

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales  
Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig | Climate Change,  
Environment and Rural Affairs Committee  
Ymchwiliad i bolisi coedwigaeth a choetiroedd yng Nghymru | Inquiry into Forestry  
and woodland policy in Wales

FWP 25

Ymateb gan : Y Gynghrair Cefn Gwlad  
Evidence from : Countryside Alliance

I write in response to the committee's inquiry into forestry and woodland policy in Wales, to include looking at the Welsh Governments delivery of its woodland strategy for Wales.

The Countryside Alliance, at time of writing, is preparing a submission to Natural Resources Wales' call for evidence on the review of the use of firearms on NRW managed land. The call for evidence has raised some concerns with our members and supporters with regards to the use of public funds to pacify a minority activist group who ran a specific campaign against NRW's land management opportunities involving recreational shooting.

Shooting in Wales contributes to 75 million to the rural economy, provides the equivalent of 2,400 full time jobs in some of the remotest parts of Wales during the winter months which sit outside of the main tourism season. Rural communities and businesses from village shops, bed and breakfasts, country hotels and pubs are often surviving in these remote parts simply due to the support they receive from the shooting community during the season.

The shoot's that are leasing land from NRW have contributed hugely to habitat creation, the improvement of ecosystems, and have contributed to infrastructure such as roads and footpaths.

As part of the Woodlands for Wales Strategy Action Plan, under action number eleven there is recognition for the need to manage invasive non-native species which damage woodland habitats. The use of firearms plays an essential role in managing the deer population.

Action point 12 states the need to "gather evidence to measure and evaluate the non-timber value of forestry, woodlands and trees in Wales". A response to a freedom of information request to NRW was returned to us with no evidence of an inquiry in to the income recreational shooting could bring to the woodland estate yet a reliable source has informed us that such a review took place and the value was estimated at £500,000. This has not been made public.

When reviewing woodland management in Wales there should be a strong focus on the impact of how that woodland is managed on neighbouring landowners. This has been over-looked but should be a priority piece of work in order to fulfill the Well-being goals set out under the Well-being of Future Generations Act Wales.

We would very much welcome the opportunity to share our submission to NRW's call for evidence when finalised, to the CCERA committee, as a supplementary to this document if you would permit?