



PUBLIC OPINION OF FORESTRY 2007: NORTHERN IRELAND (preliminary report)

Preliminary results from the 2007 Northern Ireland Survey of Public Opinion of Forestry, carried out on behalf of the Forestry Commission (GB) and Forest Service (NI)

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Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	5
2. Forests, woodlands and trees in the media	7
<i>2.1 Forests, woodlands and trees in the media</i>	7
3. Forest management	8
<i>3.1 Benefits of forestry</i>	8
<i>3.2 Ratings of Northern Ireland's forestry</i>	9
4. Climate change	10
<i>4.1 Impact of climate change</i>	10
<i>4.2 Woodlands impact on climate change</i>	11
<i>4.3 Forest management in response to climate change</i>	13
5. Changes to woodland	14
<i>5.1 Perception of change in woodland area</i>	14
<i>5.2 Desire for change in woodland area</i>	15
<i>5.3 Forest management consultations</i>	15
6. Wood products	17
7. Woodland recreation	18
<i>7.1 Visits to woodland</i>	18
<i>7.2 Type of woodland visited</i>	18
<i>7.3 Reasons for not visiting woodland</i>	19
<i>7.4 Frequency of woodland visits</i>	20
<i>7.5 Visitor enjoyment</i>	21
<i>7.6 Information about woodlands to visit</i>	22
Appendix 1: Millward Brown Ulster Sampling Method	23
Appendix 2: TNS Omnibus Random Location Sampling Method	24
Appendix 3: Northern Ireland Questionnaire	25

Executive Summary

2007 survey

In 2007, four separate public opinion of forestry surveys were undertaken - one in Northern Ireland (1,000 interviews) and three others, across the UK (around 4,000 interviews, including a sample of 119 interviews in Northern Ireland), in Scotland (1,000 interviews) and in Wales (950 interviews).

This report presents results of the survey in Northern Ireland and compares, where appropriate, with the Northern Ireland 2005 and the UK 2007 and GB 2005 surveys.

Some of the questions asked in the 2007 Northern Ireland survey were the same as those asked in 2005, however, a number of new questions were asked on topics such as the relationship between forestry and climate change, and forest management consultations.

Separate reports provide similar results for England, Scotland and Wales. Final reports, charting the results and providing contrasts by, for example, socio-demographic characteristics will be available in autumn 2007.

Forests, woodlands and trees in the media

51% of respondents had seen or read about Northern Ireland's forests, woodland and trees in the last 12 months on the television, radio or in the newspapers. Topics most widely recognised include 'tree planting' (28%), 'birds and other animals in woodland' (19%), and the one new topic 'forests and woodlands helping to tackle climate change' (17%).

Recognition of topics was up from 38% of respondents in the 2005 survey, although 2% of the increase can be directly attributed to the inclusion of the new 'climate change' option.

Forest management

A majority of respondents selected at least one public benefit as a good reason to support forestry with public money (83%). The top reasons to support forestry were, 'to provide places for wildlife to live' (60%), 'to provide places to walk in' (55%) and 'to help tackle climate change' (46%).

'Providing opportunities for walking' and 'providing homes for birds and other animals' were the functions of forestry rated most highly for performance. The overall performance of Northern Ireland's forestry was rated positively by 60% of respondents and negatively by only 7%.

Climate change

55% of respondents believe that climate change will have a large impact on Northern Ireland.

There was a high degree of agreement with a set of statements regarding the ways in which forests and woodlands can impact on climate change, for example 78% of respondents agreed that 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood'. However 49% of respondents incorrectly agreed that 'Northern Ireland could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees'.

A set of statements was presented to the respondents to ascertain their views on the way in which Northern Ireland's forests should be managed in response to climate change. These generated a set of responses reflecting a belief that forestry is a method that can be used to mitigate the effects of climate change. For example, 85% of respondents agreed that 'A lot more trees should be planted' while only 9% agreed that 'There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference'. 38% of respondents believe that 'Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced'.

Changes to woodland

11% of respondents thought that the amount of woodland in Northern Ireland had increased in the last 20 years, 60% thought it had decreased and 8% that it had stayed the same. Similarly, 7% of respondents thought that the amount of native woodland in Northern Ireland had increased in the last 20 years, 55% that it had decreased and 7% that it had stayed the same.

78% of respondents would like to see more woodland in their part of the country (56% would like 'a lot more'), and only 1% would like less.

While 10% of respondents claimed to be aware that the Forest Service consults on the management of local public forests, only 1% had ever actually been consulted. 26% of respondents would like to be consulted more on the management of their local public forest.

Wood products

16% of respondents thought that Northern Ireland produces much more wood than it uses, 6% thought that it produced the same amount as it uses and 44% thought that it produces much less wood than it uses. The remaining one-third of respondents said that they did not know whether Northern Ireland produces more or less wood than it uses.

Woodland recreation

62% of respondents have visited forests or woodlands in the last few years; 56% have only visited woodland in the countryside, 18% have only visited woodland in and around towns and 29% have visited both rural and urban woodland.

Of those respondents who have not visited forests or woodlands recently, the main reason stated for not visiting was that the respondents were 'not interested in going' (45%).

70% of woodland visitors said that they had been to a woodland or forest at least once a month in the summer of 2006 and 37% visited at least once a month in the winter of 2006/07.

64% of respondents rated their visit to forests as generally more enjoyable compared to visits to other similar outdoor recreation destinations and only 5% rated their visit as generally less enjoyable.

Dog fouling (36%) and dog control (13%) were the factors most likely to decrease the respondents' enjoyment of visits to woodlands. However, 54% of respondents did not encounter any problems with other forests visitors.

'Asking friends or relatives' (45%), a 'Tourist Information Centre' (29%), a 'guidebook or map' (16%) or 'Forest Service premises or website' (9%) were the sources of information most likely to be used by adults to find out about a woodland not previously visited, although 'the internet' was not provided as a response option for this question.

1. Introduction

Background

The Forestry Commission has conducted similar biennial surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995 though the surveys have evolved since then:

- In the initial surveys, a representative sample of 2,000 adults across Great Britain (GB) was surveyed;
 - Since 2001, the GB survey has been supplemented by surveys in Scotland and Wales, each interviewing 1,000 adults, to provide additional information tailored to each country's needs after devolution, taking account of the priorities in each country's forestry strategy.
 - In 2003, the main survey was extended to include Northern Ireland in the 4,120 adults interviewed and separate surveys of 1,000 adults continued in Scotland and Wales;
 - In 2005 and 2007, the need for separate surveys in each country was confirmed, with the increased interest in country-level and regional information. However, the requirement for continued high-quality coherent information for GB/UK as a whole means that four separate surveys were undertaken each year
- A representative sample of 4,000 adults across GB (2005) and across UK (2007)
 - A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Scotland
 - A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Wales
 - A representative sample of 1,000 adults across Northern Ireland

Some questions were asked in all four of the surveys conducted in 2007, but an increasing number are survey-specific.

The Forest Service, an agency of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development collaborated with the Forestry Commission to provide a version of the questionnaire that was suitable for Northern Ireland.

This report

This report presents results from the 2007 survey in Northern Ireland and compares results, where appropriate, with the 2005 Northern Ireland survey, with the UK 2007 survey and with the GB 2005 survey.

Separate reports present the results from the surveys undertaken in England, Scotland and Wales.

Final reports, charting the results and providing contrasts by, for example, regions and socio-demographic characteristics will be available in autumn 2007.

Survey design

The information presented in this report is taken from the Ulster Omnibus survey carried out from 21st - 28th February 2007 by Millward Brown Ulster. The survey was based on a representative sample of around 1,000 adults (aged 16 or over) across Northern Ireland. They were selected from 45 sampling points by a stratified

random selection method. More details of the sample method are given in Appendix 1: Millward Brown Ulster Sampling Method.

The GB 2005 and UK 2007 data presented in this report are taken from the RSGB General Omnibus and TNS CAPI Omnibus surveys respectively, both conducted by TNS. These surveys were based on representative samples of around 4,000 adults (aged 16 or over). More details on the UK 2007 sample methods are given in Appendix 2: TNS Omnibus Random Location Sampling Method. Around 3% of the UK survey interviews (119) were conducted in Northern Ireland.

All results are subject to the effects of chance in sampling, so a range of uncertainty (confidence interval) should be associated with any result from the survey. The confidence intervals take into account the effect of clustering, weighting and stratification in the survey design (see Appendix 2: TNS Omnibus Random Location Sampling Method for more details).

- For questions asked to the whole Northern Ireland sample of around 1,000, the range of uncertainty around any figure should be no more than +/-4.6% (please note an assumed design factor of 1.5 has been applied).
- For responses of subgroups, i.e. questions not posed to the whole sample of respondents, the range of uncertainty is correspondingly higher.
- For questions asked to the whole UK 2007 and GB 2005 samples of around 4,000, the range of uncertainty around any figure should be no more than +/- 2.3%.
- For questions asked to the whole samples, differences of more than 5.2% between the Northern Ireland and GB/UK surveys are statistically significant and differences of more than 6.6% between the Northern Ireland 2007 survey the Northern Ireland 2005 survey are statistically significant.

Results are shown as percentages. These have been individually rounded so may not always total to exactly 100.

2. Forests, woodlands and trees in the media

2.1 Forests, woodlands and trees in the media

Respondents were asked whether they had seen or read about Northern Ireland's forests, woods or trees on the television, radio or in the newspapers in the last twelve months.

Generally, recognition of topics was lower in the NI 2007 survey than in the UK 2007 survey; 51% of Northern Ireland survey respondents and 63% of UK survey respondents recalled at least one topic (Table 1). However, the category most likely to be identified by Northern Irish respondents, 'Tree Planting', is the exception, being recognised by roughly similar proportions NI survey (28%) and UK survey (30%) respondents.

Recognition was higher in the NI 2007 survey than in the NI 2005 survey. In the NI 2005 survey, only 38% of respondents could recall at least one topic, and indeed recognition of each topic was marginally higher in 2007 than in 2005.

Three of the four topics most commonly selected by NI 2007 survey respondents were the same as those selected by respondents in the NI 2005 survey; 'tree planting' (28%), 'birds and other animals in woodlands' (19%) and 'forests and woodlands as places to visit' (13%). The other topic most heard about by the NI 2007 survey respondents was the one new option 'forests and woodlands helping to tackle climate change' (17%).

24 respondents (2%) selected only the new 'climate change' category, therefore on a like-for-like basis, 49% of the 2007 respondents recognised one of the categories that were presented to the 2005 respondents.

Table 1: Whether respondent has seen or read about Northern Ireland's forests, woods or trees in the last 12 months (%)

	GB	UK	Northern Ireland	
	2005	2007	2005	2007
Tree planting	21	30	22	28
Birds and other animals in woodland	24	34	13	19
Forests and woodlands helping to tackle climate change	-	35	-	17
Forest and woodland as places to visit	18	25	12	13
Protests about roads /other developments on woodland	18	23	6	12
Flowers and other plants in woodland	15	22	7	11
Public rights of access to woodland	23	24	7	10
Loss of ancient or native woodland	15	20	6	10
Restoration of ancient or native woodland	12	17	5	9
Creation of new native woodland	11	15	5	9
Wood for fuel / (short rotation coppice)	7	11	2	8
Tree pests and diseases	10	13	2	6
Community woodland / new local woodlands	-	14	2	5
Labelling/ certification of wood products	6	10	1	3
Recalling at least one topic	50	63	38	51

Base: All respondents - GB 2005 (4,000), UK 2007 (4,000), NI 2005 (1,004), NI 2007 (1,021)

3. Forest management

3.1 Benefits of forestry

The government funds forestry in Northern Ireland in many ways. Respondents were asked to select (from a list of possible public benefits) good reasons to support Northern Irish forestry with public money. Most of the respondents (83%) selected at least one benefit. Respondents to the NI 2007 survey (83%) were marginally less likely than their 2005 counterparts (87%) to support the public benefits of forestry.

The top two good reasons to support forestry were 'to provide places for wildlife to live' (60%) and 'to provide places to walk in' (55%). Support for the one new option 'to help tackle climate change' (46%) was at a similar level to the support received in 2005 for the option it replaced 'to help prevent greenhouse effect / global warming' (43%).

Support for each benefit was lower in the 2007 NI survey compared with the 2007 UK survey (as was also generally the case in 2005 when comparing the NI survey to the GB survey).

Table 2: Whether respondent believes public benefits are good reasons to support forestry with public money (%)

	GB	UK	Northern Ireland	
	2005	2007	2005	2007
To provide places for wildlife to live	67	72	55	60
To provide places to walk in	57	61	57	55
To help tackle climate change	-	61	-	46
To help prevent greenhouse effect/global warming	55	-	43	-
To improve the countryside landscape	53	55	47	43
To provide healthy places for physical activity, relaxation and stress relief	44	48	39	37
To support the economy in rural areas	41	45	30	29
To provide wood as a renewable fuel (pre 2007)				
To provide renewable energy including wood as fuel (post 2007)	28	37	22	24
To help rural tourism	36	38	39	33
To create pleasant settings for new and existing developments around towns	37	41	26	27
To restore former industrial land	30	34	13	17
To provide places to cycle or ride horses	35	40	23	21
So we can buy less wood products from abroad	30	37	18	19
To provide timber for sawmills & wood processing	23	26	17	19
To make woods more accessible to all in the community	36	37	24	24
At least one reason given	89	93	87	83

Base: All respondents - GB 2005 (4,000), UK 2007 (4,000), NI 2005 (1,004), NI 2007 (1,021)

3.2 Ratings of Northern Ireland's forestry

Respondents were asked to rate the performance of Northern Ireland's forestry on a number of aspects. Ratings were given on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being 'very good' and 5 being 'very poor'.

The aspects rated most highly were 'providing homes for birds and other animals' and 'providing opportunities for walking' (Table 3). These two highest-rated aspects of Northern Ireland's forestry were also considered the best reasons to support forestry with public money (see Table 2).

Across all of the categories, more respondents rated the performance positively (either '1 - very good' or '2') than negatively ('5 very poor' or '4'). The overall performance was rated positively by 60% of respondents and negatively by only 7%.

There is a degree of similarity between the responses to the 2005 and 2007 surveys, however it is noticeable that across all categories, a lower proportion of respondents answered 'don't know' in 2007 than in 2005. Most markedly, respondents were less likely to respond 'don't know' when asked about 'providing Northern Ireland's timber, board and paper needs' (down from 41% in 2005 to 26% in 2007).

Table 3: Performance rating of various functions of Northern Ireland's forestry

		(very good)		(very poor)			<i>Don't know</i>
		1	2	3	4	5	
Providing homes for birds and other animals	NI 2005	25	51	5	4	1	14
	NI 2007	29	47	7	5	1	9
Providing opportunities for walking	NI 2005	26	51	8	3	1	12
	NI 2007	23	51	9	6	1	9
Protecting the environment	NI 2005	18	46	13	5	2	17
	NI 2007	20	48	15	6	1	11
Providing Northern Ireland's timber, board and paper needs	NI 2005	8	22	21	6	1	41
	NI 2007	11	34	20	7	2	26
Supporting Northern Ireland's economy in rural areas	NI 2005	8	34	16	5	3	34
	NI 2007	11	40	18	9	2	20
Involving local communities	NI 2005	9	32	18	8	4	30
	NI 2007	7	37	19	12	3	22
Overall	NI 2005	17	47	14	3	0	19
	NI 2007	14	47	13	6	2	20

Base: All respondents - 2005 (1,004), 2007 (1,021)

4. Climate change

The UK Government believes that climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing the world today. There is strong evidence that climate change is happening and that man-made emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are its main cause.

Globally, forest ecosystems play a key role in addressing climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in growing vegetation and soil. Deforestation caused by the unsustainable harvesting of timber and the conversion of forests to other land-uses leads to significant emissions of this stored carbon back to the atmosphere. Forests and woodlands can also be managed as a sustainable source of wood – an alternative energy source to fossil fuels, and a low-energy construction material.

Although, on a world scale, they cover a small area (6.4% of the Northern Ireland surface area in 2007), the forests and woodlands in Northern Ireland have a role to play too.

A new section of questions regarding this issue was added to the 2007 survey. This report has already noted in sections 2.1 and 3.1 respectively, that 'Forests and woodlands helping to tackle climate change' was one of the top answers provided by respondents when asked whether they had seen anything about UK forests in the media and when asked about the benefits to be gained from public support of forestry. Sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 report the results of the other new questions on this topic.

4.1 Impact of climate change

The vast majority of respondents believe that climate change will have an impact on Northern Ireland, with most believing that there will be a large impact (55% of all respondents).

Table 4: Impact of climate change (%)

	Northern Ireland 2007
Large impact	55
Slight impact	25
No impact at all	4
Don't know	16

Base: All respondents (1,021)

4.2 Woodlands impact on climate change

In an attempt to gauge both the beliefs and knowledge of the public with respect to the interface between forests and climate change, respondents were asked for their level of agreement with a set of statements regarding the ways in which forests and woodlands in Northern Ireland can impact on climate change. Ratings were given on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being 'strongly agree' and 5 being 'strongly disagree'.

Table 5 reveals a high level of agreement with each of the statements, with more respondents agreeing (selecting '1 - strongly agree' or '2') with each statement than disagreeing (selecting '5 - strongly disagree' or '4').

The highest level of agreement, over three-quarters of respondents, was with the statement that 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood' (78%). Almost three-fifths of respondents believed that 'Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted' (59%).

Table 5: Ways in which Northern Ireland forests and woodlands can impact on climate change (%)

	(strongly agree)				(strongly disagree)	<i>Don't know</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	
1. Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood	35	43	7	3	0	12
2. Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted	20	39	12	12	2	15
3. Northern Ireland could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees	15	34	14	10	1	27
4. Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas	12	39	15	9	2	23
5. Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel	8	31	17	13	2	30
6. Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide	5	24	18	18	4	32

Base: All respondents (1,021)

It is helpful to consider the numbered statements shown above in Table 5 alongside the following common expert opinion¹:

¹ Statements and principles from the Forestry Commission 'Forestry and climate change' website: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6umkar>

1. In general, it is believed that forests and woodlands have a key role to play in mitigating the effects of climate change. Forests and woodlands do help to stabilise atmospheric carbon dioxide by sequestering and storing carbon in trees, vegetation and soils.
2. In the short term, cutting down forests and woodlands does make climate change worse, as carbon stocks are released, but in the longer term this is countered by replanting. However, this harvesting and replanting should not be confused with deforestation, which implies a change in land cover from forest to non-forest land, whereas sustainable wood production involves cyclical harvesting and growing.
3. Afforestation makes an important contribution by sequestering carbon, but it is not feasible for the UK to become 'carbon neutral' through afforestation alone. It is estimated that to do this would require creation of some 50 million hectares of forest – approximately twice the land area of the UK. The same principle is of course also valid for Northern Ireland.
4. Wood and other materials derived from plants have an important contribution to make towards our future energy needs. Wood can be used as a low-carbon renewable energy source to substitute for fossil fuels.
5. Wood products can be used as low-energy alternatives to materials such as concrete and steel, which involve high-energy use in their production. The biomass in wood products is also a carbon stock in its own right, just as much as biomass in living trees.
6. Carbon released by burning woodfuel in modern, efficient systems is re-absorbed by growing trees in a cycle that reduces the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere. The long-term effect of tree planting, good forest management practices and efficient burning woodfuel in efficient systems should be about carbon neutral.

4.3 Forest management in response to climate change

The respondents were then presented with a series of statements regarding the way in which Northern Ireland forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change. Ratings were given on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being 'strongly agree' and 5 being 'strongly disagree'. For most of the statements, the majority of responses were in line with most expert opinion (Table 6).

The majority of respondents **agreed** that 'a lot more trees should be planted' (85%), that 'more information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment' (81%) and that 'different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates' (75%).

Conversely, a majority of respondents **disagreed** with the statements that 'there is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference' (76%), and that 'no action is needed; let nature take its course' (75%).

However, 38% of respondents believed that 'trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced' (i.e. selected '1 - strongly agree' or '2' whilst only 28% stated the converse ('5 - strongly disagree' or '4'). This result is inconsistent with the cyclical harvesting and growing pattern regularly employed in modern forest management practices, but may be a reflection on the relatively low proportion of forest cover in Northern Ireland (6.4% of the Northern Ireland surface area in 2007, compared to 11.7% across the UK).

Table 6: Management of Northern Ireland's forests in response to the threat of climate change (%)

	(strongly agree)				(strongly disagree)	<i>Don't know</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	
A lot more trees should be planted	41	43	5	3	1	7
More information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment	32	48	10	1	0	8
Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates	27	49	11	3	1	10
Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced	17	22	21	24	4	12
No action is needed; let nature take its course	3	9	6	42	32	7
There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference	1	7	8	44	32	8

Base: All respondents (1,021)

5. Changes to woodland

5.1 Perception of change in woodland area

The recorded area of woodland in Northern [Ireland](#) has increased by nearly 30%, from 67,000 hectares in 1980, to 87,000 hectares in 2007. This was in line with the UK as a whole, where the recorded total area of woodland also increased by 30% over the same period¹. Although some of the increase in GB can be attributed to improved coverage of woodlands inventories, the increase for NI is more firmly based on statistics for the Forest Service estate, which makes up 70% of the total woodland in Northern Ireland.

Respondents were asked whether they thought the total amount of woodland in Northern Ireland had been increasing or decreasing over the last twenty years. Only 11% said that the woodland area had increased, while the majority (60%) thought the area had decreased. (Table 7). This question was not asked in the 2007 UK opinion survey.

Table 7: Perception of change in all woodland area over last 20 years

	GB 2005	NI 2005	NI 2007
Increasing	15	15	11
Staying about the same	13	8	8
Decreasing	60	54	60
Don't know	12	23	21

Base: All respondents - GB 2005 (4,000), NI 2005 (1,004), NI 2007 (1,021)

Respondents were also asked whether they thought the area of native woodland (such as oak and ash) in Northern Ireland had been increasing or decreasing over the same period. Over half of respondents believed the area of native woodland had decreased (55%) while almost one-third of respondents could not give an opinion (31%), similar results to those received in 2005 (Table 8).

Table 8: Perception of change in native woodland area over last 20 years

	NI 2005	NI 2007
Increasing	9	7
Staying about the same	7	7
Decreasing	49	55
Don't know	36	31

Base: All respondents - NI 2005 (1,004), 2007 (1,021)

¹ Forestry Statistics 2006, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh
Woodland Area, Planting and Restocking (First Release) (14/06/2007), Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

5.2 Desire for change in woodland area

Respondents were then asked whether or not they would like more woodland in their part of the country. Over three-quarters of respondents (78%) said they would like more woodland, while only 1% would like less. Over half of respondents wanted 'a lot more' woodland in their part of Northern Ireland (56%).

This question was not asked in the 2007 UK opinion survey.

Table 9: Desire for more woodland (%)

	GB 2005	NI 2005	NI 2007 ¹
A lot more	-	-	56
More than half as much again	18	22	-
About half as much again	24	23	-
A little more	23	30	23
<i>More - total</i>	66	75	78
Neither more nor less	29	15	10
Less	2	1	1
Don't know	4	9	10

Base: All respondents - GB 2005 (4,000), NI 2005 (1,004), NI 2007 (1,021)

5.3 Forest management consultations

The UK Forestry Standard² encourages woodland owners to involve local communities when making decisions about changing the look or use of woodlands.

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of consultations, had ever been consulted, and would like to be consulted in the future, about the management of their local public forest.

Table 10: Public consultation on the management of your local public forest (%)

	NI 2007
Aware that the Forest Service consults on the management of your local public forest	10
Ever been consulted about the management of your local forest	1
Would want to be consulted more on the management of your local public forest	26

Base: All respondents - 1,021

¹ Note the response options offered in the 2007 survey differed to those in the earlier surveys.

² FC (2004): *The UK Forestry Standard (2nd edition)*; *The government's approach to sustainable forestry*, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

Comparison with previous surveys

Similar questions were asked in the 2005 GB opinion survey. Respondents were asked if they had ever been consulted about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in their area. 6% of respondents said they had.

Respondents were then asked if they would like to be consulted (or consulted again in some cases) about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in their area. A total of 42% of respondents (77% of those who had previously been consulted and 40% of those who had not) would like to be consulted in the future.

The GB 2005 figures are not significantly different from the UK 2003 survey. In 2003, as in 2005, 6% of respondents had been consulted about plans for creating, managing or using woodlands in their area, while 43% (79% of those who had previously been consulted and 41% of those who had not) would like to be consulted in the future. This question was not asked in surveys prior to 2003.

6. Wood products

Using population data and wood production and consumption estimates it is possible to estimate that Northern Ireland produces around a third of the amount of wood that it consumes¹.

Respondents were asked whether they thought Northern Ireland produces more or less wood than it uses. Over two-fifths of respondents (44%) thought that Northern Ireland produced much less wood than it uses, 16% of respondents thought Northern Ireland produced much more and 6% thought it produced about the same amount of wood as it uses. The remaining one-third of respondents (34%) said they did not know whether Northern Ireland produces more or less wood than it uses. (Table 11).

Table 11: Perception of production versus usage of wood in Northern Ireland

	NI 2005	NI 2007
Much more wood than it uses	12	16
About the same amount of wood as it uses (2005) Is self sufficient in its use of wood (2007) ²	10	6
Much less wood than it uses	39	44
Don't know / no reply	39	34

Base: All respondents 2005 (1,004), 2007 (1,021)

¹ Forestry Statistics 2006, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh, 2006

² Response option changed in 2007

7. Woodland recreation

The UK Forestry Standard¹ encourages the creation and improvement of public access to woodlands for recreation.

7.1 Visits to woodland

Although the results of the GB 2005 (65%) and NI 2005 (67%) surveys are similar, the corresponding 2007 survey results are not; 62% of respondents to the NI 2007 survey and 77% of respondents to the 2007 UK survey said that they had visited woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation in the last few years (Table 12).

Clearly there is quite a divergence in the 2007 survey results, however it is also possible to consider the responses of the small subset of Northern Irish responses (119) within the 2007 UK survey. Although the small sample size of 119 means the results should be treated with caution, it is interesting to note that 77% of the 119 Northern Irish responses received within the UK survey claimed to have visited woodland in the last few years. This perhaps suggests that the difference in results obtained (between the UK and NI 2007 surveys) is at least partially attributable to the survey in which the question was asked. For example, the emphasis placed on the question and/or the preceding questions may have an influence on the responses received.

Table 12: Visited woodland in last few years (%)

	GB	UK	Northern Ireland	
	2005	2007	2005	2007
Visited woodland in last few years	65	77	67	62

Base: All respondents - GB 2005 (4,000), UK 2007 (4,000), NI 2005 (1,004), NI 2007 (1,021)

7.2 Type of woodland visited

Table 13 shows that 56% of NI 2007 survey respondents who had visited woodland, had only visited woodland in the countryside, 18% had only visited woodland in and around towns and 29% had visited both rural and urban woodland.

A divergence in results similar to that noted above in section 7.1 is also evident here, i.e. the Northern Ireland responses received in 2007 are less similar to the UK 2007 responses, than the Northern Ireland 2005 responses were to the GB 2005 survey.

The responses of the 119 Northern Ireland respondents in the 2007 UK survey ('in the countryside' (55%), 'both' (32%), 'in and around towns' (13%)) are fairly similar to the NI 2007 survey responses.

¹ FC (2004): *The UK Forestry Standard (2nd edition)*, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

Table 13: Type of woodland visited (%)

	GB 2005	UK 2007	NI 2005	NI 2007
In the countryside	46	40	51	56
Both	35	43	32	29
In and around towns	17	17	15	18
Don't know	2	0	1	0

Base: Respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years - GB 2005 (2,672), UK 2007 (3,065), NI 2005 (668), 2007 (633)

7.3 Reasons for not visiting woodland

Although this question asked those respondents who had not visited for their **main** reason for not visiting, multiple answers were accepted from respondents; the 384 respondents who had not visited in the last few years gave a total of 416 responses. For this reason, the NI 2007 results are not directly comparable with the GB 2005, UK 2007 or NI 2005 results.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the main reason given by respondents for not visiting remained that they were 'not interested in going' (45% of the NI 2007 survey respondents who had not visited).

Table 14: Main reason for not visiting forest/woodland in last few years

	GB 2005	UK 2007	NI 2005	NI 2007
Not interested in going	33	26	38	45
Don't have a car	13	11	14	13
Other personal mobility reasons	17	18	11	11
Woods are too far away	11	14	9	8
Prefer other areas of countryside	3	2	5	6
Concerns that woods are not safe	3	3	1	3
Lack of information	3	2	2	2
Other	11	17	20	19
Don't know / No reply	7	9	0	2

Base: All respondents who have not visited forests or woodlands recently (226)

7.4 Frequency of woodland visits

Of the NI 2007 survey respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years, 70% said that they visited at least once a month in the summer of 2006 (Table 15) and 37% said that they visited at least once a month in the winter of 2006/7.

A fifth of those NI 2007 survey respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years said that they did not visit during the most recent winter (20%) while only 1% said that they did not visit during the most recent summer.

Table 15 indicates that the results from the NI 2007 and UK 2007 surveys are fairly similar, particularly the responses given for summer visits. A higher proportion of UK respondents did not visit during the most recent winter (27% of UK 2007 survey respondents compared to 20% of NI 2007 survey respondents).

Table 15: Frequency of visit in last summer and winter (%)

Summer 2006			Winter 2006/7	
NI 2007	UK 2007		NI 2007	UK 2007
13	14	Several times per week	6	7
28	29	Several times per month	14	13
28	27	About once per month	17	20
29	26	Less often	42	33
1	3	Never	20	27
-	0	Don't know	-	0

Base: Respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years - NI 2007 (752), UK 2007 (3,065)

By combining the information about those who had visited forests in the last few years with the frequency of visit information for the last year, it is possible to estimate the proportion of adults who have visited woodland in the last year. In this way it is estimated that 62% of adults had visited woodland during the last year, 61% in the summer of 2006, and 49% in the winter of 2006/2007.

7.5 Visitor enjoyment

Those respondents who had visited forests or woodlands were asked how they would rate their visits to forests compared with visits to other similar outdoor recreation destinations, such as country parks, gardens and nature reserves.

Almost two-thirds of respondents who had visited forests or woodlands in the last few years stated that their forest visits were generally more enjoyable than visits to other similar outdoor recreation destinations (64%), while only 5% of respondents felt that their visits were generally less enjoyable. The results obtained in 2007 were similar to those received in 2005.

Table 8: Respondents rating of forest visits (%)

	NI 2005	NI 2007
Generally more enjoyable	62	64
Sometimes more enjoyable, sometimes less enjoyable	28	26
Generally less enjoyable	4	5
Don't visit other outdoor recreation destinations	1	1
Don't know	4	4

Base: All respondents who have visited forests or woodlands in last few years, NI 2005 (668), NI 2007 (633)

Respondents were also asked whether encounters with any other recreational users decreased the enjoyment of their visit. The question asked in 2007 included two new response options (dog fouling and dog control), so the results are not directly comparable with those received in 2005. Table 16 shows that the two new responses were the most likely to be selected by respondents and indicates that the results received in 2005 and 2007 for the other categories were roughly similar.

The addition of the two new categories has contributed to a large fall in the proportion of the respondents stating that they had had 'no problems with other forest visitors' (from 80% in 2005 to 54% in 2007).

Table 16: Decrease in enjoyment of woodland visit due to other recreational users (%)

	NI 2005	NI 2007
Dog fouling	-	36
Dog control	-	13
Motor bikers	10	12
Cyclists	6	7
Children / Youths	4	5
Other motor vehicle drivers	3	3
Horse riders	2	3
Walkers	1	2
No problems with other forest visitors	80	54
Don't know	0	1

Base: All respondents who have visited forests or woodlands in last few years, NI 2005 (668), NI 2007 (633)

7.6 Information about woodlands to visit

'Asking friends/relatives' (45%), using a 'Tourist Information Centre' (29%) or 'a guide book or map' (16%) are the sources of information Northern Ireland 2007 survey respondents are most likely to be use to find out about woodlands not previously visited (Table 17).

The internet (37%) was the source most likely to be used by respondents in the UK 2007 survey, but this was not included as an option in the Northern Ireland 2007 survey. Of the small sample of 119 Northern Ireland respondents in the UK 2007 survey, 28% selected the internet.

The Northern Ireland surveys and those in GB 2005 and UK 2007 included different response options for the 'Forest Service premises and website' and the 'Forestry Commission', therefore direct comparison between these categories is not possible.

Table 17: Sources of information normally used for woodlands not previously visited (%)

	GB 2005	UK 2007	NI 2005	NI 2007
Ask friends/relatives	27	33	39	45
Tourist Information Centre	34	29	36	29
Guide book/map	28	26	16	16
Internet (<i>GB/UK surveys only</i>)	27	37	-	-
Forest Service premises or website	-	-	10	9
Forestry Commission (<i>GB</i>) / <i>Forest Service (NI)</i>	7	10	-	-
Library or Sports Centre	10	10	3	3
Other	1	2	4	6
No interest in visiting	16	8	4	1
Don't know	5	7	15	16

Base: All respondents - GB 2005 (4,000), UK 2007 (4,000), NI 2005 (1,004), NI 2007 (1,021)

Appendix 1: Millward Brown Ulster Sampling Method

METHODOLOGY

The Ulster Omnibus is a consumer omnibus survey that is conducted twice a month. It is a face-to-face survey amongst 1,000 adults aged 16+ years, using paper-based questionnaires.

Interviewing is carried out over 45 freshly selected sampling points. These sampling points are selected using a stratified random selection process that ensures representation in terms of regions of Northern Ireland.

Interviewers are set a quota to achieve for the interviews in each area, based on sex, age and social class. A range of standard questions are asked which include sex, age, social class, car in household, working status, presence of children, marital status, religion and ethnicity.

The questions presented in Appendix 3: Northern Ireland Questionnaire were asked in the Millward Brown Ulster Omnibus Survey carried out from 21st - 28th February 2007.

Appendix 2: TNS Omnibus Random Location Sampling Method

(UK 2007 survey)

SAMPLING FRAME

The TNS CAPI Omnibus employs a random location methodology. 2001 Census small area statistics and the Postal Address File (PAF) were used to define sample points. These are areas of similar population sizes formed by the combination of wards, with the constraint that each point must be contained within a single Government Office Region (GOR). In addition, geographic systems were employed to minimise the drive time required to cover each area as optimally as possible. 600 points were defined south of the Caledonian Canal in Great Britain (GB), and, for UK samples, another 25 points were defined in a similar fashion in Northern Ireland.

STRATIFICATION AND SAMPLE POINT SELECTION

278 points were selected south of the Caledonian Canal for use by the Omnibus after stratification by Government Office Region and Social Grade. They were also checked to ensure they are representative by an urban and rural classification. Those points are divided into two replicates. Each set is used in alternate weeks. 16 of the points in Northern Ireland were selected and divided into four replicates. Those replicates are used in rotation to give a wide spread across the Province over time in the UK samples. Similarly the statistical accuracy of the GB sampling is maximised by issuing sequential waves of fieldwork systematically across the sampling frame to provide maximum geographical dispersion. This ensures that the sample point selection remains representative for any specific fieldwork wave.

SELECTION OF CLUSTERS WITHIN SAMPLING POINTS

All the sample points in the sampling frame have been divided into two geographically distinct segments each containing, as far as possible, equal populations. The segments comprise aggregations of complete wards. For the Omnibus alternate A and B halves are worked each wave of fieldwork. Each week different wards are selected in each required half and Census Output Areas selected within those wards. Then, blocks containing an average of 150 addresses are sampled in those areas from the PAF.

DESIGN EFFECT

As with all multi-stage sample designs, there are effects on the magnitude of the standard error of estimates that arise from a number of sources. The greatest contributors are caused negatively by the effects of clustering and weighting and positively by the effects of stratification. These are collectively known as 'design effects'. The 'design factor' is used to estimate the ratio of the standard error of these complex sample estimates to that of a simple random sample of the same size. Design factors vary from one variable to another depending on the inter-correlations that exist between that variable and the causes of variation in the size of the standard error. For example social grade tends to be correlated between households in small geographical areas and thus variables that are correlated with social grade (e.g. visits to woodland) will have larger design factors. Such design factors need to be individually calculated from actual data to obtain accurate estimates for any given variable. Common practice is the use of a 'modal' value for application to estimates. For the Omnibus TNS recommend a design factor of 1.5 be applied to the calculation of confidence limits and when testing for significance.

INTERVIEWING AND QUOTA CONTROLS

Assignments are conducted over two days of fieldwork and are carried out on weekdays from 2 p.m. – 8 p.m. and at the weekend. Quotas are set by sex (male, female housewife, female non-housewife); within female housewife, presence of children and working status, and within men, working status, to ensure a balanced sample of adults within effective contacted addresses. Interviewers are instructed to leave 3 doors between each successful interview.

Appendix 3: Northern Ireland Questionnaire

<p>Q1.</p>	<p>You may have seen or read about Northern Ireland’s forests, woods or trees on the television, radio or in the newspapers. From this list, can you please tell me which of these topics you have seen or read anything about in the last 12 months?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birds and other animals in woodlands • Flowers and other plants in woodlands • Forests and woodlands as places to visit • Community woodlands / new local woodlands • Tree planting • Tree pests and diseases • Wood for fuel (e.g. short rotation coppice) • Loss of ancient or native woodlands • Restoration of ancient or native woodlands • Creation of new native woodlands • Public rights of access to woodlands • Protests about roads or other developments on woodlands • Labelling/certification of wood products • Forests and woodlands helping to tackle climate change • Other (specify) • None of these
<p>Q 2.</p>	<p>In Northern Ireland public money is given to support forestry and the planting and management of all types and sizes of forests and woods, because it is believed to be of public benefit. From this list, please tell me which of the following reasons are good reasons to support forestry in this way?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the economy in rural areas • To help rural tourism • To provide timber for sawmills and wood processing • To provide wood as a renewable energy including wood as fuel • So we can buy less wood products from abroad • To make woods more accessible to all in the community • To help tackle climate change • To provide places for wildlife to live • To provide places to walk in • To provide places to cycle or ride horses in • To provide healthy places for physical activity, relaxation and stress relief • To improve the countryside landscape • To create pleasant settings for developments around towns • To restore former industrial land • None • Don’t know
<p>Q3</p>	<p>How much of an impact do you think climate change will have on Northern Ireland?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large impact • Slight impact • No impact at all • Don't know

<p>Q4</p>	<p>Would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the ways in which forests and woodlands in Northern Ireland can impact on climate change? ((1) strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, (5) strongly disagree, and don't know)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood • Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted • Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas • Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide • Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel • Northern Ireland could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees
<p>Q5</p>	<p>Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding how Northern Ireland's forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change? ((1) strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, (5) strongly disagree, and don't know)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference • No action is needed; let nature take its course • A lot more trees should be planted • Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced • Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates • More information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment
<p>Q6.</p>	<p>On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how good do you think Northern Ireland's forestry is at ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for walking • Protecting the environment • Providing Northern Ireland's timber, board and paper needs • Providing homes for birds and other animals • Involving local communities • Supporting Northern Ireland's economy in rural areas <p>..and on the same scale, how would you rate the overall performance of Northern Ireland's forestry?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall rating
<p>Q7.</p>	<p>Do you think Northern Ireland produces more or less wood than it uses?</p> <p>Much more wood than it uses Much less wood than it uses Is self sufficient in its use of wood Don't know</p>
<p>Q8.</p>	<p>In the last 20 years, do you think the total amount of woodland in Northern Ireland has been increasing or decreasing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing • Decreasing • Staying about the same • Don't know

<p>Q9.</p>	<p>..and over the same period, do you think the amount of native woodlands such as oak and ash in Northern Ireland has been increasing or decreasing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing • Decreasing • Staying about the same • Don't know
<p>Q10.</p>	<p>a. Would you like to have more or less woodland in your part of Northern Ireland?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot more • A little more • Neither more nor less • Less • Don't know
<p>Q11.</p>	<p>a. In the last few years, have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p>- if YES, then go to Q11b then Q12 then skip to Q14 - if NO, then go to Q13</p> <p>b. Did you visit woodlands in the countryside or woodlands in and around towns?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodlands in the countryside • Woodlands in and around towns • Both
<p>Q12.</p>	<p>a. On average how frequently did you visit forests or woodlands last summer, i.e. between April and September 2006?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several times per week • Several times per month • About once per month • Less often • Never <p>b. And how often this winter, i.e. since October 2006?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several times per week • Several times per month • About once per month • Less often • Never <p>c. How would you rate your visits to forests compared to visits to other similar outdoor recreation destinations, such as country parks, gardens and nature reserves?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest visits are generally more enjoyable • Forest visits are generally less enjoyable • Forest visits are sometimes more enjoyable, sometimes less enjoyable • Do not visit other outdoor recreation destinations • Don't know

	<p>d. During recent visits, did encounters with any of the following recreational users or situations decrease the enjoyment of your visit?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers • Cyclists • Horse riders • Motor bikers • Other motor vehicle drivers • Children/Youths • Dog fouling • Dog control • No problems with other forest visitors
<p>Q13.</p>	<p>What was the main reason that you did not visit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not interested in going (Go to Q15) • Don't have a car • Other personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking, unwell, etc.) • Woods are too far away • Lack of facilities (play areas, picnic areas, etc.) • Lack of information about woods to visit • Prefer other areas of countryside • Concerns that woods are not safe • Other (specify)
<p>Q14.</p>	<p>If you were thinking about visiting forests or woodlands that you had not visited before, which of the following sources of information would you normally use?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Multi choice)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask friends/relatives • Guide book or map • Forest Service premises or website • Tourist Information Centre • Library or Sports Centre • Other (specify) • No interest in visiting • Don't know
<p>Q15.</p>	<p>a Are you aware that Forest Service consults on the management of your local public forest?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p>b. Have you ever been consulted about the management of your local forest?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p>c. Would you want to be consulted more on the management of your local public forest?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No

The questions below were included to enable the Forest Service to determine public opinion held by different groups about how it manages its forests. This will enable the Service to determine the effect its policies have on those groups.

Do you suffer from any disability (*long-term illness, health problems or disability which limits your daily activities or the work that you can do*)?

- Yes
- No

To which of the ethnic groups below do you belong?

- White
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Irish Traveller
- Other Ethnic Group (please specify)

To which of the following denominations do you belong?

- Protestant
- Catholic
- Other religion
- No Religion
- Refused