Forestry Commission

Woodland Creation
Planting for the future

Lowther Estate, Cumbria

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The Lowther Estate in Cumbria worked with partners including the Forestry Commission, Natural England and the Eden Rivers Trust to bring to fruition a new large scale productive woodland in the North West of England.

In November 2017, the Lowther Estate gained approval for 170 hectares of new productive woodland, 'Jacks Wood', named after the estate's recently retired forester, Ian Jack, who led the development of the project.

The new woodland will largely be within the Lake District National Park and will see the planting of 121 ha of productive conifer; with the remainder made up of predominantly productive broadleaves. In total, 213, 098 trees will be planted – making this one of the largest areas of productive conifer to be planted in England since the 1980's.

Lowther Estates used the Woodland Creation Planning Grant (WCPG) to help cover the planning and design costs for the new woodland. The Estate has also received approval for funding under the Countryside Stewardship scheme for the planting and maintenance of the woodland.

David Bliss, Estate Manager for Lowther Estate said,

"Our success is entirely down to the work of Ian Jack. The Woodland Creation Planning Grant funding helped him plan and gain approval for this magnificent commercial woodland, which will support many local jobs and associated forestry businesses."

The new planting will blend existing blocks of monoculture conifers with new woodland made up of broadleaves, helping to restore the look of the landscape. This will create an extensive

> **"Creating a woodland means so much more to me than just putting trees in the ground; we're creating a beautiful place for the future; for the people and the wildlife. I won't see this woodland fully mature, but that doesn't matter to me – it's taking the first step that matters."**
>
> – Ian Jack, Head Forester, Lowther Estate (retired)

natural corridor linking the south of the estate with important pasture woodlands and a community woodland which adjoins two local villages. The new section of wooded corridor will also be of huge benefit to the local wildlife, including the resident red squirrel population.

The estate management team worked closely with a range of stakeholders from the outset, so that feedback from local groups was taken into consideration as early as possible during the planning process. The team worked particularly closely with the Eden Rivers Trust to ensure that the woodland will also provide multiple water benefits to downstream communities; improving water quality and ecology by decreasing the amount of run off from the surrounding land; and providing some mitigation against flood risk. The woodland will also benefit the wider public by extending current public access provisions, and will provide the setting for a wide range of outdoor activities for visitors to enjoy.

In addition to these wider benefits, a primary objective for the estate is to be able to manage the woodlands to generate a future income from timber sales, which will in turn support local forestry businesses. There are a number of strategic timber mills in Cumbria, which the estate currently supplies and it is expected that the trees planted now will mature and be ready for felling at the time when it is predicted that timber shortages will occur - providing much needed long term security. The provision of future stock to supply these mills will build confidence and help these businesses to continue to grow and invest over the coming years.

Ian Jack, the estate's forester, who led the project and has since retired said, "There appears to be a renaissance of planting well designed, functional woodlands in the north of England and Scotland. It's good to be part of that ground swell and to be able to plant all the right trees, in the right places, for the right reasons. I'm glad to be able to pass on a tangible legacy to the people of Cumbria."

Find out how we can support you to plant trees on your land and the funding that is available to help.

www.gov.uk/guidance/create-woodland-overview

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