

Forestry

Introduction

Woodlands are a renewable natural resource which contribute to a successful economy, better environment, healthy communities, and improved quality of life. Woodlands contribute to climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration: as trees grow, they convert atmospheric carbon dioxide into the carbon that forms the basis of their roots, branches, and leaves. Trees also reduce soil erosion by wind and water, and they provide shade that helps to moderate temperature.

Forestry Commission Wales acts as the Welsh Assembly Government's department of forestry, and looks after the 38 per cent of Welsh woodlands that comprise the Welsh Assembly Government's estate.

- ◆ A total of 14 per cent of Wales' land area is covered by woodland; the EU-15 average is 32 per centⁱ.

Overview of current statutory powers of the Assembly

"Forestry" is part of Field 1 of Schedule 5 of the *Government of Wales Act 2006*. This means that the National Assembly for Wales can seek Measure-making powers over forestry matters through Legislative Competence Orders.

The following secondary legislative responsibilities of the Second Assembly will transfer to Welsh Ministers in the Third Assembly:

- ◆ Forestry land management
- ◆ Forestry policy

Forthcoming EU and UK primary legislation

- ◆ A draft Climate Change Bill was published on 13 March 2007.
- ◆ A Communication on an EU Forest Action Plan was published on 15 June 2006ⁱⁱ. The Action Plan was approved by the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in October 2006ⁱⁱⁱ.

EU policy

EU involvement in forestry issues is set out in the EU Forestry Strategy^{iv}. The EU produces forestry plans based on Member State forestry policy, and provides some financial support for forestry and woodland management via the structural funds programmes (see Wales' Rural Development Plan). It also funds research into forestry and forest-based industries.

- ◆ The EU Biomass Action Plan of December 2005 states that the Commission "will encourage Member States to establish national biomass action plans"^v.

Key Assembly Government strategy documents and action plans from the Second Assembly:

- ◆ Woodlands for Wales is the Welsh Assembly Government's forestry strategy^{vi}. A progress report on the first five years of the strategy has been published^{vii}.
- ◆ The Environment Strategy for Wales^{viii} and its accompanying Action Plan^{ix} include 11 outcomes related to forestry (7, 8, 16, 18, 19-21, 23, 29, 30, 35, and 36).
- ◆ A consultation closed on 27 April about a climate change adaptation action plan for Wales^x.

Legacy issues from the Second Assembly

The Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee's legacy paper highlighted the following issues of forestry interest for the attention of the Third Assembly:

- ◆ The Environment Strategy for Wales
- ◆ Biocrops and biofuels
- ◆ The Climate Change Bill

Useful links

1. Forestry Commission Wales' website is <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/wales>
2. The National Inventory of Woodland and Trees for Wales is available here: [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/pdf.nsf/pdf/niwales.pdf/\\$FILE/niwales.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/pdf.nsf/pdf/niwales.pdf/$FILE/niwales.pdf)
3. The Wales Forest Business Partnership is a grouping of organisations with the aim of developing world class forest industries in Wales: <http://www.wfbp.org/>
4. Coed Lleol is an organisation dedicated to helping people enjoy and care for Welsh woodlands: <http://www.coedlleol.org.uk/>
5. Tree for All in Wales is a Coed Cadw site focused on encouraging children's involvement in tree-planting: <http://www.treeforall.org.uk/Wales/default.htm>
6. The European Commission Directorate-General of Agriculture's forestry website can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/index_en.htm

Further information

A research paper is available on the Environment Strategy for Wales at <http://assembly/presidingoffic/mrs/briefings/environment-planning-e.htm>

For further information on any aspect of forestry, please contact:

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ⁱ Welsh Assembly Government, *Woodlands for Wales*, [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/woodwaleseng.pdf/\\$FILE/woodwaleseng.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/woodwaleseng.pdf/$FILE/woodwaleseng.pdf)

ⁱⁱ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on an EU Forest Action Plan*, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/action_plan/com_en.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on the EU Forest Action Plan 2007-2011*, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/publi/2006_council_conclusions.pdf

^{iv} Official Journal of the European Communities, *Council Resolution on a Forestry Strategy for the European Union*, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/1999/c_056/c_05619990226en00010004.pdf

^v European Commission, *National Biomass Action Plans*, http://ec.europa.eu/energy/res/biomass_action_plan/nationa_bap_en.htm

^{vi} Welsh Assembly Government, *Woodlands for Wales*, [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/pdf.nsf/pdf/woodwaleseng.pdf/\\$FILE/woodwaleseng.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/pdf.nsf/pdf/woodwaleseng.pdf/$FILE/woodwaleseng.pdf)

^{vii} Forestry Commission Wales, *Coetiroedd i Gymru: Adroddiad Cynnydd 2001-2005/Woodlands for Wales: Progress Report 2001-2005*, [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WoodlandsforWales\(1-77\).pdf/\\$FILE/WoodlandsforWales\(1-77\).pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/WoodlandsforWales(1-77).pdf/$FILE/WoodlandsforWales(1-77).pdf)

^{viii} Welsh Assembly Government, May 2006, *Environment Strategy for Wales*, http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/Environment_strategy_for_wales/About_the_strategy/?lang=en

^{ix} Welsh Assembly Government, *Environment Strategy for Wales: First Action Plan*, http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/4038231121/118554/Env_strat_rewrite/Action_Plan_e.pdf?lang=en

^x Welsh Assembly Government, *Responding to our Changing Climate: Consultation on a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan for Wales*, <http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultation/662235/1502-270407climatechange?lang=en>