



# Seeing the Wood for the Trees

## E News—July 2006

Forestry and Woodlands Partnership—Working for England's most wooded region

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<http://www.seeingthewoodforthetrees.org.uk>

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### Introduction

Welcome to the quarterly 'Seeing the Wood for the Trees' Newsletter - the newsletter for the South East's Regional Forestry and Woodlands Framework. This newsletter points you to the information you need to know to make positive change happen in the South East's forestry and woodland sector. There is quite a woodfuel flavour to this edition with the long awaited Government Response to the Biomass Task Force, to which the South East is well placed to contribute.

During the last quarter the Forestry and Woodlands Partnership, met. The partnership's work is to ensure that trees and woodlands are recognised in the regional agenda and that delivery supports our four priority topics - sustainable communities, ancient woodland, renewable energy and regional spatial planning. Therefore the Partnership is submitting comments to ensure that the supportive woodland policy of the South East Plan (NRM5) is retained through the Examination in Public. If you wish to see our comments, contact me.

Our website <http://www.seeingthewoodforthetrees.org.uk> showcases activities that deliver the Framework outcomes, as well as listing current events and relevant resources. The events are updated more regularly than this newsletter, so take a look every week or two.

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### News



#### Government responds to Biomass Task Force recommendations

The Government has responded to the Biomass Task Force, including acceptance of two key recommendations of new grant aid for biomass boilers and increased use of biomass heat in the public sector. The Forestry Commission has been tasked with facilitating the supply of 2 million tonnes per year of woodfuel onto the market from both private and public woodlands. There will be another round of the Bio-energy Infrastructure Scheme, and £10-15 capital grants for boilers. The Biomass Energy Centre will be set up as a hub for advice and best practice, based upon Forest Research's expertise. Regional Development Agencies, especially SEEDA, the lead RDA on renewable energy, will help ensure co-ordinated mechanisms for delivery and advice. This is a boost for the woodland sector, particularly the recognition that woodfuel is best placed to deliver heat energy. The challenge now remains to deliver the wood to the market, with a good proportion to come from the South East. A group from the sector in the South East is working with the Forestry Commission and SEEDA to develop a costed action plan by September. Meanwhile SEEDA's support for woodfuel this financial year will be focused on enabling the supply chain.

The full response can be downloaded at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2006/farm-0427.htm>  
The Biomass Energy Centre can be visited at <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6P8G8E>



### New Minister for Forestry

In the recent Government reshuffle, Barry Gardiner MP has become Parliamentary Secretary for Biodiversity, Landscape and Rural Affairs, which includes Forestry. He is MP for Brent North. See <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/ministers/gardiner.htm>

### AONB Local Accords launched across South East

The AONBs in South East England have signed local accords with the Forestry Commission setting out their joint objectives in regards to woodlands, and their support for delivering the Regional Forestry Framework. Over a third of the South East's landscape is protected through AONB designations, and they contain two thirds of the South East's woodlands. Contact your local AONB for a copy.

### Risen from the ashes - the 'Phoenix Sawmill'

The re-opening of Giddings Sawmill is good news for the forestry sector in the South East. After a fire which destroyed the sawmill in February 2005 a new state of the art Swedish mill has been installed. This allows great flexibility in fully utilising the logs for a range of specifications. Giddings buy softwoods from Kent to Cornwall from their mill at Bartley, near Southampton. John Gidding stressed the need for quality in the supply chain. For further information see <http://www.rfgiddings.com> or contact John Giddings on 02380 813157 or <mailto:john@rfgiddings.com>

### St. Regis Task Group

An English Forest Industries Partnership Task Group has formed to address the closure of Sudbrook Mill. Judith Gauler is speaking to contractors and hauliers to assess the impact of the closure on them. Early indicators are that most contractors are still working in the industry, but have had to change the type of work they are doing. There has been a substantial increase in material going into the firewood market. We encourage you to send any input on the South East situation to Judith, who will be reporting at the end of July - 01626 821070 or <mailto:jude@treewood21.fsnet.co.uk>

### Public Opinion of Forestry

The Forestry Commission's "Public Opinion of Forestry 2005: England" survey sets out results from a survey of public attitudes to forestry and related issues. This is the first time results have been examined by region, so may be helpful if you require evidence on how the public value woodland in the South East.

Copies are available from <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/statistics>.

## Publications and Resources



### A South East Regional Study into Wood and Energy Crops as a Source of Bioenergy

TV Energy, Hadlow College.

This is a comprehensive, useful and timely assessment of the opportunities and resources available for biomass in the South East - both from woodland management and short rotation coppice. Of particular use are the case studies and the market segmentation analysis.

It can be downloaded at <http://www.tvenergy.org/energy-conference-2006.htm>

### SEE Stats

The South East Renewable Energy Statistics system monitors and predicts progress towards regional targets for Renewable Energy. The website has recently been updated, with new sample projects plus the latest overall statistics (now including renewable heat). See <http://www.see-stats.org>

### The BioMap project

The final report from this project looks at the potential for woodfuel heating around Hampshire and West Sussex and the barriers which need to be overcome. One of the main conclusions is that there is a great need for extra support to those interested in installing woodfuel, as there is currently no 'see it, buy it' option with woodfuel. The report can be found at <http://www.naturallight.org.uk/BioMAP%20Final%20Report.pdf>

## Recent Publications and Resources



### Mapping Study

The England Forest Industries mapping study is complete. This will form an evidence base for the sector, and will lead to EFIP's implementation plan. The information is being presented regionally as well as nationally and should become an important part of the evidence base for the contributions of forestry to the region. The final document should be on the EFIP website soon - <http://www.efip.org.uk> For more details contact Mardi MacGregor - <mailto:mardi@confor.org.uk> or 07814 939341

### Forest Mensuration - Forestry Commission

The 'blue book' on Forest Mensuration has been updated and reprinted with new logical format and easy guide to selecting appropriate mensuration methods. It is £24 from Forestry Commission Publications, PO Box 25, Wetherby, West Yorkshire. LS23 7EW or <mailto:forestry@twoten.press.net>

### Forest Fencing - Forestry Commission Technical Guide

This replaces Forestry Commission Bulletin 102: *Forest fencing*, published in 1992 with updated principles, practical issues and specifications.

It can be downloaded from <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B> or a hard copy for £7.50 from Forestry Commission Publications, PO Box 25, Wetherby, West Yorkshire. LS23 7EW or <mailto:forestry@twoten.press.net>

### Recent Forestry Commission Information Notes

These include:

- Choosing provenance in broadleaved trees (FCIN082)
- An update on nursery propagation and establishment best practice for larch in Britain (FCIN80)

They can be downloaded at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/publications>. Copies are available, free, from Forestry Commission Publications, P.O. Box 25, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7EW; <mailto:forestry@twoten.press.net>

## Events



### 8<sup>th</sup> September 2006. British Beechwoods - Site Suitability and Environmental Change -

British Ecological Society and Wessex Silvicultural Group. Oxford and the Chilterns. This day will examine concerns that site sustainability of beech is being challenged by prolonged drought episodes and by predicted environmental change, through visiting beech stands in different conditions. For more information contact Dr. Scott McG. Wilson, <mailto:cottmcgwilson@hotmail.com> or 07798 - 693303

15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September 2006 - Weald Woodland Fair, Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum, Halland, East Sussex. Weald WoodFair is an annual woodland, wood-use and woodcraft event. It offers an opportunity to follow the whole tree cycle from tree-growing, timber-making and the everyday uses of wood in a woodland setting. See <http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/woodlands/wealdwood/woodfair/default.htm>

21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> September 2006 APF Show - Ragley Estate, Alcester, Warwickshire . This is the largest exhibition of forestry, woodland, arboriculture, utilities and estate management equipment, supplies and services in the UK. New for 2006 is a wood energy section. For more details see <http://www.apfexhibition.co.uk>

18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> September 2006 - Realising the Promise of BioEnergy - International and regional TV Energy/IEA Bioenergy Conference, Oxford.

For further details see <http://www.tvenergy.org/energy-conference-2006.htm>

A range of Royal Forestry Society events are also happening across the region - these are listed on our website at <http://www.seeingthewoodforthetrees.org.uk> under Events.

## Funding Opportunities



AONB Sustainable Development Funds 2006-07 -this is open in all the South East's AONB's. Funding is for projects which bring environmental, social and economic benefits to the AONB. Groups, organisations and individuals can apply, but the proposal must have the support of the community and/or environmental interests. For more information contact your local AONB. For a link to all the AONB websites see <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Regions/southEast/activities/landscape/finecountryside/index.asp>

## Funding Opportunities



### BIG Lottery Fund Breathing Spaces Funding

This will support development of existing green spaces or creation of new ones, including community forests. These must be open to the public. Voluntary or community sector organisations with experience of working the natural environment can apply. Minimum support is £300, maximum support £10,000. The first £1 million is open now, focusing on participation in these spaces, closing date 26<sup>th</sup> July 2006. The 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche of £4million will open with the BBC's Autumnwatch series. This will mainly be for capital costs for new projects that make physical improvements to the local environment. See <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/england/apply-eng.htm>

### BIG Lottery Fund Renewable Energy Funding

This £2million funding round will focus on providing support to small-scale biomass heat and combined heat and power projects. Minimum support is £50,000, maximum support £500,000. The deadline for applications is 31st July 2006, see:-

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/england/apply-eng.htm>

### SITA Environmental Trust - Enriching Nature

This fund supports projects contributing to biodiversity targets within 10 miles of registered landfill sites. It has two funding levels: Small - for projects up to £25,000 and Large - for projects up to £175,000. The next deadline for applications is 12<sup>th</sup> September 2006. See <http://www.sitatrust.org.uk/nature>

### England Woodland Grant Scheme

All grants are open for business at present. The South East England Prospectus can be found at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6PTEDU#southeastengland> The closing date for the Woodland Creation Grant is 31<sup>st</sup> August 2006.

## Policy Consultations



### England Forestry Strategy

The review of the England Forestry Strategy is looking at the role of Government, (eg regulations, incentives, the balance between national and regional) and priorities including climate change, promotion of timber, biodiversity, public access and green infrastructure. This will lead to a new national Strategy, with the Forestry Commission and Natural England then being asked to prepare delivery plans. This is open for consultation until 9<sup>th</sup> August. The Forestry and Woodlands Partnership will be submitting a response. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/forestry-strategy/index.htm>

### South East Plan Examination in Public (EiP)

The EiP in September 2006 will discuss and test the Plan, in public before a Panel - see <http://www.eipsoutheast.co.uk/home>. For the latest version of the draft South East Plan see [http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/plan/view\\_plan.html#core\\_doc](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan/plan/view_plan.html#core_doc) Comments from the Forestry and Woodland partnership were fed into SEERA for this consultation which is now closed.

### Regional Economic Strategy

The draft RES has been published. Consultations on the draft RES and its Sustainability Appraisal closed on the 30th June 2006. See <http://www.seeda.co.uk/RES>

### Outdoors for All?

This consultation examines the best ways to encourage those who currently do not get out to the countryside, to visit and enjoy local green spaces and the countryside. The consultation is based around a draft 10 year action plan. The deadline is 30th September 2006. For more details see <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/outdoorsdiversity>

## Focus



### Upskilling in the Forest

The Forestry Commission's South East England Forest District have started a pilot scheme to help low-risk offenders, in partnership with Winchester Community Prison. Offenders approaching their release dates are being given a chance to enhance their job prospects by gaining skills working on placements doing forestry and conservation projects in the District. This could allow the offenders access to further training and qualifications in the sector in future. The scheme has the potential to be replicated England-wide. For further contact Ben Phelan on 01420 23666 or 07920 576537 <mailto:ben.phelan@forestry.gsi.gov.uk>