Tentsmuir and Reres Wood Public Scoping Survey Report

As part of the initial scoping for the revision of the Tentsmuir (including Reres Wood) Land Management Plan (LMP), we carried out a short public survey on the consultation webpage. The survey was designed to make it easy for people to feed in their views. This short report describes the survey method and provides an analysis of the results.

Method

The survey was composed of five questions:

1. How do you use Tentsmuir/Reres Wood?
2. How often do you visit?
   - Every day
   - Once a week or more
   - Once a month or more
   - Less than once a month
   - Other
3. What's special to you about Tentsmuir/Reres Wood?
4. Is there anything about these sites that you would like to see changed?
5. Please tell us your postcode to help us understand where the people that use or value the forest live (we will not use this information to identify you).

The web survey was open for six weeks from 12th December 2022 to 23rd January 2023, and was publicised via FLS social media channels on Facebook and Twitter. The consultation was also advertised using posters within the forest. We received 172 responses, 133 of these were from people living in the Tayport/Dundee/Fife area (where postcode starts DD or KY). For more detail, see map, Figure 1.

Figure 1. Maps showing the postcode locations provided by survey respondents.
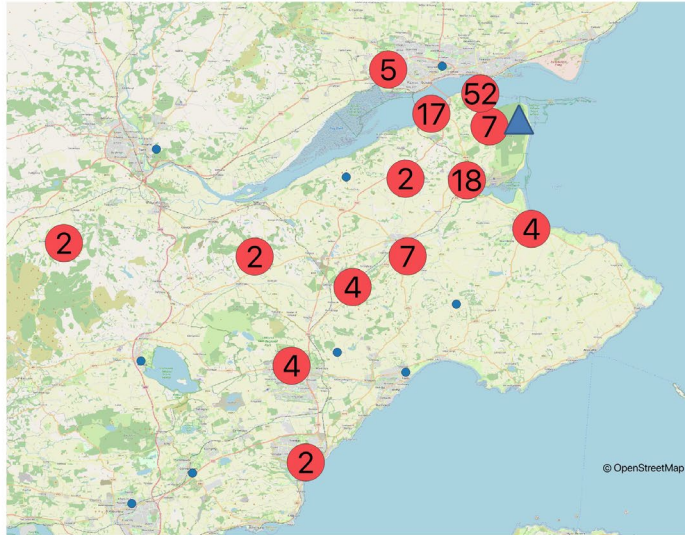

- Postcodes provided by survey respondents. Red circles show the number of responses where more than one response was received from the same postcode, or where postcodes are close to each other and overlap on the map. Note that partial postcodes are not mapped.

▲ Tentsmuir/Reres Wood

Question 1: Uses and recreational activities

The responses on use and recreational activities have been grouped into the categories shown in Figure 2. Walking, dog walking, spending time in nature/wildlife watching, and cycling were the most frequently stated uses. Horse riding and running are also popular. The forest is also used as a place for spending time with others, and the playpark and beach were mentioned by several respondents. Other activities listed that did not fall into these categories were camping, relaxation/improve mental health, picnic, photography, café/toilets, forage, orienteering, research/teaching, and conservation work. The count for each type of use is provided in the Appendix (Table 1).
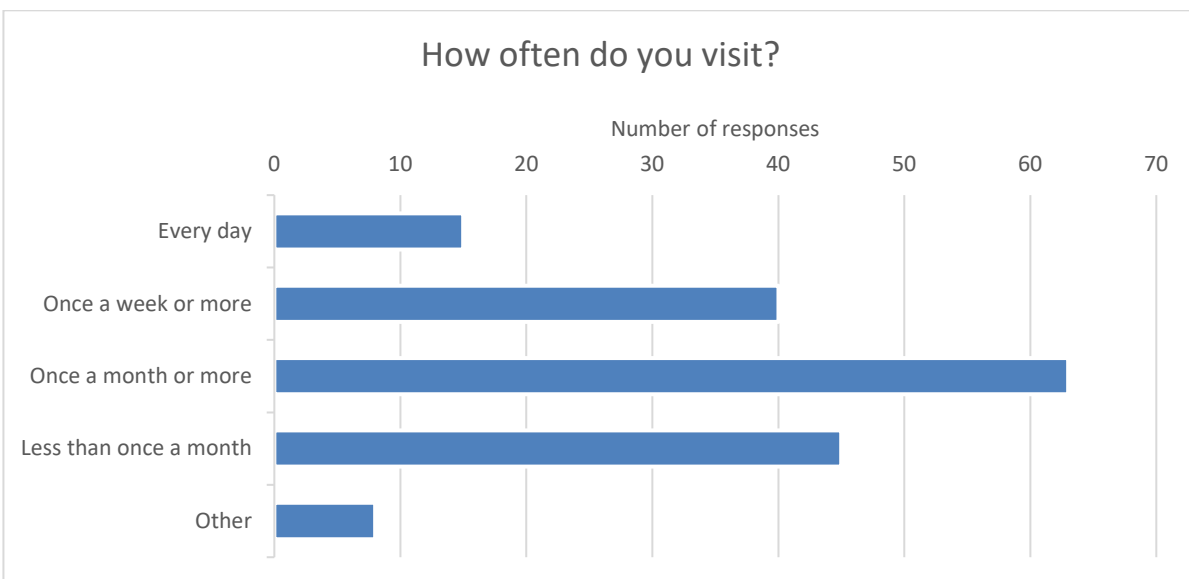
Figure 2. Main activities and uses of the forest according to popularity. The responses were grouped into categories; numbers show the count for each category.
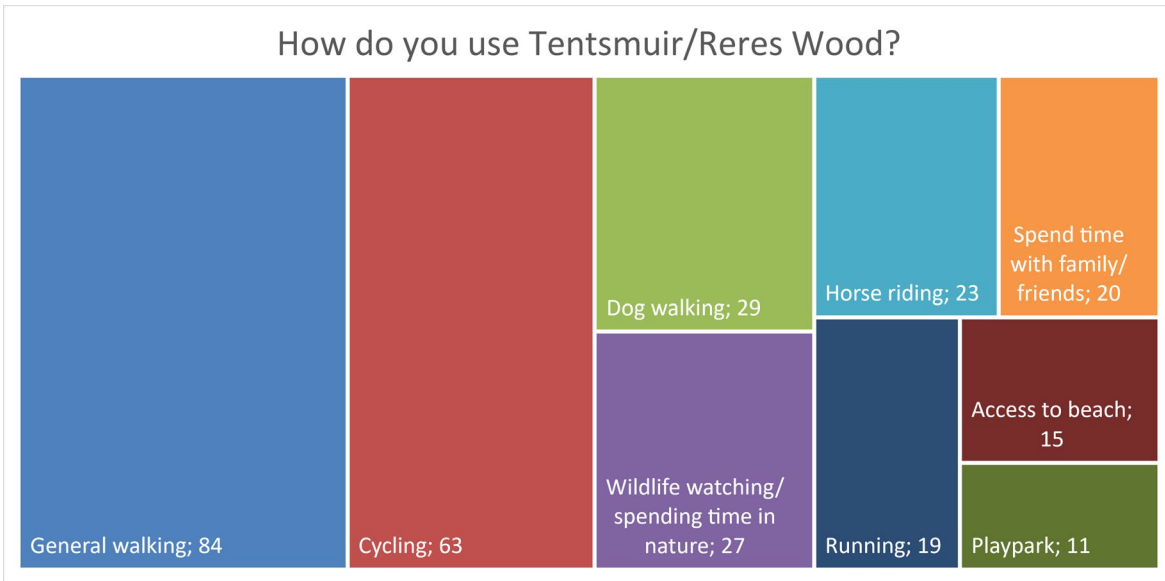
Question 2: Frequency of visits

The majority of people visit the forest at least once a month, with many visiting at least once a week or every day (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Frequency of visits.

Question 3: Special qualities

Respondents were invited to write open answers to the question on what is special to them about Tentsmuir/Reres Wood. We have extracted the words and created a word cloud of the 30 most frequently used words (Figure 4), where the size of the font represents the frequency with which it was used so that more frequently used words are larger. Word clouds are popular for presenting this type of information. The most frequently used words were wildlife, beach, forest and beautiful; the count for each word is provided in the Appendix (Table 2).
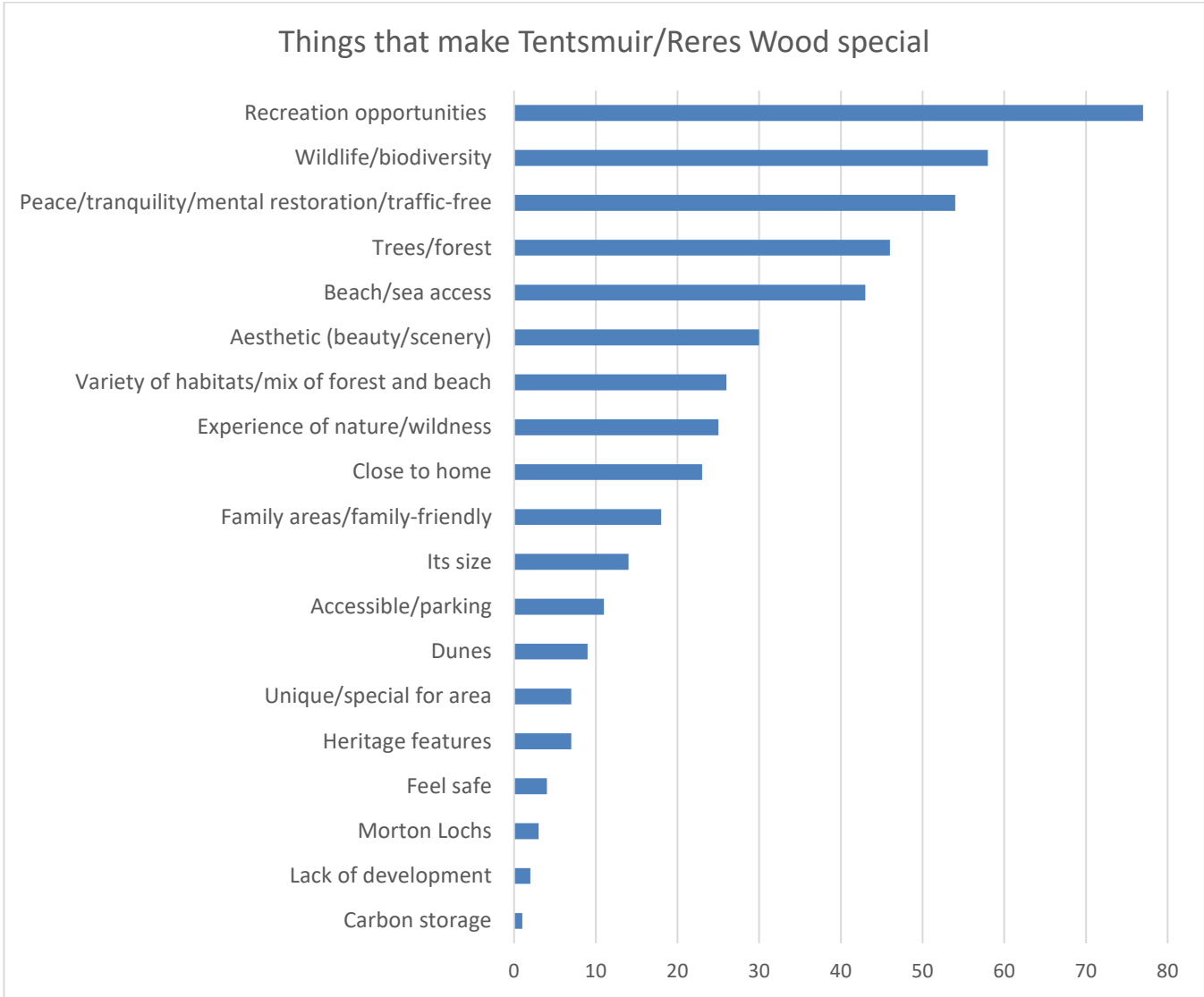
Figure 4. Word cloud of the 30 most frequently used words to describe what is special about Tentsmuir/Reres Wood.

Further analysis of the comments was carried out to better understand their context. Each comment was categorised according to its content, from which a wide range of themes emerged (Figure 5). The most commonly mentioned qualities were the range of recreation opportunities, the wildlife and biodiversity, and the opportunity for finding peace, tranquility and associated benefits for mental wellbeing. The area is valued for its combination of beach and sea access, the aesthetic qualities of the landscape, and the opportunity that people can find for spending time in nature and with their families and friends. The count for each theme is provided in the Appendix (Table 3).

The results demonstrate the many ways in which people use, value and appreciate the forest and adjacent coastline. They show that Tentsmuir has an important role in achieving national priorities for increasing health and wellbeing. People also value and appreciate the contribution it makes for biodiversity.

Figure 5. Emergent themes to describe what makes Tentsmuir and Reres special.

Things that make Tentsmuir/Reres Wood special

## Question 4: Suggestions for changes to the forest

To inform the LMP review, we also wanted to find out what issues people would like us to address. Respondents were invited to write open answers to the question on things that they would like to be changed. A word cloud showing the 30 most frequently used words is shown in Figure 6. The count for each word is provided in the Appendix (Table 4).

Figure 6. Word cloud of the 30 most frequently used words when asked what changes people would like to see in Tentsmuir/Reres Wood.

Further analysis of the comments was carried out to better understand their context. The same approach was used as for the question 3, from which 10 main themes emerged (Figure 7). The themes are described in more detail below. The count for each theme is provided in the Appendix (Table 5). We also received one comment on the long term contribution to carbon storage, and one concerned about fires.

Figure 7. Emergent themes for change
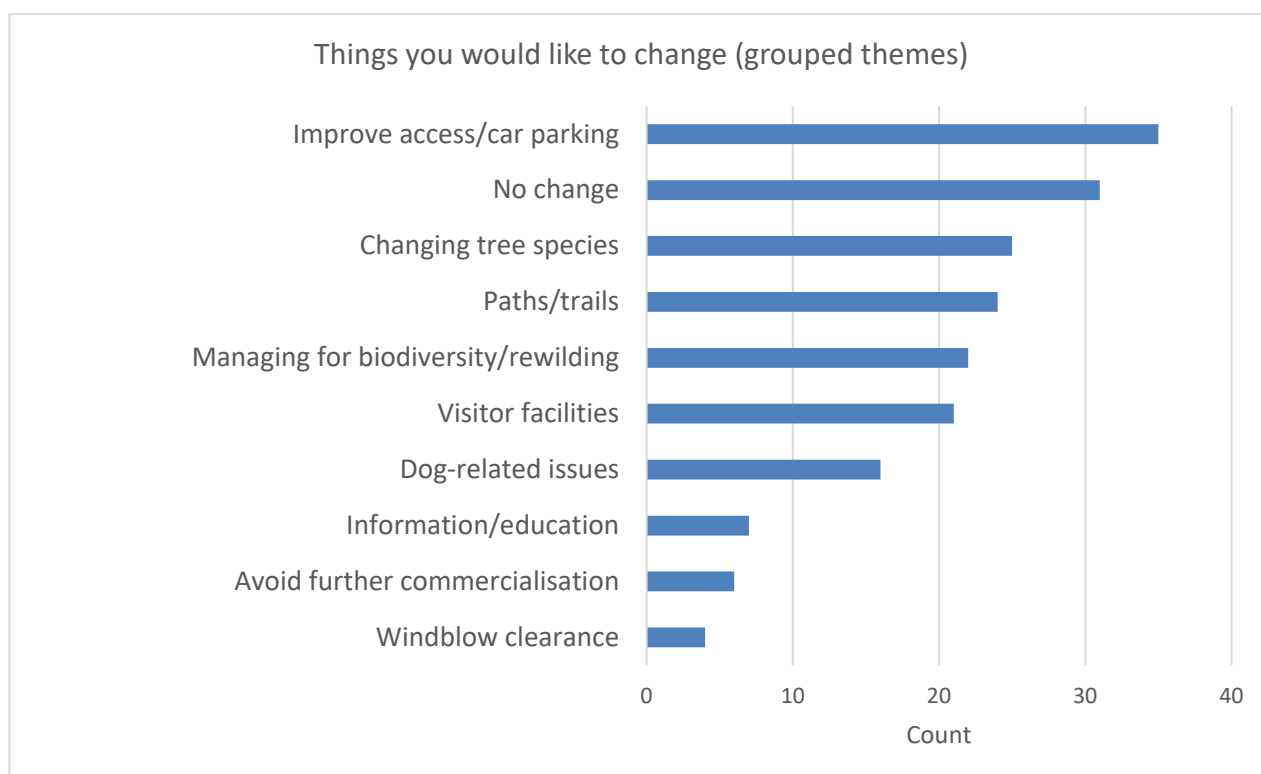
1. Improving access/car parking

The comments related to improving access and car parking raised the following issues:
- the condition and width of the roads and passing points;
- parking in other areas of the forest and at Tayport;
- alternative methods of payment at the barrier;
- increased horse box parking;
- improved public transport;
- safer routes for horses and cyclists through the forest away from road traffic;
- reduced traffic presence in the forest.

2. No change

The second most frequent response (31 in total) specified "no" (or synonyms) in answer to this question. Note that a blank entry was not counted.

3. Changing tree species

Twenty-five responses were related to changing the tree species, with some comments linking species selection to anticipated future changes in site and climate conditions at Tentsmuir. The comments can be generally grouped into the following changes:

- More diversity in tree species;
- More mixed stands;
- More native tree species;
- More broadleaved species.

4. Paths/trails

Comments relating to the paths and trails through the forest have been separated from those on roads and carparking. The issues raised related to:

- provision of accessible footpaths within the forest/from the Tayport entrance that are suitable for buggies and wheelchairs;
- improved access path to beach;
- more signage around forest, including to the beach;
- separation of cyclists and walkers, dedicated cycle trails;
- a shorter path;
- improved access to the Polish camp.

5. Managing for wildlife/nature/biodiversity/rewilding

A wide range of comments related to biodiversity and rewilding were received, raising issues regarding:

- increased emphasis on biodiversity - management for and protection of wildlife, flora and fauna;
- more open areas/wildflower meadow;
- wet woodland habitat;
- rewilding – reduced management intensity, species introductions;
- control of invasive species such as rhododendron.

6. Other visitor facilities

Aside from the trails and car parking, comments were received relating to other visitor facilities, such as improved toilet facilities/composting toilets, camping/overnight stay options, and expanded visitor facilities e.g. event space, bigger café, visitor centre (this also links to education, see below).

7. Dog-related issues

People reported the following dog-related issues when using the forest:
- some people are intimidated by large numbers of dogs with increased numbers of commercial dog walkers using the forest;
- dog waste and bin provision;
- dog-free areas;
- concerns about dogs disturbing wildlife.

8. Increased information/education

We received comments on the opportunities to improve the level of information and education provided in the forest, e.g. about the wildlife, biodiversity and historical features in the forest, but also to educate about littering, sustainable foraging, and control of dogs.

9. Avoid further commercialisation

Conversely to the previous two themes, we also received several comments from people who would not like to see any further development or commercialisation in the forest.

10. Windblow clearance

We received a small number of comments requesting clearance of the windblow from paths and trails.

Next steps

The survey has helped us to understand how people are using the forest, what they value and what changes they would like to see in the future. The information we have received will be used to inform the next steps of the LMP revision process, to help develop the objectives for the site and inform our decision making as the new LMP is drafted. We will also provide a response to the issues identified by the survey in the LMP document when this is published.

We would like to thank everybody who took the time to reply to our survey.

Appendix

Table 1. Activities and uses of Tentsmuir/Reres Wood.

Activity/use type	Count
General walking	84
Cycling	63
Dog walking	29
Wildlife watching/spending time in nature	27
Horse riding	23
Spend time with family/friends	20
Running	19
Access to beach	15
Playpark	11
General leisure/recreation	10
Relaxation/mental health	6
Camping	3
Other: picnics, photography, café/toilets, forage, orienteering, research/teaching, conservation work	-

Table 2. Word count of top 30 words used to describe what makes Tentsmuir and Reres special.

Word	Count	Word	Count
wildlife	42	close	9
beach	32	family	9
forest	29	natural	9
beautiful	25	sea	9
tracks	17	space	9
quiet	16	access	8
trees	16	amazing	8
love	14	live	8
nature	14	peaceful	8
woodland	14	ride	8
peace	13	walking	8
walk	11	children	7
walks	11	cycling	7
paths	10	fantastic	7
people	10	horse	7

Table 3. Special qualities – emergent themes.

Theme	Count
Recreation opportunities	77
Wildlife/biodiversity	58
Peace/tranquility/mental restoration/traffic-free	54
Trees/forest	46
Beach/sea access	43
Aesthetic (beauty/scenery)	30
Variety of habitats/mix of forest and beach	26
Experience of nature/wildness	25
Close to home	23
Family areas/family-friendly	18
Its size	14
Accessible/parking	11
Dunes	9
Heritage features	7
Unique/special for area	7
Feel safe	4
Morton Lochs	3
Lack of development	2
Carbon storage	1

Table 4. Word count of top 30 words used to describe any changes that people would like to see made to the forest.

Word	Count
access	28
no	27
dog	24
trees	24
forest	20
tayport	20
areas	16
wildlife	15
parking	14
road	14
beach	12
car	12
bins	11
native	11
walking	11

Word	Count
local	10
park	10
paths	10
species	10
tracks	10
bike	9
dogs	9
forestry	9
carpark	8
community	8
improved	8
natural	8
outdoor	8
people	8
routes	8

Table 5. Emergent themes for change.

Theme	Count
Improve access/car parking	35
No change	31
Changing tree species	25
Paths/trails	24
Managing for biodiversity/rewilding	22
Visitor facilities	21
Dog-related issues	16
Information/education	7
Avoid further commercialisation	6
Windblow clearance	4
Carbon storage	1
Fire risk	1