

# Other Research Studies



THE NATIONAL  
FOREST

This review note provides details of other research studies that the National Forest Company (NFC) is currently involved in. Several of these will be written up in more detail and added to the full series of National Forest research summaries when they are complete.

## Socio - economic impact of The National Forest

The NFC has monitored the socio-economic impact of The National Forest through studies undertaken by Derby University in 2001<sup>1</sup> and Staffordshire University in 2004<sup>2</sup>. This work is being updated by DC Research, Leicester (due to be completed in May 2010) and will describe the direct and indirect socio-economic impacts of the Forest's creation. It will also analyse changing effects over time in comparison with the 2001 and 2004 studies; and will benchmark the Forest area against regional and national economic trends and other comparator areas within the UK.

### Further information

<sup>1</sup> *The National Forest: Social and Economic Impact Study* (2001) Derby University.

<sup>2</sup> *Much More Than Trees 2: Measuring the social and economic impact of The National Forest* (2004) Staffordshire University.

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## European Landscape Convention

The NFC is one of the first organisations in the UK to produce an Action Plan which meets the requirements of the European Landscape Convention (ELC)<sup>1</sup>. The National Forest Action Plan (2008-13)<sup>2</sup> sets out how The National Forest is meeting the ELC objectives of: all landscapes matter, respecting landscape character, taking a co-ordinated approach to landscape planning, management and enhancement and linking people with place.

The Action Plan describes how the Forest's creation is rooted in a landscape-led approach and how an over-arching approach to landscape provides the framework for achieving the Forest's wider objectives related to forestry, biodiversity, recreation and tourism, heritage, rural diversification, development planning and community and educational involvement. Practical actions are set out in the Plan, which are reported on and updated annually. This forms part of Defra's annual reporting to the European Commission on progress towards implementing the ELC across the UK.

### Further information

<sup>1</sup> *European Landscape Convention* (2000) Council of Europe.

<sup>2</sup> *National Forest European Landscape Convention Action Plan, 2008-13* (2009) National Forest Company.

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## Carbon sequestration through tree planting

The National Forest's creation has an important, practical and symbolic part to play in contributing towards combating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change through carbon sequestration by tree planting. The NFC has contracted the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to produce estimates of carbon sequestered through studies undertaken in 2004 and 2007.

Since 1991 around 7.8m trees have been planted in the Forest. Over the period 1990 - 2006 it was calculated that:

- an estimated 50 kilotonnes of carbon (ktc) were sequestered by The National Forest. This is equivalent to the net removal of 182 million kg of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- at current planting rates, up to 2012 the Forest will sequester approximately 11ktc per year. This will remove a further 40 million kg per year of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere – 0.05% of the UK's contribution. This is equivalent to the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from 10,000 family cars in a year.

The next update of this work is planned in 2010.

### Further information

*Estimates of carbon sequestration in The National Forest (2004 and 2007)* Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

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## Deer population monitoring

The NFC works with the Deer Initiative to monitor the extent, range, health and impact of deer populations in The National Forest. This is important because the Forest's creation is providing new woodland habitat for deer. If deer populations were to expand significantly they could seriously damage the very resource that the Forest is creating, through browsing of young trees and woodland flora. Deer also pose increased risks of road traffic accidents and damage to agricultural crops. Balanced against this, deer are an important biodiversity species in the Forest and can be a delight for local residents and visitors to see. They also provide ethically sound and healthy meat.

Population monitoring in The National Forest is undertaken through thermal image surveys undertaken by the Deer Initiative. These have been undertaken annually since 2005, focusing on areas in Needwood, around Calke/Ticknall, around Grangewood and more recently in Charnwood.

This work provides data over time to help inform practical approaches to deer management. (This can include deer fencing of woodlands; use of tall tree tubes when planting; using roadside deflectors at busy crossing points; and selective culling if appropriate). The NFC's aim in this respect is to maintain healthy and sustainable populations of deer in the Forest area, whilst monitoring if their impact becomes excessive in any particular locations.

### Further information

*National Forest deer monitoring reports (2005 - 2009)* The Deer Initiative (available from the National Forest Company).

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# Geodiversity: Exploring the landscape of The National Forest

This project aims to promote geodiversity in The National Forest and its relationship with both aggregate and mineral workings in the area. The National Forest has strong links and associations with the aggregates and minerals industries, with hard-rock quarries in Charnwood Forest, coal and clay workings in the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfields and gravel extraction in the Trent Valley south of Burton upon Trent. The area has also been subjected to many other industries based on mining and quarrying, most importantly brick-making, lead-mining, building stone, gypsum and the burning of limestone to produce quicklime. As well as current workings, there are also many abandoned quarries which have been historically worked for sand and gravel, sandstone and limestone.

The project is a collaborative venture between the British Geological Survey (BGS), the NFC, Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire County Councils, Leicestershire Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites Group, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, Derby University, Lafarge Aggregates UK Ltd, Aggregate Industries UK Ltd, Tarmac/Midland Quarry Products Ltd, Hanson aggregates UK Ltd, Ibstock Brick Ltd and independent geological consultants.

Outputs will include a geological map and booklet in the BGS 'Exploring the Landscape of...' series, to cover The National Forest area. It will complement the recently produced book in the same series on Charnwood Forest<sup>1</sup>, and booklets published through the earlier Leicestershire & Rutland Geodiversity Action Plan (2004)<sup>2,3</sup>. The new 1:50,000 scale map and booklet will highlight the underlying geology, together with geological walks and places of interest. Links will be made between the geology and landscape (geomorphology) of the Forest, and how these relate to biodiversity, archaeology and the industrial heritage of the area.

The research is funded by the Mineral Industry Sustainable Technology fund and the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund that is managed by the Mineral Industry Research Organisation. The map and booklet will be launched in 2011.

## Further information

- <sup>1</sup> *Exploring the landscape of Charnwood Forest and Mountsorrel: A walker's guide to the rocks and landscape of Charnwood Forest and Mountsorrel.* (2007) Ambrose, K., Carney, J.N., Lott, G.K., Weightman, G. and McGrath, A. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey. ISBN 9780852725702 (available from the British Geological Survey and the National Forest Company).
  - <sup>2</sup> *A geological walk around Bradgate Park and Swithland Wood* (2004). McGrath, A. ISBN 0852724861 (available from the British Geological Survey and the National Forest Company).
  - <sup>3</sup> *A geological walk around Cliffe Hill Quarry* (2004). McGrath, A. ISBN 0852724853 (available from the British Geological Survey and the National Forest Company).
- The rock quarries of Charnwood Forest* (2007). McGrath, A. *Mercian Geologist* 16 (4).

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## Growing Places, a study of social change in The National Forest

This research project<sup>1</sup> examined the social impact of The National Forest by investigating the ways in which the Forest is changing the lives of people who live, work and spend their leisure time in the area. The research was conducted between January and May 2005, by social science researchers from Lancaster University. The project was commissioned by the Forestry Commission, with support from NFC. Researchers conducted interviews with a wide range of people from organisations involved in Forest-related activities. Interviews were also undertaken through participation with groups and individuals involved in voluntary conservation work, health walks, farm diversification activities and community tree planting, to gain a realistic “hands-on” experience of the Forest.

The main findings of the research were:

- The National Forest is positively perceived and is closely associated with improving environmental and economic conditions.
- There is a growing trust for the NFC and organisations helping to create the Forest.
- A strong willingness amongst organisations to be associated with The National Forest brand.
- A feeling of optimism towards a forward-looking vision for the area.
- Strong links between landscape change and use of the Forest as a new social place.
- NFC’s careful approach to balancing a forward-looking vision with preserving the area’s heritage is working.
- Connectedness between organisations is a key feature and a significant achievement; partnership working is reaping benefits.
- Both the NFC and the Forest itself are seen as permanent and enduring features of the landscape. This has influenced the business and policy-related decision-making of organisations by engendering a sense of long-term trust.

### Further information

<sup>1</sup> *Growing Places: a study of social change in The National Forest* (2006). Morris, J. and Urry, J. Forest Research, ISBN 0855387092.

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