



Better woodlands for Wales

News from Forestry Commission Wales Grants and Regulations, Issue 18, March 2009

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Issue dates:

Issue 19 May 2009

Issue 20 July 2009

Current issue and back issues available on the FCW website:

www.forestry.gov.uk/wales

Management Planner update training

The update training has now been completed and the questions and answers, along with copies of the presentations have been sent to all planners. Please e-mail alison.evans@forestry.gsi.gov.uk if you wish to have it resent. Thank you to everyone for attending and for providing feedback. We have been analysing this and the overall results are summarised below:

- 88% of attendees scored the training as satisfactory or higher
- 4% of attendees scored the training as not completely satisfactory
- 8% of attendees did not score the training

The highest scoring sections were the presentation, the trainer's knowledge, the help that the training provided with regard to BWW and the discussion sessions.

The lowest scoring section was documentation and we will endeavour to improve on this, not only in relation to training but to ensure that this is also taken on board by Andrew Wright, our Documentation Manager. (See article on customer survey).

Some of the comments received were;

- *'Presence of more senior FC would have been beneficial'. We will act on this and ensure that the Operations Manager or Assistant Operations Manager attends each session.*
- *'Generally well prepared and presented'*
- *'Too much regarding features and factors'. This update training was prepared following feedback from Planners that more information on features and factors would be useful. However we recognise that different Planners have different levels of experience here. It is always difficult to design a training session that covers a wide range of topics aimed at an audience with different skills.*
- *'Highly useful in generally 'keeping focused''*



BWW customer survey heading your way

Our documentation manager, Andrew Wright will be sending out a customer survey to all our Management Planners. This is primarily designed to identify where documents are either missing which relate to the BWW process or where existing documents are in need of revision. We are also taking the opportunity to find out more information about the way you use BWW and the service we are providing. The questionnaire will be e-mailed to all Management Planners, but we would like you to consider the questions from both your own perspective and those of your clients. This is your opportunity to tell us what you think, so please respond. A summary of the findings will be published in a future technical newsletter.

Changes to Single Payment Scheme (SPS) for new planting

Important changes have been made to the SPS that will affect farm woodlands. Farmers can now use land taken out of agricultural production for new planting under BWW, to support claims on SPS entitlements, provided that the land was used to claim SPS in 2008. The land may be used for SPS claims for the duration of the BWW scheme. This also applies to stock excluded woodland under Tir Gofal.

Short rotation coppice is now an eligible land cover for the SPS in its own right and there is no longer a need to claim the 'Aid for Energy Crops'.

Who is your Technical Services Officer?



From left to right:

front row
Menna Jones,
Carol Jones,
Liz Watt,

back row
Rhian Corlett,
Sam Milner

If you're not sure which TSO is dealing with your case, please go onto the 'current case administration' page in GLOS. Then select 'case summary and it will display your TSO (administration officer) who is responsible for your BWW scheme.

GIS consolidation fees

As reported in the last Technical Newsletter, we will continue to pay GIS consolidation fees after 1st April, for those Management Planners who provide spatial data for their BWW cases. The fees will continue to be £750 for the first 2 cases that achieve PRL2 status and £250 for any additional case that is approved. The 2 x £750 payments are in recognition of the financial and time investment made in obtaining and becoming familiar with the GIS software. The £250 for each additional case is not to pay for the digitisation of the map data but to compensate for the extra data required for the BWW case i.e. additional information in the attribute table. When you provide digital data, it is the Management Planner's responsibility to check that data has been captured accurately before sending it to Technical Services.



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As from 1st April, Technical Services will be checking each case submitted digitally using bespoke software developed to ensure that they adhere to agreed data capture standards. The software will check the accuracy of captured data against OS MasterMap – in particular the BWW case boundary. It will also check the quality of the data capture, highlighting any digital 'kick backs' or loops and check for overlapping polygons or gaps between sub compartments and other polygon data. The software produces a report that will be passed back the Management Planner to aid correction. Use of this software will speed up the data validation process.

To aid Management Planners who are using GIS for BWW we're pleased to announce that two user guides will be available from 1st April. These guides have been written by Management Planners and will help you through the process of producing digital data for your BWW case. The two guides are for MPs using either ESRI ArcGIS or MapInfo. A third guide aimed at MPs who use Map Maker will be available shortly.

If you want a copy of either of these guides please email www.ts@forestry.gov.uk indicating which GIS software you use.

New Management Planning grants from 1st April 2009

Forestry Commission Wales are introducing revised Management planning grants from 1st April 2009. The new rates will apply to all cases that have not reached Draft Contract Stage (DCT) at that date.

The original fees were set following the BWW pilot scheme. The revision process involved an assessment against inflation as well as discussions with planners who outlined their experiences with BWW, to look at changes and alteration in the system and business processes assumed or measured by the pilot scheme.

The main findings can be summarised as:

- The management planning grant calculation was still found to be working well and reflecting the main work groups. However new work elements in the basic case overheads were found.
- The area dependent variables for large cases were found to be slightly low - due to the lack of a sophisticated integrated map browser capability.
- The comparison of efforts in briefing and inputting special assessments showed that an amount for processing was needed as against the briefing fee used to date.
- There are survey and consultation costs in a small and recognisable group of complex cases which are to be the subject of a rule controlled special assessment type.
- The planners welcomed the contribution of Foundation plan top up to cash flow during the management plan phase.

Management plan grant changes

The calculation method used for the management planner grants will remain unchanged. The new rates are:

The underpinning agent daily rate will be set at £360/day (£45/hr)

The base amount will be £500 (an increase of £200)

The polygon amount will be £14 (an increase of £4)

The under 25ha rate will be £33 (an increase of £8)

The over 25ha rate will be £6.75 (an increase of £1.75)

The Special Assessment Briefing fee will cease and be replaced by a Special Assessment Processing amount of £100 for all special assessments regardless of who carries these out.

During 09/10, for cases of over 10ha total area, the flat rate of £200 Foundation plan delivery amount will continue be paid on invoice, where the planner completes the Foundation plan in under 60 days. This is a payment under the Planner's framework agreement.

For cases below 10ha total area, FCW are developing a more streamlined approach to reduce overall time from application to approval and therefore the Foundation plan delivery fee will not be paid in these cases.

All other consolidation fees will cease except for the additional fee paid to encourage planners to provide spatial data from their own GIS.



New WIG cost calculator

The new WIG Cost Calculator and associated business rules will be published at the beginning of April on the BWW website. There are significant changes to both the calculator and business rules, so once it is published please delete old calculators/business rules to ensure you are using the new version. The new version of the WIG CC will be made available in March (as early as possible), and may be used on all plans to be submitted from April 09 onwards.

- FCW will continue to accept grant costings based on the old WIG CC until 1st May 2009. This is to allow for cases where the operations have already been entered into GLOS.
- All management plans submitted to the WO for the first time after 1st May must use the new WIG CC.



Welsh Woodland Strategy launch

Following a 12 week public consultation, the new Wales Woodland Strategy is to be launched on the 27th March by Elin Jones, Minister for Rural Affairs. Originally published in 2001, this document set out a 50 year plan for trees and woodlands. Since then a number of new opportunities and threats, such as climate change, have come to the fore and need to be taken into account. More details of this launch will be included in issue 19 of the newsletter.



Contact us...

For general BWW enquiries, telephone: 0845 604 0845 or log on to: www.forestry.gov.uk/wales
For technical queries, email: bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
For the GLOS Service link: www.eforestry.gov.uk
and with suggestions for future issues, email: alison.evans@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Reminders

Amendments

An amendment created by an agent or owner in the GLOS system isn't flagged up to our Technical Services team until you e-mail bww.ts@forestry.gsi.gov.uk and notify them of the change. Alternatively, please put a copy of the amendment form into the post and send it to our Clawdd Newydd office or scan the completed form and attach it to an e-mail. Your amendment will not be processed until you have contacted our team.

New planting sub-compartments

New Planting must only be spatially linked to sub-compartments. If new planting is linked to general polygons the case will fail cross-checking and delay your case approval.

Un-linked GIS shapes

There are a number of BWW cases where the polygons, points and lines have been created but no work attached. Please let the TSO know if you require any unwanted shapes deleted before the case is submitted to the FC.

Staff changes

After 5 1/2 years working for the Forestry Commission, Woodland Officer for South East Wales, Andy J Wright is moving onto pastures new from April 2009, taking up the post of Forestry Advisor in the High Weald and South Downs AONBs. Andy will be replaced by a new Woodland Officer as soon as possible.

Liz Watt has joined the North Wales team as the new Regulatory Support officer, dealing with Felling Licence applications, EIAs and Forest Design Plans.