



Comisiwn Coedwigaeth Cymru  
Forestry Commission Wales

# **PUBLIC OPINION OF FORESTRY 2007: WALES (preliminary report)**

Preliminary results from the 2007 Welsh Survey of  
Public Opinion of Forestry, carried out on behalf of  
the Forestry Commission

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## **Executive Summary**

### **2007 survey**

In 2007, four separate public opinion of forestry surveys were undertaken - across the UK (around 4,000 interviews, including a sample of 188 interviews in Wales), Wales (950 interviews), Scotland (1,000 interviews) and Northern Ireland (1,000 interviews).

This report presents results of the survey in Wales and compares, where appropriate, with the Wales 2005 and 2003 surveys and the UK 2007 and GB 2005 surveys.

Some of the questions asked in the 2007 Wales survey were the same as those asked in 2005 (and in earlier years); however, a number of new questions were asked on topics such as the relationship between forestry and climate change.

Separate reports provide similar results for England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Final reports, charting the results and providing contrasts by, for example, regions and socio-demographic characteristics will be available in autumn 2007.

### **Benefits of forestry**

Around 90% of respondents stated that they received substantial benefit from the following potential benefits of woodlands:

- Knowing that Welsh woodlands will be there for future generations;
- Knowing that there are trees and woodlands in Wales;
- Knowing that Welsh woodlands provide a place for wildlife;
- Seeing trees or woods from where you live;
- Seeing trees and woodlands as you undertake your daily activities.

In addition there was strong overall agreement with a series of statements presented to the respondents regarding their views on the purpose and potential uses of woodlands; over 90% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that:

- Woodlands play an important role in children's and young people's outdoor learning experience;
- Woodlands in Wales are an important part of the country's natural and cultural heritage;
- Woodlands allow families to learn about nature.

### **Changes to woodland**

4% of respondents had been consulted about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands and 43% of respondents would like to be consulted in the future.

Almost four-fifths of respondents either agreed (52%) or strongly agreed (27%) that 'it is important to have a say in what happens in your local woodland'.

### **Climate change**

43% of respondents believe that climate change will have a large impact on Wales and a further 41% believe there will be a slight impact.

There was a high degree of agreement with a set of statements regarding the ways in which forests and woodlands can impact on climate change, for example almost

three-quarters of respondents agreed that 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood'. However, 47% of respondents incorrectly agreed that 'Wales could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees'.

A set of statements was presented to the respondents to ascertain their views on the way in which Welsh forests should be managed in response to climate change. These generated a set of responses that reflect a belief that forestry is a method that can be used to mitigate the effects of climate change. For example, 86% of respondents agreed that 'A lot more trees should be planted' while only 18% agreed that 'There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference'.

### **Wood as a fuel**

6% of respondents said that they used wood as a fuel in their home, either on its own, or with other fuels. Of these, 65% classified themselves as an occasional user, while 19% use it as the main fuel for heating their home.

### **Awareness of Forestry Commission Wales**

Of the 80% of respondents who said that they had heard of Forestry Commission Wales, 57% correctly identified it as a government department or agency.

Most respondents who had heard of Forestry Commission Wales showed a fairly good awareness of its range of activities. Over 90% were aware that Forestry Commission Wales lets the public walk in its woodlands and improves woodland habitats for wildlife. Fewer respondents were aware that Forestry Commission Wales gives grants to private woodland owners (38%).

On a scale from '1 (very good)' to '5 (very poor)', 54% of respondents who were aware of the Forestry Commission rated its performance in managing/protecting FC woodlands as '1 (very good)' or '2'. Similarly, 35% rated the Forestry Commission as '1 (very good)' or '2' at encouraging other landowners to protect and expand Britain's woodlands and at responding to the threat of climate change.

### **Woodland recreation**

Respondents in 2007 (79%) were more likely than those in 2005 (69%) or 2003 (62%) to have visited woodlands in the last few years.

Of the Wales 2007 survey respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years, 36% had visited woodlands in the countryside only, 19% had visited woodlands in and around towns only, and 45% had visited both.

The main reasons respondents gave for not visiting woodlands were that they had 'other personal mobility reasons' (26%) or were 'not interested in visiting' (25%).

# 1. Introduction

## Background

The Forestry Commission has conducted similar biennial surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995 though the surveys have evolved since then:

- In the initial surveys, a representative sample of 2,000 adults across Great Britain (GB) was surveyed;
- In 2001, with more interest in country-level results within GB, additional questions were asked of representative samples of 1,000 adults across Scotland and Wales;
- In 2003, the main survey was extended to include Northern Ireland in the 4,120 adults interviewed and separate surveys of 1,000 adults continued in Scotland and Wales;
- In 2005 and 2007, the need for separate surveys in each country was confirmed, with the increased interest in country-level and regional information. However, the requirement for continued high-quality coherent information for GB/UK as a whole means that four separate surveys were undertaken each year:
  - A representative sample of 4,000 adults across GB (2005) and across UK (2007)
  - A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Scotland
  - A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Wales
  - A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Northern Ireland

Some questions were asked in all four of the surveys conducted in 2007, but an increasing number are survey-specific.

## This report

This report presents results from the 2007 survey in Wales and compares, where appropriate, with the 2005 and 2003 Welsh surveys, with the UK 2007 survey and with the GB 2005 survey.

Separate reports present the results from the surveys undertaken in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

## Survey design

The Wales information presented in this report is taken from the Beaufort Research Omnibus survey carried out from 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2007 on behalf of the Forestry Commission. The survey was based on a representative sample of around 950 adults (aged 16 or over) across Wales. More details of the sample method are given in Appendix 1: Beaufort Research sampling method.

The 2005 and 2003 Welsh results, presented for comparison, are taken from similar Beaufort Research Omnibus surveys.

The GB 2005 and UK 2007 data presented in this report are taken from the RSGB General Omnibus and TNS CAPI Omnibus surveys respectively, both conducted by TNS. These surveys were based on representative samples of around 4,000 adults (aged 16 or over). More details on the UK 2007 sample methods are given in Appendix 2: TNS Omnibus Random Location Sampling Method. Around 5% of the UK survey interviews (188) were conducted in Wales.

All results are subject to the effects of chance in sampling, so a range of uncertainty (confidence interval) should be associated with any result from the survey. The confidence intervals take into account the effects of clustering, weighting and stratification in the survey design (see Appendix 1: Beaufort Research sampling method and Appendix 2: TNS Omnibus Random Location Sampling Method).

- For questions asked to the whole 2007 Wales sample of around 950, the range of uncertainty around any figure should be no more than +/-4.8%.
- For responses of subgroups, i.e. questions not posed to the whole sample of respondents, the range of uncertainty is correspondingly higher.
- For questions asked to the whole UK 2007 and GB 2005 samples of around 4,000, the range of uncertainty around any figure should be no more than +/- 2.3%.
- For questions asked to the whole samples, differences of more than 5.3% between the Wales 2007 and GB/UK surveys, and differences of 6.7% or more between the 2007 Welsh survey and previous Welsh surveys, are statistically significant.

Results are shown as percentages. These have been individually rounded so may not always total to exactly 100.



## 2. Benefits of forestry

### 2.1 General public benefits

The Welsh Assembly Government funds forestry in many ways. Respondents were presented with a series of statements regarding some of the potential benefits of woodlands and asked to indicate whether they received substantial benefit.

Table 1 reveals a high level of agreement, with around 90% of respondents agreeing with each of the statements.

**Table 1: Whether respondent receives substantial benefit from... (%)**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<i>Don't know</i>
Knowing that Welsh woodlands will be there for future generations	92	7	1
Knowing that there are trees and woodlands in Wales	91	7	2
Knowing that Welsh woodlands provide a place for wildlife	90	8	2
Seeing trees or woods from where you live	89	11	1
Seeing trees and woodlands as you undertake your daily activities	89	10	1

Base: All respondents (953)

## 2.2 Views on the role and use of woodlands

There was strong overall agreement with a series of statements presented to the respondents regarding their views on the purpose and potential uses of woodlands.

Over 90% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed (i.e. provided a rating of 1 'strongly agree' or 2) that:

- Woodlands play an important role in children's and young people's outdoor learning experience;
- Woodlands in Wales are an important part of the country's natural and cultural heritage;
- Woodlands allow families to learn about nature.

**Table 2: Level of agreement with statements (%)**

	<b>(strongly agree)</b>				<b>(strongly disagree)</b>	<i>Don't know</i>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
Woodlands play an important role in children's and young people's outdoor learning experience	46	46	4	1	1	2
Woodlands in Wales are an important part of the country's natural and cultural heritage	44	49	4	1	0	2
Woodlands allow families to learn about nature	38	56	3	1	1	2
Woodlands are places to reduce stress and anxiety	29	55	9	3	0	4
Woodlands are places to exercise and keep fit	24	57	10	5	0	4
It is important to have a say in what happens in your local woodland	27	52	11	6	1	3
Woodlands in Wales are important in helping people to earn a living or make ends meet	16	47	19	7	1	9
Woodlands are good places to meet with friends and family	18	47	18	11	2	4

Base: All respondents (953)

Even though, in both cases, the majority of respondents did either strongly agree or agree, the lowest levels of agreement were with the statements, 'Woodlands in the UK are important in helping people to earn a living or make ends meet' (63%) and 'Woodlands are good places to meet with friends and family' (66%).

### 3. Changes to woodland

'Woodlands for Wales'<sup>1</sup> states that the Welsh Assembly Government aims to provide opportunities for communities to have their say in the management of woods close to where they live. The UK Forestry Standard<sup>2</sup> encourages woodland owners to involve local communities when making decisions about changing the look or the use of woodlands.

#### 3.1 Public consultation over woodland change and use

This section reports on questions concerning public consultation. Respondents were asked whether they had ever been consulted, and would like to be consulted in the future, about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in their area.

4% of respondents in the 2007 Welsh survey said that they had been consulted about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in their area, the same proportion as in 2005.

The Wales 2007 survey respondents (43%) were more likely than Wales 2005 survey respondents (19%) to say that they would like to be consulted in the future. The proportion of the Wales 2007 survey respondents who would like to be consulted in the future was similar to the proportion of GB 2005 respondents.

**Table 3: Public consultation about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in your area, by region (%)**

	GB 2005	Wales 2005	<b>Wales 2007</b>
Have ever been consulted	6	4	<b>4</b>
Would like to be consulted in the future	42	19	<b>43</b>

Base: All respondents - Wales 2007 (953), Wales 2005 (1,001), GB (4,000)

These questions were not asked in the UK 2007 or Wales 2003 surveys.

As already seen in section 2.2, one of the new additional questions asked respondents whether or not they agreed that 'it is important to have a say in what happens in your local woodland'. Table 2 reveals that almost four-fifths of respondents either agreed (52%) or strongly agreed (27%) with this statement.

<sup>1</sup> FC Wales (2001): Wales woodland strategy, woodlands for Wales  
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-53vh7e>

<sup>2</sup> FC (2004): The UK Forestry Standard (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition); the government's approach to sustainable forestry, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh, [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/PDF/fcfc001.pdf/\\$FILE/fcfc001.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/PDF/fcfc001.pdf/$FILE/fcfc001.pdf)

## 4. Climate change

The Welsh Assembly Government believes that climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing the world, that we need to tackle its causes by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and we need to adapt to the impacts of unavoidable climate change.

Globally, forest ecosystems play a key role in addressing climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in growing vegetation and soil. Deforestation caused by the unsustainable harvesting of timber and the conversion of forests to other land-uses leads to significant emissions of this stored carbon back to the atmosphere. Forests and woodlands can also be managed as a sustainable source of wood – an alternative energy source to fossil fuels, and a low-energy construction material.

Although, on a world scale, they cover a small area (13.7% of the Wales surface area in 2007), the forests and woodlands in Wales have a role to play too.

A new section of questions regarding this issue was added to the 2007 survey. Section 6.3 of this report notes that when asked about Forestry Commission Wales' performance in responding to the challenge of climate change, just over a third of responses (35%) were positive and 6% were negative. Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 report the results of the other new questions on this topic.

### 4.1 Impact of climate change

The vast majority of respondents believe that climate change will have an impact on Wales, with the largest proportion believing that there will be a large impact (43% of all respondents).

**Table 4: Impact of climate change (%)**

	<b>Wales 2007</b>
Large impact	43
Slight impact	41
No impact at all	5
Don't know	11

Base: All respondents (953)

## 4.2 Woodlands impact on climate change

In an attempt to gauge both the beliefs and knowledge of the public with respect to the interface between forests and climate change, respondents were asked about their level of agreement with a set of statements regarding the ways in which forests and woodlands in Wales can impact on climate change.

Table 5 reveals a high level of agreement with each of the statements, with more respondents agreeing (selecting '1 strongly agree' or '2') with each statement than disagreeing (selecting '5 strongly disagree' or '4').

The highest level of agreement, almost three-quarters of respondents, was with the statement that 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood'. Around half of respondents believe that 'Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted' and that 'Wales could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees'.

**Table 5: Ways in which forests and woodlands can impact on climate change (%)**

	<b>(strongly agree)</b>				<b>(strongly disagree)</b>	<i>Don't know</i>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
1. Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood	25	46	9	1	1	19
2. Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted	11	41	13	16	1	18
3. Wales could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees	11	36	16	13	2	22
4. Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide	7	28	21	17	2	25
5. Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas	6	28	23	16	3	25
6. Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel	4	24	24	20	4	24

Base: All respondents (953)

It is helpful to consider the numbered statements shown above in Table 5 alongside the following common expert opinion<sup>3</sup>:

<sup>3</sup> Statements and principles from the Forestry Commission 'Forestry and climate change' website: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6umkar>

1. In general, it is believed that forests and woodlands have a key role to play in mitigating the effects of climate change. Forests and woodlands do help to stabilise atmospheric carbon dioxide by sequestering and storing carbon in trees, vegetation and soils.
2. In the short term, cutting down forests and woodlands does make climate change worse, as carbon stocks are released, but in the longer term this is countered by replanting. However, this harvesting and replanting should not be confused with deforestation, which implies a change in land cover from forest to non-forest land, whereas sustainable wood production involves cyclical harvesting and growing.
3. Afforestation makes an important contribution by sequestering carbon, but it is not feasible for the UK to become 'carbon neutral' through afforestation alone. It is estimated that to do this would require creation of some 50 million hectares of forest – approximately twice the land area of the UK. The same principle is of course also valid for Wales.
4. Carbon released by burning woodfuel in modern, efficient systems is re-absorbed by growing trees in a cycle that reduces the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere. The long-term effect of tree planting, good forest management practices and efficient burning woodfuel in efficient systems should be about carbon neutral.
5. Wood and other materials derived from plants have an important contribution to make towards our future energy needs. Wood can be used as a low-carbon renewable energy source to substitute for fossil fuels.
6. Wood products can be used as low-energy alternatives to materials such as concrete and steel, which involve high-energy use in their production. The biomass in wood products is also a carbon stock in its own right, just as much as biomass in living trees.

### 4.3 Forest management in response to climate change

The respondents were then presented with a series of statements regarding the way in which Welsh forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change.

There was a clear distinction in the level of agreement with the six statements posed, but for each, the majority of responses were in line with most expert opinion, as displayed below in Table 6.

The majority of respondents **agreed** that 'a lot more trees should be planted' (86%), that 'more information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment' (79%) and that 'different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates' (73%). Agreement with these points reflects a belief that climate change is occurring but also some amount of faith that forestry and wood can be utilised in an attempt to mitigate changes.

Conversely, a majority of respondents **disagreed** with the statements that 'no action is needed; let nature take its course' (67%), that 'there is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference' (63%) and that 'trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced' (53%). The strong rejection of 'letting nature take its course' and of the idea that 'there is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference' is more evidence that respondents believe we can and should use our knowledge of forestry to attempt to make a difference.

**Table 6: Management of Welsh forests in response to the threat of climate change (%)**

	<b>(strongly agree)</b>				<b>(strongly disagree)</b>	<i>Don't know</i>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
A lot more trees should be planted	34	52	7	2	1	4
More information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment	24	56	10	3	1	7
Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates	20	53	12	3	1	10
Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced	3	16	21	48	5	7
There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference	4	14	11	41	22	8
No action is needed; let nature take its course	4	14	11	42	25	4

Base: All respondents (953)

## 5. Wood as a fuel

In 2007, 6% of respondents to the Wales survey said that they used wood as a fuel in their home, either on its own, or with other fuels. This question was asked in separate 2007 public opinion surveys undertaken across the UK and in Scotland, in the 2005 Wales public opinion survey, in a woodfuel consumption study in Scotland in 2004/05 and additionally in the GB firewood survey in 1997.

Each of these surveys identified a small proportion of respondents who used wood as a fuel. Although the proportion of respondents answering yes is lower in the 2007 Wales survey (6%) than in the 2005 Wales survey (11%), the difference is not quite large enough to be significant at the 95% confidence level. It is notable that the UK result is not significantly different to the GB result from ten years earlier.

**Table 7: Proportion of respondents who use wood as a fuel in their home (%)**

Respondents who used wood as a fuel in their home, either on its own or with other fuels	
GB 1997	9
Scotland 2004/5	5
Wales 2005	11
Scotland 2007	4
UK 2007	8
<b>Wales 2007</b>	<b>6</b>

Base: All respondents in - Wales 2007 (953), Wales 2005 (1,001), UK 2007 (4,000), Scotland 2007 (1,007), Scotland 2004/5 (4,006), GB 1997 (2,000)

The respondents who did use wood for fuel were asked three further questions:

- The majority either gathered their woodfuel themselves (44%) or obtained it a few bags at a time (41%), while 15% received it by the truck load;
- The majority of respondents classified themselves as an occasional user (65%), while 35% said they used wood as a fuel regularly;
- Of those using wood, 19% use it as the main fuel for heating their home, while the rest mainly use something else.



## 6. Awareness of Forestry Commission Wales

The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for forestry in Great Britain. Since devolution in 1999, most policy and operational responsibility has been devolved to national offices in Wales and in England and Scotland.

### 6.1 Awareness and perceived status of Forestry Commission Wales

Respondents were asked whether they had heard of Forestry Commission Wales; 80% answered 'yes', 19% 'no' and 1% 'don't know'.

Of those respondents who had heard of Forestry Commission Wales, 57% correctly identified it as a government department or agency (Table 8). 15% thought that it was an independent body, and 19% said that they did not know its status.

**Table 8: Perception of status of Forestry Commission Wales (%)**

Respondents who had heard of Forestry Commission Wales	
A government department or agency	57
An independent body	15
A private company	5
A body representing private woodland owners	3
None of these	1
Don't know	19

Base: Respondents who had heard of Forestry Commission Wales – 765

Although this question was asked in previous GB and UK surveys (see Table 9), it has not been asked in earlier Welsh surveys. The Welsh 2007 responses are fairly similar to those from the GB and UK surveys between 1997 and 2005. Welsh 2007 respondents were less likely than their GB and UK survey counterparts to think the Forestry Commission was an independent body and more likely to state 'don't know'.

**Table 9: Perception of status of Forestry Commission (%)**

	GB 1997	GB 1999	GB 2001	UK 2003	GB 2005	<b>Wales 2007</b>
Government department or agency	61	62	62	60	60	<b>57</b>
Independent body	20	21	23	23	24	<b>15</b>
Body representing woodland owners	7	3	2	2	3	<b>5</b>
Private company	--	3	3	3	2	<b>3</b>
Don't know	12	11	10	12	11	<b>19</b>

Base: Respondents who had heard of the Forestry Commission – Wales 2007 (765), GB 2005 (2,455), UK 2003 (2,596), GB 2001 (1,440), GB 1999 (1,440), GB 1997 (1,540)

## 6.2 Forestry Commission Wales activities

Most respondents showed a fairly good awareness of a range of Forestry Commission activities<sup>4</sup>. The vast majority were aware that the Forestry Commission lets the public walk in its woodlands (91%) and improves woodland habitats for wildlife (91%). Fewer respondents were aware that the Forestry Commission gives grants to private woodland owners (15% said no and 47% did not know).

**Table 10: Perception of activities carried out by Forestry Commission Wales (%)**

	GB 2005	Wales 2007		
	Yes	Yes	No	<i>Don't know</i>
Improves woodland habitats for wildlife	88	<b>91</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
Lets the public walk in its woods and forests	89	<b>91</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
Provides trails for cycling and horseriding	82	<b>88</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>
Carries out scientific studies	78	<b>71</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>
Sells Christmas trees	59	<b>68</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>
Gives grants to private woodland owners	38	<b>38</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>47</b>

Base: Respondents who had heard of Forestry Commission Wales – 765, GB 2005 - 2,455

### Comparison with previous surveys

Although this question was not asked in earlier Welsh surveys, it has previously been asked in GB and UK surveys. Table 10 demonstrates that the proportion of respondents answering 'yes' was similar in the Wales 2007 and GB 2005 surveys.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that the level of awareness may be overstated, as some respondents may have guessed that the correct response to every activity listed was "yes".

### 6.3 Performance of Forestry Commission Wales

Respondents were also asked to rate the performance of Forestry Commission Wales in pursuing some of its main aims - in managing and protecting Forestry Commission woodland in Wales, in encouraging other landowners to protect and expand Welsh woodlands and in responding to the challenge of climate change. Ratings were given on a scale of 1-5, 1 being 'very good' and 5 being 'very poor'.

Table 11 shows that more than half of respondents (54%) who were aware of Forestry Commission Wales gave their performance in managing and protecting their own woodlands a rating of 1 (very good) or 2.

Around a third of respondents (35%) gave ratings of 1 or 2 for the Forestry Commission's work with other landowners and around a third of respondents (34%) said that they could not rate the Forestry Commission on this activity, which may imply that fewer people were aware of this role.

When asked about Forestry Commission Wales' performance in responding to the challenge of climate change 35% of responses were positive (1 'very good' or 2) and 6% were negative (5 'very poor' or 4).

**Table 11: Rating of Forestry Commission Wales core activities (%)**

	<b>(very good)</b>					<b>(very poor)</b>	<i>Don't know</i>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>		
Managing and protecting FC woodlands	24	30	20	4	1		22
Encouraging other landowners to protect and expand UK woodland	13	22	26	4	1		34
Responding to the challenge of climate change	11	23	29	5	1		30

Base: Respondents who had heard of Forestry Commission Wales – 765

## 7. Woodland recreation

'Woodlands for Wales' states that the Welsh Assembly Government aims to use woodlands to help create a high quality visitor experience as well as to promote health through access to woodlands for all. This section deals with questions relating to recreation in woodlands.

### 7.1 Visits to woodland

Over three-quarters of respondents (79%) said that they had visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation in the last few years (Table 12). This represents a significant increase over the 2005 and 2003 Wales survey results and is in line with the 2007 UK survey result.

**Table 12: Visited woodland in last few years (%)**

	GB 2005	UK 2007	Wales 2003	Wales 2005	<b>Wales 2007</b>
Visited woodland in last few years	65	77	62	69	<b>79</b>

Base: All respondents - Wales 2007 (953), 2005 (1,001), 2003 (1,000), UK 2007 (4,000), GB 2005 (4,000)

Some of the new questions already reported in section 2.2, related to woodland recreation; for example, over four-fifths of respondents either agreed (57%) or strongly agreed (24%) that woodlands are places to exercise and keep fit.

### 6.4 Type of woodland visited

Table 13 shows an increase in the proportion of Welsh survey respondents stating that they had visited woodlands in and around towns (i.e. responding either 'both' or 'in and around towns'), from 50% in 2005 to 64% in 2007. Around four-fifths of respondents said that they had visited woodlands in the countryside in 2007 (81%) and 2005 (79%), (i.e. they responded either 'in the countryside' or 'both').

The responses from the Wales 2007 survey are similar to those received from the UK 2007 survey.

**Table 13: Type of woodland visited (%)**

	GB 2005	UK 2007	Wales 2003	Wales 2005	<b>Wales 2007</b>
In the countryside	46	40	65	49	<b>36</b>
Both	35	43	24	30	<b>45</b>
In and around towns	17	17	11	20	<b>19</b>
Don't know	2	0	0	1	<b>0</b>

Base: Respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years - Wales 2007 (751), 2005 (694), 2003 (620), UK 2007 (3,065), GB 2005 (2,672)

### 6.5 Reasons for not visiting woodland

Respondents who had not visited woodlands in the last few years were asked to specify their reasons for not doing so. The main reasons cited in the Wales 2007 survey for not visiting a forest or woodland were that the respondent had other personal mobility reasons, difficulty in walking, unwell etc' (26%)' or that they were 'not interested in going' (25% of those who had not visited).

The proportion of Wales 2007 survey respondents who were 'not interested in going' was lower in 2007 (25%) than in 2005 (36%). The proportion of respondents who did not visit due to 'other personal mobility reasons' increased from 14% in 2005 to 26% in 2007.

18% of Welsh 2007 survey respondents did not provide a specific reason for not visiting woodland.

**Table 14: Main reason for not visiting forest/woodland in last few years**

	UK 2007	Wales 2005	<b>Wales 2007</b>
Other personal mobility reasons	18	14	26
Not interested in going	26	36	25
Woods are too far away	14	6	10
Lack of time	-	8	6
Don't have a car	11	5	6
Other	17	5	4
Prefer other areas of countryside	2	3	3
Concerns that woods are not safe	3	1	2
Lack of information	2	2	0
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Don't know / No particular reason	9	18	18

Base: Respondents who have not visited woodland in the last few years, Wales 2007 (192) Wales 2005 (308), UK 2007 (935)

## **Appendix 1: Beaufort Research sampling method**

The omnibus sample is designed to be representative of the adult population resident in Wales aged 16 and over. The unit of sampling is the electoral ward and 68 interviewing points throughout Wales are selected with probability proportional to resident population, after stratification within county (unitary authority).

Within each sampling point, interlocking quota controls of age and social class within sex are employed for the selection of respondents.

Quotas are set to reflect the demographic profile of Welsh residents and no more than one person per household is interviewed. A fresh sample is selected for each survey within substantially the same interviewing locations.

Interviews are conducted face to face in the homes of respondents. Beaufort's experienced fieldworkers are used with postal and telephone back-checking in accordance with BS7911.

Fieldwork for the March 2007 survey was largely conducted over the period 9<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> March 2007 with the remaining fieldwork completed a few days later. A total of 952 interviews were completed and analysed.

### **Beaufort Research**

## **Appendix 2: TNS Omnibus Random Location Sampling Method** (UK 2007 survey)

### **SAMPLING FRAME**

The TNS CAPI Omnibus employs a random location methodology. 2001 Census small area statistics and the Postal Address File (PAF) were used to define sample points. These are areas of similar population sizes formed by the combination of wards, with the constraint that each point must be contained within a single Government Office Region (GOR). In addition, geographic systems were employed to minimise the drive time required to cover each area as optimally as possible. 600 points were defined south of the Caledonian Canal in Great Britain (GB), and, for UK samples, another 25 points were defined in a similar fashion in Northern Ireland.

### **STRATIFICATION AND SAMPLE POINT SELECTION**

The Omnibus selected 278 points south of the Caledonian Canal and stratified them by Government Office Region and Social Grade. They were also checked to ensure they are representative by an urban and rural classification. Those points are divided into two replicates. Each set is used in alternate weeks. 16 of the points in Northern Ireland were selected and divided into four replicates. Those replicates are used in rotation to give a wide spread across the Province over time in the UK samples. Similarly the statistical accuracy of the GB sampling is maximised by issuing sequential waves of fieldwork systematically across the sampling frame to provide maximum geographical dispersion. This ensures that the sample point selection remains representative for any specific fieldwork wave.

### **SELECTION OF CLUSTERS WITHIN SAMPLING POINTS**

All the sample points in the sampling frame have been divided into two geographically distinct segments each containing, as far as possible, equal populations. The segments comprise aggregations of complete wards. For the Omnibus alternate A and B halves are worked each wave of fieldwork. Each week different wards are selected in each required half and Census Output Areas selected within those wards. Then, blocks containing an average of 150 addresses are sampled in those areas from the PAF.

### **DESIGN EFFECT**

As with all multi-stage sample designs, there are effects on the magnitude of the standard error of estimates that arise from a number of sources. The greatest contributors are caused negatively by the effects of clustering and weighting and positively by the effects of stratification. These are collectively known as 'design effects'. The 'design factor' is used to estimate the ratio of the standard error of these complex sample estimates to that of a simple random sample of the same size. Design factors vary from one variable to another depending on the inter-correlations that exist between that variable and the causes of variation in the size of the standard error. For example social grade tends to be correlated between households in small geographical areas and thus variables that are correlated with social grade (e.g. visits to woodland) will have larger design factors. Such design factors need to be individually calculated from actual data to obtain accurate estimates for any given variable. Common practice is the use of a 'modal' value for application to estimates. For the Omnibus TNS recommend a design factor of 1.5 be applied to the calculation of confidence limits and when testing for significance.

### **INTERVIEWING AND QUOTA CONTROLS**

Assignments are conducted over two days of fieldwork and are carried out on weekdays from 2 p.m. – 8 p.m. and at the weekend. Quotas are set by sex (male, female housewife, female non-housewife); within female housewife, presence of children and working status, and within men, working status, to ensure a balanced sample of adults within effective contacted addresses. Interviewers are instructed to leave 3 doors between each successful interview.

## Appendix 3: Wales Questionnaire 2007

<p><b>Q1</b></p>	<p><b>Do you receive substantial benefit from any of the following? (Yes/No/Don't know)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing trees or woods from where you live</li> <li>• Knowing that there are trees and woodlands in Wales</li> <li>• Seeing trees and woodlands as you undertake your daily activities</li> <li>• Knowing that Welsh woodlands will be there for future generations</li> <li>• Knowing that Welsh woodlands provide a place for wildlife</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q2</b></p>	<p><b>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b>            ((1) strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, (5) strongly disagree, and don't know)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodlands are places to reduce stress and anxiety</li> <li>• Woodlands are places to exercise and keep fit</li> <li>• Woodlands allow families to learn about nature</li> <li>• Woodlands are good places to meet with friends and family</li> <li>• Woodlands in Wales are an important part of the country's natural and cultural heritage</li> <li>• Woodlands play an important role in children's and young people's outdoor learning experience</li> <li>• Woodlands in Wales are important in helping people to earn a living or make ends meet</li> <li>• It is important to have a say in what happens in your local woodland</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q3</b></p>	<p><b>How much of an impact do you think climate change will have on Wales?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large impact</li> <li>• Slight impact</li> <li>• No impact at all</li> <li>• Don't know</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q4</b></p>	<p><b>Would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the ways in which forests and woodlands in Wales can impact on climate change?</b>            ((1) strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, (5) strongly disagree, and don't know)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood</li> <li>• Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted</li> <li>• Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas</li> <li>• Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide</li> <li>• Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel</li> <li>• Wales could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q5</b></p>	<p><b>Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding how Welsh forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change?</b>            ((1) strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, (5) strongly disagree, and don't know)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference</li> <li>• No action is needed; let nature take its course</li> <li>• A lot more trees should be planted</li> <li>• Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced</li> <li>• Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates</li> <li>• More information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment</li> </ul>



<p><b>Q6</b></p>	<p><b>a. Do you ever use wood as a fuel in your home, either on its own or with other fuels?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No     <i>(skip to Q7)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>b. Do you get the wood by the truck load, or a few bags at a time, or gather it yourself?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. by the truck load</li> <li>2. a few bags at a time</li> <li>3. gather it yourself</li> <li>4. don't know</li> </ol> <p><b>c. Do you use wood as a fuel regularly or only occasionally?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. regularly</li> <li>2. occasionally</li> <li>3. don't know</li> </ol> <p><b>d. Is wood the main fuel for heating your home, or do you mainly use something else?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. main fuel</li> <li>2. mainly use something else</li> <li>3. don't know</li> </ol>
<p><b>Q7</b></p>	<p><b>a. Have you ever been consulted about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in your area?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p><b>b. Would you like to be consulted (again) about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in your area?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q8</b></p>	<p><b>a. In the last few years, have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p><b>If YES ask Q8b, If NO then skip to Q8c</b></p> <p><b>b. Did you visit woodlands in the countryside or woodlands in and around towns?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodlands in the countryside</li> <li>• Woodlands in and around towns</li> <li>• Both</li> </ul> <p><b>c. What was the main reason that you did not visit?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not interested in going</li> <li>• Don't have a car</li> <li>• Lack of suitable public transport</li> <li>• Other personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking, unwell, etc.)</li> <li>• Woods are too far away</li> <li>• Lack of facilities (play areas, picnic areas, etc.)</li> <li>• Lack of information about woods to visit</li> <li>• Prefer other areas of countryside</li> <li>• Concerns that woods are not safe</li> <li>• Other (specify)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Q9</b></p>	<p><b>Have you heard of Forestry Commission Wales?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No (if no, then go to Q11)</li> </ul> <p><b>Do you think that Forestry Commission Wales is ...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A government department or agency</li> <li>• An independent body</li> <li>• A body representing private woodland owners</li> <li>• A private company</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q10</b></p>	<p><b>I am now going to read out a number of forestry activities and for each one I would like you to say whether you think it is something done by Forestry Commission Wales. So do you think Forestry Commission Wales ...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lets the public walk in its woods and forests</li> <li>• Provides trails for cycling and horse-riding</li> <li>• Improves woodland habitats for wildlife</li> <li>• Sells Christmas trees</li> <li>• Gives grants to private woodland owners</li> <li>• Carries out scientific studies</li> </ul> <p><b>On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how would you rate Forestry Commission Wales' overall performance in ...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing and protecting Forestry Commission woodlands in Wales</li> <li>• Encouraging other landowners to protect and expand Wales' woodlands</li> <li>• Responding to the challenge of climate change</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q11</b></p>	<p><b>Do you have any long-term illness, health problems or disability which limits your daily activities or the work you can do?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>