

Forestry Operations in Noxon Park

Updated June 2021

We will be timber harvesting in Noxon Park, Nr. Bream and Clements End, from July 2021.

The works will impact some of our trails and access points, this page provides more information about the work we are doing and why.

What is happening?

There are three parts to this operation. The contractors will begin in the area of Sweet Chesnut in Oakwood Bottom which will be re-coppiced to provide timber in the future for fencing materials. Coppicing is an ancient and sustainable way to manage woodlands. It increases light to the forest floor; providing vital habitat for insects such as butterflies and supporting biodiversity in the area.

The areas of Corsican Pine near Clements End will be clear felled in line with the Forest Plan and replanted with productive conifer in the area below the camp site and native broadleaved tree species. Clear fell areas can look dramatic due to the sudden change but be assured that until the trees grow back the increase in light to the forest floor will enable ground flora to flourish and the open space will provide potential nest sites for rare ground nesting birds.

The areas of mixed broad leaf, larch and pine will be routinely thinned to favour native broadleaved tree species. This is in line with our Forest Plan PAWS (Planted Ancient Woodland Sites) restoration of these areas.

The timber produced by this operation will go into the construction industry, pallet making, wood panel manufacture for furniture and firewood. Some crown wood will be left on site as wildlife habitat, known as 'dead wood.'

The works are due to continue throughout the autumn and winter; you will notice a significant operational presence in the woodland with banks persons, harvesting machinery, signage and timber stacks. We do our best to use existing extraction routes to minimise the damage to the forest floor, which is inevitable with the scale of machinery that must be used. This will be reinstated where necessary on completion of the work.

Harvesting contracts can sometimes be quite drawn out and work may stop for some time due to the many constraints that we have to work around. So please bear with us as we carry out this work with the aim of minimising inconvenience to all site users.

Will you be replanting?

In the area that is due to be clear felled we will be replanting with productive conifer and native tree species. The area that is being thinned will not be replanted. However, this work will aid the cycle of continual regeneration over a long time and is the lifeblood of any forest and woodland ecosystem. Maintaining this cycle without loss is the basis of sustainable forest management. In British forests, harvesting timber is an essential part of the cycle, as it makes space for regrowth and develops robust, healthy and diverse forest areas.

Can I still visit this woodland?

Yes - the woodland will remain open throughout our harvesting operations, the most important thing for us is to keep the public, our staff, and contractors safe. We will have safety and operational signage displayed, diversions, closures, and banks persons in position where needed. This is for your safety, whether you can see or hear us working, it is important you read and listen to all instructions very carefully and obey all instruction.

Please look out for banks persons who will be periodically closing the PRow in the area of Sweet Chesnut in Horwellhill Inclosure in order to maintain access.

Forestry work is very hazardous. A falling tree can weigh several tonnes and hit the ground at nearly 60mph. If a harvesting machine chainsaw snaps, it can fly through the forest like a bullet.

What about the wildlife?

Well managed forests are able to support more wildlife, and harvesting trees is an important part of a sustainable forest lifecycle. Before we start any forestry work, we carry out ecological surveys to check for species such as birds, mammals, rodents, invertebrates, native plants such as bluebells and fungi. We also consider these against complex factors including tree health, how the ground slopes, soil condition, and likely rainfall when planning work that will support our long-term management plan. While working, we continue to check for wildlife and will adapt, pause or suspend work if we find any animal that must be protected.

Why is this work being completed in spring/summer months?

In order to support the rural economy, we must continue to work throughout the year. It is important for us to balance competing objectives in order to keep contractors employed for the greater good of the woodland as a whole. We also cannot physically complete our programme of work outside of the nesting season, however the small part of the forest that is worked through the nesting season are in areas of lower risk, which then leaves the vast majority of the forest undisturbed for wildlife. Parts of this woodland are known to be soft and the ground becomes too wet for the machinery to operate during the winter months.



If you would like any further information, please get in touch via westengland@forestryengland.uk