>Total Resource Provision</b>	<b>147.7</b>	<b>124.3</b>	<b>120.5</b>	<b>122.4</b>

<sup>29</sup> Other Resource Provision covers accruals changes and the cost of capital and depreciation charges for the use of assets. Cost of capital was reduced from 6% to 3.5% in 2003-04.

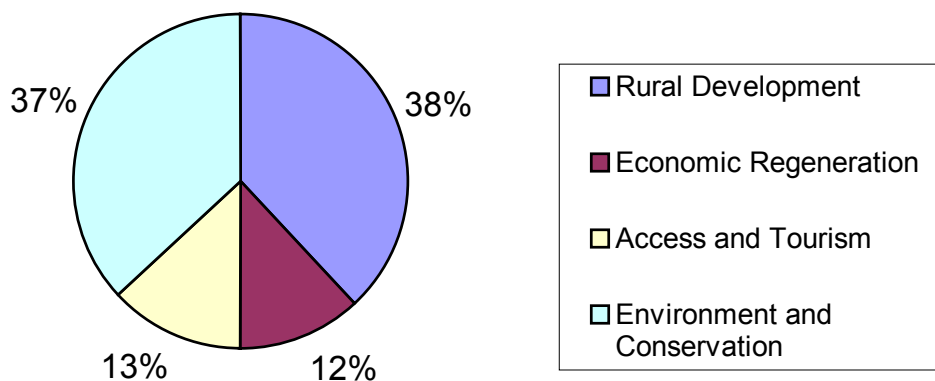
## Use of Funds

£m	2002-03 Outturn	2003-04 Estimated Outturn	2004-05 Budget	2005-06 Plan
<b>Forestry Commission GB</b>				
Research and Development	9.4	10.7	10.7	11.2
Pensions and Retirement Compensation	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.4
International Forestry Policy	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Plant Health	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.3
Other GB level policy matters	5.5	4.4	3.9	3.7
Invest to Save Budget	0.2	0.5	–	–
Additional ASLC payments <sup>1</sup>				0.9
Changes in Working Capital			–	–
Total Cash Expenditure	16.1	17.0	16.1	17.0
Other Resource Costs	2.8	1.3	1.3	1.3
<b>Total FC GB Resource Expenditure</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>18.3</b>
<b>Forestry Commission England</b>				
Woodland Grants and Partnerships	18.8	18.0	18.5	19.0
Policy, Regulation & Administration	8.0	10.8	9.7	8.6
Changes in Working Capital		–	–	–
Additional ASLC payments	–	–	–	1.0
Total Cash Expenditure	26.8	28.8	28.2	28.6
Other Resource Costs	3.0	1.1	0.1	0.1
<b>Total FC England Resource Expenditure</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>28.7</b>
<b>Forest Enterprise England</b>				
Operating Costs	31.5	32.6	35.0	35.1
Recreation, Conservation and Heritage	15.8	18.2	18.6	19.0
Cost of Surplus Land Sales	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2
New Planting	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1
Other Capital	1.0	0.8	0.5	0.7
Capital Modernisation Fund	9.6	3.3	–	–
Changes in Working Capital		–		
Total Cash Expenditure	59.2	56.1	55.5	56.1
Other Resource Costs	34.9	16.0	19.3	19.3
<b>Total FE England Resource Expenditure</b>	<b>94.1</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>74.8</b>	<b>75.4</b>
<b>Total England Resource Expenditure</b>	<b>123.9</b>	<b>102.0</b>	<b>103.1</b>	<b>104.1</b>
<b>Total England/GB Resource Expenditure</b>	<b>142.8</b>	<b>120.3</b>	<b>120.5</b>	<b>122.4</b>

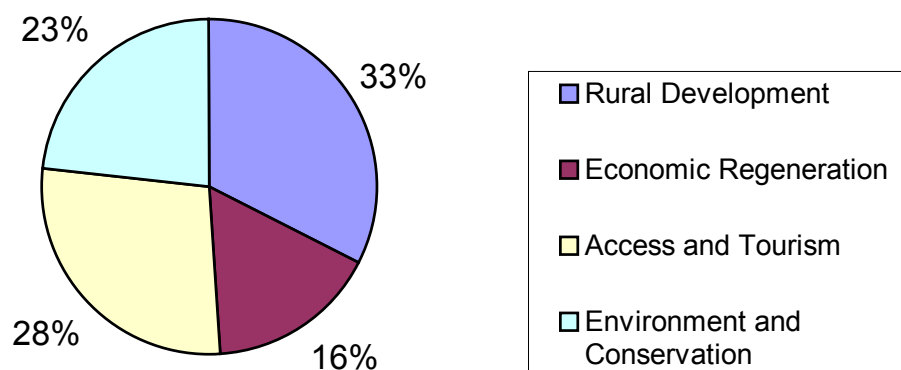
<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary provision has been given for Accruing Superannuation Liability Contributions

## Forestry Commission Grants, Licensing and Partnership Funding

In England



### Expenditure by Forest Enterprise on the public forest estate



The underlying methodology for the pie-chart is only indicative, since by its nature multi-benefit forestry delivers a range of benefits from individual woodlands and so apportioning costs can be difficult.

### Improving Efficiency

The Forestry Commission Service Delivery Agreement for 2003-06 requires us to actively pursue efficiency gains and achieve better value for public money.

The targets for the Commission in England are set out in Annex A. The main risks in achieving these targets are: reductions in funding as a consequence of a further decline in the timber market, and changes in the demand for woodland grants as a consequence of external factors which may change the relative attractiveness of woodland as a land-use. Annex B is the corporate plan for Forest Enterprise England. This sets targets for its key performance indicators which *inter alia* seek best value for the investment in the public forest estate.

## Strategic Priorities

### **We will continue to strive to achieve better value for public money by:**

- improving the administration of our grant schemes;
- implementing our E-business strategy to enhance services and increase efficiency through the greater use of information technology;
- evaluating the effectiveness of mechanisms for implementing the England Forestry Strategy.

## Tasks for 2004

### **Through the GB Forestry Commission we will:**

- Commence implementation of the GLADE system for enabling the delivery of grants and licences electronically;
- Introduce systems to enable staff to access corporate data even when working remotely;
- Strengthen the capabilities for horizon scanning and Foresight-style processes within the Forestry Commission and wherever possible link these activities to those carried out in other parts of UK government and the devolved administrations.

## **People in the Forestry Commission**

The Forestry Commission remains the employer of choice for many people who want to work in forestry or in rural areas. We employ 1,946 people directly on the activities covered by this Corporate Plan. This includes 1,030 staff working exclusively on English activities of whom 862 work on the management of the public forest estate.

### **A Continuing Programme of Change**

Action continues in response to our November 2002 Staff Survey. Some of this is centrally driven but most of the follow-up action will be taken at country level by FC England. A further staff survey will be conducted in 2005.

### **Benchmarking Progress**

Forest Research Agency was successfully re-evaluated against the IIP accreditation standards. This brought the re-evaluation exercise for the whole organisation to a successful conclusion. We are planning to use internal assessors for future evaluations.

A new Forest Enterprise Agency was created to manage the public forests in England and the National Office for England was restructured and resourced to carry out its new range of responsibilities.

A greater emphasis was placed on interchange with a total of 9 staff involved in interchange or secondment during 2003.

### **People: Health, Safety and Diversity**

We put a lot of effort into developing and operating safe working systems and practices and ensuring the general welfare of all staff. Particular attention is paid to those who work in the forest – a potentially dangerous workplace. The number of reportable accidents has progressively reduced and now stands at 1 per 100 employees. This has been achieved by using the Managing Health and Safety in Forestry Framework, audit systems that measure health and safety performance and improved risk assessment.

Health and safety is also a priority for the Forestry Commission when working with the forest industry as a whole.

The Forestry Commission's sick absence record remains significantly better than the average for the Civil Service. Our working days absence per staff year amounted to 7.1 for 2003 compared to the Civil Service average for 2002 of 9.8 (latest figure available). Sickness absence has reduced by 14% against our 1998 baseline figure. Ill health retirement fell to 2.48 per 1,000 employees for 2003. Our target for 2005 is 4.84.

We continue to make progress on the number of women in senior posts and the number of staff who have self-declared disabilities has risen to 2.9% of our workforce. There has been no significant change in the number of staff from an ethnic minority background but we have had a slight improvement in the number of job applicants. We are hopeful that our Race Equality Scheme will raise the profile of the Forestry Commission amongst ethnic minorities.

## Tasks for 2004

- In line with our Learning Strategy we will:
  - develop further the use of Apprenticeships in the Forestry Commission;
  - promote the value to staff of gaining marketable qualifications;
  - improve basic numeracy and literacy skills in the organisation.
- Continue to meet our targets on absence from the office and medical retirements;

## **Public Service**

The Commission is committed to achieving high standards of public service. The following formal Statements of standards are now in place:

- Statement of General Standards of Service (Forest Enterprise);
- Woodland Grant Scheme Applicant's Charter;
- Felling Licence Charter;
- Plant Health Charter.

Performance against these standards is reported in our Annual Report.

We work extensively with partner organisations, with customers, and with the people who use England's forests. We recognise that good communications with all these groups is essential.

In all our contacts we aim to be:

**Honest** – we will treat people honestly as befits our responsibilities as Crown servants.

**Open** – we will make information available on all our services and how we are performing. In line with Open Government, we will also make information on all our activities available on request.

**Accessible** – through our helpline and Internet site, and through personal contact and published materials. Wherever possible we will use plain language. We will also make contact names and addresses widely available.

**Listening** – we encourage views about forestry and what we do. We will consult openly about our policies and about the range of services we provide, at both national and local levels.

**Responsible** – if we get something wrong we will admit to it and put it right. We will also respect people's privacy and dignity.

## Tasks for 2004

### **We will:**

- create web areas within our website to provide regional information on forestry and the work of the Forestry Commission.

## 2002 Spending Review Targets for 2003-2006

The following table records our performance against our targets.

Target	Forecast of progress at 31 March 2004
<b>Sustainable Development</b>	
<b>Achieve positive trends in specified UK Indicators of Sustainable Forestry in the SR2002 period :</b> A2 - new woodland creation A6 - area of sustainably managed woodland D3 - timber production and future availability E3 - public awareness	A2, 2003/04 figures available June 04; A6, 1,153,000 ha (up from 1,084,000 in Dec 2001) D3, estimate available for 2003 in May 2004; E3, The survey carried out in 2003/04 is not directly comparable with earlier surveys but is likely to be repeated in 2005
Strengthen the role of woodlands and forestry in the sustainable development strategy of each region through promoting the preparation of regional expressions of the England Forestry Strategy by 2004.	One framework complete, three at consultation stage and five being developed.
Create 15,000 hectares of new woodland from 2003 to 2006 in accordance with the England Forestry Strategy and the England Rural Development Programme.	6200 ha (estimated) <sup>1</sup>
Promote an increase in the area of woodland certified against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard for sustainable forest management in England to 350,000 hectares (32%) by 2006.	307,000 ha (estimated).
<b>Rural Development</b>	
Promote the sustainable utilisation of England's woodland resource by facilitating the harvesting of 38% of the annual timber growth each year until 2006	Estimates for 2003 will be available in May 2004.
Carry out a baseline study to establish the confidence of woodland and forestry related businesses and set a target for improvement	Baseline figures will be established after the 2004 survey of the Health and Viability of Forest Industry Businesses has been completed and analysed.
<b>Economic Regeneration</b>	
Improve the environment of disadvantaged urban communities and help to attract investment by creating 2700 hectares of new woodlands in priority areas from 2003 to 2006.	735 ha. (estimated)
<b>Recreation, Access and Tourism</b>	
Promote healthier lifestyles and increase environmental awareness by expanding the area of woodlands with public access by 10,000 hectares in priority areas over the period 2003-2006 in relation to the 2003 baseline study.	Baseline study has been completed.
Increase the number of day visits to woods and forests to 350 million by 2006.	Awaiting verification of 2002 baseline figures. Results from 2004 survey to be available in 2006.
<b>Conservation and Environment</b>	
Bring into favourable condition by 2010, 95% of all SSSIs where the Forestry Commission has statutory responsibilities.	Baseline assessment for SSSIs at March 2003 is 69%.
Lead implementation of the UK Biodiversity Habitat Action Plans for woodlands in England for delivery by 2015.	A major database is being developed to record progress against Action Plan targets.
Reverse the long-term decline in the number of woodland birds by 2020 as measured annually against underlying trends using the Woodland Birds Index.	The National Woodland Birds Survey Project reporting in 2005 will clarify causal factors and research priorities.
<b>Value for Money</b>	
Reduce the unit cost of administering grant aid to 16p/£ by 2006 while maintaining a minimum of 85% compliance with the FC Customer Service Standard for the Woodland Grant Scheme and achieving 100% electronic serving delivery capability for such payments by 2005.	As the achievement of the unit cost target and electronic delivery depends on the introduction of GLADE planned for April 2005, the target will be assessed thereafter. Compliance with FC Customer Service Standard is 85% (estimated)
Reduce the unit cost of producing a cubic metre of timber on the Forestry Commission estate to £13.55/m <sup>3</sup> by 2006 while increasing the proportion of woodland managed in accordance with low impact silvicultural systems.	£13.52/m <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The practice has been to record the area paid but since the introduction of resource accounting, the amounts of grant payments appearing in the accounts represents the accrued expenditure. This total includes approximately 1000 ha payment for which was accrued in the 2002/03 accounts and has not been previously reported. The remainder represents the area achieved by the amounts appearing the 2003/04 accounts.



## Annex B

### Forest Enterprise England CORPORATE PLAN 2004 – 2007

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## **Foreword**

Welcome to our Corporate Plan for 2004/5.

Forest Enterprise faces a dramatically changing environment in its task of managing the public forest estate. We must continue to address the increasing demand for a range of public services (green space, attractive landscapes, wildlife, recreation facilities, rural development opportunities), while adapting to changes in our funding and recognising the wider changes in rural and urban societies.

This plan covers a period during which:

- Regional Forest Frameworks are being developed to encapsulate regional forest policies;
- Our Framework Document is due for revision.

As a result, it only covers a single year: maintaining our current position without compromising our ability to adapt to the changes that may face us in the future

**Geoff Hatfield**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Forest Enterprise England**

## Introduction

Forest Enterprise England is a new agency of the Forestry Commission in England, whose aim as set out in its Framework Document is:

***"To manage the public estate owned by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in a sustainable way, so as to contribute towards the economic, social and environmental objectives of the England Forestry Strategy."***

We achieve this by using good business practice to support public service: This means that income from our timber and leisure businesses is used to offset the cost of our contributions to the England Forest Strategy and the Government's wider sustainable development programmes.

FEE came into existence following the devolution review, at a time of unprecedented change for forestry and the land based industries.

### Devolution and Regional Government

The move to more Regional government in England has resulted in the creation of Regional Forestry Frameworks. Most of these frameworks are in a draft stage as this plan is published. Once they are completed in 2005, they will give us a clearer idea of what local people want from their woodlands.

### A Changing Countryside

Social, demographic and economic changes are changing the way that the countryside is used and perceived. The Modernising Rural Delivery Review is looking at these issues, and we await the outcome.

### Economics of land-based industries

The revenue that we can generate from harvesting trees has severely declined in the past 5 years, due to global factors. Revenue from our leisure businesses is increasing but not sufficiently to compensate for reductions in timber prices, or to cover the cost of FC programmes. As a consequence, Government funding has been increased in the Spending Review to sustain the programmes sought by Ministers and Commissioners.

Our ability to change and adapt is completely dependent on the motivation and skill of our staff. We strive to be an organisation that supports personal development, encouraging our people to develop their skills and to reach their full potential. We will develop an increasingly diverse organisation, to provide the wide range of skills and backgrounds we will need to meet the challenges laid out in this plan.

**Our strategy is to continue managing woodlands for multiple benefits so that they are able to adapt to a range of alternative future scenarios. To achieve this we will look at all of our resources – forest, land and staff – and consider how best to develop our flexibility and resilience. While doing this, we will continue to adhere to our principles of Quality, Public Benefit Delivery, Sustainable Management and Partnership.**

## Programmes for delivering Public Benefit

- The Agency is tasked to deliver Public Benefit through its Framework Document which sets an overarching objective for Sustainable Forest Management and economic, social and environmental objectives to support it. The following sections identify the areas of work where we will concentrate to deliver positive outcomes.

### Our commitment

By implementing this plan, we are following the recommendations of the Forestry Review and changing our priorities to improve public benefit delivery. This means that we will...

- *Manage our woodlands with an increasing emphasis on people and the environment.*
- *Develop and promote woodland recreation to support government targets for activity and health.*
- *Promote sustainable tourism to benefit the wider economy in rural areas.*
- *Support government targets for the England Biodiversity Strategy through the restoration of priority habitats and the improvement of SSSIs*

## **Economic Programme**

### Framework Document Objective:

*To increase the contribution of the estate to the rural economy.*

### Key Issues

We can contribute most to economic development in a range of locations by supporting tourism and countryside access and by encouraging businesses to benefit from the woodland resource. We will achieve this through the provision of attractive, welcoming woodlands, with a range of facilities and supported activities.

Management of woodlands (including maintenance, timber harvesting, tree planting and conservation work) continues to be a significant employer in some areas. We will continue to support jobs and business opportunities in woodland management and timber processing by letting timber and service contracts in a way that balances competitive pricing with business security and by bringing guaranteed volumes of timber to the market.

### Actions.

- **Provide improved facilities for visitors and small businesses by completing the first phase of the refurbishment of the Dalby visitor centre in North York Moors;**
- **Develop our Public Private Partnership for Forest Holidays cabins and campsites;**
- **Offer training opportunities through apprenticeships to ensure future generations of skilled countryside craftsmen;**
- **Bring 1.4 million m<sup>3</sup> of certified timber to market, and implement the electronic sales package.**

## **Social Programme**

### Framework Document Objectives:

*To promote public access to the estate and develop diverse recreational opportunities;*

*To expand the role of the estate in improving the environment of disadvantaged communities and bringing brownfield land into beneficial public use.*

### Key Issues

Woodlands and green open space can contribute significantly to the health and well being of those able to access them. Participation in the management process for local woodlands helps to build stronger communities. Public woodlands can be used to promote inclusion through improved accessibility, outreach work and by providing novel learning opportunities for people of diverse ages and backgrounds. The Public Forest Estate has a substantial role in contributing to the government's agendas for sustainable communities and health.

### Actions

- **Work in partnership with the Land Restoration Trust to restore degraded landscapes;**
- **Start to dedicate FC woodlands under CROW;**
- **Deliver education and learning programmes to over 100,000 children and young adults and continue to develop our work with excluded school children and the probation service;**
- **Develop our understanding of our potential contribution to health improvement by working with partners on pilot sites.**

## **Environmental Programme**

### Framework Document Objective:

*To conserve and enhance the biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage of the estate.*

### Key Issues

There are 67,900 hectares of SSSI on the public forest estate which are a biodiversity resource of international importance. 71% are currently in favourable condition, against the Government wide target of 95% favourable by 2010. The work and resources required to meet this target have been evaluated and work will proceed as resources permit.

Forest Enterprise will also continue to contribute to habitat and species targets under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Native woodland and lowland heathland are particularly important, with a special emphasis on the irreplaceable ecological and cultural value of ancient woodland.

Forest Enterprise helps sustain the wider environment through its activities as a timber supplier, as a purchaser of goods and as an exemplar of environmentally sensitive management.

### Actions

- **develop a methodology for assessing the condition of all priority habitats across the FC estate;**
- **carry out work across 2% of our SSSI's to contribute to the Government's target of having 95% in favourable or recovering condition by 2010;**
- **start a programme to restore 15000Ha of ancient semi-natural woodland by thinning 700Ha of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS);**
- **continue with our programme to restore 2000Ha of lowland Heath by 2007.**

## **Managing Forest Enterprise England**

### Objectives

*To manage the estate sustainably in all respects;  
to be efficient, cost-effective and commercially and environmentally aware in all operations;  
to provide high-quality services to customers;  
to be a caring and fair employer;  
to maintain safe working practices, and a safe environment for visitors.*

### Sustainable Forest Management

The principle of sustainable management underpins all of our work, since sustainable woodlands are the foundation of much of our delivery. Our forest-based work is all independently audited against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard to ensure it is sustainable. We will:

- **complete a re-certification audit in 2005.**

### Efficiency and cost-effectiveness

To deliver cost savings and efficiencies in terms of improved purchasing, stock control and transaction processing at The National Arboreta, we will:

- **introduce a state of the art retail system.**

### Customer service

To update our knowledge about who is visiting sites where we have significant staff and cash investment, we will:

- **Carry out basic visitor surveys at all visitor centres and a limited number of other key sites;**

To provide a more in depth picture of visitors to these sites, identify potential improvements and provide evidence for our annual report, we will:

- **Complete detailed reports on two visitor centre locations and one community forest area;**

To help us to more accurately gauge changes in use over time and support future funding bids, we will:

- **Improve the accuracy of visitor counts at visitor centres and other key sites.**

### Safety

To safeguard visitors to the public forest estate, we will:

- **start a major review of public safety on FC land (due for completion in 2006) by carrying out detailed studies at key locations.**

## Summary of Key Performance Measures

<b>Sustainable Forest Management</b>	<b>Target for 2004/05</b>
Percentage of forest estate certified as sustainably managed.	100%
Percentage of estate managed in accordance with approved Forest Design Plans;	87%
<b>Social</b>	
Increase in area of forest estate with public access;	150 ha
Area of new woodland created in priority areas for improving the environment of disadvantaged urban communities	46 ha (gross)
<b>Economic</b>	
Percentage of the annual timber increment which is harvested	74% <sup>1</sup>
Income generated from sources other than timber production and sales of land and property.	£16.0 million
<b>Environmental</b>	
Percentage of SSSIs in favourable or recovering condition	73% <sup>2</sup>
Progress with implementing relevant UK Biodiversity Action Plan targets	Improve 700 ha of plantation on ancient woodland sites
<b>Operational</b>	
Cost per cubic metre of timber production	£13.55
Profit/loss on timber operations	£5.0 million
Number of reportable accidents per hundred employees	1.8
Rate of return from capital invested in the 'Forest Holidays' business	7.5%
Percentage of customers and community partners "satisfied"	Key sites will achieve an average satisfaction score >0 <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Defined as volume harvested / volume growth on public forest estate as estimated by the National Inventory of Woodlands and Trees (1 934 000 m<sup>3</sup> softwood + 337 000 m<sup>3</sup> hardwood).

<sup>2</sup> Assessment of condition is carried out on a 6 year cycle by English nature. We are aiming to have 95% in favourable condition by 2010 (dependent on funding).

<sup>3</sup> The customer satisfaction scores range from -2 (much worse than expected) to +2 (much better than expected).

## Forest Enterprise England Resources

<i>Income (£ million)</i>		<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>
	operating receipts	25.0	24.0
	recreation, conservation and heritage income	8.8	8.0
	sales of surplus land assets	1.5	5.4
	Forestry Commission (to meet Ministers and Commissioners programme requirements)	19.9	18.0
	other capital	0.2	0.1
	other Parliamentary resource provision	19.3	19.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>74.8</b>
<i>Expenditure (£ million)</i>			
	operating costs	38.6	35.0
	recreation, conservation and heritage expenditure	18.5	18.6
	cost of land sales	0.3	0.3
	new planting	1.1	1.1
	other capital	3.4	0.5
	other resource costs	19.3	19.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>74.8</b>

