

Woodland Trust Community Woodland Network Grant



Moor Trees Report February 2004

Summary

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for the WT grant, it has made a real difference, allowing us to double the amount of volunteers and work we do in our nurseries and at our tree planting sites. As a small organisation, it is difficult and sometimes complicated to set up accounts with tools suppliers, so the individual co-ordinators who spent the grant took out an interest free credit card to cover payments over the short spend time.

We weren't able to completely spend all of the grant within the time span, and ended up making the cut between tools and consumables at a slightly different ratio because of the short time frame in which to spend the grant i.e. not needing all of the consumables at once we chose to buy more tools instead of our 3 year consumables requirement.

I enclose some Photos on floppy disk from planting in December using the new tools. I also enclose guidance notes on the grant spend along with balance sheets and receipts, as it is not completely straight forward.

Tree growing and Seed collection

The grant has provided invaluable tools, equipment and consumables to allow Moor Trees to develop and expand its 7 tree nurseries around Dartmoor.

We have been able to provide more opportunities for volunteers, improve our maintenance tasks in the nurseries, and to increase tree production substantially.

This grant along with other grants that enabled us to appointment a new tree growing co-ordinator in October 2003, has helped us to implement the next stage of our development plan which, among other things, aims to grow 15,000 more trees from local provenance seed over the next 3 years.

As part of this plan, we have already gained two new nurseries and recruited many new volunteers to provide the manpower to develop and maintain the nurseries. Along with this growth in our activities, we were in need of more tools, equipment and consumables to support our new volunteers and nurseries. This WT grant has enabled us to increase the number of basic tools available, such as digging forks and spades, allowing us to work with much larger groups and achieve a huge amount in a short time. It has also given us an opportunity to provide training to these groups in basic nursery techniques. For example, the purchase of several pairs of good quality secateurs means that many more volunteers can learn how to carry out root pruning and the relining out of young trees. On Saturday 21st of February we where able to offer our first full-length training day, it could not have been done without enough tools.

On a recent day at our nursery near Diptford, we were able to have 23 people working at once. Some were busy building new compost bins, using the saws, hammers, nails and lump hammer provided by the WT grant. Others were helping to lift young trees, using the new forks and spades. The trees were root pruned with the new secateurs and lined out in beds weeded with new hand trowels and forks. The new straw was then used to mulch for trees to retain moisture and prevent weed growth.

The purchase of a mower to keep nursery paths and uncultivated areas tidy and under control will save a huge amount of work, and be far safer and less time consuming than hand shears. The mower also allows us to collect grass cuttings easily for addition to our compost bins, which provides invaluable extra mulch and compost for the nursery beds.

Having a large number of tools, especially the extra hand tools and secateurs, which we had so few of, allowed everyone to make a real contribution to the work of the nursery.

The volunteers were also very appreciative of the tea we can now provide, using the new thermos flasks and plastic mugs. Before we had the Woodland Trust grant, we could not have a group as large as this all doing such rewarding and interesting tasks.

Although we always give instructions about suitable clothing for volunteering at Moor Trees, not everyone has access to proper wet gear and wellingtons. Being able to provide some emergency waterproofs and wellies means volunteers such as our new student volunteer group, can participate even if they do not have their own gear. Or they can keep working if the weather changes unexpectedly and enjoy an experience which would otherwise not only be uncomfortable but a potential danger to their health and safety.

The storage boxes are proving invaluable for tools and equipment. They protect the tools from damage and loss, and make it much easier to load and unload the vehicles when moving from one nursery to another. Seeds need to be stored safely and protected from pests. The new boxes have tight-fitting lids and can hold very large quantities. This year we are planning to collect far larger amounts of seed than ever before. Good storage is essential for preservation and successful germination later.

Tean Mitchell

Seeds to Saplings co-ordinator

The Woods on the Wildside project - 'The Branching Out stage'

Tree Planting and maintenance

The extra planting tools, have really made a difference.

We have been able to provide more volunteering opportunities to the public as well as small local groups.

In November and December 2003 we planted nearly 1500 trees with the help of the WT grant, enabling us to make the first step in expanding a PAWS remnant on the river Harbourneford. New spades, mattocks and picks ensured that we were still able to dig into the stoniest of grounds, whilst new flasks, waterproofs and wellies kept them warm and dry.

Our new wheelbarrow has been a real step up in getting our equipment, trees and guards around site and cut huge amounts of time in logistics.

The fencing tools have also enabled us to start constructing smaller supplementary planting exclosures on Sunday the 22nd of February a group of 12 volunteers constructed a small copse exclosure of 175m in circumference and dug out 120 holes for tree planting by local Plymouth school children the following week.

With hindsight we would have ideally taken longer to spend the grant, as there are always differences between testing out our foreseen requirements against actual capacity.

Adam Griffin

Wildwoods Service Co-ordinator

The Woods on the Wildside project - 'The Branching Out stage'