

# **REVIEW OF LAND MANAGED BY FORESTRY COMMISSION SCOTLAND – CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

## **REPORT**

PUBLIC MEETING HELD AT - **INVERURIE**

VENUE/DATE: **THAINSTONE HOUSE HOTEL: 29 JAN. 2004**

ORGANISER: **DOUGLAS CLARK**

MEETING CHAIR OR FACILITATOR: **ANDREW RAVEN**

WORKING GROUP REPRESENTATIVE: **BILL MASON**

ATTENDANCE FIGURE: **27**

## **ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK SHEETS**

NUMBER OF COMPLETED FEEDBACK SHEETS: **13**

Female: 50%. Male: 50%

Age:

a. under 25?	8%
b. 25 – 35?	8%
c. 35 – 45?	16%
d. 45 – 55?	37%
e. over 55?	31%

Distance travelled:

a. under 10 miles?	44%
b. between 10 and 25 miles?	16%
c. between 25 and 40 miles?	24%
d. between 40 and 55 miles?	8%
e. over 55 miles?	8%

Was the meeting worthwhile?

a. Definitely worthwhile	69%
b. Quite worthwhile	31%
c. Waste of time	-

## **COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED VISION**

- Does not reflect past actions of Forestry Commission (FC), which damaged the environment through ploughing and planting of semi-natural moorland habitats and interference with private water supplies
- Recognised that in the past FC had a different remit, focussed exclusively on timber production; but this has changed and FC has taken on board environmental and social aspects of forest management. Our forests are in very good hands with the FC.
- Vision should refer to the growing of trees/silviculture: as currently worded it could apply to a number of organisations.
- FC needs to show respect for local communities.
- Needs to be enrichment of the forest estate.

## **SUBJECTS THAT WERE RAISED DURING MEETING OR ON THE FEEDBACK SHEETS**

- Forest management: important to let trees grow old gracefully because people like to see “grand old trees”. Save money by moving towards more natural systems and avoiding too much clear felling, using natural regeneration. Danger of swinging too far away from productive forestry – Scotland’s national forests should remain as a main source of timber for the wood processing industries, and may once again be of strategic importance. Since these forests are publicly owned, public benefits such as amenity and conservation should be main objectives. Tourism a very important sector of the economy, and amenity/conservation value of forests can benefit tourism. Need to put proper value on non-market benefits. Also need to prioritise more clearly.
- Marginal areas: Consultation Paper underplays extent to which there are forests in Scotland that are unlikely ever to be commercially viable - in these areas a radically different approach is needed, and this will cost money; FC should not “walk away” from these areas by selling and leaving problem to others.
- Consultation: important, but the challenge is to engage effectively with people and to convey (eg) the landscape impact of different designs. Foresters sometimes talk a different language – relating (eg) to silvicultural options rather trees blocking paths and retaining puddles where children collect frog spawn. Remember that working people have difficulty attending day-time meetings. Agricultural Shows a good opportunity for consultation; also outdoor, rather than indoor, meetings. Treefest a tremendous initiative.
- Community involvement: recognise that enthusiasm/expertise with communities may come and go, but forestry is a very long-term business. Different communities may have different objectives and exclude some potential users (eg car rallies), but important to realise that national forests are for everyone. If

forests sold to communities, strict guidelines needed to protect different communities of interest; community ownership depends upon public subsidy/lottery money. FC should continue to engage with communities, but not be proactive in transferring ownership; key thing is community involvement in use and management, not ownership.

- Urban communities: in general, not well served by FCS and this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Consider relocating FCS staff to work within the urban communities and to building partnerships with parks staff in the larger urban settlements. Map 2 on the Consultation document does not reflect the potential of existing council and private woodland areas adjacent to urban centres – secondment of skilled FC staff could revitalise the management of these woods and associated open space. An approach based upon selling forests in more rural areas and developing new forests in peri-urban situations would take more time and probably be less successful.
- Social housing: proposal for social housing welcomed, but will need planning consent, and same rules should apply to FC as private sector. In general, planning unlikely to favour new housing in remote locations, so social housing developments likely to be adjacent to existing settlements.
- Partnerships: any legal constraints to effective partnership working should be removed. FCS cannot be expected to achieve everything and must look to use of partnership to help fulfill the vision. There is a need to make staff in other agencies aware of the resource and outputs that the FCS forests offer.
- Integration with agriculture: need to do more to promote farm forestry, as seen for example in Norway. Norway illustrates value of forestry culture where people work productively with trees, deriving clear economic benefits through local use of timber.
- Recreation: even in Grampian, not everyone can get easy access to forest recreation facilities – eg if they live in towns or cities and do not have cars. If FC expands into urban areas it should work in effective partnership with existing initiatives. Grampian Health Board has promoted idea of walking as element of personal health care, patients making contracts with GPs.
- Disposals: if forests are sold, where will money go? Sales of isolated, remote areas likely to be symbolic, rather than significant in terms of funding new programmes to improve social and environmental value of forests. This requires cash from Scottish Executive. But FC should have freedom to manage estate, selling small isolated blocks.
- Gender balance: need to promote active involvement of more women in forestry
- Future generations: think about needs of future generations and what they will want from forests.
- Bio-fuels: FCS should do more to promote development of wood as a fuel and must lead by example. Should encourage local sales of local timber. Wood fuel

could be one important way of encouraging this and providing direct economic benefit to communities.

- Social inclusion: need to focus on better engagement with wider communities. Many communities not well served currently (e.g) youth; elderly and less able; people with learning disabilities and groups with low disposable income. There should be more imagination in thinking about the way forests can be used to benefit all parts of society (pop concerts are just one example).
- The possible use of forest plots as a means of linking schools and the national forests. These can be used as a teaching resource for many different subjects.
- Increase attractiveness of forests for people: Bois de Boulogne and Wienerwald cited as examples of what we should aspire to. These forests have excellent provision for visitors and are heavily used. The provision includes restaurants and snack-bars which give people a chance to enjoy refreshments during or after their leisure activity. Plant specimen trees more widely, including fruit trees!
- Lack of forest culture: there is a separation between Scottish people and their forests and we need to do more to bridge this gap and rediscover a common forest culture, though it is recognised it can only be a long-term aim.

***As part of this Consultation exercise, public meetings were held in seven venues in different parts of Scotland during the second half of January 2004. Afternoon meetings were held in Oban, Dingwall, Newton St Boswells and Inverurie. Evening meetings were held in Dundee and Glasgow. A “drop-in” meeting, lasting from 3pm until 9 pm was held in Newton Stewart. This report summarises the points made and issues raised at the Inverurie meeting; similar reports are being produced for the other six meetings.***