



# Seeing the Wood for the Trees

## E News - August 2007

Forestry and Woodlands Partnership - Working together for England's most wooded region

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### Introduction

Welcome to the quarterly newsletter of the South East's Regional Forestry and Woodlands Framework. This newsletter highlights the information you need to know to make positive change happen in the South East's forestry and woodland sector.

There is an increasing amount of work occurring on adding value to timber and supporting supply chain development. A Regional Timber Champion has been appointed. The major 'Building with Wood' conference is happening in Exeter on 18th September and the Forestry and Woodlands Framework is offering 10-20 people from the South East a subsidised place to attend! To find out how to access this offer, see Events below. This could be a great opportunity to send a client to influence their use of wood in construction.

There are upcoming opportunities for funding to support adding value to wood products and increasing the economic value of forests. This will come through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Axis 1 and 3, which will be managed by SEEDA, focusing on activities within the forest. The Forestry and Woodlands Partnership are also been working with SEEDA and the private sector to develop the South East Woodland and Timber Funding (SEWTF) to focus on activities in the supply chain beyond the forest gate. More on that below, but start thinking about projects now, so they are ready to bid when these funds open.

*Jane Hull*

Framework Development Officer



Construction using Timber (Photo: FC Library)

### News

#### South East Woodland and Timber Fund

The Forestry and Woodlands Partnership have been working with SEEDA and the private sector to develop the South East Woodland and Timber Fund (SEWTF) over the past few months. This is modelled on the successful South West Woodland Renaissance

([http://www.silvanus.org.uk/woodland\\_renaissance.php](http://www.silvanus.org.uk/woodland_renaissance.php)), where a peer reviewed fund is available to the industry to bid into for projects. We hope that £250,000 will be available until the end of financial year 2009-10 to strengthen the timber supply chain in the region. SEWTF proposals were recently submitted to the SEEDA Project Appraisal Board, which it passed. It has one final stage of assessment to pass. SEWTF will work seamlessly with the RDPE funding supporting enhanced economic activities within the forest. However it is likely to open ahead of this. As we wish to fund the first projects in this financial year we are keen to encourage you to start considering projects to submit. For further details about the Fund and to discuss opportunities for potential projects please call Jane Hull on 01296 696543 or [jane.hull@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jane.hull@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)



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## Timber Champion for the South East

The Farming and Rural Industries Group (FRIG) have just appointed a Regional Champion for Timber. Tom Compton is a forester and sawmiller who has supplied timber from the region to a number of iconic buildings in the south east, including the award winning Savill Gardens Visitors Centre. Tom has support from FRIG and SEEDA for a year. He will be working to increase the profile and supply of local timber through clear information on products and their properties, a demonstration of local timber products in use and strengthened networking across the supply chain. Tom owns English Woodlands Timber (<http://www.ewtimber.co.uk>) in the South Downs. We look forward to working with him to take forward these priorities.

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## Angling Spring Wood Talking Trail

The Forestry and Woodland's Framework is pleased to announce the launch of the Angling Spring Wood Talking Trail in the Chilterns. People can download tales of the woodland's history, ecology and management onto an MP3 player from [www.anglingspringwood.org.uk](http://www.anglingspringwood.org.uk) Told from the perspective of the trees, the all age trail highlights environmental issues likely to affect our woodlands. The wood is located on public transport routes from Aylesbury Growth Area, Great Missenden and High Wycombe. This tests use of new technology in interpretation and public understanding of woodlands. This was joint project with Chiltern District Council (who own the wood), the Chilterns Woodland Project, Prestwood Nature, Siren Nature Conservation, the Special Trees and Woodlands Project and the Chilterns Conservation Board.



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## Woodlotting in Kent

Woodlotting is a serious challenge to effective woodland management in Kent, reports a compelling study commissioned by the Kent Downs AONB. Whilst a particularly strong issue in Kent, with activity trebled in the past 5 years, woodlands across the region are being bought and split into blocks as small as 25 x 30m. If done unscrupulously it can threaten the fabric of woodlands, particularly ancient woodlands, which have been the main focus of activity in Kent. This is the first study of its kind in England and examines the extent of woodlotting, its impacts and challenges. Concerns raised include increased structures, hardstanding and access, boundary fencing, inappropriate use and potential for neglect. Whilst many owners state nature conservation as a reason for purchase, few seek out woodland management advice. Recommendations include need to review Permitted Development Rights, proactive engagement with land agents and new owners to highlight need for woodland management and a joined up approach with local planning authorities. To see more - <http://www.kentdowns.org.uk>



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## A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests

A Strategy for England's Trees, Woodlands and Forests (ETWF) was published in June 2007. The Partnership responded to the consultation last year to ensure that the role of Regions in delivery would be strongly supported at national level. The strategy recognises Regional Forestry Frameworks, stating that ETWF should provide "national policy direction, to be incorporated in an appropriate way alongside their regional priorities". A number of the ETWF priorities are already recognised in our RFF, including south east case studies. We particularly welcome the support for working woodlands. It can be seen at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/rddteam/forestry.htm>

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## Amendments to Habitat Regulations

Increased legal protection for European Protected Species will come into force on the 21st August 2007. Several of these species are found in woodland, so this change has implications for how woodlands are managed. Under the current Habitats Regulations it is an offence to deliberately kill or disturb these protected species, to destroy their eggs, or to destroy or damage a breeding site or resting places used by them. The amendment now means that it is also an offence if you accidentally damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place (which was previously exempt). The Forestry Commission is working to ensure that the forestry sector is in a position to both conserve these key European Protected Species and to minimise any adverse impacts on other aspects of woodland management. A letter with further information is being sent to all woodland owners and agents with grant schemes and other stakeholders, this can be seen at: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6RPKZD>

Most activities will be able to continue without restriction, in some cases management practices may need to be modified or rescheduled to a less sensitive time of year. Where this is not possible or adequate then operators may need to apply for a licence to remain within the law. Licences will be processed by the Forestry Commission and issued by Natural England. For further details see: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-protectedspecies>

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## Better beech for Britain?

The British-Irish Hardwood Improvement Programme (BIHIP) would like to hear from people who would be interested in beech breeding, either as a participant or an end-user of improved stock. BIHIP are also keen to hear of stands of beech (or individual trees) with superior stem form, which may be suitable as plus trees. Contact Dr Scott McG Wilson; 07798 693303; [scottmcgwilson@hotmail.com](mailto:scottmcgwilson@hotmail.com)

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## Funding opportunities

### Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Axis 1&3 - Socio-economic projects

SEEDA are continuing to highlight what will be available under RDPE funding for socio-economic projects, which should open to applications from January 2008. The budget available from 2007-2013 is c£60million. There is good provision for projects which increase the economic value of forests and add value to woodland products. There will be a particular push to support renewable energy and woodfuel. Further information and slides from recent seminars are at [http://www.seeda.co.uk/Work\\_in\\_the\\_Region/Rural\\_Issues/Rural\\_Development\\_Programme\\_for\\_England](http://www.seeda.co.uk/Work_in_the_Region/Rural_Issues/Rural_Development_Programme_for_England)

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## LEADER

The initial Expression of Interest process for LEADER, facilitated by SEEDA, has stimulated 20 applications covering a large proportion of the region. SEEDA are stressing the need to include opportunities for forestry and woodland businesses in LEADER and now is the time for these businesses to engage. Full bids will be developed by January and we are hopeful there will be some well targeted provision for woodland in them. Contacts for each bid are at: [http://www.seeda.co.uk/Work\\_in\\_the\\_Region/Rural\\_Issues/Rural\\_Development\\_Programme\\_for\\_England](http://www.seeda.co.uk/Work_in_the_Region/Rural_Issues/Rural_Development_Programme_for_England)

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## Sustainable Development Funds

All Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) have Sustainable Development Funds open for 2007-08. These will support projects which brings environmental, social or economic benefits to the AONB. Links to AONB websites can be found at <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Regions/southEast/activities/landscape/finestcountryside/index.asp>

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## Publications and Resources

### RFF Information Note 6 - South East Primary Processing Study

This summarises the South East Primary Processing Study of spring 2007. It focused on the smaller and mobile mills that have not been captured in other studies. It allowed better understanding of the level of processing capacity, and aspirations for future development. Key issues included the struggle to supply local wood in the face of imports and finding skilled staff. We hope this can be an evidence base for those of you developing projects to strengthen the supply chain for wood products in the region - of particular interest with upcoming new RDPE and South East Woodland and Timber Fund funding opportunities. The Information Note and full report can be found at: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf6-6ggh73>

### Adding value to homegrown timber

Produced by the Scottish Forest Industries Cluster, Forestry Commission and Scottish Enterprise, this looks at properties of variety of products, and the properties of commercial timber species in the UK. It can be downloaded from <http://www.forestryscotland.com> under Latest publications.

### Online Timber Courses

Napier University has launched online MSc degree programmes in Timber Engineering (for engineers) and Timber Industry Management (for forestry or construction industry). These start in September 2007 and February 2008. See <http://cte.napier.ac.uk/index.php> This online facility allows remote access to this national centre of expertise, of interest to people in the South East. Short online courses will also be developed in time.

### Woodland management pays dividends

Woodland management for timber and wood products: the impact on public good outputs' by the University of Gloucester shows how the management of England's woodlands to produce timber can provide other benefits. These include habitat creation, better landscapes and leisure. It also suggests ways to encourage more woodland management. [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-woodlandmanagement](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-woodlandmanagement).

# Policy

## Regional Economic Strategy

A consultation on the implementation plan for the new RES is out now. The consultation closes on 24th August. The Forestry and Woodlands Partnership will be submitting a response.

See [http://www.seeda.co.uk/res/RES\\_Implementation\\_Plan/index.asp](http://www.seeda.co.uk/res/RES_Implementation_Plan/index.asp)

## Government Timber procurement

CPET is consulting on plans to strengthen UK government timber procurement. Currently timber procured must be legal, with evidence of sustainability preferred. From 1st April 2009, it is planned that only timber products from an independently verified legal and sustainable source or a licenced FLEGT partner can be used. The consultation closes on 27th September. See <http://www.proforest.net/cpet/review-comments-1/current-reviews-and-consultations>

## Events

**18th September - Building with Wood**, Exeter- A major one-day conference, combining presentations and seminars around inspirational design, affordable housing, sustainable development, practical issues for architects, zero carbon buildings, wood energy and timber industry research.- See <http://www.woodfairsouthwest.co.uk/events/index.html> for more details and the booking form.

**10-20 half price places are available for people going from the South East!** The Forestry and Woodlands Framework wishes to ensure our regional players have an opportunity to network and learn at this event, which is targeted at architects, developers, builders, councillors, local authority officers, structural engineers and other building professionals. To secure a place, you will need to book a full price place with the conference. Then use the receipt or invoice plus evidence of payment to claim back half the fee. However to secure your reduction in price first, please send a paragraph to Jane Hull [jane.hull@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jane.hull@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) outlining what you would gain from attending this conference. You may wish to confirm you are included in the 10-20 people before booking your place at the conference. For further details contact Jane Hull on 01296 696543.

**21st - 23rd September** - Weald Woodfair. Bentley, East Sussex. - Woodfair brings together representatives from the entire timber industry 'from forest to final form'. It involves anyone with an interest in wood with exhibits, demonstrations, seminars and activities, all within or related to the woodland and timber industry. See <http://www.bentley.org.uk>

**25-26th September** - Biodiversity in the New Forest, Brockenhurst. This is open to anyone with interest in the wildlife of this National Park. See [www.bournemouth.ac.uk/conservation/conferences/biodiversityconference07/biodiversity\\_home.html](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/conservation/conferences/biodiversityconference07/biodiversity_home.html)

**2nd October** - Forestry Commission Berks, Bucks and Oxon Forum, Great Milton. To book a place contact Sue Clarke - 01296 696543 or [sue.clarke@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sue.clarke@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

**24th November** - Chilterns Special Trees and Woods Project - Main speaker Tony Kirkham, Head of Kew Arboretum. The event will celebrate the work of the project to date. To book a place contact Liz Manley on 01844 355 525 or [lmanley@chilternsaonb.org](mailto:lmanley@chilternsaonb.org)

## Focus

### High Weald PAWS restoration project - First Annual Report

This summarises the early achievements of this project to restore Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) to native broadleaved woodland. It explains the methods used to identify and engage landowners whose woodlands are not yet currently being managed. It considers ways to inspire landowners to start woodland management through advisory visits, clear and inspiring information on woodland history and management, and demonstration workshops. This project particularly has wider relevance to those involved in PAWS restoration. The engagement with landowners is also important when considering how we can increase management in woodlands to supply the growing woodfuel market.

It can be downloaded from <http://www.highweald.org/text.asp?PageId=224>