

AGROECOLOGY PATHWAYS FORESTRY



**A career in Forestry
can involve planting,
growing, harvesting and
processing trees for fuel
and timber products.**



AGROECOLOGY PATHWAYS



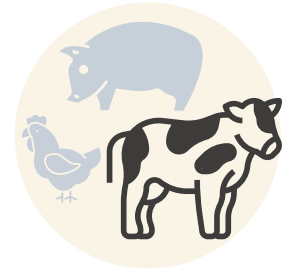
FORESTRY



ARABLE



HORTICULTURE



**DAIRY/
LIVESTOCK**



This document outlines the agroecological career pathway for the forestry industry and offers information, tips and links to resources and further sources of support.

This is a PDF version of an interactive pathway located on the LWA website and was made to support new entrants planning to start up or progress their agroecological businesses, as part of the Defra funded New Entrant Support pilot.

VOLUNTEERING



Volunteering is unpaid time working with businesses or organisations that are engaged in forestry. This can be in the form of regular days each week/month or can be more intensive periods. Due to the high level of training required in many areas of forestry, only some forestry businesses offer volunteering opportunities. However, many conservation organisations conducting forestry work take on volunteers with little experience.

Pay/benefits attached: Some voluntary roles are provided with lunch during work days. More intensive volunteering (e.g. [WWOOFing](#)) may exchange work for food and accommodation. Some forestry volunteering (especially with conservation bodies) offer to fund accredited training such as basic chainsaw or tractor qualifications.

Where does this lead me? Volunteering in a range of forestry tasks will enable you to decide whether forestry is for you and which aspects you are most drawn to. It will also provide you with contacts within the industry when looking for further training or paid opportunities. After volunteering, opportunities in forestry qualifications, training and work will be more relevant and accessible to you.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Short term or ongoing volunteering

Volunteering on a weekly or monthly basis is a useful way into forestry if you have the time and resources to support yourself. Part time volunteering alongside other paid work is also possible. This sort of volunteering is generally flexible and doesn't involve huge time commitments.

Volunteering is a great way to:

- ✓ Gain hands-on experience
- ✓ Learn a range of forestry skills
- ✓ Meet other volunteers interested in forestry
- ✓ Meet people who are already working in forestry
- ✓ Experience the different jobs available within forestry
- ✓ Discover a deeper connection with trees and woods

Intensive volunteering

Intensive volunteering usually involves working for a set period of time (usually from a week upwards) with a forestry business. These are often work exchanges where you are provided

with food and accommodation in return for work – often on a full time basis. This minimises living costs but can also make doing part-time work impractical.

Intensive volunteering can provide:

- ✓ A detailed experience of work in forestry
- ✓ Rapid increase in your forestry skill set
- ✓ An immersive experience of forestry as a business and life
- ✓ A well rounded experience of the daily routine of a forest worker
- ✓ Opportunities to develop long-lasting industry connections

Sources of support

For those who have had little experience of regular access to the woods, starting work in forestry can seem a difficult and daunting prospect. Many of us don't have the supporting resources to volunteer our time in exchange for skills and experience.

Organisations like the [Landworkers' Alliance](#) support members who are often marginalised in landwork and have unequal access to opportunities. Members organise an LGBTQIA+ working group (called Out on the Land), a BPOC (Black and People of Colour) working group (called REAL) and a youth arm (FLAME).

The Landworkers' Alliance [Women and Diverse Genders in Forestry and Landwork](#) group offers skills shares and valuable support.

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HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?



Some regenerative forestry businesses offer volunteering opportunities. Many conservation organisations that undertake forestry provide volunteering roles.

Short-term or ongoing volunteering opportunities

Contact your local conservation bodies and ask about their volunteer programmes and what forestry or woodland work they might undertake. These include:

- The [National Trust](#), [Wildlife Trusts](#) and [Woodland Trust](#), as well as more regional charities and community interest companies.
- Most local councils have a forestry or tree department which may provide useful contacts.
- Talk to farm shops that sell locally grown charcoal and contact the makers about volunteering possibilities. Talk to local sawmills about the foresters they work with.
- County or agricultural shows will usually have individuals from the forestry sector, represented by businesses or organisations.

Contact regional or national organisations representing regenerative forestry and ask for the contacts of your local foresters. These include:

- [Small Woods /The Green Wood Centre](#)
- [National Coppice Federation](#) (and their federated coppice groups)
- Non-federated coppice groups
- [Confor](#)
- [The Institute of Chartered Foresters](#)



- [Royal Forestry Society](#)
- [Forestry Commission](#)
- [Environment Job](#) and [Countryside Jobs](#) are both job and volunteering directories
- [Woodland Heritage](#)
- [Wessex Silvicultural Group](#)
- [Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group](#)
- [Farm Woodland Forum](#)
- [Continuous Cover Forestry Group](#)
- [Selectfor](#)
- [Pro Silva](#) – European wide forestry organisation
- (Some of the above groups have WhatsApp or Facebook groups)
- The [Landworkers' Alliance](#) has a dedicated forestry sector with an active WhatsApp group of regenerative forest workers who may have volunteering opportunities.
- Many have useful newsletter sign ups. There are also more generic Facebook and WhatsApp groups, such as UK charcoal burners and wood colliers groups.
- [Confor](#), [Woodland Heritage](#), the [Royal Forestry Society](#) and others have very useful regular magazine issues.
- [Quercus](#) and [Living Woods](#) magazines are also good publications for finding regenerative forestry businesses.
- Search online with your location followed by 'Forestry', 'Regenerative forestry', 'Woodland management' and 'Silviculture'. Searching for related work such as 'Horse Logging', 'Hedgelaying', 'Sawmilling' or 'Charcoal making' will yield good results as well.

- **In Wales:** [Llais y Goedwig](#) represents community woodland across Wales. [Coed Cadw](#) is the woodland trust in Wales, [Coed Lleol](#) is the Welsh branch of the Small Woods Association. [Coed Cymru](#) are an organisation promoting woodland management in Wales.
- **In Scotland:** [Royal Scottish Forestry Society](#) represents a range of woodland owners and workers as a membership organisation. [Trees for Life](#) and [Highlands Rewilding](#) are two organisations aiming to restore natural habitats in Scotland including reforestation.

Long-term volunteering opportunities

- For more intensive opportunities [WWOOF](#) ([WWOOF UK](#)) and [HelpX](#) organisations provide a searchable catalogue of businesses offering work exchanges ranging from one week to several months at a time.

TRAINING



Forestry and woodland training comprises a range of opportunities, from non-accredited courses and webinars to longer term traineeships.

Regular webinars are offered by a range of forestry organisations. They are often free and allow access to high quality forestry education by experienced foresters. Q&A sessions are a great way to find out more and get your face seen in the wider forestry world. The Continuous Cover Forestry Group provide free webinars on Youtube.

Organisations such as the [Royal Forestry Society](#) run a programme of forest visits which are a great way to see forestry in action, meet foresters and learn from them informally. A range of non accredited forestry training exists, often hosted by organisations such as [Small Woods](#).

Some forest businesses also offer courses in woodland management or related areas. These courses can be expensive but may offer low waged bursaries (worth asking even if it isn't advertised).

Some courses may only be open to members of an organisation.

Only a few organisations and businesses offer longer term traineeships/internships/ informal apprenticeships. However it may be possible to approach a forestry business who might be open to creating a traineeship.

Experience needed: The majority of this sort of training doesn't require experience however some courses or traineeships might ask for a certain level of experience.

Qualifications needed: Most training opportunities do not require qualifications.

Skills needed: Basic learning skills such as listening, note taking and asking questions are important to get the most from courses or traineeships. Organisational and work management skills as well as the ability to work both alone and in a team are also important.

Qualifications gained: Training of this sort may offer a certificate of completion rather than formally recognised accreditation. Traineeships will also be a useful source of references for future work or more formal education opportunities. Some training might offer CPD (Continuous Professional Development) credits.

Pay/benefits attached: Some traineeships might offer pay or a stipend. Accommodation is sometimes included in some traineeships as well or instead of pay.

Where does this lead me? After completing courses you will be better prepared to undertake further training or gain qualifications. Some courses/training will give you the skills for paid work in task based forestry roles such as charcoal making, coppicing and hedgelaying.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Non-accredited courses

Taking part in courses allows you to:

- ✓ Gain insight and skills in specific areas of forestry
- ✓ Meet people working in forestry
- ✓ Meet others interested in forest work
- ✓ Ask in-depth questions about forestry and working in forestry
- ✓ Get experience before traineeships/internships/informal apprenticeships

Skills learned during traineeships can be comprehensive and include:

- ✓ An understanding of the day to day tasks of a forestry business
- ✓ An understanding of wood processing and timber markets
- ✓ An opportunity to take on responsibility for roles within a business
- ✓ Identifying gaps in the market you could fill with your own business ideas
- ✓ Industry level appreciation of skills and knowledge used in forestry

Navigating these spaces, funding and sources of support

Non-accredited courses and traineeships will vary greatly depending on the provider. Make sure to assess the learning outcomes to ensure you choose the training that is best suited to your needs. You can ask to talk to previous participants or trainees to find out their experiences and what to expect.

Access to this more in depth training may seem daunting or difficult, especially if you are from a non-forestry background or a minoritised community. See the Volunteering Sources of Support section for resources and organisations that can help overcome barriers.



HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

Non accredited courses

Many of the organisations or businesses mentioned in the volunteering section also provide training courses. Those offering webinars, forest tours and courses include:

- [Royal Forestry Society](#) – courses and forest tours
- [Small Woods](#) – courses
- [Landworkers' Alliance](#) – occasional courses and forest tours
- [Confor](#) – promotes forestry education and had a small fund to support training
- [Woodland Trust](#) – courses
- [Woodland Heritage](#), – forest tours, courses and bursaries
- [The Institute of Chartered Foresters](#) – webinars, course and forest tours
- [Forestry Commission](#) – webinars
- [Wessex Silvicultural Group](#) – forest tours
- [Continuos Cover Forestry Group](#) – forest and study tours
- [Selectfor](#) – courses
- [Focus on Forestry First](#) (Wales)
- [Ben Law/Prickly Nut Wood](#) and other forest business led courses.

Traineeships/internships/informal apprenticeships

The following businesses and organisations offer traineeships:

- [Small Woods](#) – occasionally offer traineeships.
- Bill Hogarth Memorial Apprenticeship Trust – offer non accredited apprenticeships.
- [Wildlife Trusts](#) and [National Trust](#) sites sometimes offer traineeships with a forestry focus.
- [Trees for Life](#) (Scotland) offer a traineeship focusing on rewilding.



FORESTRY PRACTICAL CERTIFICATION



In order to use most forestry equipment or undertake some tasks, employers and insurers will need proof of your competence and safe working practices.

Practical certificates exist for a range of forestry equipment and tasks including:

- ✓ Chainsaw maintenance, cross cutting and felling small trees
- ✓ Felling large trees
- ✓ Felling windblown trees
- ✓ Winching and assisted felling
- ✓ Brush cutting
- ✓ Tractor driving
- ✓ Forwarder operations
- ✓ Firewood processing

Experience needed: Some certification requires experience but the entry level tickets such as Small tree felling and Tractor driving are accessible to beginners.

Qualifications needed: Some courses require a previous level of certification. For example, you will need the Felling small trees ticket as a requirement to do the Felling large trees. Ask your local training provider for details.

Skills needed: Most practical courses benefit from some mechanical or hands on knowledge. It's useful

to find some pre-training opportunities, even just someone to explain the different parts of a chainsaw and how they work is useful. This will help you get the best from the training and make your training assessments less stressful.

Qualifications gained: These courses are industry recognised across the country and are a requirement of most hands-on forestry roles.

Pay/benefits attached: None.

Where does this lead me? On completing a practical certificate you will be able to be insured for the task and equipment that you have gained a certificate in. This will allow you to apply for roles where this is a requirement and to be insured for using your equipment. Many landowners will also ask to see copies of your insurance and certificates when working as a contractor in their woods.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

The [City And Guilds NPTC](#) courses are considered the industry standard certificates. [Lantra](#) offer some certificated courses but many are "training only".

[Lantra](#) and [NPTC](#) are often **not compatible** so consider this when looking at the range of training you are likely to need over your career. If in doubt, talk to your local training provider.

These courses are available from agricultural colleges and training businesses. Some courses only run when a

training provider has enough participants wanting a particular course so it pays to contact your local training businesses and discuss your needs.

Many forestry apprenticeships include practical certification.

Some college courses (see Qualification section) include some practical certificate courses. This can be in technical forestry courses or arboriculture (tree surgery) courses.

Arboriculture, while differing from forestry as it tends to be focused on the health and safety of individual trees, is sometimes a route that leads to forestry. The practical certificates gained during arboriculture courses are often transferable.

Most practical courses consist of one or more training days and then an assessment day (which may be immediately following your training or up to a few weeks after). Sometimes the assessor is an independent assessor and sometimes they are the person who delivered your training.

Some training providers have equipment and protective equipment needed for the course for hire. Other providers expect you to bring your own kit. Make sure your equipment is in full safe and working order and meets the requirements of the course.

Navigating these spaces, funding and support

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organise an LGBTQIA+ working group (called Out on the Land), a BPOC (Black and People of Colour) working group (called REAL) and a youth arm (FLAME).



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[Forestry Roots](#) – Royal Forestry Society providing financial support to access forestry careers.

Many education centres will offer support in finding funding for your course.

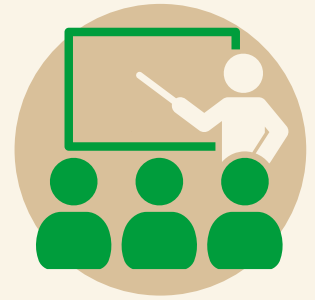
HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

- Most agricultural colleges (see qualifications page) will offer these courses or be able to point you to a provider
- Training providers may be able to suggest funding schemes that can assist with financing these courses
- Some training providers may be able to put on courses if you have enough people wanting to do them. Clubbing together with others is a good way of getting training for courses which don't run very often. Reaching out to other foresters within LWA, for example on Whatsapp, can be a good way to find others looking for similar training

- Some technical college courses include some of these courses as part of their learning outcomes
- The [Forestry Commission](#), [Confor](#), [Woodland Heritage](#) and others have grants which can help with the costs of these courses including [Forest Industries Education & Provident Fund](#), [Training Courses](#) | [Farming Connect](#) (Wales only)
- Often these courses can be attained by longer term volunteering with an organisation such as the [Wildlife Trusts](#) – see the volunteering page.
- [RFS Certifications](#) – [Royal Forestry Society](#) offers a certificate in Forestry that combines practical certificates with forestry theory.



QUALIFICATIONS AND ACCREDITATIONS



There are a range of forestry qualifications at College and University level, available for both distance and in-person learning. Courses can be academic or vocational or a mixture. Post-college education tends towards accredited **apprenticeships** for **practical education** or **University degree courses** for **academic learning**. Most formal education is focused on the more conventional forest roles rather than 'regenerative' forestry however there is plenty of crossover between different parts of the sector and many of the skills learned are vital in all aspects of forestry.

Experience needed: College and university courses generally require a minimum of previous education. Check the eligibility criteria for information on requirements.

Skills needed: Good writing, self-study/motivation, organisational and time management skills are all important for these courses. For vocational courses practical skills and safe working are also useful skills.

Qualifications gained: College education qualifications come in the form of technical certificates/advanced certificates. University accredited courses will usually be BSc or MSc. Apprenticeships are usually linked to a college or university for accreditation at college or BSc level.

Pay/benefits attached: Apprenticeships will generally be paid. Qualifications acquired will be internationally recognised.

Where does this lead me? The qualifications gained from apprenticeships and accredited courses can help you gain further education or allow you to apply for a range of paid roles. They may also provide you the industry knowledge to set up your own business.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- ✓ College courses often have a vocational element as well as an academic element allowing you to gain skills and qualifications for practical forest work.
- ✓ University courses are often mainly academic with a focus on desk based forest management rather than on the ground forest work.
- ✓ Many academic courses have routes to access practical certificates
- ✓ Qualifications allow you to certify your skills and knowledge to employers and provide an industry recognised level of education
- ✓ Full time courses allow you dedicate yourself to learning forestry
- ✓ They give you an opportunity to engage with influential people and organisations within forestry.
- ✓ Some courses can be studied by living near the campus with regular in person lectures while other

courses can be undertaken as distance learning with some in-person attendance. Full time and part time studying options are sometimes available.

Accredited Courses

Undertaking a qualification requires you to take time out from paid work so it's important to make sure the course meets your needs. Grants, bursaries and student loans can help meet the financial costs of education. Reaching out to the various organisations mentioned in this document can help both with choosing courses and finding support for the costs of education.

Accredited Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are paid and are designed to lead into work relatively easily. Currently there are few accredited apprenticeships and the majority focus on mainly conventional methods of forestry. Some apprenticeships require you to find your own employer to be your host business although colleges requiring this offer support to assist with this.

Access and sources of support

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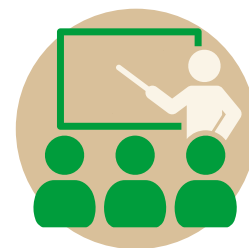
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HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

Colleges offering accredited forestry courses include:

(England)

- Bicton college
- Askham Bryan college
- Plumpton college
- Bridgewater and Taunton college
- Chapel Manor college
- Cornwall college
- Derby college
- Easton college
- Hereford and Ludlow college
- Moulton college
- Reaseheath college

- Spar shot college
- Horticultural correspondence college

(Scotland)

- Scotland's rural college
- Scottish school of forestry

(Wales)

- Coleg Cambria
- Black Mountains college
- Coleg Merion Dwyfor

Higher level accredited courses:

- [Bangor University](#) offers a wide range of forestry BSc, MSc and MRes courses and is well regarded as a forestry university
- BSc Forest Management at the [University of the Highlands and Islands](#)
- BSc Forest Management at the [University of Cumbria](#)

Other universities offering similar land management courses that contain elements of forestry include:

- [Harper Adams University](#)
- [Myerscough College](#)
- [University of Aberdeen](#)

Accredited apprenticeships

(England)

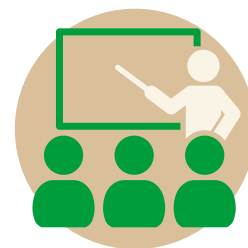
- The Forestry Commission has a range of forestry apprenticeships in collaboration with the [University of Cumbria](#) and the [The Institute of Chartered Foresters](#). This includes the Forestry England Craftsperson apprenticeship.

(Scotland)

- Trees and Timber apprenticeship with [Forestry and Land Scotland](#)
- Craftsperson modern apprenticeship

(Wales)

- Forestry and the countryside apprenticeship at [Coleg Cambria](#)



WORKING



Forestry covers a huge range of roles. Many foresters undertake a number of roles in their work. The following tasks all fall within forestry but there are many more not mentioned here:

- Woodland creation, design and consultation
- Tree nursery growing
- Tree planting
- Woodland management surveying and planning
- Brush cutting
- Tree felling (thinning and harvesting)
- Timber extracting (winching and forwarding)
- Horse logging
- Academic forestry research
- Tree health assessment
- Coppice products manufacture
- Sawmilling
- Firewood processing
- Charcoal making

Experience needed: A reasonable level of knowledge and experience is useful especially in practical tasks such as tree felling, although some employers may be open to new entrants who have

relevant practical qualifications and good motivation and communication skills.

Qualifications needed: The basic chainsaw and small tree felling ticket is an important qualification to begin work in forestry. Further technical qualifications such as large tree felling and brush cutting add to the tasks you will be eligible for.

First aid is another important qualification to add to your employability although some employers will be able to provide this as part of your ongoing training.

Skills needed: Communication is a vital skill for any forest worker as well as being able to work safely and sensibly. Stamina and the ability to work in all weathers are key requirements. Safe and efficient lifting skills. An understanding of basic forestry machinery and maintenance. The ability to learn the wood requirements of a range of forest products will ensure harvested wood isn't needlessly wasted.

Qualifications gained: A good forestry company will ensure their employees undertake continued professional development which can involve gaining qualifications and training.

Pay/benefits attached: National minimum wage or more. Pensions.

Where does this lead me? Paid work can lead to more responsibility within a forestry team. Forestry roles within charities and government organisations can lead to managing teams of foresters or undertaking more desk

based forest management planning and organising as well as timber marketing and business roles.

Progression in forestry roles for contractors or private forest businesses can widen the tasks you undertake into things such as sawmilling, charcoal making, timber forwarding and hauling, tree planting, marketing, consultation and more.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Finding paid work is a great way to:

- ✓ Use skills and knowledge learnt from volunteering and training
- ✓ Widen your skills and qualifications and overall employability
- ✓ Deepen your understanding of forestry as a business
- ✓ See woods and forests develop and improve slowly over the course of your career
- ✓ Work with other people who are also passionate about woodlands

Vacancies in forestry can be few and far between and some roles may be highly competitive. Roles for smaller forestry businesses may not be well advertised so time spent contacting potential employers speculatively may be worthwhile. Many tasks in forestry are seasonal including tree planting and felling so it may be possible to find seasonal work which can be a foot in the door into more permanent positions.

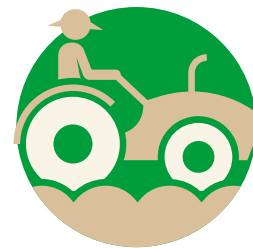
Accommodation

A major factor affecting all rural jobs is housing. Many rural areas have high demand for housing and high housing costs. Forestry generally works on tight profit margins which in turn means wages are generally low. Some forestry companies may be able to provide

advice or assistance on finding housing.

Forestry roles for charities and organisations may provide better pay.

Sometimes it is possible to find less traditional housing solutions through reciprocal arrangements with landowners in exchange for labour as forestry skills are much in demand but often costly to a woodland owner.



HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

Jobs in the regenerative forestry sector

As these jobs are often poorly advertised and hard to come by the following organisations may be able to provide advice on finding paid forestry work:

- [Landworkers' Alliance](#) often advertise work opportunities via their newsletter and forestry WhatsApp groups
- [Small Woods](#) association have a classified adverts section to the website
- [Confor](#), [Royal Forestry Society](#) and [Woodland Heritage](#) are worth contacting for helpful advice on jobs in forestry
- [Environment Job](#) and [Countryside Jobs](#) are both job and volunteering directories
- Make contact with local wooded estates which have their own forestry teams
- Follow interesting forestry businesses on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media channels
- Contact interesting forestry organisations and businesses via their websites

STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS



Setting up and running your own forestry enterprise.

Experience needed: Essential experience of forestry operations, processing, and marketing which can be gained by volunteering, training, apprenticeships and working in other forest enterprises.

Qualifications needed: To ensure safe working and to meet insurance eligibility practical certificates are important. These include chainsaw, tree felling, winching, tractor, firewood processing, sawmilling and forwarder tickets. Using machinery without the appropriate certificate often invalidates insurance. First aid certificates are important for your own health but are also often a requirement to work in others' woods.

Skills needed: A range of practical forestry skills including planting, felling, extracting and processing are important. Marketing and continued learning will ensure your business grows. An understanding of UK business requirements are necessary including tax, insurance, health and safety, employment law, and basic accountancy.

Entrepreneurial thinking, good communication, flexibility, finance management, a strong work ethic and self motivation all help make businesses more successful as well as the ability to network and collaborate with others.

Qualifications gained: Continued professional development is important for growing your business so make sure to prioritise this where you can.

Pay/benefits attached: You will be able to set your own wage. Be mindful that many forestry businesses operate tight profit margins and your take home pay may be low in the first years of running your own business.

Where does this lead me? Starting a woodland enterprise can lead to a diverse range of opportunities including:

- Branching out into many different areas of forestry and woodland based enterprise
- Incorporation of jobs traditionally outside the forestry sector including farming, tourism, craft, and community/social enterprises
- Involvement with your local community to advocate what benefits forestry can bring to your local friends and neighbours and connecting people with nature
- Linking with other land based businesses as part of networks and projects
- Being part of the solution to create more learning and job opportunities in forestry
- Experimenting with novel or innovative practices that improve the reliance of forestry and woodland habitat
- Being a case study or advocate for regenerative forestry and providing inspiration for others.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Setting up a forestry business involves dedication, conviction, motivation and hard work but allows you to:

- ✓ Put your skills and knowledge into practise
- ✓ Have a positive impact on the land and community you live in
- ✓ Provide solutions to major challenges such as climate change and globalisation
- ✓ Develop a lifelong understanding and relationship with woodland and trees
- ✓ Watch the impact of your work over long periods of time
- ✓ Build a woodland culture in the UK

Seeking Business Support

Reaching out to local and national business support initiatives can be hugely valuable when setting up a business. There is lots of support out there including help with writing business plans, finding the right business model, finding woods to work, and promoting and marketing your products and services.

Working with others

Setting up a forestry enterprise by yourself can be a long and lonely path. Sharing responsibility and increasing your enterprise's passion and network by involving others is often the best way to ensure business success and better mental health. There are different collaborative business models to suit different situations including partnerships, community interest companies and limited companies.

Accommodation

High cost of rural housing can be a challenging hindrance to successful business startups in forestry.

Finding and keeping affordable housing or seeking out innovative ways to minimise costs will help ensure business income meets your needs. Adding your voice to campaigns by organisations like the [Landworkers' Alliance](#) help build a movement to change legal barriers to good, affordable rural housing for foresters.



HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

Although the barriers to starting a new forestry business may seem daunting there is an increasing level of support for your enterprise.

Access to Land and Finance

Forestry startups benefit from the fact that many woods are undervalued and underutilised by their owners. Connecting with landowners and farmers whose values align with your own and who own woods which they currently ignore may provide a way into forestry. Going for a walk with a landowner in their woods can show them your passion for an aspect of their land they may not have the resources to manage themselves and an offer to bring their woods into good management may yield access to land.

- Organisations such as the [Country Land and Business Association \(CLA\)](#) represent landowners on a county by county level and may be able to connect you.
- Similarly many woodland owning charities and organisations may not have the skills or knowledge to undertake forestry themselves and may consider exchanging woodland restoration for the felled timber.
- Organisations like the [Wildlife Trusts](#), [National Trust](#), [RSPB](#) and [Woodland Trust](#) represent the major

national organisations but there are many smaller charities and community woodland groups.

- [The Farm Woodland Forum](#), [Small Woods association](#), [Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group](#) (FWAG) and others have woodland owners reaching out to them for forestry connections and would be worth making links with in search of a forestry startup wood.
- [Start to Farm](#) | [Farming Connect](#) In Wales link landowners with budding landworkers (mainly farming but occasional farm woodland is available).
- Posting on social media groups and newsletters may yield results in land searches. The [Landworkers' Alliance](#) newsletter and WhatsApp groups as well as Facebook woodland owners groups represent the obvious places to start but there are many other land based social media groups to connect with.
- Financial assistance with forestry business startups require lateral thinking as direct funding for enterprises are limited.
- Contact your local county or regional council who will have funding resources aimed at assisting with their social and environmental aims.
- Rural enterprise/development funding exists in a variety of guises. Some is accessed via local councils while other funding may be available from AONBs, national parks or other land based organisations.
- Registering your business as a community interest company or charity opens up access to much more funding.

Other support

It is important to note that for those who have had little experience of regular access to the woods, starting work in forestry can seem a difficult and daunting

prospect. Many of us don't have the supporting resources to volunteer our time in exchange for skills and experience.



Organisations like the [Landworkers' Alliance](#) support members who are often marginalised in landwork and have unequal access to opportunities. Members organise an LGBTQIA+ working group (called Out on the Land), a BPOC (Black and People of Colour) working group (called REAL) and a youth arm (FLAME).

The Landworkers' Alliance [Women and Diverse Genders in Forestry and Landwork](#) group offers skills shares and valuable support.

[LION](#) or Land in our Names are a Black-led collective who also work to support those looking to get into land work but are unable to access traditional routes.

[Ubele](#) also offers sources of support and empowerment for Black and Minoritised communities in the UK.

[Shared Assets](#) work to reimagine what we can do with land and support communities to gain access.

Also see the 'Further Resources' section of this pathway for other links to support and resources that you may find helpful when setting up your own forestry business.

BUSINESS & CAREER PROGRESSION



Growing your business or furthering your career helps ensure your works stays robust, relevant and resilient.

Experience needed: Paid work or equivalent level of knowledge is necessary for further career progression and business development.

Qualifications needed: For furthering your career or growing your business into broader areas of forestry a basic level of secondary or college education is usually a minimum requirement but this will vary according to your ability and experience.

Skills needed: Paid working or equivalent skill set is vital for furthering your progression opportunities.

Qualifications gained: Options for getting academic grounding in your forestry work include MSc, MRes and PhD qualifications.

Pay/benefits attached: Progressing, expanding and diversifying your forestry work can lead to higher level job opportunities or increased business turnover and profit. Your standing as a forester will increase with progression and so increase chances of further and more diverse work opportunities.

Where does this lead me? Progressing within a forestry career can lead to work opportunities that address broader forestry and associated issues. Advocacy, consultation, campaigning, mentoring and education opportunities can widen your skill set beyond traditional forestry or business experiences.

- Expanding your work into political or social areas help to bring the national regenerative forestry story to a wider or more powerful audience and make the legacy of your work with the sector be as long lasting as your woodland legacy.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Progressing your career

If you are working in forestry and begin to expand the scope of your work you will:

- ✓ Learn skills that transfer across all parts of your life
- ✓ Find yourself as an agent for change or inspiration within the sector
- ✓ Meet people across the country striving for similar values
- ✓ Discover how forestry works in different parts of the country and world
- ✓ Access more senior roles that have more power for positive change
- ✓ Access skills for starting your own business or organisation
- ✓ Progress your business

Expanding and diversifying your enterprise can have major benefits for you and your business by:

- ✓ Building in adaptability and resilience in the face of changing markets and unforeseen barriers
- ✓ Providing a wider customer base by furthering your reach and reputation
- ✓ Growing your profits, turnover, efficiency and employee base
- ✓ Safeguarding your business past your retirement
- ✓ Providing a high quality case study for changes in forestry policy
- ✓ Creating jobs for new entrants
- ✓ Collaborating with other organisations and businesses

Progression expansion and diversification can be costly and can impact your business or career negatively if done without research. Make sure your career or business is at the right stage before branching out into new areas or increasing what you already do significantly. Opportunities to progress are generally ongoing and give you time to ensure that your bottom line is running well before embarking on new projects.

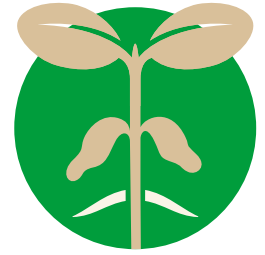
HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

Many of the resources already mentioned in each section of this pathway will be relevant to business and career progression. Referring to larger organisations might seem the obvious route but equally connecting with the smaller more local organisations or projects can lead to interesting opportunities.

Career and business progression

- [Confor](#), [Woodland Heritage](#) and the [Royal Forestry Society/Royal Scottish Forestry Society](#) can provide

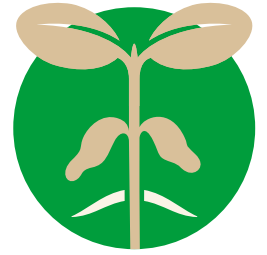
information on furthering your career/business. Being a member of these organisations will provide access to the full range of their resources and assistance.



- Attending forest walks and talks can be a great way to meet other foresters and continue learning and seeing how others are managing their woods. The Royal Forestry Society, Institute of Chartered Foresters and others have a calendar of events throughout the year. In the south of England the Wessex Silviculture Group and Continuous Cover Forestry Group are well known for their valuable events.
- [The Institute of Chartered Foresters](#) can help assist with career development as well as governing chartered forester status.
- The above organisations and others host awards for forestry businesses and individuals. Generally these awards are open to anyone on application. Winning or being short-listed for your achievements can widen your customer base, provide validation and increase your credibility as a forester. Local councils may also host sustainability awards.
- Make links with foresters and others in connected fields whose work you appreciate. Collaborating with other businesses or organisations is a good way to progress your business that spreads risks and responsibilities of a project while benefiting from the motivation and enthusiasm of others.
- Get your work into the media. Podcasters, authors, photographers, TV and film makers, and social media influencers are often looking for interesting voices to profile. Getting involved with broadcast projects that are focused around rural or environment issues will increase your audience customer base and work towards a better understanding about forestry by the public.

- Some areas of forestry such as forest research, policy, funding and plant health have roles within government bodies such as the [Forestry Commission](#), [Natural England](#) and [DEFRA](#). Their newsletters and websites will have information about upcoming roles.
- For those with an academic interest those universities that specialise in forestry may have post-graduate projects and research positions as well as teaching roles available.

See the Further Resources page for other links you may find helpful when progressing your work.



FURTHER RESOURCES / PLACES OF SUPPORT

Supporting organisations

- [Landworkers' Alliance](#)
- [Small Woods Association](#)
- [Coed Lleol](#)
- [National Coppice Federation](#)
- [Confor](#)
- [Royal Forestry Society](#)
- [Royal Scottish Forestry Society](#)
- [Coed Cymru](#)
- [Llais y Goedwig](#)
- [The Institute of Chartered Foresters](#)
- [Forestry England](#)
- [Natural Resources Wales](#)
- [Forestry and Land Scotland](#)
- [Wessex Silvicultural Group](#)
- [Continuous Cover Forestry Group](#)

Reading

[The Cutting Edge: Twelve Examples of Ecological Forestry in the UK](#) – Landworkers' Alliance case studies of small woodland businesses across the UK.

[New Report: The Promise of Agroforestry – Landworkers Alliance Agroforestry case studies.](#)

[Regenerative Forestry Report](#) – A report by the Soil Association on regenerative forestry case studies.

[Jumping Fences](#) – A report on overcoming barriers to landwork for black people and people of colour.

[Quarterly Journal of Forestry](#) – The Royal Forestry Society quarterly journal.

Events

[Confor Woodland Show 2023](#) – Alternates every other year with the APF exhibition: an industry leading forestry event and a great place to discover more about forestry careers.

[APF Exhibition](#) – On even numbered years (alternating with the Confor show): the UK's largest forestry show and a good opportunity to meet people involved in forestry from across the UK.

[Agroforestry show](#) – Foresters and farmers who love trees and woods.



Find us online

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