MESSAGE ONE: CHANGE

Prepare for change in our woodlands

With ancient woodlands struggling to regenerate and challenges for tree establishment due to climate change, the UK must be prepared for both predictable and unpredictable changes.

Practical steps like establishing robust seed supplies, planting resilient tree species, and building knowledge-sharing networks for landowners and managers can strengthen our proactive response.

The carbon sink capacity of ancient woodlands is declining. There has been a loss in biomass with a rise in mortality rates within the largest trees and the impact of ash dieback.

Ancient woodlands are failing to regenerate, with a sharp decline in the number of saplings and small trees in the last decade.

Membra

Forest monocultures of Sitka spruce can be made more resilient through diversification - planting native species in 'blocky mixes' within Sitka plantations.

DiversiTree

There is strong support for treescapes among citizens, who want to see more trees and view health and wellbeing one of the primary benefits. They understood treescapes to be a vital connection between generations, linking the past, present and future.

Branching Out.

Rather than simple focusing on increasing woodland cover, treescape expansion should focus on connected treescapes and woodland quality.

Connected Treescapes

Agroforestry can play an important role in landscape and climate resilience. But grant schemes should be more flexible to take account of farmers' needs. A new advisory body could champion best practice and advise policymakers.

FARM TREE

Evolutionary modelling suggests that under the most pessimistic climate change scenarios, natural regeneration alone may not ensure treescape resilience.

newLEAF

Collected seeds from Norway for genetic research, potentially leading to reintroduction of lost species in UK mountain environments. Ellie Dimambro-Denso

Created prototype forecasting tool for UK tree species, new Oak masting monitoring network, and coproduction with Defra of seed orchard management guide. Andrew Hacket-Pain