

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref LG/319/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Welsh Parliament
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1 October 2020

Dear Janet

In the Plenary session of Wednesday 16 September, you asked whether Natural Resources Wales (NRW) were giving adequate consideration to the potential flood risk associated with tree felling in Wales. You also queried whether the Natural Flood Management (NFM) fund I announced in April would be used to review the effectiveness of licenses in preventing felling in flooding hotspots.

Well managed woodlands do have a role to play in reducing flood risk, although they are not the solution to reducing all flood risk in Wales. Woodland is only a small proportion of catchments in Wales, with the majority of run-off occurring from farmland and uplands. For example, only 5% of the Conwy Valley is wooded, and even recently felled areas continue to provide some flood attenuation benefits. In major events, the benefits associated with woodland attenuation are limited, especially if the ground is already saturated.

For a review of the latest evidence regarding the impacts of woodland creation on downstream flooding, please see the Welsh Government's "Environment and Rural Affairs Monitoring & Modelling Programme (ERAMMP), National Forest in Wales Evidence Review Annex-5, Ecosystem Services" Section 7 on Flood Mitigation:

https://erammp.wales/sites/default/files/ERAMMP%20Rpt-37%20NF%20Annex5%20Ecosystem%20Services%20%20v1.0_en.pdf “.

A list of the successful NFM projects which will be funded this year has been published on the Welsh Government website: <https://gov.wales/flood-and-coastal-erosion-riskmanagement-programme-2020-2021-html>

The schemes will make use of a broad palette of measures to reduce flood risk, including tree planting, leaky dams and the reintroduction of meanders to naturalise flood plains. This capital funding will not be used to scrutinise the effectiveness of NRW's licensing procedures.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

NRW's management of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate is independently audited and certified to international standards of sustainable forest management via the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS), which includes standards for the management of water.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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