



EMBARGO: Tuesday 20 February 2024

Plans unveiled for the future of Cannop Ponds

Forestry England is today [sharing plans](#) for the future of Cannop Ponds. The aim is to create a site which is better for the future; for flood risk; for wildlife and for the community.

Cannop Ponds will continue to be a special haven where wildlife is given space to thrive, and people are welcomed to connect with nature. A different approach is being taken at Upper and Lower Cannop, to reflect the opportunities that each Pond presents. The two will work together to bring benefits to the wider forest environment.

Lower Cannop will remain a large body of water in the heart of the Forest of Dean. Engineering works will be carried out to build a new, larger spillway and make the existing dam watertight. This work will be as sympathetic as possible, and meet modern engineering standards. It will increase resilience to extreme rainfall, make the Pond better at holding back storm water, and so protect local communities downstream.

A more natural approach will be taken at Upper Cannop, to minimise the extensive engineering works that would be required. There will be a mixture of open water, marsh and reedbeds to create a haven for wildlife to flourish and attract more native wildlife. Marshes and shallow water will help boost numbers of invertebrate and plant species, which will, in turn, support more wintering birds. There will be greater foraging opportunities for mammals including bats and otters, whilst amphibians and dragonflies will have more areas to breed.

Cannop Ponds will still be an important place for people to visit. Fishing will continue at Lower Cannop and accessibility will be improved at both Ponds. The plan is to create a space that everyone can enjoy, regardless of age or ability. This could include upgrading the walking trails, providing areas for pond-dipping and paddling, or better viewing platforms. Forestry England is committed to ensuring Cannop Ponds remains a place for everyone, now and in the future, and will be asking the local community what they would like to see improved at the site.

The next step will be to carry out more detailed design work. Once this is complete, Forestry England will invite people to give comments and shape elements of the final design for Cannop Ponds. A planning application will then be submitted based on this feedback.

Josh Howe, Director of Engineering for Forestry England explained:

“We have spent the last 18 months gathering a huge amount of technical information and listening to the public’s views about what should be done to protect Cannop Ponds. Whether you want a place to walk the dog, spend time with family, or space for your physical and mental wellbeing, you will have the chance to have your say on what could be offered.

“We want the dams to be safe and are legally obliged to address the problems with the ageing dam structures to ensure future safety. But the more we looked at what we would have to do to fix the issues, the more we could see opportunities to improve the whole site for the community and for wildlife, whilst also protecting those downstream.

“We believe that this outline plan will future-proof Cannop Ponds for generations to come. And it will also help the Forest of Dean be resilient to the changing climate, whilst continuing to support our precious wildlife during the biodiversity crisis.”

Artist’s impressions of what the Ponds could look like can be found online. Updates on the progress of the project, along with information on how the public can provide feedback will also be shared over the next few months. Visit: www.forestryengland.uk/article/the-future-cannop-ponds

Ends

Notes to Editor

1. Artist’s impressions are available [to download here](#). These were produced by Arup on behalf of Forestry England.
 - Image 1 - Artist's Impression: Lower Cannop from above, showing new, larger spillway. The dam will be reinforced below ground level.
 - Image 2 - Artist's Impression: Lower Cannop from above. Lower Cannop will continue to be a large lake in the heart of the Forest of Dean.
 - Image 3 - Artist's Impression: Upper Cannop from above. A more natural approach will see the current dam kept as it is, and wetland habitats will be created.
 - Image 4 - Artist's Impression: Upper Cannop from the south. There will be a mixture of open water, marsh and reedbeds to create a haven for wildlife to flourish.

- Image 5 - Artist's Impression: Upper Cannop from the footbridge by the car park. A new bridge will be constructed and the spillway will be reinforced by riprap - boulders which slow the flow of the water.
2. History of the Cannop Ponds project [can be found here](#).
 3. Forestry England manages and cares for the nation's 1,500 woods and forests, with over 291 million visits in 2022/23. As England's largest land manager, we shape landscapes and enhance forests for people to enjoy, wildlife to flourish and businesses to grow. We are continuing the work we have already started to make the nation's forests resilient to climate change and by 2026 we will:
 - create at least 6,000 more hectares where we integrate wilding activities in our productive forests
 - increase the diversity of visitors to the nation's forests and have one million hours of high-quality volunteer time given to the nation's forests
 - plant at least 2,000 hectares of new, high quality, predominantly broadleaf woodlands

For more information visit forestryengland.uk. Forestry England is an agency of the Forestry Commission.

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