

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000:

PROPOSAL FOR A LONG TERM DIRECTION BY THE RELEVANT AUTHORITY

SUMMARY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION Prepared by Forestry Commission

1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Case Reference Number:	2015087883
Name of site/land parcel:	Peat Sike, NGR: NT75305
Access Authority:	Northumberland
Relevant Authority:	Forestry Commission
Local Access Forum:	NE England, Northumberland

The Forestry Commission has received an application under section 25 (1b) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (the Act) for a direction to exclude the public from the site indicated on the attached map, in order to carry out timber harvesting operations.

Having considered the application, the Forestry Commission now proposes to give a direction on the site that may last for longer than 6 months continuously. The direction proposed is for a closure of a maximum of 300 days to be used between the 01st November 2015 and the 31st October 2019. The Act requires us to consult publicly on all such proposals for 'long-term directions'.

This is a summary of our proposal, explaining the reasoning in support of our proposal. It is accompanied by a map of the site which can be seen on the Open Access website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?publication_filter_option=consultations

To access the consultation enter "Open Access" into the free text box titled "Contains" and then filter by "Natural England" in the Department drop down. Other documents relating to the proposed direction may be inspected and copies obtained by contacting the Forestry Commission at Buller's Hill, Kennford, Nr Exeter, EX6 7XR; e-mail: cca@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

2. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT AUTHORITY PROPOSAL

i) Summary of proposed direction to restrict access

Long term outline direction for a closure of a maximum of 300 days to be used between the 01st November 2015 and the 31st October 2019, for the purpose of clearfell of conifer by harvester/forwarder over 39.5ha.

ii) Why is a statutory restriction necessary?

Public Safety

iii) What is lowest level of restriction required?

Full Exclusion of Public access

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THE APPLICATION FOR OUTLINE DIRECTION OF LONG TERM CLOSURE

COUPE 45232 – PEAT SIKE – NORTH ENGLAND FOREST DISTRICT

The proposed felling coupe, to be known as Peat Sike, is projected to produce around 25,644m³/20,700t of timber to supply local and national markets. The site covers approximately 39.5 hectares (Gross).

The parcel will be harvested as part of the district direct production programme and it is expected to commence winter 2015 and be worked during the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 financial years. Due to the reliance on timber markets, precise timings of harvesting operations are not currently known.

The risk assessment carried out identifies that timber harvesting operations present a risk to public safety; it is therefore necessary to exclude the public from the site during operations.

The work will be carried out using normal forest harvesting techniques, i.e. harvester/forwarder, given estimated machine outputs of around 500 tonnes per week, and allowing time for unforeseen circumstances, it is estimated that harvesting operations will take approximately 42 weeks. It is expected that production will achieve this level of output.

In addition to the exclusion of the public, other controls will include the use of

warning and prohibition signs placed at strategic points around the worksite. Signs will also be placed on the forest roads approaching the worksite.

There are no formal recreational facilities within, or in the immediate area around, the felling coupe. Therefore, the controls mentioned above should be sufficient to manage access on the site.

To maintain operational flexibility it is not feasible to split the coupe into any smaller areas, we will need to have the ability to react to changes in the timber markets and changes in weather conditions by moving production around the site.

I hope that this additional information is of use to support the application for direction.

Neil Gibson
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3. SUBMITTING COMMENTS ON THE REVIEW:

If you wish to comment on the review of this direction then you must do so before the 25th September 2015 directly to the Forestry Commission at Buller's Hill, Kennford, Nr Exeter, EX6 7XR; e-mail: cca@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

A map accompanies this notice and can be seen on the Open Access website:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?publication_filter_option=consultations

If, following consultation, we decide to give a long-term direction, we must formally review the decision not more than 5 years after it is given. We may also revoke or vary the direction at any other time, if new evidence comes to light showing that the circumstances have changed.