

80% Woodland Improvement Grant: Ancient Woodland Restoration in East England

Introduction This leaflet provides guidance on how to apply for this regionally focused grant. It supplements the generic guidance on Woodland Improvement Grant, which is available from the [EWGS website](#).

Background Ancient woodland (i.e. native woodland with a continuous cover of tree species since at least c. 1600 AD) has the highest cultural and environmental importance; it is scarce and irreplaceable.

The East of England has approximately 19,000ha of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands (ASNW) and 8,000ha of Planted Semi-Natural Woodland Sites (PAWS), the majority of which lack formal management regimes.

Woodland that is managed tends to have higher biodiversity interest than woodland that is not managed. All ancient woodland is important and should ideally be under management, but research has demonstrated that higher levels of biodiversity benefits are realised when management is targeted at larger woodlands or where there is a higher density of woodland.

Eligibility In order to be eligible for this grant applicants must meet the following:

- The general criteria and conditions for Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) apply – refer to the [WIG guidance](#) for further details
- The woodland must be listed as ancient woodland on the Provisional Inventory of Ancient Woodland

Applicants can check ancient and semi-natural woodland boundaries by using the [Land Information Search](#) at www.forestry.gov.uk/planting and click on “Land Information Search”). The Inventory is not comprehensive and other woodlands that include ancient woodland indicator species may be eligible at the discretion of FC Woodland Officers.

- At least 50% of the woodland must lie within the boundary of a cluster area (see below)
- The proposed work must protect or enhance ancient semi-natural woodland or restore ancient woodland habitats.

Clusters A project to map 18 clusters of “hot spots” of higher density ancient woodland in the region was undertaken by the County Wildlife Trusts overseen by Norfolk Wildlife Services. For convenience these clusters are identified with a 8km radius around a centre grid reference.

Name of cluster	County	Grid ref (centre point of 8km radius circle)
King's Lynn	Norfolk	TF 718 239
Swanton Novers	Norfolk	TG 026 294
Sheringham	Norfolk	TG 119 392
Waveney	Suffolk	TM 455 832
South Suffolk	Suffolk	TM 121 410
Haverhill	Cambridgeshire/Suffolk	TL 642 530
Grafham	Cambridgeshire/Bedfordshire	TL 137 675
Huntingdon	Cambridgeshire	TL 205 799
West Peterborough	Cambridgeshire/Peterborough	TF125 027
North Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire	TL 024 640
Marston Vale	Bedfordshire	SP 977 445
Greensand Ridge	Bedfordshire	TL 108 429
Dacorum	Hertfordshire/Bedfordshire	TL 076 127
Welwyn	Hertfordshire	TL 266 160
Broxbourne	Hertfordshire/Essex	TL 308 074
Saffron Walden	Essex/Cambridgeshire	TL 576 382
Braintree	Essex	TL 829 288
Tendring	Essex	TM 091 216

Grant details Within the 18 clusters we can contribute up to 80% of agreed costs for the management of ancient woodland.

Woodlands outside the ancient woodland clusters may still be eligible for Woodland Improvement Grant at a contribution rate of 50%.

Further information This guidance is supported by Forestry Commission East England Region (01842 815544; east.fce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

General details on the English Woodland Grant Scheme are available in a pack that can be obtained from your local FC office, or downloadable from the FC website www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs.

Supplementary information on EWGS is also available in the EWGS document library on the FC website www.forestry.gov.uk/england-documents.

For general advice on EWGS you can contact either your local FC office or the EWGS helpline (01223 346004)

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Version 1.1 published 1st August 2007 – revised cluster grid references