



# Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales

## COMMUNITY DROP-IN MEETING (FORESTRY IMPACTS FROM PHYTOPHTHORA RAMORUM)

Thank you for attending the recent community drop-in meeting which was held in Henderson Hall Talybont on 8<sup>th</sup> July. Due to the considerable increase of *P. Ramorum* infection in our larch trees we wanted to engage with our communities across the central Brecon Beacons and keep you informed.

We wish to thank Roger Williams MP for joining us for much of the afternoon, and for listening to your concerns.

A thank you also for the local support of Regan from Talybont stores who provided light refreshments

At the drop-in session we received lots of similar questions and we made a commitment to better answer a few specific questions. The following are a collection of these questions and answers. I hope that you found the event useful.

### **What is the risk of spores spreading if the branchwood is not burnt or removed?**

*Phytophthora ramorum* spreads by microscopic seeds called spores, it produces two kinds 1. resting spores (chlamydospores) and 2. zoospores. These spores can only be produced from the pathogen's interaction with live trees or plant tissues, by cutting the tree down the tree is killed. As the branchwood has only limited resources Snedding out the tree (cutting off the branchwood), once these resources are used up sporulation can no longer occur.

The two types of spore act in different ways and have different life spans. The resting spores are long lived and will survive in soil or on branchwood and timber residue for many years. The zoospores are short lived and require water, such as raindrops, mist and streams. The branchwood is likely to have resting spores on it, and must not be moved from the site to another as it could infect another site unless bio-security controls are in place. Burning the brash is possible but the benefits of doing this do not outweigh the risk of spore spread. Burning brash would create smoke problems and reduce air quality and remove nutrients from the soil for the next trees.

Burning in woodlands is also strongly linked to a number of other tree diseases such as "group dying" (only for conifer)

### **Will these areas be replanted? When? What with?**

Yes they will be, the degree of change to our published plans has been very high so we will be reviewing these and will consult the community at that time.

Our overarching aim is to restore our ancient woodland habitat and increase diversity in our woodlands to create mixed woodlands of different species and make our forests more resilient to pests and diseases.



### **Can you use the timber once the tree is infected?**

Yes, the timber can be utilized however it must go to a licensed timber mill. The mill

must ensure that the timber is not mixed and that the bark and sawdust are disposed of properly and not used for any horticultural purpose.

### **Where will the timber go once it leaves the forest?**

The timber will leave the forest at Tal-y-bont reservoir dam. Depending on the market the timber is going to will determine the direction of travel. Approximately 50% of the timber will head to the A40 through Aber and 50% will head through Pontsticill.

### **Why have you not replanted the area felled in 2009?**

The area above Gellibont was replanted in April this year with a mixture of broadleaf trees around the edges and Douglas fir in the middle. Not all of the broadleaf trees were planted due to sheep trespass and this area will be planted next winter.



### **Why can you not build a road to leave the forest through Trefil village?**

This option was considered however it was considered unsuitable, and not within our gift for the following reasons.

1. Due to the steep ground in the forest the track would have to be longer than the proposed route as it would have to zig-zag down the hill. To ensure safe use of the road the gradient must not exceed 10%.
2. Any connecting track would affect a number of protected and designated species and habitats on the crag areas at the top of the slope
3. The link between the forest and the private road is a restrictive byway, this type of public right of way is not open to vehicular traffic.
4. If a link over the common were required it would require the permission of the owner and planning permission. Neither of

these would be easy or economic to obtain.

5. Separating the access points for the forest would make the forest harder to manage and would require a 33km diversion to visit one side of the forest and then the other.
6. The road from Trefil village to the forest is a private road owned by the Duke of Beaufort. We do not have legal access rights to move timber out along this road.

### **What will you do to reduce the visual impact of the road through the semi natural woodland?**

We will reduce the overall width of the road as far as practical in this section. We will also restore the disturbed ground as ancient woodland ground flora as quickly as possible following completion.

### **How will Natural Resources Wales manage unauthorised use of the proposed road?**

Natural Resources Wales will place two steel barriers to prevent 4x4 access from the restrictive byway on to the proposed road. If other traffic uses the new road it would be against Forestry Commission bylaws adopted by Natural Resources Wales . Incidents should be reported to the Police through the Brecon Beacons National Park website <http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/the-authority/wardens/illegal-off-roading>

### **How and When did Phytophthora ramorum enter the UK?**

Phytophthora ramorum was first identified in the mid-1990s as the cause of widespread devastation of wild oak trees in California and Oregon, USA (which earned it the name 'Sudden oak death'). The pathogen was subsequently found in the nursery trade in North America in 2001.

In Europe, including the UK, P. ramorum was initially found mainly on container-grown Rhododendron, Viburnum and Camellia plants in nurseries. It was first detected in the UK in 2002, when emergency measures were introduced. The initial measures included destruction of infected plants, a ban on imports of susceptible material from affected areas of the USA, and notification of movements of susceptible

nursery stock. These measures were notified to the EU Standing Committee on Plant Health, which agreed EU-wide emergency measures in November 2002, based largely on the UK's action. Those measures are still in place.

Rhododendron species, particularly *R. Ponticum* growing in the wild was found to be an important host for the organism and was thought to be the principal means for spread of disease, leading to the first findings in native trees. In January 2009 the first finding in the wild of *P. ramorum* on the heathland plant *Vaccinium myrtillus* (bilberry) was confirmed at a site in Staffordshire. Most recently, in August 2009, the pathogen was identified on Japanese larch trees at sites in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. Since then it has been found extensively in larch plantations in the south-west, in Wales and in south-west Scotland, leading to the felling of large areas.



**What alternative options did Natural Resources Wales consider for the Dyffryn Cwannon forest road SPDO application, and why are these alternatives not suitable?**

Natural Resources Wales looked at three options to transport timber from the forest:

1. Building a road to connect with the public road in the Dyffryn Cwannon valley. Natural Resources Wales has

a number of legal access rights the first is along the narrow track above Cefn Crug, the other access the forest through fields near to Pyrgad farm. These were rejected due to the concern of the impact of timber haulage on both the community and the narrow road.

2. The proposed route joining the existing forest road infrastructure
3. Connecting to Trefil village road (the reasons why this was considered unsuitable are discussed in a previous answer).

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