

# Epping Forest is Branching Out

## The Branching Out vision is to protect Epping Forest through:

- Extending opportunities to learn about Epping Forest's heritage
- Raising awareness of what has been before through interpretation, history and education

Improving access for The Heritage Lottery Fund has agreed to grant £4.76 m towards the implementation of the £6.8m Branching Out Project. The project covers long lasting improvements which will benefit current users, potential visitors and future generations. The remaining money will come from the City of London, Essex County Council and other key project partners.

- all working towards a more sustainable future
- Re-establishing traditional Forest management through grazing and pollarding

Mrs Wendy Mead, Chairman of the Epping Forest and Commons Committee at the City of London said: "We would like to thank everyone involved for their contribution and particularly to the Heritage Lottery Fund for this very generous grant to improve facilities and visitors' experience at Epping Forest. This funding will allow us to achieve many of the much-needed changes in a much shorter period of time than anticipated. It will also help us develop open spaces access and education and learning for future generations at Epping Forest."

The Branching Out Project is scheduled to commence in Autumn 2009 and will take five years to reach completion.



1. A new Interpretation Centre development, next door to Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, and a refurbished Butler's Retreat will create a campus for visitors to learn about the Forest, its management through the years, the Tudor Hunting Lodge and the Forest Retreats of the Victorian era. The Interpretation Centre, situated within walking distance of good public transport links, will have a large exhibition area, with thought-provoking displays. It will also house a community room which can be used for school and adult learning as well as providing a versatile facility for local groups. An artist's impression of the proposed site can be seen here.
2. 'Discovering Epping Forest' is a forward thinking education programme, developed in partnership with the education providers of the Forest (Field Studies Council, Suntrap, Epping Forest Centenary Trust and City of London). Over 750 school children per year will benefit from the experience of outdoor learning.
3. Three remodelled visitor hubs, improved Easy Access Trails, bespoke interpretive panels and marked trails will help visitors explore the Forest safely and with

confidence, possibly venturing deeper into the Forest than on their previous visits. The whole Forest will be identified to vehicular traffic by iconic gateway Forest markers, on the majority of entrance routes, aiming to convey the unity of the Forest despite being dissected by highways.

4. Engaging with a local college, Capel Manor, the City of London aims to employ 15 apprentice arborists over the life of the project. The extra help will allow for increased output of tree management and the apprentices will be learning techniques specific to the management of veteran trees.
5. It is also hoped that the City of London will be able to restore grazing over an additional 350 hectares and extend the current grazing season by three months. However, this is subject to on-going development works informed by public consultation and the detailed outcome is not yet defined.