



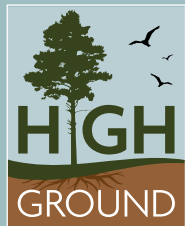
LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –
OUTDOORS

LAND BASED SECTOR GUIDE



FORESTRY

www.highground-uk.org



FORESTRY IS A SCIENCE THAT AIMS TO MAXIMISE THE FANTASTIC TIMBER RECOURSE AVAILABLE IN THE UK.

WHAT IS FORESTRY WORK?

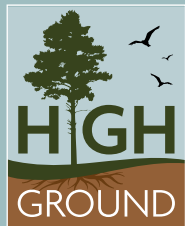
- Forestry is both felling, extraction and processing of trees and also planting and establishment of new woodlands.
- Forestry is a science that aims to maximise the fantastic timber recourse available in the UK.
- The work ranges from practical hands-on elements to the management of trees, woodlands and forests.
- Woodland covers approx. 13% of UK. Woodlands are owned by both the private sector and the devolved governments.
- The forestry sector starts with growing trees from seed or cuttings in a nursery and ends when the timber is processed in a sawmill and driven out the gates to thousands of different uses, many in the building sector.
- Forestry is often seen as only dealing with rows of conifers but it also includes the production of broad leaf trees.
- Forestry work covers the whole of the UK.
- Forestry work includes recreation, setting up and maintenance of mountain bike trails for example. Public sector forestry managers all have teams dedicated to the provision of the such services.

The environment and forestry are inextricably linked. Trees provide so many benefits, some you can see and touch (out door recreation space) and others deeper elements such as carbon capture and storage, flood reduction, and the air we breathe.

BENEFITS AND SHORTFALLS OF WORKING IN THIS SECTOR

- Hands on, practical outdoors work.
- Life long work.
- Both individual or team based work.
- Typically rural based with travel to site.
- Plenty of scope for further training and career development.
- Work can be local or involve travel across the UK (and abroad).
- Sense of achievement – able to see progress in the work undertaken, such as new woodlands planted or amount of trees harvested.
- Forestry can aid the fight in climate change through carbon sequestration and storage.
- Specialist machinery such as timber harvesters.
- Working with people passionate about the sector.
- Career for life, many foresters stay in the sector until retirement.
- The work is seen as high risk by the Health and Safety Executive.





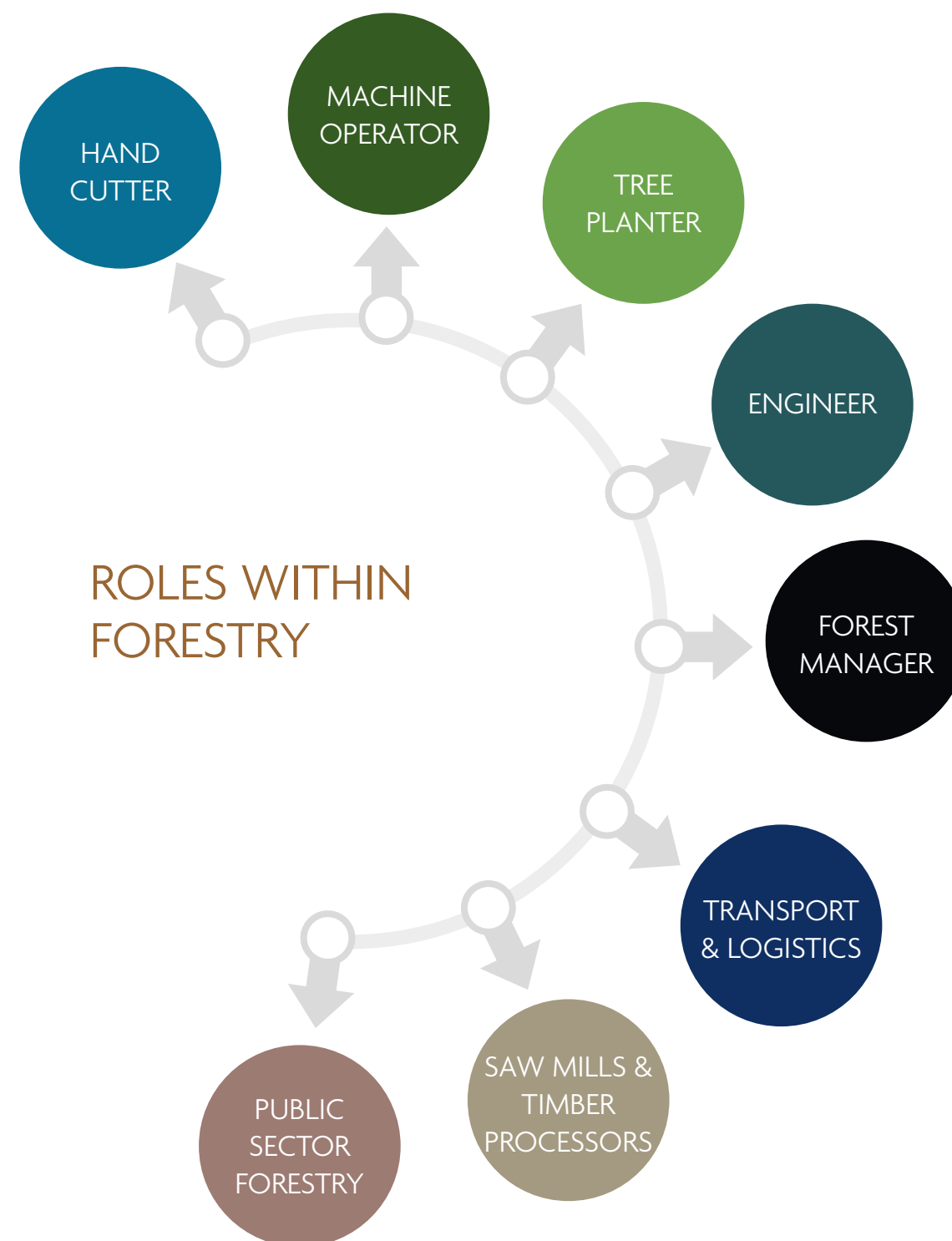
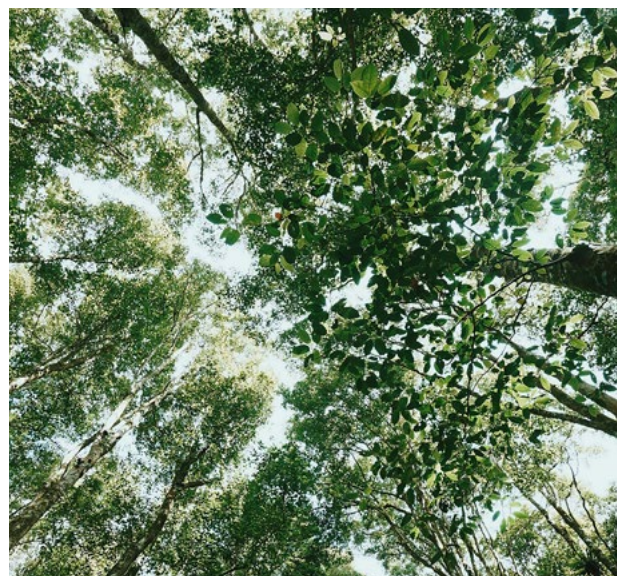
WHAT IS THE DEMAND?

There is demand in all areas of the sector. There is a need for the practical person on the ground, working with the trees either by hand or by machine. There is a demand for skilled and knowledgeable managers to ensure that woodlands meet their potential in all areas such as timber and wildlife.

Recent surveys in Scotland, England and Wales have shown that the current work force is aging and decreasing in size especially in the practical elements. The amount of new entrants into the industry does not match those leaving via retirement etc.

A massive number of new woodlands are being created to support climate change mitigation and due to an increased awareness in bio-diversity.

There is a large number of small woodlands across the UK not managed which offer massive potential for work. The price of timber is rising, and the UK is the second largest importer of timber in the world along with the desire for more timber products, makes timber attractive. The new woodlands being created now will need to be managed in the future.





ROLES IN FORESTRY EXPLAINED



HAND CUTTER

This is a person who uses a chainsaw to fell trees. Even the best tree felling machinery still has some limitations and that is why the hand cutter needs to be well trained, competent and confident in their abilities. They will be required to fell the large trees found at the edge of the woodland that takes great skill to bring down in the correct way. As well as a chainsaw you may use winches, hydraulic wedges and bottle jacks to assist the tree in falling over.

MACHINE OPERATOR

This covers a wider variety of forestry jobs. It could be using an excavator to prepare the site for tree planting such as creating little mounds to plant the tree in or creating a new access track. The machinery operator role also includes using specialist tree felling machines called harvesters (which cuts the tree down) or forwarders (which bring the timber out of the wood to the road). Both these machines are superb at their job but need skilled operators to make the most out of them given the financial investment required to buy one. Machinery is also found in the sawmills, for handling timber both pre and post processing.

TREE PLANTER

This role comes with a lot of job satisfaction when you see the woodland growing. During the planting season (traditionally November to March but can be extended depending on the weather conditions), you would be planting trees, but this may include installing a tube and stake as well. During the maintenance season (April to October) a tree planter will carry out maintenance of woodlands. This includes using a strimmer or sprayer to kill weeds, fencing and counting the number of trees that have died and need to be replaced - a process called beating up.

ENGINEER

The person to call when the machinery breaks down! Normally it is not possible to bring the machine to a workshop so when a break down occurs the engineer needs to be able to get the going again, in the forest.

FOREST MANAGER

The forest manger is responsible for arranging all the work that is carried out in the forest and obtaining the best price for the timber.

TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

The felled trees have to be hauled to the sawmill. Unlike general haulage, timber transporters have to be along to deal with narrow forestry roads which can test even experienced drivers.

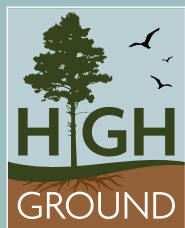
SAW MILLS AND TIMBER PROCESSORS

Once the timber arrives at the mill, there is a wide variety of roles, from machinery operator to saw operator and timber packer. These roles are often jobs for life and many of the mills report having employees for decades.

PUBLIC SECTOR FORESTRY

Covers such as wide range of roles that it would be impossible to name them all. All of the jobs listed above plus any number of managers dealing with recreation, the environment, timber sales, training,





ENTRY LEVEL
QUALIFICATIONS
AND TRAINING
REQUIREMENT

The level and type of qualification required depends on which route you intend to go down; establishment, felling or machinery. However there are some basic qualifications which most foresters have and are requirements to move on to further training.

Included here are the routes into practical forestry, to move straight into forest management then either a degree or level 6 apprenticeship would be a good starting point.

Short courses tend to last between a day and 5 days with an assessment at the end.

These are considered the basic for any pathway:

First Aid plus forestry
UK Driving licence

Awarding bodies:

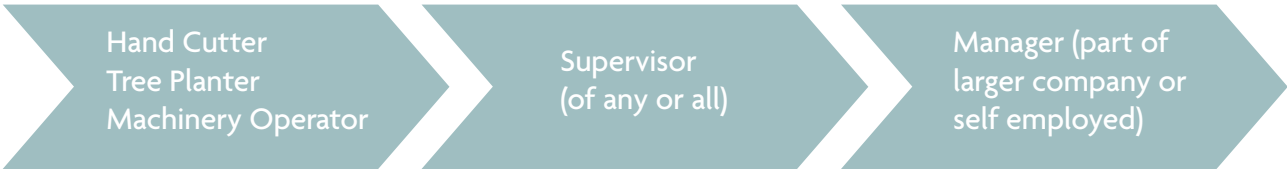
City and Guilds <https://www.cityandguilds.com/>
Lantra <https://www.lantra.co.uk/>
There are others who deliver First Aid



POTENTIAL SALARY AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Career path

Whichever path you take the options are reasonably straight forward. Learn the trade, take on responsibility for others, then start managing potentially multiple sites. At any point the self-employed option is open.



Self-employment

Within forestry there is a large potential to be self-employed.

There are some very large companies in forestry, who directly employ but also hire in contractors when needed.

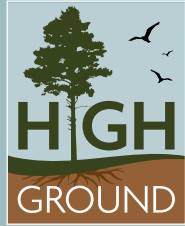
The public forests (Forestry England, Forest and Land Scotland and Natural Resources Wales) all tend to hire in contractors to undertake the majority of their work. These contractors often bring on sub-contractors for short periods to complete the project. The sub-contractors are often small businesses or self-employed.

Example salary and benefits

- Hand cutter, can earn up to £750 – £850 per week.
- Tree planter, is often paid piece rate (paid for the amount of trees planted, which changes depending on the tree and site) so its difficult to give a single figure, however an annual income of £22,000 could be expected.
- Machinery operator can earn up to £1,000 – £1,500 per week.
- Supervisor roles vary but are in the region of £30,000 / year plus vehicle.
- Management roles start at £40,000 / year plus vehicle.
- The public sector has clear benefits such as a pension scheme offering up to 28% of your salary.



ESTABLISHMENT	FELLING	MACINERY
Pesticides foundation knowledge PA1	Chainsaw maintenance and cross cutting timber	There are various options here but the most common is:
Application with knapsack sprayer PA6	Felling trees up to 380mm with a chainsaw	Forest Machine Operator (FMO)
Sit astride ATV	Felling trees over 380mm	Units 1 – 6, you don’t need to undertake them all just the ones relevant to you.
Strimmer / brush cutter / clearing saw	Single windblow trees	
	Multiple windblown trees	



National

These are the main websites that host jobs relating to the forestry industry, of course all the large employers also have their own websites

<https://www.confor.org.uk/resources/jobs/>

<https://arbjobs.com/jobs-by-category/forestry>

<https://www.countryside-jobs.com/>

<https://www.charteredforesters.org/job-board>

International

Forestry is a global career should you choose it. The Americas have a massive timber trade as does Australia. Closer to home forestry is a major employer in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

http://www.cfa-international.org/career_grant_opportunities.php

<https://www.findaforestryjob.com>



TRENDS AND AREAS OF EXPANSION

The UK Government has promised to plant 30,000 ha of new woodlands between 2020 and 2025 to help combat climate change. Each of those trees needs to be grown in a nursery, transplanted out on a site and managed to ensure it survives. Eventually it will be harvested and the cycle repeated. An average planter will plant 2000 trees a day (without tube or stakes).

The UK imports 80% of the timber it needs, we are the world's second largest timber importer. The demand for timber is growing every day.

The price of saw log (the type of timber you might buy from B&Q) has increased dramatically over the past few years, further pushing the demand for home grown timber.

The Queen's Green Canopy is a tree planting initiative created to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

Timber in construction is massively increasing, it is an easy way to store the carbon locked up by trees. As more buildings use timber and less traditional materials such as brick the demand for timber will grow even more.

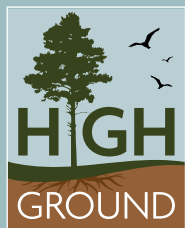
TECH DEVELOPMENTS

Like any industry forestry is always looking to modernise and improve the technology used. Recent technology developments include the improvement of batteries for chainsaws and the first fuel injected chainsaw, making it extremely powerful.

Decarbonisation of timber haulage is growing area of importance to ensure that the carbon forestry captures is not lost in the movement and conversion to a usable product.

Research and development is carried out by manufacturers and there is always a demand for engineers to support this.





ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTING SERVICE LEAVER AND VETERAN RECRUITMENT

The sector has always welcomed service leavers and veterans. You will find many people in forestry who have served in the armed forces.

Trade Associations



Membership societies



USEFUL READING

WEBSITES

Confor
<https://www.confor.org.uk/>

Royal Forestry Society
<https://www.rfs.org.uk/>

Institute of Chartered Foresters
<https://www.charteredforesters.org/>

Scottish Forestry
<https://forestry.gov.scot/forests-people/working-with-trees-and-timber>

Lantra Scotland
https://issuu.com/lantra.scotland/docs/forestry_induction_pack

National Land Based College
<https://nlbc.uk/careers/land-based-careers/forestry-arboriculture-careers/?sector=fa>



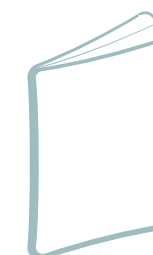
BOOKS

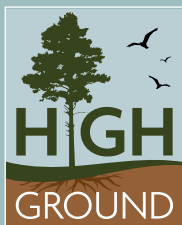
Collins Tree Guide
Westonbirt's Tree Spotters Guide
Collins Gem Trees
Arborists' knots for climbing and rigging
Tree climbers knot book
Managing Native Broadleaved Woodland



MAGAZINES

Forestry & Timber News
Forestry Journal
Forest Machine Magazine
Essential Arb Magazine
Arb Climber Magazine





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For more information about HighGround's services please contact Tim Lever.

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