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Bob McIntosh
Forestry Commission Scotland
Silvan House
231 Corstorphine Road
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Dear Bob,

The Role of the Public Forest Estate in Scotland

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your paper on the role of the public forest estate in Scotland.

Reforesting Scotland believes there is a role for some public ownership of forests, however we would like to see a change in the underlying principles and practical approaches to management of the Estate. We would like to see all parts of the public forest estate demonstrating exemplary practice in producing quality products whilst also demonstrating environmental integrity and benefits to local communities by working with and through them.

Of the three options for future directions of the Estate presented in your paper, Reforesting Scotland favours option 3 with provisos, which we have detailed below. Given the content and spirit of the recently published Scottish Forestry Strategy, which aims to guide Scotland's entire forest sector for the next ten years, and which was developed through a commendable consultation process, we were disappointed that options 1 and 2 were deemed worthy of consideration. We do not agree that commercial forestry can only exist when forests are managed with a view to providing the minimum of non-market benefits required by the UK Forestry Standard. There are many examples of profitable small-scale forestry enterprises in Scotland which demonstrate that this is not the case.

We do however recognise that our forests are an important resource that can be managed in a productive way to reduce dependence upon unpredictable Government support and to demonstrate that productive forests can represent exemplary silvicultural practice and are about producing multiple benefits, not simply generating short-term financial gain.

The value of a long-term and holistic approach is even more evident today, as we struggle to understand, address and reverse climate change.

Reforestation Scotland supports 'option 3' provided the approach to management of all public sector forestry demonstrably works towards:

1. Demonstrating best practice in terms of delivering multiple benefits (social, environmental and economic), including in forests under 'commercial forestry'. The public sector has an opportunity to be innovative and influence practice in the private sector.
2. Devolving management of public sector forests to local and community levels through establishing local partnerships, building capacity, stimulating rural enterprise and continuing to support sale and rent of land and forest resources to perpetuate multiple benefits in local areas and long-term productivity in every sense.
3. Ensuring that enhancing the environment is integral to all forest management, increasing the diversity of species and woodland types, particularly native hardwoods, both for conservation and amenity benefits, as well as for economic benefit.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on role of the public forest estate. We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Kristin Olsen
Development Officer