

Community Restoration Network

Project Profile: Royal Forest of Wychwood

Project Location:

Royal Forest of Wychwood,
West Oxfordshire, UK

Project Manager/Coordinator:

Nick Mottram, Wychwood Project Director

Project Duration:

ongoing since 1997

Ecosystem to be Restored:

a mosaic of woodlands, meadows,
cultivated fields, heaths and downs

Area to be Restored:

120 square miles encompassing 41 parishes



Primary Cause of Degradation:

Human occupation in this area dates back to the Neolithic Age. The pressures associated with a growing population (e.g. agriculture, felling of timber) have reduced the forest to a fraction of its original size.

Project Goal:

To enhance the environmental, cultural and historical features of the Wychwood landscape

Restoration Treatments Used:

The Wychwood Project combines many smaller focus areas to improve the overall ecological integrity of West Oxfordshire. Ten community woodlands have been established to encourage stewardship and community-based resource management. Dry stone walls have been constructed in many places to contain livestock and prevent erosion. A project team dedicated to hedgerow restoration carries out a number of projects throughout the region. Nesting boxes for barn owls have been installed to ensure their breeding success. Surveys and monitoring of sensitive landscape features such as ponds and ancient trees are conducted to facilitate conservation.

Community Involvement:

The project has three permanent staff people that coordinate activities but is otherwise heavily dependent upon the help of local volunteers. Community members provide labor, financial support in the form of donations and membership dues, and outreach opportunities at community gatherings.

Benefits to Local Ecology:

The project has had much success raising awareness about important conservation issues affecting the Royal Forest of Wychwood and attracting the participation of local community members in the protection and restoration of this invaluable natural and cultural resource.

Directions for the Future:

This is an ongoing initiative with support from the local government.

Funding/Support:

Funding has been provided by the West Oxfordshire District Council since the project's inception.

References/Contacts:

Wychwood Project

<http://www.wychwoodproject.org/>

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