

One of four priority areas

Across the South West Region, the Forestry Commission have carried out a mapping exercise to identify robust habitat networks centred around clusters of ancient and native woodlands. This has culminated in four Ancient Woodland Priority Areas; Dartmoor, Greater Exmoor, the Forest of Dean and the Cotswolds. The principles behind this approach are set out in FC Information Note 73.

No truly natural woodland is present in Britain, however certain sites have retained remnants which are close to the wildwood of the past, representing a continuity of woodland cover that may stretch back to the original post-glacial forests. These are classified as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands, (ASNW) and they contribute substantially to our natural and cultural heritage.

The value of ancient woodland

The ancient woodlands of the Cotswolds are exceptionally rich in wildlife, including many rare species and habitats. They:

- provide a quality renewable resource in the form of hardwood timber and other woodland products
- contain surviving descendants and features from the original natural forests and act as reservoirs from which wildlife can spread into new woodlands
- are an integral part of the Cotswold landscape containing a wealth of historic features unaltered by cultivation or disturbance, providing a powerful sense of place for us all to enjoy.

The major threats to ancient and native woodland are:

- climate change and fragmentation
- excessive browsing and grazing by deer and livestock
- invasive, non-native or problem species
- diffuse pollution
- loss
- inadequate or inappropriate management.

General sources of information

English Woodland Grant Scheme:
www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs

South West Ancient Woodland Priority Areas:
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6TKC45>

A statement of policy for England's Ancient and Native Woodland:
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/keepersoftime>

EWGS Forms & Guidance:
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-ewgsdocuments>

The Cotswold Conservation Board:
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Natural England:
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/planning/farming-wildlife/default.htm>

Environmental Stewardship:
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/es/default.htm>

For further information about the project, ELS/HLS and the enhanced EWGS grants available please contact:

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The Cotswolds Ancient Woodland Project



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Part of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has been identified as an Ancient Woodland Priority Area (AWPA). Increased support and resources are available within this area as part of the Cotswolds Ancient Woodland Project to help woodland owners conserve and manage ancient and native woodlands.

The aim is to focus resources to protect and enhance ancient and native woodlands to achieve landscape scale benefits. The project is a partnership between the Forestry Commission, The Cotswolds Conservation Board and Natural England.

Help available

Grant aid is available within the Ancient Woodland Priority Area under the English Woodland Grant Scheme, (EWGS):

- All ancient woodland is eligible for an increased grant of £1,760 per hectare when replacing felled non-native plantations with appropriate native species.
- In addition, the Woodland Improvement Grant is paid at a higher rate of 80% contribution to costs on ancient woodland sites for capital expenditure on work to create and sustain or enhance the benefits provided within ancient woodlands.
- The Woodland Creation Grant will also provide an additional £1,000 per hectare for creating new native woodland within or contiguous with mapped habitat networks and in line with the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment

Other grants are available through Environmental Stewardship schemes including Entry Level and Higher Level where targeted.

