

# Tree planting rates to treble by end of this Parliament

Plans to treble tree planting rates over the course of this Parliament will be set out by the Environment Secretary this week.

In a speech that will outline the government's ambitions to create more woodlands, protect our peatlands and boost biodiversity, he will set out how new measures to increase tree planting will form a central pillar in the efforts to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

Under the new target, approximately 7,000 hectares of woodlands will be planted per year by the end of this Parliament (May 2024) alongside new initiatives to improve the health of our trees, create more woodlands in cities, and deliver thousands of green jobs as we build back greener from the pandemic.

The increase in woodland creation rates will be backed up by new funding for tree nurseries to improve our domestic tree production and maintain high levels of biosecurity. This will ensure the trees we plant now are healthy and resilient to the impacts of changing climate and increasing threats from pests and diseases.

## **Launching the plan, the Environment Secretary George Eustice is expected to say:**

We are putting plans in place to treble woodland creation rates by the end of this Parliament, reflecting England's contribution to meeting the UK's overall target of planting 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this Parliament. We will make sure that the right trees are planted in the right places and that more green jobs are created in the forestry sector.

## **He will also outline the importance of nature for people and society, saying:**

The events of the last twelve months have led people to appreciate the difference that nature makes to our lives more than ever before. There is an increased awareness of the link between our own health, and economic prosperity, and that of the planet— as highlighted by the recent Dasgupta Review of the economics of biodiversity.

Details of how the government will deliver the new target will be set out in an England Trees Action Plan, which will outline how we will create the diverse woodlands we need, through processes such as natural regeneration,

where woodlands are restocked by trees which grow from seeds which naturally fall and germinate there, as well as programmes of tree planting.

The Action Plan aims to see the current planting trends for woodlands made up of mostly native broadleaf trees continue, given the additional benefits they provide for nature by supporting native insects, birds and other animals.

The Environment Secretary's speech on Tuesday will take place at an event chaired by the Wildlife Trusts where speakers will also include Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, and Sir William Worsley, Chair of the Forestry Commission.

Last week, the government marked less than six months to go before the UK hosts the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow later this year. In the run up to the summit, the UK is focused on four goals to drive progress: securing global net zero, protecting communities and natural habitats from the impacts of climate change, mobilising finance and working together to accelerate action.