

P-05-945 The Climate Emergency and a National Forest for Wales

This petition was submitted by Coed Cadw – The Woodland Trust in Wales having collected a total of 4,354 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to urgently increase tree cover to help address this climate emergency & the well documented collapse of nature.

The Welsh Government's 'State of Natural Resources Report' said no ecosystems in Wales are resilient.

We need more trees in urban & rural areas to address high levels of air pollution, lessen heatwaves & floods, increase wildlife & create a carbon store above & below ground.

Rivers, hedgerows & verges can provide quality habitat connectivity, these criss-cross Wales from mountains to coast. Many have biodiversity rich ancient woods, meadows & marshes alongside them, but their range & quality has massively declined in the last 50 years.

Our rivers are healthiest when bordered by wide strips of lightly grazed broadleaf woodland river banks. Trees provide some dappled shade keeping rivers cool & protecting them from pollutants, reducing unsustainable soil loss, whilst helping to keep farmers on the land.

To help nature recover we need to recreate more wildlife friendly landscapes by creating more & healthier interconnecting habitats.

Placed & funded correctly, a new national forest can deliver many solutions for all future generations, a more 'resilient Wales'.

We call for a comprehensive strategy to deliver:

- an increase of 5000 hectares per year in tree cover in urban areas, on farms, & in the uplands
- tree cover that is at least 50% native broadleaf trees, best for biodiversity, & public well-being

- sustainable management of existing trees, forests, woodland & hedges, to protect them from damage & provide a mixed mosaic of habitat for wildlife & people
- new funding for farmers for 'Hedges & Edges' & traditional woodland pasture –agroforestry
- funding for community tree nurseries, for people to be involved in finding sites, planting, & growing trees right across Wales
- a truly national & innovative 'National Forest for Wales'

Additional Information

References

Climate Emergency: <https://gov.wales/written-statement-welsh-government-declares-climate-emergency>

State of Natural Resources Report:
<https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/682366/sonarr-summary-september-2016-edited-august-2017.pdf>

A Resilient Wales: <https://futuregenerations.wales/aotp/resilience/>

Bordered by wide strips of lightly grazed broadleaf woodland:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281902234_Beyond_cool_Adapting_upland_streams_for_climate_change_using_riparian_woodlands

Community tree nurseries <https://www.longforest.cymru/news/community-tree-nurseries-guest-blog>

Agroforestry: combining agriculture & trees
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2018/07/agroforestry-wales/>

Glossary

Biodiversity: the variety of life found on earth. It includes all species of plants & animals, their abundance & genetic diversity

Ecosystem resilience: means how well ecosystems can deal with disturbances – either by resisting them, recovering from them, or adapting to them. Resilient ecosystems are able to carry on delivering services & benefits despite these disturbances.

Habitat: the natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism

Habitat connectivity: how patches of habitat are linked together to form a connected habitat network that allows species to interact & move.

Hedges & Edges: the habitats that make up hedges, tree lines, verges, river & stream margins, ditches, stone walls & other boundaries

Public Goods: commodities or service that is provided without profit to all members of a society, either by the government or by a private individual or organisation

Tree Cover: the area that is shaded by the canopies of trees & shrubs

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central