

Press release: Reduce flood risk with the Woodlands for Water scheme

Expert advice on creating woodlands that will reduce flood risk and improve water quality is once again being offered in Yorkshire and North East England as part of a pioneering project run by the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency.

The Woodlands for Water project enables farmers and other land managers to benefit from the services of skilled professionals working on contract to the Forestry Commission. Advice is available in areas of land where woodland planting will most effectively reduce flood risk and/or improve water quality by reducing sediment and pollutants reaching rivers and streams.

Landowners can work with a professional advisor who can walk them through the full process from developing a planting plan to submission of the grant application.

In addition to this advice, significant grant funding is available for planting new woodlands through the Forestry Commission via the Woodland Carbon Fund or the Woodland Creation grant (which is part of the Countryside Stewardship scheme). The Woodland Creation grant offers up to £6,800 per hectare for planting new woodlands with an additional multi-annual payment of £200 per hectare for a period of 10 years for eligible applicants.

Trees and woodland can have a significant impact on flood risk and surface water pollution. Carefully planned tree planting will slow water run-off (and limit downstream flooding), reduce land erosion, help to moderate stream temperature and aid flood risk management.

As many landowners already know, well planned new woodland planting can also deliver other significant benefits including:

- providing shelter for stock
- generating income from timber
- producing wood for use as a renewable fuel
- creating a new habitat for wildlife
- capturing carbon dioxide and so mitigating climate change.

Generating more great schemes

Crispin Thorn, Area Director of the Forestry Commission in Yorkshire and the North East said:

It's great to be working in partnership with the Environment Agency and the wider sector as part of the Woodlands for Water project.

The network of Woodlands for Water advisers across Yorkshire and the North East are available to help take forward applications for

woodland creation that will benefit the water environment and bring a host of other benefits including enhancing biodiversity, reducing carbon and providing future income from timber.

This will help meet the government's 11 million tree target as well as delivering against key areas within the 25 Year Environment Plan.

Oliver Harmer, Area Director of the Environment Agency in the North East said:

I am delighted to see that through last year's Woodlands for Water project 160 hectares of new woodlands that will benefit the water environment have been approved for planting in Yorkshire and North East England.

And I am pleased that the project is up and running again this year with the advisors already working with landowners to generate more great schemes.

Woodland creation is an important part of natural flood management and helps deliver on our mission to improve water quality. This project is a marvellous example of the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency pooling their skills and resources to great effect.