



Sefton Coast Woodlands

Sefton Coast Woodland Partnership. Progress Report, Year 01 - 2003

BACKGROUND

The Sefton Coast Woodlands are 420 hectares of largely pine wood distributed along 13 kilometres of the Sefton Coast between Altcar and Southport. They are an important part of the Coast's heritage, much loved by the many users. The ownership is distributed between nearly thirty different owners, many of whom came together in 2001 to collaborate in the writing of a management plan. This plan has been approved at the end of 2002 by the Forestry Commission as a licence for management work in the area and is known as the Sefton Coast Woodlands Forest Plan.

THIS NEWSLETTER

2003 was the first year of implementation and this newsletter aims to update interested parties of the progress, achievements and problems within the first year. It is the first and will be produced on an annual basis or additionally in the event of extraordinary circumstances.

FOREST PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The starting point is that the Forest Plan was finally given a time-limited acceptance by English Nature under the Appropriate Assessment required to monitor changes in water table levels around dune slacks. The Forestry Commission having completed the Appropriate Assessment was able to sign the Plan in December 2002 and implementation began in January 2003. The Plan was formally launched by the Worshipful Mayor of Sefton Council at Formby High School in May 2003.

FIRST YEAR TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

	Thinning	Restocking felling	Natural regen	Planting
Summary for Year 01	44.35	8.49	0	1.02
Estimated achievements for Yr01	11.53	5.85	0	0

Achievements are estimated as information is still coming in from the owners (January 03).

Much of the thinning that was scheduled for year 01 is being delayed until year 02 and the targets will be rolled over. The planting work that was scheduled for the year is mostly under way as the newsletter is being written (the forestry planting year runs from November to April, so planting could fall into either calendar year).

THE WORK PROGRESSES:



OWNER'S COMMENTS

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council

Wood Fare - Woodland Open Days, 12th and 13th Sept 2003 (for schools and for the general public, respectively, at Lifeboat Road) were very successful. A second event is planned for June 2004.

Woodland walks – 4 through the year with up to 20 attending each event. One, with Formby Civic Society, explored the history of the Ravenmeols Woods looking for evidence of early planting, archaeology and estate boundaries.

The National Trust

The National Trust has rescheduled the start of the woodland work programme to commence in February 2004. 0.8 hectares of coupe felling will take place in February along with cleaning of 3.3 hectares and thinning of 0.3 hectares.

During the summer 0.55 hectares will be prepared for restocking and two areas of new planting (0.5 hectares) fenced and prepared on the edge of former asparagus fields with planting in the Autumn.

In the Autumn, major woodland thinning of 7.9 hectares plus a further 0.7 hectares of coupe felling will be implemented by contractor. Most woodland work on National Trust land is carried out by the Trust's Countryside Wardens.

0.85 hectares will be restocked and 4.65 hectares of thinning will be carried out in early 2005.

St Lukes Church

During the year our woodland has changed dramatically, mainly due to the felling of some old and dangerous black poplar and the thinning of sycamore saplings. The work was made possible by grant aid from the Forestry Commission and ICEP under guidance and facilitation from The Mersey Forest Team. The thinning of the sycamore saplings is being carried out by our own volunteer team and will be completed, as scheduled, by the end of February 2004. Re-planting of the area, with pine and silver birch, will begin in Autumn and be completed by Christmas 2004.

The activities have involved some timber being removed from the site and the sycamore thinnings being re-used for fencing, hedging, repairing and extending paths. Woodland plants have been replanted and the site generally tidied up. As a consequence of the work, the Church has been presented with the Eco-congregation Award by Encams and we are the first church in the north of England to be presented with this award. It was presented at Liverpool Cathedral by the Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt. Rev. James Jones.

On a sad note, we record the passing of Patrick Furguson, a loyal friend and member of our woodland team. We planted an Oak tree in his memory.

The Forest Plan is formally launched at Formby High School:

