

National Forest Wood Pasture/Parkland Guidelines for Applicants & Agents

What are wood pasture and parkland?

Wood pasture usually consists of large open-grown trees growing in grassland. It is created by natural regeneration with managed livestock grazing. Tree species are generally broadleaved such as oak, lime, sycamore and sweet chestnut, with some woody shrub species.

Parklands are designed landscapes which are often associated with a country house but can also form elements of pony paddocks and town parks in urban areas. The trees are planted and species are often a mix of broadleaves and conifers.

Why create new wood pasture/parkland?

Wood pasture and parkland have significant ecological and landscape benefits and contribute strongly to the wooded character and 'sense of place' of a large-scale Forest area such as The National Forest. Wood pasture is a priority habitat in the UK and National Forest Biodiversity Action Plans and parklands are important historic and visual elements in the landscape across The National Forest area.

New wood pasture and parkland has value in a number of settings, including:

- well-wooded landscapes – linking areas of high forest with more open landscapes.
- landscapes where large woodlands are less appropriate – such as sensitive historic and ecological areas.
- agricultural landscapes – linked to grazing regimes, including horse paddocks.
- providing wooded settings for country houses or farm buildings.
- urban areas – enhancing open amenity greenspace, including school grounds.
- river valley landscapes – where dense woodland is less appropriate.

National Forest Grant Scheme or Higher Level Scheme?

The National Forest Grant Scheme is aimed at the creation of new areas of wood pasture/parkland.

Natural England's Higher Level Scheme (HLS) includes grants for wood pasture/parkland. However, to avoid overlap or duplication of effort, HLS should be primarily used for replacement tree planting in existing wood pasture/parkland landscapes within The National Forest.

Should HLS funding not be available, the National Forest Company may consider schemes in existing wood pasture/parkland landscapes if a clear benefit can be demonstrated.

Eligibility criteria

- The land must be within The National Forest, or close to its boundary. Please contact us if the proposal is outside the boundary,
- The applicant must own the land or have the written agreement of the owner.
- The land must be a minimum of 0.25 hectares (ha). Whilst there is no upper limit it is expected that most schemes will be between 0.25 and 5 ha.
- The land must not be under an existing Environmental Stewardship Scheme or be a condition of planning permission.
- The land must not be part of an existing National Forest grant scheme (e.g. Tender Scheme, Changing Landscapes Scheme, Freewoods Scheme).
- The tree planting must be completed by 31st January each year.

Conditions of the Scheme

Design

Schemes should be designed to produce the effect of 'scattered trees'. Small groups and avenues of trees can only be included as part of an overall scattered tree design.

Multiple planting areas can be included in one application, but each planting area must be at least 0.25ha.

Schemes should be sited and designed to achieve public benefits that fulfil the objectives of the National Forest Strategy 2014-24. These include:

- **visual landscape benefit** – for the public, not just the site owner.
- **landscape/ecological connectivity** – for example, siting schemes to link woodland or other habitats, or individual trees (e.g. hedgerow or parkland trees) in the surrounding landscape.
- **accessibility** – whilst public access is not a requirement, schemes should be visible from public rights of way, other accessible land, or the highway network.

The Scheme does not include contributions towards other features (e.g. ponds, hedgerows, etc).

Consultation

At the scheme planning stage, the applicant must undertake consultation with County Council archaeologists, ecologists and landscape team, the Environment Agency and other

statutory consultees (e.g. Natural England) as appropriate. This is to ensure that schemes will have no adverse impacts on the environment or heritage.

Tree densities

The density of tree planting must range from 6 to 25 trees per hectare, with a minimum of three trees on the smallest schemes (0.25 - 0.5 ha).

Tree species

The species planted should be primarily native broadleaves such as English or sessile oak and small-leaved lime. In parkland schemes, 'naturalised' species such as sycamore and horse/sweet chestnut will also be considered, plus in exceptional circumstances, more exotic species such as red oak, Cedar of Lebanon and Giant Redwood (in agreement with the NFC).

Establishment and maintenance

The landowner or appointed Contractor/Agent will be responsible for planting and erecting protection around the trees using tree crates with tree guards to the specification detailed in Appendix A. Timber for the tree crates should be British and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified and sourced locally where possible.

Any tree losses will be replaced by the landowner in the next available planting season and at his/her cost.

By year five each tree should be well established. The landowner will then continue to ensure that tree protection is maintained from browsing animals.

Change in ownership

If the land is sold in the future, the seller and purchaser will agree in writing that the trees will be maintained in their original setting to meet the long-term aim of adding value to the landscape.

Rejection of schemes

The National Forest Company (NFC) reserves the right to decline schemes based upon the eligibility criteria, conditions of the grant scheme and the overall value for money that they provide.

Specification

Protective tree crates will meet the minimum specification attached (*Note: diagram/measurements and photograph in appendix A*). If landowners choose to use an alternative higher specification tree crate, this must be agreed with the NFC before procurement of materials. Minimum specifications for the staking and guarding of each tree are also set out in Appendix A.

A parkland tree 'unit' will comprise:

- a feathered tree (1.0-1.5m, preferably pot-grown)

- tree guard, stake and tie
- plant tree and fit tree guard
- woodchip mulch (to minimise maintenance)
- protective tree crate (supplied and fitted)

On large scale schemes it may be landscape-appropriate to group some of the parkland trees into a roundel, protected by post and four-rail fence instead of individual tree crates (other specifications remain the same).

Application process

Pre-application discussion

The applicant discusses the proposed scheme with the NFC, which may include a site visit. The NFC then reviews the site against environmental alert maps.

Consultation

Where necessary, the applicant consults with County Council ecologists, archaeologists and landscape, the Environment Agency or any other statutory consultees to check that schemes will not have detrimental impacts on the environment or local heritage.

Submission

The applicant appoints an agent/contractor from the NFC's approved list. The agent/contractor submits an application form, design map and tree planting specification to the NFC for consideration. Application maps must include:

- the applicant's name;
- the location of the scheme (with a grid reference);
- accurate tree locations and numbers;
- boundary of scheme area; and
- a key.

Forestry Commission base maps are preferred and these can be requested at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/request-a-map-from-the-forestry-commission>

Authorisation

The NFC will review the application, taking into consideration of value for money and the public benefit it provides. The NFC then approves or rejects the scheme or makes recommendations for improvements.

Implementation

The agent/contractor implements the scheme to the specification detailed in the application form and design map.

Completion

The NFC inspects the completed scheme and makes payment to the agent/contractor at the agreed standard rate, based upon successful implementation. Use NFPL2 claim form.

Monitoring and maintenance

The NFC will make periodic monitoring inspections of schemes. If trees fail to be effectively established by year five, the landowner will be required to repay the total cost of the grant received.

Appendix A: Parkland tree planting specification

1. Tree crate and planting components

To be read in conjunction with the diagram overleaf.

Table 1 showing the materials required to build a tree crate

Item	Quantity	Specification	Notes
Machine round posts	4	2.4m by 100mm	Pressure-treated softwood
Motorway rails	8	3.6m by 85mm by 35mm	Pressure-treated softwood
Nails	92	4 inches	Galvanised
Coach bolts	2	3 inches	Galvanised
Parkland tree	1	1m – 1.5m	Feathered, pit-planted
Tree tube	1	1.2m	Rabbit guard
Stake for tree guard	1	1.5m	Pressure-treated softwood
Tree mulch	50 litres	2-3 inches deep by 1m diameter	Woodchip/bark
Herbicide		1m diameter	Residual applied before mulch

2. Suitable tree species include:

Table 2 showing some of the suitable tree species and their Latin names

Tree species	Latin name
Oak	<i>Quercus robur/petraea</i>
Lime	<i>Tillia cordata/platyphyllos</i>
Hornbeam	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>
Sweet chestnut	<i>Castanea sativa</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Norway maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>

Other tree species to be agreed between NFC and landowner before planting.

3. Example Crate (for illustration purposes only)



4. Tree crate dimensions

