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# Securing the future of our forests

February 6th 2011

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consultation  
have your say**

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**[Forestry Consultation Document](#)** Clicks:32 (CTR 69.57%)

## MYTH BUSTER

MYTH "You're going to sell off Sherwood Forest"

FACT; Sherwood Forest is privately owned and run by the sort of charitable trust the Government hopes will manage all our Heritage Forests.

MYTH "All our forests and woodlands are going to be sold"

FACT; Heritage Forests, like the Forest of Dean would be transferred to charitable or community organisations. Other woods would be sold to community groups and the rest would be leased.

MYTH "The Government is rail roading this through"

FACT; The proposals would cover a 10 year period and in any event this is a genuine consultation.

**Read the debate in**

## » Let's have a debate based on the facts not myths

I have had hundreds of emails about the Coalition Government's plans for the future of forests and woodlands owned by the Government and managed by the Forestry Commission. Thank you for your email.

I will continue to reply to personal emails and deal with questions and comments on an individual basis. I have compiled this email newsletter as a response to all the emails I have received.

I have no doubt about the strength of feeling on the issue and share a number of concerns about the plans for the future of our forests and woods.

## » Guaranteeing access and securing public ownership

I was brought up in Clumber Park which is owned and managed by the National Trust, and has been for over sixty years. I don't think anyone would say Clumber is anything other than a fantastic place, open to us all and owned and run by an outstanding charity.

The Coalition has proposed our Heritage Forests (like the New Forest and the Forest of Dean) are transferred to charities like the National Trust. But if this is not taken up then our Heritage Forests will remain in government ownership.

Only 18% of our forests and woodlands are run by the Forestry Commission; and governments of all political persuasions have sold off Forestry Commission land in the past. Unfortunately the last Government did not impose strict conditions to make sure access was maintained on the 25,000 acres they sold.

In relation to the forests and woodlands in the consultation document, the plan is to lease, not sell,

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some forests to commercial operators. The 150 year leases would preserve rights of way and access for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and others. They would also guarantee bio-diversity and existing statutory protection of wildlife would remain.

The plan is for other woods and forests to be sold to community organisations.

BUT my concern is that in the event that no such organisation comes forward, then we must make sure the future of that wood or forest is secured for the benefit of the community. I will not hesitate to make my views known to the Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman.

I have attended two meetings with Caroline Spelman who has assured me this is a genuine consultation.

I will continue to make representations on behalf of everyone who is concerned about the future of our forests and woods. Please read the consultation document and please take part in the consultation.

Thank you again for contacting me and please keep in touch.

Anna Soubry

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