



Forestry England

# Growing the future: 2021-26



# We are Forestry England

We are the country's largest land manager, caring for the nation's forests for people, nature and the economy. The foundation of our organisation is our world-class sustainable management of the nation's forests.

Front cover: One of our apprentices at work. We invest in our people by offering training and development programmes and wellbeing initiatives.

This page: The first Forestry Commission trees were planted in Eggesford forest, Devon, in 1919.

**We believe the nation's forests can have an incredibly positive long-term effect on people's lives and England's biodiversity, and with a thriving green economy, we can impact our country's response to the climate emergency.**

It is a privilege to lead Forestry England, such an innovative, evolving organisation. It is brimming with passionate experts who love and care for the nation's forests and have a deep commitment to all that they can do for our society and for our country.

It is humbling to be in the company of foresters in an organisation that thinks instinctively and plans in 100-year timescales. More than ever, it feels like an extraordinary time for trees, with a growing understanding of the important role trees and productive forests can play in contributing to a thriving society and green economy for the next century. Our plan contributes to government's 25-year environment plan and the England Trees Action Plan. In this plan, as custodians of the nation's forests, we have made clear our priorities and ambitions for the next five years to deliver these valuable benefits to society.

The nation's forests are astonishing. They flourish through careful planning and expert management by Forestry England staff, volunteers and partners. They are a vital source of sustainable timber to support jobs and industry, a home for

wildlife to thrive and a place for people to connect with nature and enjoy themselves. We are experts in bringing people and forests together, and this relationship with nature is even more essential since the pandemic.

The nation's forests continue to evolve and adapt to the demands and needs of society. Our response to the wildlife crisis, the changing climate and people's connection to nature will define the next five years. We envision that with this plan, by 2026, we will have grown and protected the living treasures that are England's forests.

Forests are dynamic places, and Forestry England is a dynamic organisation. We are confident that through our internationally accredited sustainable forest and land management, we can address some of the country's most pressing needs and welcome everyone to enjoy the largest open-access space in England.

We are excited that you share our passion and join us as custodians of the nation's living, breathing forests, indulging in their wonder and delight.

# We are growing the future

Sir William Worsley, Forestry Commission Chair  
Mike Seddon, Forestry England Chief Executive



Sir William Worsley (left)  
Mike Seddon (right)

# Our plan

The expertise, professionalism and passion of our people make us an outstanding organisation. Growing on the success of the last 100 years, we continue to build our exceptional reputation for sustainable land management. We evolve, innovate and grow the vast benefits the nation's forests give to people, nature and the economy.


We have five strategic objectives that drive our work to succeed, thrive and deliver over the next 100 years. This plan identifies our priorities for the next five years.

The nation's forests are a world-class sustainable living treasure that help us respond to the challenges we face in society. As sustainable, productive forests, they are fundamental as we confront the climate emergency, tackle the nature crisis and support people's health and wellbeing.

We underpin the incredible benefits the forests provide with our forestry expertise and high-quality partnerships, which are at the heart of everything we do. We know that a prosperous forestry industry means a thriving green economy where our certified forest and land management propels a vibrant forest culture we are proud of.

In telling our story, we show how sustainable wood is an important part of industry supply chains, and how the forests the timber comes from are recognised as part of precious landscapes. By sharing this story, we can raise awareness and understanding of the nation's forests and Forestry England's valuable work.

**This plan sets out our priorities and our five-year framework to achieve more, now and for future generations.**

A photograph of two young children in a forest. The child on the left is wearing a grey jacket, a grey and orange striped hat, and a matching scarf. The child on the right is wearing a bright yellow raincoat and pink boots. They are both looking at a small glass held by the child in yellow. The background is a blurred forest floor with trees and foliage. A dashed white line runs across the image from the top left to the bottom right.

We can build a life-long connection with forests.

## For wildlife

Nature is in crisis. Currently ranked 189 of 218 countries assessed on a Biodiversity Intactness Index, the UK has lost more biodiversity than most other countries. The recent UK State of Nature report showed that 13% of species are at immediate risk of extinction.

## For people

Essential for energising, restoring and supporting mental and physical wellbeing; time outdoors is a necessity for all. We are always learning more about the positive effects of being in nature for everyone.

## For the climate

We are facing a climate emergency. The nation's forests are critical for reducing the causes and mitigating the impacts of climate change. We see those impacts today at landscape scale in the resilience of forests, trees and land management.

# We must act now

<sup>1</sup>Newbold, T. et al. Has land use pushed terrestrial biodiversity beyond the planetary boundary? A global assessment. *Science* (80-). (2016) doi:10.1126/science.aaf2201.

<sup>2</sup>Hayhow, D. et al. *The State of Nature 2019*. (2019).



# For wildlife

We have been working with partners to reintroduce native pine martens to the Forest of Dean.

## Our vision: The nation's forests provide the most valuable places for wildlife to thrive and expand in England.

The nation's forests are an unrivalled national asset and are critical to the country's response in this time of crisis for nature. We are optimistic about the difference we can make. A quarter of a million hectares of breathtaking diversity make up the nation's forests, which provide valuable, high-quality, sustainably managed habitats for wildlife in forests and woodlands, grasslands, heaths, wetlands and our internationally renowned arboreta.



Beavers now live in Cropton forest, Yorkshire, as part of a trial to reduce the impact of flooding locally.



**At least 6,000  
hectares of  
wild areas  
established**

## We will build on our success

The rich, diverse and connected habitats in the nation's forests will continue to be improved and enhanced by our sustainable forest and land management.

Our people and partners will use skilled and professional management to improve continually the condition of precious habitats in our care. We will lead the development of fully functioning ecosystems, where species can establish, thrive and spread across landscapes. We will also continue to reintroduce wildlife to support and grow the abundance of species flourishing in the nation's forests. We will showcase this exciting biodiversity story to champion nature, build opportunities for deeper learning and create a sense of wonder for all.

## We will grow for the future

We will harness the power of nature, establishing a network of wild areas in the nation's forests.



Credit: Wild Ennerdale

Black Galloway cattle are an important part of the wild landscape in Ennerdale.

### Acting now means

Identifying potential key sites in our working forests where we can use more wilding activities, such as low-density grazing and more meandering watercourses.

Continuing action to protect, improve and build the resilience of our most special habitats, including ancient woodlands and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Reintroducing and translocating plant and animal species to support the rich ecosystems in the nation's forests.

### What you will see in the next five years

Working with partners, we will deliver at least 6,000 more hectares where we integrate wilding activities in our productive forests.

Using habitat enhancements, we will support and improve the condition of our exceptional sites, including ancient woodlands, open habitats, wetlands and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.



# For people

We'll continue to find new ways to connect people with our forests across all seasons.

**Our vision: The nation's forests are a living treasure for all, deeply connected to people's lives improving the health and wellbeing of the nation.**

Forests provide a true sense of wildness and a deep and peaceful connection to nature; they invite us to explore, play and have adventures. Time spent in forests bonds us to the seasons, our history and time.

The nation's forests are among the most popular natural spaces in the country, visited millions of times every year. We want to go further. We want to break down barriers and reach across society, so everyone feels welcome in these shared public spaces. We are evolving our offer, reaching out to new audiences and welcoming visitors that reflect the richness and diversity of the nation's forests.

We will share our forests' stories with our visitors. We will strengthen respect and understanding of forests and forest culture while deepening each visitor's sense of curiosity and wonder that connects us to our shared natural heritage.



Forestry England has over 2,500 km of cycling trails, from gentle family routes to bike skills areas or downhill MTB.





**1 million hours  
of volunteer time  
to the forests**

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## We will build on our success

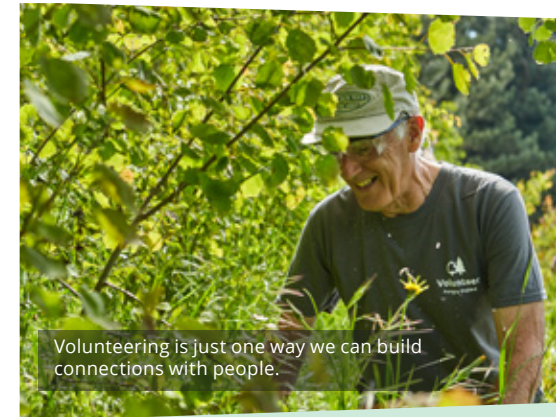
**We will continue to provide first-class outdoor experiences in the nation's forests with excellent customer service.**

Our expert sustainable forest, land and recreation management allows us to expand and improve our offer: attracting more people to the places we look after across the whole country, in every season. Our innovative partnerships keep evolving the breadth of activities and experiences available in our nation's forests.

More people will experience a stronger connection to the nation's forests through richer experiences, like volunteer programmes, social prescribing, national membership and supporter engagement. There is something for everyone, from inspiring arts programmes, sports and physical activities and historical sites to mindful moments for enjoyment, health and wellbeing.

## We will grow for the future

**We will increase the diversity of visitors to the nation's forests.**



Volunteering is just one way we can build connections with people.

### Acting now means

Growing our offer and breadth of opportunities for enjoyment of the forests for all, including new ways to access recreation activities and experiences.

Identifying the cultural and physical barriers to accessing the nation's forests and obtaining the knowledge, infrastructure and resources we need to break them down.

Launching a national membership scheme, enabling more people to be aware of and enjoy the benefits the nation's forests have to offer.

### What you will see in the next five years

Evolved, high-quality partnerships that grow expertise and innovation, enabling us to reach wider audiences in new ways with new technologies, services and products.

Our visitors will reflect the richness and diversity of the communities they serve.

Richer connections developed with the nation's forests, including:

- One million hours of high-quality volunteer time given to the nation's forests.
- Launching our national membership scheme.

# For climate

Science is helping us to grow resilient forests for the future.

**Our vision: The nation's forests are resilient to climate change, increasing their value for communities by producing high-quality, sustainable timber and absorbing carbon emissions.**

The trees, vegetation, soils and freshwater environments of the nation's forests play a critical role in absorbing and storing greenhouse-gas emissions. We will expand and develop the nation's forests by taking wider opportunities for woodland creation and contributing to the government's action plans on trees, nature and climate. Our seed and nursery units will be fundamental to the longer-term success, quality and diversity of both our mature and newly created woodlands.

Through our innovative work, we will deepen our evidence-based knowledge, ensuring forests and other habitats are resilient to the impacts of climate change. The nation's forests

are growing more resilient because we manage them using adaptation, diversification, connectivity, and expansion principles to drive our management decisions. We will support the nation's forests in their increasingly important role of supplying sustainable timber and forest products in the efforts to replace plastics and fossil-fuel-based materials.

**We will tell the story of climate change, productive forestry and forest resilience as a part of this work.**





**2,000 hectares  
of new woodland  
planted**

## We will build on our success

**We will continue to manage the nation's forests, following world-class, independently certified, sustainable forest and land management standards to ensure they thrive and provide vital sustainably produced timber.**

The nation's forests will continue to contribute to the growing green economy, supplying renewable timber and forest products as sustainable alternatives. Forestry England is at the forefront of internationally significant scientific research in forests and climate science. We work with partners, including Forest Research, and use the expertise from our network of arboreta and pineta at Westonbirt and Bedgebury. We will continue to work with the forestry industry, the energy sector and corporate partners, all who support us and increase our impact. By adapting, diversifying and improving their composition, scale, connectivity and quality, our nation's forests will thrive over the coming decades.

## We will grow for the future

**We will create new woodlands, expanding the nation's forests and absorbing more carbon from the atmosphere.**



Tree planting at Westonbirt, The National Arboretum.

### Acting now means

Investing in skilled people and new partnerships to support an expansion of the nation's forests.

Continuing to restore and help our habitats and landscapes to adapt, which will support their role in carbon absorption and biodiversity resilience and tell the story of its place in productive forestry.

Offering over one million cubic metres of sustainable timber to market each year, maintaining world-class forest management practices, externally accredited to international standards.


### What you will see in the next five years

At least 2,000 hectares of new, high quality, predominantly broadleaf woodlands planted. The partnerships that deliver these will strengthen connections to their wider settings, enabling our forests to play their crucial role in landscape-scale climate resilience.

Greater structural and tree species diversity in the nation's forests to support adaptation to climate change and securing a sustainable timber supply for future generations.

Continued investment in research to help our forests be diverse and resilient and lead the way in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change on forest landscapes.

# Our people and our values



Every person in Forestry England makes a difference.

**Our vision:** We are one Forestry England. We support each other to work to our values and to be healthy, motivated, engaged experts, enabling us all to make our best contribution. We are a diverse workforce representing the people we serve.

We can only achieve our ambitions by investing in our excellent people and by being an outstanding organisation. It is our people, with their expertise, professionalism and passion, who will make this plan happen, safeguarding the long-term sustainability of the nation's forests and the benefits they deliver.

We know we are most innovative and impactful when we collaborate across the Forestry England team, including our partners and volunteers. We want to go even further in how we do this in Forestry England. Every role and every person makes a difference. We

will invest in everyone to develop their skills and expertise, so we can deliver more from the nation's forests and increase the public benefits they provide.

Over the next five years, we will continue to evolve how we work by investing in our digital infrastructure and information data, building and securing an impressive health and safety culture, improving work-life balance and supporting flexible working. We will grow our people's skills and leadership, supporting successful, fulfilling careers. We want to diversify our workforce to ensure Forestry England represents the people it serves.



# Our values are an essential part of who we are and are embedded in all we do.

## Think beyond a lifetime

We make plans today for a better tomorrow, so our business and our forests are sustainable and fit for the future.

## Do it together

We get our best results when we work with others, and we encourage diverse perspectives, so we make better decisions.

## Be adventurous

We approach challenges with creativity and adventure, embracing research and innovation to stay relevant.

## Look out and look after

We care about our colleagues, volunteers, partners and customers, and we take a stand against unsafe behaviour.



Our innovative projects will continue to transform our visitor experience.



We will continue to improve technology and working environments for our people.

## Acting now means

Continuing to invest in the infrastructure and systems that we need to diversify and support our workforce.

Continuing to build and secure our strong health and safety culture.

Continuing to invest in our people by offering training and development programmes and wellbeing initiatives, so they can enjoy fulfilling work lives.

## What you will see in the next five years

A workforce that reflects the diversity of the nation's communities.

Improved working environments and approaches as well as effective use of our technologies. As one Forestry England team, we will empower all our people to flourish wherever they work.

Improved reporting of accidents and near-misses, supporting our outstanding health and safety culture.

# Our sustainable approach

**Our vision:** Forestry England puts sustainability at the heart of the nation's forests and all we do. The valuable benefits delivered by the nation's forests are secure and resilient due to our environmental and financial sustainability.

We are committed to evolving our business and organisation to become carbon-lean and climate-friendly across our forest operations, landscape management decisions and corporate activity. We will have meaningful reductions in our direct emissions and have a clear plan for minimising indirect emissions from our supply chains, working with suppliers and partners to identify and rise to the challenge.

We are proud that, while delivering on our social purpose and responsibilities as a public-sector

organisation, around 80% of the funding that supports our work comes from our trading activities. Financial sustainability is critical to the long-term security of the benefits delivered by the nation's forests. With more diverse, robust and long-term income streams, our finances will be more sustainable.

We are working with partners to promote our work and plant more trees.



We are growing the nation's forests, such as this new 145 hectare site at Rushy Knowe.





Our sustainable forest and land management is internationally accredited.



**Net-zero  
by 2030**

Over the next five years, we will continue to diversify and expand where our money comes from and optimise our business. Initiatives such as our national membership scheme, corporate partnerships and legacy giving that sit alongside our sustainable timber business and recreation offers will consolidate our sound financial footing. This resilience will underpin, deepen and extend the public benefits the nation’s forests deliver.

Forestry England demonstrates and values its agility, adaptability and innovation as it responds to what society needs from the nation’s forests and tells the story of the impact we make. These qualities are essential to our sustainable approach and our ability to take opportunities as they arise. They are essential to the continued success of the nation’s forests throughout this plan and beyond.



Our new electric vehicles will help us on our journey to being carbon lean.

### Acting now means

Setting a clear plan for achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Investing in low-carbon and renewable energy sources for our business and changing how we do things to optimise the energy we use.

Innovating to expand and optimise our commercial activity to strengthen our financial resilience.

### What you will see in the next five years

Meaningfully reduced greenhouse gas emissions on our way to being net-zero by 2030.

Increased proportion of self-generated income.

Increased awareness and understanding of Forestry England.

# In the next five years and beyond

We are excited and optimistic about our plan for the nation's forests. This plan reinforces our commitment and mission to connect everyone with the nation's forests and to continue to evolve them to grow and thrive as the resilient living treasure they are, for the next century and beyond.





## The priorities we have set out in this plan will ensure that more benefits reach across society for generations that follow.



We will identify, resource and implement actions to realise these ambitions using our rolling business and financial planning processes. We will monitor and track progress through our annual corporate reporting and share our success stories along the way.

### In this plan you will see

- At least 6,000 hectares of wild areas established
- Improved condition of SSSIs, ancient woodlands, open habitats and wetlands
- Species reintroductions
- New audiences reached
- Visitor demographics representing diverse communities
- One million hours of volunteer time given to the nation's forests
- At least 2,000 hectares of new woodlands created\*
- More diversity in our tree species and forest structures
- Investment in research to support further forest resilience
- Our workforce demographics reflecting diverse communities
- Technologies embedded to improve working practices for staff
- Increased reporting of accidents and near-misses
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- An increased proportion of self-generated income\*
- Increased public awareness and understanding of Forestry England

To support our decision-making, we have many measures and important markers of success across many programmes and plans that help us to track progress:

- Sustainable timber production
- All of our forests and woodlands are certified to the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) licence code FSC-C123214 and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) licence code PEFC/16-40-1001 standards
- Number of visits made to our hubs and the nation's forests as a whole\*
- Customer service
- Staff and public accident rates\*
- Total calculated natural capital value\*

\*These measures relate to our long-term organisational key performance indicators.

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We care for the nation's forests across the whole forest life-cycle.