

Social Forestry Questions and Issues

Compiled by Elizabeth O'Brien Social Forestry Project Leader Forest Research

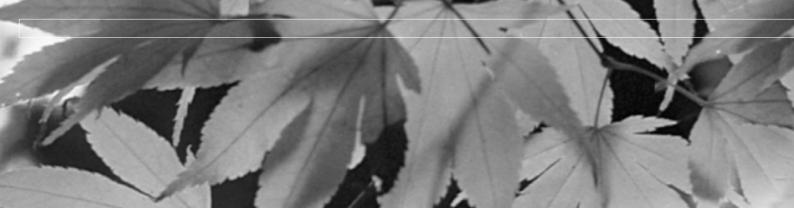
Social Forestry

Questions and Issues

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SOCIAL FORESTRY - A RESEARCH SEMINAR



Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the people who chaired each of the workshop groups and reported back the findings of each group: Jacquie Burgess, Gary Kerr and Ian Willoughby. Paul Tabbush was overall chairman for the day and also acted as rapporteur for one of the workshop groups along with Jenny Claridge and Liz O'Brien.

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Executive summary

This publication provides the presentation papers, workshop discussions and plenary discussion from a one-day seminar on social forestry held at Alice Holt Research Station in December 2000. The seminar was convened to bring together a wide range of delegates to consider the social forestry agenda and discuss important related social forestry research. Forest Enterprise, Forestry Commission and Forest Research staff gave the presentations. The topics covered current activities in relation to the social aspects of forestry and emphasised the importance of the social dimension of forestry, the need to involve the public in decision-making and for the Commission to adopt a socially inclusive approach. A series of workshops revealed a number of issues that are currently of particular importance. The group discussions focused on quality of life, stakeholder analysis and social sustainability. Among the main points raised was the need for a better understanding of the core values of stakeholders. Arriving at decisions that are viewed as just by all the various stakeholders was considered important, as disenfranchisement could occur if certain groups were neglected. Stakeholders and potential stakeholders need to be defined and their relative importance assessed at both a national and local level. Identification of excluded sections of the population, possibly through the use of informal networks in deprived areas, was regarded as important. There are different levels of possible participation in planning and management and flexibility is crucial in adapting to circumstances specific to a particular area. Strong partnerships are required between researchers, managers and communities so that participation and learning become a two-way collaborative process.

Ownership was considered to be important, either actual ownership of a woodland or the perception of ownership without the responsibility of management. It was argued that the younger generation often lacked confidence in using woodlands and green spaces due to unfamiliarity with these areas. Reconnecting and enthusing the younger generation to woodlands is required and possible role models are needed with which they can identify. Forestry is part of a wider arena of countryside values and meanings and should be considered in this context.

Research is required to inform managers and policymakers in their dealings with various stakeholders. Woodlands provide a wide spectrum of goods and services, a number of which lie outside of the market place. New alliances need to be sought in



the defence of the social benefits that woodlands provide to the public. A new woodland ethic is required which embraces this worth and accords it important and relative status compared to environmental and economic benefits. Exploration of the social and cultural values diverse publics hold for woodlands and trees is crucial to understanding people's experiences and attitudes towards woodlands and nature.

Introduction and background

A one-day seminar on social forestry was convened by Liz O'Brien of Forest Research on 6 December 2000. The purpose of the seminar was to focus on the social forestry agenda and discuss questions of importance in social forestry research. A mix of delegates attended to provide wide ranging and diverse views for the discussions generated by the workshop groups. The outcome of the day is this consultation publication which is primarily intended to stimulate debate at a conference to be held at Cardiff University on 19–20 June 2001. The purpose of the Cardiff conference will be to focus on social science research into woodlands and the natural environment. Researchers and PhD students will present their work and the conference will provide networking opportunities for academics, research students and interested organisations.

The Forestry Commission has become aware of the importance of considering the social aspects of forestry and how forestry impacts on people's lives. The concept of sustainable development emphasises social as well as economic and environmental issues. The Lisbon conference in 1998 on the protection of forests in Europe (Resolution 1) focused on the socio-economic aspects of sustainable management. Public participation in forestry planning and management is important and has become increasingly widespread throughout Europe. Forest Enterprise is already working with a number of community groups and involving them in forest design planning. The Community Forest Programme has involved local people and encouraged them to take part in decision-making and activities within forests. Although some progress has been made there is currently a need for a more socially inclusive approach as many groups are under-represented in current participation activities. Studies have documented the importance of involving groups such as local communities in decision-making in order to increase public participation, provide a sense of ownership, reduce conflict and improve the success of projects. The Forestry Commission is aware of the need to empower and encourage communities to take greater control and make their own decisions. The appointment of a Social Forestry Project Leader for Forest Research is another step forward in the process of assessing the social aspects of forestry. Contact is being made between Forest Research and specialists such as sociologists, psychologists and geographers so that the social issues and concerns connected with forestry can be researched in greater depth. As a public body the Forestry Commission is well placed to provide a greater number of benefits associated with woodlands to a wider cross section of society.

Often the value of woodlands and trees to local people has been overlooked even though they can provide many benefits that enrich people's lives such as improving well being, reducing stress and providing physical recreation opportunities. How and why woodlands are valued should play an important part in how they are created and managed. Management methods are then likely to be more effective and socially acceptable. Forestry Commission management of woodlands should incorporate a wider range of people's views and needs in order to reduce and manage any conflicts that arise and increase social equity and justice in woodland use.

The above issues formed the basis of the workshop discussion topics at the seminar which focused on stakeholder analysis, quality of life and social sustainability. Within forestry, greater emphasis is now being placed on research which highlights the meanings, experiences, perceptions and values people hold in relation to woodlands and the impact this has on their lives.

Seminar Presentations

Presentations by the Forestry Commission, Forest Enterprise and Forest Research staff provide an overview of the current position and interests of the organisations.

- Forests for people: working with communities in Britain Alan Stevenson
- Perspectives on forestry Marcus Sangster

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- The Community Forests Programme past, present and future Ron Melville
- Woods, people and politics in Wales John Westlake
- The Social Forestry Programme of Forest Research past, present and future Max Hislop

Forests for people: working with communities in Britain

Alan Stevenson Affiliated Head of Environment and Communications, Forest Enterprise

Where have we been?

The social priorities for forestry in 20th century Britain included the establishment of a strategic timber reserve by the Forestry Commission (FC) after its creation in 1919. In the 1960s the strategic reserve concept was replaced by economic considerations, while in the 1970s there was a large increase in recreation provision by the Commission. The 1980s saw a decline in employment with increased productivity and less expansion of forest cover. People became more aware of the environmental impacts of afforestation and there was a withdrawal of foresters from local communities.

Recent developments in the social aspects of forestry in Britain have come about through various international conferences and concepts:

- 1992 United Nations conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro.
- 1993 Helsinki Conference on protection of forests in Europe.
- 1998 Lisbon Conference on protection of forests in Europe which focused on the socio-economic impacts of sustainable management.

Decisive issues and policies have arisen from these conferences:

- Sustainable development
- Local Agenda 21
- Sustainable forest management.

The social elements of sustainable forest management are those which involve two-way interactions or transactions between the forest and people, whether individuals or communities.

Where are we now?

In the past two years Forest Enterprise (FE) have reviewed and discussed community involvement among staff, partners, communities and ministers. They have drawn on best practice, research and knowledge and have had the experience of practising community involvement at a local level. This resulted in the launch of a suite of FE publications comprising guidance for staff and communities, a set of strategy commitments for England, Scotland and Wales and the development of case studies for publication in collaboration with partners and communities (Forest Enterprise, 1999a, b, c, d).

Where are we going?

What is the guidance on offer from FE? The document *Working with communities in Britain - how to get involved* was published in July 1999. The four main themes for working with communities cover development, access and recreation, quality of life and culture. There is a spectrum of potential opportunities for working with communities; these include full community involvement, consultation, provision of information and giving communities control.



What do we need in order to work together?

In order for FE to work effectively with communities it needs to have:

- Clear objectives
- Performance indicators
- Structures for communications and reporting
- Commitment to the participation process
- Dialogue with communities
- Time to undertake dialogue.

Working with communities in Scotland

What commitment has FE made in Scotland? FE is committed to increasing the involvement of people and communities in the sustainable management of the Forestry Commission estate.

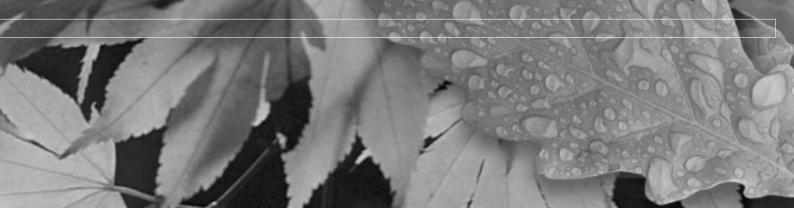
FE will:

- 1. Facilitate and provide opportunities for the involvement of local communities in the management of FC land wherever and whenever feasible.
- Consult local communities over the development of forest plans covering FC land and ensure that such plans are prepared in an integrated manner involving other public/private bodies for the benefit of local communities.
- Inform and consult local communities about any significant changes in the management of FC land – administration, acquisition, disposals and developments.
- 4. Optimise the opportunities for employment of local people.
- 5. Develop a good relationship with those who live and work on or near FC land.
- 6. Participate in local sustainable developments which contribute to local economics and fulfil our national business and environmental commitments.
- 7. Ensure that all local staff are clearly identifiable and accessible to the public.

Working with communities in England and Wales

The following five commitments for England and Wales have recently been drawn up:

- 1. Information: inform the public, local communities and stakeholders about the management of FC land.
- Consultation: comply with statutory consultation processes required by FC and other authorities and seek to conduct informal consultation with other stakeholders on significant changes.
- 3. Involvement: listen to local communities and facilitate realistic opportunities for the involvement of all stakeholder groups in the management of FC land.



- 4. Sustainable development: develop management systems and participate in local sustainable developments which contribute to local economies.
- 5. Responsible management: continue to develop good relationships with our visitors and with those who live and work on or near FC land.

The future – what next for Forest Enterprise?

The challenges for the 21st century will be:

- Enacting strategies in Scotland, England and Wales
- Making policy work
- Sourcing the necessary finance/resources
- Developing meaningful performance indicators
- Achieving value for money
- Managing expectation
- Developing a forest culture.

Issues/limits

There are a number of issues of importance and certain limitations that FE has to consider in its management of forests:

- Resources staff and cash
- Justification economic appraisal, non-market outputs, value for money
- Setting targets
- Performance measures/indicators
- Displaced benefits/outputs (from inputs)
- Lack of data and understanding of the requirements of stakeholders
- Stakeholder diversity
- Mismatch of forests with populations
- Variability of local circumstances/needs.

Perspectives on forestry

Marcus Sangster Principal Adviser Social Benefits, Forestry Commission

The role of Policy and Practice Division

The work of Policy and Practice Division (PPD) includes:

- International policy with the Department for International Development and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
- UK Forestry Policy
- Standards, regulation and monitoring
- Customer for Forest Research, an agency of the Forestry Commission
- Training
- Statistics and economics services
- Commissioned research from universities, studentships.

In Britain today only 2% of people are employed in primary industries such as fishing, farming, forestry and quarries. Eighty per cent of the population now lives in towns. Southern England is one of Europe's most densely populated areas while North Scotland is one of the least populated. All these facts emphasise the diversity of population distribution in Britain.

Why is PPD interested in social research?

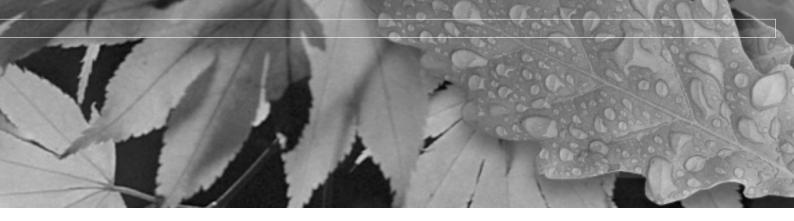
Current developments and changes in Government policy have emphasised the need to consider a wide range of social issues in connection with the management of forests. These developments include:

- Trajectory of rural policy endogenous approaches, open Government
- Funding streams Common Agricultural Policy, rural development
- Legitimacy of Government policy
- International forestry agreements
- Sustainable development.

What are forests?

'In respect of the environment the public is influenced not by scientific facts so much as social constructs of nature. Understanding these constructs is critical for forestry because they inform the nature of controversies.' (Binckley, 1998)

Binckley's quote highlights the importance of discovering how the public view nature and how they are influenced by it. Scientific information and decision-making needs to be balanced with local knowledge and views.



What do we want from the social research programme?

We need to understand who our stakeholders are and what they want from woodlands. We need a greater understanding of how to compete for the attention of stakeholders and engage with them using language that they themselves use and understand. The Forestry Commission also needs greater awareness of how to manage itself and how it might improve on its current performance.

What do we need to do to achieve this?

We need to:

- Instill an understanding and acceptance of the value of outputs from phenomenological research, with its analysis and description of everyday life.
- Broaden the vocabulary of our managers.
- Demonstrate the practical application of qualitative research, i.e. show that it is useful.
- Build up the momentum and resources within the programme.

Outputs from the social forest research programme

There is scope for more sophisticated approaches to surveys and managerial information. The development of qualitative performance indicators will be important and challenging; indicators are needed for forestry and also for the FC. Risk, safety and employee relations are all very important to FC managers. FC runs the UK's largest outdoor recreation industry, therefore understanding and managing customers is a key requirement.

Legitimacy and mandate

Legitimacy and mandate are expressed through the policy objective of social equity:

- Social inclusion/exclusion
- Publications, e.g. English Rural White Paper (DETR, 2000)
- Stakeholder identities and needs
- Marketing concepts of segmentation and targeted research.

Final thoughts

- It is too early to define a programme: we still need to explore researchable questions that are relevant to us.
- It is acceptable, even necessary, to try things out.
- We are talking about a *research* programme, so we need to be prepared to say 'no' to demands that take us away from that.
- PPD has no problems with funding near-market research (e.g. for FE) if it can learn by carrying out the research or promote the social forestry programme.

The Community Forests Programme – past, present and future

Ron Melville Community Forests Programme Manager, Forestry Commission

Purpose

This paper summarises recent arrangements that have been put in place to support a more coordinated approach to developing the Community Forests Programme in England. It reviews work currently under way by the Forestry Commission (FC) to examine the current arrangements for FC support in each of the 12 forests as well as their contributions towards delivery of the England Forestry Strategy (EFS). Finally, the paper looks forward over the next four to five years to 2005 when a succession strategy for the Countryside Agency's support of the programme and 12 teams will have to be in place. It also presents some questions to frame a discussion on mainstreaming community forestry more widely.

Background

Since the programme was first initiated in the late 1980s, the Community Forests have established themselves as a major national programme for encouraging landscape-scale environmental, social and economic regeneration. The Community Forests are a major vehicle for supporting the delivery of the EFS, in particular the programmes for economic regeneration, recreation, access and tourism, and environment and conservation. Although the 12 forests predated publication of the EFS, it was considerably influenced by their achievements.

The next five years

There are three key strategic issues to be addressed over the next five years:

- A succession strategy for the programme post-2005 (or earlier if appropriate) to act as a support programme as the Countryside Agency reduces its role.
- Mainstreaming community forestry more widely.
- Defining and targeting our resources to where there will be maximum social, environmental and economic advantage.

The Community Forests are involved in transforming the landscape in an around our cities and towns. Working in partnership is key to the success of this approach in delivering multiple

benefits to the public. The Community Forests Programme is taking a positive approach and creating new woodlands and opportunities for access near to people's homes.

Woods, people and politics in Wales

Jon Westlake Operations Manager, Forestry Commission

Social forestry in Wales

The following factors influence the approach to social forestry in Wales:

- The National Assembly of Wales has a duty to include sustainability in all its policies and programmes.
- Sixty-five per cent of Wales is covered by Objective 1 funding (GDP of 75% or less of European Union norm).
- Agricultural incomes in Wales have declined by approximately 40% in the past five years.
- The National Assembly's woodlands cover 7% of the surface of Wales making the Assembly Wales's largest landowner.
- South Wales contains Western Europe's largest urban forest, The Valleys, which covers 30 000 hectares with 1.8 million inhabitants living nearby.

Rural and semi-urban sustainable development

Social issues in Wales are inextricably entwined with sustainable development. The Assembly sees rural and semi-urban development as:

An endogenous process which harnesses local enterprise and resources to create a diversified service economy.

(Notice in that statement there is no reference to primary industries!)

There are a number of problems such as the limited resources or opportunities available in some areas. A number of social groups lack the tools or experience to participate in economic or development activity.

What can we offer?

At National level:

- Policy integration with other departments and public bodies to deliver sustainable development programmes.
- Support for research that will deliver new insights.

At local level:

- Opportunities for locally based economic development (e.g. Coed-y-Brenin mountain biking, local value-adding activities).
- Grant aid to support the development of community action woodlands and green spaces.
- Community outreach programmes to involve local people in the management of their forests and woodlands and provide education initiatives.
- Partnership opportunities for others to make use of the resources that we manage (development initiatives).



What do we need?

The following changes are required:

- A new paradigm and mission that accurately reflects the importance of the social dimension of our work.
- Staff who are equipped to understand the complexities of social issues and their integration into sustainable development.
- A shared understanding (internally and externally) of what is achievable.
- A more inclusive attitude towards external partners.
- The acceptance of occasional failure.
- Increased funding.

The Social Forestry Programme of Forest Research – past, present and future

Max Hislop Project Leader, Forest Research

What does social forestry mean?

The Forestry Commission's 'People, Trees and Woods' group identified four themes that can be used to describe the wide range of issues covered by the term social forestry. Table 1 shows these four themes with some examples of the issues they might include.

Development	Recreation and access	Quality of life	Participation and awareness
Forestry jobs	Walkers	Views	Consultation
Local processing	Cyclists	Health – exercise, pollution, stress relief	Community woodlands
Tourism	Dog walking	Habitat protection	Education
Non-timber products	Wildlife watching	Seasonal changes	Social inclusion

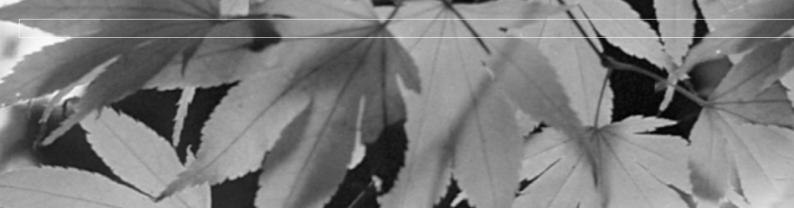
Table 1 Social forestry themes and examples

🔆 Past

Forest Research's programmes can be related to the ecological, economic and social forestry functions in the definition of sustainable forest management from the 1993 Helsinki Forestry Conference. The chronology of the programmes reflect the development of forestry in the 20th century. Consequently there are many developed research branches with economic considerations as the primary focus (e.g. Tree Improvement, Silviculture, Mensuration), fewer more recent branches with environmental considerations (e.g. Woodland Ecology, Environmental Research) and, until recently, none with social considerations.

The Social Forestry Programme has developed from two earlier silvicultural projects: Urban Forestry (at Alice Holt) and Community Woodlands (at Northern Research Station) (Hodge, 1995). A Forest Research review of social forestry research in 1998 identified a research 'gap' between the traditional biophysical research undertaken within Forest Research and the social sciences.

Forestry Commissioners' want to understand more about the social values of forestry and how forestry can deliver social benefits; consequently research budgets in this area have increased. There are currently two project leaders with a social forestry remit – one based at Alice Holt and one at the Northern Research Station.



Present

Objectives of programme

The social forestry programme has seven main objectives:

- To become more responsive to public needs
- To learn and apply from best practice
- To aid decision-making by providing managers with theoretical frameworks
- To develop a common vocabulary
- To encourage understanding (both internal and external to FC)
- To demonstrate the industry's good faith
- To maintain the industry's 'licence to operate'.

Some outputs for 2000/01

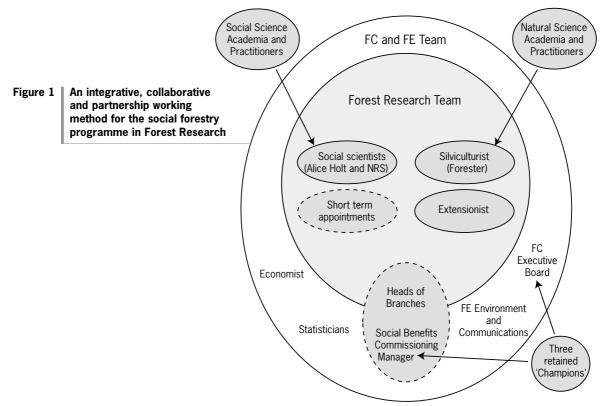
A number of projects are currently planned or on going in the social forestry programme:

- Use and abuse of forests in the central belt of Scotland (with Heriot-Watt University)
- The effectiveness of wayfinding systems with forest users (with Heriot-Watt University)
- Application of social science skills to meet forest managers' needs (with contractor)
- Development of a decision framework for public involvement in Forest Enterprise planning (with USDA Forest Service researcher).

🚴 Future

The Social Forestry programme has many potential research issues to explore that will require specialist expertise at particular times. It is intended that a core team is established within Forest Research (two additions to the existing team) and that this team works in collaboration with and in partnership with external centres of expertise (Figure 1). The intention is that the outputs of the programme should integrate with other programmes of research within the organisation.





It is currently anticipated that future research will include:

- Decision-making in forestry for social benefits
- Social valuation of forestry.

Workshop Discussion Groups

Three workshops focused on areas of current importance for the social forestry research agenda. Many of these issues are not only related to forestry but are also important in the context of the wider countryside.

Workshop Group 1: Quality of life as a driver of countryside policy Chair: Ian Willoughby

- Workshop Group 2: Stakeholders and their importance Chair: Gary Kerr
- Workshop Group 3: Social sustainability as part of sustainable forest management Chair: Jacquie Burgess

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Workshop Group 1: Quality of life as a driver of countryside policy

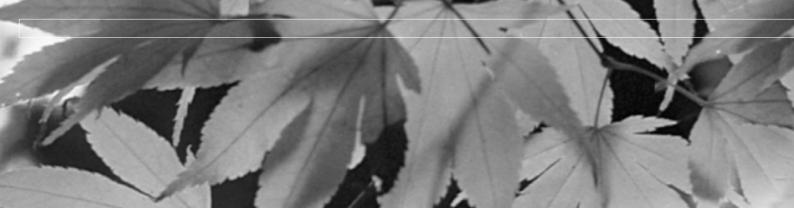
Workshop chair lan Willoughby

The issues discussed in this group included:

- How do forests and woodlands improve people's quality of life?
- What should we be researching in relation to quality of life?

A brainstorming session revealed lists of positive and negative quality of life issues in relation to woodlands:

Positive: improvement of quality of life	
Create space	Backdrop to factories
Get away from daily life	Wealth – timber revenues
Mental and physical health	Shelter
Diversify landscape	Different recreation
Withstand change	Shared ownership – no boundaries
Freely accessible areas	Keep warm
Participation potential	Educational asset
Sports use	Carbon 'sinks'
Stress relief	World ecology – climate change
Jobs	Restore degraded land
Timber revenues	Sense or illusion of freedom
Arts – painting and drawing	Home, security, well-being
Timber and wood products	Informal study areas
Opportunities for recreation	Accessible space
Natural environment	Seclusion and solitude
Air and water	Increased house prices
Other habitats	Space for urban development
Sense of belonging	Absorb crowds – privacy
Provide continuity	Spiritual
Cultural values	Sense of place
Non-timber products	Focus of community well-being
Make ugly things less ugly	Focus of community activity



Negative: reduction of quality of life		
Dark and dangerous	Hidden danger	
Leaves on railway lines	Harbour deleterious wildlife	
Crime	Intercept light and space	
Choke waterways		

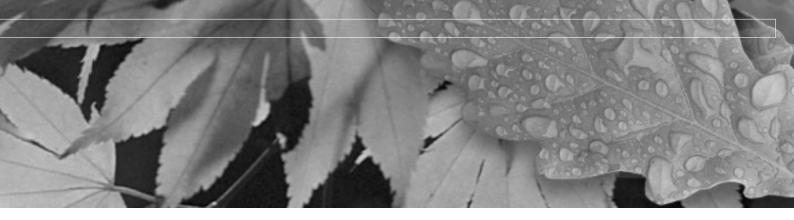
It was suggested that people claim ownership not necessarily of a whole woodland but of the part that they use and are familiar with, and possibly use on a regular basis. In a number of areas in Wales it was thought that there was antipathy to distant coniferous woodlands which did not represent the needs of local people. Research is necessary to explore who uses woodlands and why, and more specifically to focus on people's core inner experience of using woodlands. What are the internalised psychological benefits that people receive from woodlands whether they visit them and use them or enjoy them from a distance?

Part of the debate focused on whether generational patterns of woodland use were more important than people's stage in their life cycle. The older generation, who were familiar with woodlands and had grown up with them, had greater confidence in using them. The younger generation were often less familiar with and had less experience of woodlands and green space, and sometimes felt uncertain in woodland settings. This lack of confidence in using green space was considered to be a problem that needed to be addressed.

The group suggested that quality of life issues were complex and involved more than the discovery and description of the benefits that people received from woodlands and trees. The values that people have for woodlands need to be articulated in their own terms and words. Research should focus on the core values of different stakeholder groups and question who obtains benefits and why. The group argued that trying to apply monetary values to the social benefits that people received from woodlands was unhelpful as it did not include an understanding of the different ways in which people could express values and suggests that people value only what they can pay for.

It was argued that woods could be used to develop a sense of community and that people had become detached from woodlands as a result of the industrial revolution and a reduction in forest cover. Conflicts could arise between local woodland users and visitors from other areas particularly when management changes were made which seemed to be of benefit to one particular group.

Emphasis was placed on the need to educate foresters to provide people with what they wanted from woodlands. The approach in the past has assumed that if the public were educated to understand what foresters were doing they would be happy with management



practices. This view is based on the presumption that the forester or Forestry Commission view is the 'right' one, and the one that all reasonable people should accept. Attitudes have changed and it is no longer assumed that education is a one-way process; instead it should include a two-way collaborative approach.

The group agreed that research should investigate the sort of woodlands people wanted and where they should be located. Assessment should also be made of how people should be involved in determining forestry's future. Sophisticated and comprehensive survey work could be used to ask more meaningful questions about public attitudes. Woodlands are also part of the wider countryside and this context needs to be taken into consideration.

Research needs identified:

What is quality of life?
Who cares? – need to demonstrate and educate.
How do we compete?
Who uses woodlands and why?
What values do the public have in relation to the countryside and why?
What are the social/psychological benefits?
What do people perceive in the forest environment?
Large scale survey of attitudes/values in order to identify a benchmark of attitudes.
Use market research techniques, e.g. find market and sell product.
Stratify those familiar with woods and those unfamiliar with woods.

Summary

The group decided that quality of life was a nebulous concept which needed to be adequately defined. It was emphasised that robust criteria were needed for evaluating quality of life issues. Research questions considered to be important were the need to discover the core values of different stakeholder groups and what values they have in relation to woodlands. Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs which suggested that basic needs, such as food and shelter, have to be met before people could move on to fulfilling other needs such as cultural and spiritual. The group argued that research should focus on the higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy such as cultural and social identity, quality of life and citizenship. The cultural contributions that woodlands and trees make to people's quality of life can be very significant. It was also emphasised that forestry is a small player in a large arena of countryside meanings and values. There is a requirement to form strong partnerships across research communities, between managers and with citizens, and to demonstrate to politicians that forestry is valuable.

Workshop Group 2 Stakeholders and their importance

Workshop chair Gary Kerr

Group 2 produced a problem statement. In what ways might we:

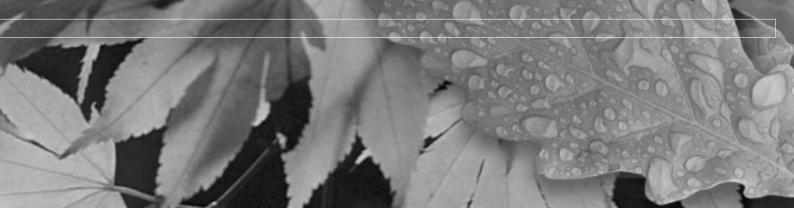
- (a) Identify stakeholders?
- (b) Take account of their views in the planning and management of Britain's woodlands?

The group discussed the importance of identifying stakeholders and discovering the areas that they wanted to engage with in connection with woodlands. Do they want to be involved in management, in planning or to actually own a particular woodland? Meaningful engagement was considered important and would vary depending on particular situations. How could the Forestry Commission prioritise between various stakeholders and reconcile contrasting views and reach a compromise? Consideration needs to be given to the wide range of stakeholders and potential stakeholders who may or may not currently use woodlands. Neglecting particular groups could lead to a disenfranchised public. The group suggested that there was a need to be more comprehensive in considering stakeholders and their importance. A process of 'going out' to all groups however large or small was advocated.

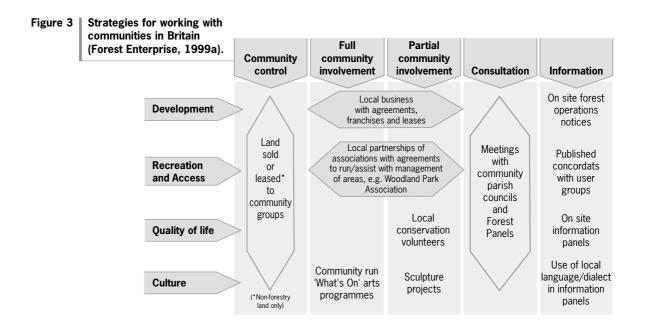
Current participation in forest management and planning is concentrated on interest groups such as friends of the forests, parish councils and organisations with particular interests such as wildlife trusts and local authorities. These are often vocal groups who know how to make themselves heard and have interest in a particular issue. Many people, such as the young, ethnic minorities, the unemployed and disadvantaged are not represented on these groups.

Forums for consulting with stakeholders have traditionally occurred at public meetings which, for various reasons, are often not an effective method of encouraging stakeholders to give their views. Meetings are often dominated by a few vociferous people whose views may not be important, relevant or representative of the majority of users. Meetings do not include the possibly important thoughts and contributions of the people who are not used to speaking in public. Awareness is needed of the positive and negative aspects of participation; people may not always engage in the participatory process in good faith and may try to influence meetings to air their grievances whether or not they are relevant to the situation. The group suggested that there was a need for an open route for people to get involved in decision-making and emphasised how a decision support system could help managers involve the public.

The group discussed Arnstein's ladder of	Γ	Citizen control
participation which focuses on different levels of	Degree of	
participation from consultation to citizen control	citizen – Delegated p	
(Figure 2). The hierarchical levels of participation	power	Partnership
were thought by the group to be unhelpful.	Γ	Placation
	Degree of tokenism	Consultation
		Informing
Figure 2 Arnstein's ladder of participation	Non -	Therapy
(Arnstein, 1969).	participation	Manipulation



A different approach has been illustrated in the Forest Enterprise's strategy for working with communities in Britain (Figure 3). This removes the hierarchical levels and highlights various aspects of participation which may be appropriate at different times. It was argued that different tools would be required for working with people at various levels. Tokenism should be avoided and genuine attempts made to engage with stakeholders. Discussion also centred on how to manage competing claims under conflict, as it would not be possible to please all stakeholders.



Research needs identified:

Identification of stakeholders and potential stakeholders.

Methodologies for assessing stakeholder and citizen views.

Practical methods for incorporating stakeholder views into planning and management.

Summary

A broad range of techniques from the social sciences and rural development studies could be utilised in the study of stakeholders. In identifying and involving stakeholders in woodland management, use and planning, the Forestry Commission needs to deal honestly with integrity and transparency. Stakeholders need to be aware that the participation process has been just and thorough and could be viewed as fair by all stakeholders. There is a need to define stakeholders and assess their relevance and importance at both a national and local level. Flexibility, adaptability and innovative ideas are needed when trying to involve stakeholders in decision-making and management.

Workshop Group 3: Social sustainability as part of sustainable forest management

Workshop chair Jacquie Burgess

The issues discussed in this group included:

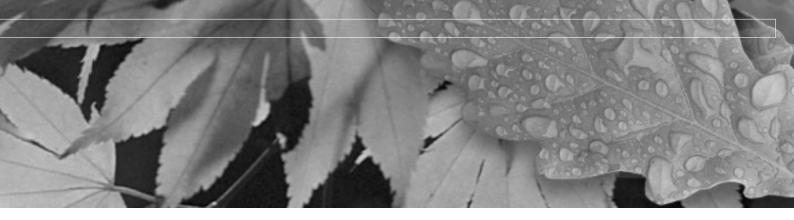
- Fairness, transparency and justice.
- How accessible are our woodlands and green spaces to all groups of society?
- Can we interest a wider cross section of society in woodlands, e.g. women, ethnic minorities?
- How can we create a sense of ownership of woodlands?
- Does ownership matter?
- Should we be creating ownership as a means of achieving social justice?

The group first discussed definitions of justice, fairness, transparency, ownership and accessibility.

Justice	Legal, procedural
	Redressing inequalities
Fairness	Equality of opportunities
	Equity in decision-making
Transparency	Openness of process
nansparency	Rights to participate
	Audit trails
	Audit trails
Ownership	Property rights
	Centuries of exclusion
	Different models deliver different justice and fairness goals
Accessibility	Rights to be there
	Confidence issues

Ownership was considered in relation to property rights and whether access could provide feelings of ownership. It was emphasised that there were different perceptions and attitudes towards access in England, Scotland and Wales. In Scotland, and to a slightly lesser extent in Wales, people feel that they have rights of access and moral ownership of land. In England people were thought to be fearful about where they could and could not go. There is a perception in Wales that forestry, represented by English interests, has imposed itself on the Welsh and this is a legacy the Forestry Commission has to overcome.

The question was raised of whether the public actually wanted ownership in a legal sense, which has happened in areas such as Laggan in Scotland, or whether they wanted greater feelings of ownership without the significant responsibility of actually owning and managing a woodland. It was argued that there were other ways of providing ownership such as communities owning freehold and having access to land in perpetuity.



A number of questions were raised:

- Does ownership matter in the sense that it gives legal or permissive rights to people that they have not had before?
- Is there more potential for public bodies to provide feelings of ownership? Can benefits be delivered without changing ownership?
- Does access actually provide people with feelings of ownership?

Public ownership is not necessarily a guarantee of public access although there is greater potential in public bodies for providing ownership. Whether ownership was a reality or a perception was not considered to be the key question as the most important challenge is to get the balance right for a particular community. The group agreed that ownership was an important issue and different arrangements would be required that were regionally and country specific. Numerous benefits can be delivered without necessarily changing ownership. When a community has ownership of a woodland they do not necessarily want to be involved with the management of it. Providing a sense of ownership might reduce unacceptable behaviour and activities within woodland as local people could group together and monitor what was happening in their area.

There is a need to build confidence so that communities and individuals are aware that they are welcome at woodland sites. This can be a slow process particularly with disadvantaged groups who may not be used to green space and often do not feel any sense of ownership. Voluntary wardens from different ethnic groups could play an important role in building confidence and providing a sense of community engagement; they could also help police woods. This might give people greater confidence and networks could be developed so that people could go walking together. A woodland owner who lived within his wood described how his presence on site gave people greater confidence, particularly women with children. He argued that actually having people living in woodlands was important and should be encouraged. It was suggested that the younger generation often has little knowledge of green space: they were not familiar with it or particularly confident about using it. Reconnecting people to green space is important and there is a need for role models for young and ethnic minority groups so that they see people they identify with using woodlands and green space.

Research needs identified:

Validate environmental and social benefits. Discover multiple publics' views. Ethnic groups – are there barriers to accessibility? Social deprivation – what contributions and improvements can woodlands make?



Summary

Many of the issues facing woodlands plague society at large, such as policing, fear of the so-called 'yob culture', rights of individuals, drug and litter problems. It was suggested that accessible woodlands were needed that people could walk to. As a society we are interested in 'quick fixes' and forget that woodlands take a long time to grow and that they operate on a different timescale.

The group developed a matrix for research which focuses on the need to look at issues such as people's values for green space and woods, accessibility, confidence issues, economic initiatives, and these needed to be assessed in relation to gender, age, class and ethnicity (Table 2). Research should also be undertaken within a policy framework, within a geographical context that is sensitive to different areas, and within the context of current woodland resources.



	Geo	graphical context	olicy framework Wo	odland resources
	Values of green space and woods	Accessibility	Action research confidence	New economic initiatives and incentives
Gender				
Ethnicity				
Age				
Class				
Expertise				

Plenary discussion

Chair Paul Tabbush

The Forestry Commission (FC) needs to be more inclusive and imaginative and demonstrate that it can deliver benefits to a wider cross section of society. It was suggested that the Commission should look at the medium and long-term future and consider whether it had an estate that gave the public what it wanted. As an organisation the FC must consider a wider range of stakeholders and possible potential stakeholders who may not currently use woodlands. Reasons for non-use might include lack of transport, unfamiliarity with woods, fear for safety, lack of time and lack of confidence. The FC needs to create an adequate resource in urban areas where it could have a large impact on improving people's quality of life.

Concern was expressed about possible community participation scenarios in which articulate members of various communities, who generally have little free time, became overloaded with community initiatives while the less articulate continued to be ignored. It was suggested that more use should be made of informal networks particularly in deprived areas and that discovering ways to access these networks would be very useful. A lot of work is currently going on at a grass-roots level in connection with community participation and there should be greater dissemination of information on successful approaches.

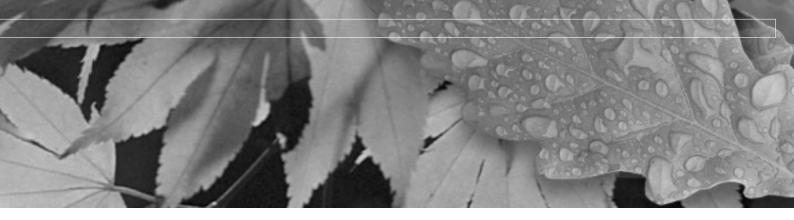
Emphasis was placed on looking beyond the boundaries of woodlands and trees to consider the environment as a whole and people's attitudes to green space in general. Bringing woodlands back into urban development was considered to be important and the FC should consider green space as well as tree cover in the urban environment.

Seminar summary and the way forward

Forestry has embraced the recent concept of sustainable forest management in which social issues are as important as environmental and economic issues. People are a fundamental part of the sustainable forest management system and their views and needs should be incorporated into forest planning and management. It is clear from the outcome of this seminar that there is an active interest in research which investigates the social aspects of forestry and woodland use. Stakeholders and potential stakeholders were viewed as a particularly important area where work needs to be carried out in order to ensure that the FC takes a more socially inclusive approach. A greater understanding of stakeholders, what they want and how to engage with them could provide important information for management and policymakers. Involving local communities in woodland use, planning and management has significant benefits and provides a sense of ownership of the wood for that community. Ownership of woodlands was considered to be an important issue whether it was in a physical or perceptual sense. There is a need to improve understanding of the effectiveness of community participation in forestry and investigate different approaches particularly in relation to disadvantaged groups. All three workshop groups talked of the importance of stakeholder involvement in decision-making and the need for flexibility to adapt participation processes to different requirements and situations. Top down approaches to participation are no longer acceptable; approaches that are more effective are needed, i.e. consultative, democratic, collaborative, deliberative and interactive.

Identification of issues by local people can provide important information, informed by longterm local knowledge and experience of an area. Improving and extending public participation could improve the understanding of both forest workers and managers who could benefit from local indigenous knowledge and at the same time increase public understanding of biodiversity and forest management issues. There are many diverse publics and research should explore people's social and cultural values in relation to woodlands; not only for those who currently use woodlands but also for non-users who may also consider woodlands and trees to be important. Increased understanding of the values people hold for woodlands could aid in the development of socially acceptable management practices and is an important part of sustainable forest management. Currently there is a limited understanding of the values the public have for woodlands. Research can identify how these values are expressed and assess ways of incorporating them into the decision-making process.

It was suggested that a large proportion of the younger generation were not used to using green space and woodlands and they lacked confidence in these settings. There is a need to reconnect young people with the countryside and increase their confidence in using and enjoying woodlands. Education initiatives often involve schoolchildren in activities such as tree planting. There may be other approaches that could be effective in reintroducing young people to woodlands and the environment.



Main issues arising from the seminar

In summary, the Seminar identified the following main issues which will help to provide the foundations for future social forestry research.

- Make use of informal networks particularly in deprived areas
- Adopt a socially inclusive approach
- Define stakeholders and assess their relevance and importance at both a national and a local level
- Develop flexible and innovative ideas when trying to involve stakeholders in decision-making and management
- Provide sense of ownership of woodlands to local communities
- Explore diverse publics' social and cultural values in relation to woodlands
- Increase confidence of younger generation who may be unfamiliar with woodlands and green space
- Form strong partnerships across research communities, between managers and with citizens and demonstrate to politicians that forestry is valuable
- Appreciate that forestry is a small player in a larger arena of countryside meanings and values

Cardiff conference

This consultation publication is primarily designed to be used as the basis for stimulating debate at the forthcoming two-day conference on social science research into woodlands and the natural environment at Cardiff University on 19–20 June 2001. The conference will bring together academics, PhD researchers, organisations and local authorities interested in discussing people and nature issues. The first day will consist of presentations of current work by academics and PhD researchers. On the second day a series of workshops will be run on topics of current importance; this will provide delegates with the opportunity to contribute their knowledge and experience. The proceedings of the conference will be published to encourage and ensure dissemination of current research and thinking.

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People are a fundamental part of the sustainable forest management system and their views need to be incorporated into forest planning and management. Consideration of the social aspects of forestry, and how forests and woodlands impact on people's lives, stimulated the need for discussion in this area. A wide range of delegates were brought



together for a one-day seminar held at Forest Research to focus on the social and human dimension of forestry and discuss questions of importance in social forestry research.



This publication contains the presentations given by Forest Enterprise, Forest Research and Forestry Commission speakers and the contributions made by all delegates in workshop discussion groups which focused on quality of life issues, stakeholders and their importance and social sustainability.

