

Clough Woodland

Benefits for my land

BENEFITS

Clough woodland creates many benefits for water, wildlife and people. It also has numerous advantages for farmers, land owners and managers. Clough woodland:

- Contributes to bracken control
- Provides shade and shelter for livestock
- Improves water quality
- Reduces downstream flood risk
- Enhances the landscape
- Provides a source of timber
- Reduces atmospheric pollutants

Will creating woodlands be costly and time consuming?

Woodland creation amounts on each land holding will be a subject of discussion between landlord and tenant (on tenanted farms). Woodland creation and management on small farms through much of Europe is seen as a contributor to business sustainability. Woodland creation provides wood for use on farms for wood fuel and can be used for fencing material. Woodlands can also be designed as windbreaks to give stock shelter and can be laid out to allow continued use of droving routes to move stock around the farm.



Woodlands can often be created naturally by excluding livestock and deer. This can be done by using fencing and allowing existing shrubs near the site to colonise. Wind or birds often spread the natural seeds sources. This may take several years to create a woodland but woodlands created in this way are normally more natural looking and more resilient to climate change. The amount of time involved will depend on how much of the work is carried out by contractors and how much is carried out by the landowner. If work is carried out in-house by the farmer, establishing a woodland may include work such as fencing and fence maintenance, tree planting, weed control and tree shelter maintenance. Woodland management can be carried out at quieter times in the farming calendar.

Will woodland have an impact on my shoot?

New woodland will create extra woodland and scrub edge habitat which would suit some game birds such as partridge and pheasant. New woodlands will mostly be at relatively small scale with as much as 40% open ground incorporated into the design. This will mean ease of access for shooters and beaters.



Artist's illustration of land at Upper North Grain, before and after clough woodland creation



Can woodland increase the risk of pests and predators on my land?

Woodlands will be in smaller blocks with, as mentioned previously, as much as 40% open ground incorporated into them. This will not create dense thickets where it is impossible to control pests. The density of trees and shrubs could be as low as 400 per hectare on planted areas so woodlands will be accessible to allow farmers, gamekeepers and shoots to access them for pest control. Often new woodland will be created by expanding existing woodland. The additional burden on pest control in these areas will be minimal. Consideration will be given to the potential impact woodland could have on rare ground nesting birds such as curlew where this may be an issue.

What are the risks associated with these diseases?

There are some serious plant diseases out there. The secret is to plant or encourage a wide selection of tree species and to ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place. This way, trees are healthy, less stressed and more able to cope with any diseases that come along. Creating woodlands through natural regeneration normally produces woodlands best suited to the conditions of the site. Obviously planting some trees such as Ash is not allowed at the moment and guidance on other species is readily available.

Will my woodland attract deer?

When planning new woodland it is crucial to consider what pests such as deer are present in the area and what protection needs to be put in place. This is usually tree shelters or deer fences. This together with deer control programmes will allow new woodlands to establish. Once the woodlands are established they will undoubtedly provide additional habitat for deer but open ground (designed into the woodlands at the start) will enable deer culling if and when it is needed.

Will I be able to allow livestock to use new woodland as shelter?

This will depend on how the woodland creation has been funded. The Forestry Commission includes compensation for taking the land out of agricultural production. If there were Farm Woodland Payments, livestock must be excluded. If there are no Farm Woodland Payments in place then stock could be allowed back into woodland when it is fully established. Under the woodland creation scheme, land in the scheme must not be used for any agricultural activity, including grazing, for a period of at least five years. Land managers can claim their BPS through the WCG agreement and until the end of any subsequent 10-year maintenance agreement.

Will allowing stock back into established woodland compromise its value for conservation?

The main thing to ensure is that stock does not damage or kill the trees by either eating them or by compacting the soil around the trees. A grazed woodland habitat could benefit certain bird species such as tree pipit and spotted flycatcher. At a landscape scale it would be good to have a mixture of woodlands where some grazing was allowed and others where an understory is allowed to develop.

ADVICE AND FUNDING

Moors for the Future partners work to develop native clough woodland across the Peak District and South Pennines.

We offer support and advice for those interested in creating clough woodlands to access grants that help to cover the costs of establishing new woodland in high priority areas. These areas can offer the greatest potential to deliver multiple benefits for people, the environment, water and biodiversity. (For more information on what financial support is available, read the 'grants and support' factsheet).

This is one of three factsheets about clough woodland creation, which are part of a series of factsheets produced by the Moors for the Future Partnership. For more advice and information, please contact either:

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