



THE DUKE OF CORNWALL'S AWARD FOR RESILIENT MULTI-PURPOSE FORESTRY 2026

Rules & Guidelines

1. The purpose of this Award is to recognise woods that are managed for ecological and economic resilience to threats such as pests, diseases and climate change in order to meet commercial, environmental and social objectives.
2. The Awards rotate annually around five regions across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. On the sixth year, a Best of the Best Award may be held with regional winners invited to take part. In 2026, the Awards will be for entrants from the South East of England, defined as the counties covered by the RFS Divisions: Home Counties, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire, London, Southern and South Eastern.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

3. Entries are invited from forest owners or managers from the private, public or voluntary sectors.
4. Woodland entered must conform to the UK Forestry Standard requirements and guidelines and UKWAS requirements but need not be certified or under any grant scheme. All entries must conform to all legal requirements such as felling licences.
5. Where an entry contains one or more Sites/Areas of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI/ASSI) and / or Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) the percentage that this forms of the total area entered must be proportional and representative of the rest of the woodland on the estate and management must have been agreed with the appropriate statutory nature conservation body.
6. Woods must be at least 20 hectares. There is no upper limit for the area that can be entered into the competition, but entrants should be able to demonstrate the award-winning qualities of their site within a half-day visit from our judges.

JUDGING CRITERIA

7. The judges are looking for a proactive approach to woodland management, taking full account of guidance produced by the relevant forestry authority (Forestry Commission England, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Forest Service, Dept. of Environment, Food, Agriculture, IoM) and other organisations where appropriate.

8. The judges will be concerned with management practices designed BOTH (a) to increase the ecological and economic resilience of the wood (including its contribution to resilience at a landscape scale) to the threat of rapid environmental change AND (b) to deliver current economic, environmental and social benefits.
9. The judges will be wanting to understand why your entry merits recognition above other entrants, e.g. beyond meeting the requirements of grants received to support work undertaken. Entries should be clear about the aspects of silviculture being exemplified, interventions made and the results achieved etc.
10. In addition to a summary of the management plan, the judges would be interested in seeing any other documents (e.g. work records, management agreements with statutory bodies, wildlife surveys, photographic records) which might assist them in a fuller evaluation of past, present and future woodland management. Evidence of sound business management would also be helpful.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

11. Entry forms can be downloaded from The Royal Forestry Society website. Please refer to the eligibility and judging criteria above when completing your application.
12. Entrants must submit a 500-word written statement with the accompanying form, showing how their wood is managed for resilience in order to meet commercial, environmental and social objectives.
13. The completed entry form should be sent preferably by email to eif@rfs.org.uk or exceptionally by post to RFS Excellence in Forestry Awards, The Hay Barns, Home Farm Drive, Upton Estate, Banbury, OX15 6HU.
14. Please contact Andrea Donnelly by email eif@rfs.org.uk or phone 01295 678588 if you require clarification.
15. **The closing date for entries is noon on 30 April 2026.** An email will be sent to acknowledge that your application has been received and will be considered.

SHORTLISTING AND JUDGING

16. The RFS will appoint a panel of two judges. All entries will be assessed, and final judging will take place on site, but the judges will short-list according to the quality and composition of the entry form and written statement. It is therefore crucial that you show through your application how your wood meets the eligibility and judging criteria above, and that you provide all the information requested, to enable the judges to fully assess your entry. Entries that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be shortlisted.
17. In drawing up the shortlist, the judges will seek to ensure that all woods are given equal opportunities regardless of their size and composition, and that each property is evaluated in its own context. The judges' decision is final.

18. Final judging is expected to take place in July/August 2026. It is particularly important that the judges should meet and be accompanied during the woodland inspection by those responsible for both deciding and implementing the forest management policies and practices. They should be well-briefed and prepared to answer wide-ranging questions about the woodland.
19. When judging is completed, the judges prepare a comprehensive report which is published in the *Quarterly Journal of Forestry*. Individual reports on each wood are not available but the RFS is keen to disseminate learning and may contact winning entrants to develop case studies on their woods.

PUBLICITY, PRIZES AND PRESENTATION

20. Winners are asked not to publicise their awards until authorised by the RFS.
21. The Award will consist of:
- **First Prize** – a trophy (to be held for one year), cash prize of £500 and a certificate
 - **Second Prize** – a certificate and cash prize of £250.
22. The Award Ceremony will take place in October 2026, venue is to be confirmed.

NOTES

23. The cash prize may be modified as the RFS sees fit.
24. No member of any judging panel and no national officer of the RFS may enter their own woods for the Award during their term of office.
25. The Society reserves the right to:
- a) suspend the competition at its own discretion
 - b) decide against awarding any or all of the prizes if it feels they are not warranted

**The Duke of Cornwall's Award for Resilient Multi-purpose Forestry 2026
is sponsored by Savills and Trees Please.**

