

Summary of Consultation Hub engagement for Dyfi Forest Resource Plan (September 2021)

There were 44 responses to the consultation.

A number of responses expressed what was liked and disliked about the plans:

11 liked the Ancient Woodland Restoration and management, and more broadleaves

11 liked the wildlife and biodiversity

9 liked the plans in general

5 liked the reduction in conifers

2 liked that more thinning management will occur

1 liked being consulted

1 liked the removal of diseased larch

1 liked the paths, routes and links between communities

6 disliked the lack of focus on recreation and mountain biking facilities

5 disliked the negative effects of clear felling

3 disliked the potential damage to off-piste trails

2 disliked the lack of detail in the plans

1 disliked the reduction in future timber production

1 disliked Sitka spruce

1 disliked Minimum Intervention

1 disliked the lack of focus on carbon sequestration.

Overall, there were more positive comments (40) about the plans than negative comments (20).

All comments were noted and considered by NRW for further actions. Generally, the plan was liked and the three most popular positive comments all related to the future proposals for the forest and the potential for further enhancement of wildlife and biodiversity. The three most common dislikes related to clear-felling and lack of focus on mountain biking or the potential damaged caused to mountain bike routes caused by forest operations such as clear-felling. These themes also carried on in the proposed 'Improvements' section of the consultation (see below)

The following Comments and Suggestions were raised both in general, and in order to help improve the plans:

Mountain biking:

Preserve and enhance mountain bike trails/ Protect off-piste trails/ Maintain MTB trails despite forest operations/ More information how MTB routes are affected and repaired when felling occurs/ Maintain 'Climax' and off-piste trails/ Danger of losing unofficial trails.

Greater emphasis of mountain biking provision and supporting recreational facilities.

Make income from Mountain Biking e.g. car parks and reinvest back in to the forest

Work with local MTB group/ Engage with local MTB group about forest operations around unofficial trails

Don't miss opportunity to work with local Mountain bike community to build on the positive work already achieved in the forest.

Build on Dyfi forest MTB legacy popularity and recent expansion as a major resource for visitors and local economy

NRW is in the process of setting a management agreement with Dyfi Mountain biking for the day to day running of the Climach-x trail. NRW are also working to find a suitable resolution around 'Wild Trails' in the Dyfi Forest. Since many of these trails are now mapped, where possible, damage to trails due to felling operations can be avoided.

MTB is not universally popular and MTB trails encourage Motorbikes

NRW recognises the impacts of Motorbikes on other forest users and does not permit motorbikes. Experience and evidence show, that in areas where there are no MTB tracks, motorbikes still persist. More often than not, isolated areas, where there is less formal recreation, can attract illegal motorbike activity.

Other Recreation:

6 responses asked for provision and to address the needs for overnight stays for motorhomes similar to French style 'Aires'

Address the needs and popularity of Campervan and motorhome visitors to the area

Currently, NRW has no plans to provide French style 'Aires' or overnight camping facilities for campervans and motorhomes. In France these are often provided by local authorities in towns and are free. Outside of urban areas in the countryside, municipal and private campsites provide this service and are staffed at a cost to the tourist, similar to this country.

Allow provision for motor-cross bikes

Because of the conflict with other forest users NRW does not permit motorbiking in the forest. Forestry bylaws prohibit motor-biking.

Ensure engagement with local users to develop further provision for access to the forest for recreation, especially providing active, cultural opportunities for younger generations.

NRW already works with local groups and consults with communities when developing further recreation in the Dyfi area where appropriate.

Reinstate running trails in Tan-y-Coed

The old running trails were decommissioned as they were poorly used by the public. This was because of the difficulty of terrain and navigation. There are currently no plans to reopen or create new running trails in Tan-y-coed. Ideally any new trails would be more accessible to more people with an interest in running. In the meantime, NRW have taken opportunities to improve access in Pantperthog forest, by removal of Western hemlock regeneration, windblown trees and Rhododendron from various public rights of way around Pantperthog farm, Brynlyd and Cwmcadian, and reinstated three access points along the right of way by Alfa.

Support for local hiking routes such as 'Cambrian Way' may support local economy and relieve tourism pressure in other parts of Wales.

NRW continues to promote and support recreation and access in its forests, including long distant or regional routes such as the 'Cambrian Way'

Biodiversity and Woodland management:

3 responses asked for more Continuous Cover Forestry and natural regeneration to provide sustainable forest management and multiuse benefits.

The plan has tried to maximise the amount of practically achievable Continuous Cover Forestry, that is possible at this point in time. Further areas will be added to Continuous Cover Forestry management as the thinning plan is implemented over the next ten years. These areas will be identified and shown on future Forest Resource Plan revisions.

3 responses suggested: Do not clear fell/ Less clearfelling/ Stop clearfelling- Exacerbated flooding in Braich Goch Terrace due to clear felling.

Unfortunately, due to the Phytophthora ramorum and diseased larch and lack of historical thinning, clear felling is unavoidable. An example of this problem is in Dinas Mawddwy where the majority of

the forest is infected and has never been thinned previously. Opportunities for quick change. What is proposed by the plan is a gradual reduction of clear felling over the next 25 years, and more of the forest will be managed as Continuous Cover Forestry. Braich Goch terrace is in the catchment where private forestry has been felled in recent years and is not part of this plan.

2 responses asked for more connectivity of native habitats including 'Celtic Rainforest'

The plans show a substantial increase in native woodland expansion, including Ancient Woodland restoration, to be carried out over the next 10 to 35 years which will greatly improve connectivity of native woodland habitats in the forest.

3 responses proposing reintroduction of Beavers and Red Squirrels and rewilding projects

NRW works with partner organisations like Wildlife Trusts on projects for red squirrels and beavers and provides licenses for such introductions to areas. The Wildlife Trust Wales have also submitted an application to NRW to undertake a five year pilot project to release beavers into the wild in the Dyfi catchment.

Restore more Ancient Woodland Sites

The plans show a substantial area Ancient Woodland management and restoration to be carried out over the next 10 to 35 years. Together with the native woodland expansion, this will greatly improve native woodland habitats in the forest.

Remove Invasive Non-Native Species from Ancient Woodland sites in Pantperthog woods and also Aberllefenni.

Remove Invasive Non-Native Species from native woods by 'Maximum Intervention'

Get the invasive's under control with more manual management.

The amount of *Rhododendron ponticum* is of concern in Dinas Mawddwy

These types of operations are carried out around the forest as part management programs. Areas are identified by surveys. The most urgent areas that require management are prioritised with the budgets and funds available each year. Dinas Mawddwy has had some *Rhododendron* clearance work carried out recently.

Plant vertical bands of conifers and broadleaves to prevent conifer seeding into broadleaf areas.

This type of strip/band planting will not stop seeding into adjacent broadleaf areas. In fact using strip felling techniques are used to promote seeding downwind across strips. The best way to reduce conifer seeding into broadleaf areas is to make larger distinct areas of conifers and broadleaves and use less invasive conifer species, which the new plan proposes.

Create riparian buffer zones to mitigate against heavy metal and nitrogen runoff.

The plan proposes to increase size and extent of riparian zones in the Dyfi forest

Community:

More focus on local users, workers and people who live in the area

More consultation with all local community, not just MTB groups

This has been acknowledged and NRW have been consulting with the local community and local interest groups as part of this consultation.

Other comments and suggestions:

More details in plans needed

Forest Resource Plans are strategic long-term plans which require a certain level of detail. More detail is developed for each forest operation as and when the management is programmed to occur.

Show how NRW are improving biodiversity

A forest resource plan is renewed every 10 years and reviewed for progress every 5 years. Specific targets for Ancient Woodland restoration and management are set for each place and checked for progress. On a Wales scale the State of Natural Resources Report (SONAR) is produced every 5 years which charts progress in improving biodiversity.

Make more people aware of the plans / Good to see plans in public domain

NRW publish new forest resource plans on their website and communicate with stakeholders when a plan is renewed. This includes an extensive consultation which includes local groups and communities, neighbours, and also regional and national stakeholders.

Legally commit to delivery of plans

All forest resource plans go through regulatory checks and NRW's permitting process for approval and are legally committed to, under the forestry Act. In addition, The Welsh Government Woodland Estate is FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest

Certification) certified meeting high forest stewardship standards. As part of those standards plans are checked against progress and delivery as part of a regular UKWAS (United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard) audit.

Parts of Corris have been affected by flooding. What mitigation strategies are being put in place to make sure that communities and businesses won't be adversely impacted by the felling plans?

Have plans to embed water management

At forest resource plan scale, all management proposals, including thresholds of overall felling are checked especially in high-risk flood areas. All tree harvesting operations require a water management plan as part of the planning and contract process.

Have plans to increase Carbon sequestration

One of NRW's key priorities for managing the Welsh government Woodland Estate is to expand the woodland area of the Estate, both compensating for lost areas of woodland for open habitat and dep peat restoration and the increasing the overall wooded area of Wales. Also, the move to more Continuous Cover forestry over the next 30 years will also lock up more carbon in the forests, whilst still providing a good and sustainable source of timber and woodland products.

Plant economically useful trees and be self-sufficient in timber

This is a key priority of sustainable forest management on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate. The plan identifies areas for Ancient Woodland restoration, riparian woodland and open habitats. It also shows that a large proportion of the forest will be managed as conifers and broadleaves for timber production.

Stop rallying in the forest. It disrupts wildlife, causes pollution and annoys residents.

The NRW forests of mid-Wales have long been the heartlands of motorsports in WGWE. There are relatively few other activities that take place in the forest and the use of the roads fits well with the large timber volumes that use the forest road network. The rallies take place under a Master Agreement between NRW and Motorsports UK the National Governing Body. NRW and MSUK work together to spread the rally events throughout the forests of Wales both geographically and chronologically, to enable road repairs to consolidate before return. Rally Event Organisers pay directly for the road repairs through MSUK and a 'not for profit' company Rally4Wales. It allows the competitions to take place in WGWE and there is no cost to NRW. NRW are working with MSUK to improve the sustainability of their events and to reduce their carbon footprint. This approach has been signed off at NRW Board level.

Work with other private forestry landowners to co-ordinate timber haulage in the forest. Lots of potential lorries on long haulage route to Aberangell along the narrow council road. Carry out better consultation with Community Council about impacts of larch felling and haulage along narrow roads.

NRW are liaising with relevant private forestry owners where they may be affected by specific operations. For timber haulage relating to this Forest Resource Plan (FRP), NRW use established suitable routes that have least impact on local communities. Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) roads are utilised as an alternative to travelling on narrow minor public roads wherever possible. This FRP illustrates when coupes are due to be felled and many of the ones to be felled soonest will include larch. Larch felling will be incorporated into annual harvesting programmes and won't be additional volume to these, which means there shouldn't be a significant annual volume increase from the forests included in this FRP. Any new haulage routes required for areas included in this FRP will be subject to approval via the required processes and by the appropriate authorities.

Specific Comments and direct replies to groups:

Tan-y-coed residents have requested further specific consultation about removing large trees from around car park and houses.

NRW's Land Management team will be in direct contact with residents about managing trees around properties.

Continuous Cover Forestry Group have expressed concerns, of the lack of Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) in the plan.

NRW has replied directly to them explaining the limitations of the current crops and the intentions to expand CCF into the future in younger crops.

Dyfi Mountain Biking.cic have requested further commitment and collaboration to work with NRW on MTB provision in the Dyfi

NRW's Land Management Team are in direct contact and working with the group.