

Timber Operations

Frequently Asked Questions

Q Why are the branches left on the ground looking a mess?

A The Forestry Commission does clear up the 'brash' left behind after tree felling from main access paths but otherwise it is left for practical economic reasons. From a conservation point of view, it is important to leave brash on the ground to provide habitat areas for woodland creatures but also to allow the nutrients locked up in the branches to decay back into the soil.

Q Why isn't timber felling only carried out when the ground is dry enough to prevent any damage?

A Timber operations are carefully planned to take into account a number of factors including ground conditions and public pressure at different times of the year. Wherever possible wetter areas are felled in the drier months but this is not always possible as other factors must be considered. It is the responsibility of the Forestry Commission staff to undertake an Operational Site Assessment (OSA) prior to the commencement of any timber operation. This assessment details the work to be undertaken and considers the likely impact the project may have upon the wildlife, heritage and recreation interests for the area. Where potentially adverse impacts are identified measures are taken to mitigate those impacts. For example, it may be a popular recreation site which is heavily used during the summer months, therefore public safety must be considered or protected birds are nesting so felling must be postponed.



Q Why don't you fix the mess you make of the tracks immediately?

A We aim to reinstate the grass rides as soon as possible after work is completed but this is sometimes delayed due to weather conditions or availability of machinery. Gravel tracks can be in use by heavy timber lorries for several weeks or months after the trees have been felled and extracted to roadside so the repair of any damaged tracks is delayed until after this time to avoid repeated damage occurring.

Q Why are there so many signs put up?

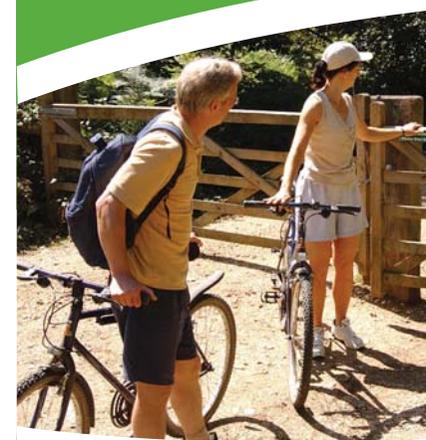
A During work, signs are erected to warn of the presence of forest operations and to restrict access to the immediate work site from Monday to Friday for the safety of both public and workers. Additional signs provide site-specific information about the work including its duration. After work has finished lorries may still be coming in and out of the inclosure to collect timber so for public safety, warning signs are left up until this has been completed.

If you would like further information about specific Forest Design Plans or forestry works please contact the Forestry Commission ranger team at:

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Forest Design Plans

& the New Forest Inclosures



Forest Design Plans and the New Forest Inclosures

Q What is an Inclosure?

A An inclosure is an area of land originally fenced off to grow trees. The fences keep out commoning animals which can damage the young trees. There are 100 inclosures in the New Forest, an area of 8,500 hectares. Today they are not only important for producing timber but also for their conservation and recreation value.

Q What are Forest Design Plans?

A Each inclosure has a plan which has been produced to guide its management over the next 20 years in detail and 100 years in outline. These plans are called Forest Design Plans.

Q So how are these plans produced?

A Plans are produced by the Forestry Commission's planning team who consult with and take advice from a 'Forest Design Plan Forum' consisting of representatives from the Verderers, planning authorities, conservation organisations, local businesses and private individuals. Public consultation events are carried out across the forest to ensure that the views of everyone are taken into account and incorporated into the final plans.



Q Can we really make a difference to the plans.

A Absolutely. In 1999 and 2000 the Forestry Commission undertook their biggest ever Forest Design Plan public under the banner 'New Forest New Future'. Thousands of people took part in over 100 events from open days to walks and talks. In response to comments made by those attending these events amendments were made to some of the plans. In 2005 and 2006 these plans are being reviewed and another series of events are taking place.



Q Why are these plans so important?

A The Forest Design Plans produced in 1999/2000 heralded a change in emphasis away from the traditional view of inclosures which simply produce timber, towards woodlands that provide bio-diversity to enhance the environment; attractive landscapes for public access and recreation; woodlands which contribute to local employment, support industries using wood products; and woodlands which recognise and protect archaeological and cultural features.

Q What will the plans do?

A Everywhere in the New Forest is different and this is reflected in the Forest Design Plans for each area. In some areas conservation or recreation may have the highest priority, in others traditional tree growing. Some inclosures will gradually be reverted back to heathland in others, areas of near natural and ancient and ornamental pasture woodland will be restored. The overall proportion of broadleaf trees, such as beech and oak, to conifers, such as pine and fir, will gradually increase from 37% to over 50%.



Q Once the plans are finalised is that it for the next 100 years?

A No. Every five years the plans are reviewed by the Forestry Commission, Design Plan Forum and through public consultation.

