

## **DIRECTOR SCOTLAND REPORT**

### **SENIOR STAFF CHANGES**

1. Dominic Driver, Head of Social Policy, has left us, on transfer to FC England, and has been replaced by James Ogilvie. We have appointed a new Head of Communications, Sheryl May, to boost our ability to formulate, and communicate, the benefits of forestry to Scotland plc and our part in delivering these benefits.

### **KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

2. The National Committee has been discussing the development of policy and strategy with respect to some key policy areas:

#### **Woodland Loss**

3. Not published as per Freedom of Information Act, Part II (Exempt Information) Sections 35, Formulation of Government Policy

#### **Increasing Scotland's Woodland Area**

4. Not published as per Freedom of Information Act, Part II (Exempt Information) Sections 35, Formulation of Government Policy

#### **Development of Renewables Potential**

Not published as per Freedom of Information Act, Part II (Exempt Information) Sections 35, Formulation of Government Policy

## **DELIVERING GRANT AID THROUGH THE SCOTTISH RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

12. The new Rural Priorities Grant Scheme, which incorporates most of the forest support measures, is up and running and awareness raising seminars are being held in all Conservancies.

13. We are working with Scottish Government Legal Directorate to draft a Scottish Statutory Instrument (SSI) to make provision for the Forestry Challenge Funds in the Scotland Rural Development Plan (SRDP).

14. The SSI sets out powers and responsibilities for Forestry Commissioners. The can be summarised as:

- The nature of projects that can be supported by the measures.
- Forestry Commissioners' powers to devise new Challenge Funds.
- Forestry Commissioners' powers to devise associated guidance and to authorise payment of grant.
- Payment of grant assistance by the Scottish Ministers (Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate) as paying agency, the information and records required to be held by applicants.
- Powers of authorised persons, revocation or variation of approval and withholding or recovery of grant and offences applicable.

15. To-date, two Forestry Challenge Funds, Woods In and Around Towns Challenge Fund and Forestry for People Challenge Fund have been developed. Forestry Commission Scotland may also develop additional forestry challenge funds to support other elements of the Scottish Forestry Strategy 2006.

16. Corporate Forestry Support's advice is that we do not need to consult the Commissioners directly on the SSIs because they do not change Commissioners' current general powers and responsibilities. The SSI is due to come into force on 6 May, subject to Ministerial and Parliamentary approval.

17. The other SSIs in development for areas of the Scotland Rural Development Plan that includes measures related to forestry are "Rural Development Contracts - Rural Priorities" and "Rural Development Contracts - Land Managers Options". These do not provide for any powers or responsibilities for Commissioners.

## **RED SQUIRREL CONSERVATION**

18. Not published as per Freedom of Information Act, Part II (Exempt Information) Sections 35, Formulation of Government Policy

## **BEAVER INTRODUCTION**

Not published as per Freedom of Information Act, Part II (Exempt Information) Sections 35, Formulation of Government Policy

## **FOREST OPERATIONS**

23. Significant areas of Red Band Needle Blight have been identified in Lodgepole Pine in **Aberdeenshire FD**. Inspection is currently underway to confirm the scale of the problem and consider appropriate remedial action.

24. A successful pilot event for the new training course "site recognition and tree species selection" was held at Aberfoyle. The course will now be rolled out across the whole of Scotland with the aim of training approximately 200 FCS staff this year. The course has been developed through a working group comprising FCS, FR and L&D staff and will address an identified skill shortage.

25. The Stirling & Tayside Timber Transport Group endorsed the grant bid by Tillhill to the Scottish Timber Transport Fund to support the lineside loading development for rail haulage out of the Barracks Forest in **Tay FD**. Tillhill hold a long term contract with FCS for harvesting at Rannoch,

26. There have been a number of forest fires as a consequence of the late spring dry weather. **Lochaber, Tay and Inverness FDs** have all dealt with major incidents. Fortunately, to date, these have been largely surface fires with relatively low costs and only small areas of woodland burnt. However 2 fires north of Inverness on the 6/7 May involved more than 10 fire service units and led to widespread disruption for internet users in the north and west.

### **Timber Sale by tender - 23 March 2008**

27. Not published as per Freedom of Information Act, Part II (Exempt Information) Section 43, Commercial Interests

### **Logs**

30. Not published as per Freedom of Information Act, Part II (Exempt Information) Section 43, Commercial Interests

### **Standing Timber**

32. Not published as per Freedom of Information Act, Part II (Exempt Information) Section 43, Commercial Interests

## **END OF YEAR FINANCIAL POSITION**

34. Not published as per Freedom of Information Act, Part II (Exempt Information) Sections 35, Formulation of Government Policy

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**May 2008**