

To the Independent Panel on Forestry - Call for Views

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Black Walnut Forest

Black Walnut Forest - an idea for a forest

I have an idea that there could be a forest entirely of black walnut trees where no tree is ever cut down while the tree lives, unless it becomes rotten or otherwise dangerous.

Once planted in Black Walnut Forest a tree would stay there for its lifetime; thus there would be no thinning and no harvesting of timber unless a tree died or became unsafe.

I am told that the trees can live for 150 years to 400 years in good conditions, so Black Walnut Forest would be planted with the intention that it would be a long-term amenity forest for many years before there was any wood to use.

I have in mind that Black Walnut Forest would be owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. There could also be a support society with an annual membership of around ten pounds per year, the support society being managed by the Forestry Commission.

I have seen the following web page about the black walnut tree.

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-8CZBJA>

It seems that if Black Walnut Forest can be established that it would be best to be in a lowland area in southern England with a high water table.

In order to establish Black Walnut Forest there would be funding considerations. A lot would depend upon the size in hectares of Black Walnut Forest: the size would depend upon the availability of a suitable site. I am thinking that around five hectares would be a size that could be considered; though maybe larger or smaller depending upon the availability of a site and upon funding considerations.

How would such a project be funded please? Black Walnut Forest would be owned and managed by the Forestry Commission, yet maybe funds would need to be raised in order to establish the forest, due to its long-term nature.

I mentioned earlier that Black Walnut Forest would be owned and managed by the Forestry Commission and that there could also be a support society with an annual membership of around ten pounds per year, the support society being managed by the Forestry Commission. I thought of that because of knowing of the way in which many preserved railways are owned and funded using a two-company legal structure where one company owns the property and the other company has a membership structure and organizes the cultural activities. That legal structure model can be, and is, applied to various types of property, from land with a track-bed to an individual locomotive. That is not the same legal structure as I imagine for Black Walnut Forest, as the property would be owned by the Forestry Commission. I mention the situation regarding preserved railways so that the legal structure that I am suggesting for Black Walnut Forest is shown to be realistic.

Due to the particular cultural feature of Black Walnut Forest that once planted in Black Walnut Forest a tree would stay there for its lifetime and that thus there would be no thinning and no harvesting of timber unless a tree died or became unsafe, trees would need to be planted an adequate distance apart so that light could reach the forest floor when the trees grew to a large size. This might well mean that Black Walnut Forest would be quite sparse for some years, yet that is a result of its cultural situation.