



The Role of the Public Forest Estate in Scotland

A response from the Forest Policy Group

February 2007

Bob MacIntosh,
Director,
Forestry Commission Scotland,
Sylvan House,
Corstorphine,
Edinburgh

The Forest Policy Group

Dear Bob,

Reference: The Role of the Public Forest Estate in Scotland

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your paper on the Public Forest estate in Scotland and the potential strategic directions that State sector forestry may take over the next five years.

I am writing this letter in my capacity as a member of the Forest Policy Group (FPG). This group is comprised of individuals and organisations that are committed to environmentally sensitive forestry which provides economic and social benefit at a local level. I have appended a list of the names of some of the members of this group who attended our most recent meeting in Kingussie on February the 7th 2007.

The Forest Policy Group is supportive of State sector forest management in Scotland through the offices of Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) and welcomes this discussion paper which, in the light of the forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary elections and the formulation of Scottish Forestry Strategy Implementation Plans is most timely.

Of your options outlined on pages 10-12 in *'Implications for the Nature of the National Forest Estate'* the FPG felt that the third option, the 'middle way' or status quo was the more desirable than outright commercialisation and more pragmatic than divesting all commercial activities.

Whilst being strongly supportive of State forests the FPG would wish to suggest some points of emphasis for consideration and inclusion in the FES Framework Document. These points are proposed in a positive spirit and in the expectation that their consideration and adoption will better equip FES to manage Scotland's forests on behalf of the State and for the people of Scotland.

The FPG believes FES should:-

- Devolve more control of the management of State forests down to a regional and local level
- Provide exemplars of forestry best practice linked to the Scottish Forestry Strategy Themes i.e. silviculture within the Timber Theme
- Consider greater community involvement in the Forest Landscape Restoration process
- Provide a greater diversity of species and woodland types within the State forest
- Place greater emphasis on community partnerships, backed by increased resources

- Carefully evaluate long term benefits and issues relating regional and local sustainability when considering sale of State forest and subsequent acquisition
- Provide greater support to rural enterprise through greater access to forest resources such as land and timber

The FPG are interested as to whether you are able to outline the criteria which you are proposing to apply in delivering the Scottish Forestry Strategy and including in the Forest Enterprise Framework document.

Thank you again for the opportunity to input to the discussion on public forest estate and we look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely on behalf of the FPG

Piers Voysey

Forest Policy Group Members

Gordon Gray Stephens - Scottish Native Woods
Willie McGhee – Borders Forest Trust
Margaret Davidson – Abriachan Forest Trust
Kirstin Olsen – Reforesting Scotland
Piers Voysey – Community Woodlands Association
Steve Robertson – North Highland Forest Trust
Scott Wilson – Royal Scottish Forestry Society
Rick Worrell – Independent
Ruth Anderson –Independent
Ian Ross – Independent