

Support

1. Resources

Provide Coppice Community with location of possible funding approaches; provide training for making bids and/or a clearing house to do it

Identify possible new markets/ outlets and ensure the Coppice Community is aware of them. This needs more than local co-ordination though this can be built upon with some sort of delivery centre (a 'Modern Coppice Merchant'?) Note that this complements, not replaces, the Federation/Forum idea.

2. Guidance

Much is already known but we need to maximise what we have, by improved communication approaches, research into new markets. A national strategy could be built out of shared regional experience.

3. Training

In addition to BHMAT/GWC Apprenticeships a more widely available training programme has to be accessible to practitioners at affordable cost. Some existing subcomponents e.g. marketing advice, might be useable. There also needs to be ongoing opportunity for business training, mentoring, and acquisition of national occupational standards (LANTRA)

There is a quite specific issue of deer management approaches being understood by, and accessible to coppice practitioners and owners, with on-going support.

4. New opportunities

Seize upon all that arise e.g. University of Cumbria; Sustainable Building Centre – Penrith ; Forest Schools; investigate all possible means of getting country-wide. Grow from existing county/local activity and use best practice from elsewhere.

Communication

1. **Target Groups** Information about the value and benefits of coppice needs to reach a variety of target groups

- woodland/ land owners

- policy makers;

- various groups amongst the general public - those already environmentally knowledgeable; those who know nothing about coppicing; special interest groups; parallel existing groups e.g. members of the Woodland Trust, Small Woods Association, leaders of Forest Schools, those in education more widely, etc.

2. **Practical Participation** Give special focus to participative and practical means: e.g. Great Cumbrian Beanpole Festival (3,000 people attended the last one) Build on this but target specific markets e.g. allotment holders, gardening societies, users of garden products. Encourage policy makers and funders to attend. Look for effective locations for events and clearly identify the purposes in stimulating demand, to sell, and to communicate.

3. **The Message** Get across the message that coppice is good for health; it is sustainable; brings rotation, product, and employment flexibility for those responsible for woodlands; holds a significant heritage for all of us; has sociological and cultural and health benefits; brings biodiversity and more general environmental benefits. Identify any financial benefits.

4. **Publicity** Communicate in every way possible and take every opportunity to utilise coppice products in doing so: signs, leaflets, talking, festivals, participation and play. Use your selling as form of communication. Put things, simply, directly and in everyday language. Identifiable financial incentives need to be brought out.

CANW wishes to acknowledge the financial support of Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB Sustainable Development Fund, Awards for All, the Forestry Commission, the Friends of the Lake District, the Lake District National Park Sustainable Development Fund, and the Wood Education Programme Trust in putting on the Conference and in the production of this Action Plan

21st Century Coppice - Conference Report

Copies of the Conference Report are available from the Association office at £5 (plus postage) or may be purchased by card via Cumbria Woodlands website

www.cumbriawoodlands.co.uk

Development

1. **National 'Federation'/ 'Forum'**, of interested groups/organisations is needed
2. Mapping of **Target Areas** for coppicing – co-ordinate agencies, look at both restoration, secondary and new woodlands; include National and Community Forests.
3. **Grants** – there is the need for a single woodland payment similar to that available for farming – need to be able to access Woodland Improvement Grant element of the English Woodland Grant Scheme. Provides a basic return but returns better for larger certificated woods (potential for group schemes here); we should consider the need for a kitemark. We should push for **conservation coppicing as well as commercial coppicing**, and we need to explain that “coppicing” is not one system. Commercial coppicing does need support, especially a focus on the period between the 1st and 3rd cut (e.g. GWC project using volunteers for 1st cut, then 2nd cut by contractor – decide on details here); could tier this according to management, get information on latest grants – noted that most grants are for sociological aims – turn these to woodland use. **Maintain** Cumbria Woodlands and other **woodland initiatives**. Need small, quickly turned round grants and to inform landowners of grants.
4. **Marketing** – Easier access to public e.g. via internet (look at Logpile, Ecolots as example), also coppice products website, Better access to farmers markets. Lobby Made in Cumbria for non-food local products. Look for opportunities for more collaborative marketing.
5. **Affordable and seasonal housing for workers** – planning policies are an issue with woodland housing (low-impact development, more flexibility e.g. certain task, certain seasons – for cultural reasons. Note the impact of residential “hope” value; and its possible value as a deer deterrent).
6. **Renewable energy resource**: Promotion of renewable fuels e.g. firewood market – need to use central point of contact for consumer (see Logpile), small scale has an impact, consider power generation (new Low Carbon Building Fund)

cover image: Edward Acland

An ACTION PLAN for COPPICE

This Action Plan results from the open discussion held as the final session of a Conference on Saturday 13 May 2006

“21 Century Coppice”

at Grange over Sands, Cumbria

The three sections

- Support
- Communication
- Development

are parallel and are regarded as of equal importance for the future of coppice and greenwood working and the associated industries, and are intended to help shape further debate in your own context



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Some Useful Reading

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COPPICE

- a practical and positive alternative for woodland management

Environmentally Friendly
Climate Friendly
Healthy Outdoor Environment
Local employment
Flexibility of product
Flexibility of rotation
Cultural Heritage
LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY



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Long-term sustainability

Regularly managed coppice stools will continue to regenerate more or less indefinitely - for certain for several hundred years for many species (many hundreds for some). There are many examples around the country of sites which have been productive for centuries.

Flexibility of rotation

The cycle of cutting (rotation) varies with species and desired product. Species mixtures and varying markets give a great flexibility to the manager. Rotation might be as little as a year or two for willow, or as much as 30 years for certain oak material. In almost all cases the time of cutting has a season or two flexibility to it as well.

Flexibility of product

Plenty of traditional markets still remain - hurdles, swill baskets, besom brooms, roof shingles etc etc, some of them, like BBQ charcoal, potentially very large markets indeed. The scope for innovation is limitless. Sometimes modification, like creation of panels (which are pinned together at almost any customisable size) instead of woven hurdles, on other occasions really new uses - like the stabilisation of blowing sand by cut coppice materials.

Local employment

By definition, managed coppice provides materials almost all of which need to be further worked. Working the coppices is, of itself, employment for someone and the fashioning of products from the materials produced can be employment for many more people. Almost without exception, coppiced woodlands are especially useful as safe educational venues bringing today's youth into close contact with ways of working in the environment and with the products.

Environmentally Friendly

As with other woodland management systems, coppices are, at the least, carbon neutral and where woodland is extended they provide an additional carbon sink. Maintenance of woodland cover is one aspect of run-off control and, consequently, flood control in river catchments. The great diversity of coppiced woodlands creates a range of habitats within a relatively small geographical area which benefits wildlife.

Wildlife Friendly

The change throughout the rotation within coppiced woodlands ensures habitat niches needed by plants, animals, insects, and birds (indeed, all wildlife) are always available - a great contrast to mono-cultural plantation crops of trees. Relatively little modification e.g. retention of old stems, care at ride edges and along water courses hardly affects product outcomes but extends wildlife friendliness with ease.

Healthy Environment

Many people find woodlands enjoyable for rest and recreation, active and otherwise. Where this contains variety the feeling of well-being is enhanced. Coppices, especially coppices with standards kept in good management rotation, serve these purposes well. If they can be combined with water-edge environments the positive response becomes yet greater.

Cultural Heritage

Most of our coppice woodlands are a heritage in themselves. Management and craft product techniques have been honed over time and are a reservoir of knowledge we can ill-afford to lose.

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