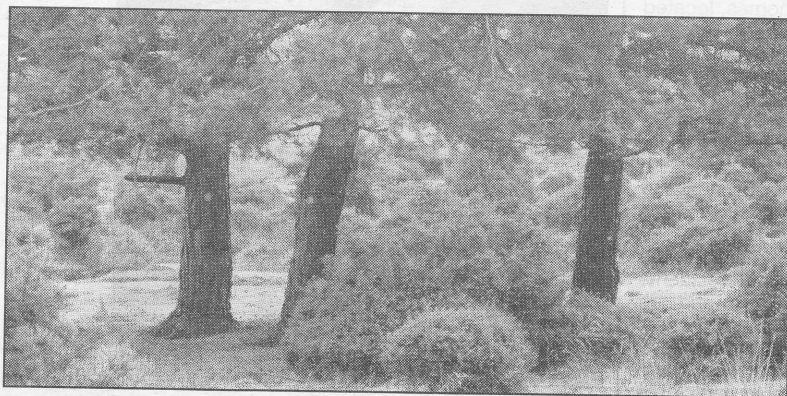


How can this work be 'restoration'?



■ Pine trees at Ogdens waiting to be felled last year, as part of the Forestry Commission's extensive project to "restore" the area. Fiona MacDonald of the Fish Veterinary Society says the work on the brook could prove devastating for fish.

I WOULD like to express my professional concern about the Forestry Commission and Natural England's proposed stream restoration work, which is planned for Latchmore Brook in June and July this year.

I understand this work will include the filling-in of the existing brook with some 10,000 tonnes of imported gravel and clay in order to alter the course of this waterway.

There will inevitably be serious effects on fish such as stone loaches and bullhead minnows who inhabit this brook but even more worrying will be the effects on rare fish such as sea trout which have been seen in the brook - this time of year is just when fish of this type come upstream to spawn. Sea trout are very highly protected, but this does not appear to have any influence on this planned disturbance.

This amount of material and the associated groundworks will also have a major knock-on effect on water quality downstream of the project, with high levels of silt and particulate matter which can cause major problems with fish - and this potentially could reach as far as the River Avon. This will be over a period of weeks, not just a few days.

Not only that, but the import of such large quantities of material from outside this part of the Forest could bring in disease, as well as upset the normal water chemistry of the stream.

I am at a loss as to how this major disturbance to a balanced area can be done in the name of 'restoration'.

FIONA A MACDONALD BVMS MRCVS
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