woodland in the urban fringe. Rubbish is dumped and trees are damaged. During the field study police pursued a youth in a stolen car in a high-speed chase through the park. Male flashers are a problem.

The presence of flashers undermines the view of the Bestwood 'imagined community' described by one the Nottingham men: "the people you come across in the woods are like us, and people with dogs and horses and nice ordinary people. You know, you don't meet bad people."

From another perspective, Bestwood is a patch of urban fringe woodland next to a peripheral council estate that has high levels of crime – mainly burglaries and theft of and/or from vehicles. The more cynical view of the Nottingham mothers would be that "Bestwood is a nice park in the wrong neighbourhood".

The notion of an imagined community also operated powerfully for the Afro-Caribbean women, especially when they contrasted experiences in London with memories of life in the West Indies.

Maria: "In the woods at home – people would look out for you... It's a community, everybody will look out for you. But here, you could scream in the woods and people would walk past you."

Eloise: "Neighbour looking after another neighbour. If you are an old person, with no one living with you, they have kids that will carry water for them, do their bit of shopping, and all such – looking after the old people. But up here, nobody looks after you."

Joy: "I mean, we are just from Waltham Forest and to come to Waltham Abbey is like 'wow'. I think that sense of community spirit isn't so much around in a wood in England. I think if that were there people would feel a lot safer."

Bel: "I would feel safer if there were a lot more rangers around and you saw more people."

Patricia: "I suppose if you can be attacked in the middle of Walthamstow – you are twice as likely to be attacked in the middle of the woods."
(London Afro-Caribbean women)

The way in which the groups tried to decide where a potential attack was more likely to take place also reflects the inter-connectedness of country and city, and the ways in which people come to understand the risks they face in woods and forests.

The women's general view was woods were more dangerous because there were more places people could hide and they would not be deterred by the presence of others. For the men, it was perfectly obvious that any woodland would be safer than the city: no one was going to bother travelling out to the countryside to expose himself.

Ken: "I don't want to speak for everybody, but I think men generally look on flashers as comical, rather than threatening. I think women look at it as threatening. I think for men it's just someone having a joke. For most women it is the fear of things going further than just simple exposure."

Jack: "In a flashing situation in an urban area, the chances are there is always going to be somebody nearby or within screaming distance. In a woodland I can imagine it would be far more threatening because they are in the middle of nowhere – who is going to hear?"

John: "Surely, if you are going to expose yourself you don't want to be – have that trouble of going all the way to a wood, finding your way right into the middle and then you have to wait hours and hours..." (laughter)

Stanley: "You have a captive audience right outside the supermarket!"

John: "So from the attacker's point of view, it would make more sense to be in the city than in a woodland. We were saying earlier on, ourselves, we don't feel threatened in woodland but we feel threatened walking down the street at 12 o'clock at night. Women, who probably feel more threatened in woodland, have less reason to."
(London men)

Women are therefore in a double bind. First, they are made to understand that woods are particularly dangerous, that they would be foolish to risk being there and, should anything happen, they would be 'to blame'. Second, the socially accepted view of the male attacker as a 'sex pervert', 'a nutter' 'out-of-control' etc, indicates someone insane whose behaviour is non-rational – and yet the men discussed where, rationally, would be the 'best place' to go and expose yourself to women.

Women have to manage their own and their children's safety in the face of these contradictions.

Coping strategies

A key point to emerge from all the groups is that people develop a range of strategies to ease anxieties and let them move about in public. Women develop strategies as part of growing up and learning how to behave in public.

Most women regulate their behaviour to reduce the risks of victimisation and harassment. One London girl described going home on a winter evening. "I walk down the street – I've got my alarm in one hand, my keys in the other. And I walk down from the end of my road to my house, and I sort of take a deep breath as I come off the main road; it's like 'I'm gonna do it!' and you have to walk as quickly, as fast as you can, and I've got my hands ready..."

Women's coping strategies include trying to ensure never being 'caught out' in a vulnerable position: avoiding being alone in public open spaces, avoiding public transport, not going out after dark. Specific coping strategies for walking in woods include taking a dog along, choosing carefully when to go, continually monitoring surroundings, not straying from the main paths and, most often, not going alone.

Assertive body language is important. Several women commented that they would feel relaxed and comfortable walking in parks and woodland until a man (or men) appeared – and at that point, they would become suspicious and watchful.

For adult males, coping strategies are relatively limited. One London man said: "It's all very well for us lot to walk around because we're all quite big fellows". One Nottingham man commented: "I think I know a pervert when I see one".

The teenage boys were more concerned about dealing with threats from adult males and gangs of youths in urban areas. They discussed coping strategies mainly in the context of how they handle situations in urban rather than woodland settings, but the mechanisms are similar. Their avoidance strategies included not going to certain places after certain times; walking down the middle of the road rather than at the side, or near the bushes; not carrying much money. They also had similar discussions to the women about body language – moving confidently, not looking around fearfully.

The ultimate response for all the teenage boys (although it was not welcomed by any of them) was to fight their way out of trouble if necessary. But here, too, the declining levels of trust were important. A number of males commented that aggressors might be on drugs, carrying a knife or another offensive weapon. You could not be sure that it would be a 'fair fight'.

The men and teenagers realised that they might be seen as a threat if they met women in a wooded area or public park, and even more so if it was a lone woman. They discussed a number of strategies to 'make her feel safe', including not walking behind a woman, crossing over the street, coughing or whistling to let her know someone was there, and waiting until she had gone.

Ideally, the men would like to be able to smile and say "hello" but did not think this was possible because of women's general state of anxiety about men. There was also a fear that a man walking by himself in a woodland "without any obvious reason for being there" – without a dog to walk or a camera to photograph wildlife – would be an object of suspicion and in danger of being accused of "lurking with intent".

4. BUILDING CONFIDENCE

A combination of design-based and people-based strategies can reduce fears and perceptions of risk in woodlands close to towns and cities. A central challenge is how to build sufficient confidence in people so they feel comfortable in woodland. One of the Nottingham women who lived close to Bestwood said: "I think the more you go into a place and the more you are familiar with it, the less frightened you become, and the less threatened you are".

Following the research, Community Forest teams, their partner groups and other professionals have been developing approaches that will encourage more people to use and enjoy urban fringe woodland. Two seminars brought together academics, police and woodland designers and managers to develop strategies. Workshops have also taken place within two Community Forests. Action points from these seminars and workshops are incorporated in the following proposals.

The recommendations also draw on the international Safe Cities programmes in Canada, the USA, UK, Europe and Australia, for example. These offer considerable expertise in designing safer public spaces for women – and therefore for everyone else.

Getting together to share ideas can generate suggestions for building confidence.

Consultation

One approach that has been tried is to hold workshops with a broad range of participants involved in managing land, from local councillors to rangers. The one-day workshops aimed to generate local strategies to address the main causes of the perceptions of risk and

to increase community confidence in urban fringe woodlands. Their style was interactive, stimulating discussion and drawing on participants' experiences to produce recommendations.

To encourage sharing of ideas and a feeling of empathy with people who are anxious about using woodland, three scenarios were developed in the workshops.

- Bilberry Wood – a rural wood. The scenario focused on a parish council trying to improve its local woodland and increase usage. The council had to rebuild confidence after a child went missing near the woodland.
- Grange Woods – a green field site. This scenario followed a team of council officers attempting to involve a local community in planning a new woodland. They had to find strategies to address the perception that the woodland would increase crime in the locality.
- Nuthanger Copse – an urban woodland. This centred on a local community attempting to rebuild confidence in its local woodland through consultation and strategic improvements after a woman was sexually assaulted in the copse.

The participants were divided into teams of mixed occupations and experience. Each team worked on one woodland scenario in five sessions, each examining a different factor. The order varied because each team had a different story line. The five factors were:

- consultation: developing effective consultation that reaches all sections of the community and listens to their concerns;
- people: developing strategies to increase use of woods, thus increasing confidence and reducing fear;
- design: designing woodland settings to provide areas perceived as safe for public use;
- improvements: demonstrating the link between low perceptions of risk and a woodland that appears well maintained and cared-for;
- media: developing strategies to work effectively with the media to generate positive news coverage about woodlands.

The day ended with participants producing personal action plans listing what they felt able to do over the next 12 months to incorporate into their work or daily life positive actions addressing this issue.

Workshops like these are part of the way forward and a pack to help people run similar events is available from the Countryside Commission's Community Forest Unit. It is also essential to continue consulting a wide section of the community about what people want. To create 'forests for the community' it is vital to involve local people at all stages.

Design and management

It is important to design woodland settings that are safe for the general public – and perceived to be so. There is a growing literature on how environmental design can reduce crime and the fear of crime in cities. The Safe City Committee of Toronto, Canada has produced an excellent working guide for planners and designers (1992). This highlights those environmental features which most influence women's feelings in urban spaces.

- Lighting has a fundamental effect on how much people can read cues about strangers and maintain surveillance in public spaces, and it must be of a high standard. But lighting isolated spaces or paths may give the impression that they are well used in evening hours and therefore foster a false sense of security.
- Good sightlines are essential in safer design where the need is to 'design out' sharp corners and enhance 'visual permeability'. The report says: "of special concern are... overgrown shrubbery and other thick barriers which could shield an attacker".
- Hiding and entrapment spots are small, confined areas close to a well-travelled route, without possibility of escape because they are enclosed on three sides.

Research shows that improving these three features most enhances people's feelings of safety by enabling them better to use their coping strategies of surveillance and/or avoidance.

There is a fundamental problem in trying to apply these recommendations to urban fringe woodland design. The three features which are the most frightening and dangerous aspects of the built environment are intrinsic qualities of woods and forests. Woods are darker than open countryside; trees, bushes and tall shrubs are all potential hiding places; narrow paths lined by thick or prickly vegetation can create the sense of entrapment.

Most people spend the majority of their lives in cities and have developed a finely tuned sensitivity to built environments. Responses to woodland environments, therefore, are based on people's experiences of how to remain safe in city streets and open spaces.

At the same time, to 'design out' the intrinsic woodland features to enable individuals to feel safer would mean destroying the character of the wood. This is the crux of the physical problem.

Experiencing the special qualities of woods is very important for the psychological and social well-being of many different groups of people, especially those in cities. There is a similar problem in large, urban parks. "The ability to escape the city in parks, including ravines and other forms of urban wilderness, is essential to many urban-dwellers' health. The issue is to create a choice and for the user to be in control" (Safe Cities report, 1992).

All the groups in the Community Forest research discussed the extent to which steps to ease people's anxiety and fear would 'destroy' the 'naturalness' and 'wildness' of woods. Both men and women worried about losing the natural feel of woodland by creating a 'designer wood' – although it was not at all clear what that actually meant – and Bestwood, with its very high levels of management and facilities, was regarded as an ideal wood by many. A small minority of keen naturalists among the men did not like the idea of reducing the naturalness of woods to widen access.

The strategies generally preferred by the men were design-based: more signs and information, more and wider paths, more glades and picnic spots, better lighting. This reflects their independence in woods and green spaces.

Women and youngsters were equally disturbed about security measures which could destroy the 'naturalness' of the experience. At the same time, the women's groups asked how could they enjoy a woodland walk if they were tense, frightened and on their guard? In design terms, safety had to be their prime concern.

For women, therefore, solutions were to be found only through social strategies. This supports the findings of Wiedermann (1985) in Volkspark Jungfernheide, Berlin that "hardly any woman would advise such simple measures as taking away dense shrubbery, or lighting the parks like some kind of soccer field... the best form of protection is the company of other people".

The Countryside Commission has design guidelines for personal safety in woodlands which develop good practice. These are included in the Community Forest advice manual, CCP 271. There were no additional suggestions from any of the groups involved with the research. The guidelines are:

- create a network of 'safe' routes and spaces to reassure those who perceive themselves to be most at risk;
- increase sightlines;
- upgrade the general appearance of the woodland;
- pay close attention to entrances and exits into safe, busy areas;
- give thought to lighting – a difficult issue: how appropriate is it and where?
- limit the number of official routes as this will necessarily concentrate (people) and therefore increase feelings of safety while providing 'wilder' paths for those wanting them;
- concentrate facilities and activities on the edges of woodland to diffuse the edge as a barrier between safety and fear;
- provide safe open spaces for picnicking, games etc, and signs to indicate places of refuge, such as farms, other buildings, main roads: open areas should not be surrounded by dense foliage; any bushes planted next to the area should be very prickly;
- create clear sight lines for long distances and paths that are a minimum of four metres wide with graded vegetation at their edges and leafy deciduous species.

Signs and other information

Signs and levels of maintenance are two areas of design and management that affect people's sense of security in woods and forests by giving them more control without reducing natural qualities too much.

Signs are important. Knowing where you are and which way you should turn, especially in times of stress, contributes to security. Members of the groups taking part in the research often found difficulty understanding the signs. This indicates that more effort needs to go into making signs work.

Bencroft has single wooden posts with a coloured arrow to waymark the route. For many unfamiliar with woodland, these signs were hopelessly inadequate. Some people did not know what the posts were for – and therefore to them the wood was not sign-posted. Others saw the posts but did not understand what they meant. Bestwood was much better; its signs indicated destination and the time it took to reach it – but still some people missed them. All the notices were in English only. One of the London Asian women made an important general point: "To try and bring in racial harmony just through notices would make others aware that it's not only whites using this forest".

People in both locations commented on the need to understand where the wood was in relation to the surrounding countryside and/or urban area. If anyone wanted to get out in a hurry, or just got lost and came out somewhere unexpected, it would be extremely helpful to be able to orientate oneself. Site maps usually give information on the trails and features within the wood or forest, but do not show its immediate neighbourhood. Instead, they tend to show the wood in limbo and therefore some people find it hard to choose the best way out.

Good signs can help people enjoy their woodland visit.

Sense of ownership and indications of good maintenance

The groups liked to see 'natural' untidiness like fallen logs, tree stumps and brambles in woods. They were offended and disturbed by features which signified a lack of social control and 'ownership' of public space. These could include vandalism, graffiti, dumped rubbish, discarded drug needles, broken bottles and abandoned cars. High levels of maintenance are needed.

Changes in maintenance regimes can dramatically affect the public's perception of a site. The following figure shows how the same feature can be perceived either positively or negatively.

Families feel welcome in well-sited picnic areas.

Figure 8. Perceptions of woodland features.

Feature	Negative perception	Positive perception
Paths	overgrown, narrow, hemmed in	open at sides, well surfaced
Benches	set in bushes, secluded, broken	open position, in good condition
Undergrowth	tall, dense, bushy	clear sightlines and routes through
Kids	gangs, noisy/unruly older children and teenagers	playing happily
Streams	litter, polluted, poorly defined banking	clean, well defined banking
Night	at any time on one's own	less risky if in a group
Lighting	if none – in areas of shadow	if well lit, especially paths
Bikes	where used on unsuitable footpaths	if on specially designed bike trails
Trees	dense, dangerous condition	open character, well maintained
Litter	if present, and particularly if it looks as if it has been there for some time	regularly emptied bins and an absence of litter
Car park	dark, poorly lit, poorly signposted, surrounded by tall shrubs and trees	well lit, signposted, open and well maintained
Fences	broken down	well maintained
People	men on their own, gangs of youths, people with fierce dogs	families, and people with friendly dogs
Picnic area	dense undergrowth, secluded, far away from car park	in a clearing, not isolated, well maintained

People need people

Design changes are necessary but not, in themselves, sufficient to remove fears, particularly among women.

To feel safe, people need to know that there are other people around who are 'looking out for them'; who could come to their assistance if needed. The Safe Cities project talks of "adding eyes to the street". If people feel that cries for help will not be heard or responded to they will avoid that place, making it more unsafe. This creates a vicious circle. The Safe Cities reports talk of "activity generators": ways to attract more people to places so that everyone feels safer.

The challenge for those involved in creating Community Forests is how to encourage more people to use woodland, because the strongest contribution to feeling safer is the presence of others.

The argument often advanced by countryside managers – that the public wants to get away from other people – does not appear to be entirely correct in woodland recreation. In the research only a few keen naturalists took that line. For the great majority, 'more people' translates into a wish to see a wider and more varied mix of people in woods. A much more visible presence of foresters and rangers at work demonstrates that people with authority are taking care of both the wood and its visitors. In particular, rangers in distinctive uniforms are the most effective signal to visitors that they are welcome in woods and will be safe.

The public looks to rangers for personal protection, as well as for managing potential conflicts between different groups. Many rangers resist having a 'policing' role; however, they provide the critical presence that the public needs to feel sure there is someone looking after them.

Flashing is the sex crime which has the most direct and immediate impact on women and children in woodland. It is essential that rangers, liaising with local police, deal effectively with this problem. When there is local talk about 'a pervert' in the woods the behavioural sanctions, on women and children in particular, will be tightened yet more.

Rangers and woodland managers probably have the strongest roles in developing activities which encourage a broader range of visitors to use woodlands and ensure that more people use woods more often. This is a question of building a popular base within Community Forests.

Rangers have an equally important community liaison role, helping to increase confidence among local people. Many are already involved in some community activities but, with additional rangers, much more could be done.

The strongest justification for employing more rangers and developing programmes to let a wider range of people use woodlands comes from the title of the Community Forest initiative itself. During the research, the sentiment was best expressed by one of

Rangers have a key role to play in attracting more people to woodland.

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the London grandmothers but emerged in many of the different groups. "These are going to be Community Forests. That means they are for the whole community."

There is a clear need for more women rangers and rangers from ethnic groups. They would provide good role models for others who were anxious about being in woodlands. They are also better able to communicate with and understand the concerns of their own 'constituencies'.

The great majority of group members did not want to see a lot of additional, commercial attractions and gimmicks. The novelty of being able to walk in the woodland was enough for most people. Commercialism, too, detracts from the 'natural' feel.

Some ideas for community activities

- For children: orienteering, teddy bears' picnics
- For people at work: short and snappy lunchtime events
- For conservation groups: theme events – badgers, bats, birds, etc
- For families: dawn chorus and nightlife walks – understanding wildlife
- For old people: a band and afternoon tea
- For local residents: establish a 'Friends' of the wood group
- For youth clubs: practical work, creating conservation areas
- For unemployed people: involve them in voluntary wardening

Thames Chase 'Babes in the Wood' celebrate the birthday they share with the Community Forest.

A relaxing woodland walk.

*Practical woodland action is fun.*

Woods are a great place to picnic.

Action for disadvantaged groups

A number of key groups have emerged from the project who could gain great benefit if special programmes were developed. To emphasise their particular problems, ethnic groups are identified separately.

Children

Woods are simply 'no-go' areas for many children. Community Forest teams should consider a range of activities for children so they can rediscover the 'woodcraft' skills that have been lost, and gain more independence and confidence.
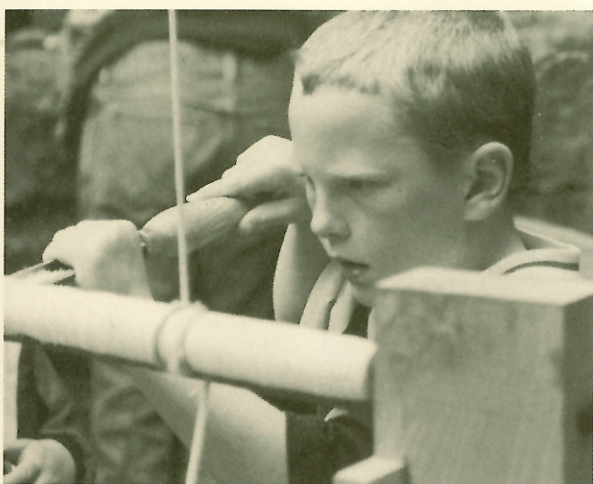
These should include not only 'worthy' activities like planting trees or structured educational visits, which are undoubtedly of value, but also fun things. Building dens; climbing trees; making a tree house; tracking; learning woodcraft; playing hide and seek; damming streams; building bridges; just running around in the fresh air and making a noise are all activities which people remember gave them so much pleasure when they were young.

In particular, programmes are needed for girls of nine to 14 who, more than any other group, need opportunities to have adventures that involve physical contact with nature.

Women

Women are one of the key targets for group activities, given their responsibility for child care and the concern for each other's safety shown by mothers and daughters. Encouraging groups of women with young children into woodland for fun activities and adventures such as 'Piglet walks' or 'Pooh-sticks' would help them develop confidence. In this way they could feel safe enough to enjoy the woods with their children.

Another important group is women whose children have left home and who are perhaps looking for new interests. Many would value opportunities to get out more with other women. Their example could encourage younger women to visit the woodlands with confidence. 'Mother and daughter' events could also reduce the mutual reinforcement of fear that operates between these groups.

Promoting activities such as horse-riding can increase the confidence of women and girls and enable them to enjoy visiting woodlands.

Ethnic groups

For people from ethnic groups, widespread experiences of racism affect their perceptions of risk in woods, and many will only visit them in groups. This needs to be catered for. Another factor which makes people from such groups especially lacking in confidence about using woods is that they often live where there is little or no green space and they have little experience of recreational woodland.

Culturally appropriate events, indicating that members of ethnic groups are welcome, would give them the opportunity to gain familiarity with urban fringe woodlands and grow in confidence. Such events would provide a range of benefits. During the research, members of the Asian and the Afro-Caribbean groups mentioned that they would value being able to show their children something of their own cultural roots and rural lifestyles through a woodland visit.

The success of the Community Outreach project in the Lee Valley provides examples of good practice. The outreach officer was from an ethnic group which gave communities she worked with immediate confidence that she would be able to understand their needs. Her commitment created a reciprocal commitment among other community workers. This opened up real opportunities for countryside recreation among different ethnic groups. Specific projects such as Common Ground's national Tree Dressing Day celebrate cultural diversity and could be developed in the Community Forests.
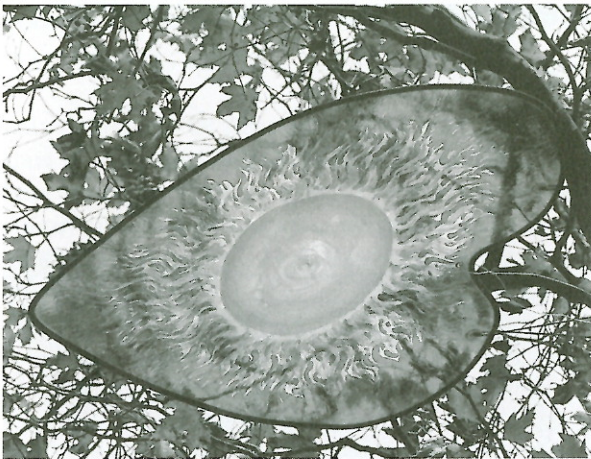
Tree dressing day is a way for all sections of the community to celebrate and enjoy woodland.

Media strategy

The Home Office Working Group on The Fear of Crime (1989) asked the media to introduce a voluntary code of practice to reduce the sensationalism in crime reporting. This seems to have had little or no impact. National media continue to concentrate on the most notorious crimes. Although such crimes gain national coverage precisely because they are so unusual, that does not alter people's perceptions of risk. Local media provide a flow of coverage about muggings and sex attacks in known, local places.

The aim both nationally and locally, therefore, should be to develop strategies for working effectively with the media to publicise positive stories about experiences in woodlands. A strong public relations programme could seek to counteract negative coverage by issuing 'good news' stories about woods and forests, perhaps with an emphasis on 'ordinary people reclaiming their woods and parks'.

At a local level there are opportunities to shape and reclaim the sense of 'community ownership' of green spaces and woods. Local media should be supplied with a consistent flow of stories which would show how groups within the community were using their woods,

stimulate curiosity and interest and, in time, perhaps generate a sense of ownership. Rangers could be profiled: interviews with female rangers and/or those from ethnic groups could be particularly valuable in encouraging more people to feel that the woods are for them to use and enjoy. It is the local media that actually help to set the parameters of local life. Much can be done through journalists to reduce fear and broaden access.

It is therefore important to enlist the media's help from the beginning, building up relationships with individual journalists, publications, radio and television stations. It is also important to be able to demonstrate positive action as part of a coherent programme.

Training for being interviewed by the press or broadcast media should be considered for all key staff within Community Forests.

Creating a choice

By offering visitors a choice between different types of woodlands, Community Forests can be made more widely welcoming. This approach allows people to become familiar with a woodland at their own pace – and so grow in confidence.

The groups in the study all recognised that compromises must be made to increase confidence without destroying the very nature of woodlands. They suggested creating areas within woodlands which catered for people's different needs. The groups drew very clear distinctions between the different areas. In a Community Forest it may not always be possible to have all three types of area within the same wood. However, there are ways of indicating to visitors the nature of a particular area so that they can assess whether they will feel comfortable visiting it.

1. Open wood

The findings of the research suggest that sometimes it may be appropriate to select areas where visitors' perception of risk can be minimised. These areas of very intensive management would often include the woodland edge which is critical for people who live close by – in Bestwood dense tree cover starts at the bottom of people's gardens.

These areas would incorporate the majority of the design proposals made by the Countryside Commission (Community Forest advice manual, CCP 271). They would be very open, with 'thin trees' and little under storey.

There would be toilets and other facilities; maps and information points; rangers would be much in evidence and there would perhaps also be a ranger base. Information in the major languages of the locality would be of practical benefit and also indicate that people from ethnic groups are welcome. Maps would

show where the wood is in relation to its surroundings and major paths and car parks would be lit to help people returning from a walk at dusk.

Using the examples of best practice from urban nature conservation schemes, 'open wood' areas could be developed to encourage wildlife, eg by putting up bird feeders and nesting boxes, and planting species to attract butterflies and bees.

Families relax in open wood.

2. Middle wood

This would represent the second phase of a woodland experience, with increased possibilities of encountering and enjoying 'woodiness'. There would be glades and open spots as well as more shrubby areas; ideally there would be streams running through.

Guided walks encourage people to explore the middle wood.

Signs and waymarks are very important. Everybody must be able to understand them. A mixture of paths – wide and narrow, straight and twisty – would be welcome. A strong ranger presence would be required through, for example, evidence of rangers and other people working in the woods or accompanying groups on guided walks.

3. Wild wood

This would be the most natural of the three areas. It would cater for 'the purists' as people in the research groups called them; those with great confidence, those who wish to encounter 'the wilderness' – so far as possible in this country – and who know about wildlife and nature. There would be minimal signs of active management and/or people; there should be hides and other places for seeing wildlife; and waymarking should be unobtrusive. But the wild wood would still have an active ranger presence.

The wild wood offers opportunities to find out about the wildlife.

It is a measure of how much the public would welcome greater access to woods and forest that this design solution imagines a very large tract of woodland to resolve the apparent conflict between 'safety' and 'naturalness'. Steps to reduce public fears will help to give people more confidence, enabling them to make more use of woodlands. Like the Community Forests themselves, a change in something as fundamental as fear will not occur overnight. The long-term goal should be to widen the social base of woodland recreation through a full and properly resourced commitment to programmes aimed at reducing fear. In this way they may truly become 'forests for the whole community'.

Figure 9. Criteria for two sorts of paths.

The Community Forest workshops drew up criteria for two different paths, a main access route that would be perceived of as safe and a 'wild wood path' for more adventurous walkers to take — but without being intimidated.

MAIN ACCESS PATH — woodland edge

- open aspect
- surface resin bound, or compacted gravel or stone
- vegetation cut regularly and well back from the edge of the path
- lighting, possibly along the path and definitely at the entrance
- straight line from A to B
- good sightlines
- signposts
- possible crown lifting, brashing and pruning of trees to open views through the wood
- thorny shrubs planted near the path to prevent intrusion
- between 2.5 and 3 metres wide to allow for cyclists
- open area for about 2 metres on each side
- well drained
- benches and picnic areas
- view points

WILD WOOD PATH

- meandering to encourage people to wander and explore
- managed to foster habitat diversity, various types of vegetation and offer different views
- scalloped edges, creating both dense and open areas along the path
- a bare earth path, cleared of vegetation
- board walk and non-slip bridges
- between 1.2 and 2 metres wide
- enclosed and winding
- 'natural feel' of being enclosed by woodland
- good signposting, especially at junctions with main paths
- circular route
- trail leaflet available
- route through mixed age range of trees
- intersecting other paths to provide 'escape routes'

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