

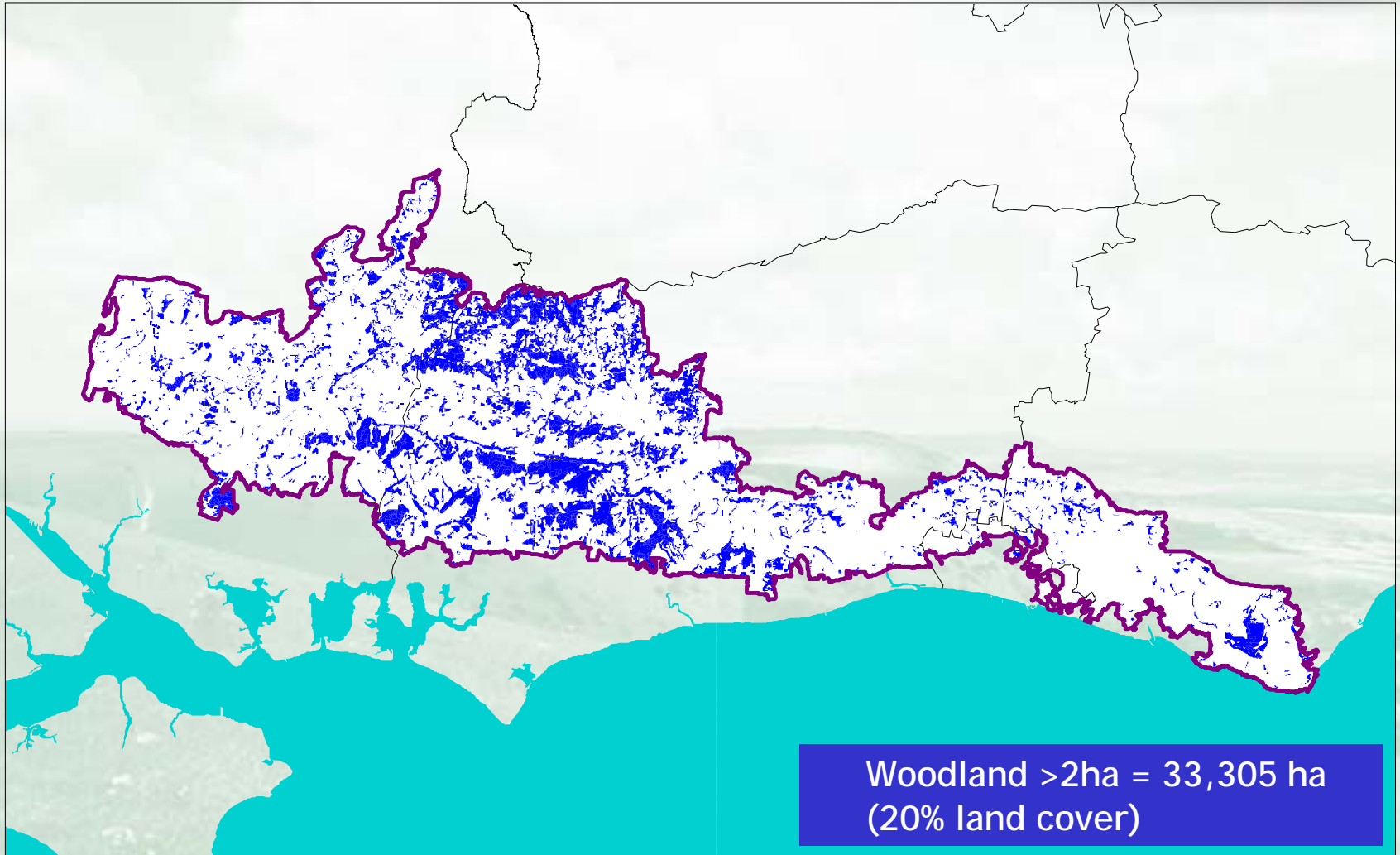
# **Promoting woodland products in the South Downs**

Trees, woodlands and hedgerows group  
Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September



**Working in Partnership to Protect the South Downs**

# Wood for the trees!



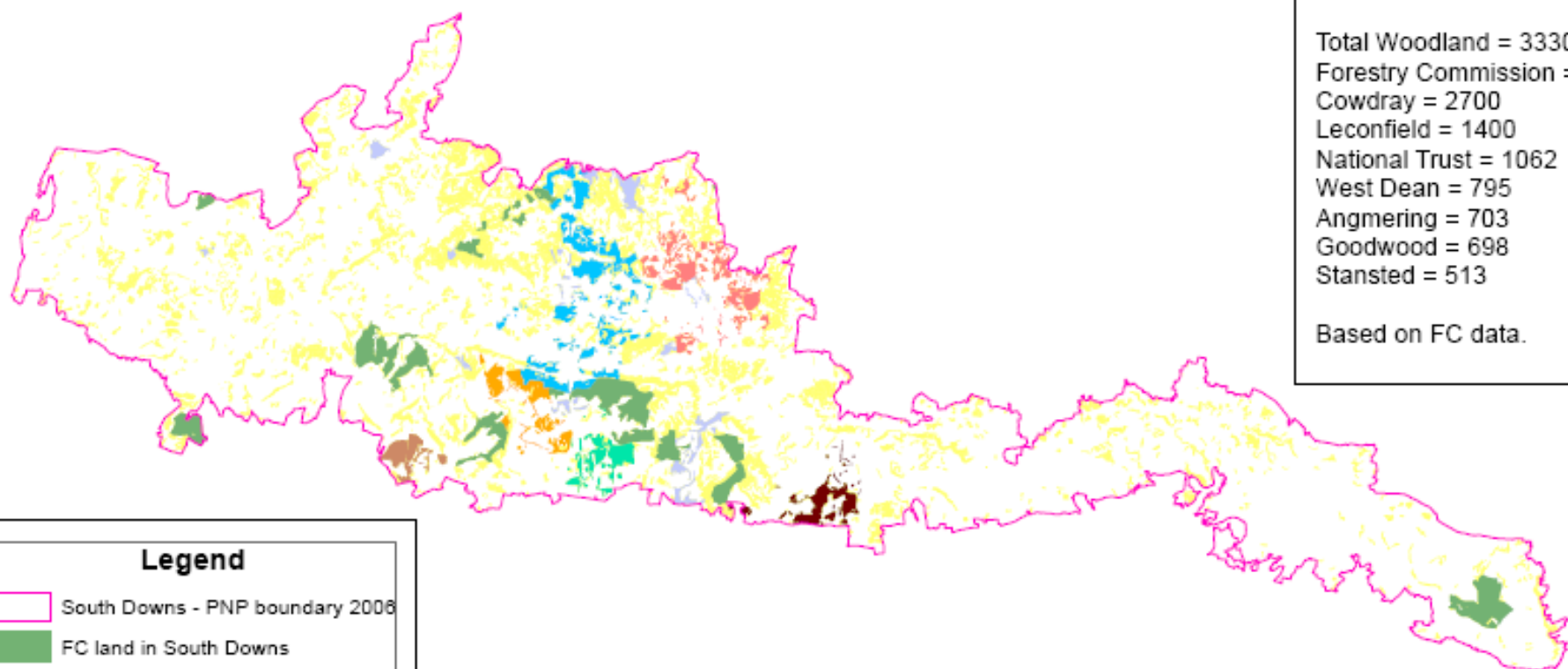
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# So.....

- Total is 20+ % woodland cover
- 10% of the South Downs is ancient woodland
- 4.5% of the South Downs ancient woodland is PAWS

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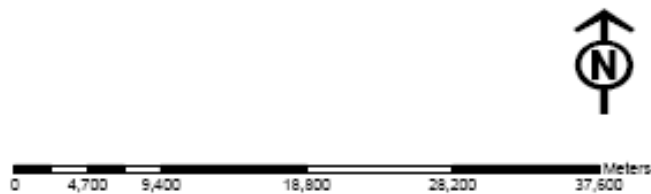
# Woodland ownership in the South Downs



Areas (ha)	
Total Woodland	= 33305
Forestry Commission	= 4935
Cowdray	= 2700
Leconfield	= 1400
National Trust	= 1062
West Dean	= 795
Angmering	= 703
Goodwood	= 698
Stansted	= 513
Based on FC data.	

**Legend**

- South Downs - PNP boundary 2008
- FC land in South Downs
- Cowdray\_All
- Leconfield\_All
- NT\_owned
- West\_Dean\_All
- Angmering\_All
- Goodwood\_All
- Stansted\_All
- IFT South Downs\_region



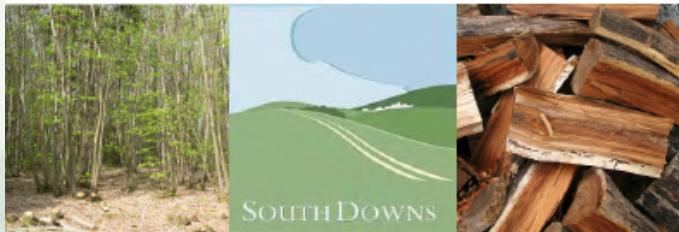
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East Sussex County Council - 100019601, 2008

# Promoting Firewood in the South Downs



## Promoting firewood in the South Downs:

design for a South Downs Firewood Accreditation Scheme  
and evaluation of Community Firewood Hubs



Author: Andrew Tolfts

Date: March 2010



## Summary

The objective of the study was to

- Design and assess the viability of a Firewood Accreditation Scheme for the South Downs National Park;
- Evaluate the potential for Community Firewood Hubs;
- Investigate the need for and duties of a Woodland Produce Officer.

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## Scope of the study

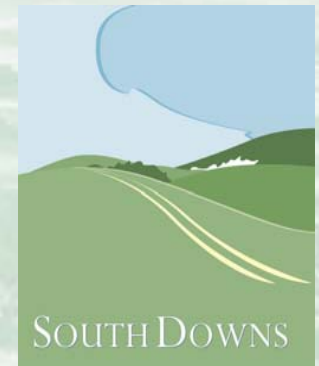
- 1. To assess the potential for and viability of a firewood accreditation scheme for the South Downs Area that would ensure firewood quality in terms of product characteristics, sustainable management, environmental impacts and where it was grown. The scheme would lead to an accreditation mark or brand that could be used for marketing purposes
- 2. To make recommendations on how to promote and support firewood production and in particular to examine the concept of community hubs for the sale of locally produced firewood from accredited suppliers.
- 3. Establish the need for a South Downs Woodland Produce Officer to support all in the sector, linking owners of BAP habitat woods with grants, contractors and new markets to increase levels of woodland management on the South Downs

# Existing work to promote positive land management through accreditation in woodlands



**SOUTH DOWNS**  
VENISON & GAME  
01730 826869

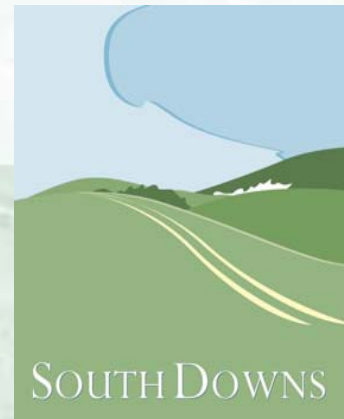
.....WILD MEAT WITH OUTSTANDING FLAVOR

A banner featuring a logo on the left with a stag silhouette and the text "SOUTH DOWNS VENISON & GAME 01730 826869". On the right is a black and white photograph of a rolling landscape with hills and a valley. Below the photo is the text ".....WILD MEAT WITH OUTSTANDING FLAVOR".

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# Opportunities for the South Downs

- Proximity to large population
- Large number of visitors
- Good communication links – London, EU
- Develop sense of identity, iconic landscape
- Local products, local delivery
- Create a park of time and place
- Market towns well placed as 'Gateways'



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# Results of the firewood study –

## 1. Firewood accreditation scheme



- A key focus of the scheme would be to inform customers what they are buying in terms of both timber and energy, and educate them as to how to make best use of the firewood in their stoves and boilers.
- Reaction from the industry sector contacted was almost universally positive with the scheme being seen as a way of differentiating South Downs firewood from other products seen as a positive marketing tool.
- Market could not support any significant price increase as a result of accreditation but the scheme was technically feasible
- The staffing requirements of the accreditation scheme were estimated to be one full time equivalent for nine months and 2 days per week for the scheme's administration thereafter.

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# Results of the firewood study –

## 2. Community Wood fuel Hubs



- The need for and probable programme for the Community Hubs was less clear.
- Potential for competition with existing fuel wood suppliers was identified as a significant risk, particularly in rural areas. The ownership structure and management control of hubs critical in avoiding such competition risks.
- On the other hand, potential benefits were identified due to:
  - \* *the ability of hubs to serve urban areas such as Brighton;*
  - \* *creation of capacity to support existing businesses through purchase of partially seasoned*
  - \* *firewood in the summer; and the ability to achieve economies of scale for existing firewood producers through purchase of larger, more sophisticated equipment than any one producer could justify.*

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## Results of the firewood study –

### 3. Woodland Marketing Officer



- The consultants concluded that there is a good justification for a full time Woodland Marketing Officer (WMO)
- In addition to setting up and managing the Accreditation scheme the WMO would undertake a range of other duties in support of the woodland sector in the National Park without duplicating the work of others such as Forestry Commission Woodland Officers.
- A key role would be to work with owners of unmanaged woodlands containing BAP priority species and use the low quality produce to supply a growing firewood market.
- Networking and facilitating the operation of small rural businesses would be an important part of the WPO's work.

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# Key Conclusions



- The study assists in identifying the bespoke role of the SDNPA through an accreditation scheme
- Support for an ‘adding value’ post by the existing partners to focus on marketing activity
- Further discussion and work required to develop the post and role of the SDNPA in the woodland sector