



Publication of Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem (GWDTE) Practice Guide

This briefing note introduces a [new practice guide](#) developed by FCS, SEPA, SNH and Confor to help land managers in identifying and assessing the risk woodland creation operations pose to Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) and their related groundwater flows.

GWDTE are a category of wetlands, understood to be ecologically critically dependent upon groundwater. They derive their water supply primarily from a groundwater body, rather than deriving their water from rain and surface water saturated soils, and they can support biodiverse, botanically rich ground-flora communities.

The [UK Forestry Standard](#) (UKFS) places specific protection on wetlands by defining appropriate buffer areas to protect them from the risk of diffuse pollution from operations on adjacent or upslope ground and to minimise a potential reduction in water quantity.

The practice guide expands on the detail within the UKFS for wetlands that are critically dependent upon groundwater; it focuses on protecting botanically rich communities primarily fed by a groundwater body.

The guide provides a step-by-step approach to inform development of woodland creation planting proposals, including:

- assessment of wetland site suitability for woodland creation
- support in developing detailed planting proposals
- assessment of risk of forestry operations to GWDTE: deep excavation for tracks, borrow pits, quarries and drainage have the most potential to disrupt groundwater to and from GWDTE
- planning of appropriate forestry operations
- planning of appropriate mitigation measures (e.g. avoidance or buffer areas)