

Mary Creagh CBE MP
Minister of Nature
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

17 October 2024

Dear Minister Creagh,

We are writing to ask you to maintain the commitment to £750,000 dedicated to research and development into England's rainforests as set out in a "A plan to recover England's temperate rainforests" government strategy November 2023. This internationally rare habitat will greatly benefit from additional research, in a variety of areas, including carbon storage, benefits to local communities, climate change mitigation and management for specific rainforest species.

England's rainforest is a unique habitat characterised by higher than average rainfall and consistent temperatures, creating ideal conditions for rare lichens, mosses, liverworts and bryophytes to thrive. This abundance, coupled with the diversity and rarity of species, highlight the global importance of England's temperate rainforest habitat.

Temperate rainforests are a vital part of our country's biodiversity and heritage, as well as having a vital role to play in helping combat the climate crisis. The Government cannot achieve its ambitious national and global biodiversity targets without protecting and restoring this habitat.

However, the remaining rainforest fragments face multiple threats, including inappropriate grazing patterns, spread of invasive species in particular *Rhododendron ponticum*, disease such as ash dieback, and air pollution threatening overall biodiversity. There are significant gaps in our understanding of these threats and how best to mitigate them.

To save England's rare rainforest habitat, investment into research and development to support landscape scale management is vital . We understand the current pressures on public finances but this is a relatively small sum which would have a significant impact. We urge you to maintain this commitment and ensure that the funds are made available for delivery without further delay.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nicola Hutchinson, Director of Conservation, Plantlife

Guy Shrubsole, environmental campaigner and author of [*The Lost Rainforests of Britain*](#)

Professor Rosie Hails MBE, Nature and Science Director, National Trust

Merlin Handbury-Tenison, Managing Director, Thousand Year Trust

Abi Bunker, Director of Conservation and External Affairs, Woodland Trust

Stan Smith, Programme Manager (Temperate Rainforest Programme), The Wildlife Trusts

Letter copied to Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Rt Hon Steve
Reed OBE and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Rachel Reeves