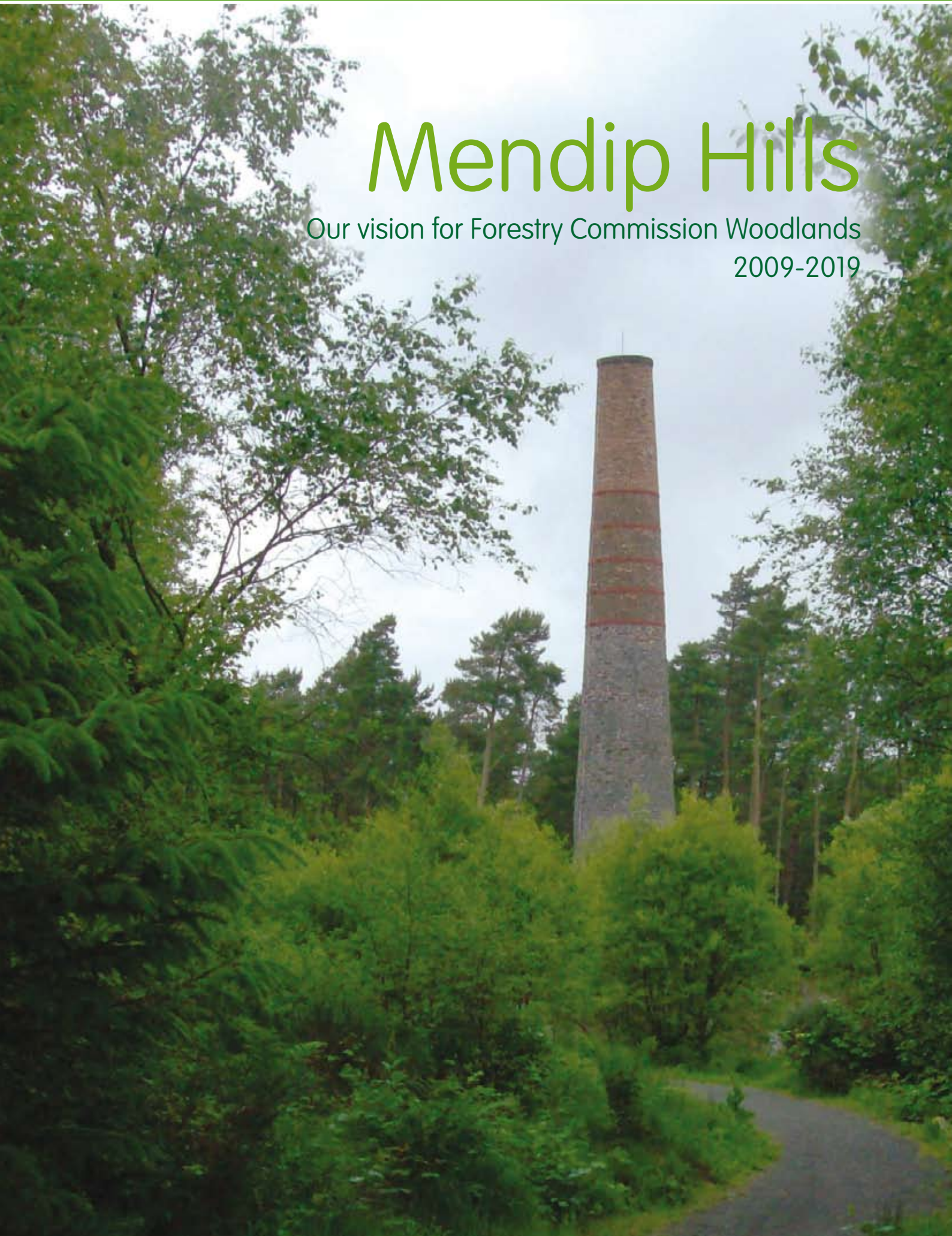




Forestry Commission
England

Mendip Hills

Our vision for Forestry Commission Woodlands
2009-2019



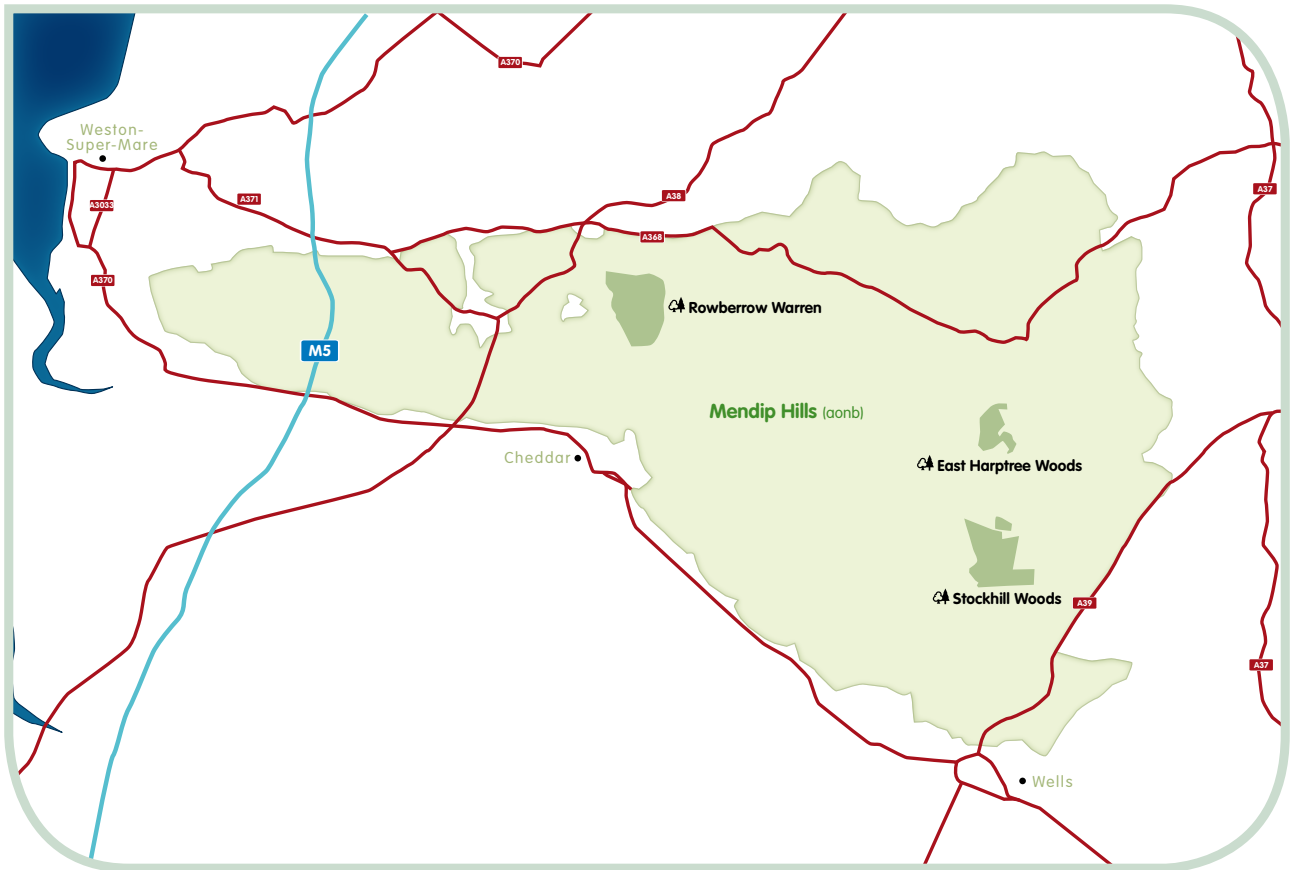
The Forestry Commission estate on the Mendip Hills in Somerset consists of 484 hectares of woodland. This comprises the three plantations of Rowberrow Warren, Stockhill and East Harptree Wood perched on the Mendip plateau 100-300m above sea level. All of these woodlands lie within the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Land tenure is a mixture of freehold and leasehold land with restrictive covenants.

The woodlands represent a small proportion of the whole Forest District landholding but are productive in timber terms. Despite being created in the middle of the 20th Century the woodlands are structurally diverse, a development that has led to them being important breeding sites for BAP* species such as long-eared owl and nightjar. The Mendip Hills is an area with a rich historic environment and there are 10 Scheduled Ancient Monuments of pre-historic origin within the Forestry Commission woodlands, as well as numerous other features of archaeological importance.

The area is well used by walkers, horse riders and cyclist using the numerous public rights of way. Car parking facilities exist at East Harptree Wood and Stockhill but recreational activity is generally informal and low key. The market towns of Cheddar (4500 residents) and Wells (10 000 residents) lie close by and Bristol (500 000 residents) lies within easy reach.

*Biodiversity Action Plan





Facts and figures for the Forestry Commission Woodlands of the Mendip Hills

Area of woodland (hectares)	484
Proportion of Forest District	3%
Freehold area (hectares)	70
Leasehold area (hectares)	414
Area within Mendip Hills AONB (hectares)	484
No. of Scheduled Ancient Monuments	10
Car Parks	2
Other recreation facilities (interpretation board/ leaflet/trail)	2

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (hectares)	0
Proportion of broadleaves	19%
Proportion of conifers	62%
Area of Ancient Semi-natural woodland (hectares)	0
Area of Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (hectares)	0
Modern woodland (hectares)	484
Annual timber production – Conifers (000 m ³)	2.0
Annual timber production – Broadleaves (000 m ³)	0.1

Priorities for the Future

Current England forestry policy is outlined in the statement 'A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests' published by Defra (2007). The strategy identifies a number of themes by which woods and forests can contribute to society.

These are;

- Communities and Places
- Land and the Natural Environment
- Working Woodlands

The Forestry Commission vision for the woodlands of the Mendip Hills aims to complement and enhance the natural and cultural character of the landscape through the implementation of policies that correspond to these strategic themes.



(This is how we plan to implement these strategic aims in the Mendip Hills.)

Communities and Places

- Provide recreational opportunities as appropriate within the terms of the leasehold woodlands.
- Work with freeholders of woods and other parties to identify opportunities to develop recreational use of the woodlands.
- Continue to be responsive to opportunities for partnership working with local groups.
- Continue to work with stakeholders to interpret the landscape and historic environment.

Land and the Natural Environment

- Continue to maintain and enhance the special character of the landscape and features of the historic environment.
- Manage woodlands in order to complement other habitats in the landscape.
- Conversion of woodland to open space will be focussed on delivering landscape or biodiversity benefits and will be identified through the Forest Design Plan process.
- Continue to take account of and enhance habitats for locally important BAP species through management processes (e.g. long-eared owl and nightjar).

Working Woodlands

- Continue to manage the woodlands with timber production as a major objective.
- Maintain the productive capacity of these woodlands and continue to provide a stable flow of coniferous timber onto the market.