



# CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

## School of Engineering

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH

Tel: 01483 686675



## FORTHCOMING CES SEMINAR

**Thursday 3 May 2007, 13.00 hrs**  
**Room 45A AZ 04**

### **Forestry, Science and Society**

**Paul Tabbush**

Forest Research

Forestry has been forced to adapt to societal changes over the centuries, and this process has accelerated in recent years; especially in response to the sustainability discourse. Mather (2001) described the current phase as “post-industrial”, to indicate a reduction of emphasis on timber production in favour of environmental services such as biodiversity and recreation.

As part of a government response to these changes, Paul Tabbush has, since its inception in 1999, led a Social and Economic Research Group within the Forestry Commission’s Research Agency (Forest Research). The emerging themes include education, health, sport, governance and decision-making, crime and risk, cultural values, and economic valuation.

A challenging methodological issue concerns the nature of powerful evidence. What sort of evidence is needed by policy makers? Examples are taken from work with the European Commission concerning their Impact Analysis procedures, and work for Forestry Commission (Scotland) on the valuation of “Forestry for People”. In both cases there is a tension between a policy making regime that is most comfortable with expert-driven quantitative evidence, and an increasing realisation that qualitative methods can be powerful in producing confident reflections on the effect of policies on the various groups of people, and hence producing a type of evidence that has more legitimacy. Is there a “third way” between reductionist neo-classical economics, and qualitative social science?

*Enquiries to Jana Owens (01483 686675)*