Jaguar Land Rover drives nature recovery in the National Forest

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THE NATIONAL FOREST



Unity Wood JLR day.

Global businesses unite to create Unity Wood in the heart of the National Forest

A new eight-hectare woodland, Unity Wood, is set to take root in North West Leicestershire through a landmark collaboration between Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), its freight partners and the National Forest. Planted with around 13,000 native broadleaf trees, and designed with a reflection glade, wetland area and accessible trail links, the woodland will provide a living legacy for people and nature while symbolising what can be achieved when industries work together for the environment.

The National Forest is one of the UK's most ambitious environmental regeneration projects. Once scarred by decades of coal mining and clay extraction, the landscape of central England has been steadily transformed over the past 30 years.

Now covering more than a quarter of the region with woodland and with close to 10 million trees planted, the Forest has created thriving habitats, new green spaces and visitor attractions that support communities, tourism and businesses across 200 square miles of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

By attracting thousands of visitors each year, the Forest helps sustain local shops, cafes and accommodation providers, creates opportunities for tourism-related jobs and contributes to the wider regional economy while improving wellbeing and quality of life for residents.

Unity Wood represents a new chapter in this story.

Between Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe on land once considered for development, the woodland will offer a protected space for recreation and wellbeing.

With benches, a reflection glade, a wetland habitat and accessible paths, it will connect walkers and cyclists along the Ashby Woulds Heritage Trail and become a cherished feature of the local landscape.

The project began in December last year when JLR's supply chain operations team approached the National Forest for the purpose of celebrating a mutual success by creating a positive environmental legacy.

JLR then invited its logistics partners to join by matching contributions to fund the planting.

The response has been unprecedented. 18 international businesses have come together to support the woodland, creating a symbol of collective action at a scale rarely seen in the sector.

Together, £85k has been raised to fund the creation and design of the woodland.

Levent Yuksel, freight operations director at JLR, said, "This project shows how collaborative action can create results far beyond what any one organisation could achieve

alone. It has been inspiring to work with so many partners on a project that leaves a real legacy."

The local community has welcomed the project.

With concerns that the site could be developed for housing, its future as a woodland safeguards the area's rural character while opening new opportunities for outdoor activity, relaxation and nature recovery.

Thousands of trees will transform the land over the coming years, creating a space that benefits both people and wildlife.

A planting event with partners is scheduled for December, with full planting continuing through the 2025 to 2026 season.

Carolyn Sankey, director of development at the National Forest, said, "This project demonstrates the power of collaboration.

"Working with a world-leading brand and its partners has made a real difference here in the heart of the Forest.

"We are always happy to speak to organisations that want to take meaningful sustainability journeys, and we can offer transparent and practical ways to make a difference."

Unity Wood stands as a model of how industries can act together to create lasting change.

Businesses interested in exploring bespoke sustainability projects with the National Forest are encouraged to get in touch to discuss how they can make a difference.

More information can be found online nationalforest.org



Badger Woods drone shot.

Notes:

The partnership included DHL, LGK Logistics, Birway, Atlantic Container Line (Grimaldi), Priority Freight, BCA, DSV, CBW Group Holdings (AMCO), K-Logistics, Metro Shipping (Global), CEVA, B&B, K-Line, DS Smith, Maersk, Wallenius Wilhelmsen (WalWil) and DP World.

The National Forest…

…covers 200 square miles of the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. Its creation began in the early 1990s, a radical vision to bring the benefits of trees, woodland and multi-use forestry to lowland England, where thousands of people

live and work.

The Forest provides a national demonstration of the value of the natural environment to drive regeneration and showcase policy and practice, research and development in the heart of the country.

It was the first broadleaf forest to be created at scale in England for more than 900 years and is now seen as one of the boldest environmentally led regeneration initiatives in the country. It has transformed a post-industrial Midlands landscape – scarred by coal mining and heavy industry – from black to green.

Year by year, the National Forest has been steadily turning what was once one of the least wooded areas of England into a multi-purpose, sustainable forest. More than 9.8 million trees have been planted so far. Forest cover has increased from six percent to 25 percent, approaching double the national average for woodland cover. The aim is to reach around a third forest cover.

Trees have been the catalyst for change and transformation. The National Forest is a positive response to the climate crisis and is putting in place the building blocks to deliver mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Through partnerships the National Forest is working to create wildlife habitats, reduce flooding, improve air quality, store carbon and create space for outdoor education, supporting the health and wellbeing of communities and enabling Forest-related businesses to thrive.

The National Forest Company (charity no: 1166563) leads the creation of the National Forest, working in partnership with landowners, local authorities, businesses and its communities. It has strong support from government, politicians and the public, and continues to be supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

