

Woodland Management at Burnhope Reservoir



What's Happening to the Woods at Burnhope Reservoir

For those people that visit Burnhope Reservoir you may have noticed that the conifer plantations on the northern side are gradually disappearing. This is part of an ongoing project to clearfell the plantations and replant with native woodland species like rowan, oak, holly, willow, alder and hawthorn.

The conifer plantations which were planted approximately 50-60 years ago have reached maturity and are becoming increasingly unstable, with pockets of windblown trees starting to appear. If left unmanaged it's likely that most of the trees will eventually blow over. To tackle this issue a phased clearfell and replanting scheme started in 2008 with the aim of replacing all the conifer plantations with native woodland. Replanting with more than 4,000 trees and shrubs started in the 2010/11 planting season with assistance from local Wearhead school children. The species planted include; alder, downy birch, willow, hazel, oak, hawthorn, cherry and holly with more to go in over the next few years.

This work to enhance biodiversity around the reservoir will, unfortunately, have an impact on site access due to the potentially hazardous nature of the forestry work; involving the use of heavy machinery and vehicles. The clearfell work has been planned for October to March each year and during this time there will be no public access for safety reasons. Normal unrestricted access to the north shore will be available from April to September .

A new access track will also have to be constructed on the south side of the reservoir before we can begin felling trees here and this will also mean temporary restrictions during construction and tree felling activity.

The ultimate aim is to establish more than 60 hectares of native woodland around Burnhope Reservoir that will provide a source of food, shelter and nesting opportunities for a variety of wildlife as well as creating a more enjoyable experience for people.

Please check the 'What's New' section under the 'For the Environment' part of the website for any updates on what's happening with this forestry work and for details on path closure around the reservoir.

If you have any specific queries about this work please contact Northumbrian Water's Conservation Team.