

Public Opinion of Forestry 2014, Northern Ireland

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Introduction

The Forestry Commission has conducted surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995.

Information has been collected for Northern Ireland, on behalf of the Forest Service, through UK-wide surveys since 2003 and in separate Northern Ireland surveys (around 1,000 adults) carried out in 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2014.

This publication presents results from the Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014 on:

- Forestry in the media;
- Benefits of forestry;
- Climate change;
- Changes to woodland;
- Consultation on Forest Service forests;
- Woodland recreation;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Tree health; and
- Wood as a fuel.

A copy of the questionnaire used in this survey, giving complete wording of questions and response options, is provided in the Annex at the end of this report.

Reports providing results from previous surveys are available on the Forestry Commission website at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zyl9w. Reports from surveys run across the UK as a whole, in Scotland and in Wales, are also available from this web page.

Comparisons with earlier years (from Northern Ireland surveys run in 2005, 2007 and 2010) are included where possible. Results for Northern Ireland from UK-wide surveys (run in 2003, 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013) are not included, given the small sample sizes involved.

Results from the 2014 survey are published for the first time in this release. Figures for earlier years have not been revised from those previously released. For further details, see the Revisions section of the Annex.

As the data are obtained from a sample survey, there is a range of uncertainty (confidence interval) associated with any results produced. Any differences highlighted in the text are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level unless otherwise stated. For further details, see the Data Sources and Methodology and the Quality sections of the Annex.

Key findings

In Northern Ireland:

- **61%** of adults in Northern Ireland have seen or read about Northern Ireland's forests and woodlands in the media in the last 12 months.
- **96%** of respondents believed that there was at least one benefit of forestry worth supporting with public money.
- **82%** agree or strongly agree that 'trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood'.
- **91%** agree or strongly agree that 'a lot more trees should be planted' in response to the threat of climate change.
- **79%** of respondents would like to see more woodland in their part of Northern Ireland.
- **73%** of respondents thought that preventing the spread of disease was an acceptable reason for cutting down trees.
- **15%** of respondents are aware that the Forest Service consults on the management of Forest Service forests and **24%** would like to be consulted in future.
- **Three quarters** of respondents have visited forests or woodlands in the last few years.
- **70%** of respondents who had visited woodlands considered visits to woodland and the outdoors to be good for relaxing and unwinding.
- Leisurely walking is the most common activity on visits to woodlands (**82%** of those who had visited).
- Almost **one third** of respondents who had visited woodlands were aware of the advice to help prevent the spread of tree pests and diseases.
- **29%** use wood as fuel in their home.

Forestry in the media

Respondents were asked whether they had seen or read about Northern Ireland’s forests and woodlands in the media (television, radio, internet, social media, etc) in the last 12 months.

Most respondents in Northern Ireland in 2014 (61%) recalled seeing or reading about at least one topic (Table 1). The most commonly identified topics were ‘walking, running, cycling, mountain biking or horse riding’ and ‘tree pests and diseases’ (each recalled by 27% of respondents), ‘tree planting’ (24%) and ‘birds and other animals in woodlands’ and ‘forests and woodlands as places to visit’ (21% each).

The proportion of respondents in 2014 who recalled seeing or reading about ‘tree pests and diseases’ (27%), represents a significant increase over the 2010 figure (7%). This follows considerable media coverage on the Chalara dieback of Ash since 2012. Other significant changes since 2010 included reductions in those who recalled ‘tree planting’ (from 33% to 24%) and ‘birds and other animals in woodlands’ (29% to 21%).

Table 1: Respondents who had seen or read about Northern Ireland’s forests and woodlands in the last 12 months^{1,2}

Topic ^{4,5}	Percent of respondents			
	2005	2007	2010	2014
Walking, running, cycling, mountain biking, horse riding	..	..	..	27
Tree pests and diseases	2	6	7	27
Tree planting	22	28	33	24
Birds and other animals in forests and woodlands	13	19	29	21
Forests and woodlands as places to visit	12	13	21	21
The role of forests and woodlands in helping to reduce the impacts of climate change ³	..	17	22	15
Protection of ancient woodland	..	..	..	14
Public right of pedestrian access to forests ³	7	10	15	14
Flowers and other plants in forests and woodlands	7	11	16	12
Forests and woodlands for the use of local people and communities	..	..	13	12
Wood for fuel/ firewood ³	3	8	13	10
Labelling to show that wood products are produced from sustainable sources ³	1	3	11	6
New native woodland	5	9	10	6
At least one topic	38	51	62	61

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: 2005 (1,004), 2007 (1,021), 2010 (1,011), 2014 (994).
2. .. denotes data not available (response option not included in that year’s survey).
3. Changes to the wording of these options may have resulted in inconsistencies over time.
4. Respondents could select more than one topic.
5. Excludes other responses (1% of respondents in 2014) and options included in earlier years only.

Benefits of forestry

Respondents were asked to select, from a list of possible public benefits, good reasons to support forestry in Northern Ireland with public money.

Table 2 shows that, in 2014, 96% of respondents believed there was at least one benefit of forestry worth supporting with public money. As in previous years, the top reason to support forestry in Northern Ireland with public money was 'to provide places for wildlife to live' with 62% of respondents in 2014 selecting this as a benefit. 'To provide places for families to play' (55%) and 'to provide places for recreation' (44%) were also seen as important reasons to support forestry with public money.

Table 2: Reasons to support forestry with public money^{1,2}

Reason ^{4,5}	Percent of respondents			
	2005	2007	2010	2014
To provide places for wildlife to live	55	60	72	62
To provide places for families to play	..	..	48	55
To provide places for recreation (such as walking, running, cycling and horse riding)	..	..	61	44
To help rural tourism	39	33	46	41
To provide places for relaxation and stress relief ³	39	37	51	40
To improve the countryside landscape	47	43	56	39
To combat climate change ³	43	46	47	37
To support the economy in rural areas	30	29	44	37
To provide renewable energy ³	21	24	40	36
To provide places for learning	..	..	45	33
To provide timber	17	19	32	30
To provide better access to forests and woodlands ³	24	24	38	30
To make us more self-sufficient in timber and wood products ³	18	19	30	27
All of these	..	..	..	15
At least one reason	86	83	96	96

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: 2005 (1,004), 2007 (1,021), 2010 (1,011), 2014 (994).
2. .. denotes data not available (response option not included in that year's survey).
3. Changes to the wording of these options may have resulted in inconsistencies over time.
4. Respondents could select more than one reason.
5. Excludes options included in earlier years only.

Climate change

Since 2007, respondents have been asked to indicate their level of agreement with two sets of statements related to woodlands and climate change.

Woodlands' impact on climate change

Respondents were asked about their level of agreement with a set of statements regarding the ways in which forests and woodlands in Northern Ireland can impact on climate change.

Table 3 shows that the highest levels of agreement in 2014, where respondents selected 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', were with the following statements:

- 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood' (82% agreed);
- 'Northern Ireland could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees' (62% agreed).

The lowest levels of agreement in 2014 were with the following statements:

- 'Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide' (40% agreed);
- 'Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel' (43% agreed).

Table 3: Ways in which forests and woodlands can impact on climate change¹

	Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree		
	2007	2010	2014
Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood	78	86	82
Northern Ireland could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees	49	55	62
Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas	51	55	55
Cutting down forests and woodlands makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted	59	49	53
Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel	39	45	43
Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide	29	25	40

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: 2007 (1,021), 2010 (1,011), 2014 (994).

Forest management in response to climate change

Respondents were presented with a series of statements regarding the way in which forests and woodlands in Northern Ireland should be managed in response to the threat of climate change.

Table 4 shows that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- 'A lot more trees should be planted' (91% in 2014);
- 'More information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment' (86%); and that
- 'Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates' (84%).

Table 4: Management of Northern Ireland's forests in response to the threat of climate change¹

	Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree		
	2007	2010	2014
A lot more trees should be planted	85	87	91
More information should be provided about the ways in which forests and woodlands can lessen our impact on the environment	81	86	86
Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates	75	79	84

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: 2007 (1,021), 2010 (1,011), 2014 (994).

Changes to woodland

Respondents were asked whether or not they would like to see more woodland in their part of Northern Ireland. Most respondents in 2014 (79%) said they would like to see more woodland in their part of Northern Ireland and a further 16% reported that they would like to see 'neither more nor less' (Table 5). Only 3% said they would like to see less.

Table 5: Desire for change in woodland area^{1,2}

	Percent of respondents			
	2005	2007	2010	2014
More	75	78	77	79
A lot more	..	56	51	43
A little more	..	23	26	36
Neither more nor less	15	10	18	16
Less	1	1	3	3
A little less	..	1	2	2
A lot less	..	0	1	1
Don't know	9	10	3	2
All respondents	100	100	100	100

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

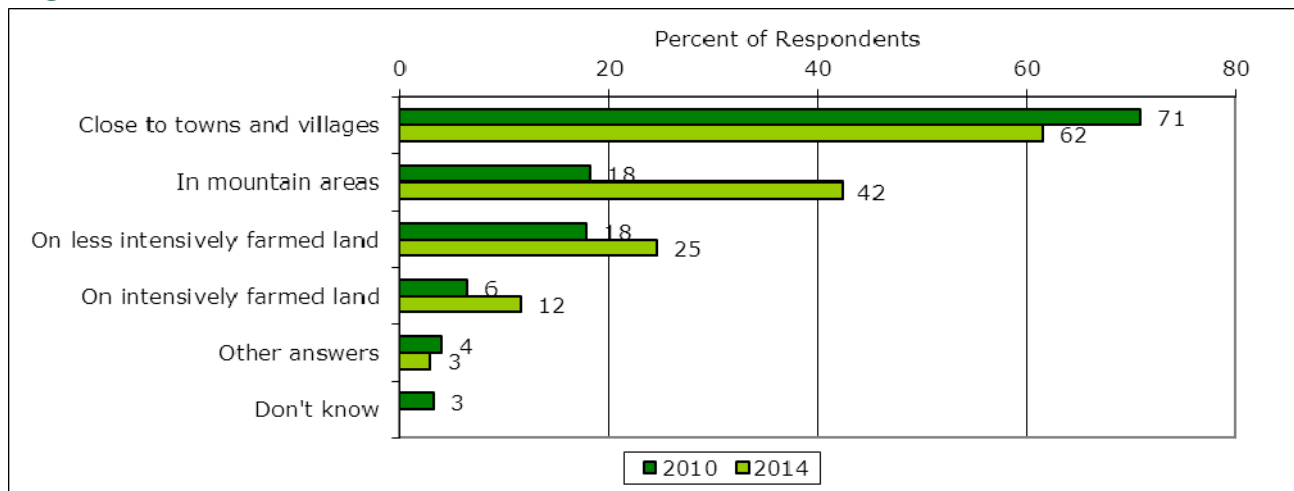
1. Figures are based on all respondents: 2005 (1,004), 2007 (1,021), 2010 (1,011), 2014 (994).
2. .. denotes data not available (response option not included in that year's survey).

Public Opinion of Forestry – Northern Ireland

Respondents who had indicated that they would like to see more woodland in their part of Northern Ireland were then asked where they thought any new woodlands should be created. This question was first asked in the 2010 survey.

In 2014, 62% of respondents who would like to see more woodland in their part of Northern Ireland thought that new woodlands should be created close to towns and villages and 42% thought new woodland should be created in mountain areas (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Location of new woodland^{1,2}



Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

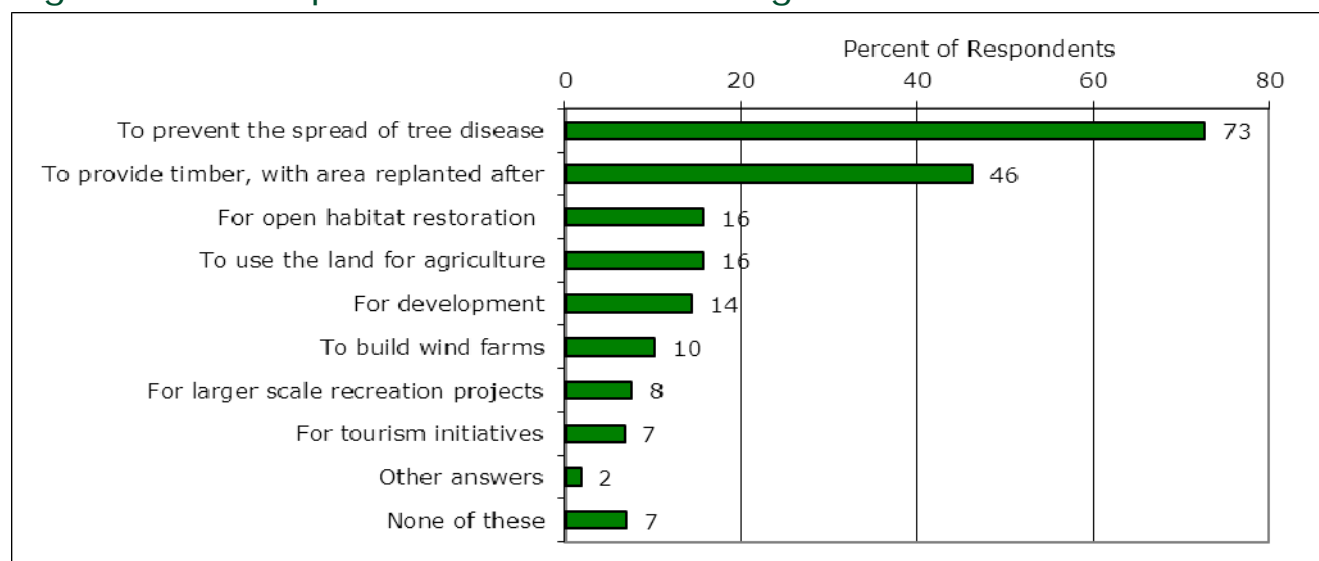
1. Figures are based on all respondents who would like more woodland: 2010 (775), 2014 (787).
2. Respondents could select more than one location.

Public Opinion of Forestry – Northern Ireland

A new question was introduced in 2014 to seek respondents' views on acceptable reasons for cutting down trees.

Around three quarters of respondents (73%) thought that preventing the spread of disease and 46% thought that providing timber, with the area being replanted afterwards were acceptable reasons for cutting down trees (Figure 2). Each of the other options were considered acceptable by fewer than one fifth of respondents. Few respondents (7%) thought that there were no acceptable reasons for cutting down trees.

Figure 2: Acceptable reasons for cutting down trees^{1,2}



Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents (994).
2. Respondents could select more than one reason.

Consultation on Forest Service forests

Since 2007, respondents have been asked a series of questions related to consultation on the management of Forest Service forests. 15% of respondents in 2014 were aware that the Forest Service consults on the management of Forest Service forests and around one quarter (24%) stated that they would like to be consulted (Table 6).

Table 6: Consultation on management of local woodland¹

	Percent of respondents		
	2007	2010	2014
Aware that Forest Service consults	10	13	15
Would like to be consulted	26	33	24

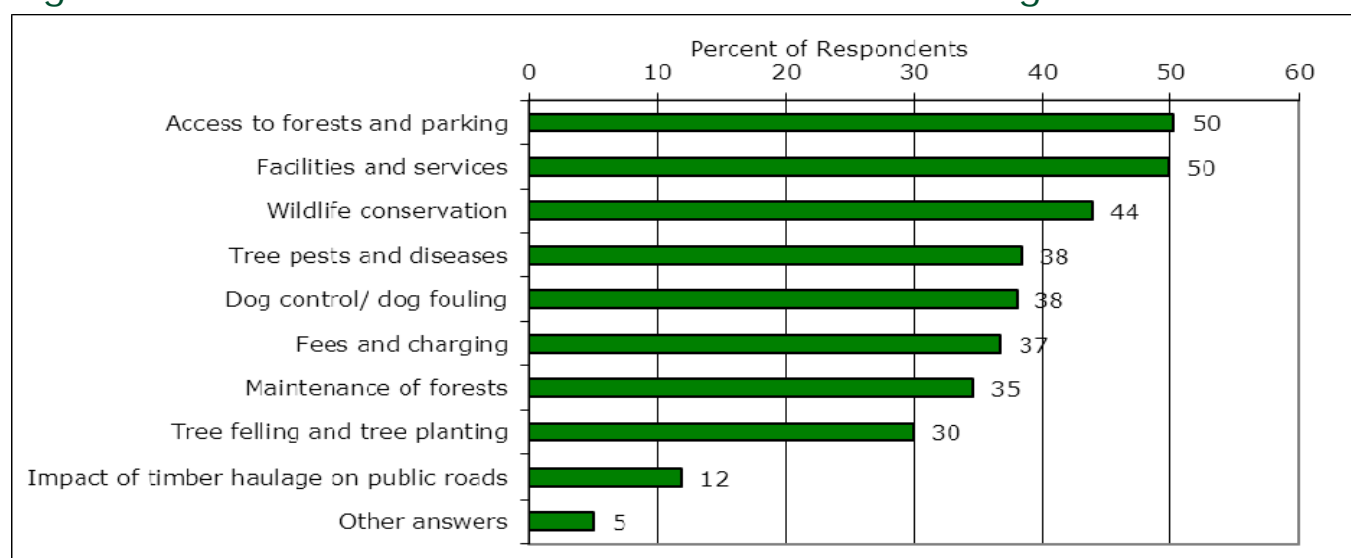
Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: 2007 (1,021), 2010 (1,011), 2014 (994).

For the first time in 2014, respondents who indicated that they would like to be consulted on the management of their local Forest Service woodland were then asked about the issues that they would like to be consulted on. Figure 3 shows that ‘access to forests and parking’ and ‘facilities and services’ were the most commonly cited issues that respondents would like to be consulted on, each reported by one half (50%) of respondents who would like to be consulted.

Figure 3: Issues for consultation on woodland management^{1,2}



Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who would like to be consulted on their local Forest Service woodland (237).

2. Respondents could select more than one reason.

Woodland recreation

The survey asked respondents a number of questions about visits to woodland. This included whether the respondent had visited woodland in the last few years, frequency of visits, group composition, reductions to enjoyment and reasons for not visiting.

Proportion visiting woodland

As in previous years, respondents to the 2014 survey were asked whether they had visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation in the last few years.

In 2014, three quarters of respondents (75%) said they had visited forests or woodlands in the last few years for walks, picnics or other recreation (Table 7). This is similar to the level reported in 2010 and higher than earlier years.

Table 7: Visited woodland in last few years¹

Percent of respondents	
Year	%
2005	67
2007	62
2010	72
2014	75

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: 2005 (1,004), 2007 (1,021), 2010 (1,011), 2014 (994).

Frequency of woodland visits

Respondents who stated that they had visited woodlands in the last few years were asked how often they had visited. These questions have been included in the Northern Ireland surveys since 2007.

Of the respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years, 70% said that they visited at least once a month during summer 2013 (between April and September 2013) (Table 8). Few respondents who had visited woodlands in the past few years said that they did not visit during the summer (5%).

Table 8: Frequency of woodland visits in Summer (April to September)¹

Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands			
Frequency	2007	2010	2014
Several times per week	13	18	15
Several times per month	28	27	30
About once a month	28	28	25
Less often	29	24	25
Never	1	3	5
All visitors	100	100	100

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: 2007 (633), 2010 (733), 2014 (748).

Table 9 shows that, of the respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years, 36% said they visited at least once a month during winter 2013/14 (between October 2013 and March 2014). 29% said they did not visit during the winter.

Table 9: Frequency of woodland visits in Winter (October to March)¹

Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands			
Frequency	2007	2010	2014
Several times per week	6	6	8
Several times per month	14	11	11
About once a month	17	17	16
Less often	42	40	36
Never	20	26	29
All visitors	100	100	100

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: 2007 (633), 2010 (733), 2014 (748).

Group composition when visiting woodland

Questions on group composition when visiting woodland have been included in Northern Ireland surveys since 2010.

Around three quarters (74%) of respondents who had visited woodlands and forests in the last few years reported in 2014 that they usually visited with other people. A further 10% usually visited alone and 16% sometimes visited alone and sometimes with other people.

Table 10: Group composition when visiting woodland¹

Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands		
	2010	2014
Alone (without other people)	10	10
With other people	78	74
Sometimes alone and sometimes with others	11	16
Don't know/ no response	1	..
All visitors	100	100

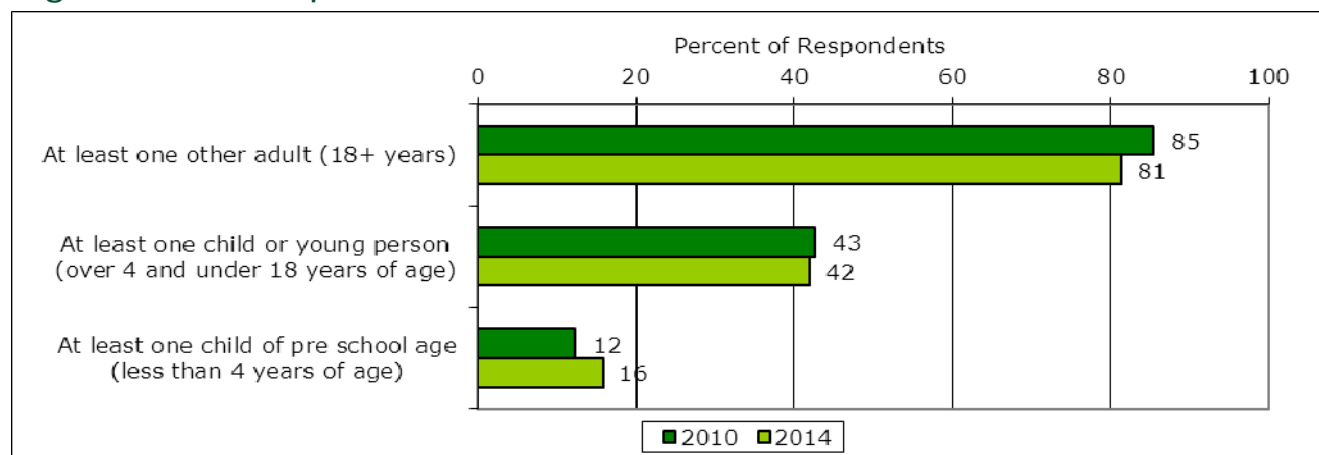
Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: 2010 (733), 2014 (748).

The majority (81%) of respondents who visited woodlands with other people reported that they normally visited with at least one other adult. 42% normally visited with at least one child over 4 years of age and 16% reported that they normally visited with younger children.

Figure 4: Companions on woodland visits^{1,2}



Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who visit woodland with other people: 2010 (658), 2014 (671).

2. Respondents could select more than one option.

Forest last visited

A new question was introduced in the 2014 survey to ask respondents who had visited woodlands and forests in the last few years for the name of the forest visited on their most recent trip. Tollymore Forest Park was the most frequently cited destination (15% of respondents who had visited woodlands) (Table 11). Other destinations included Hillsborough Forest and Castlewellan Forest Park (each reported by 7% of visitors).

Table 11: Forest last visited¹

Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands

Name of forest	2014
Tollymore Forest Park	15
Hillsborough Forest	7
Castlewellan Forest Park	7
Belvoir Park Forest	5
Gortin Glen Forest Park	5
Gosford Forest Park	4
Glenariff Forest Park	4
Rostrevor Forest	4
Tardee Forest	3
Ness Wood Country Park	3
Mount Stewart Forest	3
All other answers	42
All visitors	100

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: (748).

Reductions to enjoyment on most recent visit to woodland

Respondents who had visited woodlands and forests in the last few years were asked whether anything had reduced their enjoyment on their most recent visit. Around two fifths (41%) identified at least one of the reasons provided as being a problem (Table 12).

Dog fouling (23%) and a lack of dog control (11%) were the most commonly cited reasons for reduced enjoyment.

Table 12: Reasons for reduced enjoyment on most recent visit^{1,2}

Reason ³	Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands			
	2005	2007	2010	2014
Dog fouling	..	36	35	23
Lack of dog control	..	13	20	11
Cyclists/ mountain bikers	6	7	5	5
Motor bikers/ scramblers	10	12	12	5
Limited facilities	..	..	7	5
Limited range of permitted activities	..	..	3	2
Walkers	1	2	1	2
Other motor vehicle drivers	3	3	4	1
Horse riders	2	3	2	1
Children/ youths	4	5	4	1
Other answers	..	..	..	3
At least one reason	20	46	53	41

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: 2005 (668), 2007 (633), 2010 (733), 2014 (748).
2. .. denotes data not available (response option not included in that year's survey).
3. Respondents could select more than one reason.

Reasons for not visiting woodland

Respondents who had not visited woodland in the last few years were asked to state their main reason for not visiting woodland.

Table 13 shows that the most commonly cited reasons for not visiting woodland in the last few years were 'not interested in going' (33%) and 'don't have a car' (19%). These results were similar to those provided in previous surveys.

Table 13: Main reason for not visiting woodland in last few years^{1,2}

Main reason	Percent of respondents who had not visited woodlands			
	2005	2007 ³	2010 ³	2014
Not interested in going	38	45	37	33
Don't have a car	14	13	15	19
I'm too busy/ not enough time	..	..	..	13
Other personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking, unwell, etc.)	11	11	16	12
Forests/ woodlands are too far away	9	8	16	7
Lack of suitable public transport	0	..	..	4
Prefer other areas of countryside	5	6	6	4
Cost of visiting	..	..	..	1
Lack of information about forests and woodlands to visit	2	2	4	1
Concerns that forests and woodlands are not safe	1	3	4	1
Lack of facilities (play area, picnic areas etc)	3	1	4	..
Other answers	17	18	18	4

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had not visited woodland in the last few years: 2005 (326), 2007 (384), 2010 (278), 2014 (246).
2. .. denotes data not available (response option not included in that year's survey).
3. Respondents could select more than one reason in 2007 and 2010, so results are not directly comparable.

Health and wellbeing

Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years were asked some questions on health and wellbeing in relation to visits to woodlands and the outdoors. These questions were introduced for the 2014 survey.

Benefits from visiting woodlands

Firstly, respondents were asked about the aspects of their health and wellbeing that benefited from visiting forests and woodlands. Almost all respondents who had visited woodland (100%) said that they benefited from at least one aspect, while around one third (34%) said that they benefited from all three (Table 14).

Looking at the individual aspects:

- 70% considered visits to woodlands and the outdoors to be good for relaxing and unwinding;
- 65% said that physical exercise was a benefit; and
- 63% reported that visits to woodlands and the outdoors provided an opportunity to spend time with family and friends.

Table 14: Health benefits from visiting woodlands¹

Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands	
Benefits ²	2014
It's a good place for me to relax and unwind from the stress of everyday life	70
It's a good place for me to do some physical exercise	65
It's a good place for me to spend time with family and friends	63
All of these	34
At least one benefit	100

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: (748).
2. Respondents could select more than one benefit.

Activities undertaken when visiting woodlands

Respondents were asked about the activities they normally take part in when visiting forests and woodlands. Leisurely walking was the most commonly reported activity, accounting for 82% of respondents who had visited woodland (Table 15). This was followed by dog walking and children's play, each accounting for 27% of woodland visitors.

Table 15: Activities undertaken when visiting woodlands¹

Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands

Activities ²	2014
Leisurely walking	82
Dog walking	27
Children's play	27
Brisk walking or running	15
Cycling or mountain biking	7
Hiking	6
Orienteering	2
Horse riding	1
Other answers	1

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014.

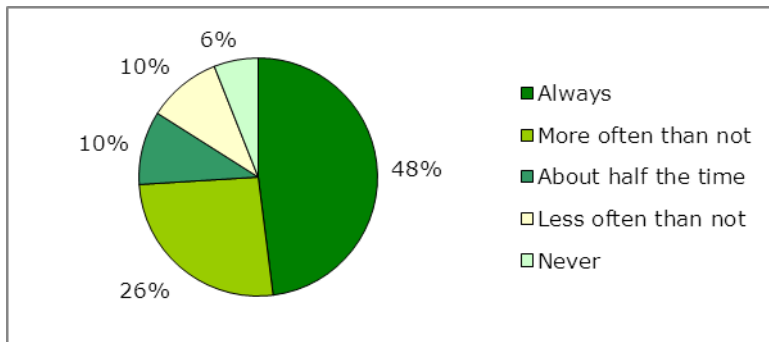
Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: (748).
2. Respondents could select more than one activity.

Walking for an hour or more when visiting woodlands

Around one half of respondents (48%) who had visited woodlands reported that they always walked for an hour or more during their visit (Figure 5). A further one quarter (26%) said that they walked for an hour or more ‘more often than not’.

Figure 5: Walking for an hour or more when visiting woodlands¹



Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014.

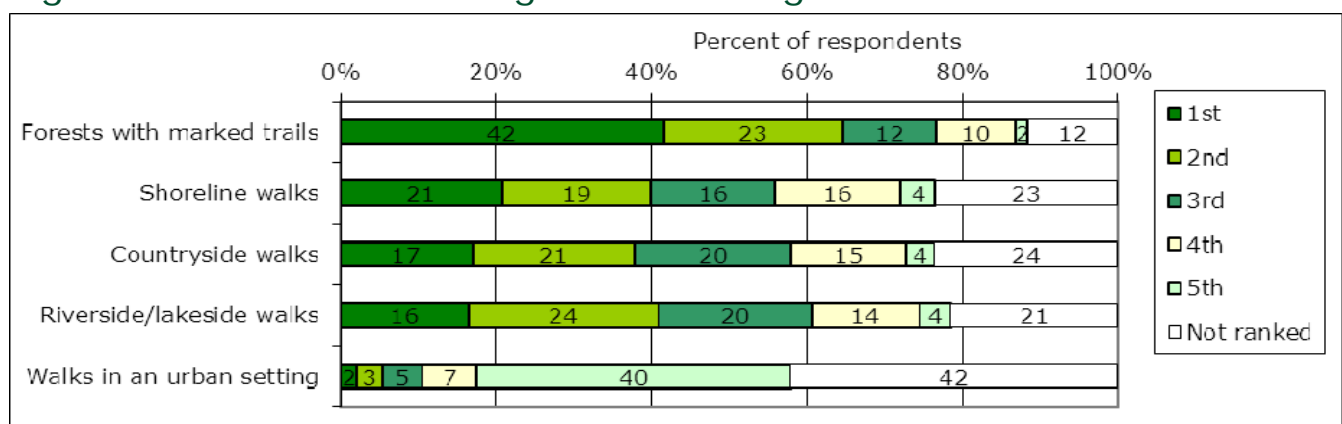
Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: (748).

Respondents who reported walking for an hour or more at least some of the time were then asked to rank the settings that they prefer to walk in. 42% of respondents who walked for an hour or more stated that forests with marked trails was the setting preferred most and a further 23% ranked it in second place (Figure 6).

One fifth (21%) of respondents who walked for an hour or more rated shoreline walks as the most preferred setting. Few (2%) rated walks in an urban setting as the most preferred option.

Figure 6: Preferred setting when walking for an hour or more^{1,2}



Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who reported that they sometimes walked for an hour or more when visiting woodland: (704).

2. Respondents could select up to 5 settings, ranking them from 1 (most preferred) to 5 (least preferred).

Tree health

Two new questions relating to tree health were introduced for the 2014 survey and asked of those who had visited forests and woodlands in the last few years.

Almost one third of respondents who had visited woodlands (30%) reported that they were aware of advice to help prevent the spread of tree pests and diseases (Table 16).

Table 16: Advice to help prevent the spread of tree pests and diseases¹

Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands	
	2014
Aware of advice	30
Not aware of advice	70
All visitors	100

Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014.

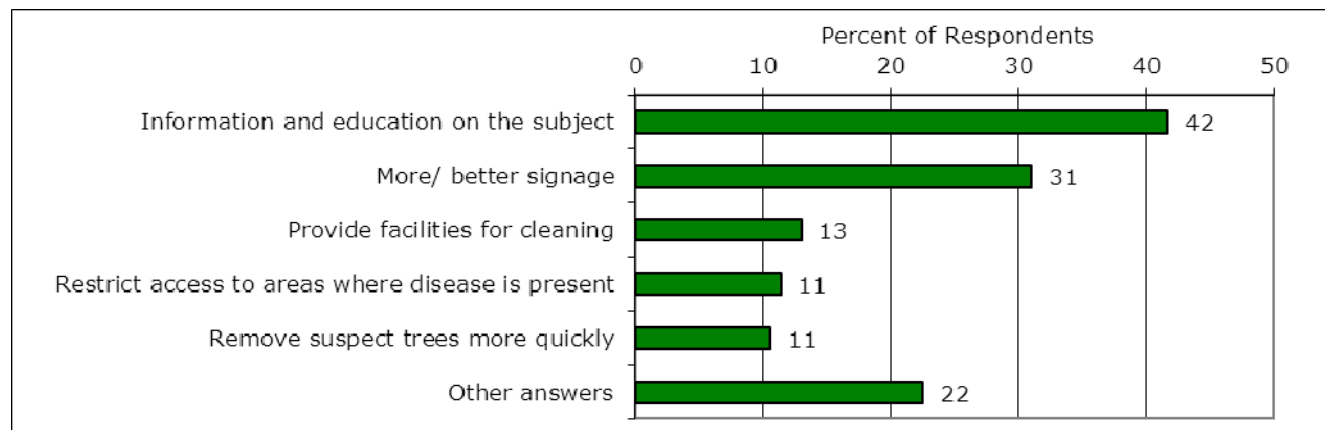
Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: (748).

Respondents were informed that the advice includes keeping to forest roads, keeping dogs on leads and removing all soil and mud from boots and shoes before visiting other forests or woodlands. They were then asked, in relation to their most recent visit to woodland, what more should be done to help prevent the spread of tree pests and diseases.

Figure 7 shows that the most frequently cited actions were 'Information and education on the subject', accounting for 42% of those who had visited woodland, and 'more/ better signage' (31%).

Figure 7: Action to help prevent the spread of tree pests and diseases¹



Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014.

Note:

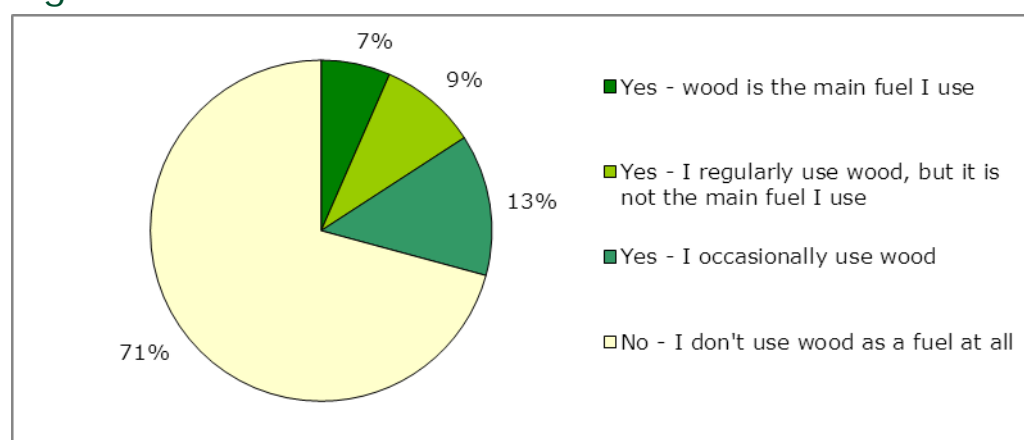
1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: (748).

Wood as a fuel

A series of questions on the use of wood as a fuel was introduced for the 2014 survey.

All respondents were asked to state whether or not they use wood as a fuel in their home. Overall, 29% of respondents reported that they use wood as a fuel (Figure 8). 7% reported that wood was their main fuel, a further 9% regularly use wood, but not as their main fuel and 13% occasionally use wood as a fuel.

Figure 8: Use of wood as a fuel in the home¹



Source: Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents (994).

Respondents who said they used wood as a fuel were asked two further questions. The following was reported in 2014:

- Most (81%) used wood as a fuel because they had an open fire or wood burning stove;
- Firewood (94%) was the most popular form of wood fuel to use.

Annex

Introduction

This annex provides background information on the statistics presented in this release. It covers the data sources and methodology used to produce the statistics, information on quality measures and on any revisions to historic data and links to further information.

Glossary

Confidence interval An estimated range of values that is likely to include an unknown population parameter (i.e. a fixed value for the population as a whole). The confidence interval around an estimate is derived from the sample data, and is used to indicate the reliability of the estimate.

Clustering A sampling technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or clusters, and a random sample of these clusters are selected. All (or a selection of) observations in the selected clusters are included in the sample. Cluster sampling is often used when a random sample would produce a list of subjects so widely scattered that surveying them would prove to be far too expensive.

Forest In the United Kingdom, there is no formal definition of “forest”; the term is often used for large woodland areas (especially conifers) or for old Royal hunting preserves such as the New Forest or the Forest of Dean.

Forest Service (FS) The agency of the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture and Rural Development responsible for forestry matters in Northern Ireland.

Forestry Commission (FC) The government department responsible for forestry matters in England, Scotland and (until March 2013) Wales. The Forestry Commission’s functions in Wales transferred to a new organisation, Natural Resources Wales, on 1 April 2013. The responsibility for forestry is devolved.

Great Britain (GB) England, Wales and Scotland.

Quota sampling A method of sampling where interviewers are each given a fixed number of subjects of specified type to interview.

Statistical significance A statistical assessment of whether observations reflect an actual pattern rather than just chance.

Stratification A sampling technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or strata, and a random sample is selected within each group. Stratified sampling is often

used to ensure that sufficient numbers from each group are included in the overall sample, particularly where results are required for each group.

United Kingdom (UK) Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Weighting A set of factors assigned to survey responses to ensure that the resulting weighted results are representative of the population as a whole.

Woodland Land under stands of trees with a canopy cover of at least 20% (25% in Northern Ireland), or having the potential to achieve this, including integral open space, and including felled areas that are awaiting restocking.

Data Sources and Methodology

Background

The Forestry Commission has conducted surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995.

Information has been collected for Northern Ireland through UK-wide surveys since 2003 and in separate Northern Ireland surveys (around 1,000 adults) carried out in 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2014.

The table below is a summary of the previous surveys and presents the approximate number of adults interviewed for each country.

Table A1: Sample sizes for Public Opinion of Forestry surveys since 2001

Approximate number of adults interviewed

Year	UK ¹	England ²	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland ³
2001	2,000		1,000	1,000	
2003	4,000	3,400	1,000	1,000	
2005	4,000	3,400	1,000	1,000	1,000
2007	4,000	3,300	1,000	1,000	1,000
2009	2,000	1,700	1,000	1,000	
2010					1,000
2011	2,000	1,700	1,000	1,000	
2013	2,000	1,700	1,000	1,000	
2014					1,000

Note:

1. 2001 and 2005 surveys shown in the “UK” column covered Great Britain only (i.e. excluding Northern Ireland).
2. Results for England are derived from UK surveys.
3. Sample sizes shown for Northern Ireland relate to surveys run solely in Northern Ireland. UK-wide surveys have also included some respondents from Northern Ireland (around 120 in 2003 and 2007, around 50-60 in 2009 to 2013).

Survey Design

The 2014 survey results presented in this report are taken from the Ipsos MORI Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey carried out from the 10th to 23rd March 2014. The survey was based on a representative sample of 994 adults (aged 16 or over) across Northern Ireland. More details of the sample method are given below.

The 2005, 2007 and 2010 surveys were obtained from the Millward Brown Ulster Omnibus Survey. This survey employed a different survey design so comparisons should be taken with care.

Methodology

2014 survey

The Ipsos MORI Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey covers a minimum of 50 locations per month, with sampling points chosen at random from 285 electoral wards, across Northern Ireland. Each sampling point may incorporate up to 3 wards depending on the population of the area.

Survey sampling

A quota sample is used to ensure that the achieved sample is representative of the adult population, based on the most up-to-date Census data and covering gender, age group, social class and location.

Interviewing

Fieldwork is conducted over a two to three week period. Face to face interviews are undertaken in-home using Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI).

Questionnaire

A copy of the 2014 questionnaire is provided at the end of this release. This covers the questions requested by Forest Service. In addition, a small number of additional questions are included as standard in the omnibus surveys run by Market Research companies (e.g. gender, age, region) and some of these are also used in analysing the results from the survey.

Most questions are retained from one survey to the next, to enable comparisons over time. However, changes are sometimes made to reflect changing circumstances or priorities, or to improve the wording of questions. The following changes were made for the 2014 questionnaire:

- New questions were added on acceptable reasons for cutting down trees (Q5), health and wellbeing benefits (Q15), activities undertaken on visit (Q16), walking for an hour or more (Q17-18), tree health (Q19-20), issues to be consulted on (Q24), woodfuel (Q25-27) and some demographic variables.
- Amendments were made to the list of response options relating to topics in the media (Q1) and public benefits of forestry (Q2).

Quality

Results from the Ipsos MORI Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey are weighted to population profiles at each wave (i.e. each time the survey is run) to ensure an accurate representation of Northern Ireland's population and consistency between waves. Currently, weighting is applied on the basis of gender, age, social class and region, using 2011 Census. The results quoted in this report are based on weighted data.

Design effect

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 effect of clustering, weighting and stratification in the survey design (see methodology, above, for more details).

The Ipsos MORI Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey uses a quota sampling approach, which means that the likelihood of individuals within the population being interviewed cannot be measured. Any confidence intervals calculated are also indicative. Due to the survey design, a 'design effect' of 1.5 should be applied to confidence intervals calculated for data from this survey.

Confidence intervals are most commonly reported at the 95% level. This means that there is a 95% chance that the true population value lies within the confidence interval. The following provides a guide to interpreting the results in this report on the basis of a 95% confidence interval:

For questions asked to the whole Northern Ireland sample of 994, the margin of error should be no more than $\pm 4.7\%$.

For questions not asked of the whole sample and sub-groups within the sample, margin of error will increase. For example:

- By gender (male n=493; female n=501), the confidence intervals should be no more than $\pm 6.6\%$;
- For those who visited woodland in the last few years (n=748), the confidence interval should be no more than $\pm 5.4\%$.

For questions asked to whole samples, differences of more than $\pm 6.6\%$ between the 2014 and 2010 surveys are statistically significant.

Further quality information on FC Official Statistics is available at:

www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7zhk85

Revisions

Figures for 2014 are published for the first time in this release.

All figures are final. Figures for earlier years have not been revised.

The Forestry Commission's revisions policy sets out how revisions and errors to these statistics are dealt with, and can be found at:

[www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCrevisions.pdf/\\$FILE/FCrevisions.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCrevisions.pdf/$FILE/FCrevisions.pdf).

Further information

Accompanying tables to this release, available at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zy19w, provide more detailed figures, showing standard breakdowns.

Figures in tables have been independently rounded, so may not add to the totals shown.

Official Statistics

This is an Official Statistics publication. For more information about Official Statistics and the UK Statistics Authority visit www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk.

Northern Ireland Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2014: Questionnaire

Q1 [All]

You may have heard about Northern Ireland's forests and woodlands in the media (including tv, radio, newspapers, internet, social media etc). Which of these topics have you heard about in the last 12 months?

(Multi answer)

- Birds and other animals in forests and woodlands
- Flowers and other plants in forests and woodlands
- Forests and woodlands as places to visit
- Forests and woodlands for the use of local people and communities
- Tree planting
- Tree pests and diseases
- Wood for fuel/ firewood
- Protection of ancient woodland
- New native woodland
- Public right of pedestrian access to forests
- Labelling to show that wood products are produced from sustainable sources
- The role of forests and woodlands in helping to reduce the impacts of climate change
- Walking, running, cycling, mountain biking or horse riding
- Other (please specify)
- None of these

Q2 [All]

In Northern Ireland public money is given to support forestry and the planting and management of all types and sizes of forests and woodlands, because it is believed to be of public benefit. From this list, please tell me which of the following are good reasons to support forestry in this way?

(Multi answer)

- To support the economy in rural areas
- To help rural tourism
- To provide timber
- To provide renewable energy
- To make us more self-sufficient in timber and wood products
- To provide better access to forests and woodlands
- To combat climate change
- To provide places for wildlife to live
- To provide places for recreation (such as walking, running, cycling, horse-riding)
- To provide places for relaxation and stress relief
- To provide places for families to play
- To provide places for learning
- To improve the countryside landscape
- None of these

Q3 [All]

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the ways in which forests and woodlands in Northern Ireland can impact on climate change?

(1 strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neither agree or disagree, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree)

- Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood
- Cutting down forests and woodlands makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted
- Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas
- Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide
- Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel
- Northern Ireland could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees

Q4 [All]

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding how Northern Ireland's forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change?

(1 strongly agree, 2 agree, 3 neither agree or disagree, 4 disagree, 5 strongly disagree)

- A lot more trees should be planted
- Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates
- More information should be provided about the ways in which forests and woodlands can lessen our impact on the environment

Q5 [All]

From this list, which of these do you think are an acceptable reason for cutting down trees?

(Multi answer)

- To provide timber - with the area being replanted afterwards
- To prevent the spread of tree disease
- For open habitat restoration
- For development, e.g. housing, roads
- To build wind farms
- To use the land for agriculture
- For larger scale recreation projects e.g. mountain biking trails
- For tourism initiatives, e.g. chalets
- Other (Please specify)
- None of these

Q6 [All]

Would you like to have more or less forests and woodlands in your part of Northern Ireland?

(Single answer)

- A lot more (Go to Q7)
- A little more (Go to Q7)
- Neither more nor less (Go to Q8)
- A little less (Go to Q8)
- A lot less (Go to Q8)
- Don't know (Go to Q8)

Q7 [Ask if answered 'a lot more' or 'a little more' to Q6]

Where do you think new forests and woodlands should be created?

(Multi answer)

- Close to towns and villages
- On intensively farmed land
- On less intensively farmed land e.g. pasture
- In mountain areas
- Other (please specify)
- Don't know

Q8 [All]

In the last few years, have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?

(Single answer)

- Yes (Go to Q9)
- No (Go to Q21)

Q9 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q8]

On average how often did you visit forests and woodlands last summer, i.e. between April and September 2013?

(Single answer)

- Several times per week
- Several times per month
- About once per month
- Less often
- Not visited

Q10 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q8]

And how often this winter, i.e. since October 2013?

(Single answer)

- Several times per week
- Several times per month
- About once per month
- Less often
- Never

Q11 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q8]

Do you usually visit forests...?

(Single answer)

- Alone (without other people) (Go to Q13)
- With other people (Go to Q12)
- Sometimes alone and sometimes with others (Go to Q12)

Q12 [Ask if answered 'with other people' or 'sometimes alone and sometimes with others' to Q11]

If you usually visit forests with other people, is it normally with...?

(Single answer)

- At least one other adult (18+ years)
- At least one child or young person (over 4 and under 18 years of age)
- At least one child of pre-school age (less than 4 years of age)

Q13 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q8]

What is the name of the last forest or woodland you visited ...?

Q14 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q8]

During your most recent visit, was your enjoyment reduced by any of the following?

(Multi answer)

- Walkers
- Cyclists/ mountain bikers
- Horse riders
- Motor bikers/ scramblers
- Other motor vehicle drivers
- Children/ youths
- Dog fouling
- Lack of dog control
- Limited facilities (please specify)
- Limited range of permitted activities
- Other (please specify)
- None of the above were a problem

Q15 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q8]

In general, which aspects of health and wellbeing do you feel benefit from visiting forests and woodlands?

(Multi answer)

- It's a good place for me to do some physical exercise
- It's a good place for me to relax and unwind from the stress of everyday life
- It's a good place for me to spend time with family and friends
- All of these
- None of these

Q16 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q8]

When you visit forests or woodlands, what physical activities do you usually take part in?

(Multi answer)

- Leisurely walking
- Dog walking
- Brisk walking or running
- Hiking
- Children's play
- Orienteering
- Horse riding
- Cycling or mountain biking
- Other (please specify)

Q17 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q8]

When you visit a forest, how often do you walk for an hour or more at a time?

(Single answer)

- Always (Go to Q18)
- More often than not (Go to Q18)
- About half the time (Go to Q18)
- Less often than not (Go to Q18)
- Never (Go to Q19)
- Don't know (Go to Q19)

Q18 [Ask if answered 'always', 'more often than not', 'about half the time' or 'less often than not' to Q17]

When taking a long walk of one hour or more, which of these settings do you prefer?

(1 = most preferred, ..., 5 = least preferred)

- Forests with marked trails
- Shoreline walks
- Countryside walks
- Riverside/ lakeside walks
- Walks in an urban setting

Q19 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q8]

Are you aware of the advice to help prevent the spread of tree pests and diseases?

(Single answer)

- Yes
- No

Q20 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q8]

The advice includes keeping to forest roads, keeping dogs on leads and removing all soil and mud from boots and shoes before visiting other forests or woodlands. Thinking back to your last visit to a forest or woodland, what more should we do to help prevent the spread of tree diseases and pests?

(Multi answer)

- Information and education on the subject
- More/ better signage
- Restrict access to areas where the disease is present
- Remove suspect trees more quickly
- Provide facilities for cleaning boots/shoes, bicycles/mountain bikes and vehicle wheels/wheel arches
- Other (please specify)

Q21 [Ask if answered 'no' to Q8]

What was the main reason that you did not visit a forest or woodland?

(Single answer)

- Not interested in going
- Don't have a car
- Lack of suitable public transport
- Other personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking, unwell, etc.)
- Forests/woodlands are too far away
- Lack of facilities (play areas, picnic areas, toilets etc.)
- Lack of information about forests and woodlands to visit
- Prefer other areas of countryside
- Concerns that forests and woodlands are not safe
- Concerns about antisocial behaviour
- Paths are badly maintained
- Cost of visiting
- I'm too busy/not enough time
- Other (Please specify)

Q22 [All]

Did you know that Forest Service consults on the management of your local Forest Service forest?

(Single answer)

- Yes
- No

Q23 [All]

Would you like to be consulted on the management of your local Forest Service forest?

(Single answer)

- Yes (Go to Q24)
- No (Go to Q25)

Q24 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q23]

Which issues would you like to be consulted on?

(Multi answer)

- Access to forests and parking
- Maintenance of forests
- Facilities and services e.g. play areas, picnic areas, walking/running trails, guides and ranger services
- Dog control/dog fouling
- Fees and charging
- Tree felling and tree planting
- The impact of timber haulage on public roads
- Tree pests and diseases
- Wildlife conservation
- Other (Please specify)

Q25 [All]

Do you use wood as a fuel in your home?

(Single answer)

- Yes – wood is the main fuel I use (Go to Q26)
- Yes – I regularly use wood, but it is not the main fuel I use (Go to Q26)
- Yes – I occasionally use wood (Go to Q26)
- No – I don't use wood as a fuel at all (Go to Q28)
- Don't know (Go to Q28)

Q26 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q25]

What is the main reason that you use wood for fuel?

(Single answer)

- I have an open fire/wood burning stove
- I get firewood from my own land
- It's cheaper than other forms of fuel
- It's better for the environment
- There is a good supply of wood for sale nowadays
- Other (Please specify)
- Don't know

Q27 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q25]

What form of wood fuel do you use?

(Single answer)

- Firewood
- Wood briquettes
- Wood pellets
- Wood chips
- Other (Please specify)
- Don't know

Q28 [All]

Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last 12 months?

(Single answer)

- Yes – limited a lot (Go to Q29)
- Yes – limited a little (Go to Q29)
- No (Go to END)

Q29 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q28]

Do you have any of these conditions, which have lasted, or are expected to last, at least 12 months?

(Multi answer)

- Physical impairment, such as difficulty using your arms, or mobility issues which mean using a wheelchair or crutches
- Long-standing illness or health condition (such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy)
- Mental health condition such as depression or schizophrenia
- Deafness or partial hearing loss
- Blindness or partial sight loss
- Learning disability/ difficulty, such as Down's syndrome or dyslexia, or cognitive impairment, such as autistic spectrum disorder
- Other answers

Q30 [Ask if answered 'yes' to Q28]

Does your condition affect your use of forests?

(Single answer)

- Yes
- No

List of demographic variables covered by the 2014 survey

- Gender
- Age
- Marital status
- Number of people in household
- Number of children in household
- Tenure
- Length of time in current home
- Working status
- Social grade
- Income
- Community background
- Religion
- Country of birth
- Ethnic group
- Sexual orientation
- Region
- Area (urban/ rural)