

ENGLAND FORESTRY STRATEGY



# A New Focus for England's Woodlands

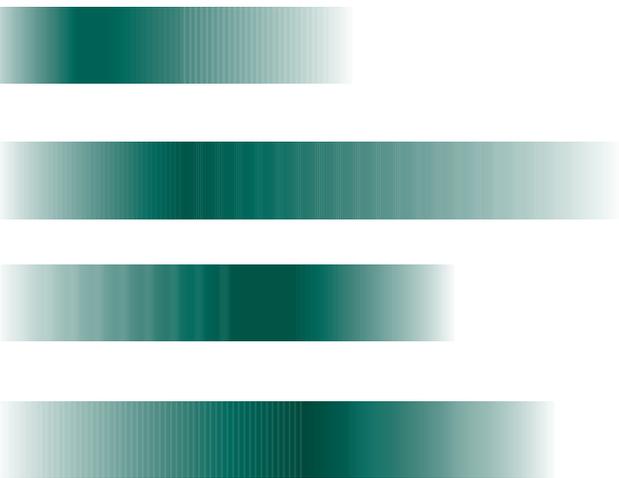
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMMES



ENGLAND FORESTRY STRATEGY

# A New Focus for England's Woodlands

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMMES



**This Strategy has been prepared by:**

Forestry Commission

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Government Office for Eastern Region

Countryside Commission

English Heritage

English Nature

English Partnerships

Environment Agency

Local Government Association

Rural Development Commission

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# Preface



The first millennium closed with the Domesday record of 15% woodland cover across England. As we approach the second millennium, with just 7% woodland cover, the Government is committed to achieving a re-expansion of England's woodlands.

A new agenda has been prepared for England's woodlands. *A New Focus for England's Woodlands* sets out the Government's strategic priorities and programmes for forestry. It shows how we will care for our existing heritage of trees, woods and forests and how we will encourage the creation of new woodlands where they are needed.

This Strategy is concerned as much with an increase in the quality of our woodlands as it is with an increase in quantity. It firmly closes the door on single-purpose plantations.

Our vision is of a great variety of well-managed woodlands. These will include woodlands for timber production to strengthen local economies; woodlands for economic regeneration to re-clothe industrial dereliction; woodlands for access and recreation; and woodlands for biodiversity to enhance our environment. Linking all of these together are benefits for society – in social, environmental and economic terms. This integrated approach is at the heart of our approach to forestry in England.

The Strategy will be achieved through better targeting of the Government's resources, to focus on areas of greatest opportunity and need. We want to work through partnerships at national, regional and local levels, creating a framework for positive action.

Implementing our Strategy will require new approaches to education, communication and information. Engaging people, actively involving local communities and creating public support are vital if the aspirations of the Strategy are to be realised.

The task ahead is large and demanding and it will require strong co-ordination. In Government we are ready to play our part. We have set out the framework for the Government's continued support for forestry in England. We want this Strategy to be the starting point for giving England's woodlands a new focus.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. A. Morley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elliot Morley MP  
Forestry Minister for England

# Introduction

The England Forestry Strategy describes how the Government will deliver its forestry policies in England and sets out the Government's priorities and programmes for forestry for the next five to ten years. The Strategy will help focus discussion on how Government can work together with partners in other organisations to ensure that England's woods continue to provide a rich source of benefits for England's people. It proposes a series of actions to help achieve our priorities and to implement our key programmes. The Strategy is not prescriptive, it sets out the framework for the Government's continued support for forestry in England and will guide the targeting of our resources in future. The Strategy cannot be delivered by Government working on its own. Many others will have a role to play and we are establishing an English Forestry Forum to advise us on the implementation of our key programmes.



Woodlands and forests can provide timber, enhance the beauty of the countryside, revitalise derelict and degraded landscapes, reduce pollution, improve health, and enhance wildlife habitats. Woodlands can also generate employment, provide opportunities for sporting and recreational activities, and improve the quality of life in and around towns and cities by screening development and improving the setting for housing and industry. Few other land uses can boast such a diverse range of benefits.



# The Policy Framework for Forestry in England



The United Kingdom's forestry policy is informed by our international commitments. These stem from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the forestry guidelines agreed in Helsinki in 1993, which together established the framework for Sustainable Forestry in the UK.[1] More recently, the social and cultural importance of forestry has gained global recognition through the Lisbon declaration which the Government and other European countries signed in July 1998.[2]

## Our forestry policy has two main aims:

- the sustainable management of our existing woods and forests;
- and**
- a continued steady expansion of our woodland area to provide more benefits for society and our environment.

These aims recognise the long-term nature of forestry and the wide-ranging benefits that woodlands can provide.

The Government's approach to sustainable forestry is underpinned by the UK Forestry Standard[3] which was published in January 1998. The Standard provides the benchmark for judging the performance of the UK forestry sector. It defines criteria and indicators that will enable progress in delivering sustainable forest management to be assessed. At the heart of the Standard is a series of Practice Notes. These help to identify acceptable options for forest and woodland management and the siting of new woodland.

Independently verified quality forest management through credible forest certification and timber labelling can help encourage sustainable forestry by involving consumers. The Government supports the work being done by the UK forestry and environmental communities to develop a certification scheme for UK forests. The scheme, which will be voluntary, will enable forest owners to respond to the increasing demand for timber from independently certified sources.

Sustainable forestry is itself one component of our wider commitment to sustainable development. The previous Government's Sustainable Development Strategy is currently being revised, both to reflect an integrated approach to sustainable development, which involves finding ways to combine social, economic and environmental objectives, and also to reflect progress made since 1994. A wide-ranging consultation[4] on revision of the Strategy has recently taken place. This has been supported by a more detailed consultation paper on Sustainable Forestry.[5]

The Government's vision of sustainable development is based on four broad objectives which are set out in our Opportunities for Change consultation paper and which are relevant to the aims of our Forestry Strategy:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources;
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Woodlands and forests can play a central part by contributing to the achievement of our sustainable development objectives.

In addition to forestry policy, forestry and woodland activity is influenced by a range of other policy measures. As a land use, forestry is influenced by agricultural policy and therefore proposals by the European Commission[6] to reform the Common Agricultural Policy as part of their Agenda 2000 package are especially significant. The proposals are a continuation of reforms to move support for agriculture away from support for commodity production towards more direct methods of payment to farmers, especially for public benefits such as environmental protection and enhancement. The Agenda 2000 package includes proposals to introduce a new Rural Development Regulation. This will subsume the existing regulation on the afforestation of agricultural land and other forestry measures and will seek to achieve better integration of environmental, forestry and rural support measures. The Agenda 2000 package also includes proposals for reform of the Structural Funds which include a clearer commitment to promote sustainable development and environmental protection. Although the proposals are at an early stage of negotiation, the Government will seek to ensure that opportunities for forestry and woodlands are recognised within its wider priorities for European policy reform.

The Government's policy of devolution also offers new opportunities for forestry. Through the UK Forestry Standard and the other mechanisms we have in place, we are able to ensure that all parts of the UK contribute consistently to delivering our international commitments to sustainable forestry. Within this framework there is now new scope for developing approaches to meet the specific needs of each country. The England Strategy sets out priorities and programmes tailored to English circumstances, meeting the needs of people in England and realising the special potential of England's woods and forests.



# Benefits and Values of Woodlands and Forests

There are opportunities throughout England for creating many different types of woodlands, serving many purposes. Types of woodland will vary from place to place, depending on the range of benefits they are intended to provide. These benefits will reflect England's environmental, economic, social and cultural priorities.

The Government wishes to maximise the overall benefits from our national woodland resource, taking into account benefits provided by other land uses. Individual woodlands should be designed and managed to provide those benefits most suitable to their location, scale and local needs. Generating an economic return will be an important consideration to encourage long-term management, but it will usually sit alongside other objectives.

Our concern is with trees and woods both in rural areas, and also in our towns and cities, where amenity, environmental improvement and quality of life benefits of trees are so important.

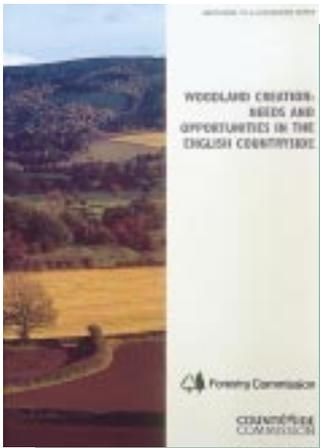
Trees, woods and forests are among our most valuable natural assets although many of their attributes are difficult to price in cash terms. The value may sometimes be obvious, for example the price we pay for wood for our homes or the price of paper. But it is hard to put a price on the trees we see from our windows or the woods which support plants and animals and which add to the richness of our environment. What is certain is that, without trees, England would be a poorer place. The Government is committed to ensuring that these values are safeguarded, making trees and woods one of the major investments in our future. We want to ensure that everyone can continue to appreciate and benefit from the contribution that woods and forests make to our everyday lives.

The Forestry Strategy deals with woodlands of all sizes and sets out a broad vision of England's tree cover. The Government wants to ensure that its policies promote not only substantial woodlands but also rejuvenated hedgerows, parklands, orchards, copses, shelter belts and urban trees.



# Woodlands in England – Consultation

In 1996 the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Commission published a discussion paper[7] inviting comments on woodland expansion in England. They received a large number of responses, with a wide range of comments and suggestions. When the report of the consultation[8] was published in 1997 the Government said that the results would contribute to our thinking on the best way forward. Although the discussion paper was primarily concerned with creating new woods, its conclusions also embrace existing woodlands.



The consultation showed that there is widespread support for a significant increase in woodland cover across England. There was also support for an increase in tree cover generally, including hedgerows, parkland and orchards. There were calls for the active promotion of woodlands on the urban fringe and in

towns and cities, and for forestry to be a preferred after-use of mineral workings. Many respondents wanted to reverse the fragmentation of ancient woodland. Many also wanted to ensure that long-term reform of the Common Agricultural Policy would facilitate woodland expansion on agricultural land.

A key aim of this Strategy is to set clear priorities for woodland creation in England.

Respondents favoured matching the type of woodland to the objectives and benefits that were sought. Through this Strategy the Government wants to encourage quality in planning and implementation, whether for producing timber, providing recreation, enhancing landscapes or meeting biodiversity objectives.

A number of respondents emphasised the real benefits of bringing a wide range of interests together to develop new partnerships. The Government believes that an integrated approach to land use is required, working in partnership at all levels.

Some respondents thought that ignorance about woodlands and forestry needed to be overcome. They saw the need to win public support and raise, at all levels, an awareness of the benefits that woodlands and forestry can provide.

There was strong support for the Forestry Commission to become involved in a rolling programme of woodland creation, through partnerships and land acquisitions. A strong public-sector national forest estate was seen as crucial for ensuring stability in what is a long-term investment market. It can also deliver the full range of public benefits. The Government intends that the Forestry Commission should play a leading role in implementing the Forestry Strategy. The Government also expects other Departments and Agencies to play their part in turning vision into reality.

Many respondents commented that forestry should be much more closely linked to the planning system than hitherto. Woodlands can provide a context and setting for new built urban development and help to shape land-use planning in urban areas, in the urban fringe and the wider countryside. A number of respondents suggested that a clearer link needs to be established between new development and woodland planting in national and regional planning and in local development plans. The Government intends to promote its strategic priorities for forestry through regional and national planning guidance.

A much-repeated theme was the need to encourage new markets. Many responses reflected the view that the creation of new markets for woodland products is essential for achieving effective woodland management. There was a call for the Forestry Commission to be actively involved in the



development of markets for wood products, especially English hardwoods. There was also support for such development to be part of a long-term strategic marketing plan with accompanying marketing campaigns at national and regional levels. There was a call for support of a marketing infrastructure and advisory networks to develop a much stronger dialogue between producers and users at all levels. The continued development of markets for woodland products will be a priority for the forestry industry. The Government will provide support to marketing initiatives to ensure that England's woodlands are well managed in the long term.

The results of this earlier consultation have been important in the development of the Forestry Strategy. Four guiding principles of quality, integration, partnership and public support were a feature of many of the responses to the consultation.

**Quality.** The Government wants to maximise the quality of all benefits provided by woodlands. High-quality management will mean that we have woods which both produce high-quality timber, an essential prerequisite for improving markets for woodland produce, and are attractive to look at and visit. We want to provide high-quality public access and recreation provision in towns and the countryside, and meet national and regional biodiversity objectives. Equally, maintaining and enhancing regional and local countryside character and distinctiveness are important.

**Integration.** Increasing woodland cover and the extent of management of existing woodlands can only be achieved by an integrated approach to land-use decisions. The Government wants to see woodland expansion and management adopted as aims by a much wider constituency than we have achieved to date.

**Partnership.** An integrated approach and the achievement of the Government's vision can only succeed through close working partnerships at all levels. The vision

must be all-inclusive. We want our Forestry Strategy to reinforce and build on links within Government and between Government, landowners, the public, private and voluntary sectors. These will help to ensure that the links between policy, approach and action are effective.

**Public support.** Above all, the Government wants this Forestry Strategy to be a vehicle for gaining public confidence and support for the benefits of well-managed woods and forests. A key principle of our approach is to increase awareness of the relevance of woodlands to all parts of society. We need to encourage a climate of positive thinking at all levels. To achieve this end, the Government will want to work with others to promote the value of woodland at the national, regional and local levels.



# Strategic Priorities and Programmes

Our Strategy is based on four key programmes. These reflect our wider policy objectives and build on the earlier consultation exercise. The integrated approach that we are promoting means that many of the proposed actions can contribute to more than one programme. The four programmes are not intended to be mutually exclusive.

**Forestry for Rural Development** covers forestry's role in the wider countryside, including its contribution to the rural economy and timber and marketing opportunities. There will be a focus both on the role of new woodlands and on how existing woodlands can be managed to deliver more benefits to local economies, by creating jobs both upstream and downstream of the forest industry.

**Forestry for Economic Regeneration** outlines opportunities for woodlands to play a positive role in strategic land-use planning. These include restoring former industrial land and creating a green setting for future urban and urban fringe development.

**Forestry for Recreation, Access and Tourism** describes what can be done to promote more and better-quality public access to woodlands. The programme also includes opportunities for ensuring that woods and forests continue to be used for a wide range of recreational pursuits as well as complementing and supporting the tourist industry.

**Forestry for the Environment and Conservation** embraces the role that woodlands can play in conserving and enhancing the character of our environment and our cultural heritage, and in delivering the Government's nature conservation, biodiversity and climate change objectives. It also considers the impact that woodland creation and management may have on other environmental resources and other land uses.



The actions set out under each of the four programmes cover the short to medium term. In time they will need to be revised. The Government will take advice from the Forestry Forum on the delivery of these programmes and on changes that might be required.

The National Forest in the English Midlands is an exemplar of the social benefits that lowland multi-purpose forestry brings. Stretching over 200 square miles of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire, the National Forest encompasses a mix of good and poorer agricultural land; working and derelict mineral land; remnants of two ancient forests; transport corridors; and busy towns and settlements.

Over the next two decades the area will be transformed into a mosaic of land uses framed within a working forest, with one-third of the area planted with trees. The objectives are to improve the landscape and environment and, in the process, to regenerate the coalfield and stimulate economic enterprise and employment opportunities; to create a major new recreation and tourism resource; to produce new supplies of timber for industry; and to encourage the diversification of farmland and rural businesses. A widely agreed Strategy supported by new incentives, including the first Tender Scheme for forestry, is stimulating planting, with associated public benefits including public access, by a range of participants, including a growing number of private landowners. Partnership and participation are the heart of the approach being promoted by the DETR's sponsored National Forest Company.



# forestry for rural



## development

# Forestry for Rural Development



The Government's programme of Forestry for Rural Development is concerned with forestry's role in the wider countryside including its contribution to the rural economy and timber and marketing opportunities. There

## Background

Rural economies should be able to exploit their particular resource and geographical characteristics sustainably and so contribute to national economic growth. In rural areas a thriving economy can help combat social exclusion and poverty and support conservation aims. One-fifth of England's population lives in the countryside and this proportion is forecast to continue to rise. Rural areas, however, face particular challenges through, for example, changing agricultural policies. Forestry is already a significant employer in the rural economy. The last employment survey carried out by the Forestry Commission[9] showed that over 19,000 people worked in the forestry and wood-processing sector in England.

Many of England's woodlands already produce a valuable timber supply that helps to reduce our dependence on imported wood and wood products. Forestry can be a truly sustainable activity, producing a renewable raw material which we use in our daily lives.

The forestry industry is part of our everyday life. Newspapers, books and magazines, packaging and cardboard, furniture, flooring, doors, panels are all familiar items in the home. Timber is also used for many other reasons including housebuilding, fuel, fencing and gates. Every person in England uses the equivalent of one tonne of wood each year.

Privately owned woodlands play a central role in providing this timber for English people. Over half of England's woodlands are privately owned – by individuals, family and charitable trusts, voluntary organisations or by companies. Typically woodlands owned by private and family interests form part of mixed estates or are on farms. These woodlands produce over 2 million tonnes of timber each year and this will rise by nearly 50% over the next 20 years. Over 19,000 people work in forestry in England and nearly 40% of them work on private estates. A further 50% work for privately owned forestry companies and in the wood-processing industries.

will be a focus both on the role of new woodlands and on how existing woodlands can be managed to deliver more benefits to local economies. We want to work in partnership with woodland owners, managers and other landowners to deliver our objectives.

Working Woodlands is a project in the West Country which aims to develop jobs and create wealth from the neglected resources in our small, semi-natural woodlands. Historically these resources were managed on a sustainable basis. However, the traditional markets for products from these sources have been progressively eroded by imported supplies or product substitution. In turn this has led to the almost total collapse of the original wood-producing industries. As a result this potential rural resource has been left essentially moribund. Some 75 landowners are being encouraged to bring more than 500 hectares of their woodland back under sustainable management. Simultaneously, a similar number of small rural and farm-based enterprises are being granted access to these woodlands to harvest timber into a variety of products that match local, regional and national market demands.

## Opportunities

England already has a well-developed timber-processing industry with around £1 billion of new investment over the past decade. Even taking account of production elsewhere in Great Britain, we can never be self-sufficient in timber, but we can make sure that opportunities for using our own timber are maximised. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the use of timber for specialist needs and for small-scale, local use. This approach offers a special opportunity to use a renewable resource entirely in accordance with our wider approach to sustainable development. New markets need to be developed for woodland products if the long-term management of woodlands is to be assured. This is a key role where, through the Forestry Commission, we will be working closely with industry and landowners in the development of ideas.

The Sotterley Estate in Suffolk has a long-established woodland management operation producing quality felled oak from trees planted 150 years ago. The owners have managed the estate since the 1740s and aim to produce a steady quantity of felled oak each year. Quality oak for future generations is also grown, marking up 40-year-old trees for felling in 100 years' time and growing others from acorns collected on the estate and elsewhere. Each year about 150 trees are felled and 25,000 planted, including species that will provide the understorey essential to produce clean mature oak trees.

Forests and woodlands do not only generate jobs in timber-related industries, they also support jobs in recreation, conservation and other environmental activities. Business sectors such as tourism benefit from the landscapes created. As one of the most rapidly growing economic sectors and an industry capable of earning significant amounts of foreign exchange, tourism is vital to the rural economy. Woodlands provide an attractive setting to encourage tourism. There is a lack of information, and practical knowledge, on how woodlands contribute to the economic activities of other sectors such as tourism. We will address this.

Much of the recent planting in England has been relatively small scale. A priority for us will be to encourage the creation of a higher proportion of well-designed, larger woodlands. Larger woodlands are usually capable of delivering more public benefits, more effectively, than smaller woods can. The planting of larger woodlands will be supported where they can be properly accommodated in the countryside and where they are in sympathy with our other aims of strengthening countryside character and nature conservation values. They will be encouraged particularly where they can help to support local wood-processing and marketing infrastructures. Planting smaller woods will continue to be supported where they are a more effective way of maximising overall public benefits. This will be particularly relevant in urban areas where small woodlands can make a significant contribution to local biodiversity, amenity, environmental health and sustainable development.

It is recognised that any large-scale movement from agricultural land to woodland would be dependent on fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), lowering land values and making forestry more competitive. Even with recent developments such as the European Commission's Agenda 2000

proposals, the scale and location of change to woodland remains uncertain, as does the timescale. It is the Government's policy to support CAP reform that phases out production-linked support. If this is achieved it should facilitate woodland planting on agricultural land as an alternative land use. It is likely that such larger-scale planting would have to be driven more by commercial considerations than in current plantings, where timber production is often a low priority.



In developing our vision of the role of the countryside we expect our Strategy to influence the agendas and activities of local planning authorities. We shall ask Government Offices for the Regions and the new Regional Development Agencies to give due weight to the role that trees, woods and forests can play. Local authorities are already required to consider the wider needs of the countryside in the preparation of their development plans. We believe that there are opportunities to promote woodlands through the planning system and we wish to see increased emphasis on this over time. As we revise our national and regional planning guidance we will consider ways of giving increased emphasis to woodlands. DETR and the Forestry Commission will work together to examine ways of providing local planning authorities with appropriate guidance on planning for woodlands in the countryside. We will review the Guidance in Circular 36/78, *Trees and Forestry*[10] which is now largely out of date, and consider how the role of woodlands might be highlighted through planning guidance. When preparing their development plans local authorities might meanwhile consider identifying those areas which would be most suitable for woodland creation, especially where plan policies include regeneration of derelict and despoiled land, landscape improvement, recreational opportunities, or provision of wildlife habitats.

Our policies include a commitment to increasing the use of renewable sources of energy. Wood fuel from forests and short-rotation coppice offers the potential to help achieve this. We will continue to support further research and development, and develop opportunities for promoting short-rotation coppice as an alternative to agricultural production where it is environmentally acceptable.

## ACTIONS

### WE WILL:

#### INFLUENCE POLICIES FOR AGRICULTURAL REFORM

- ensure that forestry will be considered in the development of rural programmes under the Agenda 2000 proposals for a new Rural Development Regulation;
- support research into the implications of CAP reform for the transfer of land from farming to forestry.

#### SUPPORT STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOODLAND RESOURCES

- publish a national woodland inventory to provide better information about England's woodland resources;
- encourage new investment in the wood-processing sector by publishing forecasts of wood production and through our policies for regional development and support for rural economies;
- ensure that the supply of timber from our woodland resource is available at the levels indicated in long-term forecasts;
- continue to provide support for regional and local marketing initiatives, including small-scale and craft uses;
- extend the range of business advice, training and local support offered to woodland businesses, particularly small producers.

#### DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF THE RURAL ECONOMY

- commission a study of the economic impacts of forestry in the rural economy.

#### ENCOURAGE DIVERSIFICATION

- support a targeted programme for short-rotation coppice planting and encourage the use of wood fuel for energy production using the most efficient technology.

# forestry for economic



## regeneration

# Forestry for Economic Regeneration



after-use for such land. The presence of damaged and disturbed land is also frequently linked to areas of social deprivation where unemployment runs at high levels, environments are poor and the quality

## Background

A major element in our approach to achieving sustainable development is improving the environment close to where people live. England is a densely populated country with a long history of industrial activity. Much has already been achieved to improve environments which have been damaged through past industrialisation, but a lot remains to be done. Recent research[11] has shown that there are some 175,000 hectares of former industrial land in England. This includes large areas of land currently being worked for minerals which will become available for new uses when mineral working is complete. The current transfer of reclaimed land to forestry is very low. Forestry can be a cost-effective

of life for local people is often perceived as very low. The Government has begun to tackle these challenges. At the heart of our approach is the need to give these communities a new chance.

Forestry has an important economic regeneration role to play on vacant operational and development land, as well as within existing greenspace. It is particularly important that forestry contributes to strategic planning through its inclusion in development plans.

The Government's programme of Forestry for Economic Regeneration provides the framework for woodlands to play a positive role in the restoration of former industrial land and as a green setting for future development.



## Opportunities

Local authorities have been active in the field of land reclamation, and have often planted extensive woodlands on former industrial sites, developing these as country parks and for public access. Further land management initiatives by local government may be limited by financial constraints and the inherent liabilities associated with reclaimed land can inhibit voluntary-sector involvement. We want to overcome these obstacles, ensuring that effective mechanisms and structures are in place. One approach, which is already showing considerable potential, is that adopted by the Forestry Commission's Land Regeneration Unit which we established in 1997.

The 1992 British Coal pit closure programme had a major impact in Nottinghamshire. Deep mining ceased at 9 of the 15 collieries with the loss of over 36,000 jobs. A unique partnership between the County Council and the Forestry Commission is now restoring 760 hectares of colliery spoil heaps to woodland. These new community woodlands will greatly enhance the areas and attract inward investment needed to replace the lost colliery employment. The areas, once restored, will be managed by Forest Enterprise for the full range of benefits available from well-designed woodlands. They will provide valuable wildlife habitats as well as opportunities for a wide range of recreational activities, whilst producing much-needed timber for local industry.

We want to ensure that forestry obtains a higher profile as an effective land-use after the restoration of former industrial land. The Forestry Commission and DETR will examine ways in which this can be achieved through the planning system and other guidance. Landscapes with trees and small woods can play an important part in enhancing the quality of life in and around our towns and cities. Much work has already been done but many opportunities remain. Where possible we will seek opportunities to encourage the planting of more trees and small woods, in association with other managed greenspace, thus providing a more attractive setting for future development. We will examine the scope for strengthening links with the planning system to increase the delivery of these improvements.



Urban forestry offers a particularly bold approach to urban greening. Trees and woods help make cities healthier and more attractive for the people who live and work there. The National Urban Forestry Unit was established by Government to promote and demonstrate best practice in urban forestry. It encourages planting of more woodland and the better care of existing urban trees. The Unit works in partnership with a wide range of organisations throughout the country, including local authorities, the private sector and non-government organisations. It has particular expertise in the greening of difficult and derelict land and in gathering details of best practice in urban forestry from around the world.

Woodlands by the Motorway is a project sponsored by the National Urban Forestry Unit, in partnership with the Countryside Commission, Highways Agency and Esso. It is supported by a wide range of public, private and voluntary-sector resources. It is based on an 11 urban mile stretch of the M5 and M6 motorways as they pass through the West Midlands. New woodland is established on a wide variety of discrete sites in public and private ownership – including derelict land, educational and recreational open space, and commercial and industrial land. Over 200 different sites have been identified, 65 hectares of woodland planted, and over 200 local people are actively involved in the project.

The Community Forests in England have successfully pioneered a new approach to managing the countryside around our towns. Working through a broadly based partnership of central and local government, the private sector and a range of community, environmental and voluntary interests, each Forest has prepared a long-term plan describing its aspirations. They have already achieved a common sense of purpose. Over the next thirty to forty years the twelve forest partnerships will work towards increasing the woodland cover in their areas to an average of 30%. They are also promoting a wide range of other countryside and land-use improvements. Between them the Forests will bring benefits for over half of England's population who live within 10 miles of the forests.

# ACTIONS

## WE WILL

### PROMOTE FORESTRY FOR LAND REGENERATION

- promote the role of forestry in the restoration of former industrial land by supporting research to develop cost-effective methods of establishing woodlands and establishing a national network of sites demonstrating best practice;
- promote a decision-making framework for the design, planning and site-preparation requirements of woodland establishment on former industrial land and use this as a basis for Government-funded work;
- consider the need for longer-term support and management of woodlands on former industrial land and explore new ways of securing their future;
- act directly through the Forestry Commission acquiring and managing land in regeneration partnerships.

### SUPPORT REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

- encourage the Regional Development Agencies to use forestry and woodland programmes in implementing their objectives;
- encourage the development of new urban forestry initiatives which can demonstrate achievement through partnership approaches.

### PROMOTE FORESTRY THROUGH LAND USE PLANNING

- review Circular 36/78 on Trees and Forestry and consider, as part of a rolling programme, how the role of woodlands might be highlighted through regional and national planning guidance;
- review the guidance in Minerals Planning Guidance Note 7 in due course and if necessary amend this to reflect revised forestry policy;
- work closely with mineral and waste planning authorities to ensure that Government forestry policies are fully reflected in development plans;
- work with the minerals and waste industries to encourage consideration of forestry as an after-use at an early stage of planning development;
- seek opportunities to consider how the setting of future built development might be enhanced by the incorporation of wooded and other green elements, and how to encourage such development through planning guidance.

### PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

- create new woodlands along transport corridors as part of a programme of environmental improvements.

forestry  
for recreation



access  
and  
tourism

# Forestry for Recreation, Access and Tourism



greater access to the open countryside. This will benefit a wide range of people including those who wish to get out into the open

## Background

Woodlands are a major resource for recreation, tourism and sport. Woodlands are robust and absorb people better than open countryside. Famous ancient woods like the New Forest and Forest of Dean are major holiday destinations whilst local woods are often visited daily by people living nearby. However, the pattern of distribution of England's woods bears little relation to where people live. For example, woods in the south-east of England and near towns are often over-used.

The Forest of Dean hosts over 1 million visits per annum. The famous Symonds Yat viewpoint and the Sculpture Trail at Beechenhurst are well-known tourist destinations, whilst local people use the forest's extensive network of paths. As well as walking, the forest is popular for a host of outdoor activities including cycling, birdwatching and orienteering. There are 300,000 camper nights per year on sites managed by Forest Enterprise and tourism generates an estimated £30 million each year for local businesses.

The Government's programme of Forestry for Recreation, Access and Tourism aims to provide more and better-quality access to woodlands. The programme includes opportunities for ensuring that woods and forests continue to be used for a wide range of recreational pursuits as well as complementing and supporting other leisure interests, notably the tourist trade.

## Opportunities

Earlier this year we published our consultation paper, *Access to the Open Countryside in England and Wales*.<sup>[12]</sup> In this we said that we want to secure

countryside near to where they live as well as others who wish to take part in longer walks. The priority for the Government is to give greater access to mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land. The consultation paper includes a proposal that the Forestry Commission should report by the year 2000 on the extent to which there is existing access to forest and woodlands. The Government will then consider whether to extend access to such countryside if access is shown to be insufficient.

Three hundred million visits are made to England's woods and forests every year. Woodlands provide a setting for a wide range of different recreational activities from walking and quiet enjoyment to more specialised activities, including orienteering and horse riding. Woodlands can also absorb large numbers of visitors. In recent years there has been a significant growth in the demand for recreational activities. This demand will continue in the future as people look for new ways of using their leisure time. The Community Forests programme is already creating new woodlands and access opportunities in and around towns and cities. Further development of opportunities for recreation close to people's homes and improvement of the quality and availability of access to the countryside are priorities for the Government and we intend that woods and forests should play a significant part in achieving this.

The Great North Forest is promoting walking in woods as an ideal way of boosting people's health and fitness. Working in partnership with local health trusts, a pack of short walks and rides has been produced containing details of the routes and information about the health benefits of exercise. The routes are short and easily accessible from nearby urban areas on foot, bicycle or by public transport.

Cycling is a popular activity which provides an opportunity to enjoy the countryside in a unique way. It is non-polluting, promotes good health and is widely affordable. About half the population has access to a bicycle, but less than 5% of leisure journeys are made by bicycle. Forests provide significant opportunities for off-road cycling. Cycle hire facilities provide positive encouragement for cycling in forests and family-oriented routes encourage group cycling. However, more innovative ideas are still needed. Existing and future facilities for cycling should build on our wider aims for sustainable development. Facilities should be provided close to where people live, with information easily available. Links with sustainable transport initiatives need to be encouraged, through public transport partnerships and joint promotion. Forest cycle facilities should be linked to other networks such as the National Cycle Network and rights of way. This will require partnerships between landowners, local authorities, recreation managers, local communities and cycling interest groups.



A key priority for the Government will be to ensure that information is widely available about woodlands that are already open to the public. We also want to provide new opportunities for access to existing woodlands, particularly in those parts of the country

where there is currently a shortage of such access. To match our wider aims for sustainable development we

want to ensure, wherever possible, that more opportunities for access to woodlands are provided near to people's homes. We want woodlands to be a part of the everyday lives of people who live and work in towns and cities. Creating more woodlands in and close to towns reduces the need to travel out to the countryside for access and recreation. There are also opportunities to create affordable and accessible woodland recreation within urban greenspace.

The Woodland Trust's Woods on Your Doorstep project involves local people creating new areas of woodland close to the heart of their communities. A network of woodlands from one to twenty acres is being established within easy walking distance of towns and villages, where there is a real local need for more public access to woodland. Local people are closely involved with the planning, design and management of the woodlands and the project has received financial support from the Millennium Commission.

Woodlands can also provide opportunities to help achieve better understanding of our environment and the importance of safeguarding it for the future. The Government attaches great importance to education and we intend to build on work already done to use our woodlands as outdoor classrooms. A number of organisations have a key role to play – for example, the Council for Environmental Education in its co-ordinating capacity, and initiatives such as the Forest Education Initiative, Learning Through Landscapes, Young Ornithologists Club and Wildlife WATCH.

The Forest Education Initiative (FEI) is a partnership between the forestry and timber-processing sectors, environmentalists and educationists. FEI aims to increase young people's understanding of the local and global importance of trees, woodlands, forest environments, the forestry industry, the timber trade and the wood products industries. FEI acts as a facilitator and works with teachers and others to produce resources which help to deliver the requirements of the National Curriculum for schools. FEI also has a national network of local groups which provide other resources, and enables visits to be made by school children to local sites.

# ACTIONS

## WE WILL

### INCREASE ACCESS TO WOODLANDS

- draw on the Forestry Commission's report on woodland access in England in implementing the Strategy;
- target grants to increase the opportunities available to visit woodlands, particularly in areas where there are shortages of access;
- promote a network of forest tracks suitable for cycling as part of the National Cycle Network and our Integrated Transport Strategy.

### IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION ABOUT ACCESS

- in partnership with woodland owners and others, explore ways of making up-to-date information available on woodlands to visit and improve the quality of information, building on the Forestry Commission's Walkers Welcome package.

### ENHANCE THE NATION'S FOREST ESTATE

- give priority to acquiring freeholds of leasehold land in areas close to centres of population, particularly in the Community Forests and the National Forest, when there is a shortage of existing woodland access;
- develop the Forestry Commission's Woodland Park network close to towns and cities;
- work in partnership with sports' governing bodies to accommodate noisy or intrusive recreation in suitable woodlands and relieve pressure on sensitive sites;
- improve recreational and other facilities through private-sector partnerships.

### PROMOTE BETTER UNDERSTANDING

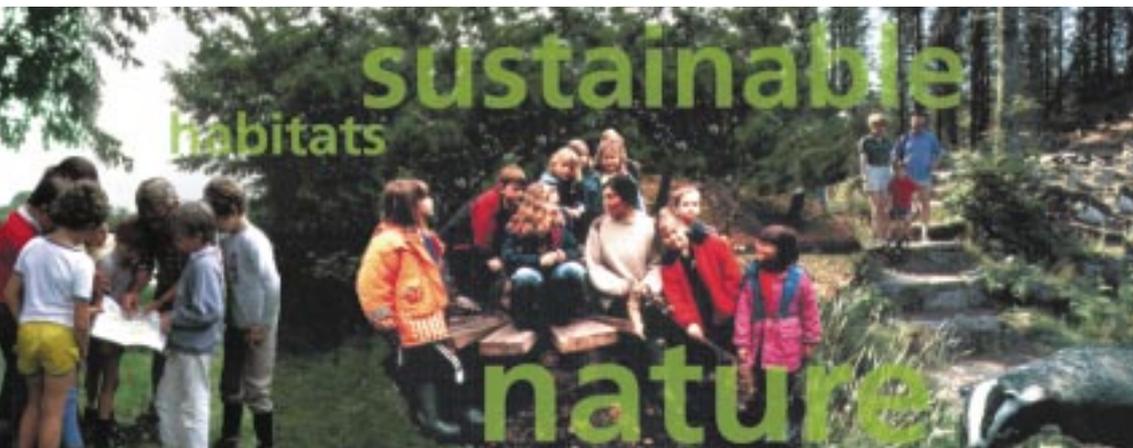
- support research into the economic contribution that woodlands and forests make to tourism and the potential for forest-based tourism initiatives to benefit local communities;
- engage with the public to promote the benefits of trees, woods and forests;
- support the Forest Education Initiative by developing the national network of local groups to encourage children and young people to better understand the importance of woods and forests.

forestry  
for the environment



and  
conservation

# Forestry for the Environment and Conservation



ensure that non-woodland habitats and species are also conserved in open space inside woods and forests and that sites of existing high habitat value are not damaged through planting to woodland. The Forestry Strategy

## Background

Trees and woodlands play a critical role in our environment. They absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, filter pollution and noise, provide summer shade and winter shelter, provide habitats for a variety of wildlife, create distinctive landscapes and provide wood – a renewable and sustainable resource for so many of our everyday needs.

The Government's priorities for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity are set out in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.[13] At the heart of the Plan is a range of Habitat and Species Action Plans which will guide nature conservation efforts over the next five to ten years. They will promote action to safeguard the quality of woodlands, their structure and characteristic plants and animals. We are preparing and implementing Woodland Habitat Action Plans, for example a plan for upland oakwoods.



Woodland habitats support a wide range of rare or endangered species, such as the red squirrel, and woodland management has a vital role to play in ensuring that these species and habitats continue to survive in our countryside. At the same time we will

will play an important role in helping to implement the Woodland Habitat Action Plans in England.

Throughout England a wide range of sites has been identified as of national and local importance for nature conservation, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and local nature reserves. English Nature's Natural Areas programme provides guidance on what is important in terms of the existing nature conservation value and how present and future woods and forests can fit in with it.

Woodlands perform an important role in respect of a range of more general environmental processes. They influence the water cycle. Alongside watercourses they act as a buffer, helping to intercept pollutants from adjacent land. They can increase river-bank stability and reduce erosion. They can remove airborne pollutants and can reduce the drift of pesticides and herbicides. They also help to form and protect soil resources.

The Government's programme of Forestry for the Environment and Conservation covers the role that woodlands can play in sustaining our environment, by enhancing the character of our countryside, and our cultural heritage, and in delivering the Government's nature conservation, biodiversity and climate change objectives. It also takes account of the impact of woodland management and creation on other environmental resources and other land uses.

## Opportunities

In many parts of England, trees, woods and forests help to define the character of our towns and countryside. They contribute to creating a sense of local identity and distinctiveness. The creation of new woods and the management of existing woods have to take account of the existing character of towns and the countryside, even where we may wish to improve and enhance it through change. Careful consideration of the design, siting and scale of planting can help to ensure that overall benefits are maximised. Even so, some landscapes may not benefit from the addition of new woodlands, however well designed, and in these circumstances new planting will not be supported.

Over 20% of our woodlands are of ancient and semi-natural origin. Many of these are fragments of historically more extensive woodlands. One of the consequences of this fragmentation is that their continued ecological viability is threatened. One way of overcoming this is to restore ancient semi-natural woodlands on the nation's forest estate. A priority will be to work towards reversing this fragmentation by encouraging the creation of new native woodlands located to create more viable woodland units. Using locally native trees and shrubs helps to conserve the ecological value of native woodlands. Following a consultation in 1997, the Forestry Commission will be introducing new guidance to help identify appropriate sources of planting material.

We will also continue to support the management of existing ancient semi-natural woodlands using the approaches described in our Forestry Standard. The Forestry Commission and English Nature will work together to establish the extent of ancient semi-natural woodland that is not being managed, seeking to help woodland owners bring it back into management where this would be beneficial. Through research we will seek a better understanding of the effects of neglect on the long-term development of our ancient woodlands. A key priority for us will be to reinstate management of these woodlands and we will be developing proposals and targets for the years ahead, linked to the Woodland Habitat Action Plans. In addition, we will seek to bring together the work of both statutory and non-statutory bodies to provide effective national monitoring schemes for woodland habitats and species.

The Forestry Commission introduced a new native woodland creation Challenge Fund for National Parks in 1997. The Challenge Fund will operate for three years and was developed in collaboration with the National Parks and English Nature. The first round of bids was assessed by a judging panel set up with representatives from the Forestry Commission, the Association of National Parks Authorities and English Nature. Forty bids were received, of which 19 were accepted by the judging panel with a total value of grants worth £1 million. These bids will result in the creation of 460 hectares of new woodlands in the English National Parks with areas ranging from 1 to 70 hectares and an average area of 24 hectares.

Forestry is unique as a land use in its long-term horizons. The consequences of management decisions taken today will often be seen for decades so the Government wants to encourage planning that will secure attractive forests and sustainable benefits for future generations. The Forestry Commission is working with landowners to pilot the system of long-term forest planning that will be introduced through an extension to the Woodland Grant Scheme. This will involve drawing up and agreeing plans to cover phased harvesting and replanting of large woodland areas, or whole estates, over a 20-year period. Proposals in the plans will have to conform with the UK Forestry Standard.

The felling regulations already provide a robust basis for ensuring that woodland is not converted to other land uses. The Forestry Commission will continue to



prosecute in all cases where there is clear evidence of illegal felling and will operate the existing legal arrangements which require replanting where convictions for illegal felling are obtained. We will continue to exercise a general presumption against the conversion of woodland to other land uses unless there are overriding public benefits, for example to

restore important semi-natural habitats. In these situations we will seek to ensure that equivalent areas of new woodland are planted in compensation.

Some of England's forests were planted on habitats like lowland heath before their special value was recognised. A major restoration project in Dorset, launched in 1991, has already restored 150 hectares of heathland, linking Sites of Special Scientific Interest fragmented by forest planting and increasing populations of key endangered species, including the Sand Lizard, the Dartford Warbler and the Nightjar. The second phase of the project, now under way, targets the Dorset Heath, *Erica ciliaris*. Both projects have been supported by the European Union's LIFE fund in a partnership involving the Forestry Commission, English Nature and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

To protect our woodlands statutory controls are in place to prevent the introduction of pests and diseases that are harmful to trees and woodlands. While primarily focused on inspections of timber at the dockside, there are also controls in place to prevent the spread of pests and diseases inland.

In many parts of the country woodlands are under great pressure from browsing by deer to the extent that woodland habitats are threatened. Through the Deer Initiative we will work to establish a network of deer management groups across the



country to achieve a balance between healthy, viable deer populations and good woodland regeneration and ground flora conditions.

Understanding countryside character is best achieved locally. As a result of structured and rigorous assessments using techniques such as those developed by the Countryside Commission and local authorities, local assessments have been made possible. These can form the basis of a long-term approach to planning for woodland creation and management.

The New Forest is an exceptional sweep of wild country surviving against the odds in urbanised southern England. The largest terrestrial Site of Special Scientific Interest in England, it holds western Europe's largest surviving examples of lowland heath and pasture woodland and has over half of England's extant valley mires. It supports a unique commoning community, carrying on agricultural traditions dating back to the Middle Ages, and it hosts over 15 million recreational visits every year. The Forestry Commission manages the Crown Lands, in partnership with the Court of Verderers and English Nature. The management of the New Forest as a whole is co-ordinated by the New Forest Committee, and the Government is currently considering proposals to further enhance the Forest's status.

Forests play a significant role in mitigating the effects of carbon dioxide emissions on climate change. At the Kyoto conference in 1997 the Government made a commitment to helping ensure the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions over the next 10 to 15 years. One of the issues which will be considered is how forestry policies can be further developed to meet climate change objectives within the framework of our broader environmental guidance and incentives for forestry.

By recognising the role of woodlands in natural processes such as these, the woodland resource can be managed and developed to increase the benefits, and reduce adverse impacts. Much research has already been undertaken in this area, and is reflected in the UK Forestry Standard and elsewhere. There are still areas where further research is needed to improve understanding of the environmental benefits of woodland cover.

The character of the countryside which we see today results from the activity of previous generations. Evidence of their lives and environment is represented by the remains of settlements, burial sites, fortifications, field systems, earlier industrial processes and designed landscapes. We recognise the importance of many of these sites and their vulnerability to damage by some activities associated with forestry. For the last ten years local authority archaeologists have been consulted about planting proposed under the Woodland Grant Scheme, and this has helped to protect important archaeological sites from damage.

Archaeological sites (some associated with the history of woodland management) in existing woods and forests require special management to prevent further deterioration. The Forestry Commission is responsible for managing over 500 Scheduled Ancient Monuments on its land and will agree management plans for all of these with English Heritage. Significant archaeological sites are interpreted and included in walking trails.



# ACTIONS

## WE WILL

### PROTECT EXISTING WOODLANDS

- review the effectiveness of the existing measures for protecting ancient semi-natural woodlands and, if necessary, introduce new measures for giving them added protection;
- seek opportunities for encouraging the replacement of woodland lost to development with equivalent areas of new planting;
- introduce Long-Term Plans to guide the management of woods and forests.

### PROMOTE THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF TREES AND WOODLANDS

- support research to improve understanding of the value of the environmental benefits of trees, woodlands and forests and the environmental processes that they perform, particularly in relation to aerial and water-borne pollution;
- promote greater appreciation of the broad environmental benefits of trees and woods to practitioners, decision makers and the public;
- promote greater appreciation of the value and use of locally native trees and shrubs.

### USE THE BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN TO GUIDE NATURE CONSERVATION

- establish a framework for monitoring important woodland habitats and species linked to the National Biodiversity Network;
- establish an English Native Woodlands Partnership to co-ordinate and implement links between the Forestry Strategy and the Biodiversity Action Plan;
- target grants through the Woodland Grant Scheme to reverse the fragmentation of existing native woodlands, conserve priority species, and help with the preparation of management plans for semi-natural woods.

### PROTECT CULTURAL HERITAGE

- work with archaeological authorities and others to identify sites of historical importance, to make sure that proposals for new planting that might affect such sites are evaluated before applications are determined.

# implementing



the  
**strategy**

# Implementing the Strategy

Forestry for Rural Development

Forestry for Economic Regeneration

Forestry for Recreation, Access and Tourism

Forestry for the Environment and Conservation

The Government's vision of the role that woodlands will play in our lives can only be achieved through an integrated approach within a wide partnership of interests. One of our key roles is in providing an effective framework for establishing these partnerships. We want all parts of the community to be involved in helping to make this vision a reality.

The Government is able to take action to implement the Strategy in a number of ways including direct action through management of the Forestry Commission's national forest estate; through support for partnership initiatives such as the Community Forests, the National Forest and the National Urban Forestry Unit; and through targeting the grants, programmes and initiatives which have been developed to implement forestry policy.

## The Nation's Forest Estate

The Government, through the Forestry Commission, is the largest single woodland owner in England. Forest Enterprise, an Agency of the Forestry Commission, is one of the key vehicles for implementing our Strategy. It is the largest single producer of timber in England and the largest single provider of countryside recreation. It manages 180 Sites of Special Scientific



Interest including many endangered habitats. Forest Enterprise has a proven track record of practical achievement and has demonstrated flexibility in its approach. In recent years, Forest

Enterprise was constrained by the previous Government in its freedom to act. We now want to give Forest Enterprise a new lease of life, particularly with activities and in locations where other sectors are not well placed to help achieve our vision. We want Forest Enterprise to play a leading role, as a champion of sustainable forestry.

### FOREST ENTERPRISE – OPPORTUNITIES

- Leading in sustainable forestry
- Regenerating derelict land
- Improving access and recreation
- Creating new woodlands on the urban fringe
- Leading implementation of biodiversity action plans
- Leading development of community participation

Through the Comprehensive Spending Review we have made resources available to the Forestry Commission to halt the large-scale disposal of forests, honouring the Government's pledge and protecting public access in the national forests. The Forestry Commission will retain flexibility to dispose of surplus assets which do not contribute to its objectives, particularly where resources can be redeployed to greater public benefit, for example through the creation of new community woodlands or the purchase of freeholds to permit public access.

We want Forest Enterprise to explore the scope to establish a viable land holding in the Community Forests and the National Forest as a contribution to these national programmes. We expect this to focus on the creation of larger new woods with full public access and provision for a wide range of recreational activities. We want Forest Enterprise to look for opportunities to increase the range of benefits that their existing woods and forests can provide to local communities. We also want Forest Enterprise to look at opportunities for developing its national network of Forest Parks and Local Woodland Parks.

Through Forest Enterprise we will ensure that the vision of our Strategy can be delivered and demonstrated in highly practical ways. We expect Forest Enterprise to continue to develop partnerships within Government and with the voluntary and public sectors. We want Forest Enterprise to consult widely on its programmes and initiatives and to work with local communities. We will expect Forest Enterprise to acquire new skills and expertise to meet these challenges.

### Partnership Initiatives

The Community Forests have demonstrated how the combination of a strategic vision, an integrated environmental planning approach and partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors can deliver significant benefits close to where people live over a long period of time. The National Forest in the Midlands has also demonstrated how a similar approach can work successfully in rather more rural areas. We will continue to support these initiatives as vehicles for implementing our Strategy. We will be encouraging others to adopt similar approaches in other parts of the country.

Since the mid-1980s a feature of woodland activity in England has been the increased role of a wide range of special initiatives and projects. They usually work in a defined part of the country, have a business plan to help secure funding, and operate through a partnership of complementary organisations, each bringing their own resources and expertise to bear. In many cases, there is a dedicated team. The projects have helped to focus local agendas and work towards implementing them. Many of the projects have been successful at securing funding from sources such as the National Lottery, Millennium Fund and Europe. Examples include Anglia Woodlink, Cumbria Broadleaves, the Marches Woodland Initiative, Wessex Coppice and Yorwoods.

We want to encourage the active participation and involvement of the private and voluntary sectors in delivering our Strategy. Over the years a range of regulatory mechanisms and incentives has been developed to assist implementation of forestry policy. Woodland and forestry projects now receive funding from a wide range of complementary sources, including central and local government, European, Lottery and Millennium funds and the Landfill Tax. We want to ensure that our grants deliver the greatest benefits to society and that we achieve value for money. We will work with private owners and the voluntary sector in developing the range of incentives that are required to implement our key priorities and programmes.

### Targeting

Our aim will be to target resources available from Government at those geographical areas, woodland types and projects which reflect the priorities in the Strategy and have been identified with greater precision in regional and local agendas. A range of Government and local authority information already indicates regional preferences for different types of woodland creation and woodland management. Other information can also influence regional and local decision making. For example, the Countryside Commission and English Nature have co-operated to map England into areas of distinctive character (the 'Character of England' map). The maps and their supporting descriptions help to identify distinctive and valuable characteristics as well as highlighting impoverished landscapes where change is desirable.

Forestry and woodland strategies have been prepared by some local authorities. These strategies broadly classify areas according to their likely sensitivity and potential for new woodlands. Local Authority Development Plans may also indicate local issues and preferences. Plans have also been drawn up by each of the Community Forests and the National Forest setting out their targets and the means of delivery. These provide an important framework for guidance and encouragement of woodland planting and management in those areas.

We want the Forestry Commission to work closely with the Regional Development Agencies in developing a regional focus for implementing our Strategy. These developing regional and local agendas will be a key consideration in the allocation

The South West Forest is pioneering a new approach to rural development. The Forest was established to help diversify the rural economic base in part of north Devon and Cornwall. Over the next fifteen years the Forest will increase the area of woodland from 10% to 15% by planting 15,000 hectares of new woodland. The Forest is a partnership of landowners, farming interests, timber growers and processors and local authorities.

The Forest receives funding from Europe as well as from the Government. In order to encourage the planting of larger new woodlands the Government has provided special funding measures through a locational supplement and a challenge fund. The Locational Supplement provides additional funding to the Woodland Grant Scheme for woodlands between 5 and 20 hectares in area. For woodland planting over 25 hectares the Challenge Fund enables landowners to submit competitive tenders for the funding they seek to carry out the planting.

of funds and in the setting of incentive levels. We will aim to work across Government to target forestry funding to meet the Strategy objectives. We will ask the Forestry Forum to consider further the appropriate mechanisms for regional and local consultation and delivery.

## Woodland Incentives

There is a range of grants and incentives to support woodland creation and management. The Woodland Grant Scheme is being adapted to be a flexible menu-based system allowing greater targeting to deliver public benefits from public money. We will continue to develop the grants to deliver our strategic priorities. There will be a range of supplements to meet identified targets.

### Key changes will be:

- a greater range of supplements targeted to meet our national priorities for woodland creation and management;
- a range of supplements and incentive levels to reflect identified regional and local objectives and targets;
- the use of challenge funding and pilot schemes to encourage major initiatives and experimentation in new approaches.

## Priorities for Woodland Creation

In recent years the grant schemes have been successful in establishing small broadleaved woodlands. We wish to encourage larger-scale activity targeted at locations where woodlands will realise greater overall benefits than other land uses. At the national level our key target areas for woodland creation are:

- the creation of larger woodlands, where they can bring greater benefits;
- the creation of woodlands in the urban fringe;
- the restoration of former industrial land;
- reversing the fragmentation of ancient woodland.

## Consultation Procedures

The Forestry Commission will seek ways to improve its consultation procedures and will follow and seek to improve the statutory Environmental Impact Assessment procedures. We are keen to maintain the freedom of choice of individual landowners but wish to ensure that all new woodland planting and management meets agreed environmental criteria. This is established in the Forestry Standard, compliance with which will continue to be a pre-requisite of all grant aid.



# Maintaining the Momentum

## Reporting Progress

In monitoring and reporting progress we will build on the existing indicators of sustainable development and the indicators of sustainable forest management set out in the UK Forestry Standard. The Standard is the centrepiece of a system to guide and monitor forestry in the UK. The monitoring information required will come from national forest surveys (such as the Inventory of Woodlands), countryside surveys (in which forestry is only one component) and from wider assessments of forestry practice.

intend to take over the next five to ten years. These cannot be implemented by Government working on its own. We want to work with members of the Forum, both individually and collectively, to ensure that the potential benefits of woods and forests are realised in practice. We will be looking to Forum members to contribute their knowledge, expertise and resources to work alongside us.

The Forum will have an important role to play in ensuring that we make real progress with implementation. We intend that progress in



## Forestry Forum

When we announced our decision to prepare this Strategy we also decided to establish an English Forestry Forum. The Strategy describes our priorities and programmes for creating new woodlands and managing existing woodlands in England. The Forum will be fundamental in our approach to working in partnership with others to turn our vision into action. We have set out a wide range of actions that we

implementation should be regularly reported to the Forum and that this should be used as the basis of reviewing and refining our combined work. The Forum will provide a focal point for measuring achievement.

# Looking Forward

This Strategy is the start of a process, not the end. The Strategy sets out the Government's priorities and programmes for forestry for the next five to ten years. We want the Strategy to help focus discussion on how we can work together, across Government, and with our partners in other organisations, to ensure that England's woods continue to provide a rich source of benefits for England's people. The Strategy is not prescriptive – it sets out the framework for the Government's continued support for forestry in England and will guide the targeting of our resources for forestry in future.

## **As the Strategy is implemented the Government wants to see:**

- an increase in the role of forestry in the rural economy;
- an increase in the areas of woodland created on derelict and former industrial land as well as a reduction in the cost of creating this woodland;
- an increase in the area of woodlands available for access;
- an increase in the area of semi-natural and native woodland together with a reduction in the fragmentation of ancient semi-natural woodland;
- an increase in the resources available for forestry and woodland through new partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- an increase in integrated action across Government to implement the Strategy;
- an increase in people's involvement with England's woods and forests and a better understanding of the benefits which they bring.



Together with the Forum, the Government will be monitoring and reviewing progress in achieving this in the years ahead.

# England Forestry Strategy Summary

FORESTRY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT	FORESTRY FOR ECONOMIC REGENERATION
WE WILL:	WE WILL:
<b>INFLUENCE POLICIES FOR AGRICULTURAL REFORM</b>	<b>PROMOTE FORESTRY FOR LAND REGENERATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that forestry will be considered in the development of rural programmes under the Agenda 2000 proposals for a new Rural Development Regulation;</li> <li>support research into the implications of CAP reform for the transfer of land from farming to forestry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>promote the role of forestry in the restoration of former industrial land by supporting research to develop cost-effective methods of establishing woodlands and establishing a national network of sites demonstrating best practice;</li> <li>promote a decision-making framework for the design, planning and site-preparation requirements of woodland establishment on former industrial land and use this as a basis for Government-funded work;</li> <li>consider the need for longer-term support and management of woodlands on former industrial land and explore new ways of securing their future;</li> <li>act directly through the Forestry Commission acquiring and managing land in regeneration partnerships.</li> </ul>
<b>SUPPORT STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOODLAND RESOURCES</b>	<b>SUPPORT REGIONAL PROGRAMMES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>publish a national woodland inventory to provide better information about England's woodland resources;</li> <li>encourage new investment in the wood-processing sector by publishing forecasts of wood production and through our policies for regional development and support for rural economies;</li> <li>ensure that the supply of timber from our woodland resource is available at the levels indicated in long-term forecasts;</li> <li>continue to provide support for regional and local marketing initiatives, including small-scale and craft uses;</li> <li>extend the range of business advice, training and local support offered to woodland businesses, particularly small producers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage the Regional Development Agencies to use forestry and woodland programmes in implementing their objectives;</li> <li>encourage the development of new urban forestry initiatives which can demonstrate achievement through partnership approaches.</li> </ul>
<b>DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF THE RURAL ECONOMY</b>	<b>PROMOTE FORESTRY THROUGH LAND-USE PLANNING</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commission a study of the economic impacts of forestry in the rural economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review Circular 36/78 on Trees and Forestry and consider, as part of a rolling programme, how the role of woodlands might be highlighted through regional and national planning guidance;</li> <li>review the guidance in Minerals Planning Guidance Note 7 in due course and if necessary amend this to reflect revised forestry policy;</li> <li>work closely with mineral and waste planning authorities to ensure that Government forestry policies are fully reflected in development plans;</li> <li>work with the minerals and waste industries to encourage consideration of forestry as an after-use at an early stage of planning development;</li> <li>seek opportunities to consider how the setting of future built development might be enhanced by the incorporation of wooded and other green elements, and how to encourage such development through planning guidance.</li> </ul>
<b>ENCOURAGE DIVERSIFICATION</b>	<b>PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support a targeted programme for short-rotation coppice planting and encourage the use of wood fuel for energy production using the most efficient technology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>create new woodlands along transport corridors as part of a programme of environmental improvements.</li> </ul>

# of Proposed Programme Actions

FORESTRY FOR RECREATION, ACCESS AND TOURISM	FORESTRY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION
WE WILL:	WE WILL:
<b>INCREASE ACCESS TO WOODLANDS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>draw on the Forestry Commission's report on woodland access in England in implementing the Strategy;</li> <li>target grants to increase the opportunities available to visit woodlands, particularly in areas where there are shortages of access;</li> <li>promote a network of forest tracks suitable for cycling as part of the National Cycle Network and our Integrated Transport Strategy.</li> </ul>	<b>PROTECT EXISTING WOODLANDS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review the effectiveness of the existing measures for protecting ancient semi-natural woodlands and, if necessary, introduce new measures for giving them added protection;</li> <li>seek opportunities for encouraging the replacement of woodland lost to development with equivalent areas of new planting;</li> <li>introduce Long-Term Plans to guide the management of woods and forests.</li> </ul>
<b>IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION ABOUT ACCESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in partnership with woodland owners and others, explore ways of making up-to-date information available on woodlands to visit and improve the quality of information, building on the Forestry Commission's Walkers Welcome package.</li> </ul>	<b>PROMOTE THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF TREES AND WOODLANDS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support research to improve understanding of the value of the environmental benefits of trees, woodlands and forests and the environmental processes that they perform, particularly in relation to aerial and water-borne pollution;</li> <li>promote greater appreciation of the broad environmental benefits of trees and woods to practitioners, decision makers and the public;</li> <li>promote greater appreciation of the value and use of locally native trees and shrubs.</li> </ul>
<b>ENHANCE THE NATION'S FOREST ESTATE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>give priority to acquiring freeholds of leasehold land in areas close to centres of population, particularly in the Community Forests and the National Forest, when there is a shortage of existing woodland access;</li> <li>develop the Forestry Commission's Woodland Park network close to towns and cities;</li> <li>work in partnership with sports' governing bodies to accommodate noisy or intrusive recreation in suitable woodlands and relieve pressure on sensitive sites;</li> <li>improve recreational and other facilities through private-sector partnerships.</li> </ul>	<b>USE THE BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN TO GUIDE NATURE CONSERVATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establish a framework for monitoring important woodland habitats and species linked to the National Biodiversity Network;</li> <li>establish an English Native Woodlands Partnership to co-ordinate and implement links between the Forestry Strategy and the Biodiversity Action Plan;</li> <li>target grants through the Woodland Grant Scheme to reverse the fragmentation of existing native woodlands, conserve priority species, and help with the preparation of management plans for semi-natural woods.</li> </ul>
<b>PROMOTE BETTER UNDERSTANDING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support research into the economic contribution that woodlands and forests make to tourism and the potential for forest-based tourism initiatives to benefit local communities;</li> <li>engage with the public to promote the benefits of trees, woods and forests;</li> <li>support the Forest Education Initiative by developing the national network of local groups to encourage children and young people to better understand the importance of woods and forests.</li> </ul>	<b>PROTECT CULTURAL HERITAGE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work with archaeological authorities and others to identify sites of historical importance, to make sure that proposals for new planting that might affect such sites are evaluated before applications are determined.</li> </ul>

# Sources of Information

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