

## Research Participant Information Leaflet



### What are the opportunities and constraints for woodland creation in the Forest of Bowland?

#### 1. Introduction

I am an MSc Conservation and Biodiversity student at Lancaster University on a dissertation placement with Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). I would like to invite you to take part in a research study which is considering opportunities and constraints for woodland creation in the Forest of Bowland. Key to this for the AONB is understanding *'how in supporting biodiversity do differing perceptions of beauty, human and economic values, influence decisions when stakeholders prioritise projects?'* This is the research study question which I am seeking to answer for Elliott Lorimer, AONB Principal Officer. We are inviting people, and partners who have an interest in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to get involved in the study. Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part in the research. This study has been reviewed/approved as per the University's Research Ethics Committee process.

#### 2. What is the study about?

At the heart of Lancashire, the Bowland fells are designated for their expanse of blanket bog and heather moorland providing important habitats for breeding bird communities. The AONB as a whole covers 730 km<sup>2</sup> in Lancashire and 73 km<sup>2</sup> in Yorkshire. Forest of Bowland is an internationally important landscape with 21 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), covering 20.4% of the AONB's 803 km<sup>2</sup> area. In recent years the AONB has focused on hay meadow and peat restoration projects using a holistic landscape-scale approach to conservation in promoting biodiversity and helping with flood prevention. The AONB have asked me to undertake the study because there have been historical constraints to realising new woodland creation schemes in the protected landscape. Woodlands can act as a form of natural flood management, reducing the risk of downstream flooding and can also help to improve water quality. It also has the added benefit of supporting reductions in carbon dioxide with trees being a natural carbon store. It is recognised by the AONB that in a protected landscape peoples' perceptions of natural beauty, and what each individual and organisation values in terms of biodiversity and the landscape impacts on decision making in terms of future land management options.

#### The aims of the study are therefore to:

- ⇒ Understand the visual tipping points in terms of woodland cover and type which positively or negatively impact on peoples' perception of beauty in the protected landscape.
- ⇒ Understand the range of personal and organisational values and how they impact on decision making in conservation initiatives.
- ⇒ Baseline the level of woodland within the AONB e.g. whether coniferous, broadleaved, ancient woodland. This will help to monitor changes in future levels.

#### 3. Why have I been invited?

I have approached you because you have been identified by the AONB as either:

- a member of the general public with an interest in the AONB
- or an organisational representative on the Joint Advisory Committee
- or have a specific interest in impacts of woodland creation.

I would be grateful if you would agree to take part in this study.

#### 4. What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decided to take part, this would involve:

**All participants:** Providing written consent to participate (see sample participant consent form at the end of this leaflet) and then complete a nine question online survey (5 –9 minutes) or if you prefer paper format. This will involve selecting photos of the AONB. Your participation will generate a unique survey reference number, which is used to anonymise your answers.

#### **Selected woodland creation project partners only:**

- Providing written consent to participate (see sample participant consent form) and participate in a 10-15 minute survey about conservation values rating attitudes for 33 questions.
- For selected individuals this may involve a follow up structured interview 60 mins either in person with the researcher at your workplace or venue to be agreed or via conference call.
- Give consideration to completing a consent form to enable your contact details to be shared with the AONB to enable you to be invited to a future focus group to discuss criteria for scoring projects (2 x ½ days or 1 full day). Please note this sits outside of the scope of this study and there is no obligation.

#### 5. What are the possible benefits from taking part?

The potential benefits are that your insights will generate improved understanding of how both perception of beauty and values relating to biodiversity inform the future direction of landscape conservation, and woodland creation in the Forest of Bowland. The research findings may help the AONB, in the review of the AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024 and agreeing future land management priorities within the AONB.

#### 6. Do I have to take part?

No, your participation is voluntary. It's completely up to you to decide whether or not you wish to take part. If you are an employee of any of the many partner organisations within the AONB partnership or Joint Advisory Committee, and you decide not to take part in this study, please be assured this will not affect your position in the organisation or relationship with your employer.

#### 7. What if I change my mind?

If you change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time from this study. If you want to withdraw, please let me know, and I will extract any ideas or information (=data) you contributed to the study and destroy them. However, it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people's data. It may not be possible to withdraw data completed online, as any data available to me will be anonymised and cannot be identified by me from your name except where a questionnaire ID no. has been provided. The final research report production will start 19th August 2018. Please accept my apologies, but data cannot be withdrawn from the study after this date. The final dissertation will be submitted on the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

#### 8. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

As a summary of the research is to be produced for the AONB which may be made available to the public on social media. There is a small risk that the public may link themes discussed in the report to specialist interest groups or organisations. If you are concerned about this, please think carefully whether to participate in the study. Otherwise it is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part as this informs strategic planning by the AONB. Please also note the research may inform future woodland creation plans by the AONB and its partners. Participants are advised that any future woodland projects which fall out of the next AONB management plan 2019-24 will be discussed and agreed with the parties they impact, on a case by case basis, with necessary approvals and permissions being obtained in each instance.

#### 9. Will my data be identifiable?

I will remove any personal information from the written record of your contribution produced in the final research report. After the survey or interview I will confidentially store your data; see section 11. The results may be discussed with my academic supervisor Dr Andrew Jarvis, and Forest of Bowland AONB supervisor Elliott Lorimer in helping me ensure the quality of the research. All personal information, or data defined as special protected data under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR, 2015) will be stored and processed confidentially in compliance with both Lancashire County Council and Lancaster University Information Governance procedures given both servers will be accessed and used for email communication and storage. On completion of analysis and publication of the research findings, the source surveys and interview records will be destroyed as required by GDPR.

### 10. How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?

I will use the information you have shared with me only in the following ways outlined. I will use it for research purposes namely my MSc dissertation and related academic publications e.g. research poster; journal articles. I may also present the results of my study to the AONB Joint Advisory Committee, partner organisations and at conferences, and public events if requested.

When writing up the findings from this study, I would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas you shared with me. I will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from my interview with you), so that although I will use your exact words, you cannot be identified in the publications.

I will also produce a public version of the report for the AONB. Common themes may be identified within the report. This may therefore be published on the AONB website to provide participant feedback and as general information to the public. As public information this may subsequently be reported on social media channels e.g. Facebook or Twitter.

### 11. Duty to safeguard

It is anticipated this research will not involve vulnerable adults or children. However, if anything you tell me in the interview (*or other data collection method*) suggests that you or another human or animal might be at risk of harm. I will be obliged to share this information with my supervisors who may refer the matter to appropriate authorities. I would normally discuss this breach of confidentiality with you, unless it places another individual at risk.

### 12. How my data will be stored

Your data will be stored in encrypted files (that is no-one other than me, the researcher will be able to access them) and on password-protected computers, which are protected with anti-virus/malware software. I will store hard copies of any data securely in locked cabinets in my office. I will keep data that can identify you separately from non-personal information (e.g. your views on a specific topic). Pen-drives will not be used for storage or transfer of personal data. Records to be destroyed will be either physically shredded or electronically using specialist software to ensure no personal data can be retrieved from computer hard-drive.

### 13. How is the research funded?

As the industry client the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) provided the brief for the dissertation study and provide physical resources in terms of office use, IT and printing as an industry placement; the EU funded Centre for Global Eco-Innovation based at Lancaster University is sponsoring the project as an Enterprise and Business Partnership project and provides a budget of £200 towards student travel expenses. Academic supervisor support is also available to the project as necessary from Lancaster Environment Centre, Lancaster University, as part of the support for the industry placement.

### 14. What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please feel free to contact me:

*Lorraine Ritchen-Stones MSc Conservation and Biodiversity Student c/o Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Kettledrum, 6 Root Hill Estate Yard, Whitewell Road, Dunsop Bridge, CLITHEROE, BB7 3AY*

Tel. 01200 448000  
Email: [l.ritchen-stones@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:l.ritchen-stones@lancaster.ac.uk) or [Lorraine.Ritchen-Stones@lancashire.ac.uk](mailto:Lorraine.Ritchen-Stones@lancashire.ac.uk)

Or if you do not feel comfortable discussing your concerns with me, please feel to contact:

**My academic supervisor Dr Andrew Jarvis** *c/o Post Graduate Taught Office Lancaster University, Lancaster Environment Centre, LEC 3, Room A40, Bailrigg, Lancaster, LA1 4YW Tel: +44 (0)1524 510257 or Direct Line +44 (0)1524 593280 Email: [a.jarvis@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:a.jarvis@lancaster.ac.uk)*

Or alternatively:

**My industry placement supervisor Elliott Lorimer** *Principal Officer, Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Kettledrum, 6 Root Hill Estate Yard, Whitewell Road, Dunsop Bridge, CLITHEROE, BB7 3AY*

Tel: 01200 448000 Email: [Elliott.Lorimer@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Elliott.Lorimer@lancashire.gov.uk)

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact:

**Dr Ian Hartley MSc Programme Director** *c/o Post Graduate Taught Office Lancaster University, Lancaster Environment Centre, LEC 3, Room A40, Bailrigg, Lancaster, LA1 4YW Tel: +44 (0)1524 510257 or Direct +44 (0)1524 592566 Email: [i.hartley@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:i.hartley@lancaster.ac.uk)*

### 15. Sources of support

It is not the intention of the researcher to discuss or seek disclosure of any personally sensitive or distressing topics as part of the research. However, it is recognised in rural communities there are many challenges which can impact health and wellbeing and these might be raised by participants. Potential sources for support are:

- **Mental Health Helpline (Lancashire Care NHS Trust)** which is open 365 days a year, Monday—Friday 7pm until 11pm and Saturday-Sunday 12pm until midnight Tel: 0800 915 4640.
- **The Farming Community Network** which answers calls in person between 7am-11pm Tel. 03000 111 999 e-helpline: [chris@fcn.org.uk](mailto:chris@fcn.org.uk)
- **The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution** supporting farming families Tel: 0808 281 9490

## Sample Participant Consent Form

### Project Title: What are the opportunities and constraints for woodland creation in the Forest of Bowland?

Name of Researcher: Lorraine Ritchen-Stones  
Email: [l.ritchen-stones@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:l.ritchen-stones@lancaster.ac.uk)

#### Please tick each box as appropriate

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, and ask questions which if asked have been answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during my participation in this study without giving any reason. I have read Section 7 of the Research Participant Information Leaflet which outlines the circumstances and timescales in which it is possible to withdraw my data from the study, and these are accepted	
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher/s, but my personal information will not be included and I will not be identifiable.	
4. I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentation. I also understand my organisations name if applicable will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations without my consent.	
5. I understand that data will be kept according to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation 2015 and information governance requirements of Lancaster University and Lancashire County Council as outlined in section 9 and 12 of the research participant information leaflet.	
<b>Selected woodland creation partners only participating in interviews:</b>	
6. I understand that a written record of interviews will be produced for approval by you. Only with your explicit written consent at the time of the interview may these be audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. That data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.	

I agree to take part in the above study. I confirm that I have not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and where asked all the questions have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability.

Signature of Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Day/month/year