

October 2012

Dear All

The team continue to wrestle with the challenge of creating the right conditions to facilitate a stepped increase in woodland creation, including supporting government to respond to the recommendations of the Independent Panel (Dom will say more about this).

My role includes woodland resilience, and I think there has been some success in convincing growers that pests and diseases of conifers has created a real urgency to increase the range of species used.

In my early work I, maybe naively, thought our native broadleaves were probably ok. Chalara!!! Oak, Beech, Birch, Sycamore and ASH account for 90% of our broadleaved high forest. Ash alone is about 20%!!!! Are we using enough species to ensure resilience from pests and disease? Are we listening to the scientist's recommendations about adaptation to climate change and using more southerly provenance?

How will the Chalara situation impact on this year's woodland creation programme, at a time we want more woodland?

Questions, questions? My plea is that we continue to ask questions and not accept a status quo, what diseases are out there, where have my seeds and plants come from, am I ensuring resilience strategies are within my plantings?

I hope you find the newsletter interesting

John Weir john.weir@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

(John Weir is Adviser, Woodland Expansion and Resilience, based in Bristol).
www.forestry.gov.uk/climatechangeengland

The Woodland Trust kindly hosted the 5 October meeting of the Woodland Carbon Task Force. We:

used a method developed by the Trust to test the evidence on how to work out the most appropriate level of ambition. This isn't to challenge the Panel's recommendation; it is about getting at the science behind the numbers. First we made judgments about how much woodland is needed to make a difference to water quality and flood risk, biodiversity, access, timber and woodfuel, and carbon. Then we worked out how much these overlapped. We ended up with a diagram of overlapping circles and something approaching a consensus....

then discussed what Government can do to better enable landowners to choose to create woodland and tried to work out what kind of impact this will have on the rate of woodland creation.

All this work is being fed into our advice to Ministers on how to respond to the Independent Panel on Forestry's recommendation to expand the area of woodland from

10% to 15% of the country by 2060.

Dominic Driver dominic.driver@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

(Dominic Driver is Head of Woodland Expansion and National Expertise, also based in Bristol)

Woodland Potential Consultation

We have launched an informal consultation asking people to tell us their views on the potential for woodland creation in the landscapes they know, see www.forestry.gov.uk/england-wpc. Please spread the word. We've made lots of technical information available but local knowledge would do. Ideally, we want local groups to get together themselves, debate the issues using our technical information and their local knowledge, and provide us with feedback.

Guestblog on woodland creation

I've done a blog on woodland creation as a guest of the Woodland Trust, <http://wtcampaigns.wordpress.com/2012/10/05/guest-post-dominic-driver-forestry-commission/>, part of a series we are doing with the Trust (Keith Jones is next). If you feel moved to comment in the discussion forum just keep in mind we are civil servants.

Local Economic Development and the Environment (LEDE) Toolkit

Defra, Natural England, the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission have developed a toolkit to support Local Enterprise Partnerships, the economic development department of Local Authorities, and others to integrate the environment and the economy into their plans. It will be launched in autumn 2012 and action research will be initiated into the real-life challenges of using and assessing the toolkit. We are looking for a consortium of organisations from one area to use the toolkit during 2012. Natural England will provide the funding for consultants to do the research and the local area consortium's role would be to act as steering group and customer for the research done for the consultants. Defra-family will select the consultants on behalf of the local area consortium. Any local consortium interested please complete the [document](#) and return to tom.butterworth@NaturalEngland.org.uk.

Tree selection for resilience

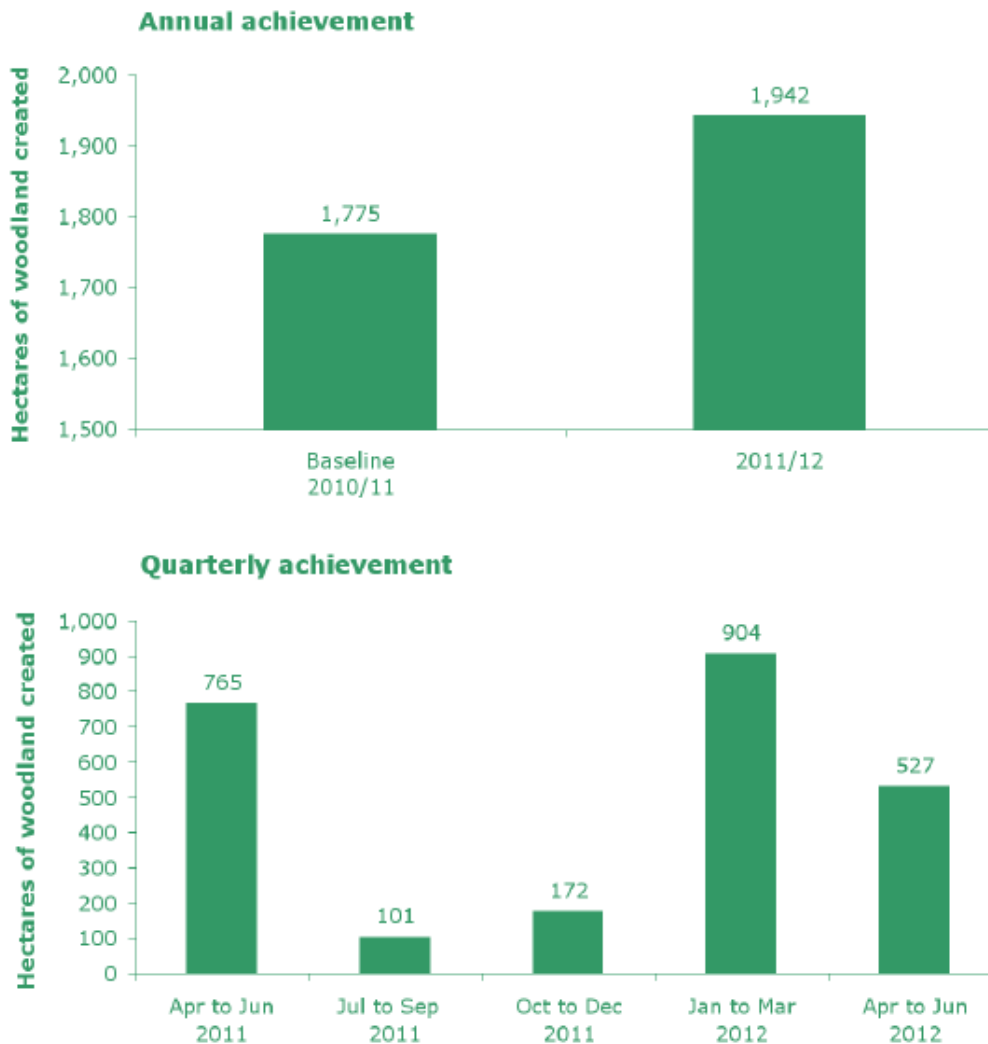
The Tree Species Seminar on September 18th for Woodland Officers was successful with: Healthy debate continued with enthusiasm to deal with the challenges such as getting others with different agendas on board and dealing with grey squirrels.

Our Internet resource, www.forestry.gov.uk/climatechangeengland, the new UK Forestry Standard climate change guidelines and Forest Research resources were showcased. I demonstrated Ecological Site Classification 3 at the APF event. This was the start of a roll out to the sector of the importance of selecting the right tree species to make our woodlands resilient to the changing environment. More than 200 of our new handouts (<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6dccc>) were taken and I was kept busy for the whole three days sharing our knowledge with the private sector. Ted Wilson, a silviculturalist from the National School of Forestry, has been contracted to work with us and the Institute of Chartered Foresters to further this work in the private sector.

Progress on expansion

Increased interest in woodland creation grants being reported from field staff and the Woodland Carbon Code is bubbling nicely. Latest indicator report (June 2012) is:

Impact Indicator: Hectares of woodland created (gross)



Report for April to June 2012: 527 hectares created.

This quarter's performance is down around 30% compared to the same period last year. It is too early to say whether this indicates an overall trend and the wet weather may have had a negative impact on planting in this period this year.

