

## ***Ffridd / Coedcae***

***Ffridd or Coedcae is difficult to define. It is the mosaic of dynamic habitats at the lowland-upland interface that has a long history of management types and rotations. Ffridd usually contains a combination of woody and grass/heathland species in a variety of successional stages.***

In addition to the difficult characterisation of ffridd/coedcae habitat, these terms have different meanings to different people making it difficult to define both socially and biologically. In north Wales, 'ffridd' means land with no borders or land in a large field surrounded by a wall or fence. 'Coedcae' is a south Walian term referring to a wooded area.

Despite being difficult to define, it is known that this margin/interface is of vital importance to the rural environment and landscape in Wales. Across all scales, from the microsite to landscape to regional, the edge and interface between systems are identified as important in their own right and maintaining the resilience of the interface processes and functioning is just as important as the main ecosystem itself.

### Definitions:

#### **RSPB**

*"Ffridd is a habitat of high diversity, and it is the variety of vegetation, communities and structural features that make it so. It is capable of supporting numerous species, and has also been identified as a habitat of high connectivity. This provides a vital role in 'buffering' protected upland sites against habitat intensification, by facilitating the movement of numerous species. Ffridd is a vital component of the landscape, allowing species to adapt to changing conditions by making altitudinal and longitudinal movements, as they seek suitable areas to fulfil their various life-cycles. The importance of this should not be underestimated. This inherent diversity can provide resilience within the landscape – the capacity to absorb disturbance, re-organize, and keep functioning. In this way, ffridd increases the resilience of important natural areas." **RSPB.***

#### **Wales National Ecosystem Assessment**

*"Important in the Welsh context is the ffridd (or coedcae) zone. This zone does not belong to any one broad habitat type, but instead refers to a mix of vegetation communities found on the often uncultivated valley sides; bridging the uplands and lowlands of Wales. The ffridd zone is noted for its dynamic nature due to a long history of changing cycles of management. Because of its situation at the boundary of lowland and upland habitats, the future management of ffridd may have important implications for biodiversity and the delivery of*



*regulating services in Wales'. Ffridd is also important in water catchments and could have a key role to play in water management."*

## Ffridd re-establishment

There is significant scope in Wales for low density tree planting to create ffridd, which could provide a number of benefits, particularly in helping to control bracken which could be important in water catchments where asulox might not be permitted. Trees established in bracken create a halo effect shading out bracken and re-establishing grazing potential for sheep at low stocking levels.

It is challenging to create this type of woodland. Trees need individual protection against grazing and require sufficient staking to prevent bracken knocking the tree over in the autumn, while allowing the tree to move naturally in the wind to create a strong root system.

Coed Cymru has, however, investigated methods of ffridd creation in trials in the Elan Valley catchment in mid-Wales. With careful specification it is feasible to create this type of woodland and recent Glastir Woodland Creation grants have included a low density 'agro-forestry' woodland option.

Contact Coed Cymru for further advice and information  
([www.coed.cymru](http://www.coed.cymru))

