

## **E. People and forests**

**E1. Visits to woodland**

**E2. Extent of open public access**

**E3. Public awareness**

**E4. Community involvement**

**E5. Historic environment and cultural heritage**

**E6. Health & safety**

***People and forests – Summary***

This group of indicators includes recreation & access, health & safety, public awareness and community involvement in forest management. Many of the benefits of forestry for society are linked to the direct use that individuals make of the forest, and may be quantified to give valuable information. They include recreational use of woodland (E1), which is influenced by the extent of open public access to woodland (E2). Increasing the provision and uptake of recreational opportunities in woodland is an objective of the countries' forestry strategies.

Two other objectives are to increase public awareness of forestry and to raise the level of participation by communities in forest management and use. These aspects of sustainable forestry are less amenable to a quantitative approach. Public awareness of forestry (E3) is assessed by a biennial survey of Public Opinion of Forestry. Many aspects of community involvement (E4) could be assessed, but there is little quantitative information at present.

Forest management plays a role in conserving our historic environment and cultural heritage (E5). Little information is currently available for this indicator and more may be added in a future report.

An indicator for health & safety (E6) has been included because of the relatively high rate of accidents to forest workers compared with workers in other sectors.

## E1. Visits to woodland

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**Relevance** Recreation in woodland contributes to quality of life. This indicator shows the number of people who are making use of the woodland recreation opportunities that are available.

**Key Points** It is estimated that there are around 350 million leisure day trips from home to woodland in GB each year. 38% of adults had made a leisure day visit from home to woodland in the past year. The wider measure in the Public Opinion survey shows that 72% had visited in the last few years.

### GB day visits to woodland

millions of day visits from home in year

Survey year	journey starting point			
	England	Scotland	Wales	GB
1994	273	18	12	<b>303</b>
1996	308	26	11	<b>346</b>
1998	321	22	11	<b>355</b>

Source: UK Day Visits Surveys

% of adults who had made a "day visit from home" in last year

Survey year	journey starting point			
	England	Scotland	Wales	GB
1994	37	32	32	<b>36</b>
1996	40	39	31	<b>37</b>
1998	39	34	31	<b>38</b>

Source: UK Day Visits Surveys

% of adults who had visited in last few years

Survey year	journey starting point			
	England	Scotland	Wales	GB
1995	73	59	61	<b>71</b>
1997	75	78	61	<b>75</b>
1999	68	60	63	<b>67</b>
2001	73	62	70	<b>72</b>

Source: Public Opinion of Forestry surveys

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**Background** The reported number of day trips to woodlands increased from 300 million in 1994 to 350 million in 1998. There is no clear trend in recent years in the two alternative measures of participation. Consistent data are not available for a longer time period, but reports from local managers (e.g. in Benson & Willis, 1992) indicate that visits to woodland have increased since the 1960s.

There have been three comparable UK Day Visits Surveys (UKDVS) in 1994, 1996 and 1998 (NCSR, 1999). The UKDVS estimates the total number of leisure day visits to woodlands from home, the demographic profile of visitors, and attributes of the visits including duration, distance and the perceived woodland ownership. The next Day Visits Survey is being carried out during 2002-03.

The Public Opinion of Forestry survey (Heggie, 2001b) is carried out every two years, and includes a set of questions about visits to woodland.

**Future** Similar statistics could be collected in the future for Northern Ireland.

There are no statistics at present on the number of non-leisure visits or trips made by holidaymakers, although information about holiday visits is being collected in the 2002-03 Day Visits Survey.

The Visitor Monitoring Trends Index compiled by the Forestry Commission gives year on year changes in the numbers of visits to FC woodlands, but due to unreliability of some of the counts and lack of information for most small sites, this is not recommended as an accurate source. A current project aims to develop an improved methodology for estimating the number of visitors to FC woodlands, by country and type of visitor.

A more comprehensive set of indicators could include information on the demographics (including gender and ethnicity), duration of visit, means of transport, type of visitor (local, day-tripper, holiday-maker) and visitor satisfaction.

## **E2. Extent of open public access**

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**Relevance** Open public access provides opportunities for social enjoyment of the forest through walking; it does not imply that the area is available for other recreational activities. The indicator is related to the potential benefits, but does not indicate the possible costs of management for access, possible effects on the capital value of the land, or possible environmental effects. The public benefit from access depends on its location (proximity to communities) and provision of walking routes, as well as the total area.

**Key Points** Opportunities for public access to woodlands have been increasing, through the creation of community woodlands and through incentives to provide access (including management grants and the Walkers Welcome package introduced in 1994). The extent of access provision will be affected by Countryside and Rights of Way legislation and the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill.

**Measures** Open access beyond rights of way has been estimated to exist for 281,000 hectares of woodland in England and 114,000 in Wales (of which 153,000 and 97,000 respectively is FC woodland).  
**Source: Countryside Agency, 1999.**

Northern Ireland has 65,000 hectares of open access woodland.

**Source : Forest Service**

In Scotland, there has been a tradition of mainly unrestricted access to the hills, but access near towns is poorly provided for in many areas. The main proposal in the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill is for a new public right of access for open-air recreation and passage. People would be required to exercise their rights responsibly, as guided by a new Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

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**Background** There are a number of reasons why public access can be limited. Many woodlands are difficult to reach or pass through; woodland could be surrounded by land not belonging to the owners (e.g. arable land); concerns about damage to property; conflicts between user groups; concerns about wildlife; and loss of privacy. There may also be temporary closure, for public health reasons (e.g. foot & mouth disease), forest operations or sporting activities. Woods with open public access may not be accessible by all (e.g. those with special mobility needs).

**Future** Further work has been commissioned by the Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust to compile a provisional dataset of woods that are open and welcoming to the public. This provisional dataset should be available by the end of 2002.

This dataset can then be analysed alongside population data to estimate the extent of open public access in relation to where people live. A possible indicator would be the population with adequate woodland access close to their homes (e.g. within 10 km), or in some form of index (proximity index). It would also be possible to produce a map, showing the distribution of woodland compared with population distribution.

Another possible measure is the area for which recreation infrastructure exists. This could be supplemented with information about provision for cycling, horse-riding, etc.

### E3. Public awareness

**Relevance** Sustainable development depends on people understanding how, individually and collectively, their activities impact on the environment. Education in its broadest sense – raising awareness – is being given greater prominence. Sustainable forestry requires that woodland creation and management take account of the needs of the public, so it is necessary to measure the public’s awareness of forestry and their attitudes.

**Key Points** About two-thirds of the public are aware of forestry issues in the media. Despite the fact that the area of conifer and broadleaved trees has continued to increase in the last two decades (see A1 and A2), a large proportion of the public still perceive that the area of woodland in GB is decreasing.

#### People who had heard or read about British forests, woods and trees in the media in the last 12 months

	% of all respondents			
	Survey year			
	1995	1997	1999	2001
Respondents who have seen or read about British forests, woods or trees on the TV, radio or in the newspapers.	73	71	64	62

Source: Public Opinion of Forestry surveys

#### Public perception of the change in area of conifer and broadleaved woodland in Britain over the last 20 years

Conifer			Survey year	Broadleaved		
Increasing	Staying the same	Decreasing		Increasing	Staying the same	Decreasing
48	8	44	1995	13	11	76
47	22	36	1997	14	26	60
41	16	39	1999	14	22	64
40	15	35	2001	13	20	67

Source: Public Opinion of Forestry surveys

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**Background** Awareness and perception can be assessed through a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. However, these methods depend very much upon the questions used having clear relevance to the policy theme being addressed.

Public awareness of forestry has been assessed since 1995, through the biennial Public Opinion of Forestry survey of 2,000 households in GB (Heggie, 2001b).

**Future** A Public Opinion of Forestry survey is planned for 2003. The Forestry Commission is currently overhauling its surveys of public attitudes and perception to target them more effectively on sustainable forestry as it is expressed in the forestry strategies for England, Scotland and Wales.



#### **E4. Community involvement**

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**Relevance** Sustainable forestry requires that woodland creation and management take account of the needs of local communities, and involve the communities in decision making. This can include improving public awareness and access to information, as well as increasing active participation in decision making. There is an emerging recognition that community involvement can be an end in itself, not just a means to other ends. The interpretation and approaches to community involvement and participation can vary between the four countries of the UK, depending on their strategies and priorities.

**Key Points** In Scotland, it is estimated that around 50 community groups are involved in managing woodland, and the area of woodland that they manage is around 22,000 hectares. Similar estimates are not available for England, Wales or Northern Ireland. Community involvement in woodland management is perceived to be growing, but there are no statistics on the trend.

**Measures** This indicator can include quantitative measures of:

- involvement of local people in decision making for local woodlands,
- active participation in voluntary activities related to local woodlands,
- the extent and quality of local consultation (e.g. on forest management plans).

Qualitative aspects to consider include:

- the existence of effective and accessible participatory processes that are appropriate to the type of decision being made, and standards and rules to support those processes;
- management of those processes in compliance with these standards and rules; and
- the effectiveness of these processes in meeting their overall purposes.

Estimates of the number of community groups that are involved in managing woodland, and the area of woodland that they manage, were included in the draft Scottish Forestry Strategy Indicators, and were revised in 2002 by Reforesting Scotland. There are proposals to compile similar information for England and Wales.

**Background** Where forestry affects the interests of individuals and communities they should be given a voice in decision making and planning. Communities can be identified in terms either of locality or of shared interest, and are likely to change according to the scale at which particular decisions apply. The key concern is not that everyone should participate, but that everyone has the opportunity to participate and be heard when they want.

The extent of involvement and participation depend on the opportunities offered and interest in exploiting the opportunities, which in turn are affected by awareness of the opportunities and capacity to exploit them. To get a complete picture, it is necessary to monitor all of these variables, but it may be easier to count the numbers that take up whatever opportunities are offered.

**Future** It may also be possible to measure the extent of individuals' involvement in community forestry through questions in a household survey like Public Opinion of Forestry, or by targeted surveys in areas where there have been community initiatives. Possible measures include:

- Percent of respondents who have spent more than X days a year doing paid or voluntary work in a woodland.
- Percent of respondents who have commented on a FE design plan or WGS proposal.
- Percent of respondents who wanted to have undertaken paid or voluntary work in woodland (within x miles of their home) and who have been unable to do so.
- Percent of respondents who feel that their views have not been taken into account in the management of (their local) woodland.

The number of local responses to WGS applications could also be monitored, but this would not distinguish how much was due to local interest and how much to the quality of the WGS applications.

Qualitative measures could include the existence of consultation processes and guidelines, demonstrating that those who want to be involved have appropriate opportunities, without requiring all to participate.

Development of this indicator should take account of the Audit Commission's indicators on Measuring Community Involvement (Audit Commission, 2002), as some of their proposed indicators for local authorities could have equivalents for community involvement in forestry.

It will also be desirable to maintain awareness of the activities of Rural Development Forestry (RDF) groups, predominantly in Scotland (see e.g. SNH, 2001). Many of them have community control or varying levels of community involvement.

## **E5. Historic environment and cultural heritage**

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**Relevance** Sustainable forestry must take account of the cultural heritage of woodlands. Important heritage features should be protected and due account taken of cultural, historic or desirable landscapes. In part, this can be measured by monitoring of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) in woodland, many of which relate to earlier land-uses. Conservation of other archaeological sites and features associated with the history of woodland management may be equally, or more important.

**Key Points** There are many SAMs in woodland, some of which have agreed management plans. There are a number of designations that aid the recognition of elements in the historic environment, but of these SAM is the only one with UK coverage. The number of SAMs with agreed management plans is increasing through a number of initiatives.

**Measures** There is little monitoring information for SAMs or other ancient monuments. Available information on the number of sites is shown below, to indicate the extent of monitoring that would be required. Monitoring changes in the number of sites would also give some indication of the effectiveness of agencies and managers in identifying ancient monuments that were previously not identified, a possible precursor to their conservation.

There are reported to be around 1000 SAMs on FC/FS land (559 in England, 348 in Scotland, 101 in Wales and 46 in Northern Ireland). The total number of SAMs in all woodland (FC/FS and non-FC/FS) are reported to be 2682 in England, 1418 in Scotland and 999 in Wales (within 50 metres of woodland), with no total yet available for Northern Ireland.

There are no estimates of the total number of ancient monuments in woodland in GB (including those which are not scheduled). For Northern Ireland, the reported total is 385 ancient monuments (source: Environment & Heritage Service), of which 339 are on the Forest Service estate (source FS).

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**Background** The landscape of the UK is a record of thousands of years of human activity. Insensitive woodland management or poorly located new planting can adversely affect the historic environment and associated features and the understanding and appreciation of future generations.

The conservation of SAMs in woodland can be measured by noting agreements between individual owners and the relevant heritage agency. Some of the heritage agencies (e.g. Historic Scotland) are currently developing heritage indicators. In addition many SAMs lie in woodland covered by WGS agreements which will address issues where woodland management is an issue.

### **Future**

Other data relevant to this topic:

- New woodland creation on land with important relict land uses.
- Number of monuments with management plans.
- Of those SAMs with agreed management plans specifying action, proportion where that action has been undertaken. This will involve close co-operation with the relevant national heritage agencies.
- Other cultural and heritage sites in woodland (or woodland itself as a cultural or heritage site) – these may also be visitor attractions.
- Recovery of lost sites when woodland felled/restructured.
- Areas of forest operations for which archaeological survey took place (area in ha, and as % of forest operations), sites identified, % with positive management put in place.

## E6. Health & safety

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**Relevance** There is concern about the high rate of accidents among forestry workers relative to other industries. Safe working practices should be promoted as part of sustainable forestry.

**Key Points** The main statistics on work accidents are reports to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), which should cover all accidents resulting in at least 3 days absence from work. However comparisons with the responses to the Labour Force Survey suggest that less than a half of all reportable accidents (less than a third in agriculture and forestry) are actually reported (see HSE, 2001).

Each year in the late 1990s, about 160 accidents to workers in forestry and related services were reported to the HSE, of which about 50 were classified as major accidents. The reported rate for all forestry accidents is about double the rate for all employees, and for major accidents is more than three times the rate for all employees.

### Accidents reported to Health & Safety Executive Annual averages for 4 years 96/97 to 99/00

	Major accidents	Total reported accidents
<b>Forestry &amp; related services (SIC 0201 &amp; 0202)</b>		
▪ Number of reported accidents	50	<b>162</b>
▪ Rate/1000 employees	4.5	<b>14.7</b>
<b>All sectors</b>		
▪ Rate/1000 employees	1.2	<b>7.0</b>

Sources: HSE, 2001 and HSE tables provided for MCPFE

Note: Rate/1000 for forestry uses an estimate of 11,000 for forestry employment (based on the Annual Business Inquiry), so may differ from other compilations.

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**Background** It is difficult to obtain accident statistics that cover all work in woodlands, because of under-reporting and the difficulty of identifying all forestry activity in the Standard Industrial Classification (e.g. accidents during work on farm woodlands could be recorded in agriculture).

Accident statistics are also available for FC employees, showing a similar rate of around 15 reported accidents per thousand employees. They may not be directly comparable with the HSE statistics for forestry, because they may be increased by better reporting, but decreased by including office employees working in the government department of forestry (for whom accident rates are not a similar concern). Systems for recording FC accident statistics are likely to change so future figures are not likely to be comparable. FC also collects statistics for accidents involving members of the public, but these will not cover all accidents, as they rely on members of the public reporting the accidents. Equivalent statistics are available for the Forest Service in Northern Ireland.

A Safety Survey was carried out for the former Forestry and Arboriculture Safety and Training Council, on two occasions during the 1990s. Based on interviews with forestry workers, this survey reported on awareness of safety issues and implementation of safe working practices.

**Future** It would be desirable to compare the results for forestry with those for other primary industries (agriculture, fishing). The published Health & Safety Statistics (HSE, 2001) show that for the period 1998/9 to 2000/1 the major accident rate for the whole agricultural sector (including hunting, fishing and forestry) was 2.1 per 1000 employees, about half the rate for forestry. However, published figures are not readily available for total reported accidents or for the matching time period.

It would also be desirable to look at accident rates for the manufacturing of wood and wood products. These will be compiled for the pan-European Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management, using the same sources as used for this indicator.