

North East England

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www.forestry.gov.uk/northeastengland



North East England

EWGS & Regional Update

Update No 15 (9 September 2009)

Timber sales and Woodfuel feature in this issue as well as the usual grants round up. Rather than pick out items of interest I have attached the whole Woodfuel Watch newsletter as you will find snippets of useful information throughout.

Also attached are our new Woodland Improvement & Woodland Creation Grant leaflets outlining what is currently on offer.

EWGS Update

As mentioned in the March update the approval of the Rural Development Programme for England secured increased funding for forestry grants. Consequently we are still able to fund Woodland Improvement Grants and Woodland Creation Grants for payment this financial year.

Most Importantly all applications for planting this year or next **MUST** be received before the closure date of 30 September – which is only **3** weeks away. If you are registering yourself or land in order to apply for EWGS, please ensure you put in bold letters on top of your RLE1 form **“FORESTRY COMMISSION TASK”**, this will help the RPA prioritise your application.

We have increased planting grant contributions and up to £3,800 per ha is now available in Northumberland National Park and Quality of Place Priority Areas towards initial planting and maintenance costs. To check priority areas you can access the [Land Information Search](#) by entering your grid reference and ticking the Quality of Place Priority Areas box on the right hand menu.

The introduction of the Woodland Improvement Grant to address the decline in woodland birds is proving very popular and we have already allocated £99,000 towards work to be carried out over the next 3 years.

Almost all improvements to woodland structure will benefit woodland bird survival and breeding. Where the woodland is within the known breeding area of one of the 14 species identified as declining in the north east then this work can attract an 80% contribution towards costs.

Work can be as diverse as ride management, thinning, fencing and road making and maintenance to enable access.

Update on Grant Availability

Grant Type	Used for	Claim year 09/10	Claim year 10/11
WCG	Planting	Open until Sept 30	Open until Sept 30
WPG	Planning	Closed	Open
WAG	Surveys	Open	Open
WRG	Restocking	Closed	Open
WIG	Biodiversity & Access Work capital works	Open	Open
WMG	Annual Biodiversity & Access annual work	Closed	Open

Please remember that your woodlands do not have to be certified to receive woodland Improvement Grants but we may require a simple condition assessment to be written.

Also that woodlands between 30 ha and 100 ha can now apply for Management Grants without the need to be certified. However we will require a Management Plan to have been written. To assist with this the Planning Grant can be used, this pays £20 per ha for the first 100 ha and 10 per ha there after with a minimum payment of £1,000.

Timber Markets

During competitive tenders in July and August, the Forestry Commission saw good demand for all of its timber, both in standing sales and for timber offered at roadside.

The spring and summer has witnessed steady but sometimes vigorous demand for timber resulting from the exchange rate, low stock holding and a general lack of timber coming to the market from private woodlands.

Many customers report good order books although with carcassing lagging behind a little in demand.

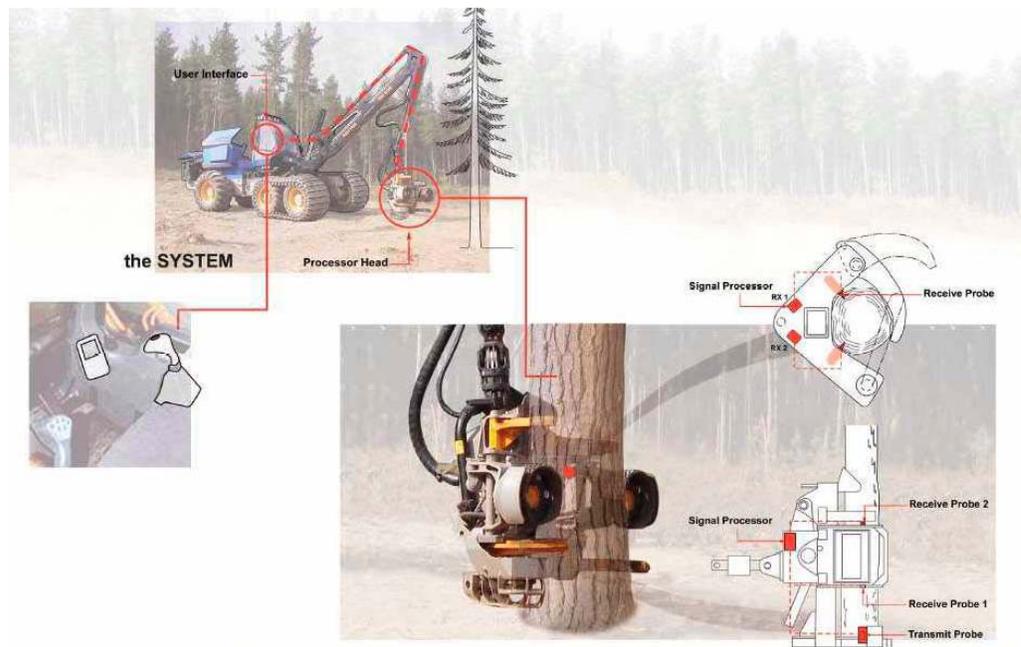
Forecasts look reasonably good as we come out of the summer sawmill shutdown period and we anticipate that all contracts for timber from FE Forests will be fulfilled and completed.

Acoustic Tool Improves Tree Harvesting Efficiency

A new research project has successfully won £50k of funding from the Genomia Fund to develop an acoustic harvester head that can assess timber quality at the point of harvesting. Worth a total of £155k, this project could improve the value of timber in the UK and Europe and reduce the amount of timber required to be imported.

Current harvesting practice sees trees felled and processed before the quality of their timber is assessed by stress grading machines at the sawmill. Unfortunately, with the inherent variability of wood, this can cause significant wastage as unsuitable timber is detected late in the process, incurring financial and environmental costs. Over the past few years, hand-held acoustic tools have been developed that can assess the quality of wood on cut logs and standing trees. However, this new project for Forest Research, carried out in collaboration with Forestry Commission Scotland's Mechanical Engineering Services and the private sector, will add this technology to the harvesting head itself, enabling trees to be more easily checked and allocated to a particular use before initial processing. This will improve the efficiency of the wood supply chain and reduce the social and environmental impacts of unnecessary timber transport and processing.

How the Acoustic Tool Works



The Study of the Forestry Commission Estate in England Consultation on the Long-term role of the public forest estate

A major piece of evidence that the study will consider will be the results of a public consultation. The public consultation was launched on 6 July 2009 and will finish on 28 September 2009. If you have an interest in England's trees, woods and forests you should be interested in the public forest estate and this [consultation](#).

The Study

Following Forestry Commission England's recommendation the Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, has asked the Forestry Commission to undertake a study of the estate the Forestry Commission manages in England. The Study is part of the Forestry Commission's Corporate Plan 2008–11 published in June 2008 <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-corporateplans>.

The purpose of the study to:

- **Consider the future long term sustainable role for the public forest estate making recommendations about any necessary changes to improve its ability to deliver relevant priorities in the Strategy for England's Trees Woods and Forests and contribute to other government objectives.**

Forestry Commission's England National Committee is overseeing the study. An external Working Group has been set up to support the process. There is ongoing information gathering and research as well as a formal public [consultation](#) to seek wider views. The group will make recommendations to the England National Committee, which will consider them and then make recommendations to our Minister. The process should be completed during the autumn or winter of 2009.

A [booklet](#) has been produced describing the estate and setting out some of the activities carried out on it.

If you wish to get in touch with the Project Team please contact:

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Awards For Best in Woodland Projects

The results of this competition run by the Royal Forestry Society and mentioned in the March update were awarded at the Great Yorkshire Show and congratulations are due to Teesdale Estate, Wheelbirks Farm and Middleton-in Teesdale-School in our catchment area.

The Awards, which were held in association with the Forestry Commission, were being piloted by the RFS in Yorkshire and the North East. Prizes for all five categories were presented at the Great Yorkshire Show, with the RFS Yorkshire Division 'Teaching Trees' project donating the Schools award first prize.

Find out more about
the Royal Forestry
Society at:

rfs.org.uk

The winners are:

Duke of Cornwall Award
for multipurpose forestry

First Prize: Hovingham Estate, York
Second: Upper Teesdale Estate, Darlington
Special Commendation: Ralph Hoyle, Grimston Wood, York

Silviculture Award

Joint First Prize:
Hovingham Estate, York
Wheelbirks Estate Company, Wheelbirks Farm, Stocksfield, Northumberland

Community Forestry Award

First Prize: The Heaton Woods Trust for Heaton Woods
Second: Sheffield City Council for Ecclesall Woods

Farm Woodland Award

First Prize: John Hepworth, Braemar Farm, Rolston, Hornsea, East Riding
Second: Justin Arnold, Woodbottom Farm, Stainburn, Otley, North Yorkshire

Schools Award

First Prize: Middleton in Teesdale Primary School
Joint Second:
Heaton Children's Services Forest School
North Yorks Moors juniper tree project

New Bog Standard Achieved For Once Parched Ancient Mires

The UK's biggest ever project to restore the 12,000 year old deep bogs of the north country has been completed nearly two years ahead of schedule. Over 1,000 hectares (2,500 acres) of the unique Border Mires – one of the world's most important wetland habitats – have been reinstated after a £700,000 scheme, which has seen 800,000 conifers felled on the Forestry Commission estate and 15 kilometres of drains blocked to re-wet the land. The work was done in just three years by the Forestry Commission, Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Northumberland National Park, Natural England, Newcastle University and RAF Spadeadam. Once again many of the Mires' glinting ponds are brimming with dragonflies, while plants such as bog asphodel, sundews and sphagnum moss have been boosted, along with the prospects for wading birds like dunlin and curlew. Neville Geddes, from the Forestry Commission, said:

"For the Border Mires it's now a question of time. Most of the critical work has been done and the bogs will gradually heal over hundreds of years, laying down new peat and supporting ever more flourishing colonies of bog plants and insects. We get dazzled by the wonders of the rain forest and marvellous ancient woodlands. But while bogs may lack the same visual impact, in many ways they are an even more endangered and fragile habitat."

Formed after the Ice Age, the Border Mires straddle Northumberland and Cumbria, and have been designated as Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the European Habitats Directive, in addition to multiple designations as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Britain holds approximately 13% of the world resource of blanket bog so the Mires are internationally important and a priority to conserve.

**Forestry
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And To Finish ... A Note From Tree Aid

Hi there,

We thought you would like to see an article written by TREE AID which is featured on the BBC website. The article makes the case for policy makers to recognise the important role trees play in providing emergency food aid, rather than short-term solutions. And judging by the response, people seem to agree. You can get to the article via the link on the home page of our website:

www.treeaid.org.uk

Please also forward this email to anyone you think might be interested.

Thanks very much

Lynne

Lynne Knight
Supporter Fundraising Assistant
TREE AID