

Questions from our consultation

This form sets out the questions we ask in a consultation on restoring and expanding open habitats from woods and forests in England that we launched on 12 March 2009. The consultation ends on 5 June 2009. You can find the consultation at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-openhabitats-consultation or contact Dominic Driver, Forestry Commission for further information (contact details below).

Comments on any aspect of the consultation are welcome, but we are particularly interested in your responses to the questions below. This form is available at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-openhabitats-consultation.

Your name:	Steve Marston
Your organisation (if any):	S H Marston Forestry
Date:	18/05/09

No	Question.
The nature of the change	
1.	Does your aspiration for the scale of the policy fit within our calculated range of 5,600 to 30,000 ha of restoration or expansion of open habitats from woodland or forest over 10 to 15 years? This is 370 to 3,000 ha each year. What level of intervention would you prefer and how is this justified?
No. This totally ridiculous. In the current economic climate with public money running out.	
Desired outcomes	
2.	Have we developed a reasonable list of desired outcomes of the policy? Do you wish to suggest any amendments?
This list of desired outcomes is unobtainable, both in funding and local expertise.	
Measuring the success of the policy	
3.	Have we developed a reasonable set of indicators for evaluation? Do you wish to suggest any amendments to this indicator list?
From my experience in working in SSSI you will fail in this because there is never enough money to keep the limited area of site surveyed. How many experts will be employed to fill forms in to list the state of all this area created	
Policy proposals	
Elements present in the policy	
We will treat woodland and open habitats as potentially mutually beneficial	
4.	Do you agree that woodland and open habitats are potentially mutually beneficial? Is promotion of this idea helpful in gaining support for open habitat restoration and

No	Question.
	expansion from woodland?
	I do not see this as a sensible question? Again from local experience the lack of local public involvement in the restoration of heathland has led to a lot of ill feeling. You touched on the crowfoot in your consultation, this was advised by the all party local council steering group as bad policy, since this act we have lost control of a sssi and no night jars nest anymore, create more open space without restriction on dog walkers will biodiversity improve?
A presumption against removal of 'mature native woodland'	
5.	Do you agree with the principle that there should be a presumption against removal of ancient and 'mature native woodland'?
	not a sensible question
6.	What do you think of our proposed outline definition of 'mature native woodland'?
	Do not waste my time with these questions
We will expect practitioners to help local users to participate in development of the initial proposals	
7.	Do you agree that local participation in decision making is helpful? What is your preferred option for how we should apply this element?
	I do not understand what you mean. The landowner is the one making the decision
We will promote mechanisms for prioritising woodland removal at a regional level	
8.	Do you agree that prioritisation at a regional level is appropriate for this policy?
	No, it should be on a local level with impacts taken into consideration from the bottom up not the top down
We will apply a framework for evaluation to projects	
9.	Do you agree with this framework for evaluation? What is your preferred option for how we should apply this element?
	How can you monitor this, working on the heathland restoration in this area has been a joke with the funding being treated as free money and inappropriate working practices used
10.	How much and what kind of support do you think we should give to practitioners to help them evaluate their projects using this framework?
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To avoid net deforestation in England we will try not to go over a threshold rate	

No	Question.
of woodland removal due to restoring and expanding open habitats.	
11.	Do you agree with the principle of an England scale threshold rate of woodland removal? What is your preferred mechanism by which such a threshold could be applied to policy?
We need wood and food the rates you are sugesting mean that you will reduce wood supply at the time we need it most and then say that the reduction will be taken up on agricultrual land just when food is becoming an issue	
12.	Do you consider that the proposed threshold is about right, too high or too low?
wrong policy	
Key variables	
What is the balance between achieving biodiversity objectives and the need to reduce green house gas emissions?	
13.	Is there a way, in the short term, we can better estimate the contribution to biodiversity objectives from different levels of restoration or expansion of open habitats?
I do not know how to value biodiversity, carbon is a bit easier	
14.	Do you agree that management practices to minimise carbon emissions during restoration or expansion of open habitats should be adopted? Do you agree with the outline practices presented? How could we best ensure that such practices are adopted?
<p>Pressent policy in this area is dire. What difERENCE to wait 10 years whilst keeping heathland habitat viable before large scale clearance. This could have been put to profitable markets, rahter than burnt or sent to Slough at a cost, furhtr undermining the development of a sustainable bio heat market.</p> <p>Managers of the larger projects I have been envolved in lack practicle experence of this type of work so how are you invisaging devolping best practice.</p>	
15.	Do you agree that it is appropriate to include impact on long-term average carbon store <i>and</i> loss of potential to substitute timber for higher carbon materials and fuel in the calculations on carbon balance?
This is my main gripe about this project it is so mispalced I can not believe it. Just as we need the timber for all the right reason you are sugesting clearing a large % of it in my local area- for bio diversity gain. We can then I suppose go into Hazel coppice with billocks and carry out the bio mass on donkeys so as not to damage the asnw.	
16.	Where do you think the appropriate balance lies between achieving biodiversity objectives and the need to reduce carbon emissions? What processes might help to make this judgement?
Balance view of the overall picture this is not a sustainable policy	

No	Question.
Should we be managing open habitats to keep them in 'favourable condition' or should we adopt a more dynamic approach to land management?	
17.	Outside SSSIs, do you agree that a more dynamic attitude to land management could deliver equivalent or greater gains for open habitats and species than one where success for all sites is based on assessments of condition as applied to SSSIs?
SSSI are not a success story I do not think that you can hope to create a better system than that without the public will and policy to fund this. This will not happen over the long term.	
18.	If so, how might such an approach be developed? Is there scope for modifying the conservation objectives on some SSSIs to incorporate a similar approach? If not, do you consider that the endpoint for all restoration proposals should be judged against favourable condition as defined for SSSI habitats?
I have been into sssi site listed as favourable which had not been looked at for more than 15 years, how can this be used as a template.	
What level of woodland removal due to restoring or expanding open habitats could avoid a significant negative impact on the timber industry?	
19.	Can you provide any information on the likely links between any reduction in timber production and economic activity in the timber sector?
Looking at the projected demand for heat projects I say none, unless you ship in wood pellets from Canada. Already I have difficulty in sourcing home grown Western Red Cedar for high value cladding I pay 3-4 times what the bulk markets pay for this, keep local 8 wheelers going and reduce embedded carbon into local buildings, I lost three builds this year about 50 tonnes of round wood, one small example form a very small hobby type sawmill set up.	
Different approaches to applying policy	
20.	Which of the three approaches by which we make decisions about woodland removal is your preferred option? Can you see any alternative types of approach based either on a combination of these approaches or on new ideas?
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The role of compensatory planting	
21.	What is the appropriate role of compensatory planting in this policy?
Bad idea made worse. Who will plant up land under this policy? Clients plant for shooting or conservation, or difficult field corners, very rarely on large scale. Who will pay for this and what species?	
Factors to consider when deciding which policy is likely to work best	
22.	Have we developed a reasonable set of questions for informing the decision on which policy is best? Do you wish to suggest any changes to the list of questions?
?	

No	Question.
Implications for delivery mechanisms	
23.	Have we missed any major implications for delivery mechanisms? Would any be particularly welcome or unwelcome to you?
?	
Other comments	
We welcome your input on any other aspect of this consultation.	
<p>I think this is such bad policy that I could hardly bring myself to fill this form in. You have made too many assumptions, the timber market is very changeable. Did you predict in your assumption that I could sell low grade birch at roadside for £28-£30 per m³? I burnt a few thousand tonnes a few years ago at Longmore for heathland restoration with all that free money from the lottery. Another contractor being used who was not experienced in large scale burning manage to do some heather burning at the same time-free of charge.</p> <p>Who is going to graze these areas-what are we trying to recreate. The restoration of heathland that I have been involved in has been very mixed it will be very steep learning curve. I just can not see this policy as being sustainable in the practical world. Fine for all the endless experts to talk about it but there will be very few stakeholders on the ground delivering desirable outcomes for the endless experts who will have to monitor the progress of so much public money being directed into such a non productive enterprise</p>	

Please include the "information about you" form with your response.¹

Please send your completed forms to:

[Dominic Driver](#)

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By 17.00hrs, Friday 5 June 2009.

¹ See www.forestry.gov.uk/england-openhabitats-consultation for a copy.