

[News story: Environment Secretary backs release of Beavers in Forest of Dean](#)

Beavers are set to be released in the Forest of Dean in plans confirmed by the Environment Secretary and the [Forestry Commission](#) today.

The project will see two adult beavers and two kits released into a 6.5 hectare secure enclosure to help improve biodiversity and build dams and ponds from next year.

This could be the first of many such schemes. [Government guidance](#) published today sets out a new [framework](#) for assessing applications for further trial releases across England.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

The beaver has a special place in English heritage and the Forest of Dean proposal is a fantastic opportunity to help bring this iconic species back to the countryside 400 years after it was driven to extinction. The community of Lydbrook has shown tremendous support for this proposal and the beavers are widely believed to be a welcome addition to local wildlife.

The project is an example of the wider approach we are taking to enhance biodiversity, become the first generation to leave the environment in a better state for future generations and deliver on our plans for a Green Brexit.

Scientists believe the beavers may be able to hold back enough water to help with flood alleviation for Lydbrook by quickly constructing natural dam structures and creating new habitat.

The Environment Secretary will visit a similar scheme run by the Devon Wildlife Trust in December where he will see first-hand the new dams, pools and other dramatic changes that have resulted from releasing two beavers on a 200 metre stretch of waterway in North Devon.

Kevin Stannard, Forestry Commission Deputy Surveyor for the Forest of Dean, said:

Our proposal to introduce captive beaver in to the Forest of Dean has strong backing from the local community and we are developing the project with the fantastic support from Environment Secretary Michael Gove.

We will continue our detailed planning including designing a robust fence to keep the beaver enclosed; securing healthy, disease-free beaver and collecting data from the monitoring of the water flow in the brook. We will continue to give updates as the project develops.

The proposal put forward by the Forestry Commission and approved by ministers has been granted full licence approval by [Natural England \(NE\)](#). This assessment has been key to ensuring the enclosure will be secure and NE will consider further applications for possible trial releases on a case by case basis, in line with the new guidance published today.

All the beavers will be fully tested for disease before they are released and a management plan will be put in place to make sure the enclosure remains secure. The Forestry Commission will also closely monitor the ecology and hydrology of the scheme throughout the trial which will help to understand the longer-term impacts and benefits to the local environment.

The project is being financed by the Forestry Commission as part of its normal operation activities supported by Forest Holidays.

Timeline of events:

- Beavers were driven from England 400 years ago
- They were reintroduced in Devon in 2015 for trial
- The FC sought SoS approval for further trial in Forest of Dean, this was granted on 22nd September
- The FC submitted an application to Natural England on 23rd October
- The beavers will be released in spring 2018