

A G E N D A

Wales Strategy Advisory Panel visit to Bryn Arau Duon

Meet at National Trust Coach House in Pumpsaint, Carmarthenshire at 12.30pm.
Lunch at Visitor Centre at Coach House. Drive to Bwlch yr Rhiw along Cothi valley and to first stop at Bryn Arau Duon, (half hour).

1.30pm Stop 1, Site 1 – Cefn Gwenffrwd, Cpt 6a

Stand description: Sitka spruce planted in 1978, Yield Class 16.

Main objective: Profitable timber production

Stand History: Pre-commercial thinning to waste in early 1990s. Thinned in 1997 by previous owners by removing every 6th row and light low selective thinning in matrix. In 2000, at the time of acquisition by the present owners, tree form and quality was exceptionally poor and clearfelling was discussed as an option. However, further thinning was carried out on the basis of harvester operator selection of the majority of the poor form trees. Three further thinnings have been carried out.

Proposals for management: Continue with removal of larger trees with poorer characteristics on a four year intervention cycle. This will involve removal of approximately 20% of the stand basal area in any one intervention. Trees for removal are selected on the basis of removing trees with poor characteristics such as poor form, diseased or damaged trees, and trees with larger branches. Under-planting with diverse tree species including improved Sitka spruce, western red cedar, Douglas fir, Norway spruce and small seeded broadleaves.

Hard hats and hi-viz jackets to be worn as harvesting will be in progress.

Marteloscope: A training plot for selective marking used for training in continuous cover forestry is established on Cefn Gwenffrwd. All trees within a 1 hectare plot are measured and their location plotted using a reference grid; each tree is tagged with a unique number. The characteristics of each tree are recorded for species, diameter, and biodiversity interest and timber quality. All details are entered to a spreadsheet allowing students in continuous cover to make selections without any permanent marks and to set their selection against a baseline selection marked by experts or against theoretical scenarios optimising different outputs. The *Marteloscope* is a very powerful training tool developed in France to train in selection and in the principles of continuous cover forestry.

AFI Plots: It is planned to set up continuous cover research plots in stands demonstrating good characteristics of irregularity in order to gain evidence of the physiological and the economic characteristics of irregular forestry. A range of research stands will be established across Wales reflecting geographical and species variation across different ownerships.

Notes about the AFI research stands and the *Marteloscope* are provided in the handouts.

2.30pm Stop 1, Site 2 – Cwm Cae'r Odyn, Cpt 5

Stand description: Lodgepole pine, Japanese larch and Sitka spruce planted in 1978, pine is YC8, larch YC12 and spruce YC16.

Main objective: Natural Reserve area, managed on minimum intervention for red squirrel conservation.

Stand history: First thinning carried out in larch 2003 by thinning to waste, favouring trees with best characteristics and favouring pine and minor species. The aim was to concentrate the growth on the most desirable trees and to promote strong canopy growth for optimum cone production. A red squirrel hair-tube survey was carried out in 2001. Trapping of grey squirrels has been carried out since 2002 which has encouraged the red squirrels and has been a useful red squirrel monitoring method.

Stand proposals: Continue with trapping of grey squirrels. Phased thinning to waste of pine to promote canopy growth and cone production. Phased removal of some of the Sitka spruce on a target diameter basis. Under-planting with diverse species including Scots pine, western red cedar, Douglas fir, Norway spruce and small seeded broadleaves.

3.15pm Stop 2, Site 3 – Walk through Penrhiwiâr to Cribyn Du, Cpt 2

Stand description: Mire and heath restoration of previously planted site.

Main objective: Natural Reserve area managed to restore semi-natural vegetation and to promote black grouse habitat connectivity within the forest and linked to RSPB reserve.

Stand history: Planted in 1962 following ground preparation by deep draining and ploughing. The trees were felled in 2003 and either removed or placed in the ditches. Vegetation recovery occurred within one year. Sitka spruce regeneration was removed in 2009.

Stand proposals: Continue with removal of regenerating spruce. Raise water table by damming ditches with plastic dams.

3.30pm Stop 2, Site 4 – Penrhiwiâr, Cpt 2.

Stand description: Sitka spruce planted in 1962, YC 16

Main objective: Profitable timber production.

Stand history: First thinning carried out in 2000, followed by another thinning in 2007. Thinning prescription was different to normal in that a low thinning was carried out in order to reduce windthrow risk and to accommodate the constraints of planting design. Transformation to CCF would be possible however, the aim is to clearfell small coupes following implementation of severance cuts. The severance cuts are prepared by low thinning in specific areas along the line of potential coupe boundaries in order to safely sub-divide otherwise large coupe areas by reducing the risk of blow along 'brown edges'.

Stand proposals: Continue with severance cut thinning. Progressively commence small scale clearfells. Restock with diverse species, including improved Sitka spruce, western red cedar, Douglas fir, Norway spruce and small seeded broadleaves.

3.45pm Stop 2, Site 5 – Cribyn Du, view of Cwm Pysgotwr and Allt Rhyd-y-groes NNR.

Stand description: 2.5 hectares of small seeded broadleaves planted in 2008.

Main objective: Biodiversity

Stand history: Clear felled in 2007 and restocked in 2008 with downy birch, alder and aspen.

4.15pm – leave site