

Current investments by the South West Woodland Renaissance Partnership – 05/2008

The Woodland Renaissance Partnership is a private/public partnership of commercial interests in the forestry and timber industries in South West England. The Partnership takes an overview of the forest industries in the SW and, through the administration of £1million of funding from the SW Regional Development Agency, invests in the long-term growth of the sector.

Woodchip Supply

A capital investment for a high volume transportable chipper and delivery system that can guarantee to supply chip to all types of wood fuelled boiler and chip storage facilities.

Investment part completed, match funded from private investment

Timber Treatment

The installation of an Osmose Micropro treatment plant. This will be the first of its type in the UK and will provide a new type of wood treatment with improved preservation and corrosion resistance. This new type of treatment has already become a market leader in the US. *Site preparations underway, match funded from private investment*

Forest Products Workshop and Sawmill Expansion

Capital grant to fund sawmill expansion to include forest products workshop and display area and a biomass fuelled timber drying kiln facility. *Investment part completed, match funded from private investment*

Woodworks SW

Providing wage subsidies and training packages to businesses in the sector who have opportunities to expand their core business or develop new products/services but are constrained by skills or labour shortage. Woodworks is available throughout the SW to all forestry and woodworking businesses that fit the themes of Woodland Renaissance. *27 jobs supported to date, match funded from private investment*

SW Woodfair

Funding to expand the very successful Woodfair brand over the region and to use it as a platform to experiment with different types of marketing and promotion. As well as the large-scale annual Woodfair the members have targeted urban, tourist and seasonal markets through a series of smaller events across the region. The Woodfair with the Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World (CCANW) jointly hosted the Building with Wood Conference in Exeter in September 2007. *Final event in July 2008, match funded by Sustainable Development Funds and private contribution.*

Centre for Arts in the Natural Environment

An innovative and exciting project using art as a nucleus for promoting timber in construction. Throughout 2007/8 exhibitions are running at the Forestry Commission's Haldon Forest outside Exeter. The exhibitions have included Wood Wisdom, looking at the use of wood in past technological innovations and Inspiring Futures, and Timber Talent South West, looking at, respectively, timber constructions from across Europe and in the SW. *Further details at <http://www.ccanw.co.uk/> Two exhibitions to run in 2008 including Timber Talent SW, showcasing south west architects and buildings. Match funding through the Arts Council.*

Sudbrook Mill

Research Study

Working with the England Forest Industries Partnership (EFIP) to assess the implications of the closure of Sudbrook Mill in 2006. The mill took large quantities of hardwood for cardboard production however a growing demand for firewood has offset some of the hardwood production. The Partnership works closely with EFIP and collaborates with the forestry sector in other regions.

Woodfuel Developments

The Partnership wished to invest in this growing industry. To allow this investment to be targeted where it will be of most use a meeting of commercial interests was convened to gain opinion on the best use of any funding. Following this meeting The Partnership worked with the protected landscapes in the SW to ring fence funding specifically for the installation of wood fuelled boilers. This funding is providing grants for the installation of small and medium sized domestic woodfuel boilers as well as a permanent advice line and subsidised advisory visits.

Woodland Cycling Initiative

Research Study

Starting with a consortium of private and public woodland owners the initiative investigated the scope for off road cycling in the forests of the South West. This involved cost analyses, identifying potential markets and possibilities for income generation by woodland owners and associated businesses, and assessing environmental implications. The full report is available from the WR office. *Project complete. Funding has been secured to take the recommendations forward.*

The South West Directory

Investment into industry infrastructure and an attempt to move away from locally constrained directories to cover the whole of the South West with its diverse growing stock, processing resources and markets. The directory is electronically based and provides details of products and service for use within the industry and by consumers. A classified sales area has recently been added to the directory. <http://www.woodland-directory-sw.org.uk/>

Woodland Renaissance Facilitator

This role provides a bridge between industry and funders as well as acting on behalf of the Partnership. Work in the past year has involved completing the capital funding round as well as brokering increasing amounts of local timber into construction projects. The Facilitator has also been investigating new funding streams that may be of use to the industry and keeping abreast of policy, market and technological developments of interest to the industry.

Resource assessment

Research Study

Research work to look at the standing resource of timber in the SW and forecast annual increment. This will be done on a species/diameter basis to allow maximum scope to apply the results to any end product or for use by investors into processing capacity.

Timber properties

Research Study

Research into appropriate technologies and end uses for SW timber. The Woodland Renaissance element of this work will concentrate on extracting data on strength and durability of common SW species. It is hoped that this data will form a base for further research matching the results with existing and emerging products and processing technologies to explore more efficient and higher value uses for timber in the South West. *In partnership with University of Bath and UWE. Part funded by Great Western Research and private sponsorship.*

Pellet Production and sawmilling

A one-off capital grant using funding from the Modernising Rural Delivery budget to fund a sawmill expansion and installation of a wood pellet producing plant in Cornwall.

For further information on the Partnerships, Woodland Renaissance funding or any of the proposals above please get in touch with Bob Barrett or Jez Ralph on 01579 372100 or bob.barrett@silvanus.org.uk jez.Ralph@silvanus.org.uk