Friston Forest is an 850 hectare forest near Eastbourne owned by SE Water and managed by the Forestry Commission. The Friston Forest Grazing Project is a pioneering approach to land management whereby grazing animals and natural processes determine how the site will evolve.

Since early 2008, six cattle have been grazing and browsing across the area. As well as eating grass growing along the forest tracks, the cattle also eat brambles, leaves and twigs.

The patchwork of grassland, scrub and woodland created by the cattle is ideal for a wide range of plants and animals. These include birds such as the nightingale, butterflies such as the silver-spotted skipper and moths including the scarlet tiger.

The occasional collapse of a tree or the fall of a branch in a storm creates further openings for the specialist insects and fungi that feed on decaying or dead wood. As a whole, this mix of short and long vegetation plus scrub and dead, decaying and healthy trees makes for a very rich environment.

The project seeks to enhance the link between the interior of Friston Forest and Lullington Heath National Nature Reserve managed by Natural England.

The Friston Forest Grazing Project covers 80 hectares and is run by the Sussex Wildlife Trust in partnership with the Forestry Commission, Natural England, South Downs Joint Committee and South East Water.

The project has received financial and in-kind support from a number of sources, including the Forestry Commission, Natural England, Sita Trust, South East Water, Sussex Wildlife Trust and Viridor Credits.

Contact Friston Forest Grazing Project
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If you have any concerns about the health of the cattle, please phone the Sussex Wildlife Trust's Grazing Officer on 07884 496807.

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www.fristonforest.org.uk