

Growing our Future – Annual Monitoring Report 2006-2007

Just over two years into the implementation phase of the West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework, the significant buy-in and engagement of stakeholder individuals and organisations who seek to realise the benefits that trees, woodland and forestry can bring to the region continues. It is through their individual activities, projects and influence that progress has been charted in the Annual Report 2006-2007 and future plans incorporated into the three-year rolling Delivery Plan 2007-2010.

Headline achievements in the past year:

- Over £1.65 million distributed under the new England Woodland Grant Scheme; £1.57 million under the Environmental Stewardship Scheme for woodland creation and management in the region;
- The Regions Woodland Opportunities Map (Version 2) comprising 6 themed maps: Woodland Creation, Ancient Woodlands, Landscape, Access, Biodiversity & Cultural Heritage was published;
- Wood fuel has become the fastest growing renewable energy alternative in the West Midlands with exponential growth in wood heating installations;
- A regional Green Infrastructure Planning Prospectus and Technical Guide was developed, published and distributed to local authorities and stakeholders;
- There has been an estimated four million visitors to Forestry Commission woodlands in the West Midlands – most involving physical activity/mental stimulation. Four further schemes have been supported through the Active Woods health challenge funding;
- Education visits are increasing and sites in Wyre Forest and Cannock Chase have hosted upwards of 30,000 schoolchildren visits;
- 123 forestry workers being trained via a regional workforce programme;
- Using the information gleaned thus far, the rolling three-year Action Plan 2007-2010 for the West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework has been developed;
- The breadth of stakeholder interest and active engagement has continued; there are now seven specialist task groups developing and implementing action plans and agenda in support of the Framework:
 - Woodland Opportunities Mapping
 - Woodland & Forestry Industries
 - Wood Energy Task Group
 - Recycling Task Group
 - Workforce Development Group
 - Green Infrastructure Planning Task Group
 - Trees, Woods and Forests Biodiversity Task Group

Further details and the full Annual Report available from Sara Roberts, s.roberts@wmra.gov.uk