



## Forestry and Climate Change Partnership

## 2022 FORESTRY & CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION ACCORD

Our shared vision is for Britain's trees, woods, and forests to be resilient to climate change and therefore able to meet their full potential in providing the full range of ecosystem services upon which human society and nature depends.

We, the undersigned signatories to the 2022 Forestry and Climate Change Adaptation Accord, agree to take urgent action, recognise the need to work together, and commit to promote the importance of the adaptation of our trees, woods, and forests to climate change.

- I. Climate change and related environmental threats, including drought, flooding, fire, pests, and pathogens, present significant threats to our trees, woods, and forests. We recognise that woodland creation and active woodland management in line with the UK Forestry Standard is key to enhancing resilience and adaptation to these threats.
- II. We will agree an action plan and work together to deliver it with a focus on:
  - a. **communicating** with those who have a direct stake in the management of trees, woods, and forests;
  - b. **delivering training and education** to practitioners to promote adaptation and resilience of trees, woods, and forests;
  - c. **informing research** that supports adaptation of trees, woods, and forests to climate change, and disseminating these findings to practitioners;
  - d. **providing a coherent voice** to support the development of forestry policy and guidance on climate adaptation.
- III. We believe that urgent action is necessary to improve the resilience and adaptation of our trees, woods, and forests to climate change. Given the long lifecycle of trees, and the long-term practice of silviculture, changes to many common forest management practices need to be made without delay.
- IV. While the signatories to this accord will undertake their own actions to support resilience, we recognise the need to work together towards the common goal of improving adaptation to climate change. Many of these organisations will seek to collaborate through their involvement in, and support of, the Forestry and Climate Change Partnership.

This 2022 Accord reaffirms and updates the principles of an accord first agreed in 2015.



## Our Vision and Priorities in more detail

### *Vision*

**Our shared vision is for Britain's trees, woods, and forests to be resilient to climate change and therefore able to meet their full potential in providing the full range of ecosystem services upon which human society and nature depends.**

Resilient trees, woods, and forests will usually be those that are diverse in species, genetics, age, and stand structure, and be well-connected in the landscape, and functional for nature and society. Achieving these outcomes requires understanding of climate change and its impacts, an increase in forest cover, improved connectivity, greater diversity, and more active management intervention. The relationship between resilience and the natural capital value of forests cannot be overstated.

Wider benefits to society from sustainable forest management are often unrecognised financially, yet it is critical to woodland resilience that these benefits are acknowledged and rewarded to safeguard their continued delivery. Producing an income is often vital in supporting active management, especially for private land owners who own the majority of our woodlands. At the same time, it is important that owners recognise the natural capital value of their land and take action to promote nature recovery.

Adapting to climate change at the scale required is a long-term goal that needs a consistent, supportive policy framework with aligned incentives, together with markets for woodland products and services, supported by focused research, education and training.

Delivering this vision requires significant change to widely accepted and practised systems of woodland and land management. Greater awareness is needed for the importance of adopting a broader range of species, less reliance on even-aged silvicultural systems, and better forest design that incorporates wildlife-rich habitats and improves ecological condition. Approaches to support adaptation vary dependent on priorities for management. Where biodiversity or soil carbon is a priority, minimum intervention may sometimes be appropriate, but in other cases management intervention may be necessary to promote ecological resilience. Planting, natural regeneration and natural colonisation all have a role to play in different circumstances.

### *Threats*

The rapidly changing climate and increasingly variable weather conditions place a range of stresses on our trees, woods, and forests particularly in combination with other pressures, such as an increased incidence of tree pests and diseases, pollution, water abstraction, fragmentation and isolation of our woods, more 'intensive' land uses between woods, and damage caused by invasive species.

We believe the active practice of sustainable forest creation and management in accordance with the [UK Forestry Standard \(UKFS\)](#) is essential to improve the resilience of trees, woods, and forests. We will actively promote the advantages to landowners in producing a management plan that is compliant with the UKFS and the wider practice of good silviculture.

### *Opportunities*

Climate change may also present opportunities where other factors are non-limiting, including increased tree growth rates and expanded range suitability for some tree species. Regular management interventions can offer opportunities to increase diversity, particularly species, genetics, and structure. In turn, this is likely to reduce risks from environmental change, such as the emergence of new pests or pathogens. Enhanced resilience is likely to improve social, economic and environmental benefits derived from trees, woods and forests.

#### Principles of Adaptation

- ensure diversity of species, genetics, age, and stand structure
- build connectivity in the landscape
- understand and anticipate climate change
- be risk aware (environmental, social, and economic)

### Working together

We recognise the importance of sharing information and good practice, coordinating efforts with others, pooling ideas and resources where appropriate, and adopting a positive and pragmatic attitude to the efforts of others. We will work together to celebrate common ground and communicate agreement on key issues to audiences. Diversity in opinion and approaches should be celebrated where these are consistent with the vision of the Accord, and where there is disagreement, the reasons and evidence should be clearly articulated and communicated to stakeholders. Many successful programmes of work already exist and these need to be sustained and built upon. We believe that a coherent and joined-up approach across the sector including forging new partnerships, where needed, will ultimately be more effective at communicating the purposes of this work to a wider audience. These actions, taken together, will help to embed change at every level across the woodland, land management and tree health communities.

### Partner Signatories

