

Field Trip 3: Neroche Forest Project



- Lottery funded. Landscape partnership scheme in the Blackdown Hills.
- Piloting an economically sustainable model for conservation grazing.
- Open land re-established by clearing large areas of conifer plantation.
- Breeding herd of English Longhorn Cattle provide locally marketed Neroche beef.
- Woodland glades support rare butterflies.

Forestry Commission Landscape Partnership Project

What are the main challenges faced by this project?

1. The challenge for FC in evolving its own objectives for the forest over time – its purpose may seem vague at the moment!
2. Needing a 'Plan B' in case grazing is inadequate – how to define the limits of acceptable change, beyond which intervention should be triggered.

What are the main challenges faced by this project?

3. Finding the right grazing mix – are Longhorns right, in the long term, or should the project look at ponies, lighter-weight cattle, better use of natural deer grazing, etc.

4. Should the project consider annualised grazing versus longer term variable grazing levels – heavier one year, less another?

What are the main challenges faced by this project?

5. Balancing a farming enterprise against a conservation objectives – without overly compromising either.
6. Public perception and engaging with the public.