

A vibrant, sun-dappled forest scene. The foreground is filled with lush green grass and ferns. Several tree trunks of varying heights and thicknesses are visible, with thick, dark branches extending across the upper half of the frame. The background is a dense canopy of bright green leaves, with sunlight filtering through, creating a bright and airy atmosphere.

A Growing Resource

Woodland and Forestry
in the West Midlands

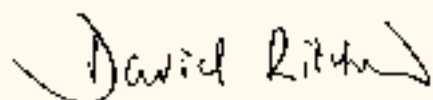
Foreword

The West Midlands, in common with other regions in England, is preparing a Regional Forestry Framework. Its aim is to ensure that forestry and woodlands are properly recognised within regional strategies and that their potential to meet the needs and priorities of the region is fully developed. The Framework will be completed by the end of 2004.

The first stage in the process has been to produce a baseline study which sets out the current state of forestry in the region and the contribution it is making to the economy, the environment and people's well-being. In this report – entitled 'A Growing Resource' – the consultants Entec have pulled together a huge amount of information and in the course of preparing it they have consulted widely with stakeholders. The results show that forestry and woodlands are vitally important to the region. At the same time there is great scope to develop even further the contribution they can make and that is the challenge facing the Regional Forestry Framework.

The study shows that the estimated overall value of the sector to the region is over £700 million per annum. This may at first sight seem surprising but when we think about the great variety of uses we all make of the products of this industry, and the other ways in which trees, woodlands and forests interact with our daily lives, perhaps we should be asking why the figure is not higher. Certainly there is a large amount of timber and its products imported into the West Midlands and an issue for the Framework will undoubtedly be whether there is scope to substitute home grown products for these imports.

That is for the future. For now, as Chairman of the West Midlands Woodland and Forestry Forum I am delighted to commend this report on behalf of the Forum. It provides an excellent foundation for our Regional Forestry Framework as it takes shape over the next year.



David Ritchie

Chairman, West Midlands Woodland and Forestry Forum

Introduction

The woodland and forestry sector makes an important contribution to the economy, quality of life and environment of the West Midlands. Woodland-related industries employ over 30,000 people and contribute £320 million per year to the region's economy. Woodlands and trees are an important part of the urban and rural landscape and provide countless opportunities for recreation, with associated economic and health benefits. Trees are essential to preserving and enhancing the region's environment. In urban areas tree planting provides opportunities for regeneration and land reclamation at the same time as increasing community cohesion and providing educational opportunities. Taking these broader benefits into account the sector is estimated to contribute up to £718 million per year to the region.

The past two decades have seen growing recognition of the broad range of economic, social and environmental benefits of trees, woodlands and forests. Innovative new forms of forest management and woodland initiatives have emerged addressing areas as diverse as rural and urban skills development, health, micro-business development, tourism, regeneration, renewable energy and social inclusion. The region is acknowledged internationally as a model of best practice in urban forestry.

This summary provides an overview of woodland and forestry activities in the West Midlands and highlights opportunities for developing and enhancing woodland and forestry activities. The study was commissioned by the Forestry Commission, Advantage West Midlands and the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

Woodland and forestry makes an important contribution to the economy, quality of life and environment of the West Midlands. Its value is estimated at up to £718 million per year



A profile of the sector



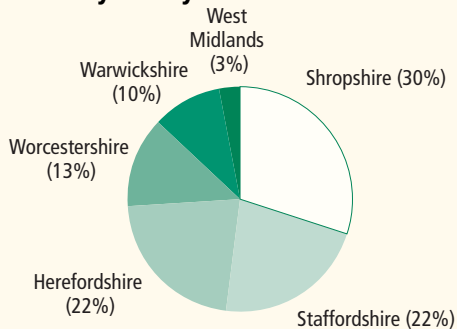
Woodland coverage

Woodland covers an area of 98,474 hectares in the West Midlands and represents 7.6% of the land area. The largest and most established forests include Cannock Chase, Mortimer Forest and Wyre Forest. These are complemented by newer forest initiatives such as the Black Country Urban Forest, the Forest of Mercia and the National Forest. Woodland is also significant to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in, for example, Wye Valley, Cannock Chase, the Malvern Hills, the Shropshire Hills and the Cotswolds.

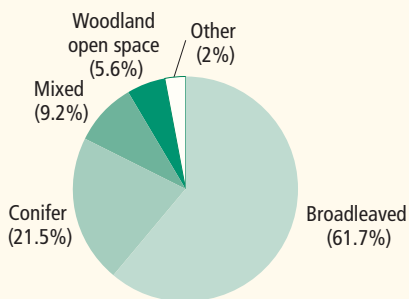
Over the past 20 years, significant efforts have been made to increase woodland cover and to reinstate much of the natural woodland that has been lost over time. The majority of new planting has occurred in the more rural shire counties but recently there has been a shift to planting in the urban and urban fringe areas. The National Forest serves as a flagship for the creation of a large new area of multi-purpose woodland. Its aim is to create a new forested landscape covering about 502km² of the East and West Midlands, producing good quality timber, enhancing the landscape, enriching interest in wildlife and creating new opportunities for access to woodland.

Particular efforts are being made to encourage multiple use management so that greater social and economic benefits can be derived from woodland at the same time as introducing sustainable management practices that conserve the resource.

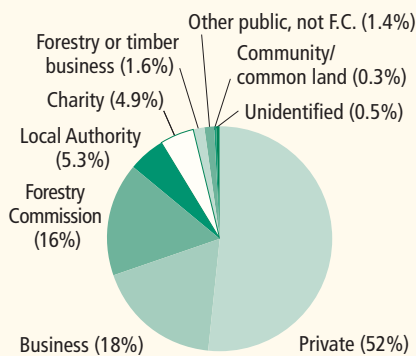
Proportion of regional woodland cover by county



Woodland coverage by forest type



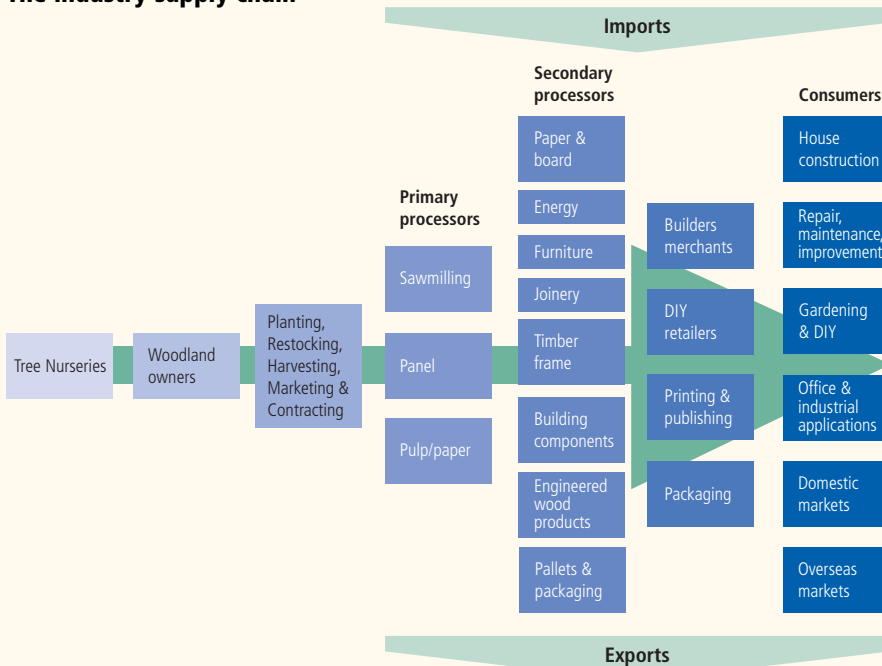
Woodland and forest ownership



The woodland and forestry industry

Woodland and related industries are significant in the West Midlands economy: there are approximately 2,770 businesses, employing 30,000 people and accounting for 1.3% of total employment. Three quarters of these are micro-businesses, with only 1–10 employees. The industry is particularly important to the region’s rural economy, where it accounts for 1.8% of employees and where self-employment in forestry operations is concentrated.

The industry supply chain

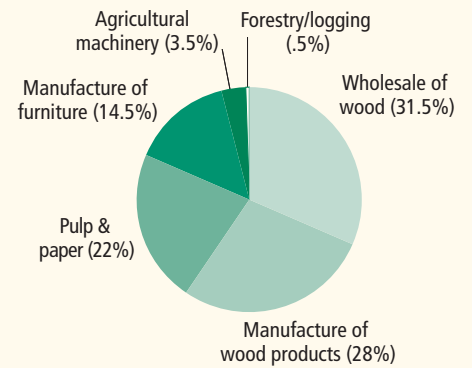


The potential demand for timber in the West Midlands is strong, with the country’s manufacturing heartland and second largest metropolitan area within its boundaries. The main market for timber is construction. It is, however, not usual for timber to be grown, converted, manufactured and bought locally. A number of initiatives are under way, aimed at creating markets for local wood and wood products as well as developing new products.

Recruitment and retention of skilled workers is a key challenge. It is particularly important to ensure that training is provided in areas such as business management, IT and health and safety. New initiatives have been introduced to provide appropriate support to increase the profitability and productivity of existing businesses through business and technical advice and training. Those businesses that have invested in training and new equipment have been seen to benefit.

There are further opportunities to expand and improve businesses, to develop existing and new markets and to increase collaboration with industry in neighbouring regions.

Woodland industry employment



Sustainable wood products – Duchy Original Furniture

A chain of local businesses are working together to produce sustainable woodland products. The Duchy Estate in Aconbury supplies timber to Whitney sawmill to mill and dry. The timber is then manufactured into garden furniture by local craftsmen. The final product carries the Duchy label, demonstrating to consumers that it is a high class and certified product.

Local wood products – The Ironbridge Woodland Products Initiative

The Severn Gorge Countryside Trust manages more than 270 hectares of woodland along the Ironbridge Gorge and through Coalbrookdale. The Ironbridge Woodland Products Initiative works with local schools, craft training centres and centres for adults with learning disabilities to help them source their wood locally. This is milled and dried and used to make a variety of products, from charcoal to fencing and furniture.

Rural capacity building – Heartwoods

Heartwoods, established in 2002 as a subsidiary of the Small Woods Association, provides support in a number of areas, including sustainable woodland management, business planning and capital investment, product development and innovation, and marketing and promotion. Currently Heartwoods mainly covers the Rural Regeneration Zone in the west but the intention is to expand to cover the whole region.



Wood-fired central heating

A 700kW automatic wood-fired central heating system has been installed in Worcestershire's County Hall to replace the previous gas system. Consuming some 600 tonnes of wood per year, it is one of the largest in the UK.

The Marches Wood Energy Network

MWEN provides an information and support service to people considering the use of wood energy for their property. Grants are available for the installation of wood energy appliances.

The initial activities of the MWEN suggest significant potential interest from farm owners that have woodland resources on their estates. Following just two articles in local newspapers, the MWEN was contacted by over one hundred properties asking for assistance in investigating the potential for using wood energy.

Wood energy can provide income for forest owners and create local employment, whilst mitigating climate change

Wood energy

Wood energy, particularly in the form of heat generation, has the potential to contribute to renewable energy production in the West Midlands and to mitigate climate change. It can provide an additional source of income for forest owners and can create employment and income for businesses who manufacture and install wood energy systems.

At present applications of wood energy are limited in number and are predominantly located in public buildings such as schools and county halls. Significant advances have been made in establishing support for the development of wood energy, including the development of a Regional Wood Energy Strategy and the establishment of the Marches Wood Energy Network.

The region is well placed to become the leading player in England in wood energy. It has plentiful sources of fuel from forests and wood-based manufacturing that could readily be supplemented by energy crops and clean waste wood.

A number of barriers will need to be overcome if the use of wood energy is to become widespread. In particular, the capital costs of installing wood energy infrastructure are currently prohibitively high and markets for wood energy remain underdeveloped. Research into the economics, technology and environmental impact of the use of waste wood for energy production would be valuable to assessing the potential application of wood energy in the region.





Recycling

Wood fibre from municipal, commercial and industrial waste is highly recyclable and represents an important element of the value of wood and paper products. The recycling of wood fibre can increase the sustainability of economic activities and contribute to regional recycling targets.

New incentives for recycling in the UK have led to significant increases in the demand for 'waste' wood fibre for paper, board and wood energy. This has been accompanied by investment in infrastructure to enable the use of recycled fibre.

The increased demand for recycled wood fibre offers market opportunities for waste management companies. Waste arising from the large urban and industrialised areas of the region is an important source of supply of waste wood fibre.

The promotion of markets for recycled wood requires careful consideration of infrastructure requirements such as waste processing facilities and transport as well as ensuring that information on available technology is accessible to the industry.

Emerging markets for recycling

Sonae UK's new state-of-the-art board mill near Liverpool uses predominantly recycled wood fibre. With good transport links between the North West and the West Midlands, this presents an important market for waste wood fibre and an opportunity for waste management companies in the region.



Recycling wood fibre can increase the sustainability of economic activities and contribute to regional recycling targets



Recreation and tourism

Woodlands and forests provide settings for recreation, hosting a broad range of activities, including walking, bird watching, horse riding, cycling, mountain and quad biking, car rallies, paint balling, shooting and craft making. They also contain a wealth of archaeological sites of interest. In 1998 an estimated 38 million day trips were made to woodlands and forests in the West Midlands – equivalent to over 7 visits per resident per year.

These activities bring economic benefits: visitors spend approximately £144 million per year and surveys indicate that they would be willing to pay a further £57 million for the non-market benefits they derive from woodlands.

Woodlands and forests contribute more broadly to recreation and tourism by providing a high quality environment. In particular, woodland is integral to the region’s Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in, for example, Wye Valley, Cannock Chase, the Malvern Hills and the Shropshire Hills. Woodland in urban areas has a special importance for those unable to travel far. The value to landscape of trees and woodlands in the West Midlands is estimated at £41.8 million and 51,500 jobs in the tourism sector rely on the quality of the environment.

There is considerable potential to develop further woodland and forestry-related tourism and recreation activities. Perhaps the greatest opportunities lie in encouraging tourists to visit woodlands and forests as part of short-break experiences. The close proximity of woodlands and forests to historic towns and cities and other attractions is a special feature of the West Midlands. Short breaks account for 30% of total holiday expenditure and short-break expenditure is expected to grow at 5% per year over the next five to ten years.

Accommodation for woodland-based tourism, more visitor facilities such as cycle paths and visitor centres, and better public access would help woodlands to capture a greater share of the recreation market.

Making woodland part of the tourist experience

The National Forest shows how facilities in forests and woodlands (such as nature trails, cafés, adventure playgrounds etc.) can complement other tourism attractions, encouraging visitors into an area and generating substantial revenue. In 1999 the Forest area received 5.7 million visitors spending a total of £128 million.

Every year, 38 million day trips are made to woodlands and forests in the West Midlands – equivalent to over 7 visits per resident per year



Health and well-being

Woodlands and trees bring important benefits to people's physical and mental health through providing recreational opportunities, improving air quality and enhancing the quality of the environment. Taking part in woodland activities can reduce the incidence of coronary heart disease and decrease obesity and stress levels. Improvements in air quality also contribute to a decreased incidence of respiratory diseases such as asthma, especially in urban areas.

These benefits have important economic implications, including increased worker productivity, decreased sickness absence and reduced burden on health services. The value of woodlands and trees to health in the West Midlands is estimated at £4.5 million.

A number of organised woodland health initiatives are underway, based predominantly on walking activities. Important target groups are young people in urban areas and ethnic minority groups whose cultures may prevent them from using public amenities such as swimming pools. Advances are also being made in developing links between woodlands and mental health. The Forestry Commission, for example, is running a healthy living programme of guided walks in several of its forests, and the National Urban Forestry Unit is leading the development of walks for health within the Black Country Urban Forest.

Although examples of best practice exist, there is little recognition of these at a strategic policy level. The links between woodland and health could be strengthened further by developing partnerships between woodland-based initiatives and health organisations such as Primary Care Trusts, GPs and mental health professionals, and other regional health initiatives, particularly in the region's most deprived areas.



The value of woodlands and trees to health in the West Midlands is estimated at £4.5 million



Education, learning and skills

Woodlands and forests provide a means of learning about the natural environment and its relationship to human activities, helping to develop an awareness of the links between rural and urban areas and educating people about healthier and more environmentally friendly lifestyles. They also provide opportunities for developing new skills, such as woodland-related crafts. The value of education and skills development activities in woodlands and forests is estimated at £2 million per year.

There are many examples of formal educational opportunities provided through the region's woodlands, such as the following:

- Cannock Chase and Wyre Forest have education centres, benefitting up to 22,000 children per year, as part of the Forest Education Initiative (FEI).
- The Forest of Mercia produces education packs for schools, including information on renewable energy and the wider benefits of forests, also part of the FEI. Schools within the Forest have been involved in a range of educational projects, such as conserving wildlife and planting trees.
- The National Urban Forestry Unit has helped to create woodlands in more than 60 schools through the Black Country Urban Forest Millennium Programme.



There are a range of skills-development activities aimed at bringing adults back into employment, re-engaging children excluded from school in the education system and working with people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

- Groundwork runs an intermediate labour market training scheme which employs people on temporary contracts to encourage them into permanent jobs through skills development and work experience.

Woodlands and forests nurture an understanding of the natural environment and bring opportunities to develop new skills

There remains significant potential to increase the contribution woodlands and forests make to education, learning and skills for both children and adults. Examples of best practice need to be rolled out to elsewhere in the region. There is also a need to build upon existing strategic links with formal learning targets such as the national curriculum and NVQs, and to integrate with the New Deal and other Government schemes.





Fostering social inclusion

Woodland activities such as tree planting, walking and craft training can provide a forum for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds from local communities to come together and learn about, enjoy and improve their environment. In this way, woodland-based activities play an important role in community capacity building and social inclusion, particularly in the region's more deprived areas.

Of the 789 wards in the West Midlands, 153 are in the top 20% of the most deprived wards in England. Fostering social inclusion is essential to combating poverty and regenerating these areas.

A number of pioneering community-based initiatives in the West Midlands are focused on activities in the region's woodlands and on the creation of new woodlands in urban and urban fringe areas. Woodland-based activities have also been successful in engaging ethnic minorities.

Combating social exclusion is an increasing concern in national- and regional-level policy making. Significant potential exists to build on the successes of woodland initiatives to develop woodlands' contribution to social inclusion in urban and rural areas. The new 'Living Spaces' initiative will help to empower communities to have a greater say in the look of their local landscape. Woodland activities could be expanded to address social concerns such as drug abuse and crime.



The New Leaf project

The REACT-funded New Leaf project has undertaken a series of events, including community consultation, site meetings, walks and community work days with training in woodland skills.

Planting trees in the community

Working in partnership with local communities to plan and execute its activities is at the heart of the Forest of Mercia's approach and hundreds of people are engaged in tree planting and management activities in the Forest.

Engaging ethnic minorities

The Greenwood Trust 'Greenwood 2000' project successfully engaged Muslim communities from three of Telford's most deprived wards in woodland craft activities despite initial reluctance on the part of these communities. Investment in time and trust building were essential to overcoming cultural and other barriers and to making the project a success.

Woodland-based activities play an important role in community capacity building and social inclusion, particularly in more deprived areas



Enhancing biodiversity

Woodlands are home to a diversity of tree species and other vegetation and provide habitats for a broad range of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and insects. The region contains one quarter of the 526 priority species identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and 21 of the 26 priority wildlife habitats. There are also some 424 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Public enjoyment and appreciation of woodland biodiversity is estimated to be worth £65.7 million per year.

Native broadleaf woodland and, in particular, ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) make the greatest contribution to biodiversity. The West Midlands has one of England's most important resources of ASNW: it has just over 10% of the country's broadleaved woodland and around half of this is thought to be ASNW. The Wyre Forest has been described as England's third most important woodland. In heavily populated urban areas, woodland and trees in parks and gardens are also highly valued habitats for the many species that thrive in the urban forest.



A number of innovative schemes to encourage the management and restoration of ASNW are underway, such as the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust's management of Ironbridge Gorge, and the Woolhope Dome Initiative. The latter is aimed at conserving and enhancing the Woolhope Dome, a 60km² area of special landscape and a stronghold for many BAP species, through working in partnership with local people to improve, restore or extend a variety of landscapes, including ancient woodlands.

Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) are also significant contributors to biodiversity. They are ancient woods in which the former tree cover has been replaced, often with non-native trees. Important features of ancient woodland often survive in these woods, including characteristic flora and fauna, and archaeology. Many organisations, such as the Woodland Trust, have projects underway to restore PAWS to semi-natural states.

The integration of enhanced habitat diversity with landscape improvements can also help biodiversity conservation. To this end, the Forest of Mercia has worked in partnership with farmers, encouraging them to plant hedgerows and trees to increase the aesthetic and biodiversity value of farmland. In some areas, woodlands serve as corridors for wildlife to travel between areas of habitat and are often strategically planted for this purpose.

A Regional Biodiversity Strategy is currently being developed to bridge the gap between the UK BAP, the English Biodiversity Strategy and local BAPs. This will play an important role, as there is no regional-level biodiversity strategy at present, and it will set out a strategic approach to conserving and enhancing biodiversity in the region.

Considerable opportunities exist for the restoration and expansion of native woodland. There is also potential to raise the biodiversity value of the region's woodlands through improved and sensitive management and by bringing unmanaged woodland under management.

The West Midlands has one of England's most important resources of ancient semi-natural woodland and a quarter of its priority species





Benefits to the natural and cultural environment

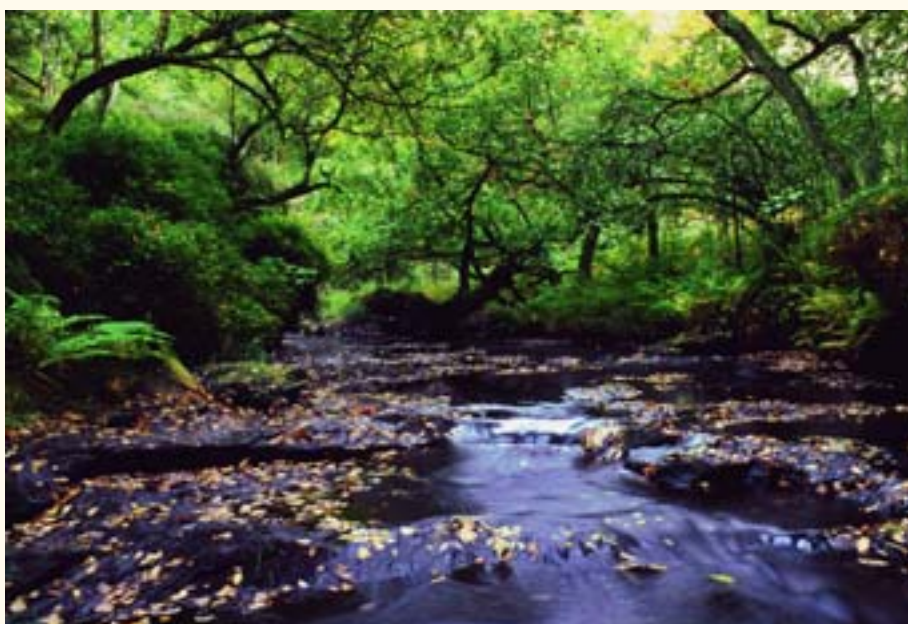
Woodlands and trees yield a diverse array of other environmental benefits. Of particular importance is the role they play in removing and storing carbon from the atmosphere and thereby helping to mitigate global warming. The economic, social and environmental costs associated with global warming are potentially catastrophic; the value of this benefit to the West Midlands is estimated at £9.9 million.

Woodlands are also important for flood control, with an estimated value to the region of £0.5 million (based on the reductions in insurance costs for properties at risk from flooding). In some cases, woodland planting has been pursued explicitly to prevent flooding, such as along the Burton on Trent floodplain. Woodlands and trees also have a positive effect on water quality in catchment areas, resulting from the filtration of nitrates from agricultural land uses.

In upland areas woodlands aid microclimate regulation by increasing condensation from cloud cover. In urban areas woodlands and trees contribute to improved air quality by filtering pollutants and providing shade. This brings health benefits to residents, such as decreased incidence of asthma and other respiratory diseases. For example, a recent study estimated that 140 premature deaths could be avoided by maximising the potential to extend urban forest.

Woodlands also contribute to the cultural environment by protecting archaeological sites and forming an important aspect of the region's historic landscapes. They are often home to sites of cultural importance, including hill forts, monuments and archaeological remains below ground, as well as providing an attractive backdrop to other historic sites. Organisations such as Forest Enterprise liaise closely with English Heritage to ensure that full consideration is given to sites of archaeological interest within the management and creation of woodlands and forests. Retention and sensitive management of woodland can protect and enhance sites of archaeological importance.

Woodlands and trees prevent flooding, improve air quality and mitigate global warming





Roadside tree planting

The Green Arc Partnership, involving over forty partners from Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Birmingham, is strategically planting new woodland to screen development and enhance the landscape of the M6 Toll road corridor.

Planting for regeneration

Tree planting has been integral to a series of environmental improvements aimed at regenerating the Premier Business Park in Walsall. Previously the park was severely degraded but since environmental improvements were undertaken in 1994 it has attracted nearly 4,000 new employees, £7.4 million of new investment and at least nine new companies.

Woodland enhances development, brings investment and provides a cost-effective means of land regeneration

Brownfield areas in the National Forest

Developing the National Forest has involved extensive planting on brownfield areas, including urban and urban fringe areas around Burton upon Trent.

Hednesford Brickworks regeneration

In the Forest of Mercia the restoration of Hednesford Brickworks has provided new homes and business premises as well as extensive areas of woodland.

Improving development and land regeneration

Woodlands and trees can help to mitigate the negative visual impacts of roads and other built development. At the same time they can contribute to attractive green settings for permitted development and encourage inward investment. There are several examples of woodland and trees being planted for these reasons in the West Midlands, and the Black Country Urban Forest is frequently cited as the most comprehensive example in the UK. Advance planting of woodland around the perimeter of vacant development sites can increase their attractiveness to local residents and businesses and will contribute to a greener image for the region.

Woodlands and trees are estimated to contribute £20.7 million to the West Midlands, increasing property prices by creating a more desirable environment in which to live and work.

Woodlands provide a cost-effective and attractive after-use for brownfield land, including land reclaimed from minerals working and industrial and urban wasteland. Land reclamation and regeneration are a priority in the West Midlands – in 1998 the region contained 12% of England’s derelict land.

Opportunities remain to develop woodlands’ role in brownfield land reclamation and to better integrate trees and woodland into new developments such as business parks, public buildings and residential areas. The Forestry Commission with others is compiling a database of brownfield land with potential for reclamation to woodland. This database should provide a useful basis for prioritising support. In many instances pioneer woodland is already successfully colonising post-industrialised land, and a positive policy of encouragement and long-term management would provide an excellent model of sustainable urban greening.





The bottom line: a summary of economic benefits

The diverse array of benefits yielded by woodland and forestry make direct and indirect contributions to the region’s economy. Some benefits, such as revenue and employment in woodland-related industries, can be easily valued whereas others, such as the contribution of woodland to biodiversity, are more difficult to assess. (The figures in the table below are current best estimates and they may change as more information is gathered. Calculations and derivations can be found in the full report, *Woodland and Forestry in the West Midlands*.)

Summary of economic benefits	
Nature of benefit	Estimated annual value (£ million)
Forestry gross output (including indirect and induced effects)	90.8
Timber processing gross output (including indirect and induced effects)	229.6
Total timber benefits	320.4
Landscape	41.8
Built development	20.7
Recreation and tourism-related expenditure	144–195.4
Non-market benefits of recreation and tourism	57.0
Education	2.0
Biodiversity	65.7
Carbon sequestration	9.9
Flood control	0.5
Health	4.5
Total non-timber benefits	346.1–397.5
Total timber and non-timber benefits	666.5–717.9



Moving forward

Contributing to regional priorities

This section looks at the specific contributions woodlands and forests can make to regional priorities, as identified in the Regional Economic Strategy (the first four priorities below), the Sustainability Strategy and other documents.

Developing a diverse and dynamic business base

Environmental technologies – Wood energy could be integrated into the environmental technologies cluster.

Tourism and leisure – Since woodlands and forests provide important opportunities for tourism and leisure, they could be seen as an integral part of the tourism and leisure cluster.

High value added – Wood products could be developed and promoted through the high-value-added cluster, for example through the use of cellulose derivatives in the body panels of automotive vehicles.

Micro-clusters and linkages – Micro-clusters could be established for parts of the sector, such as SME wood-using and wood energy businesses, and in areas with high concentrations of woodland-related activities, such as the Marches. Linkages could be developed to clusters in neighbouring regions, such as Wales.

Promoting learning and developing skills

Woodland-based activities can promote life-long learning and return people to work. They can engage people with learning disabilities and those who have dropped out of education. In urban areas, woodlands can facilitate learning about the natural environment. This can contribute to regional objectives relying on individual behaviour, such as the recycling of municipal waste.





Creating the conditions for growth

Woodland and trees help create the conditions for growth by regenerating land and providing a green setting for development. Woodlands are also a setting for recreation and tourism. Particular focus needs to be given to the potential of woodlands to contribute to the Regeneration Zones.

Regenerating communities

Woodland-based activities are able to engage communities in the improvement of their local environment. Such activities have been used in innovative ways to engage ethnic minorities and deprived communities.

Contributing to a better environment

Creating a better environment should go hand in hand with economic development and social progress. In addition to providing essential environmental services such as carbon sequestration, air quality improvements and flood control, well-managed woodlands encourage biodiversity and wildlife conservation, and contribute to the attractiveness of the landscape.

Improving health and well-being

Woodlands are able to improve health and well-being through providing opportunities for recreation and exercise, improving air quality (particularly in urban areas), and through enhancing the quality of the general environment.





Building a regional forestry framework

To realise its full potential, the sector needs to develop an overarching vision of where it wants to be, with clearly defined goals and actions. This will provide a framework for moving forward, mechanisms for making progress and a means of measuring this. Without such a framework, any progress is likely to be piecemeal and confined to specific areas, activities and organisations.

In recognition of this need, key regional organisations with an interest and involvement in the woodland and forestry sector have come together to develop the Regional Forestry Framework (a regional expression of the England Forestry Strategy), supported by a forum representing the diversity of interests. This report marks the beginning of the process.

The framework will be based on an awareness of the ways that different activities and their associated benefits are interrelated. It will build on the linkages between the woodland and forestry sector and key regional strategies, including economic development and regeneration, rural diversification, urban–rural linkages, tourism, health, biodiversity and sustainable development.

The goal is to foster development of the woodland and forestry sector and to enhance its contribution to the economy, quality of life and environment of the West Midlands.





Further information

For further information on the issues covered in this report, please write to

The Conservator
Forestry Commission
West Midlands Conservancy
Block B, Government Buildings
Whittington Road
Worcester WR5 2FR

tel: 01905 761220

or visit www.forestry.gov.uk.





West Midlands
Regional Assembly

