

The Scottish Forestry Strategy

2008-2011 Implementation Plan

& 2007-2008 Progress Report

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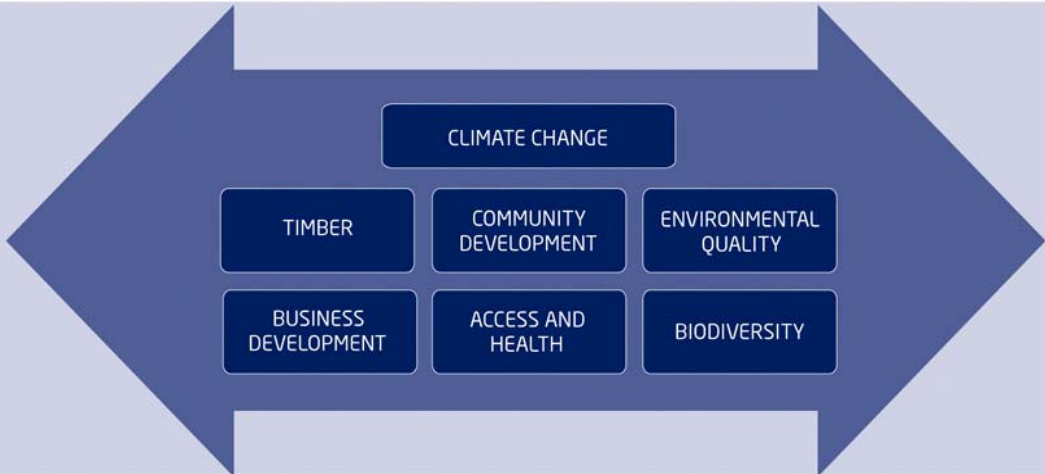
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The Scottish Forestry Strategy

Introduction

The Scottish Government's Forestry Strategy was published in October 2006¹. The core of the Strategy is shown in the schematic below. It is focused on delivering forestry benefits to Scotland against the three main outcomes. A progress report for 2007-2008 is brigaded around these outcomes. Recognising the crosscutting nature of forestry, the Strategy is organised around seven key themes. The 2008-2011 Implementation Plan lays out actions for the coming year for the 61 action partners, and directions for the following two years by theme. Theme reference groups have fed into this process. The five Regional Forestry Forums have defined additional local actions.

Our vision	<i>By the second half of this century, people are benefiting widely from Scotland's trees, woodlands and forests, actively engaging with and looking after them for the use and enjoyment of generations to come. The forestry resource has become a central part of our culture, economy and environment.</i>		
Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development – underpinned by sustainable forest management. • Social inclusion - through helping to provide opportunities for all, and helping to build stronger communities. • Forestry for and with people. • Integration with other land uses and businesses. 		
Outcomes	Improved health and well-being of people and their communities.	Competitive and innovative businesses contributing to the growth of the Scottish economy.	High quality, robust and adaptable environment.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist community participation. • Enhance opportunities for health and enjoyment. • Contribute to growth in learning and skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a more efficient and competitive timber supply chain. • Facilitate the development of markets for forest products. • Facilitate rural business diversification and development. • Increase the contribution of forestry to tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to tackle climate change. • Contribute positively to soil, water and air quality. • Contribute to landscape quality. • Protect and promote the historic environment and cultural heritage. • Help to protect and enhance biodiversity.
Key themes			

¹ <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6aggzw>

Progress report for 2007-2008

Overview

The Scottish Forestry Strategy makes a commitment to the publication of implementation plans to guide delivery. The first of these plans was published in March 2007² to cover the year from April 2007 to March 2008. This progress report summarises what FCS and the 46 action partners have delivered during the year against the three Strategy outcomes. More detail on progress is given in each of the theme and regional sections of the attached 2008-2011 Implementation Plan.

Of the 142 actions in the 2007-2008 Implementation Plan, 122 (86%) were achieved. Nineteen have been carried over into the 2009-2011 plan for completion and one has been superseded. Of the 19 actions carried over, 11 are substantively underway or nearing completion.

Theme/region	Action achieved	Carried over into 2008/09	Action superseded
Climate change	12	2	
Timber	13	2	
Business development	14	1	
Community Development	12	2	1
Access and health	9	2	
Environmental quality	10	5	
Biodiversity	10	2	
South Scotland	5		
Central Scotland	6	1	
Perth and Argyll	7		
Grampian	6	1	
Highland	4	1	

Indicator development has been a major priority for 2007/08. By establishing a consistent and representative indicator set for the forestry sector we can better demonstrate what the sector is delivering, and focus effort and resources where it is most needed.

Of 62 indicators due to be reported for the SFS strategy, 54 are defined and have data available. Six indicators are defined, but data are not yet available. The indicator for timber use in construction relative to other materials has proved difficult due to lack of data and other approaches are being evaluated. One indicator, staff turnover rates in the forestry sector, has been reluctantly dropped because of the cost and bureaucratic burden it would place on the sector.

² [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/SFSimpplan07-08.pdf/\\$FILE/SFSimpplan07-08.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/SFSimpplan07-08.pdf/$FILE/SFSimpplan07-08.pdf)

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Two biodiversity indicators have been dropped, and one added. The one on designated habitats identified as declining is dropped as this adds no value given the previous indicator for designated habitats in favourable or favourable recovering condition. The area of woodland converted to open ground habitat presents major data collection problems and would be difficult to interpret. A further woodland structure and composition indicator is added showing the proportion of Scotland's forests classified as old growth. The definition and method of data collection for loss of ancient semi-natural woodland to development is still under discussion.

Improved health and wellbeing of people and their communities

Forestry has now become well established in Scotland as an effective tool for delivering social benefits both in rural, and increasingly, in urban situations. The valuation of economic and social benefits of forestry for people³ commissioned by FCS has provided an insight into the significance of this sector to Scotland. While the timber sector remains an important supporter of jobs, almost half of the 40,000 jobs in Scottish forestry are due to woodland-based tourism and recreation visits. Woodland-based recreation and tourism were found to contribute around £250M per year to Scotland's economy. Views of woodland from homes and during daily activity were found to be worth about £24M per year. The non-market value of visits to woodland is at least £40M a year.

The Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership has been fully established and is playing a co-ordinating role in the delivery of woodland benefits in Scotland's largest urban area. This is now complemented by initiatives in Edinburgh, Dundee, Inverness, Aberdeen and Stirling and Clackmannanshire. The FCS WIAT initiative has been widely welcomed and has exceeded many of its key performance indicators. Figures for 2007/08 are not yet available, but the report for 2006/07 showed that over 8,000ha of urban woodland has been brought into active management and 828ha of new woodland created, 44% in areas of high deprivation. Across Scotland the % of the population living within 500 metres of accessible woodland at least 2ha in size has gone from 15% in 2004/05 to 23% in 2006/07⁴. Work to connect these people with their local woodland continues to expand. In 2006/07 6,500 people participated in 'Active Woods' events and nearly 3,000 school pupils were involved with FCS woods or staff in the Central Belt alone.

In 2007 the WIAT programme was complemented by a Woods for Health strategy, which has seen a steady increase in woodland-based health and physical activity initiatives during the year, for example the establishment of health walks partnerships in Aberdeenshire. Initial results from the valuation of forestry for people study show that the economic value of the health benefits of forestry is worth £13-£18M per year and that 21% of the Scottish population exercise in woodland at three times a week.

Delivery of the education strategy, 'Local Woods for Learning', has continued with 16,500 school pupils visiting FCS managed woods in 2006/07. Interest and engagement from

³ <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/forestryforpeople>

⁴ Woodland Trust Space for People Woodland Access Standard

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learning professionals in woods for learning continues to grow. This was demonstrated by the attendance of 90 people, from a range of teaching and outdoor learning organisations, at the FEI networking event in October 2007.

The national forest estate is increasingly recognised as an important recreation resource. A framework was published showing how this resource will be developed to increase delivery of recreation opportunities in areas of high social exclusion and low physical activity rates, and to enhance the economic value of tourism in economically fragile rural areas. The Framework also recognises that key mountain biking destinations are contributing significantly to Scotland as a visitor destination, as evidenced through the 2007 mountain biking world cup at Fort William.

The breadth of social benefits from forests continues to grow. The Community Woodland Association secured a major funding package enabling it to support the ever-expanding community woodland network. FCS published a position statement on volunteering, laying out how it intends to increase the social benefits of volunteering opportunities offered from forestry. Work is underway to launch a new woodland crofts option in the National Forest Land Scheme, and a project officer will be appointed to encourage uptake. In 2007/08 national forest land provided 14 affordable housing plots. Woodlands and forestry played a significant part in the Year of Highland Culture celebrations, for example through the Touchwood programme of events, which have demonstrated the extent to which a new forestry culture is emerging in Scotland.

Competitive and innovative businesses contributing to the growth of the Scottish economy

The Scottish Forest Industry Cluster underwent major change in 2007, with the focus of direction moving from the enterprise network towards the timber processing sector and FCS. FCS, in consultation with the sector, developed and published a Timber Development Programme, which aims to contribute to the sustainable development of Scotland's economy by enabling the timber growing and processing sectors to find the highest value and most appropriate end market for Scotland's timber. It lays out a practical set of actions around four objectives to:

- promote a predictable and stable timber supply;
- encourage more use of timber and timber products;
- encourage improvements to timber supply chain efficiency;
- encourage improvements to the quality of the growing stock.

A growing number of regional projects are supporting the programme such as the 'construction and sustainable development using local timber' project in the Scottish Borders.

There was considerable evidence of continued investment in Scotland's growing timber processing sector. James Jones & Sons announced a new £20M state-of-the-art sawmill at Lockerbie, BSW plan to invest £26M in their new mill at Fort William, and James Callander and Sons have submitted planning for a new £10M mill in Fife. In Dalbeattie,

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Howie Forest Products increased their throughput by an additional 100,000m³, as their new sawmill line moves towards full production. Investment in wood energy plant has also been significant. The 44MW E.ON Lockerbie biomass power station began energy production. The number of biomass heat schemes increased from 46 in 2006 to 91 in 2007. Announcements were made of major biomass projects by Balcas at Invergordon and Caledonian Paper at Irvine.

Demand for wood fuel is increasing. The Environment Minister initiated formation of a Wood Fuel Taskforce to consider ways of bringing forward supplies from currently under-utilised sources such as forest residues, short rotation coppice and under-managed woodlands⁵. Wood currently considered as waste was identified as a major potential fuel source, with around 5M t/yr being generated in Scotland. Actions were identified to increase supply from harvesting residues, neglected woodlands and landscaping activity. Energy crops are the third potential supply source, with actions identified to increase understanding and uptake of short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry systems. The Scottish Biomass Support Scheme was introduced in 2007, bringing forward 20MW thermal of new biomass energy plant, as well as 24 supply-chain developments.

Skills development in forestry emerged as a new priority in the Scottish Forestry Strategy. Lantra published the sector skills agreement for the environment and land-based sector and the Trees and Timber Industry Action Plan. Forestry is taking forward its various commitments within these agreements. In 2007/08, FCS fully established the Forestry Apprenticeship Scheme with three apprentices completing the programme. There are now 16 apprentices working with FCS towards their Modern Apprenticeship. Demand from secondary schools for forestry components of vocational education began to expand rapidly, particularly in the Highlands. The Scottish Government published Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy⁶ that provides national context for forestry's work on skills development.

Scotland's network Regional Timber Transport Groups are providing an increasingly effective forum for resolving local timber transport challenges, facilitated by the Strategic Timber Transport Fund. The Fund has offered £9M in support of 21 projects that will enable seven million tonnes of timber to be re-routed away from communities or fragile public roads over the next 10 years.

High quality, robust and adaptable environment

Climate change is increasingly recognised as the most significant environmental challenge facing the forestry sector, both in forestry's role as part of the solution, and because of the need to adapt to the consequences of climate change. In addition, Scottish forestry is unique in the UK in being subject to a carbon saving target as part of Scotland's climate change programme. Woodland creation offers a wide range of public benefits, including adaptive responses to climate change and carbon sequestration. Accordingly, Scottish Ministers have indicated their desire to see appropriate woodland creation rise to 10,000ha/year.

⁵ <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-7APFXA>

⁶ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/197204/0052752.pdf>

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A draft forestry Climate Change Action Plan was published for consultation in February 2008 identifying a whole range of adaptation actions required to safeguard woodland ecosystems and the long-term effectiveness of Scotland's forestry sector. The Plan is underpinned by new research⁷, which has identified some major risks and responses around species choice, forest management practices and native woodland conservation strategy.

The foundations for capturing the significance of woodlands and forests in the protection and enhancement of Scotland's water resource have been well established through the rapidly developing River Basin Management Planning process. Likewise, the imminent Flooding Directive has focused attention on the potentially important role of forestry in sustainable flood management.

Forest Habitat Networks are being embedded into regional land-use planning. For example, modelling for forest habitat networks in Edinburgh and the Lothians was published early in 2007⁸. FCS has been closely involved with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in the forestry sector and the potential role for forestry in sustainable flood management is being explored.

Implementing the Native Woodland Survey for Scotland has been a major focus for the year, with over 100,000ha completed, and 60% of the digital base map complete. Despite the grant scheme hiatus as we await approval of the new Scotland Rural Development Plan, over 3000ha of native woodlands were brought into active management. Improving timber receipts allowed an additional £1M to be invested in habitat and species management on the national forest estate.

Joint action programmes for red squirrel, capercaillie and black grouse were established by FCS, SNH and other partners, with substantial within-year work programmes for the latter two. The establishment of squirrelpox virus in the Scottish red squirrel population is a blow and a control strategy is being finalised. The Argyll Rhododendron Action Group is demonstrating how to develop a regional approach to management of invasive exotics.

Cross-cutting developments

Five particular developments over 2007 will have an impact across the Strategy outcomes:

- The 2007 spending review was completed by the incoming Scottish Government providing the basis for government support for forestry over the next three years, and setting an important context for the 2009-2011 Implementation Plan. The spending review settlement reflected the Scottish Government's recognition of the growing importance of the forestry sector. Significant additional resource provision was made

⁷ <http://www.forestresearch.fr/INFD-79RD4S>

⁸ <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestresearch.nsf/ByUnique/INFD-6V4CWF>

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for an increase in woodland creation and for continuation of the Strategic Timber Transport Fund.

- The new Scotland Rural Development Plan was constructed to deliver more integrated support for land-based industries. This will be most obviously manifest in Rural Development Contracts through which a whole suite of economic, environmental and social support measures will be made available to all land-use sectors, with applications assessed against regional priorities. As well as delivering forestry specific incentives, Rural Development Contracts contain a range of business development, natural and cultural heritage, and community benefit options through generic support measures.
- A more integrated approach to land use support is also being pioneered in the SEARS initiative – Scottish Environmental and Rural Services. The organisations involved, the Animal Health Agency, Cairngorms National Park Authority, The Crofters Commission, Deer Commission for Scotland, FCS, Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate are all working together to offer a 'one-stop-shop' for delivery of services to the rural sector. The service will be introduced in 2008.
- In early 2008 Forest Enterprise Scotland published a suite of District Strategic Plans, and a National Framework Strategic Plan, for consultation. These lay out priorities and directions for future management of the national forest estate in accordance with the directions laid out in the Scottish Forestry Strategy (pages 57-58). They also provide the basis for a repositioning programme involving sale of national forest land that is making a low contribution to delivery of public benefits, and investment of these resources in land that has the potential to make a significant contribution to the Scottish Forestry Strategy outcomes.
- New woodland creation has been at historically low levels, due in part to uncertainties around CAP reform and the Scottish Rural Development Plan. The new Scottish Government has indicated a desire to see rates of woodland creation increase to around 10,000ha/year to deliver a whole range of economic, social and environmental benefits and towards achieving the Scottish Forestry Strategy aspiration of 25% woodland cover by the second half of the century.

Progress indicators

The Scottish Forestry Strategy laid out a set of indicators for each key theme. These indicators will be used to gauge progress over the intended 10-year life of the current strategy.

Wherever feasible existing data sets are being used. However, aspects of the Strategy have required the development of new indicators. Some of these are challenging and still under development. A business development indicator on staff turnover in the forestry sector has been dropped because of the burden that would be placed on the sector to collect these data. Details on the definition, interpretation and data source for each indicator can be found at:

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/sfsindicators.pdf/\\$FILE/sfsindicators.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/sfsindicators.pdf/$FILE/sfsindicators.pdf)

Climate change

Indicator	Data source	Last assessed	Value	Reporting interval
Area of new planting	FCS	2005/06	3995ha	1 year
		2006/07	6600ha	
Annual net carbon sequestration by new woodlands	FC	2006	0.36MtCO ₂	1 year
		2007	0.40MtCO ₂	
Installed capacity of wood energy plant (in megawatt thermal and electrical)	FCS	2006	58 MW ^t + 0 MW ^e	1 year
		2007	67 MW ^t + 44 MW ^e	
Number of non-domestic, wood fuelled energy systems installed	FCS	2006	49	1 year
		2007	91	
Area of short rotation coppice grant aided	FCS	2005/06	34ha	1 year
		2006/07	162ha	
Index of roundwood road miles	FR	2006 (provisional)	51 miles/t	3 years

Timber

Indicator	Data source	Last assessed	Value	Reporting interval
Actual wood production	FC	2005	6.9Mm ³ obs	1 year
		2006	6.6Mm ³ obs	
Forecast wood availability in the private sector	FC	2007	3.7Mm ³ obs	5 years
Forecast wood availability from	FC	2007	3.2Mm ³ obs	5 years

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the national forest estate				
Timber's contribution to Scottish gross value-added	FC	2006	£494M (0.6%)	4 years
Sawmill log consumption		2005 2006	2.4Mm ³ 2.4Mm ³	1 year
Sawmill sawnwood output	FC	2005 2006	1.3Mm ³ 1.3Mm ³	1 year
Scottish wood's value share of the UK market	FC	2005 2006	4.4% 5.5%	1 year
Timber use in construction relative to other materials		to be established in 2009		
Area of new coniferous woodland	FCS	2005/06 2006/07	974ha 1954ha	1 year
Area of new broadleaved woodland where timber production is a significant management objective	FCS	2006 2007	84ha 311ha	1 year
Sales of improved nursery stock		2007	22.5M	1 year
Volume of certified timber from Scottish forests	FC	2005 2006	5.7Mm ³ obs 5.4Mm ³ obs	1 year

Business development

Indicator	Data source	Last assessed	Value	Reporting interval
Forestry's contribution to Scottish gross value-added	FC	2006	£760M	4 years
Employment supported by the forestry related sector	FC	2006	38,600 FTE	4 years
Uptake of Rural Development Contracts	FCS	to be established in 2008		1 year
Proportion of statutory development plans recognising woodland benefits	FCS	2007	59%	1 year
Numbers of people enrolling or registering for forestry related short courses, qualifications and Modern Apprenticeship programmes	Lantra	2007	1,542	1 year
Numbers of people completing forestry related short courses,	Lantra	2007	1,070	1 year

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qualifications and Modern Apprenticeship programmes				
Forestry's contribution to Scottish tourism Gross value-added	FCS	2007	£166M	3 years

Community development

Indicator	Data source	Last assessed	Value	Reporting interval
Number of schools involved in woodland based learning activities	FCS	2007	569	1 year
Number of community groups involved in owning or managing woodland	CWA	2002 2007	51 138	3 year
Number of schools providing vocational courses that include forestry related skills	Lantra	2006/7 2007/8	4 13	1 year
Proportion of adults and/or family members who attended an organised learning activity or event linked with Scottish woodlands in the previous 12 months.	FC	2005 2007	10% 15%	2 years
Proportion of adults who have heard or read about Scottish woodlands in the previous 12 months.	FC	2005 2007	26% 58%	2 years
Number of land parcels sold or leased under the National Forest Land Scheme.	FCS	2006/7 2007/8	17 3	1 year
Area of land parcels sold or leased under the National Forest Land Scheme.	FCS	2006/7 2007/8	877 ha 7 ha	1 year
Independent satisfaction rating of community partnerships on the national forest estate.	CWA	2006	70%	3 year

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Access and health

Indicator	Data source	Last assessed	Value	Reporting interval
Proportion of the population with accessible woodland greater than 2 hectares within 500 metres of their home	WTS	2006	23%	3 years
Proportion of the population with accessible woodland greater than 20 hectares within 4 kilometres of their home	WTS	2006	68%	3 years
Proportion of adults (16 years +) who visited woodland in previous 12 months	FC	2005 2007	50% 72%	2 years
Number of visits to national forests	FCS	2006	10M	3 years
Number and length of Core Paths in woodlands	FCS	to be established in 2008		3 years
Proportion of visitors satisfied with woodland recreation provision	FC	2007	58%	3 years
Proportion of people who used woodland, forest or tree covered park for exercise at least twice per week in the last four weeks	Scottish Health Survey	to be established in 2008		1 year
Number of 'volunteer days' associated with woodland activity	FCS	2007	47,444	3 years

Environmental quality

Indicator	Data source	Last assessed	Value	Reporting interval
Length/area of baseline rivers/lochs in forested catchments where ecological quality is of good or high status	SEPA	to be established in 2008		1 year
Length/area of baseline rivers/lochs affected by acidification where forestry is a significant exacerbating factor	SEPA	to be established in 2008		1 year
Number of forestry operations or activities leading to direct pollution of the water environment	SEPA	2006/07	awaited	1 year

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Proportion of woodlands covered by approved forest plans in areas designated for their landscapes	FCS	2006	57%	5 years
Proportion of woodland area managed under low impact silvicultural systems	FCS	2006	4.3%	1 year
Number of current Management Plans for Scheduled Monuments in forests on the National Forest Estate	FCS	2007	321	1 year
Number of monuments in forests protected under a current forest management plan or agreement	FCS	2007	13,679 (54% of all monuments in all woodlands)	1 year

Biodiversity

Indicator	Data source	Last assessed	Value	Reporting interval
Area of native woodland	FCS	2005/06 2006/07	392K ha 398 Kha	1 year
Proportion of woodland SSSIs in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition	SNH	1999-2005 2007	57% 61%	1 year from 2007
Progress against Habitat Action Plan targets for native woodland condition	FCS	2005/06 2006/07	3.3K ha 8.4K ha	1 year
Progress against Habitat Action Plan targets for native woodland restoration	FCS	2005/06 2006/07	0.4K ha 1.2K ha	1 year
Progress against Habitat Action Plan targets for native woodland expansion	FCS	2005/06 2006/07	4.3K ha 4.6K ha	1 year
Proportion of woodland related UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats identified as stable or increasing/ recovering or in favourable condition	SNH	2005	74%	3 years
Area of PAWS with a commitment to restoration under long-term plans	FCS	2007	34.5K ha	3 years
Area of woodland with active, approved deer management plans	FCS	2007	665K ha	1 year
Loss of ancient, semi-natural		to be		

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woodland to development		established from 2011		
Woodland Bird Index	BTO	2006 2007	123 awaited	1 year
Woodland structure: mean deadwood volume	FR	1995-1999	4.4m ³ /ha	6 years
Woodland structure and composition: mean understorey shrub layer cover	FR	1995-1999	17%	6 years
Woodland structure and composition: mean no. tree and shrub species within stands	FR	1995-1999	2.2	6 years
Woodland structure and composition: old growth as a proportion of Scotland's woodland cover	FR	1995-1999	4.8%	6 years

Implementation Plan - key themes

Key theme 1: Climate change

Progress and priorities

Forestry Commission Scotland is consulting on a Climate Change Action Plan outlining steps to increase the contribution and response of Scottish forestry to the challenges of climate change. This will be published later in 2008.

A climate change research programme has continued to improve our understanding of how climate change may affect Scottish forestry with the publication of a research paper '*Impacts of climate change on forestry in Scotland*⁹. In addition the Forestry Commission produced a plant health strategy and contingency plan for serious pest outbreaks in British trees.

A competitive, £3M woodland creation scheme, aimed at helping to tackle climate change through carbon sequestration, wood fuel supply and enhancing forest habitat networks, led to the in-year approval of nearly 2000ha of tree planting across a range of site and woodland types.

The Flooding Issues Advisory Committee's Final Report to the Scottish Government has given impetus to the concept of sustainable flood management. Work is underway to develop the evidence base on how forestry can contribute to catchment level sustainable flood management, with a current synopsis being set out in the paper '*The role of woodland in flood control: a landscape perspective*¹⁰.

Forest Research has developed a survey protocol to enable the monitoring of how far each tonne of Scottish round timber is travelling. An initial estimate from this work showed an average distance travelled of 51 miles. Similar to the concept of food miles, timber miles will be monitored to demonstrate how the haulage of timber compares with other products, study impacts over time of eg rising fuel prices and allow us to factor transport into macro calculations on the carbon balance of Scottish forestry.

Action to help mitigate climate change was set out in the Scottish Government's Biomass Action Plan¹¹ and boosted by some £7.5M spent on carbon saving projects through the Scottish Biomass Support Scheme, and through £850K allocated to demonstration biomass projects by the Highlands and Islands Community Energy Company. The publication of the Renewable Heat Strategy later in 2008, coupled with the Sustainable Procurement Strategy, which was nearing completion by year-end, will provide further direction for mitigation measures.

⁹ Impacts of Climate Change on forests and Forestry in Scotland – a Synopsis, 2008, Duncan Ray, Ecology Division, Forest Research.

¹⁰ The role of woodland in flood control: a landscape perspective', 2007, T.R Nisbet and H Thomas.

¹¹ www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/12095912/0

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A Wood Fuel Taskforce was convened by the Environment Minister in July 2007 to investigate how to better access wood fuel resources from woodland, energy crops, landscaping activities and waste schemes¹². Its report to the Minister in January 2008 contained 26 recommendations aimed at boosting bioenergy in Scotland.

For the period of this plan, effort will be focused on increasing forestry's preparedness for climate change and in achieving the forest sector carbon saving targets that form part of Scotland's climate change programme, and any subsequent measures to support the forthcoming Scottish Climate Change Bill and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Scotland. To increase preparedness the research evidence base will be improved to enable informed decisions about sustainable forest management, increasing the resilience of forest ecosystems, environmental protection (such as sustainable flood management techniques) and reducing our carbon footprint. The FC will lead a co-ordinated programme of raising awareness about forestry's role in responding to climate change.

What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Increasing awareness of the forestry sector's contribution

- Publish a forestry sector Climate Change Action Plan (FCS).
- Publish a deforestation policy for Scotland (FCS).
- Complete a survey to establish a baseline for monitoring Scottish roundwood timber miles (FR).

Adapting to climate change

- Consult on the revision of the UK Forestry Standard and relevant Guidelines, ensuring they reflect forest management requirements in Scotland and how forestry can increase its contribution to tackling climate change (FC).
- Ensure woodland options form part of catchment-scale integrated land use flood management studies in Scotland (SGEQD).
- Complete the coverage of published GIS-based maps of forest habitat networks at national and regional scale (FR).
- Develop a contingency plan for dealing with catastrophic windblow in Scottish forests (FCS).

Mitigating climate change

- Establish an oversight and reporting structure for implementing the recommendations of the Wood Fuel Taskforce (FCS).
- Implement forestry-related recommendations in the Biomass Action Plan and the forthcoming Renewable Heat Action Plan (FCS).
- Ensure that implementation of the FCS Timber Development Programme is linked into the Scottish Government's climate change programme (FCS).
- Establish a network of energy forestry demonstration sites (FCS).

Increasing carbon sequestration and retention

- Establish a forest carbon assurance scheme (FC).

¹² <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-7APFXA>

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- Establish a robust carbon sequestration monitoring and reporting framework (FCS).
- Publish a code of practice for woodland carbon offsetting (FC).
- Introduce new woodland creation support measures through Rural Development Contracts to contribute to achieving woodland expansion of around 10,000ha per annum (FCS and SGRPID).
- Achieve 500 ha of woodland creation on the National Forest Estate (FES).

An outline programme for 2009-2011

Increasing awareness of the forestry sector's contribution

- Publish the Scottish Climate Change Bill and establish the required delivery infrastructure.
- Promote national coverage of a new generation of Indicative Forestry Strategies as a basis for forest expansion, through updated guidance on planning and forestry.
- Through River Basin Management Plans, highlight the role of forests and woodlands in protecting and enhancing Scotland's water resource.
- Using UKCIP 08 scenarios, review the potential impacts of climate change on forestry in Scotland.

Adapting to climate change

- Publish the revised UK Forestry Standard and relevant Guidelines.
- Support landscape scale ecosystem approaches to biodiversity enhancement through woodland creation and the appropriate management of existing woodlands.
- Implement a focused programme of research on forestry and climate change, and incorporate findings into policy development and best practice guidance.
- Contribute to implementation and monitoring of catchment-scale integrated land use flood management studies in Scotland.
- Establish a better understanding of the role of lower impact silvicultural systems in Scotland as a climate change adaptation measure.

Mitigating climate change

- Monitor progress against the forestry-related actions set out in the Biomass Action Plan, Renewable Heat Strategy and the recommendations of the Wood Fuel Taskforce, initiating further action if required.
- Monitor and review the climate change contribution of the FCS Timber Development Programme.

Increasing carbon sequestration and retention

- Monitor the uptake of Rural Development Contracts and adjust if necessary to promote the creation of the desired quantity and range of woodland types.
- Purchase sufficient land to enable an annual programme of 2000ha (net) of appropriate public benefit woodland creation on the national forest estate.
- Produce regularly updated data, using nationally accepted protocols, on the contribution of Scottish forestry to Scotland's greenhouse gas balance.

Key theme 2: Timber

Progress and priorities

Scotland's 1.3M hectares of woodland and forest currently produce some 6.6 million cubic metres of softwood round timber per annum. This harvest is forecast to exceed 8.9Mm³ by 2016. Currently over 70% of this is processed in Scotland. Supporting 26,000 jobs and generating £500M in gross added value, the timber industry provides an important contribution to the Scottish economy and the delivery of the Scottish Government strategic objectives. Analysis of industry statistics suggests that with timber consumption at 6.5Mm³. Scotland is *de facto* self-sufficient in wood related material.

The Timber Development Programme was launched in 2007. It aims to contribute to the sustainable development of Scotland's economy by enabling the timber and processing sector to find the highest value and most appropriate end market for Scotland's timber. Initial work has been completed on improving the Scottish timber production forecast and a series of workshops will be held later in the year to discuss the current findings. Three Scottish hardwoods processors have achieved chain of custody certification.

The first phase of the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme concluded in March 2008. Supported projects will facilitate the sustainable transport of 9.5M tonne of timber over the next 10 years in rural Scotland benefiting local communities and the environment.

A range of reports has been published to encourage greater understanding and use of timber to explore areas that will encourage more use of timber. These include, properties of external cladding, future impact of climate change on stand intervention, increasing the recovery of quality timber and further research on the potential of Scots pine in the construction industry. The major full colour publication 'New Timber Architecture in Scotland' seeks to inspire and encourage use of timber in the full range of building types.

Priorities for the Plan period include:

- Improving the accuracy of the wood production forecast from Scotland's forests. An Industry Working Group will be set-up to determine the most efficient and effective methods of incorporating data from the private sector forests.
- Re-launching the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme after making any relevant adjustments to improve the scheme.
- Encouraging the creation of both conifer and broadleaved productive woodlands under the new Rural Development Contracts.
- Developing co-operation between the timber sector and research providers on ways to increase use of timber and improve quality of timber products.

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What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Promoting predictable and stable timber supplies

- Establish a private sector Working Group to incorporate more accurate data from privately owned forests into the next national production forecast (FCS).
- Complete an assessment of the contribution that remote sensing might make to the production forecasting process (FCS and FR).
- Complete an initial round of scenario planning to consider the impacts of climate change on Scotland's future timber resources (FR).
- Commission a report into the value of, and benefits from, a review of sawmill efficiency using Lean Management systems (SE, ConFor and UKFPA).

Encouraging more use of timber

- Support the Wood for Good campaign and other activities where there is a need to increase awareness of timber products and characteristics, including the potential uses for Scottish timber and timber products (FCS).
- Publish an annual report outlining progress of the Timber Development Programme and future programme of activities (FCS).
- Support research into innovative uses of wood for high-end value markets (FCS and SFIC).
- Commission global market scanning for new ideas and products to increase the amount of timber used in construction (FCS and SFIC).
- Collate and commission, with others, work comparing the carbon impact of wood and other construction materials in use in a range of building materials (FCS).

Increasing timber supply chain efficiency

- Publish a Strategic Timber Transport Scheme activity report (FCS).
- Continue support for the Timber Transport project officer post to lead on timber transport development work (FCS, SE and ConFor).
- Commission work to examine remaining timber transport challenges and, where required to identify issues and make recommendations for solutions (ConFor and STTF).
- Focus Strategic Timber Transport Scheme resources on high priority infrastructure projects (STTF and FCS).
- Commission a study to improve industry understanding of the motivation of private sector growers to bring their timber to market (ConFor and SE).
- Commission a study to investigate the perceived shortfall in skilled labour in the supply chain and offer options to mitigate threats and realise opportunities (ConFor and SE)

Developing the hardwood sector

- Establish hardwood demonstration plots to highlight the issues in managing hardwoods for quality timber production (FES and FCS).
- Undertake research to provide forest nurseries and growers with timber quality standards and the impact of cultural practices on hardwood timber (FR).

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- Aid the development of a hardwood strategy through supporting a conference for the hardwood sector (FCS, SE and ASHS).

An outline programme for 2009-2011

Promoting predictable and stable timber supplies

- Revise the system of valuing timber using new technology linked to end markets.
- Determine appropriate actions within the forest sector for the segregation and use of recycled wood.
- Complete a scoping study into the possibility of certification bodies agreeing to a lower cost approach to certification where woods are in approved long-term forest plans.
- Review comparative carbon capture and conservation under different silvicultural systems.

Encouraging more use of timber

- Through consultation with the industry hold a workshop to review the progress of current R&D, consider market needs and agree appropriate research and other actions to overcome barriers to realising new market opportunities.
- Support CPET's work on timber sustainability assessment and information provision.
- Explore specific opportunities for increased use of home grown timber and timber products such as the 2014 Commonwealth Games.
- Commission a report on changes in global market situations that could impact on markets and prices for Scotland's timber products.
- Continue to support research into innovative uses of wood for high-end value markets.
- Produce comprehensive data on the carbon impact of growing and bringing Scottish timber to the market.

Increasing timber supply chain efficiency

- Develop a strategy for efficient and effective timber transport involving non-road network elements from remote areas of Scotland.
- Evaluate logistics optimisation systems in forestry and seek to extend the use within Scotland of any successful models.
- Identify and support opportunities to enhance workforce skills in the timber supply chain and promote uptake of existing training opportunities.

Developing the hardwood sector

- Undertake local initiatives to engage with owners of under-managed farm woods and those in areas most suitable for expansion of productive woodlands.
- Publish written guidance on managing small woodlands for growing quality timber.
- Enable the establishment of broadleaved seed orchards from selected material.
- Produce improved forecasts to estimate total biomass production from hardwood stands.
- Organise and support events to improve understanding of best practice in growing quality broadleaves and hardwood marketing.

Key theme 3: Business development

Progress and priorities

FCS has been working closely with colleagues in the Scottish Government on a rural development programme that addresses the needs of Scotland's forest industries, delivered through Rural Development Contracts. Under the Scottish Government's Scottish Biomass Support Scheme, a total of 74 projects have been supported. A new Scottish Working Woods label was launched at Touchwood in Dingwall to support the rural forest products sector.

A number of important initiatives have been developed in partnership with tourism and economic development agencies. For example FCS hosted the 2007 world downhill mountain bike championship in Fort William, Scotland is to host the World Mountain Bike Conference on Sustainability in 2008 and the Go Ape facility was opened in Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. A national valuation of forest-related tourism was published as well as a study of forest tourism employment in South Scotland¹³. The publication of a Framework for Recreation on the National Forest Estate will help increase the contribution recreation investments to economic development. Finding ways for woodland owners can capture direct revenue from tourism is a continuing challenge.

A new Sector Skills Agreement was published, and the Trees and Timber Industry Action Plan has been agreed. Lantra launched a new 'one-stop-shop' for forestry courses. The modern forestry apprenticeship scheme took on 16 apprentices and a second structural fund bid for expansion across Scotland is in development. Four Forest School road shows were held in 2007 to encourage school leavers to consider the forest industry as a career choice. Forest Districts provided partnership support to several schools providing vocational education in rural skills. FCS also supported Rural Development Initiatives ForStart: HI project encouraging new entrants into the private sector. The shortage of skills remains an issue for the industry and a priority for this theme. The Forest Education Initiative, Modern Apprenticeship Programme, and the Sector Skills Agreement will all be used to help meet the sector's skills needs.

Forestry sector business confidence is growing. A key priority is for the Forest Industries Cluster Leadership Group and the Regional Clusters to effectively support business development, in partnership with Scottish Enterprise. Co-ordinated working between FCS, industry, and the Enterprise, Energy and Tourism Directorate on biomass energy has been important in promoting the balanced development of the demand and supply sides of the sector. Implementing Wood Fuel Taskforce recommendations and publication of a Renewable Heat Strategy will help sustain progress.

A range of new measures in the Scottish Rural Development Programme will offer opportunities for forestry business diversification. Encouraging uptake in the forestry sector and providing support and advice in the early stages of the new programme will be important.

¹³ <http://www.forestryscotland.com/>

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What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Realising economic potential

- Launch and promote a new suite of rural business development grants within Rural Development Contracts (FCS).
- Create a unified Rural Development Contract delivery service (FCS, SNH, SGRPID).
- Publish a policy for supporting the use of non-timber forest products on the national forest estate (FCS).
- Set up a Wood Fuel Taskforce implementation group (FCS).
- Publish an FCS business development strategy (FCS).

Contributing to rural development

- Publish woodland crofts section of the National Forest Land Scheme guidance (FCS)
- Appoint a woodland crofts project officer (FCS).
- Provide a network of biomass development officers (FCS).
- Promote the development of a Woodfuel Suppliers Association to strengthen the role of local rural businesses in growing the wood fuel market (FCS and SFIC).
- Publish an Energy Forestry Handbook and Practice Guides (FCS).

Tourism

- Appoint a tourism officer responsible for the development of tourism on the national forest estate (FES).
- Establish phase 2 of the woodland tourism project (FES, SE, VS).
- Provide '100k Welcomes' training for all FCS recreation and tourism staff (FES).
- Develop business models for specific opportunities for generating revenue from tourism (FES).
- Prepare an action plan to support the recreation and tourism framework for the national forest estate, identifying potential opportunities for the private sector (FES).
- Evaluate the contribution to the economy of the Touchwood programme (FR).
- Develop improved viewing facilities for sea eagles (M&IT, RSPB, SNH).

Skills

- Do a gap analysis of trainers included on the 'one-stop-shop' and promote to those that are missing (Lantra).
- Provide information for staff and partners on how best to support the forestry element of vocational qualifications in secondary schools (FCS).
- Improve the availability and uptake of appropriate training in the sector, through funded training schemes where appropriate (FCS, SE).
- Expand the forestry modern apprenticeship scheme (FES).
- Conduct a training needs analysis of Forestry Commission Scotland staff (FCS).
- Develop a competence framework for forest harvesting (Lantra).
- Produce a proposal for provision for an intermediate step between employment and volunteering for those using volunteering as an alternative way into work (FES).
- Refresh careers guidance so that it better reflects modern day forestry (FEI).
- Publish best practice guidelines on work experience placements (FCS).

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An outline programme for 2009-2011

Realising Economic Potential

- Promote innovation, leading edge research and development, collaboration and competitiveness in sector development through mechanisms like the Scottish Forest Industries Cluster.
- Raise awareness of the sorts of sites needed for national and regional scale timber processing developments.
- Build on the forestry sector's exemplar role in sustainable development, tackling climate change and conservation of biodiversity.
- Develop online e-commerce systems for the bioenergy sector.
- Review implementation of the Woodfuel Taskforce recommendations and scope further action to increase effective use of woodfuel resources.

Contributing to rural development

- Embed a robust research programme on energy crops into the energy forestry demonstration network.
- Co-ordinate biomass marketing programme to improve accessibility, consistency and reliability of information about the sector and its supply streams.
- Improve the evidence base on ways to increase economic benefit from woods in and around communities.
- Facilitate the provision of sites for affordable housing, other community facilities and, where applicable, woodland crofts.

Tourism

- Promote modernisation and upgrading of the woodland related recreation and tourism infrastructure where this will make the most significant economic gains for the local, and national, economy.
- Ensure forests contribute fully to the quality and breadth of Scotland's growing eco-tourism sector.
- Promote business development opportunities based on woodland tourism.

Skills

- Deliver the Trees and Timber Industry action plan and the Sector Skills Agreement.
- Facilitate use by the forestry sector of the One Stop Shop for training provision.
- Continue supporting forestry content in secondary school vocational qualifications.
- Continue with the modern apprenticeships on the national forest estate and investigate how apprenticeships and other new entrant programmes might be supported throughout the sector.
- Engage with higher and further education providers to help ensure that the forestry content of courses as relevant as possible to modern day forestry.
- Expand the coverage of competence frameworks for the forest industries.

Key theme 4: Community development

Progress and priorities

The Woods In and Around Towns (WIAT) initiative remains a key delivery mechanism for “improving quality of life”. WIAT has exceeded most of its targets but needs to do more on regenerating derelict, under-used or neglected land. WIAT will evolve to reflect the equalities agenda, green networks and other priorities.

Sound evaluation work is often undertaken but evaluation needs to be better embedded into delivery. The “Valuation of the Socio-economic Benefits of Forestry for People” research will be completed and further work will follow.

Interaction with the land-use planning system will be a key work area, building on progress in 2007/08. We now see this as a significant delivery mechanism particularly in the context of modernisation of planning and empowerment of local government.

For “education and life-long learning” we need to consolidate outdoor learning in the Curriculum for Excellence and woodland’s role in delivery. The emphasis will be on developing the confidence of teachers to use local woods for local learning with Forest School as one option. Introduction of the Scottish Environment and Rural Service will change the way we work. The Forest Education Initiative (FEI) is a key partnership. The partners need to continue to work together to secure long-term financial support.

Forestry contributed significantly to Scotland’s Year of Highland Culture 2007. The focus for 2008/09 will be Scotland’s Year of Homecoming 2009. FCS has articulated how it sees both volunteering and woodland art being used to deliver social benefits. This needs to be more widely communicated and used to support delivery.

FCS will develop a framework for community engagement at all levels of participation. The National Forest Land Scheme (NFLS) will be embedded in this framework. NFLS was reviewed in 2007 and found to be functioning effectively. Reconfiguration to accommodate woodland crofts is an opportunity to make improvements to the scheme. For FCS, staff capacity building will be needed to work within the framework.

The programme to reposition the national forest estate has important community engagement elements in relation to land sales and creation of new woodland. The increasing capacity of the Community Woodland Association (CWA) is helping forestry to respond to these opportunities, and will help the community sector make best use of new support measures within the Scotland Rural Development Plan.

In 2007/08 legislative change to strengthen our ability to lease land to community groups was not taken forward. Current indications are that there is a sufficient range of mechanisms to meet community aspirations, but this will be kept under review.

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What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Help to improve the quality of life and well-being of people across Scotland

- Deliver WIAT targets for active woodland management, woodland creation, green networks and promoting appropriate use of woodland (FCS).
- Increase coverage of strategic greenspace partnerships and secure linkage of WIAT into the framework and action plan for each partnership (GS).
- Sustain or develop partnerships with urban local authorities to deliver WIAT (FCS).
- Facilitate the development of a partnership to deliver a central belt green network if approved in the national planning framework (FCS).
- Initiate research into the role of woodland in urban place making (FR).
- Review Scottish Government Planning Circular 9/1999 Indicative Forestry Strategies and issue updated guidance on planning and forestry (SGDBE).
- Publish final report of the "Valuation of the Socio-economic Benefits of Forestry for People in Scotland" research programme (FR).
- Publish and pilot a framework for evaluation of social forestry initiatives (FCS).

Develop forestry's role in education and lifelong learning

- Produce joint District – Conservancy education strategic plans (FCS).
- Secure funding for FEI regional development/co-ordination posts (FEI).
- Deliver Continuous Professional Development for learning in woodlands (FEI).
- Ensure learning materials are compatible with a Curriculum for Excellence (FEI and FCS).
- Review the way domestic forestry is presented in secondary school examined subjects (FCS).
- Hold an FEI networking event on role of forestry in combating climate change (FEI).
- Refresh "Woodlands for Learning", the education strategy for forestry (FCS)
- Hold a workshop to review forestry's role in life-long learning (SGED).
- Publish case studies of volunteering on the National Forest Estate (FCS).
- Expand volunteering opportunities on the National Forest Estate as a mechanism for gaining skills for work or life (FES).
- Initiate a pilot on volunteering in woodland by older people (CSV and FES).
- Pilot the Investing In Volunteers standard in a Forest District (VDS and FES).
- Develop forestry's contribution to Scotland's Year of Homecoming 2009 (FCS).
- Create links with forestry during development and delivery of the Public Arts Strategy (SAC).
- Complete a review of public art on the national forest estate (FC).

Enhance forestry's engagement with communities

- Publish a new framework for community engagement in forestry (FCS).
- Refresh the FCS community engagement training package (FC).
- Commit £500K of support through the Forestry for People Challenge Fund (FCS).
- Include social enterprise and support for community business development in the FCS Business Development Strategy (FCS).

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- Update and communicate guidance on funding for social forestry in the SRDP including LEADER (CWA).

Support community ownership and management on the national forest estate, where this will bring increased benefits

- Publish revised NFLS guidance incorporating a woodland crofts option (FCS).

An outline programme for 2009-2011

Help to improve the quality of life and well-being of people across Scotland

- Deliver WIAT targets and activities to evolve WIAT in line with Government priorities.
- Engage with the land-use planning system to facilitate appropriate woodland creation, reduced woodland loss and a broader realisation of forestry benefits.
- Promote recognition of the full range of potential benefits of forestry in a new generation of Indicative Forestry Strategies and linkage to statutory development plans.
- Review Forestry Commission Handbook 11, "Creating and managing woodlands around towns".
- Roll out the framework for evaluation of social forestry initiatives.
- Develop forestry's role in education and lifelong learning
- Support teachers to use woodland for outdoor learning as a normal part of education.
- Engage with the education system to promote the role of forestry in providing transferable skills.
- Deliver the refreshed education strategy for forestry.
- Establish forestry's niche in contributing to lifelong learning.
- Identify forestry contributions to national and regional cultural programmes.
- Review our policy on the arts in about or using woodland.
- Publish an FCS Gaelic Language Plan.

Enhance forestry's engagement with communities

- Roll out the community engagement training package to FCS staff and external stakeholders.
- Develop the links between business development and community development.
- Review support mechanisms for the community woodland sector.
- Publish Forests for People Guidelines.

Support community ownership and management on the national forest estate, where this will bring increased benefits

- Support community ownership and management through the new framework for community engagement.

Key theme 5: Access and health

Progress and priorities

Understanding is improving on how to help disadvantaged groups make more of woodland based on the principle of least restrictive access. FCS audited application of the Disability Discrimination Act to woodland facilities, developed training materials and highlighted resources and support mechanisms. A disabled access audit for access grants was piloted. Equality is a cross-cutting issue but specific actions relating to this priority rest in the Access and Health theme.

The 'woods for health' programme was launched during the year based on a growing partnership between the forestry and health sectors, and access organisations such as Paths to Health. A focus was using the media to raise awareness of opportunities to use woodlands, linked to a range of Active Woods events. The partnership approach will continue to develop as a new 'woods for health programme' draws in a wider range of agencies, NGOs, local authorities and health professionals. Areas for further development are engagement with mental health, health inequalities and children's health, eg: through Forest School; forest kindergarten and natural play.

The WIAT initiative has surpassed its targets in delivering recreation, access and health and opportunities close to where most people live. See the Community Development theme for more on further development of WIAT.

FCS published a Framework for Access, Recreation and Tourism on the National Forest Estate that will provide direction for our investment in these areas on the National Forest Estate.

Under access legislation we have seen development of core path plans and progress on dealing with issues such as wild camping. The countryside organisations are working ever more closely over policy development, research, evaluation and delivery. SNH is the lead body on communicating the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. FCS' role is to support this work by focussing on specific user groups and by using our expertise to help resolve particular issues.

The focus for 2008-11 remains on the priority areas arising from principles of the Scottish Forestry Strategy:

- 'forestry for and with people': continuous communication to potential users that woodland and greenspace are safe settings for health promoting physical activity, embracing equality by encouraging appropriate use by the full diversity of the Scottish population;
- 'managed in a culture of consultation and working in partnership': working in partnership with the health sector and local organisations to deliver accessible woodlands near to where people live and work;
- 'a broad recognition of the health and social benefits': our focus for research is to understand how best to manage woodland to encourage health promoting physical

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activity. We will evaluate our activities and communicate findings to relevant audiences particularly the health sector.

What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Making access easier

- Complete field based research on forestry and inclusive access (FCS).
- Develop an environmental audit tool for walkability of woodland paths in partnership with SPARcoll (FCS).
- Develop a programme of training, best practice and awareness raising for recreation providers that embeds the principles of least restrictive access (PfA).
- Collate and communicate information on the preferences of equality target groups for woodland use (FC).
- Develop an equality impact assessment mechanism and web-area for recording assessments (FC).
- Develop and deliver an equality-training programme for staff (FC).
- Secure a long-term basis for the Space for People Woodland Access Standard data in Scotland by developing an on-line updating facility (WTS).
- Undertake a programme of activity to better communicate the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to mountain bikers (FCS).

Helping to improve the nation's health

- Launch Phase 2 of the Woods for Health programme with additional focus on greenspace networks, mental health, health inequalities, and children's health (FCS).
- Incorporate into the Woods for Health programme actions for the national forest estate focussing on key Districts (FES).
- Promote urban traffic free routes through woodland paths and develop a social marketing strategy to raise awareness at a key pilot site (FCS).
- Pilot a framework for evaluation of social forestry initiatives focussed on health (FCS).

Enabling people to enjoy woodlands

- Review the role of Woodland Parks on the national forest estate (FES).
- Provide information for woodland owners on funding for access in the Scotland Rural Development Programme (FCS).
- Review guidance produced by Forestry Commission England on natural play, amend and disseminate for a Scottish audience (FCS).
- Disseminate links to guidance on good practice for young people visiting woodlands to schools and other supporters and deliverers of outdoor activities for young people (FCS).

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Making access easier

- Focus on establishing new woodlands and improving access in woodlands in priority areas as identified by the Space for People Woodland Access Standard.
- Review the issues and any action required for public rights of way in forests.
- Provide forestry input to SNH's work promoting and monitoring implementation and effectiveness of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Helping to improve the nation's health

- Explore the idea of woodland 'centres of well-being' in city regions.
- Focus health research on understanding how best to manage woodlands to encourage health promoting physical activity.
- Work with the health sector to communicate to health professionals the role of woodland and greenspace for health.

Enabling people to enjoy woodlands

- Focus on local everyday access for health and on promoting recreation as part of tourism business development where they will have the most public benefit.
- Establish an inventory of the places and settings of regional and national importance for outdoor recreation to enable agencies to better plan investment and users to more easily find out where they can go for outdoor recreation.
- Review experience and develop best practice in financially and environmentally sustainable provision of outdoor recreation.

Key theme 6: Environmental quality

Progress and priorities

The ongoing major review of the UK Forestry Standard and guidelines is particularly important to the environmental quality theme, especially through the Forests and the Landscape Guidelines, Forests and the Historic Environment Guidelines and Forests and Soils Guidelines. Likewise the implementation of the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) Regulations 2005 and the Water Framework Directive, for which a series of regional seminars were undertaken by FCS and SEPA. Forest Research published an 'Update on Addressing the Contribution of Upland Forestry to Surface Water Acidification'.

The Scottish Landscape Forum submitted its report 'Scotland's Living Landscapes – Places for People' to Scottish Ministers March 2007. The report presents the Forum's recommendations for the future well-being, management and use of Scotland's landscape resource. Rural Development Contract (RDC) measures have been developed to promote increased diversity in woodlands, particularly through restructuring in accordance with a long-term forest plan. A package of support and training resources are being developed to increase the contribution of woodlands in degraded and unsightly urban and peri-urban environments.

Rural Development Contract (RDC) measures have also been developed for the conservation and enhancement of the tree and woodland component of Designed and Historic Landscapes. Provision has been made to secure archaeological advice on proposed afforestation schemes. A Working Group of Historic Scotland (HS), The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) and FCS is establishing baseline data and monitoring processes for forestry and historic environment indicators.

Priorities for this implementation plan period are:

- Building up the evidence base of the potential role that forestry can play in protecting and enhancing the quality of Scotland's water, soil and air resource.
- Raising the level of awareness and appreciation of all of Scotland's landscapes for their contribution towards health and well-being, community regeneration, tourism, rural diversification, and economic development.
- Bringing together all those with an interest and knowledge of our cultural heritage to increase the sharing, enhancement and further development of information on Scotland's historic environment.

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What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Help to protect Scotland's water, soil and air resource

- Hold regional forestry sector seminars to support implementation of water quality management regulations (FCS and SEPA).
- Publish the draft Scottish and Solway Tweed River Basin Management Plans (SEPA).
- Ensure woodland options form part of catchment-scale integrated land use flood management studies in Scotland (SQEQD).
- Publish the Scottish Soils Strategy (SGEQD).
- Consult on the new Forests and Soils Guidelines (FC).

Contribute to Scotland's diverse and attractive landscapes

- Consult on the new Forests and the Landscape Guidelines (FC).
- Develop landscape guidance for Rural Development Contract applicants (FCS).
- Review the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Local Forestry Framework (LL&TNP).
- Carry out research exploring the values people and communities place on the 'special qualities' of their landscapes (SNH).
- Implement forestry related recommendations from the Scottish Landscape Forum's report to Ministers Scotland's Living Landscapes – Places for People (FCS).
- Deliver 100% Forest Design Plan coverage on the National Forest Estate (FES).
- Make available materials for training courses in urban woodland landscape design (FCS).
- Develop guidance that fosters the restoration and management of the wood pasture and woodland grazing cultural farm landscape (FCS).
- Develop and deliver appropriate guidance on view management, promoting the SNH View from the Road approach (SNH and FCS).
- Develop guidance on forestry in National Scenic Areas (SGRD).

Help to manage Scotland's historic environment and its interpretation and enjoyment

- Consult on the new Forests and the Historic Environment Guidelines (FC).
- Develop and deliver training courses and guidance that promotes the identification and stewardship of the historic environment in woodlands for Rural Development Contract applicants (HS and FCS).
- Make provision in Rural Development Contracts for grant support for historic environment appraisal (SGRPID).
- Review availability of national, regional and local historic environment advice (FCS).
- Develop guidance on the sympathetic management of trees and woodlands in designed landscapes, including ancient and heritage trees (FCS and HS).
- Establish a working group of agencies and organisations to improve sharing of historic environment data (HS).

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An outline programme for 2009-2011

Help to protect Scotland's water, soil and air resource

- Publish the new Forests and Soils Guidelines.
- Publish and promote the new Forest Guidelines to support the Water Framework Directive process.
- Agree a programme of forestry measures as part of the River Basin Management Planning process.
- Support the implementation of Scottish Soils Strategy recommendations.
- Publish updated guidance on site selection for sustainable wood fuel recovery and publish a report on the recycling of wood ash to forests.

Contribute to Scotland's diverse and attractive landscapes

- Publish and promote the new Forests and the Landscape Guidelines, and develop and deliver associated education and training.
- Review and update Scotland's Landscape Character Assessment using the 2002 Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland.
- Deliver a 100% increase in the area of privately owned woodlands covered by approved Forest Plans.
- Contribute to the preparation of National Scenic Area management strategies and National Park landscape strategies to ensure forestry aspects adequately reflect landscape characteristics and sensitivities.

Help to manage Scotland's historic environment and its interpretation and enjoyment

- Publish and promote the new Forests and the Historic Environment Guidelines, and develop and deliver associated education, training and practical guidance.
- Initiate a Scottish-wide project to identify and record all non-inventory historic gardens and designed landscapes.
- Promote the continued development of *The Ancient Tree Hunt* and its integration with other land data sets.
- Promote and facilitate the use of the Historic Landuse Assessment tool.
- Develop a shared means to integrate all data sources of the historic environment through the SEARS initiative and the Information Communications Technology project.
- Develop guidance that promotes the stewardship of all Scheduled Monuments under an agreed management plan (HS and FCS).
- Carry out research into the history of Scotland's woodland culture (HS and HEACS).

Key theme 7: Biodiversity

Progress and priorities

During 2007 FCS, SNH and DCS developed a programme to focus effort on designated woodland sites in unfavourable condition. Although it was a year with no new grant activity due to development of the Scottish Rural Development Plan (SRDP), some 3000ha of work to improve the conditions of native woodlands was funded under the Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme. FCS published promotional advice to encourage landowners to manage, restore and expand their native woods, and developed guidance on use of new SRDP grants to support native woodland work.

Forest Research undertook a regional analysis of predicted native woodland HAP types within forest habitat networks to inform regional implementation. Forest Research also published national and regional Forest Habitat Network analyses based on modelling work over the last four years, and held a users workshop to test and refine guidance.

Joint action programmes for three key woodland species: capercaillie, black grouse and red squirrel, were developed by FCS, SNH and other partners. Capercaillie fence-marking and habitat improvement work has continued apace and black grouse inventory and management work is underway in trial sites on the National Forest Estate. Both species will be specifically targeted by the SRDP through guidance from the RSPB.

A report on selection of red squirrel candidate stronghold sites has been prepared for consultation. Unfortunately squirrelpox virus has become established in parts of southern Scotland and has affected some red squirrels. Modelling and monitoring work led by SNH is informing development of a grey squirrel control strategy.

FCS has developed a biodiversity programme setting out its own priorities for action. Work has progressed on the Scottish Forestry Strategy's biodiversity indicator, closely linked to those of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. FCS and SNH funded British Trust for Ornithology to expand the Scottish woodland birds index through enhanced sampling.

Over 100,000ha of the Native Woodlands Survey of Scotland has been completed, and 60% of the national digital woodland map completed. Twenty-five surveyors have now been recruited and trained.

2007-08 was the first year of the strategy and the Implementation Plan theme focussed significantly on planning work. In 2008-11 the focus on delivery will grow. The emphasis on milestones for broader actions and improving our evidence base and best practice guidance will also increase through the period. Three strategic issues have been identified for additional effort:

- Habitat network planning tools and guidance for integrated land uses planning.
- The use of native species in climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Larger scale action on non-native invasive species such as rhododendron.

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What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Help reverse biodiversity decline by targeted action

- Bring at least 3,000ha of designated woodland features and 3000ha of other native woodlands into management towards favourable condition (FCS).
- Bring at least 1,000ha of non-native PAWS into restoration towards native woodland to help meet HAP targets and develop habitat networks (FCS).
- Publish costed programmes for key woodland species: juniper, pearl bordered fritillary and chequered skipper butterfly (FCS).
- Publish a final set of red squirrel stronghold sites after consultation (SNH).
- Develop advice and guidance for SRDP applicants on woodland management for priority conservation species and invasive non-native species (SNH).
- Develop and implement Rural Development Contract measures and guidance for restoration of open habitats (FCS).
- Recognise the importance of woodlands of high conservation value in revised Scottish planning policy on natural heritage (SGDBE).
- Publish revised guidance on use of Ancient Woodlands Inventory (SNH).

Reverse biodiversity decline by broader actions

- Address woodland biodiversity impacts of deer in the forthcoming wild deer strategy (DCS).
- Create 4,500ha of native woodland to help meet HAP targets and develop habitat networks (FCS).

Increase awareness of woodland biodiversity

- With partners publish proposals for increasing awareness and enjoyment of woodland biodiversity and encouraging greater focus on woodland biodiversity by the education sector, based on a review of capacity and needs (FCS).

Improve knowledge for better decision-making

- Consult on the new Forests and Biodiversity Guidelines (FC).
- Complete 100% of the digital woodland map of Scotland, as a basis for fieldwork for both the Native Woodlands Survey of Scotland and the new National Inventory of Woodlands and Trees (FR).
- Publish the HaRPPS (Habitats and Rare, Protected and Priority Species) decision support tool, and provide ongoing support and servicing for its use (FR).
- Review the fit of FC funded biodiversity research programmes and linkage to other research programmes to best meet Scotland's biodiversity priorities (FC).

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An outline programme for 2009-2011

Help reverse biodiversity decline by targeted action

- Bring a cumulative total of 12,000ha of designated woodland features and 12,000ha of other native woodlands into management towards favourable condition.
- Bring a cumulative total of 4000ha non-native PAWS sites into restoration towards native woodlands and provide a targeted programme of advice.
- Carry out a programme of management for black grouse in two trial areas and begin implementation of action plans for key butterfly species and juniper.
- Complete the national red squirrel survey, publish and start to implement a grey squirrel control strategy and develop strategic plans for red squirrel stronghold sites.
- Publish proposals for open habitat restoration on the NFE.
- Provide guidance for planners on woodland biodiversity issues and assess the feasibility of using digitised spatial data to monitor losses of woodlands of high conservation value to development.

Reverse biodiversity decline by broader actions

- Strengthen deer management planning and monitoring to achieve biodiversity outcomes, particularly on designated sites.
- Create a cumulative total of at least 18,000ha of new or converted native woodland to help meet HAP targets and develop habitat networks.
- Mainstream the use of decision support tools for planning multi-functional habitat networks and embed forest habitat networks in indicative forestry strategies.
- Publish best practice guidance on diversifying planted forests for biodiversity.
- Develop one or more major landscape restoration demonstration projects.
- Extend the landscape scale approach to rhododendron management piloted in Argyll.
- Promote identification and management of seed stands in Scotland for native tree and shrub species planting.

Increase awareness of woodland biodiversity

- Include woodlands and forestry in a Scottish biodiversity awareness campaign under Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.
- Publish biodiversity related guidance for planning and managing urban/post industrial woods in green networks.

Improve knowledge for better decision-making

- Complete two-thirds of the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland and initiate the second National Inventory of Woodlands and Trees in Scotland.
- Publish research on native woodlands and climate change mitigation/adaptation; converting plantations to native woodland and forest landscape restoration indicators.
- Develop a woodland grazing management planning and monitoring toolkit.

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South Scotland

(Borders, Dumfries and Galloway and part of Ayrshire SEARS regions)

Progress and priorities

South Scotland is a predominantly rural area, characterised by small to medium-sized market towns. The natural environment is particularly diverse, ranging from montane scrub habitats in the uplands, right through to lowland raised mires and fertile river valleys. The population is widely dispersed, at roughly half the average density of the rest of Scotland. The economy is characterised by low wages, with average wages significantly below the national average.

The area contains about 25% of the total forest resource of Scotland, and as such presents unique opportunities for contributing to the local economy. The region's rural character and extensive woodland cover, present significant opportunities for the further development of wood fuel as an energy source. As an existing active hub for the forestry sector, the region is well placed to develop capacity to service the increasing demands for appropriate skills and development for this growing sector. The woodland resource also creates unparalleled opportunities to develop the tourism and leisure sectors in many areas including activity sports, wildlife and health.

What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Climate Change

- Facilitate the creation of wood fuel producer groups in the region (FCS).

Timber

- Explore new regional market opportunities for wood products through implementation of Scottish Borders Woodland Partnership projects (SBWP).

Business development

- Progress a forest industry 'centre of excellence' in South Scotland (SSFIC).

Community development

- Mount a South Scotland heritage trees campaign (SSFF).

Access and health

- Instigate a promotional campaign highlighting the benefits of using the region's woodlands and forests for recreational activities (FCS).

Environment

- Commence development of a new Indicative Forest Strategy for Dumfries and Galloway (D&GC).

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Biodiversity

- Instigate a promotional campaign highlighting the opportunities for wildlife tourism associated with the Forests and Woodlands of the South of Scotland (FES).

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Climate Change

- Advise and facilitate the uptake of biomass for renewable energy through the South Scotland Woodfuel Information Officer.
- Produce guidance for the appropriate expansion of short rotation coppice and short rotation forestry in the South of Scotland.

Timber

- Promote forest expansion with appropriate and relevant species where it helps to support a sustainable local forest products industry.
- Support and promote the work of the region's three timber transport groups and associated projects.

Business Development

- Promote the forest sector as a tourism resource and rural development asset.
- Produce development guidelines for forestry based projects in South of Scotland.
- Through FEI, promote in schools opportunities for work in the forestry sector.

Community Development

- Provide forestry input into development of the Galloway Biosphere proposal.
- Bring forward a programme of open days in woodlands adjoining communities to demonstrate their potential role in sustainable development and climate change.

Access and Health

- Obtain physical activity programme information and work with health boards to increase usage by target groups.
- Encourage the sharing and adoption of best practice from other regions on delivery of health and recreation benefits from forests.

Environmental Quality

- Review cultural heritage data sources, forest habitat network development and vacant and derelict land distribution to identify potential priority locations for action.
- Support River Basin Management plan development for Clyde, Solway and Tweed.

Biodiversity

- Enhance the scarce montane scrub habitat in South of Scotland.
- Develop regional strategies for management of damaging invasive species such as Japanese knotweed and grey squirrels.

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Central Scotland

(Clyde Valley, part of Forth and part of Ayrshire SEARS regions))

Progress and priorities

For Central Scotland 2007/08 priorities focused on climate change, community development and biodiversity. Two wood fuel studies were completed, examining the opportunities for developing a wood fuel cluster in Glasgow and of the potential for the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network to supply wood fibre to a developing wood heating sector. Under biodiversity, integrated habitat networks for both Glasgow and the Clyde Valley and Falkirk were published.

Under community development, a strategic partnership in Edinburgh and the Lothians to promote green networks to enhance the environmental quality was established, a 'forestry for planners' promotional programme delivered and a Forest School programme for Glasgow launched. The proposed forestry communication strategy for the region will be completed in 2008.

What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Climate change

- Develop and launch a Regional Biomass Advice Centre acting as a 'one-stop-shop' for information, support and advice to biomass renewable energy projects (FCS).

Business Development

- Identify and develop exemplar sites to demonstrate the role of woodland in urban regeneration and place making. The sites will be used to demonstrate the role that woodlands can play in attracting business investment, and supporting the development of more sustainable communities where people and families want to live (CSFT, GCVGNP, FCS)

Community Development

- Establish a Development Officer post to pilot Forest Kindergarten in Central Scotland and deliver a series of teacher training events (FCS and SLC).
- Publish a Central Scotland Regional Forestry Forum Communications Strategy (CSFF).
- Publish regional guidance identifying priorities areas for Forestry Commission Scotland's acquisition programme (FCS).

Access and Health

- Work with the Commonwealth Games Delivery Team to develop a programme of forestry and environmental initiatives linked to the games (GCVGNP, FCS).

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Biodiversity

- Develop and deliver priority Integrated Habitat Networks projects in Central Scotland (CSFT, GCVGNP, FCS).

An outline programme for 2009-2011

Climate change

- Build the work of the Regional Biomass Advice Centre delivering a programme of advice, support and information to biomass renewable energy projects.

Business Development

- Implement and promote exemplar sites to demonstrate the roll of woodland in urban regeneration and place making.

Community Development

- Roll out Forest Kindergarten and teacher training events, building on pilot schemes.
- Deliver the Central Scotland Regional Forestry Forum Communications Strategy Action Plan.

Access and Health

- Promote and implement the programme of forestry and environmental initiatives linked to the Commonwealth Games.

Biodiversity

- Increase focus on delivery of Central Belt integrated habitat networks projects.

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Perth and Argyll

(Argyll, Tayside and part of Forth SEARS regions)

Progress and priorities

Perth and Argyll Conservancy covers some of the most diverse range of cultural, historic and natural landscapes in Scotland ranging from the machairs of the Argyll islands to the cities of Stirling and Dundee and the productive farmlands of Perthshire, Angus and Fife. It covers four major FES Districts and includes Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park as well as being the southern gateway to the Cairngorms. Around 16% of Scotland's population live within the region and the larger part of the urban population of Scotland is within an hour, offering significant opportunities for outdoor, forest-based, tourism, recreation and education.

Twenty-two percent of the area is forested, a reflection of the long history of forest creation and management by traditional estates. It is a region open to new approaches to integrated land use where a diversity of objectives can be delivered by well-targeted public support.

Regional priorities for 2008-2011 focus on climate change mitigation and wood energy, Woods in and Around Towns, agricultural diversification, woodland-based tourism and biodiversity.

What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Climate Change

- Undertake and launch indicative forestry strategies for Argyll & Bute, Perth & Kinross, and Angus (A&BC, P&KC, AC, FCS).
- Support wood fuel clusters in Argyll and Eastern Central Scotland and agree actions for wood fuel chain development (FCS, SE and Allenergy).

Timber

- Revise the Stirling & Tayside agreed routes maps (S&TTTG).
- Organise a 'New Timber Architecture in Scotland' event for architects, timber buyers and specifiers and run a growing quality hardwoods workshop (FCS, SE and CTE).

Business Development

- Organise a non-timber forest products regional workshop (FCS & P&ARFF).
- Secure local business support for the Perthshire Big Tree Country Project (PBTCP).
- Promote use of the Breadlabane silvo-pastoral demonstration sites (BIFF).

Community Development

- Develop a long-term forest plan for community acquired woods on Mull (NWMCT).

Access and Health

- Launch phase II of the Dundee TWIG Project (FCS, GS and CDC).

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- Develop a regional health and well-being delivery plan for the region's woods (FCS).

Biodiversity

- Extend the Argyll Islands Native Woodland Partnership to cover all the Argyll Islands (FCS, SNH, NADAIR).
- Hold a rhododendron management workshop to promote action by land managers in Argyll and Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park and (FCS, SNH and LL&TNP).
- Develop the concept of the 'Great Trossachs Forest' (FCS, RSPB, WTS, LL&TNP).

An outline programme for 2009-2011

Climate Change

- Promote woodland creation in locations identified in indicative forestry frameworks.
- Review the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Local Woodland & Forestry Framework.
- Promote the use of biomass, particularly when involving low 'timber miles'.

Business Development

- Help develop a strategic approach to forest tourism in Argyll.
- Extend the BIFF collaborative approach to other areas in the region.

Community Development

- Develop CWA capacity for supporting community involvement in the urban areas of Dundee, Perth, Stirling and Clackmannan.

Access & Health

- Implement an Action Plan to increase the health contribution of the region's woods.

Environmental Quality

- Develop a collaborative heritage project on the historic oakwoods of Argyll using the Dalriada Project model.

Biodiversity

- Identify new opportunities for landscape-scale woodland restoration building on current projects in the Argyll Forest Park, Bute, the Ochils and Perthshire Big Tree Country.
- Promote the outcomes of the sustainable woodland grazing pilot project and use of the supporting management toolkit.

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Grampian

(Grampian and Moray SEARS region)

Progress and priorities

Grampian's 155,000ha of woodland produces over 900,000t of timber annually and supports a thriving timber industry, contributing significantly to the rural economy. Work is progressing on assessing Scots pine timber quality and matching it to market requirements, including an international market development project. Better information is still needed on the quantity, quality and availability of the timber resource, and efforts made to increase the supply and use of woodfuel.

The woodlands around Aberdeen and the towns of Aberdeenshire and Moray are heavily used by local communities and schools and a growing number of active community groups. Health walk co-ordinators are in post stimulating local health walk groups using woodlands close to communities. The focus on building delivery of community, health and education benefits will continue.

The region has a concentration of tree nurseries and offers much scope for integration of farming and forestry through farm woodlands and biomass energy. These activities also help tackle and raise awareness of climate change impacts and will continue to be a priority through the Grampian Forest Initiative and are reflected in the regional priorities for Rural Development Contracts in the region.

Grampian's woodlands contain large areas of native species, including 30% of Scotland's Scots pine. These are of high biodiversity value, contribute greatly to the landscape of the area and provide habitat for key species such as red squirrels and capercaillie. A report on the achievement of Habitat Action Plan targets has been prepared and endorsed by the Grampian Forestry Forum. The priority for the Plan period is to deliver regional biodiversity and water quality priorities through support for native woodland expansion and management.

What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Climate Change

- Appoint a regional Biomass Development Officer (FCS, SEG and AC).
- Support the creation of 400ha of new woodland (FCS).

Timber

- Disseminate the findings from the Scots pine timber quality project (FCS and FR).
- Reinvigorate the North East Forest Industries Cluster. (SEN, CONFOR and FCS).
- Publish updated agreed routes maps for timber haulage (GTTG and RDI).

Community Development

- Implement Forest School in Aberdeen; promote forestry career opportunities (FEI).

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Biodiversity

- Promote use of the Grampian Forest Habitat Network models (FCS, FR, SNH, HB).
- Instigate the Cairngorms habitat network project (CNPA, SNH, RSPB, HB and FCS).

An outline programme for 2009-2011

Climate Change

- Take forward the Biomass Action Plan in Grampian with emphasis on woodland creation, wood fuel supply-chain development; demonstrating energy forestry practices and raising awareness of forestry's contribution.

Timber

- Improve information on quantity and quality of the region's timber.
- Encourage production, particularly thinning, from under-managed woodlands and improve timber transport bottlenecks through local infrastructure projects.
- Increase forest certification in Grampian, including for owners of small woodlands.

Business Development

- Deliver economic benefits through the Grampian Forest Initiative.

Community development

- Implement the Grampian Woods for Learning Plan focusing on implementing Forest School and raising awareness of forestry careers.

Access and Health

- Build on WIAT developments in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and extend into Moray.
- Extend the work of health walk co-ordinators focusing on high SIMD wards, promoting safe health walks and supporting active school co-ordinators.

Environmental Quality

- Mitigate forestry and help to mitigate agriculture impacts in specific 'at risk' water bodies, particularly through expansion of riparian woodlands.
- Complete the assessment and recording of designed landscapes in Grampian and raise awareness of their importance amongst agencies and owners.

Biodiversity

- Target and promote woodland expansion and native woodland restoration, with a particular focus on delivering the Cairngorms habitat network project.
- Review progress of forestry relevant species and Habitat Action Plans and raise awareness of the forestry management requirements for priority species.

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Highland

(Highland, Western Isles and Northern Isles SEARS regions)

Progress and priorities

In 2007/08, 195 hectares of new woodland was established via the Highland Locational Premium scheme to form a contribution to Scotland's carbon saving target.

A report looking at the location and extent of large dimension, quality timber around the Moray Firth area was completed. An increasing awareness of the desirability of using timber, typically large dimension, quality Douglas fir was apparent in the construction of several new buildings with high environmental values. These included the new SNH headquarters at Great Glen House and the Inverness Forest District office at Smithton, near Inverness.

An inventory of farm woods was completed in Caithness and the assessment of their suitability for the production of woodfuel was started. A revision of the potential timber volume in relation to forest access points and the Highland road network was completed by the Highland Timber Transport Group. A study into the feasibility of using a floating pier system for sea transport off the west coast was also produced.

Community development was promoted by a series of events within the Touchwood programme, part of Scotland's Year of Highland Culture. The Dingwall Festival incorporated the Scottish Woodfair and had over 4000 visitors. The Dark Skies, Between Two Worlds and Forest History projects were also very popular.

What needs to be done in 2008-2009

Climate Change

- Use regional initiatives to support the expansion of woodland cover in the Northern and Western Isles, in line with local strategies. (FCS, CES and NIC).

Timber

- Through the Northern Periphery Programme project, identify measures to better promote Scots Pine as a commercial species, in conjunction with Grampian (FCS, FR and HB) Business development.
- Through the Northern Periphery Programme Clim-Atic project, facilitate development of sustainable woodfuel activity in Cairngorms National Park, East Sutherland & Caithness (FCS) Community development.
- Expand the forest history project to all of the Highlands and Islands (UHI).

Access and health

- Develop models for using forests for health, re-integration with communities through capacity building/training and seeking business opportunities (ReHAB).

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Biodiversity

- Establish a habitat network programme to target incentives to reduce native woodland fragmentation, promote montane scrub and riparian woodland in two geographical areas, the Cairngorms National Park and the North West coast (CNPA and SNH).

An outline programme for 2009-2011

Climate Change

- Develop habitat networks at a landscape scale in east and northwest Sutherland.

Timber

- Investigate cable crane systems using 21st century technology for difficult sites.
- Explore alternative transport options for landlocked and otherwise inaccessible timber plantations.
- Develop aspen as a commercial species within a native woodland context.

Business Development

- Promote timber use in building at the Highland Housing Fair.
- Move towards the establishment of an East Sutherland Forest Park.

Community Development

- Maintain and enhance the legacy achieved through the Touchwood programme.
- Establish links to events for Year of Homecoming 2009.
- Develop woodland crofts in suitable locations.

Access and Health

- Expand volunteering as a positive method of contribution and exercise on forest activities.

Environmental Quality

- Develop previously established new native woodlands through enrichment of grazing and habitat enhancement.

Biodiversity

- Clear rhododendron and other invasive species from key habitats.
- In support of the Peatland Strategy, plan incentives and practical action for the restoration of peatland affected by inappropriate afforestation in the past.

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Annex 1: listing of action leaders

Argyll, Lomond and the Islands Energy Agency	ALLenergy
Aberdeenshire Council	AbC
Anus Council	AC
Argyll and Bute Council	A&BC
Association of Scottish Hardwood Sawmillers	ASHS
Breadalbane Initiative for Farm Forestry	BIFF
Cairngorms National Park Authority	CNPA
Central Scotland Forest Trust	CSFT
Central Scotland Forestry Forum	CSFF
Centre for Timber Engineering	CTE
City of Dundee Council	CDC
Commun nan Eilean Siar	CES
Community Service Volunteers	CSV
Community Woodland Association	CWA
Confederation of Forest Industries	ConFor
Deer Commission for Scotland	DCS
Dumfries and Galloway Council	D&GC
Forest Education Initiative	FEI
Forest Research	FR
Forestry Commission	FC
Forestry Commission Scotland	FCS
Forest Enterprise Scotland	FES
Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership	GCVGNP
Grampian Timber Transport Group	GTTG
Greenspace Scotland	GS
Highland Birchwoods	HB
Historic Scotland	HS
Lantra – the sector skills council for the environment and land-based sector	Lantra
Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority	LL&TNP
The Mull and Iona Trust	M&IT
The Nadair Trust - rural sustainability in 'Scotland's Sea Kingdom'	NADAIR
North West Mull Community Trust	NWMCT
Northern Isles Council	NIC
Paths for All	PfA
Perth and Argyll Regional Forestry Forum	P&ARFF
Perth and Kinross Council	P&KC
Perthshire Big Tree Country Partnership	PBTCP
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	RSPB
Rehab - helping people with disabilities into work	ReHAB
Rural Development Initiatives	RDI
Scottish Arts Council	SAC
Scottish Borders Woodland Partnership	SBWP
Scottish Enterprise	SE
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	SEPA
Scottish Forest Industries Cluster	SFIC
Scottish Government Education Directorate	SGED
Scottish Government Environmental Quality Directorate	SGEQD
Scottish Government Directorate for the Built Environment	SGDBE

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Scottish Government Rural Directorate	SGRD
Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate	SGRPID
Scottish Natural Heritage	SNH
South Lanarkshire Council	SLC
South Scotland Forest Industries Cluster	SSFIC
South Scotland Forestry Forum	SSFF
Stirling & Tayside Timber Transport Group	S&TTTG
Strategic Timber Transport Forum	STTF
UK Forest Products Association	UKFPA
University of the Highlands and Islands	UHI
Visit Scotland	VS
Volunteer Development Scotland	VDS
Woodland Trust Scotland	WTS

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