

Dear Liz Kirk

I wish to respond to the proposed forestry proposals in **Climate Change and the National Forest Estate in Scotland** proposed by the Scottish Government.

I do not feel able to respond to the list of questions you ask as they are related to topics I am not familiar with however as a naturalist who has had the protection of Scottish wildlife at heart for many decades I wish to raise the following points.

When I saw the article in the Southern Reporter newspaper (Nov.13 2008) and read the highlighted "The national forest estate has a crucial contribution to make towards a greener and wealthier Scotland" I naively thought that this would involve the planting of native hard woods until I saw the photograph accompanying this article. There was the standard planting of Sitka Spruce in a ditched hillside. **It seems to me that climate change is being used as an excuse to plant more conifers and provide wealth to the owners of the private forestry companies.**

This plan has nothing to do with the nature conservation or the protection of Scotland's scenery but the massive increased planting up of huge areas of Scotland's open spaces with exotic conifers. i.e. blanket coniferisation of our hills. To do this in the interests of climate change is laughable. **Far more carbon will be released into the atmosphere by the deep ploughing of peat for planting than will be captured by these trees.** In the south east of Scotland we already have huge areas of hill country covered with Sitka Spruce. Much of it has reached the forty year stage and has been or is being felled and will be replanted. To continue to plant up more and more "virgin" land will have devastating consequences on our wild plants and animals which are struggling to cope with coniferisation as it is.

I can do no better than refer you and your committee to the New Naturalist book on "Galloway and the Borders" written by Derek Ratcliffe and ex-chief scientist with the Nature Conservancy Council and published in 2007. He describes in great details the destructive effects of coniferisation on the wild life in Galloway. His final paragraph on the subject sums up the present aims of your organisation beautifully and I quote: **"The latest argument for planting more conifers is carbon sequestration, to reduce the impact on global climate of carbon dioxide output by industrialised Britain. Oliver Rackham remarked that this was rather like asking people to drink more water in order to reduce sea-level rise."** Oliver Rackham is the foremost authority on trees and forests in Britain.

The planting of biofuels as a source of energy sounds a much greener way of producing energy but the planting of short term quick growing trees such as willows does not help wild life and takes away land which should be used for food production.

The phrase "a greener and wealthier Scotland" is a political cliché which sounds good until one looks into the details of the proposal and the impact it will have on Scotland's wildlife and scenery. If this proposal goes ahead and assuming it will there needs to be good dialogue

between the statutory conservation bodies and the voluntary societies such as the RSPB to see how the effects of such an ambitious policy on the environment can be mitigated.

Yours faithfully



R. W. M. Corner (Dr)

