

REVIEW OF LAND MANAGED BY FORESTRY COMMISSION SCOTLAND – CONSULTATION EXERCISE

REPORT

PUBLIC MEETING HELD AT - **NEWTON STEWART**

VENUE/DATE: **MACMILLAN HALL; 26 JAN. 2004**

ORGANISER: **ROB SOUTAR**

WORKING GROUP REPRESENTATIVE: **DAVID HENDERSON-HOWAT**

ATTENDANCE FIGURE: **104 (plus 10 FCS facilitators)**

ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK SHEETS:

NUMBER OF COMPLETED FEEDBACK SHEETS: **20**

Females 45%; males 55%

Age:

a. under 25?	5%
b. 25 – 35?	15%
c. 35 – 45?	10%
d. 45 – 55?	35%
e. over 55?	35%

Distance travelled:

a. under 10 miles?	35%
b. between 10 and 25 miles?	15%
c. between 25 and 40 miles?	25%
d. between 40 and 55 miles?	20%
e. over 55 miles?	5%

Was the meeting worthwhile?

a. Definitely worthwhile	40%
b. Quite worthwhile	60%
c. Waste of time	-

COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED VISION

- Welcome emphasis on communities
- Regret that in the past Forestry Commission (FC) did not do more to help sustain local communities – few people living (e.g.) in Glen Trool now work in forestry industry
- Vision statement meaningless: “All things to all men”

➤ SUBJECTS THAT WERE RAISED DURING MEETING OR ON THE FEEDBACK SHEETS

- Climate change: Important that thought is given to this, e.g. when considering replanting options
- Communication: Is “Scotland’s national forests” the right phrase to describe the land managed by FCS. What about “national forest land”?
- Communication: People don’t know where FCS forests are. How do you tell a private forest from a national one?
- Communication: “Scotlands national forest” should read woodlands
- Communication: “Scotland national forest” should not be only about trees. Mountains and moorlands are part of Scotlands forest land in the original sense.
- Community: If FCS care so much about vibrant communities why have they reduced their workforce by so much?
- Community: Ensure the right people are represented and ensure narrow agendas are not given too much influence.
- Community: FCS need to communicate better with the public to tell them what they are doing as well as defending themselves
- Community: FCS should do more work in the schools because the Scottish people have lost contact with the countryside
- Community: FCS should publish a local newsletter.
- Community: FCS should recognise educational value of forests and links with (e.g.) tree planting by children.
- Community: Current level of input into education is inadequate, FCS should build on excellent work done.
- Community: Forestry needs young workers

- Community: Moving woods closer to the cities is a good idea, especially if it enables schoolchildren to develop respect for nature
- Community: There are very few real local people at this meeting
- Community: Too much transient and poorly paid labour, FCS needs to employ more people if it plant to create vibrant local communities
- Community: Welcome plans to make FCS land available for social housing. Some concern expressed over current policies with regard to lettings and sales.
- Community: FCS is listening to the most vocal people, not the majority.
- Conservation: FCS forests should be used as introduction sites for extinct animals such as the beaver
- Conservation: FCS have over controlled deer so I don't see them very often now
- Conservation: FCS is not really interested in conservation when it has so many sheep and goats. There should be more emphasis on truly wild animals.
- Conservation: FCS land is the only place in Scotland where raptors are not persecuted.
- Conservation: FCS should not be bullied into planting native species everywhere, what would happen to crossbills, squirrels and other spruce and pine loving species.
- Conservation: The open hills are the best bit of the Galloway Forest Park for conservation.
- Conservation: There is too much emphasis on wildlife and not on the human species.
- Economy: Allow FCS to diversify into local projects e.g. buy trees locally, initiate local sawmills. Act as a catalyst, rather than sit back and wait for the private sector to create markets.
- Economy: FCS needs to add value to timber locally, not export it.
- Economy: If the FC has so much timber why doesn't it have its own sawmills?
- Economy: Is current down turn in timber prices permanent?
- Economy: We need local nurseries, sawmills for specialist markets and woodfuel plants.
- Economy: Why does FCS sell so much timber in such a poor market?
- Economy: FCS should develop local energy plants
- Economy: Local woodfuel plants should be encouraged and supported.

- Economy: Local employment is the biggest issues. FCS must stop the decline.
- Community: Galloway events are excellent, especially the Halloween spooky walk. There should be more of these and more effort to link with the history of Galloway
- Field sports: FCS should do more for local people and stop letting shooting to the highest bidder.
- Field sports: There should be more fishing by permit and FCS should stop allowing private fishing in the forest. Well done on Loch Dee.
- Farming: Can more land be made available for farming?
- Farming: FCS should create new agricultural holdings and tenancies.
- Forestry: FCS need to grow better quality trees and learn from past mistakes
- Forestry: There should be more broadleaved trees planted for timber
- Forestry: There should be more use of broadleaved species to increase biodiversity and improve landscape. Important also to try to develop markets for hardwood timber. Also a call to allow more trees to grow old – depressed timber market a good opportunity – and old trees help create diversity.
- Forestry: The clearfells should be smaller and more tidy.
- Forestry: There should be more areas of old trees, managed for diversity and the environment.
- Forestry; There should be no restocking of unviable areas
- Forestry: No mention is made of the effects of climate change in the document
- Funding: beware of “small big numbers”: £25 million/year for managing the public forest estate represents an excellent bargain for the nation.
- Funding: FCS should pay its own way.
- Funding: FCS are not making enough of the Visitor Centres as source of income.
- Funding: There should be no selling of forests in Galloway to pay for plantations in Glasgow.
- Funding: Sensitive rationalisation of the FCS estate will be supported
- Landscape: FCS need to plan more viewpoints and open up views of the hills
- Landscape: The clearfells are awful. There are too big and the FCS don't clear up the brash like the private sector do.
- Recreation: Great cycle paths!

- Recreation: How will the interests of horse riders be safeguarded if land is sold to communities?
- Recreation: Thanks to FCS for keeping the hills open to walkers. These are some of the best hills in Scotland.
- Recreation: The FC website should be used to show details of events that may interfere with recreation (e.g. mountain bike championships, harvesting etc).
- Recreation: There should be more access by car on forest roads, especially for the elderly
- Recreation: Too much spending on mountain bikes and not enough on walkers and the disabled.
- Recreation: The great improvements in recreation facilities should be continued.
- Recreation: Concern that FCS is not committed to core path networks. It is essential that FCS are committed to core path networks in Ayrshire.
- Roads: FCS should transport more timber by sea and by rail
- Roads: Forest roads can have a major impact, and detract from “wilderness value”. As important to consult on roading plans as (e.g.) clearfelling plans.
- Roads: The timber traffic through Barrhill is intolerable. I am very pleased by the plans for the railhead and bypasses through the forest, but will it actually happen? FCS must make it happen.
- Roads: Single track roads are simply not suitable for timber lorries
- Roads: FCS should police the use of public roads by timber traffic. Timber lorries are using a bridge that is banned.
- Surface water acidification: The Galloway hills should be deforested and returned to sheep farms.
- Surface water acidification: Very pleased to hear all about the good work the FCS/EU partnership has done for the Cree.
- Surface water acidification: What is FCS doing about acidification?
- Surface water acidification: Question 5 in the document does not have a statement of response from FCS.
- Tourism: FCS should do more for tourism with the Galloway Forest Park, and encourage more wildlife and rare breeds for people to see
- Tourism: Tourism is a major contributor to the local economy. Links with forestry (and other land uses) important: tourists expect to see a “working countryside”.

- Tourism: Tourism is far more important in the economy than farming and forestry and it is not subsidised.
- Tourism: Tourists are itinerant and what is good for them is not always good for local people
- Tourism: Windfarms are bad for tourism
- Tourism: Your (FCS) Visitor Centres are the best advert for Galloway, the staff are so friendly.
- Windfarms: There has been poor consultation on windfarms
- Windfarms: Why so many windfarms?
- Windfarms: Windfarms are bad for tourism
- Windfarms: Windfarms create great passions for and against and FCS need to be aware.

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 summarise the points made and issues raised at the Newton Stewart meeting; similar reports are being produced for the other six meetings.