

Managing forests in a changing climate

Farming Talk with

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There is increasing concern that climate change and the extreme weather events it can bring will inevitably require foresters to rise to the challenge by adapting and managing forests in such a way as to mitigate its effects in the future.

Work has to begin now. Increasingly, there is a need to make forests more resilient to withstand the threat of pests and diseases, such as P. ramorum (sudden oak death) and Chalara (ash die-back), believed to be caused by a changing climate. Ways we can plan for resilience are to encourage a wider species mix, rather than a monoculture with one species becoming dominant, and by getting the balance right to secure stand stability with a range of size classes of trees, from large mature seed trees down to pole stems and young saplings.

Back-to-Nature forestry or Continuous Cover Forestry is a silvicultural system that

has been widely practised in France and Germany since the 19th century and is gradually becoming adopted by UK foresters to transform even-aged forests so as to create greater species and structural diversity. It is also a system which can ultimately provide large-dimensional high quality timber that can fetch premium prices as well as creating biodiversity and wildlife habitat.

Many see it as a complex form of management but, simply put, CCF is merely a method to produce a more varied forest with more than just one canopy layer. It is felt that the system mimics what occurs in nature and results in a forest that is more dynamic,

more natural and more pleasing to the eye. Of course, many foresters feel that CCF cannot be applied to all sites. Upland plantation sites of high windthrow risk tend to be ruled out because introducing thinning in these types of stands will lead to the whole forest eventually blowing over. Sheltered sites and lowland woodlands that are more wind-firm, especially small estates and places where landscape values need to be maintained are tailor-made for transformation to this type of management.

The process can take many years and involve a number of thinning interventions. The basic principles of CCF are to manage the ecosystem of the site as a whole and adapt the tree species to the local environment (eg soil type, moisture and nutrient content etc); restrict felling areas to no more than 0.25-0.3 Ha and to "never undervalue a tree" - ie optimise the value of each individual tree within the stand, whether it be a

veteran wildlife tree of high conservation importance or a timber tree of a certain size, targeted towards a specific market. Trees are marked and felled selectively here and there, to make room for smaller ones to grow for further recruitment. This requires a great deal of skill and experience on the part of the forester.

CCF relies on being able to secure sufficient natural regeneration as opposed to planting, thereby reducing costs. Therefore, it is important how one manages light levels.

It all sounds very technical and requires know-how, but those owners practising CCF will reap the rewards over time both economically and environmentally.

Martin B. Jones is a chartered forester and managing director of the Woodland Stewardship Company, a UK-wide forest management consultancy based in Shrewsbury

Young carers aim to smash world records

Report by Emma Walker

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A GROUP of teenagers is looking to break 12 world records in just six hours to raise funds for young carers.

The Support4carers team from Telford, which is made up of 15 to 17-year-olds, is determined to help those looking after someone who may have a disability or an illness.

The world record attempts they are hoping to smash include the most T-shirts put on in one minute, the fastest time to eat a Ferrero Rocher and the most M&Ms thumb catapulted in 60 seconds.

The record-breaking challenge event takes place outside Tesco in Madeley on Sunday between 9.30am and 4pm.

CHALLENGES TO CONQUER

- Fastest time to eat a jam doughnut with no hands.
- Most cream filled biscuits eaten in one minute.
- Most bubble gum bubbles blown in one minute.
- Most M&Ms thumb catapulted in one minute.
- Most grapes eaten in one minute.
- Most cartwheels in one minute.
- Fastest time to eat a Ferrero Rocher no hands.
- Most balloons burst by sitting in 30 seconds.
- Most Ferrero Rochers eaten in one minute.
- Most socks put on in one minute.
- Most pairs of socks sorted in 30 seconds.
- Most T-shirts put on in one minute.

The event also includes a balloon race and a six-hour bike ride carried out by the group of 12 teenagers.

The public is being challenged to guess the number of miles the group travels to bag themselves a prize.

Charlotte Pearson, 17, of Stirchley, said: "We are going to give the public the chance to attempt the world records and even become a world record-holder themselves."

"All the money raised will go towards young carers in the area so it is a really worthy cause."

"Our six-hour bike ride will consist of all 12 of us in the team taking it in turns on the bike before the public get the chance

to guess how many miles we've done by pin pointing it on a map of the UK."

There will be prizes for the top three bike challenge guesses.

Their efforts come as part of the National Citizen Service scheme, which helps teens to build skills for work and life.

Members of the public will be able to pay for a balloon with contact details attached before they are let off at the end of the day.

There will be a prize for the three balloons that travel the furthest distance within five days.

Prizes include a gift set of bike equipment, vouchers for Wetherspoons, skiing tickets, ice skating passes and Odeon cinema tickets.

For more information about the group visit the Facebook page Support4Carers or @Support4C on Twitter.

Shop owner fights illness to stay open



Jane Horton, from Jane's Discount Store in Whitchurch, is vowing to return to work as soon as possible

A woman is determined not to let illness close her shop once again after she battled back from a serious injury just a few years ago.

Grandmother Jane Horton, 49, suffered from a leg ulcer for more than four years and was forced to stop working or risk losing her leg.

Having to give up her Wem store, Market Discounts, was a difficult decision, but determined to get back on her feet, she opened up Just Ask Jane in Whitchurch last year, a discount shop and ironing business on Deermoss Road.

Now she has got a new hurdle to overcome.

Ms Horton recently found out that she

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will need a major operation in January to deal with an ovarian cyst, as well as other health complications.

She said: "I just wish I didn't have this because I don't want to have to close again."

"It could be for about six to eight weeks, but I'm determined it won't be that long and I am sure I can be better before then."

"I know some people don't enjoy working, but I desperately want to keep the shop open and I'm desperate to cut down the time it will be closed for."

Ms Horton said the store, which sells

all sorts from ice cream to ironing services, is a community driven shop and one she hopes everyone feels welcome in.

She said: "I don't want to stop working because I want to help people in the area and there are people that only spend 50p, but they are here for a natter."

"It's hard being a one-woman-band, but I enjoy working and I am work orientated so it's important to me."

"This illness is holding me back - I want to make the shop like a corner store, and promote the independent shops in the town."

But to help along the way, Ms Horton is celebrating the shop's first anniversary with a September sale.

Public invited to explore groundbreaking wildlife hospital

A new state-of-the-art wildlife hospital in Shropshire will this weekend open its doors to allow the public to explore behind the scenes.

The purpose-built Cuan Wildlife Rescue Hospital on the outskirts of Much Wenlock is the only 24/7 wildlife rescue centre in the county. Over the year the organisation has helped thousands of animals including badgers, foxes, bats, birds, squirrels and many more.

The founder Megan Morris-Jones said the number of animals being treated at the centre had increased dramatically and last year it treated 1,739 creatures.

It will host an open day on Saturday where visitors can meet the patients and see the new hospital in action.

After more than 20 years in their old premises, the rescue centre upsized in a £500,000 scheme to the new 14 acre premises in July.

The new building provides a better environment for the animals, as well as much-needed space.

Anna Nicholas, manager at the hospital, said: "The open day will be held from 10am to 4pm and we will have stalls and activities including archery, donkey rides and painting."

"It will be a great day out for children and all of the money raised will go to the centre."

The hospital will provide a place for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife. One of the patients to experience the new hospital was an unfortunate bat, who arrived at the centre so sticky it couldn't move, after being victim to sticky flypaper. But after several washes and flying lessons, the bat regained its flying skills and was released.

For information about the centre or to donate to the hospital visit www.cuan-house.org.uk or contact (01952) 728070.

Charity founder in line for award

A charity which helps women suffering from depression has been nominated for a number of awards.

Pandas (Pre and Postnatal Depression Advice and Support) was founded by a Shrewsbury couple and is now a national charity. It was nominated in the "What's On For Me Awards" in the category for best community fundraising group or charity group. Founders Rachael and Stuart Dobson were nominated in the volunteer of the year category. Mrs Dobson has also been nominated for the BizMums Awards charity mum of the year category.

She said: "I cannot believe Pandas is being recognised in three different categories across two different award ceremonies. There is a dedicated team of volunteers across the UK offering advice and support to individuals, their families and carers suffering pre and postnatal illnesses, and it would be fantastic if we can let them all know all the work is being recognised with awards."

The mum of two young children runs the charity on a full time voluntary basis from her home in Harlescote. She will find out if she has been shortlisted for the BizMums award on September 19. The What's On For Me awards is shortlisted by the amount of votes cast.

Visit www.whatson4me.co.uk/award-voting.asp to cast your vote.



Rachel Dobson

Pair's park trek bid for charities

A Telford mother and daughter are set to make a gruelling trek to raise money for charity.

Jacky Williams and Sreeya Porteous will be taking on Trek Fest, a 28-mile walk across the Peaks National Park, to be completed in 12 hours.

Mrs Williams, owner of Groom Masters Dog Grooming said she hopes to raise £500 through the challenge for Rosie's Rainbow Fund, which supports sick and disabled children. She said: "So far with the help of others, we have raised £342.93. Being 54 years young - though age is just a number - this is my biggest challenge yet."

Sreeya, 32, an animal nursing assistant, is attempting to raise £500 for Hope House children's hospices, and has so far raised £170.

Mrs Williams said: "We both want to smash our target goal and are hopeful with the help of the many kind people out there we can do this." To donate visit <https://www.justgiving.com/sreeyastrekfest/> or <https://www.justgiving.com/Jacqueline-Williams2/>

999 team ready to help at event

A team of St John Ambulance first aiders will be on duty at Shrewsbury Fields Forever festival ready to deal with everything from minor injuries to emergencies.

The festival at the West Mid Showground is expected to attract more than 10,000 visitors from September 12 to 14 thanks to a line-up including Tinie Tempah, The Cribs, Shed Seven and comedian Russell Kane.

While the crowds enjoy the music and festivities, St John Ambulance volunteers will be working hard to ensure everyone has an enjoyable but safe time.

They will be available from 6pm on Friday until 8pm on Sunday.

Julie Burden, regional events co-ordinator for West Midlands St John Ambulance, said: "Our team will be helping festival-goers with everything from minor cuts and bruises, to life or death medical emergencies."

Lottery funds to pay for parishes' youth worker

The first part of £1 million Lottery funding for three villages near Oswestry could be spent shortly.

Those behind the Three Parishes Big Local group have advertised for a 15-hours-per-week community and youth worker to join the team.

The paid post, which will cover Gobowen, Weston Rhyn and St Martins, is for a two-year contract and is subject to the funding being approved by the national Big Local group.

Laurel Roberts from the Three Parishes project said: "Subject to the funding being approved, we are looking for someone to make a real difference within the Three Parishes Big Local area, experienced in working within communities and with young people."

"Three Parishes Big Local is bringing over £1 million of Big Lottery investment to the communities of Weston Rhyn, St Martins and Gobowen over the next 10 years."

New website for cinema project

Clifton Community Arts Centre, the team behind plans to revamp a Telford cinema, have launched their new website.

They say the new site boasts easier-to-use links and updated information. The link to the shares page is also quicker and easier to follow. Go to www.theclifton.org