



PUBLIC OPINION OF FORESTRY 2007: ENGLAND (preliminary report)

Preliminary results for England from the 2007
Survey of Public Opinion of Forestry, carried out
on behalf of the Forestry Commission

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Executive Summary

2007 survey

In 2007, four separate public opinion of forestry surveys were undertaken - across the UK (around 4,000 interviews), Scotland (1,000 interviews), Wales (950 interviews) and Northern Ireland (1,000 interviews).

This report presents the English results (3,339 interviews) from the UK survey and, where appropriate, highlights changes over time by comparing the 2007 results with previous surveys.

Some of the questions asked in the 2007 UK survey were the same as those asked in 2005 (and in earlier years); however, a number of new questions were asked on topics such as the relationship between forestry and climate change, woodfuel and community involvement.

Separate reports provide similar results for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. More detailed reports, contrasting the results by, for example, regions and socio-demographic characteristics will be available in autumn 2007.

Forests, woodlands and trees in the media

64% of respondents had seen or read about forests, woodlands or trees on the television, radio or in the newspapers in the last 12 months. This is up from 50% in 2005 and reflects positive changes across much of the rest of the survey, although it should be noted that 3% of the increase is due to the addition of a new 'climate change' option.

The most common response, given by 35% of respondents, was the one new response option available, 'Forests and woodlands helping to tackle climate change'.

Forest management

93% of respondents selected at least one public benefit as a good reason to support forestry with public money; the top three reasons given were 'to provide places for wildlife to live', 'to help tackle climate change' and 'to provide places to walk in'. In general, support for each benefit was marginally higher in 2007 than in 2005 and 2003. When asked directly about the standard of forest management in the UK, of those respondents who gave an opinion, 84% gave a positive or neutral response.

Climate change

70% of respondents believe that climate change will have a large impact on the UK.

There was a high degree of agreement with a set of statements regarding the ways in which forests and woodlands can impact on climate change, for example 80% of respondents agreed that 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood'. However, 55% of respondents incorrectly agreed that 'The UK could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees'.

A set of statements was presented to the respondents to ascertain their views on the way in which UK forests should be managed in response to climate change. These generated a set of responses reflecting a belief that forestry is a method that can be used to mitigate the effects of climate change. For example, 90% of respondents agreed that 'A lot more trees should be planted' while only 14% agreed that 'There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference'.

Wood as a fuel

8% of respondents said that they used wood as a fuel in their home, either on its own, or with other fuels. Of these, 69% classified themselves as an occasional user, while only 8% use it as the main fuel for heating their home.

Changes to woodland

71% of respondents would like to see more woodland in their part of the country, a significantly higher proportion than in 2003 (67%) or 2005 (65%).

In the 12 months prior to being asked, 7% of respondents had been involved with woodland voluntary work, organised tree planting or a community woodland group.

Woodland recreation

76% of respondents had visited a woodland or forest in the last few years, a significantly higher proportion than in 2003 (66%) or 2005 (65%). Of those respondents who had not visited, 25% gave their main reason for not visiting as 'not being interested', down from 33% in 2005.

Of those adults who had visited woodlands in the last few years, 82% visited woodlands in the countryside and 61% (up from 51% in 2005) visited woodlands in and around towns.

68% of woodland visitors had been to a woodland or forest at least once a month in the summer of 2006 (up from 60% in the 2005 survey). 40% visited at least once a month in the winter of 2006/07 (up from 28% in the 2005 survey).

For the first time in this series of surveys, the internet (38%) is the primary source of information used when thinking about visiting woodlands not visited before.

The majority of respondents agreed with a set of statements regarding their views on the purpose and potential uses of woodlands:

- 94% - Woodlands in the UK are an important part of the country's natural and cultural heritage;
- 94% - Woodlands allow families to learn about nature;
- 93% - Woodlands play an important role in children's and young people's outdoor learning experience;
- 92% - Trees and woods make towns and cities more attractive places to live, work and bring up families;
- 85% - It is important to have a say in what happens in your local woodland;
- 85% - Woodlands are places to reduce stress and anxiety;
- 78% - Woodlands are places to exercise and keep fit;
- 66% - Woodlands are good places to meet with friends and family;
- 61% - Woodlands in the UK are important in helping people to earn a living or make ends meet.

1. Introduction

Background

The Forestry Commission has conducted similar biennial surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995 though the surveys have evolved since then:

- In the initial surveys, a representative sample of 2,000 adults across Great Britain (GB) was surveyed;
 - In 2001, with more interest in country-level results within GB, additional questions were asked of representative samples of 1,000 adults across Scotland and Wales;
 - In 2003, the main survey was extended to include Northern Ireland in the 4,120 adults interviewed and separate surveys of 1,000 adults continued in Scotland and Wales;
 - In 2005 and 2007, the need for separate surveys in each country was confirmed, with the increased interest in country-level and regional information. However, the requirement for continued high-quality coherent information for GB/UK as a whole means that four separate surveys were undertaken each year
-
- A representative sample of 4,000 adults across GB (2005) and across UK (2007)
 - A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Scotland
 - A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Wales
 - A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Northern Ireland

Some questions were asked in all four of the surveys conducted in 2007, but an increasing number are survey-specific.

This report

This report presents the results of the respondents in England to the UK survey, and highlights any changes over time by comparing the 2007 results with previous surveys¹.

As the majority of respondents to the UK survey lived in England (83%), the England results presented in this report are similar to the results for the UK as a whole.

Separate reports present the results from the surveys undertaken in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

Final reports, charting the results and providing contrasts by, for example, regions and socio-demographic characteristics will be available in autumn 2007.

Survey design

The England 2007 survey results presented in this report are taken from the TNS CAPI Omnibus survey carried out from 22nd February – 5th March 2007 by TNS. The survey was based on a representative sample of 4,000 adults (aged 16 or over) across the UK. They were selected from a minimum of 270 sampling points by a random location method. More details of the sample method are given in Appendix 1: TNS Omnibus Random Location Sampling Method. The England 2005 and 2003

¹ This report mainly compares England results from the UK 2007 survey with results from the previous surveys of England respondents in 2003 and 2005.

survey data were obtained from the RSGB General Omnibus, also carried out by TNS.

All results are subject to the effects of chance in sampling, so a range of uncertainty (confidence interval) should be associated with any result from the survey. The confidence intervals take into account the effect of clustering, weighting and stratification in the survey design (see Appendix 1).

- For questions asked to the whole sample of 3,339, the range of uncertainty around any figure should be no more than +/-2.5%.
- For responses of subgroups, i.e. questions not posed to the whole sample of respondents, the range of uncertainty is correspondingly higher.
- For questions asked to the whole samples, differences of more than 3.6% between the 2007 results and earlier results (i.e. 2005 and 2003) are statistically significant.

Results are shown as percentages. These have been individually rounded so may not always total to exactly 100.

2. Forests, woodlands and trees in the media

2.1 Forests, woodlands and trees in the media

Respondents were asked whether they had seen or read about UK forests, woods or trees on the television, radio or in the newspapers in the last twelve months. Although the topics commonly identified in 2003 and 2005 ('birds and other animals in woodlands', 'tree planting' and 'forests and woodlands as places to visit') were also high on the list in 2007, the most commonly selected response was the new 'climate change' option (Table 1).

Overall in 2007, an increase in recognition was identified across all categories; significantly more respondents (64%) selected at least one topic than in 2005 (50%) and 2003 (48%). 3% of respondents selected only the new 'climate change' category, therefore on a like-for-like basis, 61% of the 2007 respondents recognised one of the categories that were presented to the 2005 respondents.

Table 1: Seen or read about forests, woods or trees in the last 12 months (%)

	England 2003	England 2005	England 2007
Forests and woodlands helping to tackle climate change	--	--	35
Birds and other animals in woodlands	22	25	34
Tree planting	23	22	30
Forest and woodlands as places to visit	19	19	25
Public rights of access to woodlands	19	23	24
Protests about roads or other developments on woodlands	21	19	23
Flowers and other plants in woodland	15	15	22
Loss of ancient or native woodland	15	14	20
Restoration of ancient or native woodland	12	12	17
Creation of new native woodlands	12	11	15
Community woodlands / new local woodlands	10	10	14
Tree pests and diseases	9	10	13
Wood for fuel / (short rotation coppice)	8	7	11
Labelling / certification of wood products	7	6	10
At least one topic	48	50	64

Base: All respondents in England - 2003 (3,412), 2005 (3,367), 2007 (3,339)

2.2 Promotions of forests, woodlands, trees and wood products

A further media-related question asked respondents about a number of national promotions aimed at enhancing public understanding and awareness of woodlands, wood products and related issues.

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents had heard of none of the promotions. The 2007 responses were similar to those received in 2005.

8% of respondents said that they were aware of the 'Forest Education initiative', 5% had heard of 'Forest Schools', and a similar proportion had heard of the 'Autumn Colours' campaign. A marginally smaller proportion of respondents (3%) had heard of 'Wood for Good or other promotions for timber uses and products', and the 'Active Woods' promotion.

These small proportions of respondents should be placed within the context of a possible tendency for some respondents to subconsciously appear to be more knowledgeable than they actually are, i.e. some respondents may select a category simply because it 'sounds' plausible.

Table 2: Whether respondent has heard of various promotions (%)

	England 2005	England 2007
Forest Education	8	8
Forest Schools	5	5
Autumn Colours	4	5
'Wood for Good' / other timber promotions	4	3
Active Woods 'Naturally good for you'	3	3
None/ Don't know	83	82

Base: All respondents in England - 2005 (3,367), 2007 (3,339)

3. Forest management

3.1 Benefits of forestry

The government supports forestry in many ways. Respondents were asked to select (from a list of possible public benefits) good reasons to support forestry with public money. The majority (93%) of respondents in England selected at least one benefit.

The top three good reasons to support forestry with public money were 'to provide places for wildlife to live', 'to help tackle climate change' and 'to provide places to walk in', (Table 3). In general, support for each benefit was marginally higher in 2007 than in 2005 and 2003.

Table 3: Whether respondent believes public benefits are good reasons to support forestry with public money (%)

	England 2003	England 2005	England 2007
To provide places for wildlife to live	71	67	72
To help tackle climate change †	-	-	62
To help prevent the 'greenhouse effect' and global warming †	58	56	-
To provide places to walk in*	61	57	60
To improve the countryside landscape	57	53	56
To provide healthy places for physical activity, relaxation and stress relief	-	44	48
To support the economy in rural areas	46	42	45
To create pleasant settings for developments around towns	41	38	41
To provide places to cycle or ride horses	40	35	39
To make woods more accessible to all in the community	41	36	38
To provide renewable energy including wood as fuel*	32	29	37
To help rural tourism	42	37	37
To restore former industrial land	35	31	34
So that the UK can buy less wood products from abroad	33	30	32
To provide timber for sawmills and wood processing	28	24	27
At least one reason	91	89	93

Base: All respondents in England - 2003 (3,412), 2005 (3,367), 2007 (3,339)

*The wording differed slightly in the 2003 and 2005 surveys

† Note the change in wording for this topic

3.2 Forest management standards

A new question in the 2007 survey asked about 'Forest Management', defined as referring to all activities in woodland, including woodland creation, recreation, wildlife management and timber production.

Respondents were asked to rate the standard of forest management both in the UK and in their local area. Ratings were given on a scale of 1-5, 1 being 'very high' and 5 being 'very low'.

Table 4 shows that overall, similar responses were received to the UK and local area questions. When asked about the standard of forest management in the UK, of those respondents from England who provided an answer, 84% were non-negative, i.e. they provided a response other than '5 - very low' or '4'.

Around a quarter of respondents could not give a rating, presumably because they didn't know enough about either forests or the topic of forest management.

Table 4: Standard of forest management (%)

	(very high)					(very low)	<i>Don't know</i>
	1	2	3	4	5		
Local area	7	21	29	12	6		25
UK	6	21	35	9	3		26

Base: All respondents in England - 2007 (3,339),

4. Climate change

The UK Government believes that climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing the world today. There is strong evidence that climate change is happening and that man-made emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are its main cause.

Globally, forest ecosystems play a key role in addressing climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in growing vegetation and soil. Deforestation caused by the unsustainable harvesting of timber and the conversion of forests to other land-uses leads to significant emissions of this stored carbon back to the atmosphere. Forests and woodlands can also be managed as a sustainable source of wood – an alternative energy source to fossil fuels, and a low-energy construction material.

Although, on a world scale, they cover a small area (8.6% of the England surface area in 2007), the forests and woodlands in England have a role to play too.

A new section of questions regarding this issue was added to the 2007 survey. Section 2.1 of this report has already noted that 'Forests and woodlands helping to tackle climate change' was the top answer provided by respondents when asked whether they had seen anything about UK forests in the media. Additionally, respondents identified in section 3.1 that the second top public benefit to be gained from public support of forestry is 'to help tackle climate change'. Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 report the results of other new questions on this topic.

4.1 Impact of climate change

The vast majority of respondents in England believe that climate change will have an impact on the UK, with most believing that there will be a large impact (70% of all respondents).

Table 5: Impact of climate change (%)

	England 2007
Large impact	70
Slight impact	20
No impact at all	2
Don't know	8

Base: All respondents in England - 2007 (3,339)

4.2 Woodlands' impact on climate change

In an attempt to gauge both the beliefs and knowledge of the public with respect to the interface between forests and climate change, respondents were asked about their level of agreement with a set of statements regarding the ways in which forests and woodlands in the UK can impact on climate change.

Over 40% of respondents agreed (selected '1 strongly agree' or '2') with each of the statements and many more respondents agreed with each statement than disagreed (selected '5 strongly disagree' or '4').

The highest level of agreement, four-fifths of respondents, was with the statement that 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood'. More than half of respondents believe that 'Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted' and that 'The UK could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees'.

Table 6 Ways in which forests and woodlands can impact on climate change (%)

	(strongly agree)					(strongly disagree)	<i>Don't know</i>
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood	34	46	8	2	0	9	
2. Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted	20	42	15	12	1	9	
3. The UK could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees	18	37	14	17	3	10	
4. Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide	13	35	23	12	2	16	
5. Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas	11	34	24	14	2	14	
6. Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel	11	31	24	18	3	13	

Base: All respondents in England - 2007 (3,339)

It is helpful to consider the numbered statements shown above in Table 6 alongside the following common expert opinion¹:

¹ Statements and principles from the Forestry Commission 'Forestry and climate change' website: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6umkar>

1. In general, it is believed that forests and woodlands have a key role to play in mitigating the effects of climate change. Forests and woodlands do help to stabilise atmospheric carbon dioxide by sequestering and storing carbon in trees, vegetation and soils.
2. In the short term, cutting down forests and woodlands does make climate change worse, as carbon stocks are released, but in the longer term this is countered by replanting. However, this harvesting and replanting should not be confused with deforestation, which implies a change in land cover from forest to non-forest land, whereas sustainable wood production involves cyclical harvesting and growing.
3. Afforestation makes an important contribution by sequestering carbon, but it is not feasible for the UK to become 'carbon neutral' through afforestation alone. It is estimated that to do this would require creation of some 50 million hectares of forest – approximately twice the land area of the UK. The same principle is of course also valid for England.
4. Carbon released by burning woodfuel in modern, efficient systems is re-absorbed by growing trees in a cycle that reduces the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere. The long-term effect of tree planting, good forest management practices and efficient burning woodfuel in efficient systems should be about carbon neutral.
5. Wood and other materials derived from plants have an important contribution to make towards our future energy needs. Wood can be used as a low-carbon renewable energy source to substitute for fossil fuels.
6. Wood products can be used as low-energy alternatives to materials such as concrete and steel, which involve high-energy use in their production. The biomass in wood products is also a carbon stock in its own right, just as much as biomass in living trees.

4.3 Forest management in response to climate change

The respondents were then presented with a series of statements regarding the way in which UK forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change.

There was a clear distinction in the level of agreement with the six statements posed, but for each, the majority of responses were in line with most expert opinion.

The majority of respondents **agreed** that 'a lot more trees should be planted' (90%), that 'more information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment' (86%) and that 'different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates' (75%). Agreement with these points reflects a belief that climate change is occurring but also some amount of faith that forestry and wood can be utilised in an attempt to mitigate changes.

Conversely, a majority of respondents **disagreed** with the statements that 'there is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference' (73%), that 'no action is needed; let nature take its course' (72%) and that 'trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced' (51%). The strong rejection of 'letting nature take its course' and of the idea that 'there is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference' is more evidence that respondents believe we can and should use our knowledge of forestry to attempt to make a difference.

Table 7: Management of UK forests in response to the threat of climate change (%)

	(strongly agree)					(strongly disagree)	<i>Don't know</i>
	1	2	3	4	5		
A lot more trees should be planted	40	50	6	2	0		2
More information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment	31	55	8	2	0		2
Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates	24	51	14	5	1		5
Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced	8	18	18	43	8		5
There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference	3	11	9	46	27		4
No action is needed; let nature take its course	4	12	10	44	27		3

Base: All respondents in England - 2007 (3,339)

5. Wood as a fuel

In 2007, 8% of respondents in England said that they used wood as a fuel in their home, either on its own, or with other fuels. This question was not asked in the previous GB/UK/England public opinion surveys. However, the question was asked in separate 2007 public opinion surveys undertaken in Wales and Scotland, in the 2005 Wales public opinion survey, in a woodfuel consumption study in Scotland in 2004/05 and in the 1997 GB firewood survey.

Each of these surveys identified a small proportion of respondents who use wood as a fuel. It is notable that the 2007 England result is not significantly different from the GB result from ten years earlier.

Table 8: Proportion of respondents who use wood as a fuel in their home (%)

Respondents who used wood as a fuel in their home, either on its own or with other fuels	
GB 1997	9
Scotland 2004/5	5
Wales 2005	11
Scotland 2007	4
Wales 2007	6
England 2007	8

Base: All respondents in - GB 1997 (2,000), Scotland 2004/5 (4,006), Wales 2005 (1,001), Scotland 2007 (1,007), Wales 2007 (953), England - 2007 (3,339)

The respondents who did use wood for fuel were asked three further questions:

- The majority either obtained their wood fuel a few bags at a time (42%) or gathered it themselves (40%), while 16% received it by the truck load;
- The majority of respondents classified themselves as an occasional user (69%), while 29% said they used wood as a fuel regularly;
- Only 8% use it as the main fuel for heating their home, while the rest mainly use something else.

6. Changes to woodland

Over the last few decades, the recorded area of woodland in England has increased, from 948 thousand hectares in 1980, to 1,124 thousand hectares in 2007. Although some of this increase can be attributed to improved coverage of woodland inventories, it is nevertheless clear that total woodland area has increased.

6.1 *Desire for change in woodland area*

The respondents were asked whether they would like to have more or less woodland in their part of the country. Over two-thirds of respondents indicated they would like to have more woodland (71%), a significantly higher result than that obtained in either 2005 (65%) or 2003 (67%). Roughly similar proportions of the England 2007 respondents indicated that they would like to see a little more (23%), about half as much again (26%) and more than half as much again (22%).

Table 9: Desire for more woodland in respondent's part of the country (%)

	England 2003	England 2005	England 2007
More than half as much again	20	18	22
About half as much again	24	25	26
A little more	22	22	23
More – total	67	65	71
Neither more nor less	29	28	25
Less	2	2	1
Don't know	2	5	2

Base: All respondents in England - 2003 (3,412), 2005 (3,367), 2007 (3,339)

6.2 Woodland based community involvement

The UK Forestry Standard¹ encourages woodland owners to involve local communities.

Table 10: Community involvement (%)

	England 2007
Involved in organised tree planting	4
Involved in woodland voluntary work	3
Member of community based woodland group	2
None / Don't know	93

Base: All respondents in England - 2007 (3,339)

In the 12 months prior to being interviewed, only 7% of respondents said that they had been involved in any of the three community events listed in this question, i.e. they were a member of a community based woodland group such as a 'Community Trust' or 'Friends of Group' or had participated in either an organised tree planting event or some voluntary work in connection with a woodland (e.g. physical work in a wood, admin, fund raising, running a group).

The 7% of respondents who indicated participation in one of these activities corresponds to around 3 million adults involved in such activities nationally.

¹ FC (2004): *The UK Forestry Standard (2nd edition)*; *The government's approach to sustainable forestry*, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

7. Woodland recreation

The UK Forestry Standard¹ encourages the creation and improvement of public access to woodland for recreation.

7.1 Proportion visiting woodland

Just over three-quarters of respondents (76%) said that they had visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation in the last few years (Table 11), representing a significant increase over the results received in 2005 and 2003.

Table 11: Visited woodland in last few years (%)

	England 2005	England 2003	England 2007
Visited woodland in last few years	65	66	76

Base: All respondents in England - 2003 (3,412), 2005 (3,367), 2007 (3,339)

7.2 Type of woodland visited

A large proportion of woodland visitors said that they had visited woodland in the countryside (82% in total) and 61% said that they had visited woodland in and around towns (significantly more than the 51% in 2005). Table 12 shows that 39% of woodland visitors have only visited woodland in the countryside, 18% have only visited woodland in and around towns and 43% have visited both rural and urban woodland.

Table 12: Type of woodland visited (urban/rural)

	England 2003	England 2005	England 2007
in the countryside	49	46	39
both	34	36	43
in and around towns	16	16	18
don't know	2	2	0

Base: All respondents except those who had not visited woodland in the last few years - 2,554

¹ FC (2004): *The UK Forestry Standard (2nd edition)*, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

7.3 Reasons for not visiting woodland

Respondents who had not visited woodland in the last few years were asked to give their main reason for not visiting. Table 13 shows that in 2007, as in previous years, the main reason given for not visiting a forest or woodland was that the respondent was not interested in going (25%), however this represents a significant decrease from the equivalent 2005 result (33%). This change appears to be consistent with the increased recognition and usage of woodlands highlighted in other parts of this report.

Table 13: Main reason for not visiting forest/woodland in last few years (%)

	England 2003	England 2005	England 2007
Not interested in going	29	33	25
Other personal mobility reasons	13	16	18
Woods are too far away	16	12	14
Don't have a car	13	12	11
Concerns that woods are not safe	2	3	3
Lack of information	3	3	2
Prefer other areas of countryside	3	3	2
Lack of suitable public transport	-	2	1
Lack of facilities	2	1	1
Other	14	8	14
Don't know	5	8	10

Base: Respondents in England who had not visited woodland in the last few years - 2003 (1,127), 2005 (1,128), 2007 (785).

7.4 Frequency of woodland visits

Of the respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years, 68% said that they visited at least once a month in the summer of 2006 (Table 14) and 40% said that they visited at least once a month in the winter of 2006/7.

Over a quarter (27%) of those who had visited woodland in the last few years said that they did not visit during the most recent winter. Only 4% said that they did not visit during the most recent summer.

Table 14: Frequency of visits in summer and winter - change over time

		England 2003	England 2005	England 2007
Summer	Several times a week	9	8	12
	Several times a month	23	21	29
	About once a month	29	30	27
	Less often	31	33	27
	Never	6	7	4
Winter	Several times a week	5	4	7
	Several times a month	9	7	13
	About once a month	15	14	20
	Less often	32	34	33
	Never	38	38	27

Base: All respondents in England who had visited woodland in the last few years - 2003 (2,285), 2005 (2,239), 2007 (2,554)

By using the 2007 survey data to combine information about those who had visited forests in the last few years, with the frequency of visit information for the last year, it is possible to estimate the proportion of adults who have visited woodland in the last year. In this way we estimate that 73% of adults visited woodland in the last year, 72% in the summer of 2006, and 54% in the winter of 2006/2007.

Comparison with previous surveys

Table 14 shows the frequency of visits in the most recent summer and winter in the 2007 and previous surveys. Although not a significant result in every response category, a trend of increasing frequency appears to have emerged in 2007.

7.5 Information about woodlands to visit

The use of the internet has increased in popularity from 3% in 1997 to 38% in 2007, and is now, for the first time, the single source of information most likely to be used to find out about woodland not previously visited (Table 15).

Other common sources of information are to ask friends or relatives (32%), Tourist Information Centres (29%), guidebooks or maps (27%). There is also a significant decrease in the proportion of respondents stating that they have no interest in visiting (from 16% in 2005 to 8% in 2007).

Table 15: Sources of information used for woodland not previously visited (%)

	England 2003	England 2005	England 2007
Internet	22	29	38
Ask friends/relatives	32	27	32
Tourist information centre	39	34	29
Guide book or map	31	27	28
Library or sports centre	10	10	10
Forestry Commission	9	7	9
No interest in visiting	15	16	8
Other	1	2	3
Don't know	5	5	7

Base: All respondents in England - 2003 (3,412), 2005 (3,367), 2007 (3,339)

7.6 Views on the role and use of woodlands

There was strong overall agreement with a series of statements presented to the respondents regarding their views on the purpose and potential uses of woodlands.

Over 90% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that:

- Woodlands in the UK are an important part of the country's natural and cultural heritage;
- Woodlands play an important role in children's and young people's outdoor learning experience;
- Trees and woods make towns and cities more attractive places to live, work and bring up families;
- Woodlands allow families to learn about nature.

Table 16: Level of agreement with statements (%)

	(strongly agree)				(strongly disagree)	<i>Don't know</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	
Woodlands in the UK are an important part of the country's natural and cultural heritage	51	43	4	1	0	1
Trees and woods make towns and cities more attractive places to live, work and bring up families	49	43	5	2	0	1
Woodlands play an important role in children's and young people's outdoor learning experience	47	45	4	2	0	1
Woodlands allow families to learn about nature	44	50	4	1	0	1
It is important to have a say in what happens in your local woodland	35	50	11	3	0	2
Woodlands are places to reduce stress and anxiety	35	50	10	3	1	2
Woodlands are places to exercise and keep fit	28	49	12	8	1	1
Woodlands are good places to meet with friends and family	23	43	19	12	1	2
Woodlands in the UK are important in helping people to earn a living or make ends meet	18	43	22	11	1	5

Base: All respondents in England - 2007 (3,339)

Even though in both cases, the majority of respondents did either strongly agree or agree, the lowest levels of agreement were with the statements, 'Woodlands in the UK are important in helping people to earn a living or make ends meet' (61%) and 'Woodlands are good places to meet with friends and family' (66%).

Appendix 1: TNS Omnibus Random Location Sampling Method

(UK 2007 survey)

SAMPLING FRAME

The TNS CAPI Omnibus employs a random location methodology. 2001 Census small area statistics and the Postal Address File (PAF) were used to define sample points. These are areas of similar population sizes formed by the combination of wards, with the constraint that each point must be contained within a single Government Office Region (GOR). In addition, geographic systems were employed to minimise the drive time required to cover each area as optimally as possible. 600 points were defined south of the Caledonian Canal in Great Britain (GB), and, for UK samples, another 25 points were defined in a similar fashion in Northern Ireland.

STRATIFICATION AND SAMPLE POINT SELECTION

278 points were selected south of the Caledonian Canal for use by the Omnibus after stratification by Government Office Region and Social Grade. They were also checked to ensure they are representative by an urban and rural classification. Those points are divided into two replicates. Each set is used in alternate weeks. 16 of the points in Northern Ireland were selected and divided into four replicates. Those replicates are used in rotation to give a wide spread across the Province over time in the UK samples. Similarly the statistical accuracy of the GB sampling is maximised by issuing sequential waves of fieldwork systematically across the sampling frame to provide maximum geographical dispersion. This ensures that the sample point selection remains representative for any specific fieldwork wave.

SELECTION OF CLUSTERS WITHIN SAMPLING POINTS

All the sample points in the sampling frame have been divided into two geographically distinct segments each containing, as far as possible, equal populations. The segments comprise aggregations of complete wards. For the Omnibus alternate A and B halves are worked each wave of fieldwork. Each week different wards are selected in each required half and Census Output Areas selected within those wards. Then, blocks containing an average of 150 addresses are sampled in those areas from the PAF.

DESIGN EFFECT

As with all multi-stage sample designs, there are effects on the magnitude of the standard error of estimates that arise from a number of sources. The greatest contributors are caused negatively by the effects of clustering and weighting and positively by the effects of stratification. These are collectively known as 'design effects'. The 'design factor' is used to estimate the ratio of the standard error of these complex sample estimates to that of a simple random sample of the same size. Design factors vary from one variable to another depending on the inter-correlations that exist between that variable and the causes of variation in the size of the standard error. For example social grade tends to be correlated between households in small geographical areas and thus variables that are correlated with social grade (e.g. visits to woodland) will have larger design factors. Such design factors need to be individually calculated from actual data to obtain accurate estimates for any given variable. Common practice is the use of a 'modal' value for application to estimates. For the Omnibus TNS recommend a design factor of 1.5 be applied to the calculation of confidence limits and when testing for significance.

INTERVIEWING AND QUOTA CONTROLS

Assignments are conducted over two days of fieldwork and are carried out on weekdays from 2 p.m. – 8 p.m. and at the weekend. Quotas are set by sex (male, female housewife, female non-housewife); within female housewife, presence of children and working status, and within men, working status, to ensure a balanced sample of adults within effective contacted addresses. Interviewers are instructed to leave 3 doors between each successful interview.

Appendix 2: UK Questionnaire 2007

<p>Q1</p>	<p>You may have seen or read about UK forests, woods or trees on the television, radio or in the newspapers. From this list, can you please tell me which of these topics you have seen or read anything about in the last 12 months?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birds and other animals in woodlands • Flowers and other plants in woodlands • Forests and woodlands as places to visit • Community woodlands / new local woodlands • Tree planting • Tree pests and diseases • Wood for fuel / (short rotation coppice) • Loss of ancient or native woodlands • Restoration of ancient or native woodlands • Creation of new native woodlands • Public rights of access to woodlands • Protests about roads or other developments on woodlands • Labelling/certification of wood products • Forests and woodlands helping to tackle climate change • Other (specify) • None of these
<p>Q2</p>	<p>Which of these promotions have you heard of?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Wood for Good’ or other promotions for timber uses and products • Autumn Colours • Active Woods ‘Naturally good for you’ • Forest Education Initiative • Forest Schools • None
<p>Q3</p>	<p>In the UK, public money is given to support forestry, the planting and management of all types and sizes of forests and woods, because it is believed to be of public benefit. From this list, please tell me which of the following reasons are good reasons to support forestry in this way?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the economy in rural areas • To help rural tourism • To provide timber for sawmills and wood processing • To provide renewable energy including wood as fuel • So that the UK can buy less wood products from abroad • To make woods more accessible to all in the community • To help tackle climate change • To provide places for wildlife to live • To provide places to walk in • To provide places to cycle or ride horses • To provide healthy places for physical activity, relaxation and stress relief • To improve the countryside landscape • To create pleasant settings for developments around towns • To restore former industrial land • None

<p>Q4</p>	<p>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? ((1) strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, (5) strongly disagree, and don't know)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands are places to reduce stress and anxiety • Woodlands are places to exercise and keep fit • Woodlands allow families to learn about nature • Woodlands are good places to meet with friends and family • Woodlands in the UK are an important part of the country's natural and cultural heritage • Woodlands play an important role in children's and young people's outdoor learning experience • Woodlands in the UK are important in helping people to earn a living or make ends meet • It is important to have a say in what happens in your local woodland • Trees and woods make towns and cities more attractive places to live, work and bring up families
<p>Q5</p>	<p>How much of an impact do you think climate change will have on the UK?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large impact • Slight impact • No impact at all • Don't know
<p>Q6</p>	<p>Would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the ways in which forests and woodlands in the UK can impact on climate change? ((1) strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, (5) strongly disagree, and don't know)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood • Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted • Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas • Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide • Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel • The UK could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees
<p>Q7</p>	<p>Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding how UK forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change? ((1) strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, (5) strongly disagree, and don't know)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference • No action is needed; let nature take its course • A lot more trees should be planted • Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced • Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates • More information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment
<p>Q8</p>	<p>'Forest Management' refers to all activities in woodland, including woodland creation, recreation, wildlife management and timber production.</p> <p>On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very high and 5 is very low, how would you rate the standard of forest management in:</p> <p>a. The UK</p> <p>b. your local area</p>

<p>Q9</p>	<p>a. Would you like to have more or less woodland in this part of the country?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More • Neither more nor less <i>(skip to Q10)</i> • Less <i>(skip to Q10)</i> • Don't know <i>(skip to Q10)</i> <p>b. How much more woodland: a little more, half as much again or more than that?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A little more • About half as much again • More than that • Don't know
<p>Q10</p>	<p>a. Do you ever use wood as a fuel in your home, either on its own or with other fuels?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <i>(skip to Q11)</i> <p>b. Do you get the wood by the truck load, or a few bags at a time, or gather it yourself?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. by the truck load 2. a few bags at a time 3. gather it yourself 4. don't know <p>c. Do you use wood as a fuel regularly or only occasionally?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. regularly 2. occasionally 3. don't know <p>d. Is wood the main fuel for heating your home, or do you mainly use something else?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. main fuel 2. mainly use something else 3. don't know
<p>Q11</p>	<p>a. In the last few years, have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, - then skip to Q11c • No <p>b. What is the main reason why you have not visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation? (then skip to Q13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not interested in going <i>(If this response, skip to Q14 instead of Q13)</i> • Don't have a car • Lack of suitable public transport • Other personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking, unwell, etc.) • Woods are too far away • Lack of facilities (play areas, picnic areas, etc.) • Lack of information about woods to visit • Prefer other areas of countryside • Concerns that woods are not safe • Other (please specify)

	<p>c. Did you visit woodlands in the countryside or woodlands in and around towns or both?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands in the countryside • Woodlands in and around towns • Both
Q12	<p>How frequently did you visit forests and woodlands last summer, i.e. between April and September 2006?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several times per week • Several times per month • About once a month • Less often • Never <p>And how often this winter, i.e. since October 2006?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several times per week • Several times per month • About once a month • Less often • Never
Q13	<p>If you were thinking about visiting forests or woodlands that you had not visited before, which of the following sources of information would you normally use?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask friends/relatives • Guide book or map • Forestry Commission (GB) / Forest Service (NI) • Tourist Information Centre • Internet • Library or sports centre • Other (specify) • No interest in visiting
Q14	<p>Have you in the past 12 months... (tick all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been involved in an organised tree planting event • Been involved in voluntary work in connection with a woodland (e.g. physical work in a wood, admin, fund raising, running a group) • Become or are you a member of a community based woodland group such as a 'Community Trust' or 'Friends of Group'
Q15	<p>Do you own or have the use of a car at all?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Q16	<p>Do you have any long-term illness, health problems or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No

Q17

And which of these best describes your ethnic origin?

- White
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Caribbean
- African
- Other (please specify)