



Forestry

Introduction

Woodlands are a renewable natural resource which contribute to a successful economy, better environment, healthy communities and improved quality of life. Woodlands contribute to climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration: as trees grow, they convert atmospheric carbon dioxide into the carbon that forms the basis of their roots, branches, and leaves. Trees also reduce soil erosion by wind and water, and they provide shade that helps to moderate temperature.

Forestry Commission Wales acts as the Welsh Assembly Government's department of forestry, and looks after the 38 per cent of Welsh woodlands that comprise the Welsh Assembly Government's estate. A total of 14 per cent of Wales' land area is covered by woodlandⁱ.

Current and proposed legislative competence of the Assembly

Under the *Government of Wales Act 2006*, the National Assembly for Wales can seek legislative competence through Acts of Parliament or Legislative Competence Orders (LCOs) to make a piece of law in the form of an 'Assembly Measure'. Measures can only be made in a specific policy area (or 'Matter') added to one of the 20 'Fields' (or broad subject areas) which are contained in Schedule 5 of the Act.

As "Agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development" is Field 1 of Schedule 5 to the Actⁱⁱ, the National Assembly for Wales can seek Measure-making powers in this area. There are currently no Matters in this Field.

Forthcoming EU and UK primary legislation

- The *Climate Change Bill*ⁱⁱⁱ was introduced in Parliament on 14 November 2007. It has now moved to the House of Commons for consideration. The aim is to receive Royal Assent by autumn 2008.
- A *Communication on an EU Forest Action Plan* was adopted on 15 June 2006^{iv}. The Action Plan was approved by the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in October 2006.
- On 30 June 2008 the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR) published the consultation document '*Towards Carbon Capture and Storage*'^v. The consultation consults on aspects of the proposed EU Directive on the *Geological Storage of Carbon Dioxide*^{vi} and invites views on the principle of 'carbon capture readiness' for combustion plants and the regulation of Carbon Dioxide storage.

EU policy

EU involvement in forestry issues is set out in the *EU Forestry Strategy*^{vii}. The EU produces forestry plans based on Member State forestry policy, and provides some financial support for forestry and woodland management via the structural funds programmes and support for rural development. It also funds research into forestry and forest-based industries. The *EU Biomass Action Plan* of December 2005 states that the Commission "will encourage Member States to establish national biomass action plans"^{viii}.

Key Welsh Government strategy documents and action plans

- *Woodlands for Wales* is the Welsh Government's forestry strategy^{ix}. A progress report on the first five years of the strategy is also available^x. Proposals for a revised *Woodlands for Wales* strategy has gone out for consultation and is due for closer in October 2008^{xi}.
- The *One Wales* agreement includes a commitment to providing support for indigenous woodlands and the creation of a Welsh National Forest of native trees.

The *Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013* was approved by the Commission in February 2008^{xii}. Activities under Axis 1 are specifically aimed at improving the competitiveness of the Agriculture and Forestry sector.

- The *Environment Strategy for Wales*^{xiii} and its accompanying Action Plan^{xiv} include 11 outcomes related to forestry. A report was published in September 2007 showing the first year's progress on delivering the *Environment Strategy* and broader environmental indicators, as well as progress against the Action Plan points^{xv}.
- The *Renewable Energy Route Map for Wales* consultation document was published in February 2008^{xvi} and proposes actions that would encourage the use of wood for biomass energy. The responses from the consultation will help the development of a Welsh Assembly Government energy strategy by early 2009.

Useful links

1. Forestry Commission Wales' website is <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/wales>
2. The National Inventory of Woodland and Trees for Wales is available here: [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/pdf.nsf/pdf/niwales.pdf/\\$FILE/niwales.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/pdf.nsf/pdf/niwales.pdf/$FILE/niwales.pdf)
3. The Wales Forest Business Partnership is a grouping of organisations with the aim of developing world class forest industries in Wales: <http://www.wfbp.org/>
4. The Woodland Trust is a conservation charity <http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk/index.htm>
5. Coed Lleol is an organisation dedicated to helping people enjoy and care for Welsh woodlands: <http://www.coedlleol.org.uk/>
6. Tree for All in Wales is a Coed Cadw site focused on encouraging children's involvement in tree-planting: <http://www.treeforall.org.uk/Wales/default.htm>
7. The European Commission Directorate-General of Agriculture's forestry website can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/index_en.htm

Further information

For further information on aspects of forestry, please contact Carys Jones (Carys.Jones@cymru.gsi.gov.uk), Members' Research Service, 029 2089 8598

ⁱ Welsh Assembly Government, [Woodlands for Wales](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

ⁱⁱ Office of Public Sector Information, [Government of Wales Act 2006](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

ⁱⁱⁱ Defra, [The Climate Change Bill](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{iv} European Commission, [Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on an EU Forest Action Plan](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^v DBERR, [Consultation: 'Towards Carbon Capture and Storage', 30 June 2008](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{vi} European Commission, [Carbon Capture and Geological Storage](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{vii} Official Journal of the European Communities, [Council Resolution on a Forestry Strategy for the European Union](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{viii} European Commission, [National Biomass Action Plans](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{ix} Welsh Assembly Government, [Woodlands for Wales](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^x Forestry Commission Wales, [Woodlands for Wales: Progress Report 2001-2005](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{xi} Welsh Assembly Government, Consultation on proposals to revise Woodlands for Wales: The Welsh Assembly Government's Strategy for Trees and Woodlands, webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{xii} Welsh Assembly Government, [The Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{xiii} Welsh Assembly Government, [Environment Strategy for Wales 2006](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{xiv} Welsh Assembly Government, [Environment Strategy for Wales: First Action Plan](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{xv} Welsh Assembly Government, [Environment Strategy for Wales: Report on Progress - September 2007](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]

^{xvi} Welsh Assembly Government, [Renewable energy route map for Wales: Consultation on way forward to a leaner, greener and cleaner Wales](#), webpage [on 08 July 2008]