

An all-rounder: Managing Coed y Brenin forest

Coed y Brenin was ahead of its time - an exemplar of sustainable management of natural resources and the delivery of multiple well-being benefits before this become a legislative requirement in Wales.

Coed y Brenin was the first of its kind - a dedicated mountain bike centre with a fantastic, hand-built, all-weather network of trails through the forest. It has developed over the years and now has trails for everyone from families to world-class racers. Visitors flock to the venue and local tourism businesses flourish, helping to sustain the rural communities in the area. As well as mountain biking, it is a popular destination for walking, running and other outdoor recreation pursuits. It welcomes approximately 180,000 visitors a year.

The site includes a purpose-built visitor centre with a café, bike hire, a shop and conference facilities. Opening in 2006, it had sustainable construction principles at its heart, with a wood fuel heating system, shingle roof and natural insulation. In 2013 it was extended, almost doubling its size. The extension involved the use of Welsh grown softwoods and a revolutionary construction technique called Brettstapel.



It's not just about recreation though. Coed y Brenin is a very productive forest, with an average annual timber production of 22,000m³ (enough to build 12,570 timber-framed houses). This supports employment in the forestry sector, rural livelihoods and rural communities. The trees in the forest also capture 10,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, the same impact as removing 2000 cars from the road.

And then there's nature conservation. The forest is home to an amazing array of plants, birds and animals, including the protected pearl mussel and northern hairy wood ant and twelve European Protected Species. The Afon Eden Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located within the forest was the only Welsh location to be included in the Pearls in Peril project which worked to safeguard the future of freshwater pearl mussel populations in Great Britain.

There's more we could tell you, including the fact that there are over 260 archaeological features in the forest including a former copper works, goldmine and medieval iron furnace, but we think you get the idea. Coed y Brenin is an all-rounder.

Pursuing SMNR:

