The Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate in England: Social use, value and expectations

Final report

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Social and Economic Research Group, Forest Research

The Research Agency of the
Forestry Commission

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Contents

List of abbreviations and acronyms

BME	Black and minority ethnic
DG	Discussion group
ha	hectare
FC	Forestry Commission
FCE	Forestry Commission England
FCGB	Forestry Commission Great Britain
FR	Forest Research
GOC	Gay Outdoor Club
IFOS	Forecasting and Operational Support Unit (of the FC)
LA	Local Authority
mi	mile(s)
N	Number
PFE	Public Forest Estate
POF	Public Opinion of Forestry (survey)
SERG	Social and Economic Research Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT AND AIM

This study provides evidence of the public value of the Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate in England (PFE). The aim was to establish whether people have different perceptions and expectations of publicly owned forests compared to those in other forms of ownership.

We compare three aspects of the people-forest relationship:

- Comparison between tenure types: does the PFE provide different, more or fewer benefits than other woodlands?

- Comparison within society: what social benefits do the trees and range of woodlands in the PFE in England provide, and which parts of society currently use them or feel welcome to use them?

- Comparison between woodland types: do particular kinds of woodland in the PFE provide different, more or fewer benefits than other parts and to different parts of society?

SUMMARY OF APPROACH

The study consisted of two phases. Phase 1 identified and analysed existing evidence. Phase 2 collected and analysed new data to fill gaps in existing knowledge.

New data was gathered using two complementary approaches:

- a statistically representative survey of the adult population of England

- 10 discussion groups covering a range of diversity groups and interests, held in four locations.

The survey and discussion groups were structured around the following themes:

1. use of woodlands and benefits derived from them

2. knowledge, perceived significance and impact of ownership

3. expectations and priorities of for the future provision and management of the PFE and woodlands under other ownership.

Both survey data and discussion group results represent public opinion, perception and experience, rather than right or wrong statements. The public opinion survey provides statistically representative and generalisable results. The qualitative data adds details and explanations to help understand patterns in the survey data and the underlying thinking and values that influence public opinions. Neither replaces the need to consider the wider evidence. However, the study provides a clear understanding of the portfolio of needs and expectations identified by society and clarifies the mandate for decisions about the PFE.

KEY FINDINGS

1 Over half of the population visits woodlands. Many expressed a strong emotional connection with trees and woodlands, and associated a wide range of benefits with them.

Tenure

2 Although only one third of respondents claimed to know who owned the woods that they visit, and about one tenth felt that it was important, most have clear and strong views about how public money

should be spent and what benefits public forests should provide.

3 This is supported by the fact that 70% of respondents could list values for publicly owned woodlands, while only 55% of respondents could list values for privately owned woodlands.

4 All categories of values associated with woodlands are associated more strongly with publicly owned than private ones. Recreation, access and facilities such as well-maintained paths, car parking, toilets and cafes were most frequently reported as important.

5 Public expectations for future benefits from the PFE were also higher than for comparable benefits from other woodland. For all woodland types they prioritised wildlife habitat provision followed by recreation, landscape conservation, climate change mitigation and education.

6 Many participants felt that the PFE was run cost-effectively; some were surprised how little public resource was actually used. There was often strong support for public ownership to guarantee access for the public, and sustainable woodland management in the future.

7 Most participants in the discussion groups expressed a strong wish to maintain or increase the current extent and composition of public woodland ownership.

Society

8 Those who reported using the PFE are more likely to be older, male, married, white, have children, be in full-time employment and live in rural areas, than those who reported using other woods, or did not know the ownership of the woods they used. They were also more likely to visit woods more frequently.

9 Women were more likely than men to give particular reasons for visiting a woodland, more likely to expect community involvement on private woodlands, and to choose woodlands for reasons of safety and child friendliness.

10 Disabled people had a slight preference for dog-walking as a reason to visit woodlands, were more likely to appreciate woodlands for the scenery, variety of trees, fresh air and their wider societal benefits than others, and less likely to cite physical activities as a value. Those working with disabled people would like to see better locally available communication and information about access (suitable paths and facilities).

11 People who described themselves as belonging to a BME group were less likely to value public woodlands for walking and wildlife, and more likely to value them for climate change and tourism than ethnically white people. Having information accessible/available about access rights, facilities and activities were raised as encouraging use of woodlands.

12 Older people are more likely than others to value woods for wildlife; and younger and middle-aged people more likely to value woods for activities.

13 Those on lower incomes are more likely to value woods as a place to get away, or take the children; while those on higher incomes are more likely to values woods for their contribution to the landscape. There appears to be a trend for more people in lower income brackets to expect more from the public estate.

Woodland type

14 The PFE is very diverse in both woodland ecology and facilities provided for public use. This research attempted to

distinguish between them in exploring public values. Points made in discussion group, however, often focused on a few well known 'honeypot' sites and it is unclear that public opinion relates to the full spectrum of PFE resources.

15 People value a wide range of forest types, particularly native broadleaved forests. Conifer woodlands were perceived by many as unattractive, but most valued variety over one particular type, and considered that the type of woodland did not matter as much as having access through them.

16 Most discussants perceived a need to increase the area of broadleaved woodlands. Felling trees or increasing timber production was seen by many as reducing rather than maintaining or improving these benefits. Discussants showed little awareness of the forest industry, woodland management, or the possibility that harvesting timber could contribution to climate change mitigation.

Adding value to the PFE

17 Business partnerships are useful for providing facilities or attractions on some PFE sites and as an income stream for the Forestry Commission. The main suggestions by business partners for improving existing partnerships were:

- have clearer lines of communication and more liaison (stable contact point and less bureaucracy)

- a more business-like structure to charges (set nationally or transparently across the FC; less bureaucracy)

- a longer-term perspective to issuing leases to allow more investment and reduce risk to partners.

18 The PFE is seen to provide a diverse resource, invest in a wide range of public facilities and provisions, and maintain larger sites than under private ownership. This is perceived as necessary to accommodate multiple demands and needs.

19 Public expectations for future management priorities for the PFE centre around habitat/landscape conservation, wider environmental and climate benefits, education, and recreation.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Forestry Commission (FC) manages about 258,000ha (over 600,000 acres) of land in England and provides an important national asset delivering many benefits. These include protecting and enhancing the natural environment, providing economic opportunities and helping to improve the quality of people's lives.

The Secretary of State, Hilary Benn asked the Forestry Commission England (FCE) to undertake a study of its estate in England. The study will show how the Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate in England (PFE) contributes to society today and how it might sustainably serve society's long-term needs. It is part of FCE's Corporate Plan 2008–11 published in June 2008. The remit of the PFE study is:

> "To consider the future long-term sustainable role for the public forest estate making recommendations about any necessary changes to improve its ability to deliver relevant priorities in the strategy for England's trees woods and forests and contribute to other Government objectives." (Written Ministerial Statement, 24 November 2008; Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Column 37WS, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm081124/wmstext/81124m0001.htm)

Forestry Commission England has commissioned Forest Research's (FR) Social and Economic Research Group (SERG) to conduct social research as part of the PFE study in England.

1.2 Aims

The main aims of the research were to establish whether people have different perceptions and expectations of publicly-owned woods and forests in England and their management as compared to woods and forests in other forms of ownership. Within this the study focused on three comparisons:

1. **Comparison within society:** What social benefits do the trees and range of woodlands of the PFE in England provide, and which parts of society currently use them or feel welcome to use them? How could we improve the use values for the range of interests and needs of society?
2. **Comparison between PFE and woodland under other ownership and management:** Does the PFE provide different / more / fewer benefits than woodlands under other ownership and management? Does the PFE provide benefits to different parts of society compared with woodlands under other ownership? What do business partners get out of the PFE compared with other forests? How could partnerships benefits be improved?

3. **Comparison between different parts of the PFE:** Do particular kinds of woodland in the PFE provide different / more / fewer benefits than other parts and to different parts of society?

The study consisted of two phases:
- Phase 1: identifying and analysing existing data
- Phase 2: collecting and analysing new data to fill gaps in existing knowledge.

The results of the work undertaken in phase 1 were presented to the PFE Working Group in the Interim Draft Report and are briefly summarised in section 2 before focusing on the findings from phase 2, followed by overall conclusions from the study. A 10-page summary report of the research is also available for wider dissemination.[1]

2 Summary of phase 1: review of existing evidence

Phase 1 drew on existing knowledge to provide a new cross-cutting analysis of evidence about social values, attitudes and expectations of public compared with private woodlands. It was based on a review of academic literature and published reports, a meta-analysis of completed social research held on SERG's project inventory, and a review of datasets available within the Forestry Commission.

The existing research was found to constitute a strong body of evidence for the benefits to society of trees, woods and forests. The reviewed academic literature indicated that the appropriate mixture of woodland tenure (e.g. public, community or individual private) is specific to cultural and political contexts, and cannot easily be inferred from comparison with other countries.

Circumstantial evidence from recent events in Scotland suggests that when public values for the PFE are tested, they are higher than widely assumed. A number of evaluations conducted by SERG show that particular PFE sites and projects are highly regarded and valued. Nineteen datasets were reviewed, of which two provided information on benefits provided by woodlands under different kinds of ownership.

Overall, however, there was very little evidence that enabled a rigorous comparison of the benefits, values and expectations associated with the PFE and those under other

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[1] The interim report has been finalised as Lawrence A., Carter C., O'Brien L. and Lovell R. (2009) *Social benefits from the public forest estate in England: review of current evidence*. The summary report has been finalised as Lawrence A. and Carter C. (2009) *England's public forest estate: Social use, value and expectations – Summary report*. All three reports will be available from the FR webpages for social research http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/peopleandtrees following release of the full PFE study.

ownership. Phase 2 was therefore designed to provide both quantitative and qualitative data to address this evidence gap.

3 Phase 2: methods

There were two complementary strands to our approach of gathering new data:

- A **statistically representative survey** of the adult population of England (the 'PFE survey') was commissioned to provide information on the patterns of social use, value and expectation of woodlands in different ownership.
- **Qualitative research** in the form of small discussion groups to gain a better understanding of the knowledge and significance of the PFE to the public.

Both survey data and discussion group results represent public opinion. While the public opinion survey provides statistically representative and generalisable results, the qualitative data adds details and explanations to help understand patterns in the survey data and the underlying thinking and values for public opinions.

The data from both the PFE survey and discussion groups were analysed to identify key issues and patterns as well as differences in attitudes, needs and expectations amongst different groups within society. Each approach is described in more detail in the following sections.

We also requested a **specific analysis of the Public Opinion of Forestry (POF) survey 2008** data (England) to check for statistically significant relationships in data with regard to the use of and knowledge about the PFE by different sections of the public. This was conducted by Gilly Diggins (FC Economics and Statistics).

3.1 Public survey

We developed a survey to help identify differences in public awareness, use and expectations of, and benefits from, the PFE compared with woodlands under other ownership. Drafts were reviewed by FR's senior statistician, the FC's Economic and Statistics team, the PFE England Consultation contact and contractor, and members of the PFE England Working Group. Revisions were made to address feedback from the reviewers (such as including Question 3 of the Public Consultation; see Appendix 1, Question 9a) and a nearly final version piloted face-to-face on seven individuals.

The final approved version of the survey is attached as **Appendix 1**, and contained questions relating to the:

- use of woodlands in England and benefits derived from them

- knowledge of ownership of woodlands, the perceived significance of ownership and potential impacts of ownership
- expectations of priorities for the future provision and management of the PFE as compared to private woodlands
- information on socio-cultural (including information relating to all diversity groups except religious beliefs and sexual orientation) and economic background.

TNS Travel and Tourism was contracted to electronically script the survey into a computer-assisted personal interviewing format and to carry out face-to-face in-home interviews with a statistically representative sample of the general adult (aged 16+) population in England. Their sampling system integrates the Post Office Address file with the 2001 Census small area data at output area level. This enables them to draw replicated waves of multi-stage stratified samples with accurate and up-to-date address selection. **Appendix 2** provides further explanations of TNS's sampling and weighting methods.

The survey took place between 22 and 26 July 2009 with a total sample size of 1775 individuals participating, corresponding to a weighted base/sample of 1726. The survey data was entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and tables of descriptive statistics produced by TNS. Cross breaks were chosen to distinguish between the following categories:
- users / non-users (here defined as those who had / had not used woodlands in England in the past year respectively) and for the users the frequency of woodland use
- different socio-economic groups (indicated by social class and income)
- specific diversity groups (gender, age, disability, ethnic minorities)
- population density (urban/rural)
- samples drawn from the nine English political regions.

Further analysis by SERG using SPSS focused on testing for any statistically significant differences in the perceptions, use, knowledge and expectations of woodlands and their management under different types of ownership. The Pearson's chi square test[2] was used to assess the relationship between selected variables to help answer our research questions, especially in terms of drawing comparisons between different sections of society and between the PFE and woodlands in other types of ownership. Statistical significance was quantified through the use of 'p values' which relate to the probability that the obtained results are due to chance. A 'p value' of less than 0.05 was used which

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[2] This is a commonly used test to examine the relationship between two discrete nominal variables. In chi-square analysis, the null hypothesis creates expected frequencies against which the observed frequencies are tested. If the difference between the expected and observed frequencies is sufficiently big, the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be concluded that the two variables are related.

means that there is less than a 1 in 20 probability of that result occurring by chance alone.

3.2 Discussion groups

Ten discussion groups were organised. This approach was chosen as an appropriate tool to access a number of individuals simultaneously to ensure that an adequate breadth of views and perceptions were gained. The aim of this qualitative work was to better understand:

- the range of different uses, knowledge, perceptions and expectations amongst different parts of society
- use and knowledge in relation to specific types of woodlands (in terms of their characteristics and management, facilities, ownership, location, distance).

The survey results became available just before the start of the group discussions and enabled us to use the group discussions to check for possible reasons for some of the trends identified.

The target sample size for the qualitative data was around 80 (i.e. an average of 10 per discussion group). **Appendix 3** provides some more detail on sample size for qualitative research in general and on the precise methodological approach adopted for the discussion groups in this study.

Composition of and recruitment for the discussion groups were designed to include:

- individuals of different diversity groups (different age groups; ethnic minorities; low income and unemployed; lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender community; people with disabilities)[3]
- mainly users, with some non-users of woodlands
- people living in rural, semi-urban and urban areas
- some geographical variation (South England and North/Midlands)
- FC business partners.

The choice of location was influenced by considerations of having a well-known FC woodland within 30 miles reach as well as woodlands in other public and private ownership in the vicinity. Farnham (Alice Holt Woodland) and Nottingham (Sherwood Forest) fulfilled those criteria and offered diversity in terms of rural/urban characteristics

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[3] People from different religious beliefs were not targeted in this study and not analysed as a variable in this study. The main reason for not explicitly including this variable was due to the fact that the survey contractor did not feel able to ask this question in the omnibus survey (nor a question about sexual diversity). We assumed that people with different religious beliefs were indirectly included through targeting people of different ethnic backgrounds and from different localities across England, some of which have a high level of ethnic and religious diversity (e.g. London, Midlands).

and the potential for meeting other relevant selection criteria. A group discussion protocol was developed based on FR Standard Operation Procedures to specify the general approach, format and questions for the group discussions and the expected composition and selection focus of each group (see **Appendix 4**). England Marketing was contracted to carry out the recruitment for five groups (discussion groups 3-7, **Appendix 4**), and SERG focused on recruiting participants for the remaining three groups (business partners, sexual diversity group, intensive users/interest groups). The core fieldwork took place between 15 and 24 August with a second sexual diversity discussion group held on 20 September.

Data analysis of the group discussions was conducted following standard qualitative analytical procedures. The discussions were transcribed confidentially, and analysed using QSR NVivo software to highlight quotations relevant to particular themes. These quotations were then excerpted and reviewed for pattern analysis, or the emergence of traits particular to given groups; and for explanatory insights offered by members of the groups.

The evidence derived from the group discussions is not statistically representative; its value lies instead in the power it provides to demonstrate how members of society perceive woods and forests, construct their values, and engage with the issues raised.

4 National patterns: findings from the surveys

Appendix 6 provides an overview of the demographic distribution of the survey sample and responses to key questions. Here, we present and discuss findings from the PFE and POF surveys relating to our research aim and research questions (see section 1.2).

4.1 What do people understand by 'public' and 'private' in forestry?

It is important for the context of this study to consider whether and how people distinguish between different types of woodlands and ownership, and what significance they attach to these.

Across England, an average of 57% of people surveyed visited a wood in the last year[4]. Of these, over 40% said they did not know who owned their favourite or most frequently visited wood (see **Figure 4.1**). This means that only one third of the population claims

[4] Based on FR's PFE Survey of 1726 (weighted base) adults across England, July 2009. This figure of woodland use over the past year is between the higher stated use of FC's 2009 Public Opinion of Forestry Survey (77%; up 12% from 2005) and the lower stated use in the England Leisure Visits survey of 2005 (40%)

to know who owns the woods that they visit. Furthermore, only 11% of respondents said that ownership was an important consideration when deciding to visit a woodland. **There appears to be little general awareness and knowledge about the range of public and private woodland ownership**. The discussion groups showed that ownership was rarely explicitly thought about and did not always matter in terms of existing general woodland use but certainly was of concern when considering wider aspects of current and future woodland management. This is discussed in section 5.

It was clear, however, that whether or not people know who owns particular woods, **most have clear and strong views about how public money should be spent and public forests managed**. This is supported by the fact that 70% of respondents could list values for publicly owned woodlands, while only 55% of respondents could list values for privately owned woodlands. Therefore, while many people may not know whether they are familiar with publicly owned woodland most people have opinions about what they should be like.

Half of the sample population in the PFE survey correctly identified the Forestry Commission as a government department; almost a quarter said they did not know (see **Appendix 1**, Q6). Those who chose the correct definition were more likely to be older[5], male, white, higher earners[6], and classify themselves as not having a disability.

There were no significant regional differences in claimed knowledge of ownership of woodlands most visited or most liked. However, significantly more people in the south correctly identified the FC as a government agency and fewer said they did not know who the FC was. More people in the north identified the FC as a private company than expected and more said they didn't know, while more than expected in the Midlands said the FC was a charity or a body representing private owners or they did not know.[7]

Looking at what influences decision on visiting woodlands (not to be confused with whether ownership *per se* is important), **85% of all respondents said that ownership was not an important factor in their choice of woodland destination**. Disabled people were slightly more likely to consider ownership an important factor; and people with a black and minority ethnic (BME) background were more likely to be uncertain whether it affected their decision.

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[5] Those aged 55-64 were most likely to choose the correct answer.

[6] Those earning less than £10k were less likely to identify the Forestry Commission as a government agency and more likely to reply 'don't know'.

[7] Whilst not directly relevant to the study of the PFE it is interesting to note that woodlands are significantly more frequently visited (at least 3-4 times per year) in the South and East of England, fewer in the North, and fewest in the Midlands and London. The highest percentage of visits was in the South West, with only 26% claiming to not have visited a woodland (either in the past year or generally).

4.2 Who knows about and uses the PFE?[8]

Those in the English POF survey who reported using the PFE were more likely to be older, male, married, white, have children, be in full-time employment and live in rural areas, than those who reported using other woods, or did not know the ownership of the woods they used. They were also more likely to visit woods more frequently. There was no significant difference between disabled and non-disabled.

Ownership of woodlands visited by ethnicity
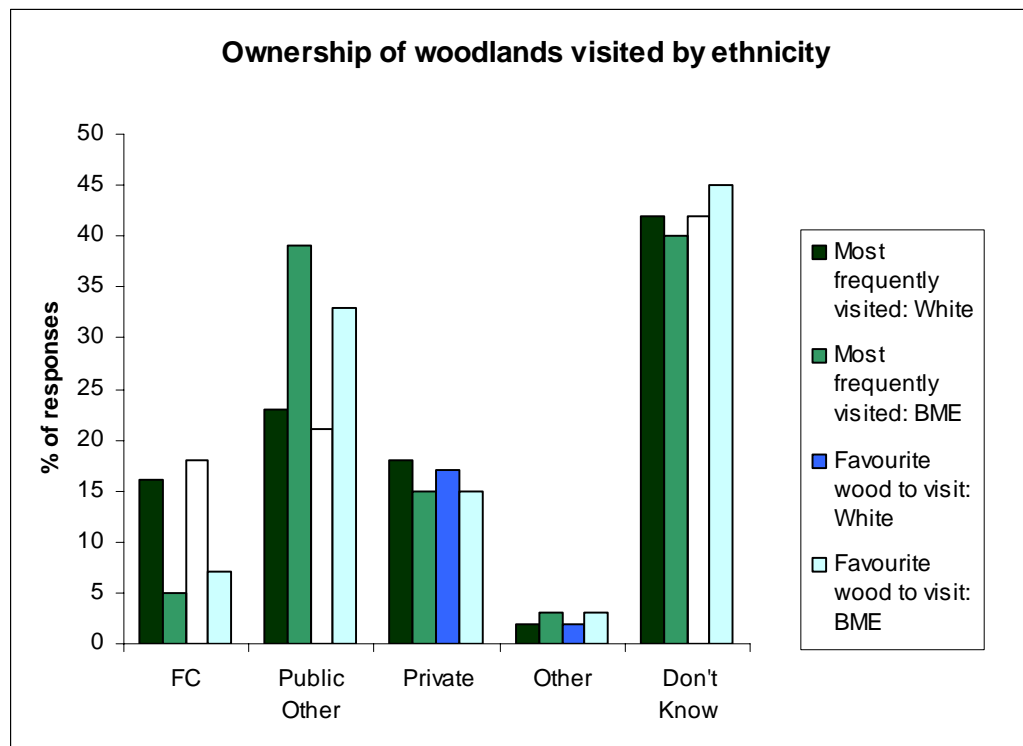
Figure 4.1. Stated knowledge of ownership of woodland most frequently visited and favourite wood, by ethnic group. Source: PFE Survey (Forest Research 2009)

Those who visit the PFE were slightly less likely than others to see forests as places 'where people have fun and enjoy themselves', but more likely to agree that forests 'provide places for relaxation and stress release', and considerably more likely than visitors to other woodlands, to see woods as places 'where I feel at home'. They were also more likely to see forests as contributing to the local economy.

Other differences are correlated with knowledge of ownership, rather than with ownership itself. Respondents who claim to know the ownership of the woods they use are more likely to agree that forests are 'places where I can exercise and keep fit', and to support the use of public money 'to make woods accessible to all', 'support the economy in rural areas', help tackle climate change', and 'provide places for wildlife'.

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[8] All differences indicated are statistically significant.

Data from the PFE survey indicate (similar to the POF survey results) that men are more likely than women to state that they visit PFE woods (which could be explained by the greater proportion of women who believed that the FC is a charity). For all groups PFE woods are more likely to be the favourite rather than their most frequently visited wood. The most striking social difference among preferred woodland ownership is between ethnic groups: BME groups are much more likely to report visiting public woodlands other than the PFE (**Figure 4.1**), especially those owned or managed by local authorities.

This result is likely to be highly context specific (e.g. woodlands in vicinity of residence or suitable for specific recreational uses) but needs further analysis and research to validate this conclusion. Early studies of the FCE Quality of Life indicator suggest that BME groups are not underrepresented as users of community woodlands in urban areas, and that women and disabled people are underrepresented in some woods but not others.

4.3 What do people value in public and private woodland?

The PFE survey showed that all categories of values associated with woodlands are associated more strongly with publicly owned[9] than private ones. Recreation, access and facilities such as well-maintained paths, car parking, toilets and cafes were most frequently reported as important.

When interpreting this information, it should be borne in mind that the question was an open one with no prompted answers. Under these circumstances, 31% of people could think of no values for public woodland and 45% could think of no values for private woodland (see **Figure 4.2**).

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[9] This question was asked about 'publicly owned woodland' not specifically the PFE. A definition of 'public' and 'private' and 'PFE' was given before the question was asked.

What do you value most about publicly / privately owned woodlands?
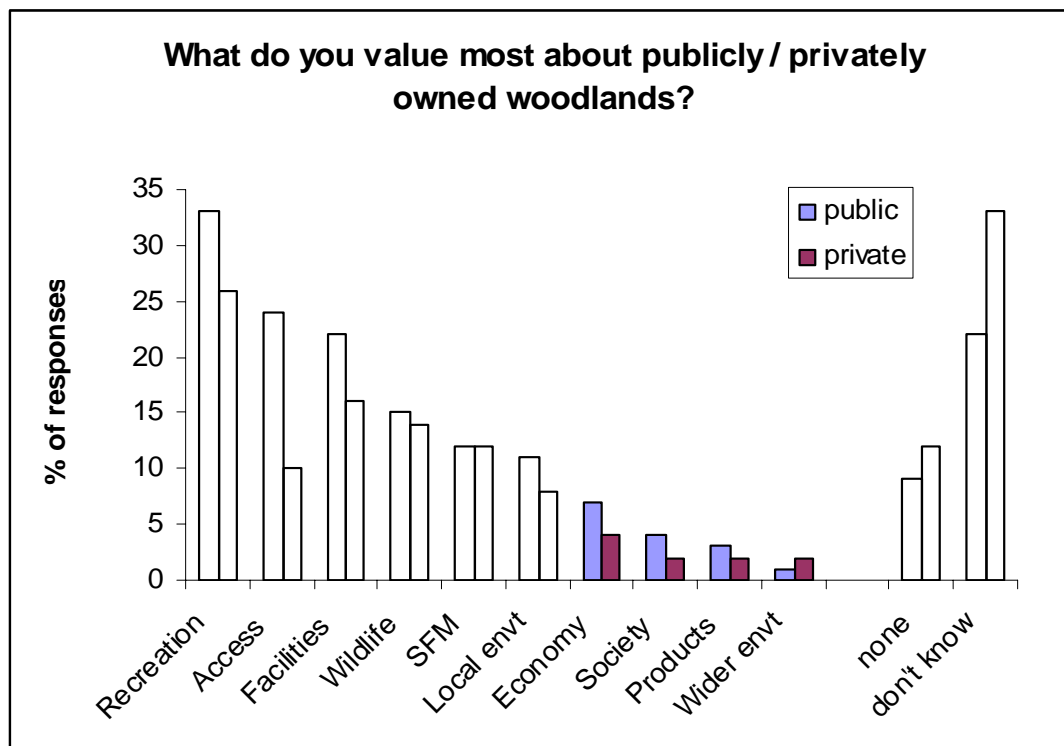
Figure 4.2. Spontaneously stated factors valued in public / private woodlands (Forest Research 2009)

4.4 What benefits do people think should be provided in the future?

The PFE survey included a question about future benefits of woodlands, which offered respondents a menu of options. This question was structured to match a question in the formal FCE public consultation and to allow comparison between expectations of the PFE and private woodland.[10] As such, 85% had an opinion on benefits the PFE should provide, while 79% had an opinion on the benefits private woodland should provide (see **Figure 4.3**).

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[10] The question followed a clarification of the definition of 'PFE' and 'private'. The question was phrased as 'Taking an England-wide perspective, what are the benefits that the Public Forest Estate, that is woodlands managed by the Forestry Commission, should deliver over the next few decades? Please tick up to five that you think are most important.' The same question was repeated for private woodlands, with each question specifying 17 options.

Taking an England-wide perspective, what are the benefits that PFE / private woodlands should deliver over the next few decades?
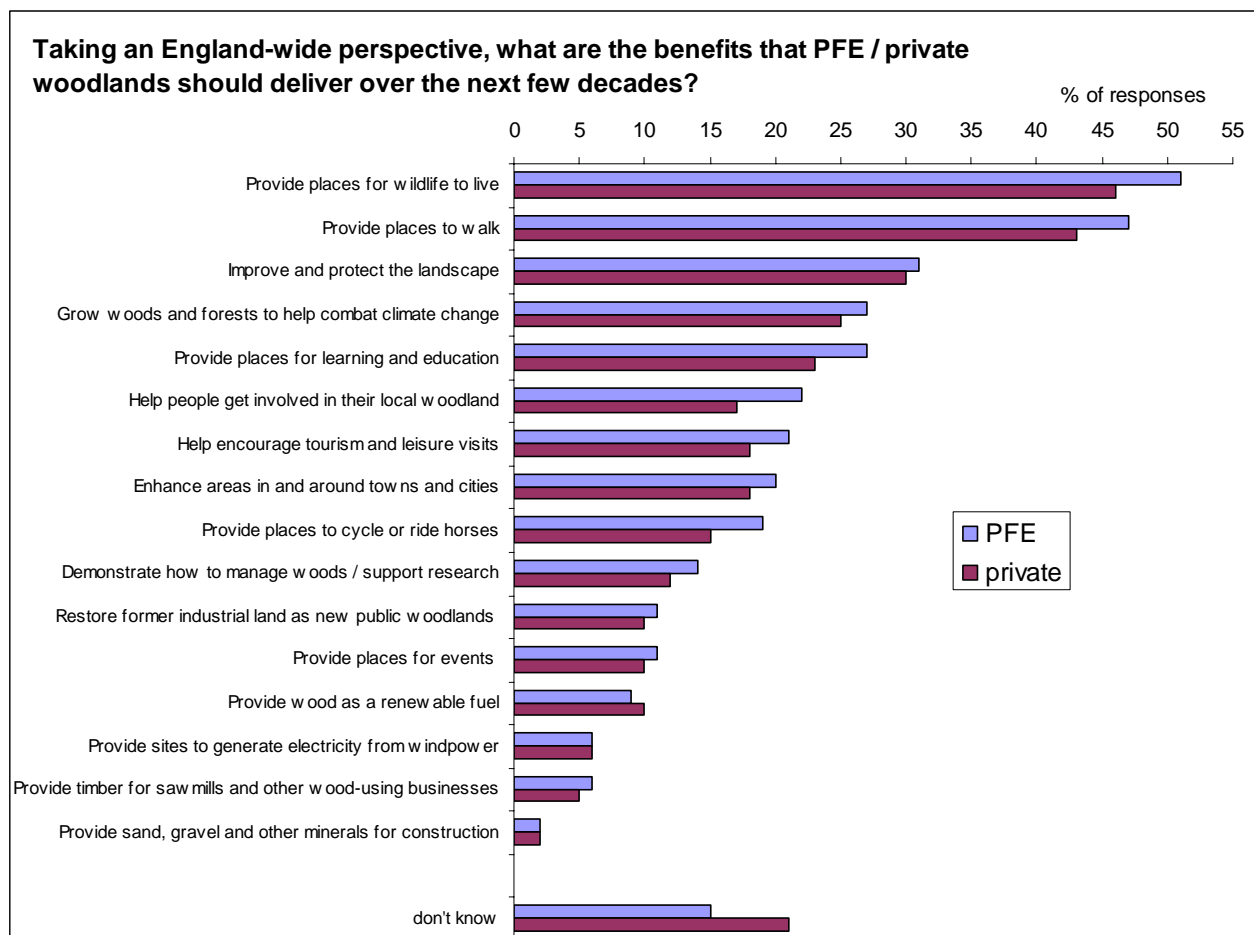
Figure 4.3. Benefits that PFE / private woodlands should provide in the future (Forest Research 2009)

Again, **almost all benefits are rated more highly for the PFE than for private woodlands**. Notably, wildlife is rated more highly among future benefits than current values; and climate change, education and community involvement are also rated more prominently. This is likely to be (at least partly) a result of the menu of options offering possibilities that people had not thought of when responding to the open question. Wildlife conservation and education were themes that participants also raised in discussion groups as being of prime importance now and for the future (see sections 5.5 and 5.6).

4.5 Social differences amongst responses

Women were more likely than men to give particular reasons for visiting a woodland frequently, or liking it – especially reasons related to children and safety (see **Appendix**

5, Table 4.1). Men are more likely than women to expect horse riding, timber and sand/gravel from public forests, and timber, industrial land restoration and renewable fuel from private woodlands. Women were more likely to expect community involvement on private woodlands.

Disabled people had a slight preference for dog-walking as a reason to visit woodlands (whether favourite or most frequent); they were more likely to appreciate woodlands for the scenery, variety of trees, fresh air and their wider societal benefits than others, and not surprisingly, less likely to cite physical activities as a value, and less likely to expect this in future from either PFE or private woodlands (see **Appendix 5**, Table 4.2).

People who described themselves as belonging to a BME group were less likely to value public woodlands for walking and wildlife, and more likely to value them for climate change and tourism than ethnically white people (see **Appendix 5**, Table 4.3).

Age related differences do not show clear patterns (see **Appendix 5**, Table 4.4). However, older people are more likely than others to value woods for wildlife; and younger and middle-aged people more likely to value woods for activities.

Likewise, there are few clear income-related patterns (see **Appendix 5**, Table 4.5). Those on lower incomes are more likely to value woods as a place to get away, or take the children; while those on higher incomes are more likely to values woods for their contribution to the landscape. There appears to be a trend for more people in lower income brackets to expect more from the public estate.

Finally it is not surprising that woodland users cited significantly more values and expectations from both public and private woods than did non-users who were more likely to say they did not know or had no values or expectations (see **Appendix 5**, Table 4.6).

5 Explanatory insights: findings from the group discussions

The qualitative evidence is structured around key themes which reflect the aim and associated research questions as outlined in section 1.2. We begin by discussing the general attitudes towards woods and forests as the context in which awareness of ownership, values and experiences, and future preferences were expressed.

5.1 General feelings about woods and forests

Group discussions often started with expressions of pleasure and attraction to trees and forests, discussion of enjoyable, varied and inspiring experiences, as well as strongly held beliefs about the importance of trees in the environment. For example, the beauty and variety in scenery through the seasons came up in each discussion group. The changing colours of deciduous trees, seasonal bursts of flowers (such as bluebells) and being able to hear and see wildlife featured highly as making woods attractive places to visit. For some, family links with certain woodlands or how they used forests in childhood also were significant.

[Low-income group, Farnham] Female: I like to see the trees, how they change, the colours of the leaves and perhaps rustling through it. I remember doing that when I was a young child and I love that.

[Rural / semi-urban group, Midlands] Male: It's an experience which you know, changes every time you go in, there's something different.

[Rural, age 55+ group, Farnham] Female: I think woodland is vital, it gives a different perspective, where no matter what season of the year, there's always something different to look at…

Several discussion group participants belonged to walking clubs (e.g. Ramblers, Local Christian walking club and Gay Outdoor Club) and two mentioned that they organise more woodland walks during the summer to escape from the heat. The capacity of woodlands to provide a pleasant habitat away from noise and air pollution was another positive aspect associated with trees and woodlands, even though only a few directly mentioned the capacity of trees to filter air, provide oxygen and act as noise barrier.

[Disability group, Nottingham]

Male: You're away from the exhaust fumes, the smell of the pine …

Female: You've got nobody knocking into you …

Female: And it's nice and peaceful.

[Intensive user group 2, Farnham] Male: We use the forest all year round and it's really good to get away from everything and sometimes in winter, you could be there for hours and hours without seeing anybody or hearing any traffic or … it's really quite peaceful.

Woodlands and trees were often described as 'special' and used as a space to escape from stress and daily pressures, and to find peace, tranquillity and some 'privacy'. This was a theme aired by participants of all different ages and in connection with both urban and more rural locations.

[Intensive user group 2, Farnham (rural)] Female (middle-aged): There is definitely something about being amongst trees that is … a unique experience, it's not like walking over a heath or through fields, it's, there's something special about being with trees.

[Gay Outdoor Club group 1] Male (in his sixties): Well they're a very essential part of the landscape for me and I think we'd all, our lives would be poorer without them shall we say? They enrich the landscape, they enrich the whole experience of walking and … they're just very special places…

[Urban group, Nottingham] Male (mountain-biker and dog-walker in his 20s): […] it's just nice and quiet, getting away from the general stresses of city life really …

Negative aspects or associations with woods were sometimes raised unprompted and in response to some probing. These concerns usually related to one of the following categories:

- certain types of woodlands or conditions of paths
- conflicts of uses
- actual or perceived occurrences of anti-social behaviour or illegal activities
- safety concerns

Tightly planted conifers that create a dark woodland, industrial 'pine' forests and FC plantation woodlands with straight and wide access routes were in several groups mentioned as uninviting. Similarly, overgrown and otherwise poorly maintained paths were frequently flagged up as unwelcoming and sometimes explicitly associated with private landowners as a measure to keep people out.

[Rural / semi-urban group, Midlands] Female: They're quite oppressive when trees are planted like that I think, no feeling that you want to go into them or anything and I know my daughter, when we used to go out to places like that, used to hate going in the woods, she was kind of scared of it.

[Disability group, Nottingham] Female: Sometimes you come along a public footpath that's going to a wood or through a field and then there is no footpath because it's all overgrown isn't it?! [laughter] It's like a nettle bush!

Sometimes certain woodland uses were perceived as damaging; for example, horse-riders and informal rally motorcycling or quad-biking were blamed by some walkers for churning up paths and being destructive. Horse-riders, on the other hand, could feel put in danger by waste and fast approaching cyclists or dogs.

[Disability group, Nottingham] Female: … we have to be careful because we have children who are more at risk, especially on horseback … if there's washing machines

[laughs] and things like that lying in the middle of the woods, it can become a bit hazardous to say the least!

[Gay Outdoor Club group 2] Male: … my dog would chase the horses sometimes.

Path obstruction was also sometimes connected with fallen trees, but few expressed safety concerns over 'natural' causes. Instead, the concerns raised related to management decisions or human uses, including anti-social or illegal activities (e.g. fly-tipping; damage to woodlands and facilities or parked cars - often associated with youngsters) or the actual or perceived presence of 'unsavoury' characters. These issues were not only ascribed to woodlands but also to open spaces, small copses and parks, especially those near cities or certain housing estates. Perceptions of and reactions to these safety concerns varied within and between the groups; some would only access woodlands in company of at least one other or with a dog (especially expressed by or for women), while others felt safe accessing woodlands on their own any time of the day (more often stated by men).

[Low-income group, Farnham]

Female: I think, occasionally, if someone says there's been a strange man in the woods recently … [some agree] … it does put you off a little bit going on your own.

Interviewer 1: And that does happen?

Female: Quite often.

Female: Oh yes. [Some agree]

[…]

Female: I think with the public, if I've got it the right way round, you'd expect more. As you say, it's more managed so more aspects are being looked after, the environment's being looked after, the public. It's something which is more structured, organised and thoughtful, whereas the private is just there and … I don't know.

Male: I'd expect the public places to be a lot safer […] I think a lot of the private places can be, the forests can be quite dense and darker types […]

[Gay Outdoor Club group 2] Male: It depends. When I think of woods I think of, say, the New Forest, but if I was to be scared at night then I might be thinking more along the lines of, say, Southampton Common. So where you've got woodland that's very close to a city centre I wouldn't go in at night, but where it's like the New Forest I would be perfectly happy to go at night, as long as there's light to see where you're going. [agreement]

Importantly many participants, and especially those of the three discussion groups held in the Midlands, set their feelings about trees and woods in a context of general pessimism about loss of nature and forest. Statements reflecting this concern and pessimism included:

> [Disability group, Nottingham]
>
> Male: … they keep building, there's more and more concrete and I think that this island will sink if they get anymore.
>
> […]
>
> Male (towards the end of the discussion when talking about woodlands near town): … if they had forests, planting forests, it will stop them building on it, I think.

> [Rural / semi-urban group, Midlands] Female: Yeah, that's all we're taught at school, it's just it's decreasing, there's less, there's more built up houses…
>
> [Intensive users group 2, Farnham] Male: I think we're restricted though by the population in this part of the world aren't you? It's growing outwards means that the woodlands are under threat all the time.

5.2 Ownership

Most participants had never explicitly thought about ownership of woodlands; yet once raised, most felt that ownership did matter. In terms of deciding on woodland visits, many participants reported factors such as vicinity or convenience, general woodland characteristics and type or range of facilities. This supports findings reported from two past SERG research projects, that there was often little awareness amongst participants of who owned the woodlands that they visited. This could result in a lack of confidence of or confusion over what was publicly accessible and allowed. In particular, focus groups led by O'Brien (2005) found that there was often little awareness of who owned the woodlands people described using. This led to lack of confidence to visit, and confusion over what spaces they were allowed to access. Study participants often assumed that woodlands in urban areas are owned by the Local Authority. They felt that, generally, access was clearer and ownership easier to discern for the larger sites with a range of facilities. For smaller sites there was more ambiguity and uncertainty over ownership and public access rights and this could act as a barrier to visit those woodlands, particularly for those who were less confident in their use of outdoor spaces.[11]

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[11] O'Brien, E. A. 2005. Publics and woodlands in England: well-being, local identity, social learning, conflict and management. *Forestry* 78:321-336.

Only some participants in the PFE discussion groups expressed with certainty the ownership of the woodlands which they visited. For example:

[Disability group, Nottingham]

Interviewer 1: So, you're quite aware of the owners, sometimes, of the ownership but not …?

Female: Not always, no. [all agree]

Female: Unless you read it when you go in.

[…]

Female: You tend not to think about that …

Female: No.

Female: Before you get in and then you look and you think "oh yeah".

Female: Yeah.

Female: But then it sort of goes from your mind because you're happy and …

Interviewer 2: Does it matter to you who owns the woods?

Male: No.

Female: No.

Male: No, not really.

The question of ownership often led participants to share their experiences of "keep out" or "private land" signs and the use of signage in car parks or at the entrance to woodlands as indicating the type of or details about ownership and management.

[Rural / semi-urban group, Midlands] Female: And when individuals own things, they kind of, they want to keep it to themselves. That's how I see a lot of the private ones, that you're just not allowed, it's like the "Keep Out" signs […] no access to you, no nothing. And it does feel a bit weird because you think they [the woodlands] should be belonging to everybody somehow.

Except for the intensive user groups and a minority of individuals in several of the other discussion groups, most participants admitted that they had not previously thought about and did not know much about the range of public and private woodland ownership. When invited to discuss them, **'private' and 'public' woodlands had a wide range of associations for the participants**. For example, descriptions of private woodlands ranged from small semi-ancient native woodlands, to woodlands and industrial plantations without or with limited access for the public. Similarly, descriptions

of public, and especially PFE, woodlands ranged from family-friendly mixed woodlands for recreation to unwelcoming monoculture plantations. Sometimes, certain stereotypes dominated in a group, or individuals admitted that they had gathered this impression many years ago and were not sure these practices or associations still held true. Intensive users and business partners were more aware of the range of woodlands found within the different types of ownership and knew and talked more about specific woods in the PFE, particularly Alice Holt, Bedgebury, the New Forest and Sherwood.

Woodlands managed by environmental trusts were often thought of as being 'public' or 'quasi-public' since they were experienced as open access and welcoming. Some mentioned the statutes or objectives of certain trusts (most notably the National Trust but also the Woodland Trust and the Wildlife Trusts) and specific objectives and management approaches of owners/managers as being most influential or of concern rather than 'ownership' itself. Examples of 'good' and 'bad' management were sometimes mentioned for both privately and publicly owned woodlands and forests. In several cases, this then led to statements expressing generally greater faith and trust in public ownership and the associated duty to serve public interest - which was often equated as having to meet a wide range of environmental, social and economic objectives (this is further discussed in sections 5.4, 5.5 and 5.7).

> [Gay Outdoor Club group 2]
>
> Male 1: Essentially, it's again similar to the National Trust. A lot of the properties of the National Trust come from The Treasury. They were inherited by the state, so they were state owned […] But they give it to the National Trust because they end up being open to the public.
>
> Male 2: But the National Trust, that is their agenda, that's what they do. Whereas if you sold it genuinely privately you have to ask yourself why would the person want to buy the land if they weren't going to benefit from it? If the use of the land wasn't going to change and the public could use it in exactly the same way as before, what is the benefit to the buyer?
>
> [Low-income group, Farnham] Female: I think in a way we find it difficult to answer these questions because we think of the National Trust as being public and you keep having that distinction, of the public and then the private and we don't see a lot of that private land as private because a lot of us pay into those organisations that own it, so we don't. So to us it's not a distinction that maybe Forestry Commission thinks it is. [Murmurs of agreement]
>
> [Intensive use group, Farnham] Male: I think generally the publicly owned, and in that I include Woodland Trust and National Trust, are more welcoming, particularly you've got open access so you've got the right to roam over the whole woodland, dedication or

voluntary rights. I think privately owned woodland, something owned by private individuals, often that's not the case […] I think the thing about, I would say the thing about National Trust and Woodland Trust, public/state Forestry Commission, when you're there, you feel as though you own it because it is publicly owned, you're a joint owner with everyone else and I think that's an important feature in terms of being welcoming …

The importance of ownership often was discussed in a different light when the issue of potential sale of (parts of) the PFE was raised, either unprompted or following the question raised towards the end of the Discussion Group Protocol (**Appendix 4**, Question 7). This theme is further explored in section 5.7.

[Gay Outdoor Club group 2]

Male 1[12]: I don't think ownership makes any difference at all, you get bad private owners and bad public owners. Some Forestry Commission woods I've walked through are appallingly maintained, bad stiles and access points, and some private woods are maintained beautifully. It depends on who it's sold to, who's going to look after it from now on. The Woodland Trust looks after it for reasons that are different from a logging company.

Male 2: There is a wider point though, that if it's publicly owned, then we as the public can expect certain standards of management and access.

[…]

Male 1: Having said that perhaps ownership doesn't matter, I think perhaps it does matter. Because if it is in public ownership, then we as the public can have a say in how it's managed.

5.3 Access and recreation

Access[13] to woodlands emerged as the key topic in all the discussion groups, and overall as the most distinctive difference between values for private and public ownership. Access was considered desirable in principle as well as in practice to enable recreational activities that people want to be guaranteed into the future. A concern for access rights was usually tempered by respect for other interests (such as

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[12] The numbering of Male/Female participants serves simply to distinguish between different speakers and do not identify a specific person throughout the report. This means that the same person may be referred to in one set of excerpts as 'Male 1' and in another as 'Male 2'. This is in line with protecting the anonymity of individuals as well as the scope of discussion groups which focus on the range of opinions expressed rather than analysing and tracing individual contributions.
[13] Usually meaning having path(s) through woodlands

privacy, private use, timber operations or the protection of wildlife) and recognised as an ideal rather than an automatic right.

[Disability group, Nottingham] Male (in response to whether type of ownership of woodlands mattered): Not really, as long as it's accessible, you can walk about without any problem, you're not getting into trouble like you're trespassing, but you go round a lot of forests round Nottingham, you see signs up, "private", it's private land, you can't walk through it, through the forest.

[Intensive user group 2, Farnham]

Male: That's a good point about the Public Forest Estate, [...] you do feel you can go in there and, as you say, do what you want to do. Whereas you go in a private woodland, I don't mean the Woodland Trust woodland but a privately owned woodland with access, you're never quite sure whether the landowner's going to say ...

[...]

Female (in response to being asked about expectations of public woodland over the next 20-30 years): I think it's important that it's inclusive access, you know, a certain amount of inclusive access, things like wheelchairs and ... but not everywhere.

[Intensive user group 1, Farnham] Male: [...] I'm very concerned that we keep access, even if it becomes privately owned.

[Rural / semi-urban group, Midlands] Female: Well, I just do feel that you know, if you see a wood, you just feel like you should be able to walk freely in it ...

[Business partner group, Farnham] Male: I would expect nothing from a private woodland owner. If it's their woodland, then they've got the gate on, so be it. If that private woodland owner then wished to have public access or if he had public rights way all through, then I would expect the public rights of way to be maintained...

Many expressed a desire for good signage, including clearly marked and well-maintained pathways, information boards outlining environmental and historical items of interest, and publicising or explaining special woodland management practices and planned operations. This tended to be counterbalanced with the expressed need to leave some areas undeveloped or 'wild' for nature, occasional exploration and as a place to get away from people and stress.

[Gay Outdoor Club group 2] Male (in response to what was most important about public woodlands): For me personally, it would be well defined paths, well maintained styles, and access and exit points where you know where you are going […] so you don't wander off and get lost. Just basic management of a footpath.

[Rural / semi-urban group, Midlands] Female: … it is for safety and also making it accessible for everybody but at the same time, part of me can't help thinking that a little bit of me wants it for myself or just […] as maybe I would have done when I was a child, where you go in the woods, there aren't any, there's just a few little beaten tracks and stuff, they're not big tramways and I used to love that.

Access to and recreation in woodlands were occasionally explicitly linked to health and wellbeing, in terms of personal benefits and also in connection with raising children. This supports findings of earlier research carried out by SERG and others.[14]

[Low-income group, Farnham] Female: I think it's quite energising as well, often you're feeling tired or you don't want to go but once you're up there, you come back feeling refreshed and much better.

Teenagers and adults with low income attending the discussion groups, referred to woodlands as an important 'free' resource where one can socialise with friends and family, as the following excerpt illustrates.

[Urban group, Nottingham]

Female: I think it's a good place to go to relax, also say if you're with friends or family, it's a place to go to socialise that's not in the city.

Female (teenager): It's good because you don't have to pay to go, it's a nice place to have a picnic or go in the park, people have not got to spend loads of money on cinema or bowling.

Some recreational use was recognised as being of higher environmental impact (e.g. highly developed sites), or less compatible with other forms of recreation (e.g. motor-bike rallying or quad biking), or requiring more infrastructure (e.g. mountain bike routes; wheelchair and pram access). A considerable amount of discussion arose around multiple, and potentially incompatible, forest uses, as the following examples illustrate.

[Intensive user group 2, Farnham, discussing the various interests of the discussion group participants and diverse forest uses and benefits more generally]

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[14] See for example section 3.4.4 of the interim report, Lawrence A., Carter C., O'Brien L. and Lovell R. (2009) *Social benefits from the public forest estate in England: review of current evidence.*

Male: … woods provide so much for everybody don't they? Motorbikes, cycling, rambling and wildlife, […] as well of course timber and all those so-called ecological services …

[…]

Male: Trouble though if we're expressing different users, [pointing to different members of the discussion group] yours is noisy, yours isn't and yours isn't and that's the objection to motorcycling I think a lot of us have in woodlands, obviously there must be some sites available to motorcycling but it's noisy…

[…]

Female: Yeah and just, one of the disadvantages of woodland is shared access or, I think probably more so from horses rather than mountain bikes…

[Gay Outdoor Club group 2]

Male 1: Hmmm. Well, there are conflicts, aren't they? We've had a conflict today on a footpath where we met a horse.

Male 2: We did, yeah. But it was not a bridleway, she shouldn't have been there.

Male 1: And the dog chased the horse, but we didn't hear the horse-rider coming.

Male 2: The only thing I would say as a cyclist that really cyclists should be made aware they've got to let people know that they're on that path travelling at a much faster speed than people who can't, who are walking or perhaps are elderly. But that's just educating people, it's not the landowner's fault if you can't behave responsibly on their land. It's not the Forestry Commission's fault that someone's dog is off the loose and it's creating damage …

Recreational use was often linked to individual woodland sites offering specific facilities, or woodlands with a certain combination of topographical and vegetation characteristics, or forests which are sufficiently large. For example, motorcycle-rallying and champion-ship events relied mainly on FC land but also Ministry of Defence land, as these were the only owners with wooded areas sufficiently diverse and large (size is further discussed in section 5.4) to fit the requirements of the sport and willing to accommodate it.

[Intensive user group 2, Farnham] Male: … we hire Forestry Commission land to run motorcycle events on […] we run a championship throughout the year which covers the South East of England. […] there's very restrictive pieces of land we can use and we can't go everywhere obviously, some woods they like to keep for cyclists and walkers, so we're restricted to about four pieces of land.

5.4 Facilities, size and characteristics of woodlands

Specific 'natural', silvicultural or site management characteristics of woodlands (be it the tree species, degree of openness of the forest stand, natural terrain or size of the woodland) were often associated with serving certain purposes or attracting specific user groups. Most discussion group participants expressed a **preference for mixed and deciduous native woodlands for their visits**; **conifer plantation forests were often less liked for personal use or to look at but usually recognised as important for timber/economic reasons**. Some discussion groups (e.g. business partners, intensive users, older rural) acknowledged the need to maintain a diversity of woodlands, management priorities and levels of facilities. This included family-oriented and educational woodlands, areas developed for specific interests (e.g. mountain-biking, cycling, Go Ape, music and other festivals, historical craft activities), woodlands left 'natural' with basic footpaths and those in remote areas for timber production. Some were not familiar enough with different types of woodlands to make a strict distinction.

[Intensive user group 2, Farnham]

Male 1: […] I think, densely planted conifer plantations are pretty awful.

Male 2: They have their place.

Male 1: They have their place, yeah.

Interviewer: Where should they be?

Male 2: In Scotland.

Male 1: Yeah, in Scotland. [several laugh]

[Rural, 55+ group, Farnham]

Male: I like various scenery, walk through woodlands, beautiful, […] I dislike plantation forests where you've got, where you're […] growing a crop, you're planting pine trees for building materials and you have fire breaks and you can't see a thing apart from a few fire breaks.

Female: I'm not sure to me the trees what trees are there matter that much to me but I guess if they were all the same I'd be, I wouldn't like it but I don't go and think "oh this has got this tree in" or "that's got that tree in", I just go 'cause it's peaceful and it's fun.

[Business partner discussion group] Male: I think people like to go through woodlands that are broadleaf woodlands, that are not dark and dense. I think coniferous woodlands have been pushed a little bit on the back burner and I think we have to also create a timber resource and employment. Employment is really important, to employ people in the woodlands. We can't keep importing timber from abroad.

The group discussions highlighted an **awareness of multiple demands from forests**, even within the 'recreation' theme (section 5.3), and a wish to see the various needs accommodated (but allocated to different woods or segregated in different parts of the forest).

> [Intensive user group, Farnham] Male (cyclist): I feel quite strongly that access should be available to everybody, I get quite frustrated sometimes when there are families with prams and people with dogs but I curb that because I think it should be freely accessible to everyone.

> [Rural / semi-urban, Midlands] Female: I'd definitely decide on a day out, if I want, like we did go to the Sherwood Forest thing and the Robin Hood thing. We went there because of what it offered and there will be days out in the summer holidays that I take my daughter and a friend or something and go specifically for that. But other times you choose to have something different.

> [Gay Outdoor Club group 2, thinking about different types of woodlands and facilities]

> Male 1: I think if it's a nice cafe or a pub then that's okay, but I wouldn't want anything too much around 'cause otherwise it starts to spoil your …

> Male 2: Actually, large car parks and facilities like toilets and things, it then attracts a different set of people and would probably start to become unattractive to us because you then start getting ice-cream vans and …

For many, one important sign of being allowed access and being encouraged to visit was the presence of car parking facilities. Furthermore, the size of the car park, and whether or not a charge applied, was often seen as directly proportional to the amount of facilities provided and popularity of the site, or indicative of targeting certain groups of the public (e.g. families with children).

> [Gay Outdoor Club group 2] Male: I think I'd rather see lots more small car parks dotted around, because the number of times I've driven past somewhere and thought 'that is so beautiful, I'd love to wander round' and there is nowhere to stop, you just have to keep driving 'cause there's nowhere to stop the car.

> [Low-income group, Farnham] Female 1: Probably in relation to the size of the car park [laughter] because if there's space for more cars, there's going to be more people wandering around. You expect, I suppose, slightly better facilities than if you've got a car park for three cars or a lay-by.

Opinions varied about the appropriateness or fairness of charging to access some sites and the particular charging system and tariffs in operation. There appeared

to be slightly higher concern over the frequency, amount and lack of transparency of charges in the discussion groups held in the South compared with those held in the Midlands.

[Disability group, Nottingham] Male: I think when we go to particularly Forestry Commission, it's not regularity you have to pay to park the car, sometimes they ask for a donation, something like that or there's an honesty box …

[Low-income group, Farnham]

Female 1: I do find some of the car park charges a bit off-putting, like Alice Holt.

Female 2: They never used to have that …

Female 1: It's the fact that the charges, it starts off so high […] I quite often don't go because you only want an hour's walk and it's quite a …

Interviewer 1: They also provide smaller car parks around it, just not in the centre, which is not charged.

Female 3: We don't know about those ones.

[…]

Female 1: I understand the need to get funds but I … it stops you going for a more casual visit, okay there are other car parks but instead of just "I'll just have a quick walk over there".

[…]

Female 3: Maybe they're trying to price it so that you don't get short term people, you know that you're trying to get the longer stay people …

Female 1: Encourage the families with children that are having a day out as opposed to the dog walkers.

[Business partners group, Farnham] Male: […] take Bedgebury as an example […] There's a kiosk, people pay a flat rate, £7.50 for the day. They're losing business from there because people aren't willing to pay £7.50 if they're coming for a two-hour dog walk; there's a kiosk which is manned part-time, which means that people take any opportunity they can not to pay. Whereas if you put a barrier system in for the sake of argument, they come onto site, they stay as long as they want to stay on site and pay on exit […] they're capturing the revenue from everybody that visits sites. People are scared of charges, so if it's the first half an hour, 40 minutes could even be free, that encourages people …

Enabling access and facilities for a wide range of users, including those with disabilities, was not only a theme in the 'disability discussion group' but also arose in several of the other discussion groups. Especially in the latter cases, most references were made to wheelchair users, and relatively few to members of the public with a range of other physical or mental impairments or disabilities. A key concern was to provide some access (suitable paths) and facilities (such as toilets, a cafe or an information centre and shop) that was suitable for people with disabilities in some of the woodlands.

> [Low-income group, Farnham] Female: I think it's nice to have, around Fleet Pond they've got, you wouldn't want it everywhere but actually having a board walk so you can have wheelchair access, I think is quite important […].

> [Disability group, Nottingham] Female: It's nice as well if they've got a visitors centre there, if you take any child or an adult with a disability, there's most things in there that they can look at and you can tell them about, then they want to go more.

The disability discussion group also emphasised the need to (better) advertise those provisions (see also section 5.7.4) and that the path and access design mattered greatly. For example, gravel paths were experienced as difficult, if not unsuitable, for wheelchair and pram access, but neither was the extreme of using tarmac to provide a flat surface seen as necessary or attractive. One (elderly) participant expressed a surprise at the lack of benches alongside paths, especially when having natural features and timber to hand to provide such facilities.

> [Disability group, Nottingham]
>
> Male 1: [..] I know we've got people walking dogs, cycling, walking but I'm not familiar with the fact of whether or not you [referring to the Forestry Commission] cater for the elderly, i.e. seats every you know, I mean, if you get any dead trees fall down for instance, you could make seats […].
>
> […]
>
> Female: […] not like a massive tarmac road through the woods! [laughs] But something that is accessible […]
>
> Male 2: It would be nice to have some different paths for different disabilities […]. You wouldn't like it all to be disabled access or whatever …
>
> Male 3: But a lot of others, not just wheelchairs, there's people with unsteady feet, they stumble a lot […] and they need flat surfaces.

Several participants observed that **large forests are desirable and necessary to provide the range of benefits and opportunities**, and recognised that **the PFE consists of more such large areas**.

[Rural / semi-urban group, Midlands] Female: We tend to think wow, Sherwood Forest, you go in and it looks huge and it is big I suppose but nothing like what it used to be. Now that's quite sad really.

[Rural, age 55+ group, Farnham] Male: … talked about having a complete mix of different types and catering for all different people's needs […] Now if you're going to do that you need large areas. Generally speaking, Forestry Commission packets of land are quite large compared to privately owned ones and that has this advantage, that you can provide a wide variety of different habitats and abilities of use, shall we say, and that's a good thing I think, for the Forestry Commission.

Their perception is supported by data from the FC National Inventory of Woodland and Trees showing that 90% of all woodlands in England over 20ha are in the PFE; and that the average size of an FC woodland is 145 ha compared with an average of 14 ha for all other woodlands.

Generally, intensive users of the PFE and FC business partners participating in the discussion groups expressed a greater awareness of the wide range of different types of forests and woodlands within the PFE.

Almost all participants expressed the wish to have more native and broadleaved woodlands and the need to protect and expand forest cover. Increasing woodland cover was sometimes seen as a counterpoint to past/on-going urban development (see e.g. section 5.1) or connected with and justified in terms of climate change.

[Disability group, Nottingham]

Male: Creating more forests for the future.

Male: What kind of forests?

Male: All types of forest, you know.

[…]

Female: I think also with the climate change and things like that, it needs to be done …

Male: Of course it does.

Most responses were based on participant's own experiences and perceptions of woodlands 'on their doorstep'. The widely expressed dislike for conifer plantations, mentioned above, was tempered by many who found dense stands acceptable as long as paths were provided, along with some attractive scenery or benefits such as fresh air and peace and quiet. It is important to be able to link values and benefits more clearly to different woodland types and facilities. **A typology of different types of woodlands**

in terms of ecology, area, silviculture and site facilities would be useful to enable understanding of the connections between benefits or values and different woodlands.[15]

5.5 Wildlife, sustainable woodland management and carbon

Woodlands are widely recognised as an important habitat for wildlife and to maintain biodiversity (see also the PFE survey result, Figure 4.3). **Wildlife and biodiversity emerged as a key theme in all the discussion groups**, concerning the pleasure of being able to see different wildlife in woodlands or in connection with maintaining biodiversity and improving habitats for wildlife into the future.

> [Low-income group, Farnham] Female (young person): That's half the point of going to the woodlands, to see the like wildlife and natural habitat and things.

> [Intensive user group 1, Farnham] Female (talking about woodland visits): As a place to go, it's a very rich landscape, it changes as you move through it from scrub to trees, you have lovely experiences of coming across different wildlife…

> [Rural/semi-urban group, Midlands] Female (in response to what is most important about public woodlands): Quantity and diversity, […] you have the potential to do something about forests and about the land…

Comments about different demands and objectives in woodland management, and thinking about management objectives of private and public woodland owners sometimes resulted in participants mentioning a **need for sustainable forest management**. This was seen as equally important for both private and public woodlands, but better control and guarantees were associated with woodlands in public ownership (see also section 5.7.3).

> [Business partner group, Farnham] Male (talking about expectations of private woodlands): I'd expect it to be managed to a standard but whereas the Forestry Commission used to have something called the Woodland Grants Scheme, it's now the English Woodland Grants Scheme, where you would have to, if you went under the Woodlands Grant Scheme, you would have to manage the woodland to a certain acceptable standard and you would be given an amount per hectare, per year to do that.

> [Rural/semi-urban group, Midlands] Female: I think if they sell it to people that are going to manage it in a better way than it's not a negative thing. But if the government are not as good at managing it, or it's not going to be sustainable, then if they're handing the control over to someone that's going to be able to do it in a more sustainable way, that's

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[15] SERG is currently developing a typology as part of its work towards a systematic framework for social forestry research.

going to serve the community better. It can't be a negative thing but then I guess it's hard to judge who are going to be good people to do that for.

Climate change and/or necessary steps for moving towards a low-carbon economy were raised in some groups as a sub-theme in response to the benefits of woodlands. However, few explicitly raised issues of increasing the use of timber as a building material or as a fuel to replace existing high carbon fuels. A few, including two participants working with/in the forestry sector raised **carbon storage** (trees' capacity to help balance atmospheric emissions) and the need for **increasing timber production** to reduce imports.

[Urban group, Nottingham] Male (in response to 'What is important to you about woods?'): Takes all the carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere doesn't it, that's one of the main things.

[Intensive user group 1, Farnham]

Male 1: I think it's very much like the old mills, there used to be a wonderful mill industry in this country and suddenly it just suddenly stopped. In the same way, the wood side or the production of wood is stopping at the Forestry Commission.

Male 2: It kind of is but we do… There is the issue of climate change and carbon storage now, which is going to become more of an issue.

[Rural, age 55+ group, Farnham]

Male 1: […] I think we've probably got too much farming land at the moment, I think some of that that's being left fallow, actually could be turned back to woodland.

Male 2: A lot is, as you walk around here, there are swathes of fields which are now being wooded over. You'll find a big field with a huge perimeter area which is just grass. But that's rather sad. I sometimes purchase things from an organic shop, they'll put a label on something saying, "peas from Egypt, 5lb of carbon emissions for 5lb of peas, we grow our own zero emission as regards carbon". So we're importing all these foodstuffs … and woodland, we're importing all this stuff on ships and planes, all of them spewing out carbon as they're going along; are we supposed to be lowering our carbon footprint?

[Business partner group, Farnham] Male: I think one of the most important roles is timber production, we can't just keep chopping conifers down because people don't like them, it's a timber resource, we need the woodland, we need timber.

There appeared to be a strong link between the themes of environmental/wildlife conservation and woodland creation or conservation and a weak, but emerging, link with carbon/low-carbon economy. The majority of participants expressed strong support for wildlife conservation and sustainable woodland management, but fewer seemed to be aware of the potential scope of woodlands for climate change mitigation and adaptation that involved certain woodland management approaches and selected harvesting, in addition to creating new woodlands and forests. Deforestation and timber harvesting was described in terms of reducing wildlife and their habitats and thus as damaging to the environment, even though trust was expressed in woodland managers as experts in knowing what they are doing and why (especially the FC and those specialising in timber operations).

This may be partly due to the much longer period of time that wildlife and woodland conservation issues have been lobbied for and on the policy agenda (and thus in the public's mind) than the relatively recent emergence of climate change related environmental management challenges. Thus, the connection between sustainable environmental/woodland management and woodfuel / timber as a low-carbon material has not yet widely been picked up.

5.6 Education, learning and play

Discussions showed the **importance of using woodlands, and especially the PFE, for education, learning and play**. Woodlands are seen as an inspiring and rich resource. This can be reinforced through offering a range of information, events and projects to help children and adults become aware of, engage with, and learn to care for woodlands - and the environment more generally. Participants working with children or adults with disabilities, and those with a keen interest in outdoor activities and/or nature conservation felt particularly strong about this. Even those who preferred using woodlands to find peace and quiet often acknowledged the benefits of having specific sites with attractions and educational facilities for (families with small) children.

> [Rural / semi-urban, Nottingham] Female (children's nursery employee): From my point of view they [woodlands] are really exciting 'cause when you take 20, 24 very young children between 2 and 5 into the woodlands, it's just "wow, what can we do, what we can we see, what can we hear?" And they usually end up with great big branches that they're trying to lift and drag around and looking at trees that are fallen down. Just the awe factor of what happens in there is amazing. It's different every time you go so from a learning/education point of view, that's brilliant for them. There's just so much of the curriculum they can actually access while they're in there.

> [Intensive user group 2, Farnham] Male: Well, the public estate I think public, that includes the charitable end, is far better on education because I don't think many privately owned woodland owners would consider education to be anywhere on their list of priorities.

[Business partner group, Farnham] Male: Even in my local paper now, I do see some educational bits in the back of the paper which is a free paper. That's great but it needs to be a lot more than that because children, I think this is a wonderful place for kids. My daughter loves it, she's 3 and she'll come up here [Alice Holt Forest] every day and wouldn't want to go home.

5.7 Public attitudes on the future of the PFE

Often, even without prompting, participants in the meetings commented on and sometimes discussed in more detail the future existence, extent, maintenance and management of the PFE, and woodlands in public ownership more generally. Participants frequently expressed strong concern about any possible reduction in the size of the PFE. They sometimes pointed out that they had not previously given a lot of thought to the matter, but that **discussion around questions of ownership, access and cost had prompted deep concerns about the need to maintain forests in public ownership**.

5.7.1 Existence and extent of the PFE

Social and environmental arguments for maintaining and increasing woodlands formed a significant part in every discussion group, and most groups also briefly considered and discussed economic aspects (especially timber production and revenue from leisure activities and charging for certain facilities). There were very few who expressed support for having more woodland in private ownership. The few who did expected private owners to be more business-minded (see section 6) or to specialise in specific (and enforceable) management objectives - be it predominantly environmental or based on a mixture of environmental, social and economic benefits. **Most expressed a wish to keep the existing *status quo*, or, if anything, to increase the extent of the PFE**.

[Disability group, Nottingham]

Interviewer 2: … how would you feel if the government started to sell off some of its forest?

Male 1: I think it would be scandalous. [Murmurs of agreement]

Male 2: Yeah, all wrong.

Male 1: It would be all wrong.

[Rural, age 55+ group, Farnham] Female: I do think the same, I wouldn't like to see big swathes of Forestry Commission departing into private ownership because of the lack of control. One wonders if that happened, what the purchasers, owners are really buying it for? What's their purpose?

[Intensive user group 2, Farnham]

Male: I think it's selling the family silver really, it doesn't really belong to the government, the Forestry Commission belongs to us, not to one particular government to use for their own political objectives. It's not us actually, it's us and our children isn't it, our grandchildren.

[…]

Female: Just playing devil's advocate and not necessarily I think this but if you did sell off areas, would it not possibly lend itself to having more local community involvement and interest expressed? But to the detriment of the current national strategy?

Male: Who would pay for it? How would the local community …

Female: I think the ideal would be to keep it in national ownership and make sure that it's managed with a local involvement, that would get my ideal because one of the dangers, a bit like the railway isn't it, you parcel it off and then nobody knows how to get from one place to another and you can't get a straightforward answer. To me it's the same with the forest.

5.7.2 Cost of PFE

Some discussion group participants asked about the cost of managing the PFE, either because they assumed that a profit was generated from timber or because they had become newly aware of the range of benefits offered. Many participants showed surprise at the net figure (£15 million or 30p per person per year) quoted in the public consultation document, and expressed the view that this was 'amazingly good value'.

[Intensive user group, Farnham]

Female: … £15m, it's nothing, absolutely nothing.

Male: This other figure which really amazed me, do you know how much it is per person, per year, to each person in England, the government spends? 30p, that's the £14m divided into, 30p, so if we were all willing to spend 60p [laughs], you could almost, it's almost having a little box in the village shop where people come in and say "put my 10p change into the charity box". It's such a trivial amount, yet governments for years have agonised over and said the Forestry Commission, the cost, it doesn't make a profit but 30p for free access to Alice Holt and your motorbikes and your cycling and …

In addition to gaining personal benefits from woodland use, many participants also recognised wider environmental benefits of woods. They expressed the **need to put more public money into creating and maintaining the resource**. Usually, two kinds of reasons were given: a focus on improving local access; and pressures on the natural environment from development and global environmental/climate change.

[Rural / semi-urban group, Midlands] Female: […] we need land for forests because we need all the things that they bring with that, that is clean air, animals, bees, all that ecosystem that they bring […] I think investing in forests is something that is necessary …

Several groups raised the issue of charges for car parking as a source of revenue (for more details see section 5.4). While some resented compulsory charges, many more expressed the view that as long as a 'fair' charging system was in place and use of the money explained, they were happy to pay for using woodlands that had a range of facilities and activities on offer.

5.7.3 Governance and public involvement

Thinking about the cost and labour required for maintaining the PFE led some participants to consider that governance and management of the PFE may require more public involvement in the future. Few had been involved to date: three had participated in consultations (one in a professional capacity as local councillor and two as representatives of stakeholder or lobby groups), and one had been connected with the early stages of setting up a community woodland when living in Scotland.

Most participants seemed **happy to entrust the sustainable management of the PFE to the FC**. Few had detailed knowledge of woodlands and their management, and the great majority recognised that they had not really thought about it before. In discussing woodland management some realised that woodlands may need more local support and, in order to make some forests pay for themselves, felt that greater autonomy and flexibility would be required in decision-making. One business partner perceived the FC as overly bureaucratic and wished it to be more entrepreneurial and efficient (see section 6), and thus saw good reasons for more private woodland ownership. Other participants also saw benefits in having some woodland in private ownership, usually based on the argument that **a mixture is good and different owners may have strong points in different areas**. For example, some charitable organisations are seen to be particularly good at wildlife and woodland conservation, some land managers at producing timber and other private and membership-based trusts at offering a range of social benefits and special uses or events.

[Intensive user group 2, Farnham]

Male 1: […] I don't think that you can really have local community involvement to any meaningful way in private woodland, but that's an advantage of retaining the public forest estate, because you can have that local public involvement, which I think we all want, which if you sell off half of Alice Holt, you can't expect to have continued public involvement in it so I think that's an advantage of the public forest estate against the private estate.

Male 2: Having said that, is anyone familiar with Coed Llandegla […] near Wrexham? Which is owned by Tilhill economic forestry group. I tell you what, if they were to take over the forest estate, I'd go – and I'm sure you would if you'd been there, go "bring it on", because they are just fantastic. But I'm not saying all owners of land would be like that. […] They are trying to make a point […] in terms of anything you can think of.[16]

[Low-income group, Farnham]

Male: If there was a forestry management team and they made decisions, obviously educated decisions to manage areas, why do they need my approval? Why should they worry about offending the local person who's actually ignorant and thinks that we're cutting down trees for fun? Surely they're the educated people, they know better, they do what they have to […]

[…]

Female: But it would be nice to know where to go to find out why they've done it, not say "that's wrong, I don't agree with what they've done" but at least to be able to show an interest in why is it being done like that? I remember when I joined a conservation group years ago and we used to go out clearing scrub and someone said once, "when I joined the conservation group, I expected to be planting things, not cutting them down". Well, obviously, we learned why things were being cut down.

The discussion groups highlighted a range of levels of knowledge and understandings amongst participants concerning the current governance and management of woodlands. Some participants talked about the change that had occurred over the past years in the management of the PFE towards a strong social and broader environmental focus, alongside timber production. Others still perceived the FC as a timber-producing agency and were more in favour of visiting woodlands under other public (especially local authorities such as Hampshire County Council) and certain private owners who to them appeared to demonstrate obvious wider social and environmental management objectives; conserving and increasing woodlands was another strong theme voiced by those participants. Four participants indicated more detailed knowledge about timber production and the complexities involved in current multi-purpose woodland management. Only this latter group made the connection and expressed the need for increasing timber production in the UK for moving towards a low-carbon economy.

In each of the two discussion groups with intensive users the suggestion was made to change the name of the FC (e.g. to 'Forest Commission') to reflect this change towards wider social and environmental priorities alongside silvicultural aspects.

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[16] Coed Llandegla Forest is owned and managed by UPM Tilhill and is their flagship site for providing public access. It covers 650 ha and is the largest privately owned recreation facility (principally mountain biking) in North Wales.

[Intensive user group 1, Farnham] Male: I think there's lots of areas where the FC could be effective and efficient. They are very good at doing what they do, as long as they're given the right instructions, to be land managers for the state but if you're almost cursed by what's written on the can, that word "forestry" and thinking yourself as, "we are the managers of the public estate in South East England for a wide social objective". Well trees might be part of that scene, well they definitely will be part of a scene but there's lots of other things that can be done and going back to the New Forest, since that's where I live and where I love, the majority of that is not currently trees. It delivers vast amounts of public benefit and where the active tree planting is going on, that public benefit is being diminished. So let's think of FC, find yourself a fresh name to repackage for a new culture, to maintain the state land holdings.

Representatives of recreational organisations and business partners expressed a need for more active engagement. Some perceived past/existing consultations as seeking comments on plans that had already been decided, but preferred **meetings / regular exchanges where different options can be discussed and viewpoints aired and explained and suitable solutions negotiated**.

At the end of the discussion groups, many participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to think about woodlands and their management. In particular, the group of business partners, the two groups of intensive users, one group of frequent semi-urban users and the group of older rural (predominantly) woodland users appreciated the opportunity to air and discuss views and concerns. The two groups of intensive users emphasised the benefits of being able to have good dialogue between FC and stakeholders or user groups (as already happening in several cases), and to negotiate access for different uses and management priorities. Such communication was felt to help balance different demands and increase understanding of the complexities of managing the resource well for current and future benefits.

5.7.4 Communication

The group discussions helped to elaborate on ways in which people find out about woodland ownership and management, FC activities and what they would like to see. Several made an explicit contrast between the FC and membership organisations that have a duty to keep members informed, e.g. through newsletters and event programmes. Few knew where to find this information for the FC, nor accessed the website. In about half the discussion groups, participants mentioned examples of County Council woodlands and/or environmental trust land, and how useful they found the available information boards, or leaflets or information on their website. For some, lack of information on access rights and available paths/routes means that they do not have the confidence or incentive to visit those woodlands. **Many participants across all different groups mentioned that they would like to see more information provided by the FC about the PFE and especially local woodlands and facilities**.

This was more strongly expressed by people interested in exploring and finding out more about their surroundings (e.g. members of walking clubs, those whose job involves organising outdoor visits), those working with disabled people, and those who currently rarely or never use woodlands.

[Urban group, Midlands] Female: ...growing up, especially as an ethnic minority, my parents obviously came to England, they didn't really know much about woods, they didn't know about accessibility, we didn't actually start going to woods at all or anything 'cause my parents didn't know if you could go in without paying. There's not enough information like for other people so they know if you can or cannot go onto the land.

[Disability group, Nottingam]

Female 1: But I think people need to know about these places, I think there is a lot of places where people with disabilities and with hearing and visual impairment can go, but it's not necessarily broadcast is it really?

Female 2: Not advertised well, are they?

Male: [overtalking] ... produce like a map with these woods and forests were marked for like disabled access and ... if we knew more about it, we perhaps could travel a bit further afield. [Murmurs of agreement]

[Low-income group, Farnham]

Female: Yeah, that is something that will stop me going into areas, if I don't know it and you can't just wander off because you don't know where you're going, so to be able to [overtalking] ...

Female: I was once in Alice Holt with my three children and I started panicking, "I'm going to be here all night", that was a bit scary, started to get dark.

Some participants highlighted the usefulness of signage at car parks, information boards and visitor centres as the main ways to make people aware of woodland ownership and management; but to others this did not matter or seem attractive (e.g. some cyclists, those who preferred visiting low key sites).

[Rural, age 55+ group, Farnham] Female: It isn't always very obvious because a lot of these places, you can approach them from different places, if you're lucky to approach it where there's a sign, that's fine but often you don't, you'll come on at sort of further down the line and there won't be anything to say who owns it or you know, who it's managed by.

6 Business partners' views

SERG was specifically requested to include business partners as one of the target groups for the group discussions. Despite intensive efforts to recruit a group of 8 to 10 business partners associated with the Alice Holt woodland site, only five agreed to participate, of which three attended. This was due to time constraints and the difficulty of finding a convenient location to hold the meeting as some business partners are located far away from the site. Those who attended represented a range of interests: bicycle hire; cafe and forest shop provisions; and training for woodland related skills and activities. While the first two participants only had experience of the business partnership situation at the FC sites where their business was located (i.e. Bedgebury and Alice Holt), the third participant had past/existing business links, and hence was familiar with, a wide range of sites. This included a variety of forests owned and managed by the Forestry Commission as well as sites under private and other public ownership across England, and also Scotland and Wales.

The main reason for entering into partnership with the PFE appeared to be the range of facilities offered and ability to attract large number of visitors.

> Bedgebury is a larger site, it's more developed although I believe it attracts a fewer number of people [than Alice Holt]. The demographics are slightly different so from what I can understand here, it's very young children, predominantly women which largely bike in the summer holiday. Bedgebury is family oriented, […] it has a different type of mountain biking trail so attracts a wide diversity of people for the mountain biking element, it attracts across the spectrum because there's a jump area there, skills area, single track, as well as the family route. […]Type of site is very important and infrastructure within the site, so if you compare for instance this site and Bedgebury, basically we've got full changing facilities, showers, […] here, there aren't any showers, people aren't getting cleaned up after a muddy grind, there's insufficient services for the volume of people coming onto site and those services need updating.

The FC business partners who participated in the discussions found partnership working positive in principle but all identified some barriers relating to perceived lack of transparency and consistency, bureaucracy and associated time delays in decision-making, insufficient communication and lack of long-term strategy, as the range of following excerpts illustrate.

> Male 1: […] it would be great to have an orientation day with the Forestry Commission to say who does what, what is the chain of command, how do we get things done? Because it's not easy, it's not easy working with the Commission, to get anything done, who do you talk to, how do you … like approach this and what is the format and the procedures to put in place because they seem to change with the personnel. It would be

good to have more open communication with them as well because I don't know what they're thinking about, I don't know what they do and I don't know what objectives they have to achieve and how they are measured against that. For me, it would be really interesting just to have that orientation, it would make life a lot easier for me. […] I haven't really made any firm commitments or contacts because we don't know what they're going to do next, they can change so, so quickly and their direction will change as well.

Male 2: I'm slightly different in the relationships I've got at Bedgebury are very, very good, I've got a very positive experience, I have to say, there is a will to move things forward and to develop the relationships. I believe I've got a relationship with the guys here but it's quite a bureaucratic organisation and it does take an awful long time. So if we take the Bedgebury site again, the previous franchisee who was there for a year without a lease, I've been there for two years and we've just got it sorted, so three years without a lease they've been operating.

Male 3: There's a lot to say for personal relationships with people … but it doesn't work when you go nationally from Devon to Derby, it doesn't work then because it's all lost in the bureaucracy. […]

Male 1: There's a 50 year plan for the Forestry sites in terms of the management of the woodland, they need to somehow transfer that across to the other aspects of their business […].

[…]

Male 3: From my point of view with the Forestry Commission, if they could simplify the, if they had a database of training providers and had all the details, public liability insurance etc., qualifications, everything, generic risk assessments, site specific risk assessments, if they had a national database of for want of a better word, authorised training providers, then each concern could go onto the database and say, "yeah, so and so's a registered training provider with us, he's given us all the information, we know the instructors he uses are all qualified and up to date, otherwise he can't deliver the training course using those guys", it would streamline the whole process so much better than having to produce all the information for every single forester or permissions officer, countless times. […] I'm perhaps being very negative about this but my whole dealing with the Forestry Commission is quite good, working relationships in certain areas are very poor, nonexistent working relationships in certain areas so the Forestry Commission, woodland managers don't want us on site because it's hassle, simple as that.

[…]

Male 1: It's [the FC] a very big organisation. For us we're very small, […] for me there are more good points than bad points. I really do enjoy coming here and running a business here 'cause it's really good and it's so diverse and it's so different, every day is different but it could be made just a little bit easier, that's all.

The current advantages of the PFE versus a private site came out in the following statement:

> I was about to say for me it's a double edged sword [...] the attractions of private site would be direct contact, less bureaucracy, the speed at which things get done and in all probability a much lower rate. The downside or the attraction to the Forestry Commission site is that you have that infrastructure typically there and there's more significant investment than private [...] [talking about private land]there wouldn't be the infrastructure and investment available to make that site work properly, that's key for us when looking at sites, it's what's there, the diversity of the site [...]

Business partners with a franchise on specific sites would like to see greater long-term security of partnership terms (e.g. the lease) to be able to invest in and develop provisions.

> Male 1: Yeah, likewise we've been looking at the purchase of woodland, the same thing, because we can get other revenue streams. The problem I have as a franchisee is that my business isn't worth anything, the policy has changed for an automatic renew of lease so in however many years' time, I'm sitting there, "am I going to get it renewed, am I not?" That's uncertainty, I can't sell it so the only thing I can sell realistically is goodwill and the business isn't worth anything.

> Male 2: There's quite a lot of sites for sale which are anything between 250 and 1200 acres.

> Male 1: And that's my big concern, moving forward and for me, I'd rather be looking for some sort of security I guess from the Commission [...]

> Male 3: It all depends on the term of the lease, our lease was three years and the three years is coming up in April, so we have to tender again. It doesn't give you, you need to be able to, as a businessman, be able to plan and you cannot do any planning when you are uncertain about your own future. And I also think that because we weren't told this at the beginning. We were told that the leases were able to be transferred over, okay it might be for 18 months or two years or three years or however but now it's all changed [...].

7 Conclusions

The PFE is perceived by the majority of those who participated in this study as providing a public, nationally and globally vital, resource that is open to all. It is valued and widely supported for personal access and recreational use, for societal benefits (e.g. education and learning; reducing air and noise pollution; economic gains and timber production) and wider environmental benefits (e.g. biodiversity conservation; improving habitats for wildlife; help tackle climate change issues).

Of the adult public (those over 16) 85% can name benefits they want to see provided by the PFE. Even people who do not use the PFE (or are not aware that they are using it) are very positive about its existence. For all current values, and preferred future benefits, scores are higher for public forest than for private (with the single exception of expectations of woodfuel production from private woodlands). **Forests and woods are valued highly for access, recreation, facilities, wildlife and learning/education.** The productive and supporting ecosystem services (such as air, soil, water) benefits were also valued but less prominently. Implications for moving towards a low-carbon economy (e.g. increased use of timber as a building material, woodfuel to replace high carbon fuels) were not yet on the public radar, but carbon storage (trees planted and managed to help reduce climate change) and the need for increasing timber production was raised by some, including two participants working with/in the forestry sector.

Differences in value associated with different forests and woodlands is not simply a reflection of ownership (e.g. public versus private) but reflects a wider and more holistic set of criteria, including the natural and management characteristics of different sites.

The PFE survey showed differences in opinion and concerns for woodlands under public versus private ownership. Furthermore, the qualitative data showed that **a substantial part of the public consulted in the discussion groups attached a deeply-held significance to public ownership.** This was largely expressed in terms of guaranteed access and, to a lesser extent, 'ability to influence' their management. It was also sometimes expressed in terms of woodlands being an essential part of life and important national resource, which (large parts of it) should be in public ownership. **A distinction was made between the PFE and other publicly owned woodlands and forests in terms of the Forestry Commission's special expertise in silviculture and multi-purpose forestry approach.**

Personal experiences appeared to strongly influence people's opinions and contributions to the group discussions. Statements made, while not always factually accurate, illustrate the strength of feeling and the meanings people associated with trees and woods. Qualitative data plays an important role in raising awareness of and respecting the fundamental values that members of the public associate with woodlands and particularly the PFE/public ownership. A mixture of different types of woodlands and ownership was widely regarded as suitable to allow for 'business' development and creativity as well as achieving a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits.

Most participants expressed a wish to increase forest cover, especially deciduous / native woodlands, while some emphasised the need to increase timber production. Most

discussion group participants believed that public ownership would best guarantee access for the public and sustainable woodland management into the future.

7.1 Values and expectations amongst different parts of society

Experience and knowledge of the PFE, and ways in which it is valued, vary within British society. Overall, the PFE appears to be better known and more widely used by members of the public in middle and higher income groups. Prominent user groups are male white recreationalists, women/families with young children, and walkers/dog-walkers.

The discussion groups highlighted the multiple benefits and provisions that woodlands can provide, and recognised that the multiple demands need to be negotiated and managed. **The PFE was seen as particularly suitable in this regard, and perceived as under an obligation to serve a wide range of environmental and social, alongside economic, objectives**.

The PFE survey results and discussion groups indicated that there are some regional differences in woodland use. **Use and provision of 'recreational' forests are generally higher in Southern parts of England** (except London) **and lower in the Midlands and some Northern parts**. This mirrors the spread, size and type of PFE woodlands in those areas. For example, in the South East, the PFE contributes heavily to accessible natural greenspace provision (35%, this being 97.5% of all FC land in the region).

The right to access woodlands was a key concern. Improving the maintenance, signage and publicity of woodland paths was a prominent concern for improving the PFE for personal use. This was strongly expressed by those coming from ethnic minorities, those belonging to walking clubs, or working with people with a range of disabilities. Other improvements to the PFE raised by some intensive users were providing small car parking facilities and less formal paths for more remote and less frequented sites.

In terms of societal benefits, expectations often focused around three aspects.
1. Increasing woodland cover, in particular deciduous and mixed, was viewed as important for social and environmental benefits
2. Increasing formal and informal educational use of woodlands was highlighted as key to raising environmental awareness amongst children and adults
3. Strong support was expressed for maintaining the sustainable management of the variety of woodlands, ranging from highly developed and popular sites to more secluded and quiet ones.

A significant proportion of group discussion **participants signalled a strong wish to conserve woodlands and increase woodland habitats**. This was a priority

particularly strongly supported by older participants in both the PFE survey and in the group discussions. Improving the environment and social well-being was perceived as preserving and increasing the area of broadleaved woodlands. Felling trees or increasing timber production was seen by many as reducing rather than maintaining or improving these benefits.

It appears that **few had come into contact with or knew about the forest industry or woodland management, or had made the connection that harvesting timber could also 'improve' the environment, when used to replace higher carbon products**, be it in terms of fuel, construction materials or other low-carbon economic uses. There is thus a clear role for the Forestry Commission along with other public and private woodland owners to **communicate or to engage wider society in discussions about the complexities of carbon management and the role that forestry and wood products can play towards achieving a low-carbon economy**.

7.2 Benefits of the PFE compared with those under other ownership and management

The Forestry Commission is recognised as an effective manager of woodland resources for multiple benefits. Intensive users and those more familiar with the PFE especially acknowledged the range of social, environmental and economic provisions that form part of FC's sustainable management goals. Many participants felt that the PFE was run cost-effectively; some were surprised how little public resource was actually used, while others found it difficult to comment as they did not know how it compared with other owners or sectors.

Even those who do not use woods, or more specifically the PFE, tended to value the societal and environmental benefits. This was the case amongst all age groups and people from different socio-economic backgrounds. A richly expressed sense of connection with trees and woodlands means that **many regard the PFE as a national natural resource to which society has a right**.

Some expressed **high levels of trust in public ownership and management** and saw woodland creation and conservation as one way to act against further losses of forest cover and the gradual erosion of urban greenbelt areas. Key advantages of public ownership that were valued are direct management control and responsibility for sustainable forest management.

Few people thought that private ownership would improve the efficiency and quality of woodland management; most wished to maintain and increase woodlands in public ownership. The creation of new woodlands was thought necessary, especially near urban or on brownfield sites and surplus farmland.

Some representatives of groups with a specific interest in woodlands voiced a wish for the FC to initiate **earlier and more open communication on planning and management options** that involves their staff and key stakeholders.

Business partnerships can work well for both sides in providing facilities or attractions and providing a stream of revenue for the Forestry Commission. The **main suggestions for improving existing partnerships** were:

- **clearer lines of communication** and **more liaison** (stable contact point and less bureaucracy)
- a more **business-like structure to charges** (set nationally or transparently across the FC; and again, less bureaucracy)
- a **longer-term perspective to issuing leases** to allow more investment and reduce risk to partners.

7.3 Benefits and expectations of different woodland resources within the PFE

People value a wide range of forest types. Native broadleaved forests are particularly highly valued. Conifer woodlands were perceived by many as unattractive, but some expressed that the type of woodland (as long as there was some variety) did not matter as much as having access through them. More work is needed to develop a typology within the PFE in order to demonstrate these aspects more clearly.

In some locations (especially Alice Holt, Bedgebury, New Forest and Sherwood Forest)[17], the knowledge and experience of community, education and recreation rangers in working with a range of publics was recognised. However, County Council rangers and wardens often had a higher profile because Councils were perceived as more prominently **advertising woodland facilities, walks and activities** through local newspapers, leaflets/maps and the internet.

7.4 Future research

The PFE survey has made a significant new contribution to allow for the first time direct comparison of societal values for the PFE and woodlands under other ownership. However, much of the interpretation depends on the assumption that people are aware of the resources under different kinds of ownership; and research reported here suggests that is not always the case. There is therefore scope for testing these assumptions further.

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[17] The range of PFE woodlands highlighted reflect the choice of sampling areas for the discussion groups (South East: Farnham, Reading, Southampton; Midlands: Nottingham)

Lack of public awareness of the range of different ownership types and the variety of resources within and across these is mirrored by an apparent lack of centrally held data on woodland resources in both private and public ownership. Some projects are underway within the Forestry Commission to build on current datasets. For example, work is currently being undertaken by IFOS to build a comprehensive database detailing the ownership of woodlands in the UK using a range of data sources. Also, efforts are underway to collate and standardise information on recreation sites, services and facilities on the PFE and to produce a tool which will provide map-based outputs. There is a **need for a more concerted and systematic approach to assessing the total woodland resource and provisions**. Comparisons could then be made between existing facilities and services provided by the PFE, other publicly owned woodlands and those in private ownership; and priorities set, and as necessary adjusted, for the future.

There is currently relatively poor scope to examine the interactions between different factors contributing to public benefit (ownership, management, location, catchment area, forest type and age). There is **scope for more sophisticated analysis of data from the National Inventory of Woods and Trees to relate woodland type (both within and beyond the PFE) to particular social catchments**, but this is a medium term proposal that was not feasible within the timeframe of this study.

Our current understanding of the use of woodlands under different ownerships is based on the reported beliefs of survey respondents. There is a need to **calibrate this self-reported data with information about the actual ownership of the woodlands visited by a cross-section of society**. If beliefs about ownership are found to be correct, more robust use can be made of self-reported ownership in future.

Within FCE, **more consistent monitoring across the full range of woodland types provided through the PFE is needed, differentiating in particular between the honey pot sites and those which are less developed for recreation**. The current SERG programme to develop a more systematic framework for planning and analysing social research, as well as current data collection programmes under development by FC GB and FCE, will contribute to this evidence base. SERG's work under the systematic framework includes developing a typology of different types of woodlands in terms of ecology, area, silviculture and site facilities. This should help improve our understanding of the connections between benefits or values and different woodlands.

Forest Research

8 Appendix 1: PFE Survey

Survey of public opinion, use and expectations of woodlands in England

SECTION 1: Use of woodlands in England and benefits derived from them

Read introduction to interviewee:

The Forestry Commission would like to find out more about whether and how you use woodlands and which ones you visit. This research is part of an in-depth look at how we manage woodlands in England to serve society's long-term needs.

By 'woodlands' I mean forests and woods of any size, type and age.

Q1. How often did you visit woodlands in England in the last year?
   Daily
   Weekly
   Monthly
   Three or four times a year
   Once or twice a year
   Never   GO TO Q5

Q2a. Can you name the woodland you <u>visit most frequently</u>, and the nearest town or village?

Wood: ………………………………………………………
Town/Village……………………………………………….

Q2b. Thinking of the woodland you visit most frequently, approximately how far in miles did you travel to reach this woodland? By that I mean the distance from your home to the place you visited?

Distance to woodland visited most frequently: ……………………… mi

Q2c. Can you tell me why you visit this woodland most frequently?
Please tick the option(s) that apply

   It is in close/ easy reach from where I live
   I feel welcome as a visitor
   It has attractive scenery
   It is rich in and/or good for watching wildlife
   It is a good place to unwind and de-stress

It is a good place for me to get away from people
It is a good place for me to take children to play and have fun
It is a good place to walk my dog
It is a good place for me to exercise
I feel it is a safe place to visit
There is no entrance charge / car park fee
None of the above (state if other reason given): ....

Q3a. Can you name the woodland you <u>most enjoy visiting</u>, and the nearest town or village?

Wood: ....
Town/Village...

If this is the same woodland as in Q2 (most frequently visited woodland), GO TO Q4.

Q3b. Thinking of the woodland you most enjoy visiting, approximately how far in miles did you travel to reach this woodland? By that I mean the distance from your home to the place you visited?

Distance to woodland most enjoyed: .... mi

Q3c. Can you tell me why you like visiting this woodland?
Please tick the option(s) that apply
It is in close/ easy reach from where I live
I feel welcome as a visitor
It has attractive scenery
It is rich in and/or good for watching wildlife
It is a good place to unwind and de-stress
It is a good place for me to get away from people
It is a good place for me to take children to play and have fun
It is a good place to walk my dog
It is a good place for me to exercise
I feel it is a safe place to visit
There is no entrance charge / car park fee
None of the above (state if other reason given):
....

SECTION 2: Knowledge of ownership of woodlands, perceived significance of ownership and potential impact of ownership

Q4. Thinking of the woodland(s) that you visit most regularly and most enjoy visiting, do you know who owns and manages the woodland?
Do not show screen and do not prompt

4a. Woodland visited most regularly:
   Public - Forestry Commission
   Public - Other (e.g. Local Authority, Ministry of Defence)
   Private (e.g. forestry or timber business; farmer; charity; private trusts)
   Other, state which: ………………………………………………
   Don't know

4b. Woodland most enjoyed:
   Public - Forestry Commission
   Public - Other (e.g. Local Authority, Ministry of Defence)
   Private (e.g. forestry or timber business; farmer; charity; private trusts)
   Other, state which: ………………………………………………
   Don't know

Q5. When you decide to visit a woodland is it important to you who owns and manages it?
   Yes
   No

Q6. Thinking about the Forestry Commission, which one of these statements do you think best describes the organisation?
Tick one only
   A government department or agency that manages publicly owned woodlands
   An independent, charitable organisation
   A body representing private woodland owners
   A private company
   Don't know

Read definitions to interviewee: **Woodland ownership and management can be divided into 'private' and 'public'. <u>Private ownership</u> refers to all non-public woodlands. Owners include private businesses, individuals, trusts and charities (such as the National Trust and the Woodland Trust). <u>Publicly owned woodlands</u> are owned by the Government on behalf of everyone and managed for the benefit of everyone. Public woodlands are managed by Local Authorities, the Ministry of Defence and the Forestry Commission. The <u>Public Forest Estate,</u> which are the woodlands managed by the Forestry Commission, is made up of over 1,500 different woodlands; that is nearly 1/5 of all woodlands.**

Q7. What do you value most about publicly owned woodlands?
Do not show screen and do not prompt. Only use the precodes if one of the specific answers shown on the screen is mentioned. If the response does not exactly match one of these, use the 'other' code and write in interviewee's response.

   Access - free, cheap, welcoming, access protected by law
   Recreation – place to walk, ride bike or horse, children's play, Go Ape, watch wildlife
   Resources and facilities - play areas, picnic sites, car parks, visitor centres, big spaces(get away from other people), rangers
   Woodland management – sustainably managed, keeping traditions and practices alive
   Benefits to local environment – woods and forests protected by law, improves local area, rangers manage the woodland (reduce anti-social behaviour)
   Benefits to wider environment – help tackle climate change, provide places for wind turbines
   Benefits to society – learning and education, cultural events
   Benefits to economy – jobs, employment, tourism, attracts visitors to area
   Wildlife – habitats, places for wildlife to live
   Products - timber, wood, wood-fuel, collecting non-timber forest products (e.g. mushrooms, berries)
   Nothing
   Don't know
   Other: ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Q8. What do you value most about <u>private woodlands</u>?
Do not show screen and do not prompt. Only use the precodes if one of the specific answers shown on the screen is mentioned. If the response does not exactly match one of these, use the 'other' code and write in interviewee's response.

   Access - free, cheap, welcoming, access protected by law
   Recreation – place to walk, ride bike or horse, children's play, Go Ape, watch wildlife
   Resources and facilities - play areas, picnic sites, car parks, visitor centres, big spaces(get away from other people), rangers
   Woodland management – sustainably managed, keeping traditions and practices alive
   Benefits to local environment – improves local area
   Benefits to wider environment – help tackle climate change, provide places for wind turbines
   Benefits to society – learning and education, cultural events
   Benefits to economy – jobs, employment, tourism, attracts visitors to area

Wildlife – habitats, places for wildlife to live
Products - timber, wood, wood-fuel, collecting non-timber forest products (e.g.
 mushrooms, berries)
Nothing
Don't know
Other: ....

SECTION 3: Expectations of priorities for the future provision and management of the
Public Forest Estate as compared to private woodlands

**Q9a. Taking an England-wide perspective, what are the benefits that the Public
Forest Estate, that is woodlands managed by the Forestry Commission, should
deliver over the next few decades? Please tick up to five that you think are
most important.**

Type of benefit	Tick up to five
Grow woods and forests to help combat climate change	
Provide wood as a renewable fuel	
Provide sites to generate electricity from windpower	
Provide places for wildlife to live	
Demonstrate how to manage woods and forests and support innovation and research	
Improve and protect the landscape	
Help people get involved in their local woodland	
Enhance areas in and around towns and cities	
Provide places to walk	
Provide places to cycle or ride horses	
Provide places for learning and education	
Provide places for events such as outdoor concerts, sporting events and festivals	
Restore former industrial land as new public woodlands and open space	
Provide sand, gravel and other minerals for construction	
Help encourage tourism and leisure visits	
Provide timber for sawmills and other wood-using businesses	
Other (please specify):	

9b. Taking an England-wide perspective, what are the benefits that <u>private woodlands</u> should deliver over the next few decades? Please tick up to five that you think are most important.

Type of benefit	Tick up to five
Grow woods and forests to help combat climate change	
Provide wood as a renewable fuel	
Provide sites to generate electricity from windpower	
Provide places for wildlife to live	
Demonstrate how to manage woods and forests and support innovation and research	
Improve and protect the landscape	
Help people get involved in their local woodland	
Enhance areas in and around towns and cities	
Provide places to walk	
Provide places to cycle or ride horses	
Provide places for learning and education	
Provide places for events such as outdoor concerts, sporting events and festivals	
Restore former industrial land as new public woodlands and open space	
Provide sand, gravel and other minerals for construction	
Help encourage tourism and leisure visits	
Provide timber for sawmills and other wood-using businesses	
Other (please specify):	

<u>SECTION 4: Diversity, socio-cultural and economic background data</u>

Q10. Gender of respondent
Male
Female

Q11. Age
16-17
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54

55-64
65-74
75+

Q12. How would you describe your cultural or ethnic background?
White British
White Irish
Any other white background
White & Black Caribbean
White & Black African
White & Asian
Any other mixed background
Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Any other Asian background
Caribbean
African
Any other Black background
Chinese
Any other

Q13. Do you have any illness or disability that would limit your daily activities or the work that you can do?
Yes
No

Q14. What is the approximate total income in your household?
Under 10K
10 to 20K
21 to 30K
31 to 50K
50K+

Q15. What is your postcode?
This information will only be used for analysis purposes and will not be used to identify you as an individual or your responses.

....

9 Appendix 2: Survey sampling strategy and weighting

TNS's Sampling System

The sampling system integrates the Post Office Address file with the 2001 Census small area data at output area level. This enables drawing replicated waves of multi-stage stratified samples with accurate and up-to-date address selection using PPS methods. This is explained in greater detail below.

TNS Omnibus has Random Location Sampling as its sampling basis. A unique sampling system has been developed by TNS for this purpose utilising 2001 UK Census small area statistics and the Post Office Address File. This divides Great Britain, south of the Caledonian Canal, into 600 areas of equal population. From these 600 areas a master sampling frame of 300 sample points is selected to reflect the country's geographical and socio-economic profile. The areas within each Standard Region are stratified into population density bands, and each band in descending order by percentage of population into socio-economic Grades I and II.

To maximise the statistical accuracy of Omnibus sampling, sequential waves of fieldwork are allocated systematically across the sampling frame to ensure maximum geographical dispersion. The 300 primary sampling units are allocated to 12 sub-samples of 25 points each, with each sub-sample in itself being a representative drawing from the frame. For each wave of Omnibus fieldwork, a set of sub-samples is selected in order to provide the number of sample points required (typically circa 139 for 2,000 interviews). Across sequential waves of fieldwork all sub-samples are systematically worked, thereby reducing the clustering effects on questionnaires asked for two or more consecutive weeks.

Each primary sampling unit is divided into two geographically distinct segments, each containing, as far as possible, equal populations. The segments comprise aggregations of complete postcode sectors. Within each half (known as the A and B halves) postcode sectors have been sorted by the percentage of the population in socio-economic groups I and II. One postcode sector from each primary sampling unit is selected for each Omnibus, alternating on successive selections between the A and B halves of the primary sampling unit, again to reduce clustering effects. For each wave of interviewing, each interviewer is supplied with two blocks of 70 addresses, drawn from different parts of the sector. Addresses are contacted systematically with three doors being left after each successful interview.

To ensure a balanced sample of adults within effective contacted addresses, a quota is set by sex (male, female housewife, female non-housewife); within female housewife, presence of children and working status and within men, working status. In each weekly wave of the omnibus survey, a target of 2000 interviews is set and the survey data is weighted, where necessary, to ensure that the sample is representative of the UK population in terms of the standard demographic characteristics.

The sampling procedure is the same whether GB\UK or England-only based. For samples amongst the English population, only points within England are used.

Quotas are not set by urban / rural classification. However, cross breaks can be added to outputs to show the proportion interviewed in urban and rural areas. A sample point is rural if the majority of Wards are defined as rural; and urban if the majority of Wards are defined as urban. Ward Urbanisation is based on the population density of the ward. Wards are urban if the population density is above 4.45 people per hectare and rural if below that figure.

<u>Weighting</u>

Weighting takes into account any variations between the demographic distribution of respondents and the GB population (England only used). Factors taken into account at this stage of the weighting process are region of residence (based on Government Office Region), age, sex and working status. If any of these quotas are over-represented, the responses from these respondents are weighted down. Likewise, responses from under-represented groups are up-weighted. Our sampling approach is designed to be representative, which limits the amount of weighing necessary.

The percentages used in the text and shown in tables are always based on the weighted base.

10 Appendix 3: Sampling approach for discussion groups

Defining the sample size for qualitative research is largely a matter of judgement and experience and needs to take account of the remit and extent of the study, the focus and range of target audiences and the specific method used. A recent study looking at the issue of 'sample size' in interview-based studies, for example, showed a range of sample sizes from 5 to 93 with one additional 'outlier' of 350 (a mean of 31, which decreases to 24 without the outlier).[18] In our group discussion/interviews we did not have the time to test for 'theoretical saturation'[19] but found a range of cross-cutting and distinct themes and patterns of similar emphasis or a set of different/characteristic positions in replies to our key questions.

We used a purposeful sampling approach where sets of selection criteria are identified and participants are recruited from populations which fulfil those criteria. The composition of groups was tailored to cover the range of criteria but within the existing time and resource limitations. This meant that most groups covered more than one selection criteria (see also **Table 10.1**) as we had to strike a balance between homogeneity within each group and comparability of specific criteria between different groups. For example, the urban group held in the Midlands included participants from ethnic minorities, age groups from 16 to 55, users and non-users. A similar mix of ages and user/non-user was part of the low-income group held in Farnham that included urban catchments (Aldershot, Fleet and Farnham). Holding separate discussions for the major segments of the target populations is thought to improve the efficiency of data collection, e.g. by creating a more welcoming and relaxed rather than adversarial or awkward atmosphere, which helps participants to freely contribute their views and experiences on the topics being discussed. This approach was effective in gathering relevant data in a relatively short amount of time and in making some cross-comparisons between different events and their associated (sub-)target groups.

The discussion groups were scheduled to take place mid to late August to allow 2-3 weeks for recruitment. The tight time frame and the study falling into the holiday period provided some obstacles; e.g. many interest groups and contacts were extremely busy or shut/away during August, and potential recruits about to go on holiday. However, we succeeded in recruiting between 6 and 13 people for each group (with between 3 and 11

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[18] These figures comes from a meta-analysis of grounded theory projects, using 50 research articles from a range of disciplines and project carried out between 2002-2004; see http://www.buseco.monash.edu.au/research/studentdocs/mgt.pdf [accessed 7 Oct 2009].

[19] See e.g. Strauss, A.L. and J.M. Corbin (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

attending). The recruitment for the intensive user / interest group discussion event showed a high level of interest, and we ended up with 19 people wishing to attend, so we run two groups in parallel (with 8 and 9 respectively attending). Another noteworthy point about this group was that attendees refused taking the £30 incentive payment[20] as they welcomed having a forum where they could contribute their own views and the needs of the interest groups they represented, as well as having the opportunity to hear and learn from others. In the case of DG2.1 which focused on sexual diversity (see **Table 10.1**) the low turnout for that group and the interest by another group that was contacted to participate meant that a second discussion group was held to obtain a wider range in ages and variety in backgrounds and experiences.

Table 10.1. Overview of participant profile for the 10 discussion groups

Group	Location - Catchment	N	Male	Female	Age range / groups	Selection (sub-)criteria and *comments*
DG1 Business Partners	Farnham - SE England (Alice Holt, Bedgebury)	3	3	0	35-54	Franchises and businesses with some interest in or association with FC or woodlands in the area.
DG2.1 Sexual diversity - GOC Berkshire and Mid-Thames Group	Reading - Berkshire	2	2	0	55-74	*Group members were invited to come to this meeting held in a pub early evening. The group secretary and the person who organised the last walk both turned up, but not others.*
DG2.2 Sexual diversity - GOC Solent Group	Near Romsey - Solent	5 (+2)	5 (+2)	0	25-54	*This discussion group was held during the lunchbreak of the group's regular monthly walk; 5 (who ate outside) were present throughout the group discussion; another 2 (of the 7 who ate inside) joined in later (the pub was too noisy to be able to record inside).*
DG3 Disability	Beeston - Nottingham	9	4	5	25-34 45-74	People with range of disabilities or special needs. *The group consisted of those who worked with disabled adults and children (esp. horseriding) as the disabled participants were either too young or did not feel up to attending. For some target groups (e.g. blind and deaf) the lead-in time was too short.*
DG4 Urban	Beeston - Nottingham	11	3	8	16-54 65+	Include ethnic minorities and 16-22 age group. *Some participants (3 males, incl. 1 from minority group) did not turn up. Mother of 16 yr old accompanied daughter and contributed.*

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[20] Paying £30 or £40 to participants for attending focus/discussion groups and covering travel costs is the current going rate and common practice. SERG was advised by the recruitment agencies who tendered for the contract that they would have extreme difficulties recruiting without the offer of such incentive.

Group	Location - Catchment	N	Male	Female	Age range / groups	Selection (sub-)criteria and *comments*
DG5 Rural ('young': 16-50 years)	Beeston	10	2	8	16-55	*Younger age group was targeted (especially 16-22) to probe into their requirements/perspectives. The catchment had to be extended to semi-urban due to chosen semi-urban venue and town-based recruitment efforts by contractor.*
DG6 Rural ('old': 50+)	Farnham - 15 mi radius	12	3	9	50-75+	*Older group was targeted to get 'history' of experiences and probe into requirements/perspectives of that age group.*
DG7 Low income and unemployed	Farnham - 15 mi radius	9	3	6	16-64	*This group consisted largely of participants aged under 45, a mixture of regular/intensive and occasional users and 1 non-user.*
DG8.1 Intensive users / interest groups	Farnham - 50 mi radius	9	7	2	45-74	Those / representatives of clubs with a strong interest in walking, mountain biking, cycling, rally motorcycling, horse-riding, nature conservation
DG8.2 Intensive users / interest groups	Farnham - 50 mi radius	8	5	3	25-64 and 75+	Those / representatives of clubs with a strong interest in local planning, walking, mountain biking, cycling, rally motorcycling, nature conservation, learning & education
Total		78 (80)	37 (39)	41		

11 Appendix 4: Discussion Groups Protocol

August-September 2009

Purpose of Discussion Groups

Find out whether people distinguish between TWF under different ownership, and whether they attach any special conditions, expectations and benefits to the public forest estate.

Objectives of the Discussion Group Work

The group interviews will enable us to:
- Establish whether people distinguish between PFE and TWF under other forms of ownership (in terms of the woodlands used / known / generally).
- Elicit people's perceptions and expectations of the PFE and its management (personal use if applicable / for society generally / in the longer term), and whether these are different from TWF under other ownership and management. If so, why?
- Find out how these expectations are reflected (or not) in the use and management of the PFE.
- Explore the contribution of the PFE to the wellbeing of different groups of stakeholders, compared with TWF under other forms of ownership (any differences?).
- Test reaction to "What if the Government sold part of its forests?" How much do ownership / provisions / proximity matter?

Target Groups & Geographical Spread

DG1: Business partners - Franchises and businesses with some interest in or association with FC or woodlands in the area. *Alice Holt, QECP*

DG2: Sexual diversity - Gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender - users and non-users of woodlands - range of ages. *Berkshire & Mid Thames Gay Outdoor Club, Reading. Solent Gay Outdoor Club, Southampton*

DG3: Disability - People with range of disabilities or special needs - users and non-users of woodlands - range of ages - M/F. *Midlands - within 30 mi radius of Sherwood Pines*

DG4: Urban - Users and non-users of woodlands - including BME - range of ages (should include 16-22 yrs) - M/F. *Midlands - Nottingham area, within 30 mi radius of Sherwood Pines*

DG5: Rural (young) - Users and non-users of woodlands - target younger age group (16-50 yrs) - M/F. *Midlands - within 30 mi radius of Sherwood Pines*

DG6: Rural (old) - Users and non-users of woodlands - include at least 5 in older age group (50+) - M/F. *South East England - within 30 mi radius of Alice Holt Forest*

DG7: Low income and unemployed - Users and non-users of woodlands - all ages - M/F. *South East England - within 30 mi radius of Alice Holt Forest*

DG8: Users and pro-nature - Intensive users of woodlands (cycling / horse-riding / walking / learning & education) - all ages - M/F. *South East England - within 30 mi radius of Alice Holt Forest*

Equipment

- 2 digital voice recorders (with additional stereo microphone)
- Spare batteries
- Notebook and pen for field observations
- Camera
- Copies of questionnaire, Pens
- Copies of consent form
- Discussion Group Protocol
- Participant list
- Route description, address and details of contact person for venue

Focus Group Plan

Facilitators to wear their Forest Research badge and sticky label with first name

Arrival

- Greet participants and introduce ourselves (name and organisation)

- Ask participant to write their name on and wear a sticky label

- Offer refreshments/snack

- While waiting for others to arrive, ask participant to **complete PFE survey**

Before we start the group discussion, we would like you to complete a short questionnaire which asks a few questions relating to the Discussion Group topic and background information about yourself. [Show and give them a copy of the questionnaire.] *This should take about 10 minutes to complete and if you prefer, you can complete it with one of us.*

Introduction

- Let participants and facilitators find a comfortable seat and make sure we all see and hear each other

- Outline the project aim and what we are doing today

*This group meeting today is part of a **short research study** that looks at the role of woodlands, especially those owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. We would like to find out what you think about woodlands in public ownership, your expectations about their characteristics and management over the next decades. We have some questions prepared to help cover different aspects of the topic, but you can bring in the elements that you feel are most relevant and important.*

*Participation in the discussion group is **voluntary** and you do not have to be part if you don't want to.*

*We will take some notes during the discussion and would like to **record** the session with two digital audio-recorders. This helps us to remember what you actually said in your own words rather than changing it to what we think or remember you said. We will treat the information as **confidential**. Any material we may use from this session in a report or presentation will we **anonymised**; that means we will not refer to your actual name. We have to follow data protection laws in how we treat and store the data.*

We feel that it is important to hear and become more aware of what you think rather than us making assumptions, and this is why we would like you to share and discuss your experiences and thoughts today.

Hand out and ask them to check and complete the **Information and Consent Form**.
Do you have any questions about the research or this meeting today before we start?

Opening Questions (each in turn)

Would each of you say your name and a little bit about yourself and where you are from?

Q 1: What do you (personally) think about woods and forests?

PROBE   Do you like trees and woodlands?
            Did you use woods or forests in your childhood?
            What do you associate with woodlands / forests / trees?

Introductory Questions (not necessarily each in turn but make sure all contribute)

*For the following questions, we would like you to focus on woodlands **in England**.*

Q 2: Can you tell us more about your use of woods and forests? Why do you use them? Is there anything that prevents you from using woodlands?

PROBE   Do you use different woods for different reasons?
             Do the following matter for why you do or do not use woodlands?:
- type of wood (e.g. conifer, broadleaf)
- facilities (e.g. car park, bike trails)
- perceptions of the wood (e.g. safety, ownership)
- vicinity / location

Q 3: Do you know who owns the woods that you use / or those which are near where you live?

PROBE   How do you know who owns the wood/s?
                  (Are there any signs or notices? Or is it just common knowledge?)

Key Questions

Ownership/Resource

Q 4: Does it matter to you or affect you who owns the woodland?

PROBE   Do you feel you are, or would be, more welcome in woods that are in a
             particular type of ownership?

             Does the ownership have any effect on how safe you (would) feel in the
             wood?

             Do you think that woods in a particular type of ownership have more or
             fewer facilities or provisions (e.g. bike trails, play parks, cafes, educational
             opportunities etc)?

             How important is ownership in relation to other factors which may influence
             your decision to visit or not visit a wood? (e.g. wider issues regarding
             safety, facilities, proximity to home)?

Provisions / Benefits / Expectations

**Q 5a: What do you expect from public woods owned or managed by the Forestry
Commission both now and over the next few decades?**

PROBE in terms of:
                  - Type of wood

- Access
- Facilities – recreation, car parking, visitor centres
- Social benefits
- Biodiversity / environmental / climate change benefits
- Economic benefits

Make sure longer term is being considered.

Q 5b: Taking a broader view and thinking about <u>society</u> as a whole, what are the expectations and needs relating to publicly owned woodlands over the next decades?

Check whether what is raised would ONLY be achieved by public woodlands or to some degree/equally/better by private woodlands.

Q 6: In comparison, what do you expect of woods in private ownership?

PROBE   What kinds of forests does each of the participants think of or are aware of?

Check for various forms of 'private' woods; include trusts and charities, investment groups, businesses.

Has any of the private or public owners a duty to provide more social / environmental / economic benefits?

Check for now and into the future (considering changes in social, economic, environmental and climate conditions/context).

How do provisions/benefits/expectations relate to different types and sizes of forests?

May be suitable to make participants aware of the fact that it costs FCE £76million to run and manage PFE and that with the profits it makes from timber, recreation etc it only receives £15 million from government.

Q 7: How would you feel if the Government sold part of its forests?

PROBE   What kinds of forests and priorities in management should stay in public ownership?

What would be acceptable to sell?

What kind of forests should be bought or planted and where?

<u>Governance / Public Involvement</u>

Q8: Are you, or have you ever been consulted about or practically involved in local wood management?

PROBE   **If yes:**   Who owned the wood?

Do you think your opinions were adequately considered?

If no: Would you like to have the opportunity?

Do you think you should have greater opportunities to be involved in local wood management?

Do you think you should have the same level of engagement in publicly owned and privately owned local woods?

Specific questions
Check whether the following angles/issues have been covered in the discussion. If not, ask now:

Business partners	• How important is location and vicinity of business to woodland compared with ownership? • What works well in the partnership with FC? What not? Are you involved in other partnerships that work better?
Sexuality	• Any stigma or discrimination experienced during woodland use? Or know of problems experienced by friends / partners? • Any special needs / provisions / information & communication issues? Different needs when younger / older?
Disability	• Are there any specific access and use issues that have not yet been mentioned? • What could the Forestry Commission do to improve the public forest estate for your particular needs?
Urban	• How important is the presence/use of *urban* greenspace compared with rural/FC woodlands? • What are your thoughts and experiences of urban woodlands and trees compared with rural woodlands?
Rural young	• Any special provisions / information & communication issues? • (Small) group events or activities planned using

	woodlands?
Rural old	• Any special needs / information & communication issues? • Woodland characteristics & management: Perceived change for better/worse over past decades?
Low income & unemployed	• Any special needs / information & communication issues? • What type of greenspace do you use most (park, football pitch, garden,…)? What is most affordable in your experience?
Intensive users & Nature watchers	• Conflicts between use, increasing/improving access and wildlife?

Ending Question (each in turn)

Q 9a: Considering all that has been discussed within this group, what is most important to you about the public forest estate?

Q9b: What aspects of other publicly owned or privately owned woods are most important to you?

Q 10: Have your opinions or expectations of [publicly owned] woods changed over time or as a result of taking part in this discussion?

We would like to thank you for participating and sharing your experiences and wish you all the best!

12 Appendix 5: Overview of statistical analysis of PFE Survey

Table 4.1. Gender differences amongst responses to the PFE survey (Forest Research 2009)

Response	Chi-square value	P	Comments
Q2c: Why woodland most frequently visited			
Close/easy to reach	4.505	.034	More women likely to agree
Good place to take children	30.037	<.0001	More women likely to agree
Safe place to visit	7.602	.006	More women likely to agree
Q3c: Why favourite woodland visited			
Feel welcome	5.835	.016	More women likely to agree
Good place to take children	4.159	.041	More women likely to agree
Safe place to visit	4.068	.044	More women likely to agree
No entrance charge	5.501	.019	More women likely to agree
Q7: What people value about public woodlands			
Access protected by law	7.872	.005	More men likely to agree
Free	4.547	.033	More men likely to agree
Welcoming	6.214	.013	More men likely to agree
Safe/secure	4.343	.037	More women likely to agree
Children's play	7.560	.006	More women likely to agree
Keeping traditions alive	3.971	.046	More men likely to agree
Q8: What people value about private woodlands			
Tourism	3.973	.046	More men likely to agree
Go Ape	5.289	.021	More men likely to agree
No developments	4.754	.029	More women likely to agree
Q9a: What people expect from PFE			
Cycle/ride horses	4.279	.039	More men likely to agree
Sand/gravel	5.186	.023	More men likely to agree
Timber	15.392	<.0001	More men likely to agree
Don't know	4.550	.033	More women likely to agree
Q9b: What people expect from private woodland			
Renewable fuel	15.130	<.0001	More men likely to agree
Restore industrial land	3.860	.049	More men likely to agree
Timber	13.584	<.0001	More men likely to agree
Getting people involved	4.244	.039	More women likely to agree

Table 4.2. Differences amongst responses to the PFE survey between those who described themselves as disabled and those who do not (Forest Research 2009)

Response	Chi-square value	p	Comments
Q2c: Why woodland most frequently visited			
Walk dog	6.873	.009	More disabled agree
Q3c: Why favourite woodland visited			
No significant differences			
Q4a: Claimed knowledge of ownership of most frequent wood			
No significant differences			
Q4b: Claimed knowledge of ownership of favourite wood			
Private – unspecified	20.710	<.0001	More disabled agree
Q6: Description of FC			
	14.851	.005	Those with disabilities were less likely to identify FC as govt agency than those without disability. They were also more likely to identify FC as charity or they did not know.
Q7: What people value about public woodlands			
Access protected	9.710	.002	Fewer disabled agree
Disabled access	16.758	<.0001	More disabled agree (although only 1.1% of disabled said it was what they valued most)
Child's play	6.648	.010	Fewer disabled agree
Place to walk	4.166	.041	Fewer disabled agree
Ride a bike	3.980	.046	Fewer disabled agree
Scenery	4.629	.031	More disabled agree
Q8: What people value about private woodlands			
Variety of trees	5.525	.019	More disabled agree
For everyone	4.168	.041	More disabled agree
Children's play	7.590	.006	Fewer disabled agree
Take dogs	9.578	.002	More disabled agree
Fresh air	11.109	.001	More disabled agree
Car parks	4.816	.028	Fewer disabled agree
Q9a: What people expect of PFE			
Places to walk	5.754	.016	Fewer disabled agree
Cycle or ride horses	6.597	.010	Fewer disabled agree
Encourage tourism	6.064	.014	Fewer disabled agree
Q9b: What people expect from private woodlands			
Improve landscape	5.656	.017	Fewer disabled agree
Cycle or ride horses	3.863	.049	Fewer disabled agree

Table 4.3. Differences amongst responses to the PFE survey between those who described themselves as belonging to a BME group and those who did not (Forest Research 2009)

Response	Chi-square value	p	Comments
Q2c: Why woodland most frequently visited			
No significant differences			
Q3c: Why favourite woodland visited			
Attractive scenery	8.372	.051	Less BMEs likely to agree
Q4a: Claimed knowledge of ownership of most frequent wood			
Local authority	7.005	.030	More BMEs likely to agree
Q4b: Claimed knowledge of ownership of favourite wood			
No significant differences			
Q6: Description of FC			
	32.528	<.0001	BMEs less likely to say "government dept" or "charity" than non-BMEs. BMEs more likely to say "private" or don't know.
Q7: What people value about public woodlands			
Tourism	10.786	.005	BMEs more likely to agree
Tackle climate change	14.721	.001	BMEs more likely to agree
Place to walk	6.603	.037	Whites more likely to agree
Place for wildlife	10.195	.006	Whites more likely to agree
None	18.186	<.0001	BMEs more likely to say none
Q8: What people value about private woodlands			
Tourism	14.304	.001	BMEs more likely to agree
Tackle climate change	6.761	.034	BMEs more likely to agree
Ride bike	6.918	.031	BMEs more likely to agree
Watch wildlife	6.320	.042	Whites more likely to agree
Big spaces	14.548	.001	BMEs more likely to agree
Car parks	6.609	.037	BMEs more likely to agree
Picnic sites	6.748	.034	BMEs more likely to agree
None	15.551	<.0001	BMEs more likely to agree
Q9a: What people expect PFE to deliver			
Wildlife places	34.598	<.0001	Whites more likely to agree
Protect landscape	8.533	.014	Whites more likely to agree
Enhance areas towns	12.937	.002	Whites more likely to agree
Places to walk	31.491	<.0001	Whites more likely to agree
Sand, gravel	17.413	<.0001	BMEs more likely to agree
Help people get involved	8.062	.018	Whites more likely to agree
Outdoor events	7.263	.026	BMEs more likely to agree

Response	Chi-square value	p	Comments
Q9b: What people expect private forest estate to deliver			
Climate change	8.045	.018	Whites more likely to agree
Wildlife places	46.769	<.0001	Whites more likely to agree
Restore industrial land	12.816	.002	Whites more likely to agree
Places to walk	15.825	<.0001	Whites more likely to agree
Sand, gravel	14.757	.001	BMEs more likely to agree

Table 4.4. Differences amongst responses to the PFE survey between different age groups (Forest Research 2009)

Response	Chi-square value	p	Comments
Q2c: Why woodland most frequently visited			
Rich in wildlife	28.973	<.0001	Over 45s more likely to agree
Good place to take children	43.455	<.0001	25-44 yr olds more likely to agree
Q3c: Why favourite woodland visited			
Feel welcome	15.954	.026	35-44 yr olds more likely to agree
Rich in wildlife	16.382	.022	Over 45s more likely to agree
Q4a: Claimed knowledge of ownership of most frequent wood			
Charity	21.489	.003	35-74 yr olds more likely to agree, especially 65-74 yr olds
Don't know	41.845	<.0001	Under 45s more likely to agree, especially under 25s
Q4b: Claimed knowledge of ownership of favourite wood			
No difference between age groups			
Q6: Description of FC			
	63.372	<.0001	More 55-64 yr olds are likely to say "government department", while under 25s are least likely to say this. Out of all the age groups, 16-17 yr olds are the most likely to say don't know.

Response	Chi-square value	p	Comments
Q7: What people value about public woodlands			
Access protected	22.052	.002	More 35-74 yr olds agree
Woodlands protected	14.363	.045	More 55-74 yr olds agree
Children's play	34.599	<.0001	More 25-44 yr olds agree
Place to walk	17.210	.016	More 45-64 yr olds and over 75s agree
Watch wildlife	15.032	.036	More 35-64 yr olds agree
Get away from people	18.300	.011	More 35-64 yr olds agree
Play areas	18.032	.012	More 35-54 yr olds agree
Visitor centre	18.584	.010	More 35-44, 55-64 yr olds agree
Places for wildlife	36.755	<.0001	More 35-74 yr olds agree
Sustainably managed	17.410	.015	More 45-74 yr olds agree
Don't know	31.425	<.0001	More under 35s and over 75s
Q8: What people value about private woodlands			
Access protected	26.295	<.0001	More 35-54 yr olds agree
Children's play	32.524	<.0001	More 25-44 yr olds agree
Place to walk	20.513	.005	More 35-64 and over 75s agree
Play areas	21.680	.003	More 35-54 yr olds agree
Places for wildlife	25.182	.001	More over 35s agree
Don't know	22.407	.002	More under 35s and over 75s agree
Q9a: What people expect of PFE			
Tackle climate change	26.195	<.0001	More 45-74 yr olds
Places for wildlife	33.377	<.0001	More 35-74 yr olds
Protect landscape	18.031	.012	More 35-64 yr olds and 16-17 yr olds
Enhance areas town	15.588	.029	More 35-74 yr olds
Restore industrial site	21.198	.003	More 55-64 yrs olds
Cycle or ride horses	23.032	.002	Under 35s, especially 16-17 yr olds
Get people involved	20.312	.005	More 16-17s, 25-34s, 45-74s
Places for learning	22.160	.002	More 25-74 yr olds
Outdoor events	34.645	<.0001	More under 35s
Demonstration	18.341	.011	More 35-64 yr olds
Don't know	34.695	<.0001	More under 25s and over 75s
Q9b: What people expect from private forest estate			
Places for wildlife	17.883	.013	More 45-74 yr olds
Improve landscape	16.762	.019	More 35-64 yr olds
Enhance areas town	28.408	<.0001	More 35-44s, 55-74s
Restore industrial site	19.160	.008	More 45-64 yr olds
Cycle or ride horses	28.324	<.0001	More under 25s, 45-54s
Learning	23.002	.002	More 25-74 yr olds
Demonstration	14.496	.043	More 25-64 yr olds
Don't know	18.935	.008	More under 25s and over 75s

Table 4.5. Differences amongst responses to the PFE survey between different income groups (Forest Research 2009)

Response	Chi-square value	p	Comments
Q2c: Why woodland most frequently visited			
To get away	26.318	<.000	More <20k agree
Safe place	9.592	.048	More <20k and >51k agree
Q3c: Why favourite woodland visited			
Scenery	13.646	.009	More 10-30k agree
Q2c/3c: Why like to visit favourite wood (when also most frequent wood only)			
Feel welcome	13.468	.009	More <10k agree
To get away	19.710	.001	More <20k agree
Safe place	10.438	.034	More <20k agree
Q2c/3c: Why like to visit favourite wood (including most frequent wood)			
To get away	19.144	.001	More 10-20k agree
Take children	9.482	.050	More 10-30k agree
Safe place	10.772	.029	More <20k and >51k agree
Q6: Description of FC			
	90.835	<.0001	Those earning less than 10k were less likely to identity FC as govt agency and were more likely to say "don't know". Those earning over 31k were more likely to say FC is charity than those earning less.
Q7: What people value about public woodlands			
Access protected	16.829	.002	More 10-20k and over 31k agree
Learning	11.160	.025	More 10-20k agree
Car parks	9.586	.048	More 10-50k agree, especially 10-20k
Don't know	22.637	<.0001	More under 20k
Q8: What people value about private woodlands			
Don't know	10.131	.038	More under 20k
Q9a: What people expect of PFE			
Protect landscape	11.453	.022	More 10-30k and 51+k agree
Enhance areas town	28.130	<.0001	More 10-20k and 31+k agree
Places for learning	12.275	.015	More 21k+ agree
Demonstration	15.353	.004	Less under 10k agree
Don't know	29.831	<.0001	More under 20k
Q9b: What people expect from private forest estate			
Enhance areas town	28.404	<.0001	More 31k+ agree
Restore industrial site	14.981	.005	More 51k+ agree
Learning	9.669	.046	More 31k+ agree
Don't know	16.191	.003	More under 20k

Table 4.6. Differences amongst responses to the PFE survey between different income groups (Forest Research 2009)

Response	Chi-square value	p	Comments
Q7: What people value about public woodlands			
Access protected	23.325	<.0001	More users agree
Free	12.181	.002	More users agree
Easy access	6.882	.032	More users agree
Improves local area	13.165	.001	More users agree
Learning/education	11.265	.004	More users agree
Children's play	21.896	<.0001	More users agree
Place to walk	16.851	<.0001	More users agree
Ride bike	6.150	.046	More users agree
Watch wildlife	13.345	.001	More users agree
Take dogs	10.479	.005	More users agree
Big spaces	11.555	.003	More users agree
Get away from people	22.996	<.0001	More users agree
Visitor centres	7.746	.021	More users agree
Sustainably managed	17.855	<.0001	More users agree
None	37.603	<.0001	More non-users
Don't know	50.201	<.0001	More non-users
Q8: What people value about private woodlands			
Children's play	6.023	.049	More users agree
Ride bike	8.568	.014	More users agree
Watch wildlife	8.853	.012	More users agree
Take dogs	7.553	.023	More users agree
Peace and quiet	19.759	<.0001	More users agree
Scenery	6.499	.039	More users agree
Get away from people	20.152	<.0001	More users agree
Rangers	6.122	.047	More users agree
Sustainably managed	15.261	<.0001	More users agree
Preserved	10.088	.006	More users agree
None	21.013	<.0001	More non-users
Don't know	12.151	.002	More non-users

Response	Chi-square value	p	Comments
Q9a: What people expect of PFE			
Tackle climate change	8.468	.014	More users agree
Places for wildlife	43.064	<.0001	More users agree
Protect landscape	24.716	<.0001	More users agree
Enhance towns	26.609	<.0001	More users agree
Place to walk	38.812	<.0001	More users agree
Cycle or ride horses	7.389	.025	More users agree
Help get people involved	17.420	<.0001	More users agree
Learning/education	16.695	<.0001	More users agree
Outdoor events	7.148	.028	More users agree
Demonstration	24.447	<.0001	More users agree
Don't know	100.765	<.0001	More non-users
Q9b: What people expect from private forest estate			
Tackle climate change	17.790	<.0001	More users agree
Places for wildlife	33.797	<.0001	More users agree
Protect landscape	16.941	<.0001	More users agree
Enhance towns	14.969	.001	More users agree
Place to walk	20.971	<.0001	More users agree
Help people get involved	8.627	.013	More users agree
Learning/education	6.072	.048	More users agree
Demonstration	5.976	.050	More users agree
Don't know	55.164	<.0001	More non-users

13 Appendix 6: Overview of PFE survey data

Table 13.1. Distribution of (total weighted) sample by key demographics

Variable	Divisions	Distribution of sample (weighted)
Gender	Male	49%
	Female	51%
Age	16-17	3%
	18-24	11%
	25-34	17%
	35-44	20%
	45-54	14%
	55-64	17%
	65-74	10%
	75+	9%
Ethnicity	White	90%
	Minority Ethnic	10%
Disability	Yes	15%
	No	85%
Population density	Urban	85%
	Rural	15%
Total income of household	<10K	16%
	10-20K	14%
	21-30K	12%
	31-50K	12%
	>50K	7%
	refused	39%
Geographical region	North East	5%
	North West	14%
	Yorks and Humber	10%
	East Midlands	8%
	Wt Midlands	10%
	South West	10%
	East of England	11%
	London	15%
	South East	17%
Total sample		1726

Collapsed categories	Total	Gender		Age								Disability		Ethnicity		Income					Population density	
		Males	Females	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Yes	No	White	Minority Ethnic	>10	10-20K	21-30K	31-50K	>50K	Rural	Urban
Never visit	43	40	45	37	55	42	30	37	39	51	66	62	39	39	74	62	41	32	29	19	43	42
Visit at least once a year	57	60	55	63	45	58	70	63	61	49	34	38	61	61	26	38	59	68	71	81	57	58

Table 13.2. Importance of knowledge of ownership of woodland when deciding to visit

Total		Gender		Age								Disability		Ethnicity		Income					Population density	
		Males	Females	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Yes	No	White	Minority Ethnic	>10	10-20K	21-30K	31-50K	>50K	Rural	Urban
Yes	11	12	11	6	10	6	10	13	14	17	13	13	11	12	7	15	17	14	7	10	11	15
No	85	84	85	92	88	89	84	84	83	78	83	81	85	85	85	81	81	85	89	88	85	84
Don't know	4	4	4	2	2	6	5	3	3	4	5	6	4	4	8	4	3	1	4	1	5	2

Table 13.3. Ownership of wood most frequently visited

Collapsed categories	Total	Gender		Age								Disability		Ethnicity		Income					Population density	
		Males	Females	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Yes	No	White	Minority Ethnic	>10	10-20K	21-30K	31-50K	>50K	Rural	Urban
Forestry Commission	16	19	13	5	7	18	18	17	18	14	16	13	16	16	5	14	15	24	22	17	14	25
Public other	23	26	20	8	23	25	22	24	24	20	34	29	23	23	39	24	24	19	21	26	26	11
Private	18	16	20	6	10	17	17	19	20	35	14	23	18	18	15	18	20	13	14	21	18	21
Other	2	2	2	.	1	.	3	2	3	4	1	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	1	7	2	3
Don't Know	41	38	45	81	59	42	43	39	35	28	34	34	42	42	40	44	40	43	43	32	42	41

Table 13.4. Ownership of favourite wood to visit

Collapsed categories	Total	Gender		Age								Disability		Ethnicity		Income					Population density	
		Males	Females	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Yes	No	White	Minority Ethnic	>10	10-20K	21-30K	31-50K	>50K	Rural	Urban
Forestry Commission	17	20	14	5	7	18	18	19	19	18	17	14	17	18	7	14	17	25	24	20	16	24
Public other	22	24	20	11	21	25	19	22	22	20	35	25	22	21	33	26	24	13	20	18	24	12
Private	17	17	18	6	10	17	17	19	16	31	13	24	16	17	15	15	19	14	15	20	17	19
Other	2	2	2	.	1	.	3	3	4	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	.	8	2	2
Don't Know	42	38	45	78	58	43	43	39	37	28	31	37	42	42	45	42	39	47	41	34	42	41

Table 13.5. Ownership of wood most frequently visited

	Total	Gender		Age								Disability		Ethnicity		Income					Population density	
		Males	Females	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Yes	No	White	Minority Ethnic	>10	10-20K	21-30K	31-50K	>50K	Rural	Urban
A government department or agency that manages publicly owned woodlands	50	56	45	39	37	50	50	55	60	50	44	41	52	50	47	38	55	57	59	34	50	50
An independent charitable organisation	15	13	16	11	16	14	15	16	14	18	11	17	14	16	4	13	15	16	17	19	14	15
A body representing private woodland owners	7	8	7	2	9	9	8	6	6	6	7	6	7	7	9	7	6	8	10	5	7	8
A private company	4	5	4	6	5	3	4	6	3	5	4	4	4	4	7	6	2	3	6	.	4	4
Don't know	24	19	29	42	34	23	24	17	18	21	35	32	23	23	32	36	22	16	9	12	24	23

Table 13.6. Knowledge of Forestry Commission

Collapsed categories	Total	Gender		Age								Disability		Ethnicity		Income					Population density	
		Males	Females	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Yes	No	White	Minority Ethnic	>10	10-20K	21-30K	31-50K	>50K	Rural	Urban
access	24	26	21	10	16	24	27	27	28	27	20	18	26	25	19	17	28	23	33	39	24	26
economy	7	7	8	5	9	7	8	6	7	7	7	8	7	7	10	8	7	11	4	9	7	9
local environment	11	12	10	8	8	10	10	10	15	13	8	9	11	11	11	9	11	11	11	11	10	13
society	4	4	5	2	3	4	3	6	7	5	3	4	4	5	2	4	7	2	6	5	4	4
wider environment	1	1	1	4	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	5	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
products	3	3	3	4	3	1	4	3	4	4	3	2	3	3	4	3	5	2	1	2	3	4
recreation	33	31	34	17	20	17	22	31	23	20	24	17	23	34	23	32	33	33	34	32	33	30
resources and facilities	22	21	22	20	20	24	28	24	18	15	18	17	23	21	25	18	21	24	24	19	22	18
wildlife	15	14	16	6	8	9	18	20	18	20	15	15	15	15	10	16	15	13	12	13	15	16
woodland management	12	13	11	7	9	9	10	14	18	14	9	10	12	12	11	9	17	16	10	15	11	18
none	9	9	10	7	13	10	7	8	10	10	10	8	10	2	3	2	2	2	5	2	23	22
don't know	22	20	24	43	30	27	19	17	19	19	25	25	22	22	29	30	24	19	19	10	23	22

Table 13.7. Value most about public woodlands

Collapsed categories	Total	Males	Females	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Yes	No	White	Minority Ethnic	>10	10-20K	21-30K	31-50K	>50K	Rural	Urban
	Total	**Gender**		**Age**								**Disability**		**Ethnicity**		**Income**					**Population density**	
access	10	11	9	3	7	8	14	13	9	13	6	6	11	10	7	6	8	11	9	11	9	14
economy	4	5	4	7	3	4	6	4	4	4	3	5	4	4	9	4	4	6	4	3	4	4
local environment	8	9	8	.	6	8	9	9	8	13	8	8	8	9	4	7	10	7	11	9	8	10
society	2	2	3	.	3	2	1	5	4	2	1	3	2	2	3	1	4	3	4	.	3	2
wider environment	2	1	2	.	1	2	2	2	2	.	.	1	2	1	4	1	2	3	1	2	2	1
products	2	2	2	4	1	1	2	3	2	4	3	2	2	2	4	2	3	.	.	1	2	2
recreation	26	24	28	14	28	20	31	29	26	20	27	25	26	26	23	28	25	24	27	26	26	26
resources and facilities	16	16	16	13	18	18	20	19	12	7	10	11	17	15	23	12	18	13	18	17	15	17
wildlife	14	12	15	7	8	8	16	16	18	14	15	14	14	14	10	15	13	15	11	14	13	16
woodland management	12	13	11	12	9	10	12	13	15	14	11	9	13	12	8	10	15	13	17	15	11	17
none	12	12	13	7	14	14	9	12	13	15	12	37	33	11	21	12	9	14	8	14	13	9
don't know	33	33	33	54	36	38	33	27	31	27	38	37	33	33	32	38	38	33	32	24	34	31

Table 13.8. Value most about private woodlands

Collapsed categories	Total	Males	Females	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Yes	No	White	Minority Ethnic	>10	10-20K	21-30K	31-50K	>50K	Rural	Urban
		Gender					Age					Disability		Ethnicity		Income					Population density	
wider environment	36	37	35	27	30	33	35	38	47	38	27	36	36	36	33	33	43	48	46	41	34	45
local environment	69	68	69	64	57	68	72	73	77	69	55	65	69	71	51	63	75	76	79	84	68	74
recreation	53	54	52	59	47	54	53	56	56	55	45	48	54	55	35	51	57	50	63	56	52	61
economic	27	30	24	19	28	25	30	27	28	27	20	22	28	26	32	22	29	30	32	29	26	29
society	48	47	49	47	40	56	46	49	54	46	36	46	48	49	42	41	54	57	59	51	46	55
Other	78	79	77	78	65	80	78	81	85	81	65	75	78	80	60	75	84	83	90	89	77	84
Don't know	15	13	17	22	22	15	16	10	9	13	26	18	15	14	29	18	11	9	5	5	16	9

Table 13.9. Benefits of the Public Forest Estate

Collapsed categories	Total	Males	Females	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Yes	No	White	Minority Ethnic	>10	10-20K	21-30K	31-50K	>50K	Rural	Urban
wider environment	35	35	34	26	37	32	34	41	39	34	23	34	35	35	31	32	41	43	37	44	32	48
local environment	63	63	64	54	57	64	63	64	71	62	55	59	64	65	44	6	68	69	69	80	61	75
recreation	48	47	48	50	43	46	51	52	48	44	46	46	48	49	34	46	53	50	51	46	46	56
economic	24	26	22	32	24	25	25	24	24	24	17	20	25	24	25	21	26	24	24	25	23	27
society	40	38	43	37	38	41	42	46	43	39	26	39	40	41	38	38	41	43	50	48	39	47
Other	71	71	71	67	66	72	73	74	77	69	62	67	72	73	59	68	76	76	75	86	69	81
Don't know	21	19	22	26	24	21	20	16	16	24	30	25	20	20	32	24	18	15	16	7	23	12

Table 13.10. Benefits of private woodlands

Please reference this report as:

Carter C., Lawrence A., Lovell R. and O'Brien L. (2009)
The Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate in England:
social use, value and expectations. Final Report
Farnham: Forest Research

Two other reports are available about this research:

Lawrence A., Carter C., O'Brien L. and Lovell R. (2009)
Social benefits from the Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate in England:
review of current evidence
Farnham: Forest Research

Lawrence A. and Carter C. (2009)
The Forestry Commission Public Forest Estate in England:
social use, value and expectations – Summary Report

Farnham: Forest Research

All three reports will be available from the FR webpages for social research
http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/peopleandtrees
following release of the full PFE study