



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/  
Ein cyf/AT/00743/09

Mark Fisher  
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Dear Mr Fisher

Thank you for your email to Jane Davidson, the Minister for Environment Sustainability and Housing regarding the EU resolution on Wilderness in Europe. In 2003 the then Deputy First Minister commissioned an internal report called "Wild Wales", and the Welsh Assembly Government continues to take an interest in the topic. We are aware of this EU Resolution and welcome public interest and enquiries about it.

We have been advised by the Countryside Council for Wales that regrettably there are few significant areas of Wales that can still be considered 'wild'. Some small parts of narrow valleys and cliff habitats may be substantially unchanged since the last Ice Age, but the majority of Wales has seen extensive human activity since the beginning of the Neolithic period, approx. 6000 years ago. Even apparently wild areas like upland moors are likely to be the product of human land use.

However there are a number of projects in Wales to restore historic woodland and 'wild' landscapes. To our knowledge there are five initiatives in Wales registered with the Wildland Network. Responding to the "Wild Wales" report, Forestry Commission Wales will shortly begin creating over 1000 hectares of Caledonian Pine landscape in mid Wales, and are considering other possibilities. There are also a substantial number of Planted Ancient Woodland (PAW) regeneration projects and some heathland restoration projects. WAG supports these while recognising it is uncertain the extent to which PAW restoration can be considered 'wilding' as it usually involves species such as chestnut (both species), beech etc. which came into Britain after the initial natural process of afforestation. Likewise Heath is generally considered to be the consequence of human land use followed by neglect, sustained by light grazing by animals which may be domestic or introduced by humans (eg rabbits) as well as truly native/'wild'.

WAG is responding positively to the EU Resolution, and is taking an active role in delivering its aims in Wales in co-operation with other stakeholders and project originators.

*Chris Worker*

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