

The long-term role of the Public Forest Estate in England: Summary of consultation

This Forestry Commission consultation asks for your opinions on the long-term role of the Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate in England. The consultation started on 6th July 2009 and will finish on 28th September 2009.

The Public Forest Estate is publicly-owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. It extends to about 258,000ha and is made up of over 1,500 different woods and forests across England, that is 2% of the land in England and 18% of the woods and forests. More than half the population live within 10km of the Public Forest Estate.

This consultation is part of a Study of the Public Forest Estate. The purpose of the Study is to consider the future long-term sustainable role for the Public Forest Estate and make recommendations about any necessary changes to improve its ability to deliver relevant priorities in the Government's Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests and contribute to other Government objectives.

The Study and therefore this consultation covers England only. It is not about individual sites.

We are not making any hard and fast recommendations in this consultation. Instead, we ask for your opinions on the issues that we need to resolve when making balanced decisions. The input from this consultation will form an important part of the evidence that we will take into account when developing recommendations later in autumn 2009.

Owning and managing a large area of land is the Government's most direct way of achieving its objectives for forestry. Therefore, the Estate must provide benefits in the most cost-effective way possible. Working out how to do this is the key challenge that the Study is trying to resolve.

The consultation asks for your opinions on:

- How you are involved with the Public Forest Estate;
- The benefits that the Estate should focus on providing;
- Key trends in society relevant to the Public Forest Estate;
- How to pay for managing the Public Forest Estate;
- The size, location and type of land that should make up the Estate;
- The priorities for the Estate focussing on:
 - Moving to a low carbon economy;
 - Helping society and wildlife adapt to climate change;
 - Supporting delivery of Government policy on other land;
 - Local participation in decision making;
 - Generating social benefits;
 - Improving the experience for visitors;
 - Supporting jobs and business development.

It also asks you to do a “reality check” of your expectations.

To find out more go to:

www.forestry.gov.uk/england-estatestudy

or contact:

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