



Forestry Commission

jigsaw challenge



Introduction

The JIGSAW Challenge has been introduced by the Forestry Commission (FC) in England as a contribution to sustainable forest management to encourage the expansion and linkage of semi natural woodland (as defined in Standard Note 5 of the UK Forestry Standard). The England Forestry Strategy (EFS) points out that many of our ancient and semi-natural woods are fragments of historically more extensive woodland. Their continued ecological viability is threatened. One of the actions identified in the EFS is:

"target grants through the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) to reverse the fragmentation of existing native woodlands, conserve priority species..."

Semi-natural Woodlands in England

Semi-natural woodland is largely composed of locally native tree and shrub species and is a refuge for many rare species of plants and animals. This is especially true of the ancient and semi-natural woods that first developed thousands of years ago after the last ice age and which have been least changed by human activity.

These woods include types that are included in the Government's Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP). Within this programme there are specific Habitat Action Plans for Beech and Yew Woods, Wet Woods, Upland Oak Woods and Upland Mixed Ash Woods. A draft plan for Lowland Mixed Broadleaves has also been proposed. Among other actions these plans contain proposals to expand the area of these woodland types.

The UKBAP also contains many Action Plans for individual species that live in or on the edge of semi-natural woodland. Examples are dormouse, black grouse and the heath fritillary butterfly. Almost 30% of the species in the Biodiversity Programme are associated with woodland in some way.

This initiative will further the aims of the EFS and help deliver the UKBAP by stimulating the expansion and linkage of existing semi-natural woodlands in carefully targeted areas

How does this Challenge work?

In this Conservancy the Challenge funding is available in the area shown on the map on the insert. We appreciate the need for a long term approach so the Challenge fund is intended to have an overall duration of 5 years. The target area may however change over time depending on individual circumstances. You should check at an early stage with your local Conservancy to confirm that your proposal is in an eligible area.

The Challenge provides the opportunity for Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) applicants in the relevant area to bid for the money they need to carry out work that will meet the aims of the initiative as outlined below.

This Challenge is competitive so a panel of judges will assess your application, against others received in the Conservancy. In deciding which bids to accept, the judges will consider quality, value for money, and public benefit. The judges will also consider the degree of partnership involvement with other organisations and initiatives, and how much public support is evident for the project. The funding for this Challenge will be limited each year and this will restrict the number of projects that can be grant aided.

Applicants must complete the special Challenge scoring form on the insert to indicate how well their proposal meets the criteria.



Forestry Commission
England

Jigsaw Challenge Fund

General requirements for the Jigsaw Challenge Fund

- The majority of the area of your application must lie within an eligible area (see map on insert).
- Proposals must extend or link existing semi-natural woodland by establishing new native woodland part of which is within 30m of the existing wood.
- You must meet the standards of environmental protection and practice set out by the Forestry Commission. Advice given in the UK Forestry Standard (e.g. Standard Notes 3 and 5), Forestry Commission Bulletin 112, FC Practice Note 8 (Using Local Stock for Planting Native Trees and Shrubs) and all our guidelines (on archaeology, the landscape and nature conservation for instance) must be followed.
- The area must NOT be located on existing semi-natural vegetation of high conservation value, e.g. unimproved species rich pasture or chalk grassland, peatbogs etc...
- Where necessary your proposals must set out your plans for long term deer management. Local deer management groups, where they exist, are particularly effective and your local Conservancy office or the Deer Initiative (contact 01823 451900) can give further advice on this.
- Your proposal must score at least 50 points to be eligible for judging under the Challenge (Schemes scoring less than 50 points may however be entered for standard WGS grants).

What are the priorities of this Challenge?

Listed below are some of the criteria to bear in mind when preparing your application and completing the scoring form.

- **If natural regeneration is practicable, it will be preferred to planting.**
We will consider natural regeneration to be practical where there are sufficient trees of seed bearing age of the species required within seed dispersal range. Your plan must include initial works to encourage and secure natural regeneration followed by protection for the seedlings and newly established trees. You must specify what action will be taken if regeneration does not occur or fails to reach the agreed stocking. A timescale for this work must be agreed and will be recorded in the WGS contract.
- **For planting, the guidance on species choice, composition and design given in FC Bulletin 112, "Creating New Native Woodlands", must be followed.**
In addition, you may need to follow any local guidance on what species are most appropriate for the local area.
- **Applications will score more where the existing adjacent semi-natural woodland either already has, or is being brought into, management with a long term plan that follows Forestry Commission Guidance on the management of semi-natural woodlands.**
- **Creating larger woods will be encouraged. Research has shown particular benefit in woodland extensions which will result in the following thresholds being passed:**
 - 3 ha provided open space (e.g. rides and glades) is included in the wood
or
 - 20 ha provided there is a long term management plan which is being actively followed
- **Proposals for sites located adjacent to other semi-natural habitats will be favoured to assist in the creation of mosaics of different habitats.**



- **The degree of partnership involvement with other organisations and initiatives and local community support will be taken into account when we judge the application.**
- **In the lowlands, sites located on arable or intensive grassland will score more. In the uplands, sites that were woodland until recent times and still have surviving woodland flora will be favoured.**

How do I apply

Firstly, discuss your ideas with staff from the Forestry Commission and locally interested bodies such as English Nature or the Local Authority to obtain their support before submitting your bid. In addition, Forestry Commission staff may be able to give you advice which will help you prepare your application but they cannot complete the application on your behalf.

You must submit your application to your Conservancy office by the Registration Date shown in the "Important Dates" box on the insert. Your application must comprise a completed WGS-FWPS 1 and, WGS-FWPS 2 forms, a Challenge Fund scoring form and an accurate Ordnance Survey map clearly annotated (scale/grid reference/work proposals etc.) at a scale of 1:10,000 or 1:2,500.

These forms and the guidance to complete them are available from your Conservancy office.

After you have registered your application, your local Woodland Officer will assess your application to ensure it meets the aims and criteria of this Challenge and the normal WGS conditions.

How do I submit my bid?

Use form WGS 6a to tell us the amount of money you are seeking from the Forestry Commission. **Your bid figure should be the total sum of money required for you to create a new native woodland and maintain it until it is successfully established.**

You will also need to submit additional information to support your bid, (e.g. photographs of your site), a summary of your proposals – (including sufficient detail to show how the new woodland will be matched to the natural variation of the site), and other relevant details as required to illustrate your proposals.

To support your bid, you must also give us a breakdown of your associated costs. The following costs will be considered:

- **survey of vegetation and other site conditions**
- **detailed design**
- **ground preparation**
- **planting and maintenance**
- **cost of plants**
- **fencing and other protection**
- **other work to encourage natural regeneration**
- **seed collection and plant production**
- **reasonable professional fees and other similar work.**
- **continuing protection and maintenance for up to 10 years**

You must advise us of any other relevant income or grant support for your project.

Your bid form WGS 6a must be submitted to your Conservancy office in a sealed envelope by the **Closing Date for bids given in the "Important Dates" box on the insert.**



Jigsaw Challenge Fund

• How does this Challenge link to the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS)?

You may also be eligible to apply for the FWPS and receive annual payments in addition to the Challenge Fund money. If you wish to apply, please complete the shaded parts of the WGS/FWPS 1 and 2. We will liaise with the relevant Rural Affairs/Agriculture Departments in the usual way. You must not include any FWPS payments in your bid.

How will my bid be judged?

Your application and bid will be judged against all others received in the Conservancy. A panel made up of independent judges and Forestry Commission staff will assess your application. They will be looking at value for money and public benefit judged against the priorities of this project. It will therefore be important that your application is clear and realistic.

We will inform you of the outcome within 3 weeks of judging.

When can I start work?

If your bid has been successful we will process your application and prepare your WGS contract within 8 weeks of judging. **You must not start any work until we have returned your Woodland Grant Scheme contract signed by the Forestry Commission. If you have also applied for FWPS you must also have written permission from DEFRA before starting any work.**

How do I claim my grant

The funds for this project are available only in specific financial years. You must complete the agreed initial work and claim the relevant grant before the grant claim deadline shown in the "Important Dates" box on the insert. Use the claim form WGS-FWPS 3 to do this. Standard WGS contract conditions apply.

How will my grant be paid?

We will first calculate the normal rate of WGS establishment grant (planting grant, or payment for natural regeneration) for your scheme and pay this in the normal way **and at normal instalment times**. This will include any WGS supplements you are eligible for.

The balance of your bid figure will be paid within the first year, almost always with the first payment of WGS grants.

Should you anticipate substantial expenditure considerably in advance of the first WGS payment, we may be able to pay for this element once agreed work has been completed to our satisfaction. You must indicate this requirement in your application.

To find out more

Please contact your local Forestry Commission office at the address on the regional scoring form.

