



PRESS RELEASE

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CELEBRATE OUR FORESTS DAY
Sunday March 20

To mark Celebrate Our Forests Day, cyclists, walkers, dog-walkers, riders, ramblers and picnickers are encouraged to get out into OUR woods and show their love for them

To celebrate our nationally-owned Forest and woods, cyclists are being urged to put on something yellow and go for a ride in their local woods on Sunday March 20.

Anything yellow will do - a bit of ribbon, tape round your handlebars - or full fancy dress if you want (and send us a photo).

So if you like riding with the family, with friends or just taking off on your own, put Sunday March 20 in your diary and get those tyres pumped and chain oiled!

In the Forest of Dean, Hands Off Our Forest are planning A Roll In The Woods, with both morning and afternoon bike rides on two circuits – one for mountain bikers, the other for families, leaving Pedalbikeway/ Cannop Cycle Centre. See www.handsoffourforest.org for details.

Organiser James Greenwood said: “The Forest of Dean is a great place for cyclists, gentle on families or quite testing for mountain bikers. The reason it’s so great is because of the way the Forestry Commission work with groups to make sure their needs are satisfied – that goes for the many different leisure pursuits and special culture and traditions, they all co-exist happily. We intend to keep things this way, to keep our Forest in public hands with the current management - accountable to the public and working with us.”

In addition, picnickers and barbecue-ers are encouraged to bring along some food for a feast at Wenchford. Or just do what you like doing in our beautiful Forest of Dean!

38 Degrees is listing events country-wide where the public will be encouraged to demonstrate just how much their forests mean to them, with rambles, cycle rides, picnics and more being organised.

The day is a celebration of our public Forests – and also a day in which we can express our rights to them. It is up to us to ensure they remain in our hands, and stewarded by the Forestry Commission.

Although we have won a victory against the Public Bodies Bill and the flawed consultation, our campaign is not over until the Government confirms it has dropped its ambition of selling off, or transferring by another means, our – the people’s - woodlands. The 500 job losses in the Forestry Commission will adversely affect the management of our Forest. Currently we pay 30p each per year for our forests to be well managed for our benefit. Value for money? In many ways our continued enjoyment of our Forest is priceless.

Sunday March 20 is the eve of World Forestry Day. 2011 is the UN International Year of Forests – more reasons to celebrate and to claim our Forests for the people and the planet.

NOTES

- Hands Off Our Forest (HOOF) is a broad alliance of people in the Forest of Dean which is campaigning to keep our Forest publicly owned and run by the Forestry Commission. See www.handsoffourforest.org for details.
- HOOF is a member of the Forest Campaigns’ Network (FCN), along with 13 other groups (so far): 38 Degrees (national), Friends of Bourne Wood (Lincolnshire), Friends of Chopwell Wood (Tyne & Wear), Friends of Hurn’s Forests (Dorset), Friends of Thetford Forest Park (Norfolk), Keep Our Forests Public (Sussex), One Voice (New Forest), Save Cannock Chase (Staffordshire), Save Haldon Forest (Devon), Save Our Forests (national), Save Our Woods (national), Save Sandlings Forests (Suffolk) and Save Sherwood Forest (Nottinghamshire).

