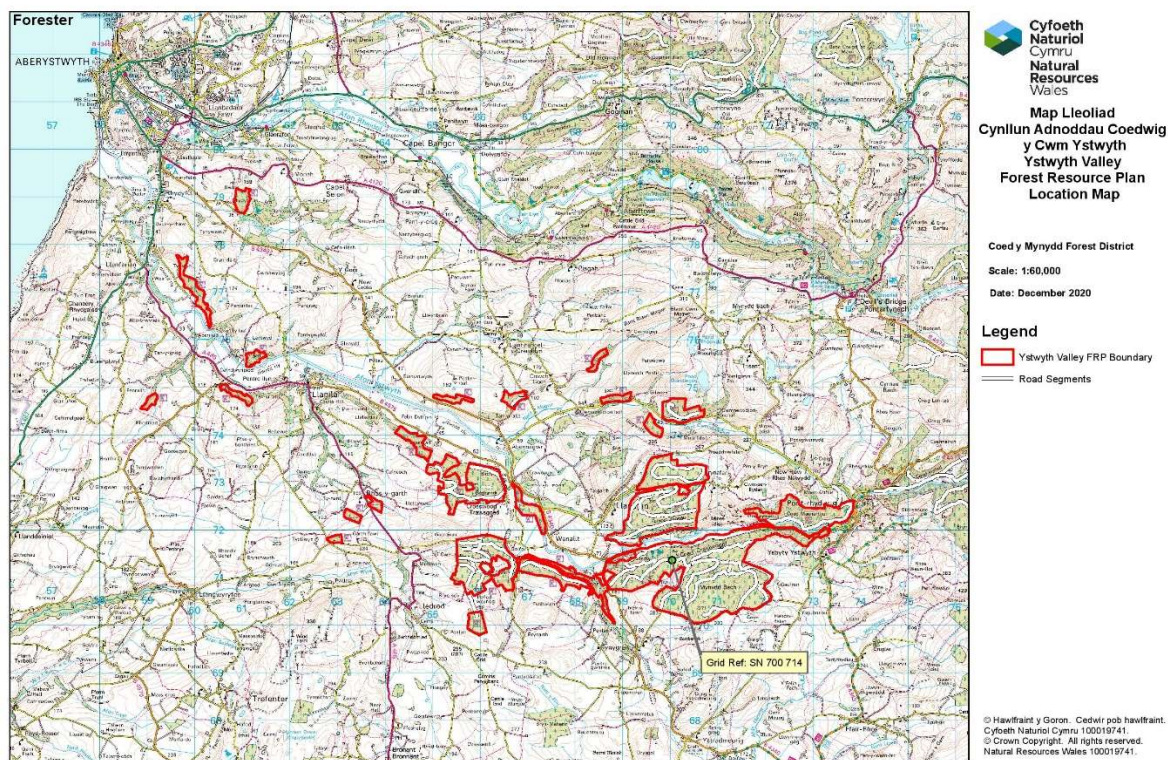


Ystwyth Valley Forest Resource Plan

Summary of Objectives

Location and Setting

- The Ystwyth Valley Forest Resource Plan amounts to 1,218 hectares, incorporating many of the discrete woodland blocks running along the valley, from the outskirts of Aberystwyth at its western extremity, to Pont Rhyd-y-groes, on the flanks of the Cambrian Mountains, in the east.
- The woodlands transition through several distinct zones, with the Lower Ystwyth containing numerous smaller blocks, forming an integral part of the rich agricultural and wooded landscape. Moving further up the valley, the dramatic landscape of the Ystwyth flood plain and gorge is bordered by substantial areas of diverse, yet productive, steep valley-side woodland. In its central and eastern reaches, these steep slopes rise onto more exposed parts of the Ceredigion upland plateaux, where more extensive areas of productive forestry have historically been managed.
- The whole of the forest resource plan area lies within Ceredigion Local Planning Authority.



Summary of Objectives

The following management objectives have been proposed in order to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems, and the benefits that they provide:

- **Maintain a sustainable supply of timber** production through the design of felling and choice of restock species and through the utilisation of site appropriate silvicultural systems.
- **Diversify the species and structural composition of the forest**, with consideration to both current and future site conditions, increasing resilience to pests, disease and climatic changes. An extensive, regular thinning program will facilitate the application of Low Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS) in appropriate crops and improve stability, quality and amenity value in remaining clearfell areas. The more productive compartments will lie within a robust network of riparian and native woodland, natural reserves, long term retentions and a mosaic of open habitats.
- **Manage for the protection of water and soils**, to facilitate improvements in riverine habitats within the Grogwynion SAC, Gro Ystwyth and Gro Ty'n yr Helig SSSIs and throughout the wider catchment. The buffering potential of existing riparian woodland will be expanded, establishing a network of successional and native woodland along streamside corridors, providing enhanced mitigation against mobilised sediments, and improving linkages between existing habitats.
- **Maintain and enhance priority habitats and support protected species**, with a focus on gradual restoration of Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), improving habitat connectivity and control of Invasive Non-Native Species. Linkages will be maintained along riparian zones, forest roads, PROW and other access routes, through appropriate management of verges, open ground and native woodland corridors. Undertakings will benefit key European protected species recorded in the vicinity, along with notable features of adjoining designated sites.
- **Address the current lack of access infrastructure** to many of the satellite woodland blocks, to safely facilitate pro-active management activities and enable the accelerated removal of larch, avoiding the need for reactive *Phytophthora* sanitation felling in future.
- **Be sensitive to the historic setting of the forest and to maintaining opportunities for public access and recreation**. The landscape setting of individual heritage features will be considered along with the wider landscape character of valley, while sustainable access over a well-connected network of paths, forest roads and public rights of way will be actively promoted.
- **Prepare for the anticipated rise in local deer populations** through active consideration of future control requirements during the design of felling and restocking coupes.

Summary of the main changes that will occur in the forest:

- Throughout the coming plan period, the Ystwyth Valley will remain an important productive woodland, providing a sustainable supply of timber to support employment and the Welsh economy.
- Species and structural diversity will be significantly enhanced, providing greater resilience to pests, disease and climatic changes.
- Areas of 'Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites' (PAWS) will undergo a steady conversion back to native broadleaf woodland, with connectivity between these remnant features being maintained and enhanced through the management of adjacent crops.
- The expansion of robust riparian corridors of native broadleaf and successional woodland, will further improve habitat connectivity and provide enhanced buffering against surrounding designated sites.
- An incremental 'Low Impact Silvicultural System' (LISS) approach will be favoured wherever the physical constraints of access, exposure and management history of existing crops will allow, bringing 518ha (43%) of the woodland into some form of continuous cover management. As future young crops are brought into a cycle of regular thinning, this proportion will rise further over time.
- The rapid spread of *Phytophthora ramorum* will require the accelerated removal of all larch crops from the valley within the next 10 to 15 years, with a significant area already under notice for removal within the next 3 years. This requirement will be the main driver directing the clearfell program over the coming plan period.
- Maintaining an appropriate landscape setting around the various Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMS) present throughout the valley, the identification and preservation of other heritage features and the provision of healthy access opportunities for the community will remain as important objectives.