

# Independent Panel on Forestry

May 2012

Newsletter 3



Panel members hear about the symptoms and impact of the disease *Phytophthora ramorum*.  
Devon visit 26<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

## Stay informed

We will send the next newsletter to those who have asked to be kept informed, as soon as the Panel's Final Report is published in July.

However, if you are no longer interested in receiving information about the Panel please let us know by emailing us with **Unsubscribe** in the subject line to [forestrypanel@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:forestrypanel@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

Or, write to us at this address:

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## Building on the Progress Report

The Independent Panel on Forestry was set up in 2011 to advise the government on the future of forests and woods in England. Welcome to the third newsletter from the Panel, which outlines some of the activities of the Panel since the publication of the Progress Report in December.

Building on the information in the 42,000 responses to the Panel's Call for Views, the members have been busy on a range of tasks:

- getting out and about to visit forest locations in ten areas,
- commissioning literature reviews and economic research,
- learning from two workshops organized on its behalf
- hosting representatives of key national organisations at a discussion event in January.

## Gaining a deeper understanding

In developing the recommendations for the Final report, the Panel has commissioned specialists to explore some topics in greater depth. Their literature reviews, workshop notes and research reports are being made [available on the website](#), now, and when the Final Report is published.

An early report to be submitted was a consideration of approaches to forestry internationally. The five countries investigated were Sweden, New Zealand, Denmark, Germany (Nordrhein and West Falen) and the State of Ohio in the United States of America. This research reveals the different approaches to policy and forest ownership in each country.

The project's first technical report by URS Scott Wilson looks at the economic infrastructure of forestry in England. This research covers the woodland economy, woodland management and woodland creation. A second phase of this work, to be published alongside the Final report, explores how greater activity may be achieved.

The Panel also commissioned literature reviews of access and community involvement in woodlands by Forest Research. Their work on 'community forest governance' highlights the diversity of approaches and the UK's place as a leader in this area. The report on 'public access to woodlands and forests' substantiates the activities and benefits people gain from access.

A summary of a workshop about the cultural and social issues affecting woodland and forest policy in England is available, as is a report about the requirements for long term forest research and its importance given the increasing incidence and impact of pests and disease.



A large timber dam forming one part of the Slowing the Flow project near Pickering. Yorkshire visit 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011.



Charles Lacey (woodland owner), left, talking to Panel members Sir Harry Studholme and John Varley about his woodland and wood fuelled district heating system. Devon visit 26<sup>th</sup> January 2012.



The Panel hear about work taking place on the Wyken Estate. East Anglia visit 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

## Out and about in England's woodlands

There is no substitute for directly hearing from those involved and over the year the Panel has made 10 visits to woods and forests across England. These visits explored the multipurpose nature of woodland and highlighted many examples of good practice under different ownership and management approaches.

Out on their visits, the panel saw how various partnership arrangements operated in different areas. This highlighted the inter-relationships between Forestry Commission staff, forestry agents, voluntary sector organisations and local project leads.

Public access and community engagement was a topic discussed across the country, with the Forest of Dean and New Forest visits particularly highlighting the depth of cultural connection between the local community and their forest. Elsewhere other initiatives demonstrated the extent of local involvement, including the Greenwood Forest in Nottinghamshire, the Ward Forester Project in Devon, the Wyre Community Land Trust and the Green Light Trust in East Anglia.

An important aspect explored was how forests are managed for multiple uses including timber production and wildlife protection alongside informal and commercial recreation facilities. The use of wood for local heat generation was examined in Devon, while in the Kielder Forest the scale of the operation emphasised the strategic importance of the wood processing industry.

Ongoing work mentoring forestry related businesses and the provision of forestry training and apprenticeships was a topic considered in depth in both Cumbria and the Wyre Forest, where local activity is helping to combat the issues of rural deprivation and unemployment.

When visiting the "Slowing the Flow" project in Yorkshire, members saw firsthand how trees were being used in a pilot scheme to reduce flooding. Here and elsewhere, the role of trees in providing a wide range of environmental benefits was discussed.

Practical forestry issues were also covered, such as coping with pests and diseases affecting woodlands, reducing deer and squirrel damage and the challenges of managing woodlands on steep terrain. The visits have proven to be a central part of the Panel's work - full details of each one are on the website

**DIARY DATE: 4TH JULY**

PUBLICATION OF THE FINAL REPORT