



National Learning Strategy Update

May 2015 - March 2017

Your forest is cared for by the Forestry Commission
for people, wildlife and timber

Email: learning.England@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



We aim to “expand opportunities for communities to become involved in the Estate and take part in activities that improve quality of life, health and learning.”

We will create “a wide variety of opportunities through which schools, groups, families and individuals will be able to engage with, and learn about trees and forests,” and will encourage “third party environmental educators and other partners to offer learning opportunities on the Public Forest Estate.”

From the Strategic Plan for the Public Forest Estate in England (2013-2020)

Vision

The **vision** of the national learning strategy, towards which we have been working during the past two years, remains unchanged. It is:

to **enable everyone, everywhere**, to **connect** with the nation’s trees and forests so that they **understand** their importance and the role of the Forestry Commission in their management, and **act** positively to safeguard forests for the future.

Aim

The aim of this updated version of the national learning plan for Forestry Commission England, is to extend the delivery of our 2013 learning strategy and provide a stepping stone between the initial strategy (2013-2015) and that which will be produced for the learning teams in the new Public Forest Estate Management Organisation in 2017.



The Public Forest Estate

The Public Forest Estate in England is managed by the Forestry Commission and is made up of more than 1500 forests and woods. Among these forests are 40 key sites, with visitor centres, events programmes, cafes, play areas, and cycling and walking trails.

Facilities at hundreds of other smaller sites include picnic tables and toilets, seasonal refreshments, car parking and miles and miles of trails for people to explore. Some sites have hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, while others are much quieter.

The Forestry Commission also manages a number of internationally important tree collections and arboreta.



Learning with the Forestry Commission in England

Where we are now

Learning teams are based at Sherwood Pines, Cannock, Wyre, Bedgebury, Westonbirt and Alice Holt. In most cases, learning managers and learning rangers have a district-wide role.

North and Yorkshire districts also have staff with responsibility for overseeing learning, as part of their wider recreation remit.

There is a **national learning manager**, who develops products and resources for use across the country and provides district support.

There is a **strong self-led learning offer** – **nationally relevant downloadable activities and curriculum-linked lesson plans** are provided on the website; our **Ranger in a Bag (RIAB)** resources are available to hire at several sites; **self-led learning trails** are being used and promoted in forests which, in the past, would not have offered any learning opportunities.

We engage with learning providers, **offering opportunities to develop businesses on the Public Forest Estate**. Some providers are chosen via a tender process; others approach us and are offered a short term agreement. By **working closely with these partners**, we ensure that their learning offer is of a **high standard**, and that they promote our messages.

During the past two years, FC-led learning has become more **specialised**, as learning teams have changed some activities to become self-led or third party led.

At the heart of all of the FC learning offer, is the learning message – **the Public Forest Estate is cared for by the Forestry Commission for timber, people and wildlife**.

Where we are going

Through this updated learning plan, we want to continue to engage with more learners, at more sites, in a variety of ways, ensuring that we try to meet the needs of **everyone, everywhere**, at the same time as delivering a **high quality service** and conveying the learning message.

In order to achieve this, more of the learning offer will be FC-facilitated rather than FC-led. Therefore, we will:

- **increase the self-led offer**
- **increase the third party led offer**
- **carefully consider what is still to be FC-led, limiting this to specialised topics**



By April 2017...

...there will be more than 40 **national downloads, including lesson plans and learning resources** for all age groups

... we will maintain at least 25 **CLOtC site provider awards** for self-led learning destinations

... there will be a well-used **Ranger in a Bag (RIAB)** offer at 35 or more forests

... **self-led learning trails** will be in use at more than 45 sites

... we will enable at least 68 **local schools to use their local woods**, by providing them with resources and advice

... we hope that 70-80 sites will have a learning offer provided by a **third party business, partner or individual**

... we will offer at least 22 **CPD / teacher and leader training sessions** per year

... we will run or facilitate various **specific projects for hard to reach groups** (as time and demand allows)

... we will improve **monitoring & evaluation systems** to ensure that our learning offer meets the needs of everyone, everywhere

... we will look for and respond to **opportunities to work with partners to develop our learning offer** in innovative ways.



If you need this publication in large print or in another language please contact the Diversity Team.

Tel 0300 067 5046

Email diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

For further information about the national learning strategy for the public forest estate in England, please visit www.forestry.gov.uk/learning or email learning.England@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.



This leaflet is printed on FSC certified paper. Please recycle after use



Forestry Commission woodlands have been certified in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council.



Forestry Commission
England