



Government Tree Strategy

National Parks England's Aspirations

The Government is currently consulting on its forthcoming Tree Strategy. It has a crucial role in supporting nature recovery and tackling the climate emergency. Below sets out what National Parks England hopes to see in it and the important role we can play in its delivery.

NPE's Aspirations

1. **The Strategy should celebrate the many benefits of wooded landscapes;** of trees and woods; and value adopting multi-purpose management of woodlands and forestry. Consistent with the National Parks England–Forestry Commission Accord we would like to work with FC to ensure woods and forests in England's National Parks are at the forefront of sustainable forest management.
2. **National Park Authorities (NPAs) have ambitious plans for new planting,** good links with their local communities, and are enablers for new woodland planting. The Strategy needs to provide the resources and flexibility to NPAs to enable them to work with farmers and land owners to achieve an increase in woodland cover, using the *Right Tree in the Right Place* principles, that is accessible for people to enjoy.
3. **National Park Partnership Plans (and their equivalents in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) should set the framework** for new tree planting and woodland management within protected landscapes. These plans are prepared collaboratively, and build on existing partnerships with FC, Woodland Trust, National Trust, landowners, and a host of others. This would ensure plans are integrated with other public policy objectives, supported locally, and delivered.
4. **National Parks and AONBs are diverse landscapes with a variety of opportunities and challenges.** In some landscapes there are significant opportunities for substantial areas of new woodland, in others places rare habitats, historic features or valued character and beauty may suggest more subtle planting. We want to work with Government to ensure the varying needs of the different protected landscapes, when it comes to woodland creation and ongoing management, are reflected in plans and decisions.
5. **NPAs have fine grained evidence to enable the most successful woodland creation plans to advance,** including sensitivity mapping and opportunity mapping. The Strategy should encourage FC to work jointly with NPAs on sensitivity mapping in order to supplement GIS tools with local knowledge and this finer-grained data.
6. **The Strategy should adopt the Right Tree in the Right Place (RTRP) definition** at its core, for planting and replanting decisions within or affecting National Parks. This should be a theme running through the various funding streams for new planting. NPAs have enormous experience, trust and knowledge of working with and helping the land owning community to come forward with proposals.

7. **The Strategy will really help if it is long term and integrated with a wider analysis of how land use needs to change to combat the climate crisis.** We look therefore, for close links to the Peat Strategy, Nature Recovery Network, and evolving Environmental Land Management Scheme. All three should be based on actions which would be viable under accepted likely temperature rises. The Strategy should also reflect upon the implications of increased risk of wildfire and the need for a national wildfire strategy as we see ever increasing amounts of woodland burn year on year around the world, releasing their valuable stores of carbon.
8. **The part that all trees play in the landscape needs greater emphasis in the Tree Strategy.** Hedges, orchards, wood pasture all contribute. The Tree Strategy should support management that facilitates natural regeneration and include this component within the metrics used to calculate increased tree cover. Natural regeneration is cheap, resilient, and can be an attractive component of the landscape. The Strategy and ELMs should also encourage wood pasture where this is appropriate.
9. We'd like the Strategy to include a strong aspiration to grow timber that can be used in construction and other long term (150 years plus) uses that will help to **maximise the long term carbon fixation benefits of forestry.**
10. We welcome the skills and jobs created by woodland creation and management, and would encourage the Government to include **clear pathways in the Strategy to increase those with the multiple skills required to deliver and manage multi-purpose forestry,** beyond timber production.
11. **The Strategy should recognise the importance and incentivise woodland management not just creation.** There should be funding support (whether public or private) that recognises the value of managing existing woodlands for the multiple ecosystem services that they provide.
12. In order to protect against the importation of pests and disease, the Strategy should proactively **support measures that source and trace seeds from within Great Britain and promote the germination and growth of seedling of stock within local/UK nurseries.**
13. In our experience **Woodland Creation Plans can be helpful to maximise utility from new planting and provide confidence to ongoing management.** Woodland Creation Plans set out the objectives for planting, the driving motivation, the implications of planting, and a commitment to long term management. Making them a requirement of receiving grant funding and sharing them with NPAs amongst others would be welcomed.
14. **We would stress that the health and wellbeing opportunities provided by engagement with trees, woodlands and forests exist in urban and rural areas.** Accessing the woodland resource found within the countryside, and in particular the protected landscapes, provide untold benefits to society and opportunities to recharge and reconnect mind, body and soul.