

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity: Review of Current Activity

Roland Stiven, Raasay Woods Limited

March 2008

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

Summary

A scoping exercise was undertaken to review the information available on activities relating to raising public awareness of woodland biodiversity, particularly with regard to practical on-the-ground initiatives. A literature review and phone around of various people and organisations suggested that there is very little specific information on either the extent or effectiveness of current efforts.

Awareness-raising activities are diverse and often rolled up with activities that have broader objectives of personal and social involvement, public health or civic responsibility. In such circumstances, biodiversity awareness may be secondary or even incidental to other objectives.

The paucity of robust evaluation of public awareness activities has been recognised. Most organisations aim to record attendance and involvement but few collate or use the information. Most evaluations tend to concentrate on the effectiveness of the delivery process rather than on outcomes. Where outcomes are assessed this is generally done in a qualitative way focusing on the impact on individual children. While relevant, this provides little information that can influence policy or resource allocation to particular activities.

Forest Research is currently collating information from a survey of FCS and other woodland organisations. This will provide data on the amount of time spent by staff and volunteers on various aspects of public awareness-related work.

A workshop/focus group with forest rangers is proposed as a pragmatic, short-term approach to improving information on public awareness activities and their effectiveness. The aim would be to consider where resources could be increased or better directed. Scottish Countryside Rangers Association may be the appropriate organisation to help Forestry Commission Scotland develop and host such a workshop.

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

Introduction

This report presents the findings of an information gathering exercise on the efficacy of efforts to raise public awareness of woodland biodiversity in Scotland, through active engagement. This report was prepared at the request of Forestry Commission Scotland working to a group chaired by Gordon Patterson.

The report is a first stage in addressing action point 2.5 within the rural section of the [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Plan 2005-2007](#)ⁱ

2.5 Increase the current resources and use of recreational, countryside and forest rangers services to help people, including schools and community groups, to appreciate woodland biodiversity through visits, conservation projects etc, linking to the SBF interpretive strategy	2.5a Programme for encouraging appreciation of woodland biodiversity has been developed and is underway	2007 FCS SNH LAs FEI NPAs Crown Estate
---	---	--

The work involved:

a desk-based piece of research and literature review to discover if there are any existing pieces of evaluation that will inform what works best with the different target audiences when engaging them with woodland biodiversity, with emphasis on active engagement through organised visits, ecoschools, wildlife tourism, volunteering etc. The work should highlight if there is any data that distinguish any key audiences typologies, thinking about key diversity issues of age, gender, ethnicity. It should list and describe existing projects or programmes that have engaging people in woodland diversity as their main component within and outside FCS, making contact with other provider organisations.

The output from this piece of work should be a written report that highlights the best ways to increase involvement in woodland biodiversity either within the scope of existing FCS social and biodiversity programmes or as additional activities, and identify potential partners. It should also indicate if there is sufficient data to base this decision on or if there is a need for further research.

Approach to the work

Available online information was reviewed. Preliminary approaches were made to suggested contacts within the Scottish Biodiversity Forum's Information Communication and Education (ICE) group and leads were followed. Various

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

woodland-related organisations were approached for information regarding raising public awareness of woodland biodiversity. A list of those approached is given in Annex 1.

Initial efforts revealed no collated data specific to the brief, although there are many studies which relate to the broader subject of outdoor education, raising awareness and promoting active engagement in natural heritage. At an interim meeting with the steering group it was agreed to concentrate on reviewing and categorising both the available research and the types of activity underway, as a precursor to considering a more qualitative evaluation of what is being done.

Broad public awareness

[Scotland's Biodiversity Indicators](#)ⁱⁱ include baseline data on attitudes to biodiversity. Most adults, (83%) are interested in biodiversity and concerned about its loss. Three quarters of adults made at least one leisure trip to the 'outdoors' in a year. 20 % did not. About 1 % of the adult population contributed to natural heritage-related volunteering (an estimated 23,740 people). About 140,000 people (2% of Scotland's population) are members of one or more of the eight larger biodiversity NGOs with bases in Scotland. A second similar survey is currently being completed.

In 2006 the Scottish Executive and Scottish Natural Heritage commissioned a plan to help coordinate [biodiversity communications](#)ⁱⁱⁱ. Research conducted for this review suggested that about a fifth of the population are actively engaged in efforts to conserve biodiversity; 60% care, but don't do anything; a few more have given up caring; 10-15 % don't care. There is little variation across the country. Of those that are 'actively engaged', about half do this by donating money. Between a quarter and a third of the 'actively engaged' either work in related sectors or volunteer, at least occasionally. There is some variation between age groups and between socio-economic backgrounds.

Using the same research, Scottish Natural Heritage commissioned a study to identify [key public messages about natural heritage](#)^{iv} (including biodiversity), concentrating primarily at larger-scale media campaigns. The report set out some principles for biodiversity communications and recommended the development of a Biodiversity Communications Toolkit. The toolkit is currently being commissioned by SNH and will help define messages and methods of delivery suited to different target audiences.

The Interpretation, Education and Communication (ICE) group of the Scottish Biodiversity Forum has a draft implementation plan for 2008-2010. This will take forward the toolkit approach for communications. Actions are included to

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

encourage environmental volunteering and to assess the impact that volunteering has on personal development, health and well-being, and environmental behaviour. The implementation plan also includes actions to develop the capacity of the education sector to deliver a positive understanding and appreciation of biodiversity – enhanced through outdoor learning.

Awareness-raising through active engagement

The public agencies along with woodland initiatives, wildlife organisations, community woodlands and some private woodland owners, all engage with the public to raise awareness of woodland opportunities for recreation, enjoyment, volunteering, and informal learning. Raising awareness activities can include:

- Ranger-led visits or events,
- Community woodland events,
- Opportunities for volunteering,

Ranger led visits or events

Ranger services are provided by public organisations such as Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, National Trust for Scotland, The Crown Estate, Local Authorities, the National Parks, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. SNH also funds ranger services delivered by NGOs and private estates. A recent review of ranger policy provides a breakdown by local authority area of the estimated 362 rangers working in Scotland.

Ranger-led events may be directed at the public, school groups or other interest groups. Some are clearly linked to woodland biodiversity, focusing on squirrels, bats, fungi, or wildflowers, for example. Others are more general, involving walks, cultural heritage, games and craft events. Many are delivered by partnerships between FCS or Council rangers and, for example, woodland initiatives, wildlife organisations, private estates or community woodland groups.

Each FCS district has a list of [events](#)^v that are open to the public, led by rangers or by partner organisation staff. Leaflets are produced each year for each district. Visitor centres and ecotourism projects can provide a focus for public engagement including, for example, the deer and goat park in Galloway Forest Park, Osprey 50 at Aberfoyle, the reindeer at Glenmore, the peregrines at Huntly and Mull Eagle watch.

Scottish Natural Heritage host [events](#)^{vi} on SNH-managed National Nature Reserves.

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

Most **Local Authority** websites (and the two national parks) provide lists of ranger-led [events](#)^{vii} including those of key partner organisations. Some events are more woodland-oriented than others and the range of activities obviously relates to the opportunities available locally. There does not appear to be any aggregated information on local authority ranger activities.

The Crown Estate has an annual woodland week at Glenlivet. The Crown Estate's ranger service has an educational pack for schools and universities and hosts around 30-40 visiting groups each year. A community group at Glenlivet undertakes biodiversity recording and there are various liaison groups with the community or other stakeholders.

Some of the larger **private estates** (such as [Atholl Estates](#),^{vii} [Rothiemurchus Estate](#),^{viii} [Dalkeith Country Park](#),^{ix} [Glen Tanar](#),^x and Invercauld) have programmes of events open to the public with woodland and wildlife related themes. For some activities there is a charge.

Central Scotland Forest Trust holds events involving the communities in the areas where they operate and their annual [report](#)^{xi} highlights 130 community events in 2005-2006 reaching 5,622 people. In the previous year, 66 events attracted 13,480 people. [Borders Forest Trust](#)^{xii} similarly provides a programme of open events as does the [Four Winds Inspiration Center](#)^{xiii} in Central Edinburgh. There are others...

Scottish Wildlife Trust has a programme of events aimed at their membership including talks and guided visits to wildlife reserves.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has a large woodland reserve at Abernethy where it hosts various ranger-led events including guided walks for the public or specialist groups and talks to locals and visitors in village halls. A field teacher works with visiting school groups.

The **Woodland Trust Scotland** (WTS) has specific public awareness initiatives set out in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy implementation plans. The Tree for All website lists [events](#)^{xiv} which involve children in planting trees across the UK. [So far](#)^{xv} 25,000 people have been involved in planting more than half a million trees in Scotland. Branching Out in West Lothian is another WTS project; a woodland learning project officer is working with schools to deliver a programme of health walks and team building activities for adults and children, organised through the Community Planning team of West Lothian. Woodland Trust Scotland recorded 3 million website visitor events in 2006. This includes Tree for All, the [Nature Detectives website](#)^{xvi} and Nature's Calendar where timing of

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

seasonal events are reported through survey cards. The Woodland Trust considers websites to be a useful means of communication and involvement.

Community Woodland Events

There are about 100 'partnerships' of various descriptions between FCS and communities, as well as other independent community woodland groups^{xvii}. Some have websites giving details of events. Most host a range of activities relevant to their local communities often including formal or informal educational events. A [recent survey](#)^{xviii} suggested that education was a developing area of interest. The Community Woodland Association held a training workshop for members in 2005/6 and discussed practical ways of delivering biodiversity messages to the public. Recognising the low attendance for advertised events that are described as 'a guided walk' the workshop proposed various ideas for events and ways to attract people to the woods such as storytelling, 'survival' courses, folklore, sculpture trails, arts trails, linking in with heritage groups, ramblers etc. The importance of providing shelters in woods for visiting groups was also noted. The Community Woodland Association also held a series of workshops for community group representatives on managing woods for biodiversity which involved training trainers and networking between groups. This is being taken forward through a new project on knowledge sharing.

Volunteering

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy implementation plan includes an action to promote environmental volunteering as a means for enabling first-hand experience of biodiversity. The role of volunteering and the natural heritage has been the subject of a [recent report](#) commissioned by SNH^{xix}. This suggests that 23,340 people in Scotland regularly volunteer in the natural heritage sector. The 2007 Public Spending Review provides £250,000 pa for three years to further develop environmental volunteering. Work is being taken forward by BTCV, Volunteer Development Scotland and Volunteer Centres across Scotland^{xx}. A Forum for Environmental Volunteering Activities has been set up.

Forestry Commission Scotland reports over 47,000^{xxi} volunteer days associated with woodland activity. FCS has agreed a volunteer policy and staff guidance for managing volunteers and is publishing case studies of volunteering on the national forest estate. While the traditional role of FCS in supporting conservation volunteering is being maintained, the emphasis is shifting towards delivering social outcomes particularly in more deprived areas. FCS has been a major player in helping to deliver opportunities for volunteering by young people through ProjectScotland. Woodland volunteering is seen as an inclusive way of facilitating personal and community development with environmental awareness a possible by-product of the process.

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

Woodland Trust Scotland also provides volunteer opportunities in its woods and through various campaigns such as the Ancient Tree Hunt.

The **John Muir Trust** works with partner organisations, including FCS, to run an [Award Scheme](#)^{xxii} to encourage young people to get involved with wild land and communicate their experience with others. This can involve environmental volunteering. The JMT has undertaken an evaluation of the way in which the award scheme furthers the objectives of the [JMT](#)^{xxiii}.

Schools and education initiatives

Formal education

The main school curriculum - Curriculum for Excellence - promotes sustainable development and biodiversity. Last year 569 schools^{xxiv} were involved in woodland-based learning activities such as ranger-led visits to woodlands. School visits by the 5-14 yr age group, form the basis of much FCS education work. Forest Research undertook a 'Survey of formal education (3-18) undertaken and delivered by Forestry Commission Scotland'^{xxv} in May 2006. This provides data on educational provision by districts and the appendices give a breakdown of school visits for two districts, describing the focus of each visit.

The FCS education strategy **Woods for Learning**^{xxvi} was launched in 2006. Working with many partners from the education and environment sectors, it aims to increase the use of forests for education. The Local Woods for Learning programme links schools to local woodland, initially working with schools within 1km of woodland managed by FCS. This emphasis on local woods enables repeat visits both within and outside school time. The approach is supported by a recent SNH study on [young people's interaction with natural heritage through outdoor learning](#)^{xxvii} which noted that:

'Young people's valued outdoor experiences often related to places that had special significance to them or places that they had the opportunity to visit regularly. The survey shows us that sites such as school grounds, parks, gardens and farms were associated with stronger focus on nature and similarly afforded the opportunity for repeated trips. These findings suggest that local places are likely to be important in any shift towards outcomes relating to nature (for example, knowing and understanding about natural processes, biodiversity and the generation of an ethic of care for places).'

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

The strategy provides support for the Forest Education Initiative in creating opportunities for education professionals to use woods for learning and for the education and social work services in providing additional support for children who need it. FCS also supports vocational development in secondary schools working with the Rural Studies Progression Award, Enterprise in Education and Excellence in Education.

More generally, outdoor education is promoted by Learning and Teaching Scotland through [Taking Learning Outdoors](#)^{xxviii} for benefits relating to educational progress, personal development, social interaction, enjoyment, health and well-being, and environmental awareness. In most cases environmental awareness is not the primary objective. [Grounds for Learning](#)^{xxix} is a Scottish charity aimed at improving school grounds as a venue for learning. A survey conducted in 2003 showed wildlife education to be low on the list of priority outcomes from improvement of school grounds.

Environmental education initiatives

Some initiatives are more directly oriented towards education about woodland or the natural environment.

The [Eco-schools](#)^{xxx} programme is an international initiative designed to encourage whole-school action for the environment. Managed in Scotland by Keep Scotland Beautiful, it is a recognised award scheme that accredits schools that make a commitment to continuously improve their environmental performance. It is also a learning resource that raises awareness of environmental and sustainable development issues throughout activities linked to curricular subjects and areas. Scotland is a world leader in terms of % of schools that are eco-schools. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy implementation plan includes an action point to develop a biodiversity module for eco-schools.

Forest School is an inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults, regular opportunities to achieve, and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a local woodland environment. Forest School involves regular visits to the same wood over an extended period of time. It delivers a wide range of curriculum areas, and supports other school initiatives like Active Schools, Enterprise in Education and citizenship. Training programmes for the development of Forest Schools are run in Scotland.

The **Forest Education Initiative** (FEI) aims to increase young people's understanding of the local and global importance of trees. It promotes shared learning through a network of local groups in the UK. The FEI website provides information and ideas for teaching about trees, woodlands, the forest industry

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

and timber products. Written by teachers, content is linked to main curriculum areas. There is also a dedicated learning resources section providing ideas for different age groups and different subjects. The Forest Set is a new teachers' resource drawing on experience in the New Forest that suggests activities for different age groups of children. The Tree Trunk is another – originally a box of woodland-related books and items and now an online website resource.

FEI cluster groups are independent, locally-managed groups providing forest education. They hold teachers' workshops, prepare resources and help schools to organise first-hand learning experiences for pupils in woodlands and in timber-related industries. Many FEI groups are also involved in delivering Forest Schools. The Highland Cluster Group has produced a directory of support providers. This lists organisations willing to host visits by children and includes private estates, community woodland groups, sawmills, forest nurseries, board manufacturers and visitor centres.

Borders Forest Trust has developed education packs and partnerships with 35 schools in the Scottish Borders.

Measuring the Effectiveness

Despite the resources being put into public awareness work and woodland-related education, there is very little information on the extent or effectiveness of the efforts. This is true both for the education sector and for less formal initiatives and events.

Monitoring

Simply knowing the extent of involvement in activities is difficult. Targets are rarely stated at any level, so there has been little incentive to collect and process information. Although many organisations claim to keep track of numbers participating in events there is little information available. Some can be gleaned from annual reports and websites but it is difficult to aggregate and events may be promoted and reported by more than one partner.

Forest Research is currently undertaking a survey in support of the Forestry for People agenda. The survey is asking for information on the amount of staff time spent on different aspects of work including public involvement, biodiversity, education, informal learning, and health and well-being. A second area of survey is to estimate the number of woodland-related public events that have been organised in Scotland by FCS, and the number of people who participated in those events [xxxi](#). The primary and secondary theme of such events has been

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

requested. The information on events and participation is only being asked of FCS, not the wider forestry sector.

Evaluation

Evaluation of public awareness activities is very limited. In most cases feedback on activities, if collected at all, is primarily concerned with the mechanisms of delivery: Did you enjoy the activity? How could it be improved? etc. The poor level of evaluation is recognised. At two ranger forum events in the summer of 2007 the [issue of evaluating outcomes](#)^{xxxii} was discussed. It was recognised that a key challenge is to develop a structure to report on quality and consistency of Ranger Service delivery across Scotland.

Evaluating outcomes is not easy. The goals at each level are often different or not clearly defined. For the biodiversity strategy, raising awareness is seen as a means of promoting the conservation of woodlands and their associated wildlife. The Scottish Forestry Strategy recognises this but also aims to increase the use of woods for learning and enjoyment generally. For some organisations, events may be part of a programme for improving health, reducing vandalism, targeting social outcomes, or simply to increase visitor numbers or promote their organisation. For those taking part, the objective for engagement may be more personal.

As the drivers for active engagement broaden so the potential for evaluating a particular agenda becomes less simple. Biodiversity awareness may not necessarily result from a walk in the woods by a healthy heart group. A recent SNH study on [young people's interaction with natural heritage through outdoor learning](#)^{xxxiii} made the following observations and recommendations:

'Evidence from focus groups indicated that learning about nature and developing an ethic of care for nature more commonly emerged from formal learning if programmes sought to address these concerns in an explicit and active manner. ... analysis suggests that much provision is not likely to be addressing outcomes relating to nature ... in an explicit manner. We recommend, that if outcomes related to nature are required from outdoor education programmes, that they may need to make these an explicit focus of their work....'

Openspace, a research centre for inclusive access to outdoor environments, based at Edinburgh College of Art, has undertaken comprehensive literature reviews relating to outdoor education and its outcomes but has found little relating specifically to an 'improved environmental awareness' outcome.

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

Even in the more formal education sector, evaluation is poor. Another SNH report on [Local Authorities input to outdoor natural heritage education](#)^{xxxiv} noted the following:

Self-evaluation led by teachers, schools or Local Authorities was the most common form of evaluation mentioned. The structures used to form this self evaluation were varied but included; quality indicators, 'the four capacities', national priorities, 'how good is our school', performance indicators, 5–14 guidelines and the LTS survey of outdoor education. These are interesting findings because in research into school provision there is little evidence that such evaluation is taking place (Higgins, et al., 2006). Indeed in Nicol, et al.'s (2006) research entitled [Outdoor Education: the views of providers](#)^{xxxv} from different contexts in Scotland, 93% of respondents did not or could not provide robust evidence of the learning outcomes of their programmes.

An [evaluation of forest schools](#) was undertaken in 2006^{xxxvi}. This was largely qualitative and focused on two case studies. The evaluation highlighted outcomes such as improvements in confidence, social skills, communication, motivation and physical skills in the children involved – as well as knowledge and understanding of the environment. The evaluation also considered the contribution of forest schools to the wider curriculum. There is continuing evaluation of forest schools and of the forest school teacher training along these lines^{xxxvii}.

While such qualitative evaluations are useful in terms of defining a role for forest schools they cannot in themselves provide a mechanism for comparing different approaches. This would require more quantitative evaluations and assessments of resource use.

The effectiveness of **volunteering** as a means of raising awareness of woodland biodiversity seems to be assumed rather than formally evaluated^{xxxviii}. Where evaluation is undertaken it is usually more concerned with the quality of volunteer management and the experience on the volunteer. There appears to be no information available that could assess its relative cost effectiveness in terms of awareness-raising. The agenda for volunteering has recently been strongly influenced by social inclusion policies such as delivered through Project Scotland - which provides structured longer term volunteering opportunities for young people.

Websites are another area where evaluation is limited. There are a number of websites that promote engagement and host games and education packs or

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

teaching resources. However there is little information about how many people they reach, how they are used, and how much they are used. FEI did evaluate the tree trunk^{xxxix} website in 2005 which highlighted the need to improve the website and market it more effectively to education providers.

Indicators of progress

Indicators of progress were set out for the FCS education strategy in 2006 which gave the following statistics:

FCS has worked with	June 2005 -March 2006
Number of vocational pupils (worked with on course projects)	101
Number of teachers (on placement or worked with)	157
Number of children with additional support for learning needs	286
Total number of school visits (number of pupils)	8095
FEI funded Projects	9
FEI Cluster groups	12
Number of Forest Schools	20
Number of Forest School leaders in training	112

Indicators have also recently been developed for the Scottish Forestry Strategy which will include information related to public awareness activities.

Gaps and opportunities

The scoping exercise has uncovered little in the way of information on the extent or effectiveness of public awareness activities by woodland organisations across Scotland. There are clearly many organisations working to promote public awareness of the natural heritage. Most of those contacted see public awareness as a necessary and valuable part of their remit but there is little investment in monitoring outputs or evaluating the outcomes in a rigorous way.

The limited information makes it difficult to judge whether the amount of public awareness work going on is appropriate, or to compare relative costs or effectiveness of the different ways in which it is delivered. It is also not clear to what extent activities are demand-led rather than policy driven. If they are generally policy driven, will better promotion and marketing create more demand or could the activities be developed to become more attractive to the public?

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

Given that FCS rangers reached out to 8095 school pupils in 2005-6 out of a total school role of currently 722,734 [pupils](#) in over 2600 schools, there would appear to be scope to be much more ambitious. Draft figures for 2007/8 suggest there has been improvement with FCS working directly with 563 schools, around 20% of the schools in Scotland. However, a report on [teachers' approaches and attitudes to engaging with the natural heritage through the curriculum](#) makes clear that there are significant perceived obstacles to the wider uptake of opportunities for outdoor education. These include cost, time, student /staff ratios, safety, poor weather and difficulties with transport. Ranger services play an important role in schools with a good record of outdoor education but resources may be need to be directed at teachers and schools as well as rangers.

Forest Enterprise Scotland invests in visitor infrastructure and interpretation which contributes to improving delivery of access related-outcomes. Such infrastructure includes car parking, visitor centres, shelters, paths and interpretation. The focus is now on developing low-key access to woodlands^{xl}, providing the minimum of built infrastructure needed to meet priorities and focus.

For some ecotourism' projects the level of investment can be more a reflection of the interests, skills and enthusiasm of particular staff and partner organisations rather than a considered evaluation of where resources are best targeted. Forestry Enterprise Scotland aims to achieve and maintain a baseline standard for infrastructure across the estate. The 'soft infrastructure' needs to be considered too; policies, publicity, visitor management plans, staff guidance and skills training, including guidance and skills development relating to volunteer management, health and safety and the protection of children. All contribute to the level of opportunity that can be catered for.

The Rural Development Contracts that come on stream in 2008 are expected to provide [grants to landowners](#) for small-scale infrastructure and the development of public awareness related services including woodland visits.

Next Steps

Forest Research is currently collating information from a survey of FCS and other woodland organisations. This will provide data on the amount of time spent by staff and volunteers on various aspects of work including public awareness activities. This quantitative information will be useful in showing where resources are currently being spent and the level of outputs. However it will need to be supported by qualitative information on the effectiveness of activities in raising awareness of biodiversity.

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

The ICE group of the Biodiversity Forum is considering ways of improving the evaluation of public awareness activities in the longer term. More immediately, a workshop or focus group of rangers and other staff involved in delivering events and managing volunteers should be organised. This workshop could review the results of the FCS survey and provide subjective but 'expert' feedback on the contribution of different approaches to raising awareness and compare their relative effectiveness and efficiency in terms of resource use. A proposal for such a workshop is outlined in Annex 2.

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

Annex 1

List of people and organisations approached

Richard Davidson and Dougie Pollok of SNH. SNH is working on the Biodiversity Communications Toolkit.

Alison Matheson SNH provided a draft Ranger policy, a review of rangering services and outdoor policy statement.

Debbie Basset and Zeshan Akhter provided information about ICE and LBAPs. Zeshan sent queries out to LBAP group on current activities and evaluation – to which there were a few replies.

Janet Bromham – notes on woodland biodiversity projects in Highland.

Graeme Wilson, Midlothian responded with information on local awareness raising at Newbattle Abbey and Esk Valley Trust.

Toby Clark of the John Muir Trust referred to [The John Muir Award – its impact on participants in Scotland \(2004\)](#) & An investigation into the John Muir Award and its relationship with outdoor education and environmental education (2003) <http://www.jmt.org/award-downloads.asp#evaluation>.

Robbie Nicol at University of Edinburgh outdoor education department.

Andy Ford of Cairngorms National Park. Across-park ranger structures are being developed.

Ross Firth of LL&TNP noted evaluation of process rather than outcomes – aimed at participants and the delivery staff rather than to evaluate the programme.

Bob Jones FCS – sent ICE minutes and action plan and a strategic forest plan.

Malcolm Muir CoSLA.

Alistair Lavery and Jeremy Roberts RSPB.

Suzanne Martin FC Research provided a copy of - 2006 'Survey of formal education (3-18) undertaken and delivered by Forestry Commission Scotland': Forest Research report to Forestry Commission Scotland.

SWT Clara Govier.

Nancy Macewan of BTCV put me onto Heath Brown and Jenny Sleeman.

Andrew Wells, The Crown Estate.

Andrew Fairbairn & Bridie Ashrowan of the Woodland Trust Scotland.

Alan Stevenson FES.

Gordon Gray Stephens, SNW.

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

Toni Clarke – previously SCRA development officer.

Anna Craigen, Borders Forest Trust.

Diane Campbell, Community Woodland Association.

Wendy Gray FCS Central Scotland Education Officer.

All FEI Cluster groups were emailed, with a few replies received.

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

Annex 2

Raising public awareness of woodland biodiversity

Proposal for two workshops

Rationale

The implementation plan of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy includes an action point (rural 2.5) to prepare and implement a programme for encouraging appreciation of woodland biodiversity. This programme would aim to invest resources in recreational countryside and forest rangers services to help people, including schools and community groups, to appreciate woodland biodiversity through visits, conservation projects etc. A recent scoping exercise revealed little useful information on the effectiveness of current practice in achieving a public awareness outcome making it difficult to know how best resources could be applied.

Forest Research is currently collecting data on the extent of work in this regard, i.e. how much effort goes into biodiversity related events and environmental volunteering and the number of people it reaches. The workshops are proposed as a short-term measure, to gather opinion from rangers and strategic level staff on the effectiveness of different services and to identify gaps and opportunities.

Desired outcome

The outcome would be a report detailing:

- the various activities undertaken;
- their applicability to different groups (in different situations);
- an evaluation of their 'effectiveness' in reaching out to the public and raising awareness of woodland biodiversity in relation to the resources required;
- gaps and opportunities identified.

While concentrating on ranger-led events and volunteer management, the workshop may also:

- gather information on the value of promotional leaflets and websites, organisational support and visitor infrastructure and the extent to which these contribute to demand and effectiveness.
- prove useful in developing future longer term evaluative procedures.

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

The workshops

Two workshops should be run preferably by autumn 2008. Each would be run as a partnership between Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Countryside Rangers Association (SCRA). Rangers and strategic level staff would be invited from FCS and other relevant organisations and each workshop would aim to attract at least a dozen participants. The workshops could contribute to the Continuing Professional Development programme of SCRA rangers. Each would be a day-long exercise, e.g. 10am–3.30pm with lunch provided. Venues are suggested but FCS may be able to provide alternatives. One or two facilitators would host each workshop. A recorder would keep notes and produce a written report.

Highland-based Workshop

Participants: 12 participants from FCS, NTS, HIE, SNH, Anagach Community Woodland, Rothiemurchus, Balmoral or other private estate....other ideas

Venue: Badaguish, or FCS HQ Inverness?

Proposed Facilitators (2): Duncan Macdonald, Gordon Maclellan, Kenny Taylor, Pete Crane..?

Proposed Recorder –Toni Clark

Lothian-based workshop

Participants: 12 from CSCT, Midlothian Council, East Lothian Council, West Lothian Council, FCS, Borders Forest Trust, Woodland Trust Scotland

Venue: FCS HQ or other venue?

Proposed Facilitators (2): Duncan Stevenson (NTS), Bonnie Maggio (FCS)

Proposed Recorder: Roland Stiven

Costs for two workshops

Preparation 2 days	£600
Venues	?
Lunches £7/head	£200
Facilitators(4)	£1200
Recorders (2)	£600
Travel costs	£1000
Prepare Report 4 days	£1200

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

Present report 1 day	£300
Total	£5100 +VAT + Venues if required

Format/Agenda of workshop

Participants will be sent in advance a summary of relevant data from the Forest Research.

Session 1 Services provided

Review the types of services provided that have an element of awareness-raising relating to woodland (or broader biodiversity). Categorise by event type, age ranges, by particular groups, family groups, or by type of event – walks, broader fun-time, volunteer work parties. Consider direct approaches – i.e. deliberately biodiversity-oriented, versus indirect. fun and games in the forest.

Session 2 methods of evaluation

Discuss what is currently undertaken by way of monitoring and evaluation or simply how staff judge the effectiveness of what they do. Develop a list of criteria eg:

- how many people does it reach in total;
- how many are new people –how many repeat visitors – are they just reaching the same people over and over again;
- does it reach the 'already interested' or the harder to reach groups;
- how effectively does new information get across;
- what behavioural changes might we expect to see as a result (if any);
- what does it cost to deliver – staff time, preparation time, transport, evaluation, administration etc;

Session 3 Evaluating existing services/identifying gaps

- Apply these questions to the sorts of events they are currently providing and get a score – high medium low etc.
- Can the effective things be scaled up? i.e. can we use these approaches to reach a much wider audience or not...?
- Marketing and support services connected with events (publicity websites, visitor infrastructure, organisational support, - how much resources should go into these? Are they a limiting factor in effectiveness?
- What are the gaps and opportunities for improving woodland biodiversity awareness?

Session 4 How to improve evaluation in future (first steps)

Possibilities for collecting comparable data

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

References/Endnotes

- i Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Implementation Plan 2005-2007
<http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/library/sbfsip.pdf>
- ii Scotland's Biodiversity Indicators
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/199632/0053322.pdf>
- iii Scottish Biodiversity Communications Strategy Framework. A Report to the Scottish Executive & Scottish Natural Heritage by Newhaven Communications 2007
<http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/library/Scottish%20Biodiversity%20Communications%20Plan%20-%20Newhaven%20Agency%20-%20January%2030%202007%20-%20PDF.pdf>
- iv Promoting key messages about the natural heritage national baseline survey of public attitudes. SNH Commissioned Report No.110
http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/F04AB09.pdf
- v FCS Events directory
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/recreation.nsf/WebWhatsOnSearch?OpenForm&c=scotland>
- vi National Nature Reserves events diary <http://www.nnr-scotland.org.uk/events.asp>
- vii Atholl Estates Events Diary <http://www.athollestaterangerservice.co.uk/events/events-diary-2008.pdf>
- viii Rothiemurchus Events Diary
<http://www.rothiemurchus.net/Pages/Home/Whats%20On%20Today/Whats-On-Today.html>
- ix Dalkeith County Park <http://www.dalkeithcountrypark.co.uk/index.html>
- x Glentanar Estate <http://www.glentanar.co.uk/index.html>
- xi Central Scotland Forest Trust Annual Report <http://www.csft.org.uk/documents/704/704.pdf>
- xii Borders Forest Trust Events page <http://www.bordersforesttrust.org/events.php>
- xiii Four Winds website <http://www.four-winds.org.uk/>
- xiv Tree for All website <http://www.treeforall.org.uk/GetDigging/>
- xv Tree for All counter <http://www.treeforall.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/CFBC64CB-70A9-44A4-B046-EABABFFEDC06/0/T4Amap2.pdf>
- xvi Nature's Calendar <http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk/>
- xvii Community Woodland Association <http://www.communitywoods.org/>
- xviii Evaluation of Partnerships between Community Groups and Forestry Commission Scotland FCS
[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcsevaluationpartnershipsexecsummary.pdf/\\$FILE/fcsevaluationpartnershipsexecsummary.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcsevaluationpartnershipsexecsummary.pdf/$FILE/fcsevaluationpartnershipsexecsummary.pdf)
- xix Volunteering in the natural heritage; an audit and review of natural heritage volunteering in Scotland. Volunteer Development Scotland (2006). . Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 219 (ROAME No. F05NC07).
http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/ReportNo219.pdf
- xx SNH board paper on volunteering and the natural heritage
http://www.snh.org.uk/data/boards_and_committees/main_board_papers/18%20Dec%2007/SNH%20Volunteering%20Policy.pdf
- xxi Draft SFS indicators report for 2006-2007
- xxii John Muir Award <http://www.jmt.org/john-muir-award.asp>
- xxiii The John Muir Award – its impact on participants. An evaluation of the effect that the John Muir Award has had on individuals who have participated – Summary Document
www.jmt.org/assets/john%20muir%20award/downloads/impact-on-participants-summary.pdf
- xxiv Draft SFS indicators report for 2006-2007
- xxv Provided by Suzanne Martin in Forest Research
- xxvi Woods for Learning Education Strategy FCS
[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc106.pdf/\\$FILE/fcfc106.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fcfc106.pdf/$FILE/fcfc106.pdf)

Raising Public Awareness of Woodland Biodiversity

- xxvii Young people's interaction with natural heritage through outdoor learning, SNH Commissioned Report No. 225 (ROAME No. F06AB03)
http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/ReportNo225.pdf
- xxviii Taking learning outdoors, partnerships for excellence. Outdoor Connections Advisory Group http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/outdoorlearning/Outdoor_Connections_report.pdf
- xxix Grounds for Learning website <http://www.gflscotland.org.uk/index.htm>
- xxx Ecoschools website <http://www.ecoschoolsscotland.org/home/index.asp?linkID=83>
- xxxi Email from David Edwards Forest Research
- xxxii Ranger Policy Review Event - Hopetoun House - 31 July 2007
http://www.snh.org.uk/strategy/pd-rsm_dps.asp
- xxxiii Young people's interaction with natural heritage through outdoor learning SNH Commissioned Report No. 225 (ROAME No. F06AB03)
http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/ReportNo225.pdf
- xxxiv Working with Local Authorities to deliver first-hand experience of the natural heritage through the formal education sector SNH Commissioned Report No. 224
http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/ReportNo224.pdf
- xxxv Outdoor Education In Scotland: A Summary Of Recent Research by Robbie Nicol, Peter Higgins, Hamish Rossi and Greg Mannionii
<http://213.121.208.4/pdfs/publications/education/OCReportWithEndnotes.pdf>
- xxxvi Forest School Evaluation
[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ForestSchoolfinalreport.pdf/\\$FILE/ForestSchoolfinalreport.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ForestSchoolfinalreport.pdf/$FILE/ForestSchoolfinalreport.pdf)
- xxxvii Email from *Wendy Gray, Central Scotland Education Officer* FCS with evaluation forms
- xxxviii An SNH report refers to two papers in this regard. Deryck Irving Associates. (1997). Awareness and Understanding in Practical Conservation Volunteering. SNH Commissioned Report No HT/AB105/00/01/97. Downie, A. (2002). Working with Communities; Research of Current Initiatives and Opportunities. SNH report No C/AB2/B/01/78.) The SNH library does not seem to hold copies of these.
- xxxix Provided by Sally York FCS
- xl Access, recreation and tourism on the national forest estate. Forestry Commission Scotland, Forests for People Strategy 2008.