

June 2012

Dear All

A fairly full news letter ranging from making sure the internal team is focused on its priorities, to pump priming the nursery trade with the right tree seed. Please feel free to make this 2 way process and offer information to me that you may consider worthy of publishing.

The key message is that our work to enable the forestry sector to expand England's woodland resource is bearing fruit, with an increase in the rate of woodland creation, several examples of private investment in woodland creation in progress, and the private sector picking up on the potential of the Woodland Carbon Code to help enable new investment in forestry.

New grants to further encourage woodland expansion have been announced and these include a strong steer towards these woodlands being resilient to climate change and being positioned where they will help alleviate floods and improve water quality

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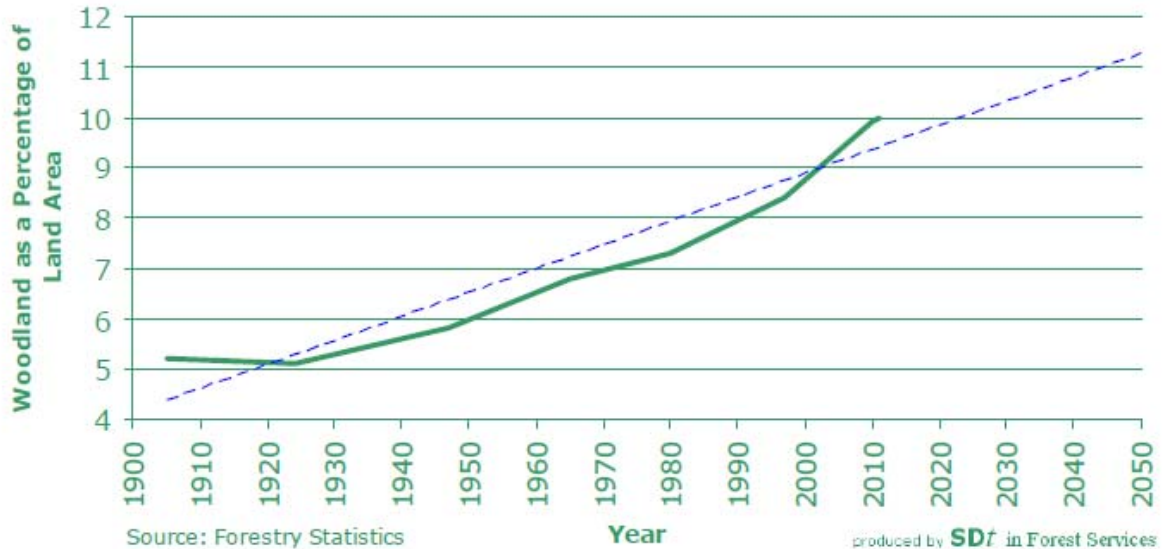
Corporate Plan Performance Indicators: Most Recent Update

The Strategic Development Team (SDt), working with the NEt, and with many other parts of the FC, has coordinated the latest Key Performance Indicator report. Published on 1 May the report is on the Indicators page of the FCE website here

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infd-8kmhu6> and shows headline impact and input indicators of progress on our aims of enabling the sector to protect, improve and expand the woodland resource.

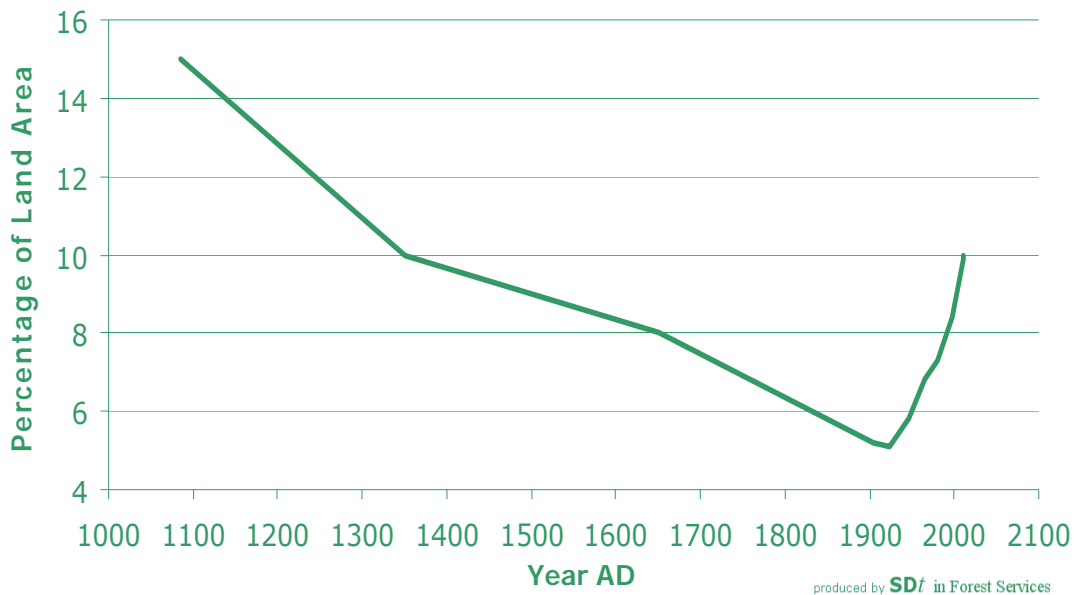
One particularly pleasing note is that since last year there has been a 9% upturn in the woodland creation measured. SDt have also been collating historical data to display trends over time in these and many of our other indicators.

Woodland as a percentage of land area in England, 1905-2011
 (Encompassing 'Area of woodland (total and change over time)' the FC England Woodlands Indicator 7)



 **Forestry Commission**
 England **Indicators: Expansion**

Woodland as a percentage of land area in England, 1086-2011
 (Encompassing 'Area of woodland (total and change over time)' the FC England Woodlands Indicator 7)



Source: Forestry Statistics

Woodland Carbon Task Force developing the 12/13 programme

Forestry Commission staff working to deliver the aspirations of the Woodland Carbon Task Force met on 14 February to agree the work programmes and milestones for 2012/13. Four key work streams are proposed:

- **Private investment linked to carbon standards and grant:** It is proposed that the financial mechanisms and carbon assurances work streams are much more closely aligned. Other financial incentives available from the Forestry Commission, Natural England and the Environment Agency should also be entwined.
- **Identify key landowners with whom to engage:** The report on land ownership and potential woodland creation opportunities from the University of Exeter is close to being published. The report will identify some ownerships sympathetic to woodland creation in the short term.
- **Developing a movement for woodland creation:** The strategic Woodland Uplift Tool is now ready to be tested in regions/areas. Its use should stimulate discussions on the aspirations of various stakeholders and hopefully create a consensus on how much woodland creation should happen at a landscape character area scale. We will be working with the Communications team to provide a communications platform to facilitate woodland creation.
- **Knowledge exchange:** co-design of delivery tools with the people who will use them, especially Woodland Officers

Research into woodland ownership and motivations for woodland management

We have commissioned a contract with Forest Research to determine a clear methodology for finding out who owns woodlands, and how we could map and number all woodland in size order down to perhaps 20ha.

Building on this work we are also looking to better understand how owners find out about management and grants, what networks they belong to and how we might improve and expand our engagement.

Complementing these contracts Defra is commissioning research to further improve our understanding of what to do to best enable landowners to bring more woods into sustainable management and create more woodland.

The Woodland Carbon Code

The Woodland Carbon Code (WCC) has now past the 1 million tonnes CO2 equivalent registered milestone with 58 projects registered and 250,000 tonnes CO2 equivalent validated on the registry.

This news was featured in Farming UK http://www.farminguk.com/news/Woodland-carbon-code-is-a-million-tonne-winner_23157.html

The WCC has been featured in an Ecosystem Marketplace publication about government engagement in voluntary carbon projects globally. We are one of 13 countries/standards featured as a case study and it is really useful for the Forestry Commission as it helps us to understand who else is doing what in the global voluntary markets.

The report is available for direct download [HERE](#), and featured with an article [HERE](#). It will also be featured in a Defra Best Practice Guidance Booklet on payments for Ecosystems Services and at a seminar in London on 1st May.

Woodland Carbon Code and local authorities

Local Authorities in England, Wales and Scotland are invited to express interest in an innovative new carbon saving pilot programme, developed by Verco, to measure and report carbon sequestration in new woodland creation.

Verco will offer participants the support required to develop woodland creation projects in line with the Forestry Commissions' new Woodland Carbon Code, which can be deducted from their gross emissions.

Verco - formerly Camco Advisory Services have helped over 500 public sector organisations to develop robust carbon reduction plans and has experience calculating and monitoring carbon sequestration in accordance with international project standards, in many countries in the world.

More information from their [website](#) where the 'carbon saving from woodland creation' expression of can be downloaded.

Space on the pilot Programme is limited, so Local Authorities need to return their expression of interest no later than Friday 18 May 2012 to the Woodland Carbon Programme Coordinator Laurie Roberts at laurie.roberts@vercoglobal.com.

Woodland creation and zero carbon homes

From 2016 all newly built homes must meet 'zero carbon' regulations. A proportion of the building's lifetime carbon footprint can be met off site. With the Department of Communities and Local Government we are looking at whether woodland creation can act as a so-called 'allowable solution' through conformance with the Woodland Carbon Code. A meeting with the Zero Carbon Hub, the organisation overseeing the introduction of the new regulations, will take place to explore this potentially significant woodland creation opportunity further. Contact NickAtkinson@woodlandtrust.org.uk for further information.

Enviromarkets report.

A report has been completed for the Woodland Carbon Task Force by [Enviromarket on the potential for bonds](#) to channel private finance into woodland creation. Enviromarket are specialists in environmental finance and had earlier (April 2011) written a report setting out a range of instruments that could be used to encourage woodland creation. The current report takes the concept of bonds and examines its application to woodland creation in England in more detail. A key finding is that bonds may be more feasible where linked to a catalyst investment (such as social housing or biomass provision) which can generate returns for investors while also allowing funds to be diverted into woodland creation. The growing 'impact investor' market which seeks social and environmental returns, as well as financial, may offer significant potential in future.

Rockingham Forest for Life

In Northamptonshire, the 'Rockingham Forest for Life' project has attracted £250k of funding for woodland creation from Lloyds TSB under a Section 106 agreement in relation to their proposed new data centre. The project is one of the Woodland Carbon Task Force pilot studies and, through the regeneration of Rockingham Forest; it aims to make the Forest for Life project a national exemplar climate change initiative by 2025.

England Woodland Grant Scheme. Woodland Creation Grant

A new grant scheme was launched on the 30/05/2012. Particular priorities are new woodlands:

- For wildlife, particularly where they can act as protective buffers and link important woodland habitats or other associated natural areas
- To help reduce flood risk, improve water quality and prevent soil erosion;
- That are resilient and can adapt to climate change
- Near to where people live, particularly within the urban fringe
- That provide access and recreation
- To enhance the landscape and restore former industrial land
- To create productive woodlands and wood products that support the rural economy and capture carbon

The grants now provide a minimum of £2,800 per ha for broadleaves and £2,200 per ha for conifers and additional further contribution of £2,000 per ha on is for targeted priorities. Applications will not now be scored but rather on a first in basis.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6dcegu>

The Bioenergy Strategy

Department of Energy and Climate Change published the Bioenergy Strategy on 26th April. The strategy sets out a framework for developing bioenergy policy and deployment, based on the following 4 principles:

- bioenergy must offer genuine carbon savings to 2050 and beyond.
- it must be cost-effective in meeting energy and climate change objectives.
- it must take into account the needs of the wider bioeconomy.
- it must be ready to respond to any risks to key priorities such as food security and biodiversity.

The strategy commits government to delivering the Woodfuel Implementation Plan and acknowledges the 'significant benefits for biodiversity and local employment' that sustainable woodland management delivers. It recognises the role that UK Forestry

Standard play in sustainable forest management and the need to link existing standards to 'bioenergy sustainability criteria' currently under development. The strategy also commits Forestry Commission and Defra to 'work with industry to explore further opportunities for boosting domestic supplies across a range of feedstocks.'

European species trials

Cross European species trials known as '[REINFFORCE](#)' are now in progress. The results will not be available to the forest industry for some time to come so Forestry Commission England has started a program of species diversification and the use of more southerly origins. [Forest Enterprise has already planted new species](#) this season and has acquired improved French seed for species such as Oak, Douglas fir, and Maritime pine for next season. This field scale planting is being monitored through the principles of Operational Guidance Booklet 4. The aim is to give confidence to the industry to follow in a similar manner.

Seed Stand Management and Seed Security

The group that comprises of representatives from Confor nursery producers group, Future Forests Trust, Institute of Chartered Foresters, Forestry Commission Wales, Forestry Commission England and Forest Research met at Westonbirt on the 26th of April.

The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss, and if possible, agree actions to tackle our current overdependence on a few major forest species, in the light of recently introduced diseases, and the need to adapt to climate change.

The main output was an agreement that a project would be drawn together to review the condition and amount of tree seed resource available to meet the industry's future needs.

The full minute can be found at <http://fcnotes/forestry/INFD-8FPHQT>

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