

Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest
District
Tower Road
Smithton
Inverness
IV2 7NL

Invernessross&skye@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 01463 791575
Fax: 01463 793872

Forest District Manager
David Jardine

Response from Forest District Manager (Inverness, Ross & Skye Forest District) re Aigas Community Forest application

1 Consideration of the effect on management of the National Forest Estate.

The whole of Aigas Forest has been declared surplus and therefore this application has no impact on the management of the National Forest Estate.

2 FES opinion on the capacity of Aigas Community Forest to manage the land.

The Aigas Community Forest is a new community body which has been established since Forestry Commission Scotland announced that Aigas Forest was to be sold as part of the repositioning programme. It does not have an established record of woodland management; however, it has worked very efficiently and effectively since the announcement. The collective skills of the Board of Directors are comprehensive in respect of community woodland management with a strong blend of business and land-management skills. It should therefore be well suited to taking appropriate decisions for the future management of the woodland. It has strong links with the local Community Council.

3 Observations on the Application.

It is sensible to mention one aspect not included in this professionally developed application:

Pine-tree Lappet Moth – This large moth, which is known to be damaging to some extensive areas of forest in continental Europe was first recorded by an amateur moth recorder in Inverness in 2004 (a single moth in a garden) and later discovered near Kiltarlity by another amateur recorder in 2007 when its presence was brought to Forestry Commission Scotland's attention. It was previously unknown in Scotland and there is a debate as whether it is a recently introduced pest, or whether it is an undiscovered endemic moth. Detailed surveys in 2009 found the moth at seven sites within a 7 km radius of the original discovery site. In total 98 moths were caught using pheromone traps and light-trapping; most were caught coming to lights, including three individuals at Crask of Aigas. In autumn 2009 caterpillars of the moth have been found a single cocoon found, confirming breeding. However, a breeding population has not yet been found at Aigas. No decisions have been taken by the Outbreak Management Team regarding this moth and it is too early to suggest whether its single recorded presence at Aigas may or may not influence the management or value of the forest.