

# GROWING OUR FUTURE

## BRIEFING WEST MIDLANDS WOODLAND & FORESTRY FORUM

DECEMBER 2007

Issue 5

### Woodland & Forestry Forum

At the November Forum meeting we welcomed 33 members together with our new Chair, Forestry Commissioner, Judith Webb, and Vice-Chair, Sophie Churchill, Chief Executive of the National Forest Company. There was a very full agenda with presentations giving a flavour of the range of projects and activities to do with trees and woodland across the region and beyond

### Delivery Deadline

The implementation of the West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework's Delivery Plan is ongoing and the next monitoring point is 31 March 2008, after which we have the opportunity to refresh and update for 2008-2011. Look out for the monitoring pro-forma which will be sent to you early in the New Year. For further details, annual reports and task group updates please visit our website: [www.growingourfuture.org](http://www.growingourfuture.org)

### Woodworks – Last Call

The very successful Woodworks programme is coming to an end. There are still training places available, but do hurry. Training advice and funded courses are available to all working in forestry or woodland related businesses in the West Midlands Region. For information on courses see the Green Wood Centre website <http://www.greenwoodcentre.org.uk>

### Heartwoods Directory

Supporting and developing the woodlands and timber industry of the West Midlands, Heartwoods have just re-launched their website and produced an updated and growing Woodland Services and Products Directory [www.heartwoods.co.uk/directory](http://www.heartwoods.co.uk/directory) Free to register, this is a valuable service for local businesses potentially gaining them new clients and as a source of local information on contractors, services, timber marketing and lots more.

### Nature on the Map

A new resource available, provided by Natural England, it shows different land uses including national and international designations, grants, BAP habitats and agri-environment schemes (ESA, EWGS, WGS). You can specify a place name, post code, etc. which will zoom you to that location [www.natureonthemap.org.uk/map.aspx?map=aesand](http://www.natureonthemap.org.uk/map.aspx?map=aesand)

### Forest School WIG

Forest School, based on a Scandinavian idea, offers regular opportunities for young people to visit woodland and carry out practical activities that satisfy both the school curriculum and promote confidence and self esteem. Aiming to involve schools in every county across the West Midlands, grants worth a total of £180,000 over three years have been made available. For further details contact Wendy Edgerton (01584 877544) or the website [www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-76QBUW](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-76QBUW)

### RSS Phase 3

The Draft Project Plan for the Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Three Revision can be seen on the website at [www.wmra.gov.uk/rssphase3](http://www.wmra.gov.uk/rssphase3). Phase 3 covers quality of environment issues including trees, woodlands and forests. If you wish to obtain a paper copy email [wmrass@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:wmrass@wmra.gov.uk) or phone 0121 245 0200. The Draft Project Plan is out for public consultation until 18 January 2008.

### Connecting to Success

The new West Midlands Economic Strategy has been launched together with a number of supporting documents. At the same time, consultation on the draft Delivery Framework for the Strategy has started. This consultation is an opportunity to contribute views on how the strategy should be delivered and how organisations and partnerships across the region can play a role in delivery. To download the draft Delivery Framework, the 'Guide to responding to the consultation' and a number of other supporting documents, please visit [www.advantagewm.co.uk](http://www.advantagewm.co.uk)

### Grow with Wyre – 'Re-energise the Wyre'

This project strand seeks to encourage the revitalisation of sustainable land management practices which will relate back to the historic land uses of the area, the sourcing and utilisation of local products and the promotion of sustainable transport, energy and water efficiency measures. In effect, reducing the carbon footprint of the Wyre Forest Area and the resource flows in and out of the Scheme Area. It therefore extends much further than wood fuel issues but nevertheless the Wyre Woodfuel Pathfinder work will provide important outcomes and help meet Re-Energise the Wyre targets. More details from [amanda.pearce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.pearce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

### RDPE – Open fully for business in the New Year

The Rural Development Plan for England (RDPE) has been agreed by the EU Rural Development Committee allowing full implementation of the new Programme in January 2008. New contracts for the English Woodland Grant Scheme under Axis 2 can then be approved. An updated EWGS plan and Q&A document can be found on our RDPE web page <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/rdpe>

In liaison with forestry sector partners, we have submitted an outline bid under the other Axis of the RDPE Programme. This initial bid to RDPE mainly focuses on support for the wood fuel supply chain but we look to widen the bid where possible or at least include pointers for bids which should follow later in the Programme; for example, in respect of wider forestry business support, skills development and in areas such as woodland related tourism and venison production. As a forestry sector we must provide clear evidence of need and the relevance to the Regional Economic Strategy if significant support from the RDPE Programme is to be achieved beyond the forestry grants under Axis 2.

### England's Trees, Woods and Forests

Forum members and Task Groups are being encouraged to get involved in the developing of the Delivery Plan for the new strategy. Forestry Commission and Natural England are leading this work and it is important that we focus on the plan's synergy and connections with our own Regional Forestry Framework. Forestry Commission Regional Director, Bill Heslegrave, has promised to keep us updated.

### Woodfuel Challenge

Increasing income from FC timber sales has allowed a significant injection of funding into Woodfuel with the formation of a Challenge Fund for FC regions to bid into. We decided to base the bid on the Wyre Woodfuel Pathfinder, which would also link to the 'Grow with Wyre' HLF project and we are delighted to report funding has been secured for a £50,000 two-year programme, linked to working alongside Forest Research. More details available from [andy@heartwoods.co.uk](mailto:andy@heartwoods.co.uk)

### Opening the GATE – Cross Border Opportunities

We have held talks with Forestry Commission Wales colleagues in terms of closer and collaborative working following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Welsh Assembly and the West Midlands Regional Assembly. At the Forum meeting they gave a stimulating account of their successful EU funded GATE project – Gaining Added Value for Timber in Europe. We will be continuing to liaise with Wales to see if the next phase of the project could include opportunities for the West Midlands

### Dates for your diary


16 January 2008	WMRFF Steering Group Meeting
16 January 2008	Trees, Woods & Forests Biodiversity Task Group
June 2008	Woodland & Forestry Forum Meeting (Warwickshire)
18-20 September	APF Forestry Exhibition (Cannock Chase)
November 2008	Woodland & Forestry Forum Meeting (Shropshire)

**For more information on the Forestry Framework, the Woodland & Forestry Forum and the Task Groups contact:**

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**Website: [www.growingourfuture.org](http://www.growingourfuture.org)**



Compliments of the Season and  
Best Wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year