

Nearly halfway through the 3-year project and it is currently unknown what will happen after April 2014.

Work Area Updates

Education and Awareness

- Set up link with the University of Edinburgh Geoscience Outreach module. This year a student produced a set of 5 awareness-raising postcards (in lieu of a leaflet) to hand out at events etc. Production expected in the next few weeks.
- Developing a £50K red squirrel trail at Falkland Estate in partnership with the Centre for Stewardship, pathwork is about to start and the interpretive element is being developed.
- Busy event season with attendance at SNH Tentsmuir NNR Family Day, Big Tent Event, Loch Leven Discovery Day and others.
- Successful Red Squirrel Fun Day at Tentsmuir with Scottish Natural Heritage, Forestry Commission Scotland, Fife Nature Records Centre and RSPB. Attendance by MSP Claire Baker and an estimated 250+ attendee's.
- Biannual newsletter (Spring and Autumn news).
- Set up link with a Forestry Commission ranger to deliver the Red Squirrel Champions School Programme around Devilla. Trying to set up similar partnerships for programme longevity.

Surveying and Monitoring

- Sightings transects have been ongoing in Ladybank (Elspeth Christie – Ladybank Forest Users Group) and Tentsmuir (Stuart Macdonald – Elmwood College) since their involvement with the Scottish Squirrel Group in 2005/2006. They currently have 6 and 4 transects respectively. Therefore the focus for surveying in Fife is visual transects.
- Of the 7 other key sites:
 - Battlefield has 1 transect (no more needed).
 - Crawford Priory has 2 transects (no more needed).
 - Devilla has 4 transects (with several volunteers keen to take on transects this autumn).
 - Falkland has 2 transects (there are also some inactive transects which I'm trying to help the Centre for Stewardship re-investigate).
 - Lochmuir has 2 transects (no more needed)
 - Pitmedden has 2 transects (more needed).
 - Springfield Muir has 1 transect (no more needed).

Habitat Management and General Advisory Role

- Two Tree Planting Days so far with the next one planned at Tulliallan Police College, beside Devilla forest. Currently seeking advice from Forestry Commission about planting due to tree diseases in pine and larch.

Grey Squirrel Control

- Set up link with Elmwood College Gamekeeping department. Last year 5 students trapped for the project and a similar set-up is planned for next year.
- National Trust for Scotland has instigated a trapping programme at Falkland Palace and Hill of Tarvit with help from the project. This involves hiring a local trapper and saw a success story within the first two weeks of trapping. A red squirrel was spotted at Falkland Palace for the first time in a couple of years.
- Grey squirrel control programme extended to Tentsmuir forest buffer zone with varying success.
- Although the focus is on landowners and a trap-loan type scheme we also have 5 trapping volunteers with 2 more about to start.
- Three BASC grey control workshop have been held so far and another one to be arranged later this year.
- Continue to struggle for support in a local context e.g. Devilla and Pitmedden where Forestry Commission are unable to support the trapping effort due to national commitments. However, it should be noted Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission jointly contract a local trapper at Tentsmuir.
- Attempting to support the national poxvirus surveillance scheme by adopting responsibility for 5 squares in Fife.