

**Community Forestry Scotland**

**A Report for Forest Research**

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The information and opinions contained here are presented by the authors and are not the responsibility of the Forestry Commission or Forest Research.

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## 1. Objective

This report was commissioned by Forest Research in order to better understand the current situation of community woodlands in Scotland. It documents developments over recent years which support or contribute to the development of community woodlands, both directly and indirectly, and investigates problems and barriers experienced. It investigates the current and past status of community woodlands in Scotland, and gives case study examples of groups. Parallel reports are being undertaken in Wales and England, and it is hoped that this will allow for comparison of the situation across the devolved countries of Great Britain. Further research needs will also be identified.

## 2. Summary

The community woodland movement in Scotland is significant for its political and social achievements in contesting existing patterns of land tenure, legislation and power relations within forestry. The number of woodlands that are managed and or owned by communities in Scotland and the role that they play in terms of the benefits they can provide is increasing. They are supported by several community woodland organisations and public agencies but are receiving less and less financial support. Funding is becoming more difficult to obtain as systems evolve that are justified in terms of auditing rather than benefit to communities; Funders often have to adhere to strict timescales and ensure that the money is going to good cause and fulfils their obligations, this can make some pots of money not available to communities that cant tick all the relevant boxes. Management of community woodlands requires fulfilment of a broad range of objectives which is reflected by the range of management techniques used they are often innovative, labour intensive and low carbon methods.

In many communities there is a limited pool of people available to serve on boards and management committees and volunteers commonly have full time jobs. This often leads to community fatigue, groups can find it difficult to bring new directors on board and enthusiasm can be lost with the pressure of keeping the group afloat. The capacity and skills available within communities varies, and inadequate levels of both can severely impact on the community's ability to manage their woodlands sustainably. Partnerships play a key role for community woodland groups and many constraints revolve around them. Effective partnership working, including the creation of partnerships, is not evident across all community woodland initiatives. There are examples where they work very well but others where communities have not even been able to create them. The way forward was put succinctly by Angela Williams from The Knoydart Foundation:

*'Directors that are committed to making sure the organisation works properly, that play close attention to finances, form good working relationships with partners/outside bodies, have open communication, and are open to scrutiny, transparent working forms the heart of*

### **3. Introduction**

#### **Who are the community?**

The concept of community as a key idea within social sciences is very elusive to define; innumerable definitions describing the term can be found (Cohen, 1985). One commonly used defines community as a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings (MacQueen et al, 2001). Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003: Part 2 Community Right to Buy: Guidance, community is defined by reference to postcode members of the community, they must also be resident and be registered to vote at a local government election at an address within the postcode unit, the community may include householders further afield if those householders can demonstrate a connection with the land to be registered (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/06/19478/38605>).

#### **What is community woodland?**

Many organisations use the term community woodland even though there may be little, or no community involvement in its management. The woodland may be provided for community use, but community involvement is often restricted to minority consultation in order to qualify for some types of funding and control is maintained by the owner or organisation (Reforestation Scotland, 2003). Reforestation Scotland (2003), Community Woodlands Association (2009) and The Highland Council (2009) define a *community woodland* as one partly or completely controlled by the local community, through a community woodland group. The woodland may be owned or leased by the group, or managed in partnership with another organization.

For the purpose of this report the definition of *community woodland* will be as described above by Reforestation Scotland, The CWA and The Highland Council, combined with the definition of *community* as given within the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. In addition, in this document, a *community woodland group* will be considered as a group in which a significant proportion of the local population are members of the group, members of the local population form a majority of the group's membership and democratically elected members of the local community form a majority of the board. (Reforestation Scotland, 2003).

Community woodlands are extremely diverse, embracing all woodland types from ancient semi-natural woods to extensive conifer plantations, and ranging from less than a hectare to over a thousand hectares in size. They can be found anywhere from small patches of newly-planted trees in town centres or city housing estates, to more extensive older woodlands in remote countryside and vary in level of community involvement (Reforestation Scotland, 2003).

The concept of community forest or woodland refers to wooded landscapes

where typically the aim is to encompass a mosaic of different land uses (Herzele et al, 2005). However, community forestry as exemplified by commercial forest operations may or may not be carried out in community woodlands, depending upon the level of ownership, partnership agreement and aims and objective of the individual group.

Some *community woodland groups* may also own or manage areas of non-wooded land, or carry out other activities not directly related to woodland management. Some *community groups* such as crofters, or groups that own or lease land throughout Scotland, may manage large areas of land, but management of community woodland may not be their primary role. For example the Assynt Crofters Trust own approximately 9000ha of land, 800ha of which has been developed as native woodland. The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust is a partnership between the residents of Eigg, The Highland Council and The Scottish Wildlife Trust, their main activities centre around housing, agriculture, power supply and 'An Laimhrig', a centre that houses the island Post Office and other commercial facilities, but they do also manage a small area of woodland for the community.

### **The community woodland movement in Scotland**

The community woodland movement in Scotland has been driven by passion and politics, and, whilst community involvement with woodland goes back through centuries, the most significant developments have taken place over the last few decades. Major changes in perceptions of woodland and forests took place towards the end of the twentieth century establishing them in far broader terms, they were no longer seen for timber production alone (Mather, 2003). The view that forests should just be maintained as a strategic reserve was challenged and timber production is now only one of a number of functions encompassed within a multipurpose forest. Alongside this the influence of Rio and Helsinki brought the overarching theme of sustainability to the fore, and bottom up involvement in management of resources has gradually moved to the forefront of policy development. In some cases communities had begun to feel increasingly distant from their woodlands, that they no longer had any influence over the management or a stake in the benefits (Foot, 2003). This, together with the land reform movement addressing unequal distribution of power and land ownership, pushed and supported community-centric land ownership and management, which have been key features in the community woodland movement in Scotland.

## **4. Methodology**

The study incorporates two methods of information collection: desk research and telephone interviews based around two questionnaires, copies of which can be found in Appendix 1. A number of representatives from national organisations such as the Community Woodlands Association and Reforesting Scotland were consulted to gain an overview of the history of the community woodland movement, its position today and opinions with respect to the future. A sample of ten community woodland groups was selected to complete

the questionnaires. The rationale behind their selection was to illustrate the diversity of community woodlands found throughout Scotland. They vary in inception date, aims, and size, type of ownership and management, and catchment. The complete list of those consulted can be found in Appendix 3.

The information gained has been collated, with key developments and the policy context tabulated and further developed to produce:

- An overview of the history and politics behind the community woodland movement in Scotland
- A timeline of key developments
- A database of the major organisations involved in the community woodland movement
- A selection of case studies
- A database of existing community woodlands

## **5. Results**

### **5.1 History and Politics**

Community woodlands and community forestry initiatives in Scotland are significant for their political and social achievements in contesting existing patterns of land tenure, legislation and power relations (Jeanrenaud & Jeanrenaud, 1997).

Historically, the involvement of local communities in the creation and management of woodlands has been integral to the way of life and local economies of many European countries (Oosthoek, 2005). However land ownership in Scotland is unique, only 3% of the country is urban, 97% rural, and it has the most concentrated pattern of large scale private land ownership of any country in the world (Wightman, 1996). 50% of the entire country is owned by 608 private land owners (18 of these hold 10% of Scotland), the remainder is held by farmers and private companies (mostly forest companies), 12% is in public ownership (the largest areas held by the Forestry Commission), and a proportion owned by the not-for-profit sector such as trusts, communities and conservation organisations (Warren, 2002). The implications of this traditional system of land tenure has meant that in the past even though woodlands and forests have contributed to communities in a broad and significant range of ways there was little or no incentive for tenants to become involved in their management (Jeanrenaud & Jeanrenaud, 1997). For most of the twentieth century, forests, woodlands and people became separated geographically, emotionally and managerially and there was little scope for positive engagement. Control, capital and management were often external and remote, and the only local input was labour (Mather, 2003, pg 220).

The need for a strategic timber reserve was gradually subsiding, it became recognised and accepted that woodlands could deliver a broad range of

benefits including conservation, recreation and rural development, and state forestry gradually became justified in both economic and social terms. During the 1970's and 1980's forestry in Scotland experienced strong public opposition to the creation of large conifer plantations in favour of supporting projects that involved regeneration of native species such as Scots Pine and Oak (Oosthoek, 2005). High profile, widely publicized campaigns criticizing forestry operations, such as the Nature Conservancy Council Report (1985) and RSPB campaign against forestry in the Flow Country had a profound effect increasing public dislike of large scale conifer plantations (Mackay, 1995).

Forest policy was changing, and while it did include rural policy objectives, the increase in mechanisation, contract culture and resultant collapse of employment opportunities in both the public and private sector, led to a decline in rural employment and alienation of local communities from their forests (Slee, 2006). In addition, the social objectives of forest policy were interpreted by the FC to mean recreation and amenity giving precedence to urban interests over rural needs (Jeanrenaud & Jeanrenaud, 1997). The Conservative Government initiated a disposal programme as part of its privatisation policy. This was mainly aimed at the commercial sector but in Scotland local communities emerged as a new group of unexpected purchasers (Jeanrenaud & Jeanrenaud 1997). The crofters of Treslaig immediately began what would turn out to be a lengthy and often acrimonious struggle to buy the FC land surrounding their crofts (Ritchie & Haggith, 2004).

There was powerful resistance to local communities taking a more active role in the management of their local woodlands, authors such as Jeanrenaud and Jeanrenaud (1997) suggesting that this was because local control would undermine the social power relationships between landowners and the communities that lived there.

All the above together with the push for Land Reform to remove the outdated and unfair land law that existed in Scotland, inspired activists to push for greater community involvement in local woodland management. The first community woodland was established with the acquisition of Wooplaw in the Scottish Borders. The idea originated in 1985 with Tim Stead, a wood sculptor, he had a love of native British timber and wanted to give something back to the environment. Initially he thought he would buy a field and create woodland, but was persuaded by Donald McPhillimy and Alan Drever that buying an existing wood would be a better option. Borders Community Woodlands was established and when Wooplaw came up for sale from a farmer it was purchased together with an adjacent field, and became the first community woodland in Scotland in 1987.

Also in 1987 the Highlands and Islands Forum (HIF), a network of community activists, held a conference called 'Land Wildlife and Community' which for the first time brought together government agencies, activists, NGOs and community leaders to explore the issues surrounding land ownership and community access to natural resources (Ritchie & Haggith, 2004).

Organisations such as Reforesting Scotland appeared. Started originally by Bernard and Emma Planterose with the journal, the idea was to create a movement to reforest Scotland, bringing back a forest culture. Andy Wightman was the first development officer who organised the influential study tour to Norway.

*'It was very much inspired by overseas experience. In a nutshell, they wanted to make Scotland more like Norway, and to tell the story of deforestation and then take action to bring back the forests, it was the accumulated effort of many people from many different backgrounds. Initially this was achieved through information sharing, telling the stories of individual projects, with an emphasis on native species. Land reform was a major item on the agenda, which was then followed by the community woodland movement which came to dominate RS's work. (Donald McPhillimy, Pers. com).*

They strongly advocated alternative models of forestry which are associated with higher levels of local employment creation, to work for a balance that keeps people on the land; they emphasized the importance of provision of independent assistance and provided information and advice.

*'Even though membership is open to all, there were concerns that the organisation could be taken over by 'the establishment' and members were vetted, however this is no longer the case'*  
(Donald McPhillimy, Pers com)

Reforesting Scotland lobbied for recognition and support of community woodlands. They actively sought out groups (partly through the very successful Scottish Rural Development Forestry Programme), encouraged them, provided publications and workshops for them, covered them in the Journal, and networked them. Today as a campaigning organisation they work with government agencies and respond to public consultations to lobby for policy changes that will further their vision. They have helped bring about a transformation in the way Scotland's forest resource is viewed.

Through the 1990's individual communities, such as Laggan achieved an immense breakthrough on behalf of rural communities. The community actively marketed their radical ideas with respect to forest ownership and management to key Scottish politicians, government officials and others in influential positions. This culminated in the personal support of the Secretary of State who asked that the Forestry Commission work in partnership with the Laggan Community in order to explore opportunities and devise a new scheme whereby Community Forests can be established to mutual benefit, which resulted in a pioneering partnership agreement with the FC to manage the woodland at Laggan. It finally became clear that the FC had to respond to local activists and the growing NGO support for community involvement in their local woodlands (Slee, 2006).

In 1992, after an acrimonious high profile campaign receiving wide public and agency support, The Assynt Crofters Trust purchased the North Lochinver Estate from foreign private land owners. In 1991 The Crofter Forestry (Scotland) Act gave crofters right to use any part of the common grazings as woodland on the approval of the Crofter's Commission, allowing crofters to establish and manage woods and to benefit directly from forestry opportunities for the first time. Under this new act the Assynt crofters created a programme to establish new native woodlands covering 10 percent of their 9000 ha of common grazings (Ritchie & Haggith, 2004). Around this time other landowners such as the RSPB realised that they cannot manage their reserves for birds alone and that they had to work with their communities (Jeanrenaud & Jeanrenaud, 1997). This project's scale is aimed at generating future employment and local commercial activities from the woodlands (Jeanrenaud & Jeanrenaud, 1997).

In parallel to this radical, grassroots movement the Forest Commission and other public authorities started to increase the involvement of communities in publically owned woodland. Their views founded on the belief that communities should play a meaningful role in the management of their forests. They used the designation community woodland or community forest to refer to the woodland or forest created by public bodies such as regional or local councils, land owners or the forestry authority for the benefit of communities, which were mainly found near or in towns and cities (Crabtree et al, 1994). Their definition of community forestry meaning several desired outcomes can be achieved i.e. greater accountability for management actions, meaningful opportunities for local people to share in the responsibility for managing forests and hopefully more diverse and healthier forests. These public sector led 'community woodlands' have a different level of community engagement than the community woodlands created in the grassroots community movement, with the emphasis in most cases being more on provision of a resource than active engagement in forest management.

In 1989 the Central Scotland Forestry Initiative was launched, and in 1991 the Central Scotland Woodland Countryside Trust was established to lead the initiative (Crabtree et al, 1994). Responsible for developing Central Scotland's first Forest Strategy in 1995, its main objectives include creating new ways to finance, develop and manage new woodlands in the area between Glasgow and Edinburgh. The initiative is supported by the Scottish Executive, Scottish Enterprise and the LECs, Forestry Commission Scotland, five Local Authorities and Scottish Natural Heritage, informal partners include local communities, voluntary organisations, the private sector, farmers and landowners.

In addition to this large scale project the creation of smaller urban fringe woodlands were being encouraged. The focus of these woodlands being on the land owner gaining benefit from the creation of the woodlands whilst providing benefit to the communities in adjacent towns and cities in the form of access to the woodlands. Their creation supported by funding through forest authority

grants (Crabtree et al, 1994).

At this time the global discourse on governance started to exert its influence. Agenda 21, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, Framework Convention on Climate Change, the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), resulted in the UK responding to its commitments by publishing *Sustainable Forestry: the UK Programme* which brought together various elements from government policies and programmes and set them in the context of international principles and guidelines (Ritchie & Haggith, 2004). This committed the forest authority to recognition of the full range of forest benefits and to engage with and empower communities to enjoy them (Ritchie & Haggith, 2004).

Following devolution in 1999 ownership of Scotland's national forest passed to Scottish ministers, and after a wide consultation, a new Scottish Forestry Strategy was published in 2000. The Forestry Commissions commitment to community participation increased rapidly from then on.

In parallel with the changes in UK forest governance the drive was on to address historical inequalities of land tenure, and by 2003 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act was passed. This effectively creates the opportunity for all rural communities to have first refusal on the sale of any rural land including woodland (Ritchie & Haggith, 2004).

From the 90's onward the community woodland movement escalated, by 1996 Culag Community Woodland Trust had agreed a formal lease of a forest from a private owner, by 1998 Abriachan had purchased 534ha of forest and open hill ground from Forest Enterprise. Today the total number of community woodlands in Scotland exceeds 200.

## 5.2 Key Developments:

The table below summarises some of the key developments within the community woodland movement in Scotland.

Date	Group	Key Development
1987	Wooplaw	The first community woodland in Scotland was purchased
1987	Highlands and Islands Forum	A network of community activists, held a conference called 'Land Wildlife and Community' that for the first time brought together government agencies, activists, NGOs and community leaders to explore the issues surrounding land ownership and community access to natural resources. Amongst other issues, this brought crofters' lack of rights to manage woodlands into clear focus and spurred the move towards the crofter forestry legislation.
1991	Reforestation Scotland	Reforestation Scotland is a grassroots NGO. The Reforestation Scotland Journal was established in 1989 as 'The Tree Planter's Guide to the Galaxy', a journal aimed at 'people growing and planting trees for conservation or environmental rehabilitation'. This led to the development of the new organisation which was established to develop the vision of The Tree Planter's Guide to the Galaxy and to support the growing network.
1992	Assynt Crofters Trust	In order to prevent further fragmentation of the Estate, and to bring it back into local ownership the Assynt Crofters Trust was formed in 1992. The Trust successfully mounted a bid for the purchase of the Estate. They created a programme to establish new native woodlands covering 10 percent of their 9000 ha of common grazings
1994	Highlands and Islands Forum (HIF)	Held another highly influential Community Conference, 'The People and the Land' Together with Reforestation Scotland and Rural Forum (a network of rural organisations), they initiated a Scottish Rural Development Forestry Programme (SRDFP).
1994	SRDFP	The aim of SRDFP was to involve communities throughout Scotland in a bottom-up process to realise the potential for forestry as a land use with social economic and environmental benefits.
1994	Treslaig	Achieved full community ownership of their forest purchased from the FC
1996	Borders Forest Trust	Established to develop and manage ambitious habitat restoration and community woodland projects and to reverse the decline of our woodlands and wild places.
1998	Laggan Forest Trust	Agreed a formal co-management partnership with the FC
1999	North Highland Forest Trust	Established to promote sustainable woodland management in North Scotland for the benefit of local people.
2003	Community Woodland Association	The CWA was established as the direct representative body of Scotland's community woodland groups
2007	Community Woodlands Association	Expansion of CWA staff enabling a broad range of services to be offered

Table 1: Key developments in the Community Woodland movement in Scotland

### 5.3 Historical Context

The development of community woodlands in Scotland has been affected by a wide-ranging series of events over the last few decades, as illustrated in table 2 below.

Events	Date	Details
Central Scotland Forest Trust	1980's	A partnership between local authorities and government to improve the scenery in derelict and upland areas of central Scotland. During the early 2000's it has become involved in encouraging community involvement in woodlands.
The Forestry Commission	1980's	During the 1980's, the government established a programme of forest disposals, this ended in 1997. The concept of sponsored sale was introduced, where land is removed from the open market, which effectively allows groups with key interest such as community woodland groups time to become established and secure funding
Crofter Forestry (Scotland) Act	1991	Crofter Forestry (Scotland) Act gives crofters right to establish and manage woods
Forests and People in Rural Areas (FAPIRA)	1994	The FAPIRA Initiative was an informal partnership of Government and non-Government organisations which explored opportunities for increasing community participation in forestry, the partnership was between the forest authority (now FC), Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE), Rural Forum Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the Scottish Office (now The Scottish Government) and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF Scotland). Its purpose was to promote the social value of woodlands and ways of deriving the greatest social benefits from woods and forests in rural areas for local people. Its key impact was to inform civil servants implementing the Scottish office's Rural Framework 1992 about the potential role of rural development forestry.
Scottish Rural Development Forestry Programme (SRDF)	1994-1997	A partnership between Highlands and Islands Forum, Reforesting Scotland and Rural Forum. Aimed "to enable local individuals and groups to realise the potential of Forestry as a land use with environmental, social and economic benefits."The SRDFP developed the technique of participatory rural appraisal. SRDFP was one of the few initiatives which able to meet the participatory principles of Agenda 21 and the UNCED Forest Principles
Millennium Forest for Scotland		A visionary far reaching project created to bring about significant physical restoration of our native woodland cover and to re-establish social, cultural and economic links between communities and their local woods. This had a major impact for CW groups supporting many communities, across Scotland in the creation and management of community woodlands
Callander report on 'rural development forestry'	1995	This report included the key argument that local communities should have access to the management of local forest resources, including rights to the benefits of management.
Community Land Unit	1997	Community Land Unit set up
Devolution	1999	Devolution has led to a change in political and administrative structures and in policy communities, which are now more distinct and self-contained in Scotland
Scottish Forestry Strategy	2000	Published by the Scottish Executive, following wide consultation undertaken by the Forestry Commission. Its aim was to further develop multi-purpose forestry in Scotland and to increase the forest resource to cover about a quarter of Scotland's land surface. The strategy recognised the aspirations in communities for increased engagement and ownership. It identified ' <i>helping communities benefit from woods and forests</i> ' as one of its five strategic directions.
Forests for People Panel	2000	Set up to advise the FC on community involvement in forestry. During its six year term, the panel worked on a variety of issues, providing advice on the review of forestry grants, the legal structures constraining greater community involvement in FE land, improving FC/FE consultation accountability, and the commissioning of a series of local development projects.
Scottish Land Fund	2001	Established by the Big Lottery, the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) was created to support local communities to acquire, manage and develop rural land

Event	Date	Details
Scottish Forestry forum	2002	Policy-level engagement processes were devolved with the establishment of the Scottish Forestry Forum, an advisory grouping of forestry stakeholder with membership balanced between economic, environmental and social interests.
Land Reform (Scotland) Act - Community Right to Buy	2003	The Community Right to Buy relates to Part 2 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. It provides community bodies representing rural areas in Scotland to register an interest in, and buy, registered land when it comes to be sold.
Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) National Forest Land Scheme	2005	National Forest Land is the forests, woods, open land and other property owned by Scottish ministers on behalf of the nation, and managed by Forestry Commission Scotland. The National Forest Land Scheme covers four key strands that offer enormous potential for growth in the capacity and empowerment of the community woodland sector: Community Acquisition by purchase or lease - giving communities the opportunity to buy or lease National Forest Land where they can provide increased public benefits. It goes one step further than Community Right to Buy because it gives this opportunity even though the land has not come up for sale. Community Acquisition is in addition to the community's Right to Buy under the Land Reform Act Land for Affordable Housing - allowing Registered Social Landlords (housing associations) and other housing bodies to buy National Forest Land to provide affordable housing. Sponsored Sale of Surplus Land - giving communities and others the opportunity to buy National Forest Land which is surplus to requirements. Surplus land is land that makes little net contribution to Forestry Commission Scotland's public policy objectives. Crofter Forestry- gives communities the opportunity to create woodland crofts
FCS Woodlands In and Around Towns (WIAT)	2005	Forestry Commission Scotland's WIAT initiative aims to increase the contribution made by woodland to quality of life in Scotland's urban and post-industrial areas. It acknowledges that much of urban woodland is under-managed, that community woodlands have considerable social value, and that derelict and vacant land can be transformed by woodland. WIAT seeks to combine improving the environment through better managed woodland with giving communities a sense of ownership through involvement in their management. WIAT effort will be focused on places within 1km of towns of 2000 people.
FCS Education Strategy (Woods for Learning)	2006	The Woods for Learning strategy outlines the direction and development for FCS's education work for the next three years including strengthening links to woods and forests guiding its work with young people, in primary and secondary schools, and outside school. Woods for Learning is all about using Scotland's trees, woods and forests to contribute to improving the life chances of young people and to show forestry as an exemplar of sustainable development. FCS is looking to work with the education sector and others to encourage the use of woods for learning by: - managing the national forests. Forestry Commission Scotland provides for a variety of recreation activities and experiences, as well as learning; - working with the Forest Education Initiative partnership fund to support the development of educational activities linked to the use of woods and forestry; and - working with others, in education and other partners, to develop programmes for use in schools and woods.
Scottish Forestry Strategy	2006	The Scottish Forestry Strategy is the Scottish Executive's framework for taking forestry forward through the first half of this century, Its core principles are based on sustainable development and social inclusion, achieved through a culture of 'forestry for and with people' and delivered in well managed forests and woodlands that integrate effectively with other land uses and businesses. Outcome 1 'Improved health and well-being of people and their communities' includes is concerned with assisting community participation and includes 'develop strong relationships between communities and their local woodlands', Theme 4 on 'Community Development' includes - Support 'community ownership and management on the national forest estate, where this will bring increased benefits'.
Woodland Crofts	2007	The Crofting Reform Act 2007 makes provision for the creation of new crofts including woodland crofts. Woodland crofts range from being mainly woodland, to mainly agricultural with a woodland element. They link housing, local rural livelihoods and woodland management.

Table 2: Timeline of events affecting the Community Woodland movement in Scotland

## 5.4 Active Community Woodland Organisations

The potential benefits of community involvement have been promoted through the Community Woodlands Association, Reforesting Scotland, the Central Scotland Woodland Initiative, and other organisations.

The organisations below have been selected as they are representative of community woodland membership and umbrella organisations in Scotland.

### Reforesting Scotland

Reforesting Scotland is a grassroots NGO established in 1991. Its aims are to:

- Promote a sustainable forest culture and economy in a well-forested land
- Develop the use of locally-produced forest goods and services
- Encourage social and ecological restoration in forests and in wider land use
- Raise awareness of the benefits of low-energy living based on woodland resources
- Place the Scottish forestry situation in an international context

It is a membership organisation that provides independent advice, information and training, and support through projects in a number of areas including:

- Sustainable harvest of non-timber forest products
- Access to woodlands for all
- Community awareness and management of woodland resources
- Buildings in forests

It has played an important role in the community woodland movement in Scotland by providing the opportunity for community groups to learn from one another, lobbying government for recognition and adequate financial support for community woodlands and was responsible, through their networking, for providing the opportunity for the creation of The Community Woodlands Association. Originally the organisation was prescriptive with respect to who could or who could not become a member and gave the impression that members of public agencies would not be welcome, however directors felt sure that no one had ever actually been refused, and today membership by all is readily embraced. The Community Woodlands Association now fulfils many of RS's original objectives which has resulted in a change in role for RS (Donald McPhillimy, pers com.)

Link:

<http://www.reforestingscotland.org/aboutus/index.php>

## **The Community Woodlands Association**

The Community Woodlands Association is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and was established in 2003 following the steering group being established at the 2002 Community Woodland Conference at Betty Hill and a nationwide consultation of community woodland groups. As the direct representative body of Scotland's community woodland groups, its aims are to help community woodland groups across the country achieve their aspirations and potential, providing advice, assistance and information, facilitating networking and training, and representing and promoting community woodlands to the wider world.

Link:

<http://www.communitywoods.org/index.php/>

## **North Highland Forest Trust**

North Highland Forest Trust is an independent charity that was established in 1999. NHFT evolved from The North West Sutherland Native Wood Initiative which was established in 1993, which supported crofters with access to grant schemes. This expanded to NHFT to a wider social and educational organisation.

The aims of NHFT are to:

- To facilitate access to finance for woodland development where this is constrained for social or other reasons
- To promote and facilitate community woodland in all aspects of woodland development and through a wide range of formal and informal arrangements.
- To promote and facilitate integrated woodland development with particular emphasis on a broad multiplicity of benefits so as to fulfil the aspirations of all members of the community.

It has 50 members ranging from crofters, and woodland groups to agencies such as SNH. Their main focus is information and advice, particularly at the moment with respect to SRDP. They are actively involved with other groups such as CWA, Scottish Native Woods, The Forest Policy Group, Sutherland and Caithness Biodiversity groups and LEADER implementation groups. They work local rangers, the Highland Council and Woodland Trust Scotland.

Link:

<http://www.nhft.org.uk/>

## **Borders Forest Trust**

Borders Forest Trust was inspired by Borders Community Woodlands, and initially funded under MFST. Established in 1996 it is an environmental charity and a membership organisation, now with over 600 members. Its aims being to:

- Develop the community woodland movement in the Borders
- Develop and manage ambitious habitat restoration and community woodland projects
- Reverse the decline of woodlands and wild places.

BFT coordinates an integrated range of projects bringing environmental, social and economic benefits to the Scottish Borders region.

It works in partnership with a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations as well as with local and national members of the business community to establish new native woods and community woodlands and to research, manage, protect and restore existing semi-natural woodlands.

Link:

<http://www.bordersforesttrust.org/>

## **The Central Scotland Forest Trust**

Formed in 1991, The Central Scotland Forest Trust leads the partnership involved in creation of the Central Scotland Forest located in South Lanarkshire, although the Trust can offer help and support beyond the Forest Boundaries.

The Central Scotland Forest Trust has two key roles in the creation of the Central Scotland Forest. Strategically, it defines the vision for the Forest, assembles the resources to create it, engages and co-ordinates partners, promotes the Forest and woodlands and monitors progress. On a practical level, it acts as an implementer, undertaking projects including woodland planting (on derelict land, farmland and in urban areas), woodland management, access and recreation works (paths and facilities) and a range of community projects and landscape improvements.

It also provides opportunities for work-based training and volunteering. They can usually provide help, guidance and in some circumstances funding for community based projects that contribute to the Forest.

Link:

[www.csft.org.uk](http://www.csft.org.uk)

## Highland Birchwoods

Highland Birchwoods was formed in 1992 as a partnership between the Forestry Commission, Scottish Natural Heritage, Highland Council and Highland & Islands Enterprise to promote best practice in the management of woodlands and forests to:

- improve conservation and biodiversity values
- deliver sustainable rural development
- enhance recreational, landscape and amenity facilities

They work in partnership to develop and deliver multi-sectoral projects funded through EU, national and regional mechanisms.

They support communities with respect to local added value timber utilisation and timber product development, promoting woodfuel actively and private and community sector rural development forestry projects. They also help with biodiversity and habitat management.

Link:

<http://www.highlandbirchwoods.co.uk/index.asp>

### 5.5 Community Woodland Tenure Types:

Community woodlands can be owned, leased, or be managed by a group which has a formal or informal agreement with the owner.

For example Abriachan on the shores of Loch Ness involved outright purchase by the local community (Inglis, 1999), Wooplaw is owned by a trust open to all, others have formal partnerships with the Forestry Commission for making local forest management decisions such as at Sunnart on the North West Atlantic coast and Laggan in the Scottish Highlands (Inglis, 1999). Culag has a 50 year lease with a private land owner and wholly owns 1100 hectares.

In 2006 a study was carried to evaluate Community groups and FCS partnerships (Campbell & Bryan, 2006). They found that partnerships varied in style of agreement from informal partnerships with no written agreement to formal agreements some with joint management structures. Of the 667,000 ha of forest in Scotland 55,000 ha are covered by some form of informal or formal agreement between FCS and local communities (Hodge, 2004).

The Community Woodlands Association carried out a survey of groups in 200 and produced a breakdown in terms of tenure type:

Type of Involvement	No of Groups	Ha
Full ownership	21	3,391
Mixture of ownership, lease and partnership	2	2,100
Mixture of ownership and lease	3	1,261
Lease	5	732
Partnerships with FCS	10	6,571
Other types of arrangement or not stated	16	4,036
<b>Totals</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>18,091</b>

Table 3: Breakdown of tenure type (CWA, 2006)

Examples of different types of tenure and management agreement, and how they work are illustrated in the case studies selected.

#### Woodland Parks:

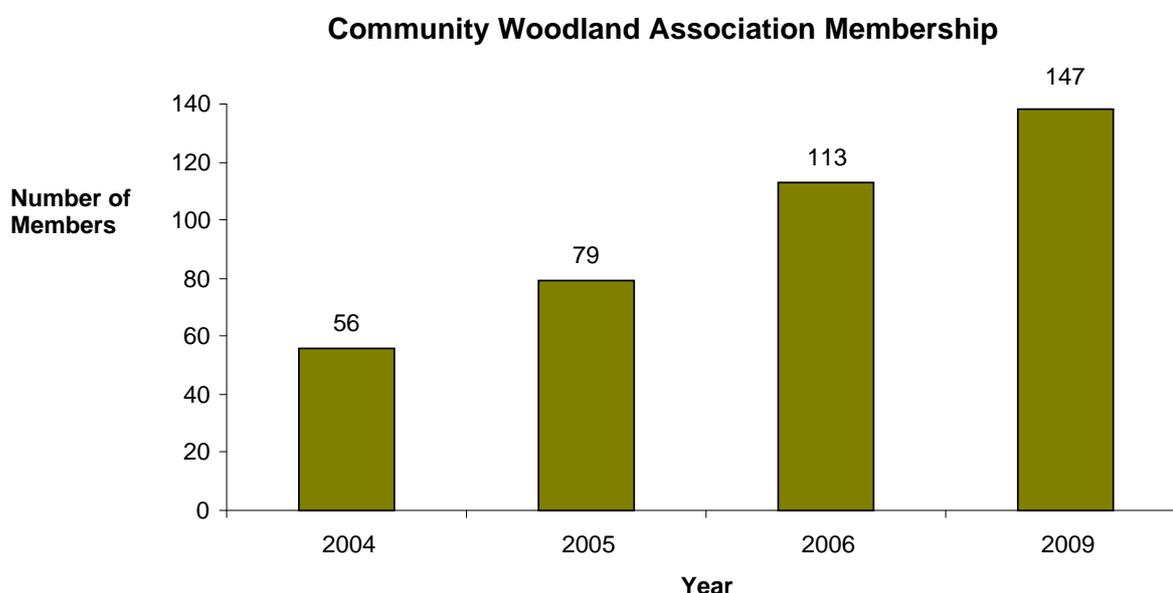
FCS works in partnership with some community woodland groups. For example, the Dunnottar Woodland Park Association, near Stonehaven, was formed in 1994 and works with FCS on the management of the 33ha wood. The association actively encourages the community to become involved in the woodland in activities such as litter clearing, educational events, and restoration of archaeology. In addition, it helps raise funds for footpath maintenance and signage (Forestry Commission Scotland, 2005). This is however a top down initiative. An example of a woodland park which has a much more grassroots input is Lochalsh Woodland Park Steering Group based near Kyle of Lochalsh, they are much more engaged with their woodland and most of their events and activities are instigated and managed by the steering group, which is largely made up of members of the local community.

#### User Groups:

There are also Forestry Commission user groups that don't see themselves as community woodland groups as such, for example: Kinnoull Hill, Ladybank Forest user group and Pitmedden. Often these are communities of interest, such as for mountain biking, they are designed to address single issues, usually related to recreational use of the forest, and are generally instigated by the FC in response to a community concern. The way in which the community and FC interact within these loose partnerships depends on the district and local FC staff, some work really well others do not. Some of these such as Ladybank user group founded in 2002 are community groups they work closely with the Forestry Commission on management for recreation and conservation

(<http://www.ladybankforestgroup.org.uk/>). Kinnoull Woodland Park User Group was formed in 2001 representing a wide range of users of the Park, from horse riders to orienteering groups, to walkers and cyclists (<http://www.kinnoull.org.uk/Activities/Users.html>). In 2008 The Forestry Commission met with mountain bikers, walkers and horse riders users to encourage them to form a user group. Forest management invariably involves reduced access at times, which can cause concern for users, engagement between them and the FC can reduce conflict of use. The constituted user groups are usually formed from the local community. Other user groups, for example mountain bikers can travel from anywhere to use the tracks within forests. Concerns may be positive, for example where the community feels the forest has good recreational facilities and wants to work with the FC to improve them further, or they could be negative where there are conflicts of use, for example between mountain bikers, walkers and horse riders utilising the same trails through woodland.

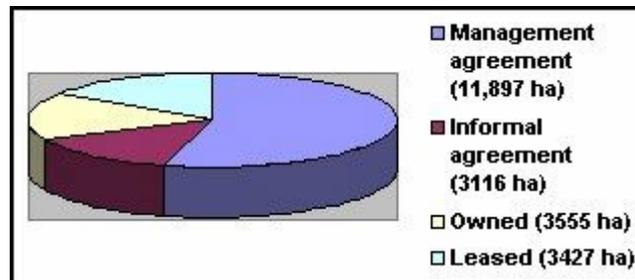
## 5.6 Community Woodland profile



Reproduced with the kind permission of the Community Woodlands Association

This chart only represents CWA members, which includes community groups, umbrella groups and individuals. There are other groups across Scotland that may not be members; from expression of interest the CWA estimates that they have approximately 70% of the total number. The umbrella groups also have up to 30 community group members (by 2002 Borders Forest Trust had 19 community woodland groups associated with it (Borders Forest Trust, 2006)). By 2002 community woodland groups were involved at 64 woodland sites (SNH, 2004). The Community Woodlands Association (2006) estimates that by 2006 the total number of community woodlands in Scotland exceeded 200. The area of land managed by community woodlands across Scotland is now well over 22000 ha (Scottish Executive, 2001; Reforesting Scotland, 2003). It

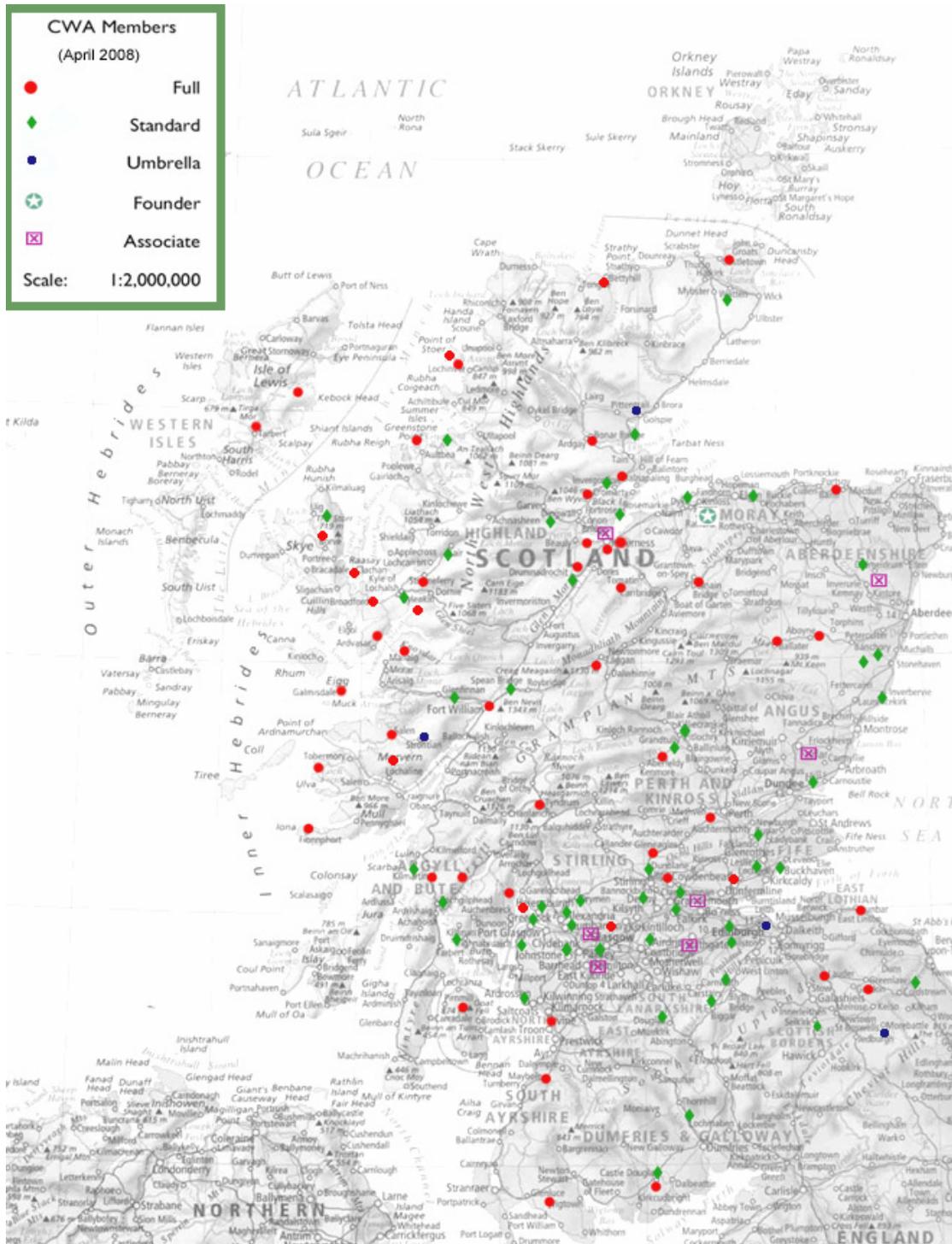
appears from the limited amount of data available that there is a steady increase in the number of community woodlands across Scotland, and in the area of woodland managed by communities. However this is an area that would benefit from an in depth study, to detail the trends and produce accurate data with respect to numbers of woodlands, area and tenure type as many of the available statistics are outdated.



Area of woodland owned or managed by community groups  
Source: *Delivering the Scottish Forestry Strategy*

## 5.7 Geographical Distribution of Community Woodland groups

The Community Woodlands Association membership map below illustrates the distribution of their members across Scotland. Highland region and the central belt have the largest number of members, followed by Aberdeenshire and the Scottish Borders (Community Woodlands Association, 2009). With umbrella groups found in the North East Highlands, South West of Fort William, in the central belt and Borders.



Reproduced with the kind permission of the Community Woodlands Association

## 5.8 Case Studies

The detailed case studies can be found in Appendix 4

Community Woodland Group	Start from	Location	Rural, Urban Urban -fringe	Tenure	Wood Size (ha)	Legal structure	Group structure and function	Income and funding	Potential and actual visitor numbers
<b>Wooplaw Community Woodlands</b>	1987	Between Stow, Lauder and Galashiels	Rural	Owned by Wooplaw Community Woodlands	22ha	Charity	Open to all with 100 members, membership gives voting rights. 3 trustees plus a management group	Membership fees and grants funding for individual projects within the woodlands. In kind labour	12,000
<b>Morven Community Woodlands</b>	2002	Bounded by Loch Sunart, Loch Linnhe and the Sound of Mull	Rural	Owned by FCS, covered by 25 year management agreement	8ha	Not-for-profit company	50 members From within Morven parish. 9 board members	Event and project based grant funding, firewood and wood sales, CWA and other training courses.	350

<b>Dunnet Forestry Trust</b>	2002	Adjacent to the A836 Thurso to John O'Groats road, just inland from Dunnet Bay	Rural	Owned by SNH, managed by Dunnet Forestry Trust	104ha	Limited company with charitable status	450 members Anyone resident in Caithness can be a member. 9 board members plus representatives from SNH and HC	Membership fees and grant funding Log sales Donations	Catchment 28,000, but visitor numbers up to 40,000
<b>Anagach Woods Trust</b>	2002	Edge of Grantown on Spey, Highlands	Rural	Owned by Anagach Woods Trust	390ha	Charitable Limited company	250 members	Grants, donations, fundraising events, very occasional timber sales	3000
<b>Laggan Forest Trust</b>	1998	Off the A86 Newtonmore to Spean Bridge road in the Central Highlands.	Rural	20ha owned by LFT, the remainder by FCS, this is managed by partnership between LFT and FCS with a 25 year management agreement	20 ha owned 1329 ha managed under partnership	Charitable company limited by guarantee	80 members restricted by Laggan post code 8 board members including representatives from Laggan Community Association and Laggan Heritage	Grant funding, donations, fundraising	Catchment 17,000, visitor number to Wolftrax 20,000
<b>Kilfinan Community Forest Company</b>	2007	Off the A8003, west of Dunoon, 55 miles west of Glasgow	Rural	Owned by FCS, no agreements to use the forest in place	407ha	Charity limited by guarantee	153 members, 9 board members, restricted by parish post code, with some associate members	Grants, fundraising, donations	Catchment 700+

<b>Culag Community Woodland Trust</b>	1995	Lochinver, Sutherland	Rural	Leased from two owners - Inver Lodge Hotel & Estate and The Highland Council.	36ha		12 directors plus 4 co-opted (owners and Highland Council ranger)	Grants, fundraising, donations	
<b>Knoydart Forest Trust</b>	1999	Knoydart peninsula is inaccessible by road; it Stretches from Barisdale in the North to Inverie in the South. From Sgurr na Ciche in the East, to Doune in the West.	Rural	Owned by Knoydart Foundation managed by Knoydart Forest Trust	100ha	Charity limited by guarantee	31 members with voting rights 26 with no voting rights 3 board members	Grants, forestry contracts, fundraising, events, donations	Community 120 Visitor number 10,000
<b>Dunbar Community Woodland</b>	2000	Dunbar is located in east Lothian, approximately 30 miles east of Edinburgh	Urban	Owned by the community – Dunbar Community Development Group	18.2 ha	Charity	150 members, no restrictions on membership 10 board members	Grants WIAT funding	7000
<b>Drumchapel Woodland Group</b>	2007	5 miles NW from Glasgow city centre	Urban Fringe	Owned by Council	14.5 ha	Community Group	19 members 5 on a management committee	Grants, prizes e.g. 'Clean Glasgow' award,	8000 in Drumchapel, 620,000 Glasgow

<b>Crossgates</b>	2005	Fife, 1 mile east of Dunfermline, 10 miles west of Kirkcaldy 20 miles north of Edinburgh	Urban	Owned by community	16.5 ha				12,000 households
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Table 3: Case Studies

## **6 Discussion**

### **6.1 Motivations**

It can be very daunting for groups to even think about owning or managing their woodland, it takes a lot of effort, energy and sufficient drive and determination for groups to get together. Often the motivation to start the process is threat of loss or ongoing problems with absentee landlords– the land going up for sale (e.g. Anagach, Knoydart). The community then rally together to protect their asset, usually this is led by strong individuals with a lot of drive who can unite the community to achieve their aim (e.g. Laggan). Problems often start with the day to day management, a lot of energy has to be used in sourcing funds to keep community woodlands afloat, and many community woodlands are found in remote rural situations with very small fragmented communities. There is a limited pool of people available to serve on boards and management committees and volunteers commonly have full time jobs. This often leads to community fatigue, groups have increasing difficulty in finding people to serve a term and enthusiasm can be lost with the pressure of keeping the group afloat.

A problem consistently found across many community woodlands is the waxing and waning of enthusiasm; Wooplaw and Laggan have found this. In the case of Wooplaw, this was partly due to the woodland being a distance from surrounding communities, and partly due to not having a committed core of people to organise and coordinate events and activities. This has been resolved to a certain extent by ensuring that the core group feel that are doing something worthwhile, and at present enthusiasm is on a high with a great deal of involvement and activity within the woodland. Laggan's decreasing enthusiasm has been mainly due to the length of time that the process has taken, in addition, as the project has evolved different sets of skills and knowledge have been required and this capacity has taken time to build. The fragility and reliance on a few individuals can lead to problems both within the community and with partner organisation that the group work with. It can in some cases be a catch 22 situation; the community may feel that the few individuals that are involved are not representative of the views of the wider community, but the wider community may not want to be involved because of the level of commitment that is required.

### **6.2 Tenure**

Many of the community woodlands across Scotland are:

- Owned e.g. Knoydart, Wooplaw, Anagach, Dunbar, Crossgates
- Managed by a public body but have community involvement in some aspects of management e.g. Drumchapel
- Managed in partnership e.g. Laggan
- Leased e.g. Culag

All at some point have been involved in some sort of partnership agreement, from detailed management partnerships to partnerships to obtain funding.

Many constraints revolve around partnership issues, particularly with respect to perceptions of whether things are or are not working. Communication flows and individual relationship issues can be problematic within and between partners. Partners may have different ideas with respect to management, for example a landowner may have a management plan that means the forest has been planted for commercial harvest and needs no maintenance other than perhaps clearing windblow, whilst the community may feel that the forest should have a multitude of uses and therefore requires more intensive management.

Partnerships, as in the case of Laggan, although initially envisaged as a mechanism to obtain money to help support the Laggan Forest Initiative office, have proved to be important mechanisms to support not just initial partners but other groups and initiatives within the communities (Thomson, 2002), and have clearly increased bridging social capital between the members of the community and external partners. For example in Laggan the partnership between LFT and FCS has supported delivery of local employment for local contractors, facilitated many community events, training, environmental, educational and recreational activities. The working relationship between the Trust and FCS developing over time as both parties developed the best ways to work together effectively to achieve objectives. Lessons learnt from these partnerships have enabled LFT to go on and form new and effective partnerships. This is supported by other authors; Edwards et al (2008) found striking evidence of a substantial increase in partnership working between agencies within and beyond the forestry sector at different spatial scales and levels of governance having a positive effect on community development and the generation of public goods. Campbell and Bryan (2006) found that the partnership approach has offered added value compared with trying to work alone.

In Laggan the capacity of the community to manage and deliver these benefits, and an increasingly more diverse range of activity, has, and still is being built. Evans and Franklin (2008) support this, finding in their study, that a high level of community capacity can be found when community woodland groups work in partnership with external agencies. From the point of view of FCS, the partnership has created benefits in the form of delivery of the mountain bike and pony trails within the forest, interpretation, MFST areas, monitoring of wildlife, diversification of habitats and increasing FCS ability to work and communicate effectively and productively with communities to achieve mutual benefit. Campbell & Bryan (2006) point out that these intangible benefits are intrinsically difficult to measure, however it would be beneficial for other communities and external agencies if indicators and/or a tool kit could be created that offered guidance with respect to good practise for community woodland partnerships

Effective partnership working, including the creation of partnerships, is not evident across all community woodland initiatives. Kilfinan have tried to create a partnership to manage Achrossan Forest for the benefit of the local community without any success, as FCS would not entertain this, which has led to the community applying through the NFLS to purchase the woodland. Drumchapel manage the woodland for the council; they have a great deal of enthusiasm and are providing the community with a much needed asset but have not been provided with sufficient support to increase their capacity where they need it most, in following protocols and running meetings (Andrew Thompson, opinion pers com).

Although partnership working can be very positive it is still too limited and considerable work needs to be undergone particularly with public agencies, in their training and understanding of the broad range of issues that communities face when managing their woodlands. Further work is needed to examine exactly how effective partnership working is and how it can be improved for the benefit of all across a broad range of community woodland groups. Campbell & Bryan (2006) found that construction of the partnership agreement was an area of conflict, in particular the time taken to establish them and the level of flexibility within them, as many do not take the dynamic nature of woodland management and community involvement into consideration. Lack of clear communication and lack of understanding of language used by professionals was illustrated through a number of the case studies. The Kilfinan group had problems in communication with FCS Land Agents and eventually had to bring in external help to '*interpret*' what the land agent was telling them and to ensure their voice was heard. Knoydart had problems with consultants actually listening and producing documented material to suit their purpose. Campbell & Bryan (2006) also found that areas of communication such as lack of clarity with respect to information and guidance with respect to insurance issues can be a problem. However this is a two way problem, FCS staff are also much stretched, they usually cover a vast geographical area with a range of responsibilities. The growing demand for community involvement puts increasing pressure on FCS staff (Cambell & Bryan, 2006). To create and maintain effective partnership working at all levels takes time and effort, and an assumption is made that this will be just included in the day to day activity of the organisation, and that community group can afford to do this as volunteers. This is an increasingly difficult issue. Knoydart are currently reviewing partnership working with nominated members of the board, Angela Williams raised an issue that is relevant across a number of agreements:

*'over 10 years things change and we need to make sure all sides are happy with how things are working, we didn't have anything written down with regard to what partners were bringing to the table or what they expected from us. With hindsight this would have been sensible as it would have given a basis for ongoing discussions'*

Quite often partners do not make it clear from the onset what is expected, this and ongoing record would ensure that everyone is clear where they stand and

what is required in partnership agreements.

The Land Reform Act and NFLS have given communities enormous opportunity to purchase woodland however the lack of funding support at this time makes it impossible for them to do so. The Scottish Land Fund is no longer active, Highland & Islands Enterprise, Community Land Unit are unable to support capital funding of community acquisitions as it would set a precedent which could not be fairly apportioned to the rest of Scotland. Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisation have confirmed that the Scottish Rural Development Programme's Rural Priorities funding is unable to support the capital funding, and The Big Lottery will not fund purchases through the NFLS as they consider that FCS land is already publically owned and community purchase of land that is already public property is not appropriate use of Lottery funding.

The Forestry Commission do not have the legal freedom to transfer land assets to communities, new statutory instruments are required, perhaps tagging on to public services legislation (Michaela Hunter, pers com). The push for Land Reform and the NFLS have been important changes influencing the development of community woodlands in Scotland. However the NFLS still poses constraints for community groups: the valuation under the NFLS gives the best market value for the FC but does not take into consideration all the public benefit that will be achieved following purchase, in addition, the clawback option may cause problems for groups in the future (Michaela Hunter, pers com.). Community woodlands deliver public service and this is not supported by government, communities want to be able to improve their economy, the government wants rural development to be bottom up but there is no support for communities to do this, there is no support for capital costs (Michaela Hunter, pers com). The data collected in this study with respect to potential and actual visitor numbers for only 10 community woodland groups illustrates they have approximately 130,000 visitors per year. Assuming this to be 5% of the number of woodlands in Scotland (based on an estimate of 200 – accurate data needs to be acquired) this gives an approximate figure of 2.6 million community members and visitors that gain benefit from community woodlands across Scotland. When:

- The difficulties that communities face in accessing funding and support to deliver these benefits
  - The problems in fulfilling the government's obligations
  - The vast number of volunteer hours that are put in
- are all taken into consideration, it's clear that more support is justified.

### **6.3 Management**

#### **Forestry management practises**

Community woodlands usually need to fulfil a broad range of objectives e.g. biodiversity, commercial forestry and recreation (See detailed case studies Appendix 4). Many are very attractive woodlands, and most management would be classed as low carbon forestry, the methods used are low impact, oil efficient but very labour intensive, and any end products are usually for a local

market. The NFLS gives communities increased opportunity to purchase their local woodland but at the same time presents a challenge from a silvicultural perspective, many of these will be beyond thinning and clear fell and restocking may be the only option to fulfil local aspirations (Jake Willis, pers com).

Just as community woodlands range in size so does scale of forestry activity and management, the smaller they are the less likely they are to be economically viable. Forest operations range from minor tree surgery to commercial harvesting. Often a wider range of methods are used than in the commercial sector, and management can be intensive; made possible through high volunteer input (effectively meaning that the labour element is not included in economic evaluation).

## **Planning**

Following discussions with the CWA community woodland advisors, and community group representatives it was established that most community groups have some form of management plan. In many cases, such as at Knoydart, they are detailed and followed rigorously. However this may not always be the case and whether groups actually follow their plans through and implement them is not always clear. In addition when communities take over management of the woodland they may be constrained by the existing structure and in some cases by the existing management plan. A common positive feature of community management is that small scale planting areas enable intense targeted management that meet multiple objectives.

## **Silviculture:**

The level of silvicultural activity varied between groups, some such as Knoydart were involved with everything from establishment and maintenance through to harvesting and utilisation, others such as Dunbar, just maintenance. Generally woodland management was intensive and in some cases innovative. This section has been divided into establishment, maintenance, harvesting and utilisation with some examples from the case studies in each to illustrate the variety of forestry management practises carried out in community woodlands.

## **Establishment**

- The use of brush hedges to provide shelter for new planting (Knoydart)
- The use of Western Red Cedar as a nurse crop for native species (Knoydart)
- The use of a variable stocking policy, planting at a high density on good quality ground and a lower density on poor quality ground, aiming for an overall stocking density that matches grant aid requirements (Knoydart)

## Maintenance

- Small scale tree surgery is carried out to make the woodlands safe and open views (CWA woodland advisors, pers com - Most groups)
- Members of Morven community woodland have developed a highly successful organic method to remove Rhododendrons; the lever and mulch method (Morven)



## Harvest and Utilisation

- Small scale coppicing is carried out on quite a wide scale (Jake Willis, Donald Mc Phillimy, pers. Com) with the focus mainly on biodiversity and woodfuel supply (e.g. at Wooplaw, Morven)
- Extraction of windblow using chainsaw winches and a system of micro-pulleys (e.g. at Morven)
- Chainsaw ring-barking which kills the trees standing; ring-barking kills the tree and allows the tree to air dry. Resultant lighter timber facilitates extraction and renders the wood more immediately useable as woodfuel. This is a very intensive form of management but it is argued that it is less labour intensive; this has been used effectively at Knoydart.
- Small scale machinery is used that has a lower impact, for example the use of small tractors, winches and farm timber trailers in the management of their Oakwood's (e.g. at Morven)



## General Community Woodland Management

Difficulties can arise when the community inherit plantations which are often unthinned and consist of commercial softwoods. Often the most practical option would be to clear fell and start again but this can cause issues with the community, they have become accustomed to seeing the forest and may feel challenged when it is suggested that the forest should be cleared. Some communities manage this better than others; Knoydart had no choice other than clear fell and put a lot of work into raising awareness and showing the community this would be a positive move, including working with the children to produce a film. Displacement can also be a problem; the production of woodfuel is a common way for community groups to make money from their woodland. However woodfuel is also often already supplied by local contractors and this can cause conflict. Another constraint relates to deer management. Groups often have a skills gap and management can be ad hoc. There is a need for an integrated plan for deer management and work in facilitating partnerships between community groups and adjacent land owners, looking at deer management at a landscape level.

Places such as Knoydart are the exception rather than the rule and experienced forest managers are in the minority in community woodlands. Some may use contractors or agents, work in partnership with the Forestry Commission (e.g. Laggan) or private organisations such as Scottish Woodlands (e.g. Laide), or with sympathetic forestry consultants (e.g. Wooplaw, Anagach). In the absence of a capable manager some manage to increase their capacity but many need help to do this. This is where the CWA play a major role, by providing support, help, advice, information, and a broad range of training courses. However the disparate nature of community woodlands often renders attendance at courses difficult. This combined with the ever increasing numbers of community woodlands, all of which are unique make it difficult to see how the CWA can provide all the help that is required. The ideal would be for all community woodland groups to have at least one paid staff member to oversee management, but funding this is a major issue.

Groups are usually financed through membership fees, grants, and income from forestry activities, such as timber sales at Abriachan, woodfuel at Morven and Wooplaw. However most community woodlands do not have adequate income to be sustainable, core funding is extremely difficult to find with most grants being provided for specific projects rather than revenue funding. Even the process of application can be difficult (e.g. SRDP applications). Monitoring and reporting back can also be very onerous and inhibitory for some community groups.

Many have governance vulnerabilities, they often rely totally on volunteer's knowledge, management and practical skills but still have to become a decision making group and comply with legislation, health and safety, insurance requirements etc. This can be difficult if the volunteers are not adequately qualified.

Urban groups can suffer from a lack of 'community' particularly within the larger urban areas, there is often no nucleus and there can be dependency issues, whereas rural communities tend to be more self reliant (Andrew Thompson, pers com).

*'It is not easy for urban groups and they often need a lot of coaching'*  
(Andrew Thompson)

However this is not always the case there are also a lot of good examples: Crossgates in Fife were the first group to use the community right to buy. They appear to be rural but are in fact a very urban mining town, they have a 5 year management plan and are successfully managing the 16.5ha of woodland and pasture for access, recreation and conservation, with full engagement with, and for, the community. CLEAR at Buckhaven, an urban group in a very deprived community on the Fife coast have very good management and working practises, together with high levels of self reliance, they carry out a lot of work in the woodland with disadvantaged young people. Dunbar in East Lothian obtained the woodland through a planning deal when the woodland became sandwiched between a new housing development and the old town. They used an existing community trust as a vehicle to take on the ownership and management. The developer approached the trust at the instigation of a local councillor; the community obtained the woodland as a planning gain giving greater benefit to the community. Dunbar have also benefited from members of the group having been involved in community woodlands elsewhere having key skills that have been invaluable for the group.

Other examples of urban community woodland engagement include the WIAT schemes; these are supposed to have been for communities but have generally tended to be led by the LA with not enough community buy in (Andrew Thompson, pers com). Practically they should have engaged with the community to see what they wanted but the pressure to spend the money within the allocated funded time period led to very little community input and no sense of ownership of many of the projects. WIAT is a good concept but the time frame to spend the money has in a number of cases set back the community woodland cause, this is in a sense a wasted opportunity as they could have achieved a much greater buy in (Andrew Thompson, pers com).

## **The way forward**

Networking, guided through the CWA, Reforesting Scotland and various umbrella organisations play an important role for community groups, they provide meeting places, points of contact for advice and communicate examples through their websites, activities, events, newsletters and conferences for the community woodland world throughout Scotland. Examples of good practise enthuse, inspire and help others, and communication with respect to how problems are resolved help other groups to address problems they may have. It is this sense of help at hand and that individual groups are

part of the larger family of the growing community woodland movement across Scotland that is making it so successful.

Directors that are committed to making sure the organisation works properly, that play close attention to finances, form good working relationships with partners/outside bodies, have open communication, and are open to scrutiny, transparent working form the heart of effective successful community groups (Angela Williams, pers com).

## 8. Future Directions

- Community woodlands encompass a multitude of uses and produce a multitude of benefits, so perhaps a different perspective could be taken of their value. A different method of accounting could be used when assessing whether or not community woodland is sustainable, which takes into consideration the multifunctional and holistic nature in which most woodlands are managed, perhaps by looking at their carbon use? Sustainable rural development policy focuses on economic growth and development, the environment is supported by legislation and designations but the social element of sustainable development has little support. This makes it very difficult to obtain funding for a large proportion of the work that is carried out in community woodlands. By using a different system of accounting benefits could be rewarded and core and revenue funding issues resolved. As the current funding potential becomes more discriminating against community woodland purchase, development, and management new and creative ways need to be found for maximising economic sustainability.
- Partnership working generally needs to be further researched, how they work, how they can be improved, for example an examination of cross boundary partnership working.
- Day to day forest management is an area that community woodland groups need help with resolving. One idea that could be examined is the use of a forest manager that looks after a group of community woodlands within an area, cooperative forest management could offer help with sustainable forest management advice, including: a professional forest management plan, assistance in locating suitable contractors, information regarding timber sales. This is already used in Finland and other Scandinavian countries and in the USA, and could possibly be an option in Scotland. In Finland this is effectively financed through timber sales, so even though the model could be used it would have to be adapted to suit the multifunctional aspects of community woodlands and possibly provided as a free service, or funded through SRDP.
- Data collection – accurate details with respect to how many community woodlands there are, where they are, tenure, and area, numbers of

volunteer hours and how many visitors they give benefit to, what these benefits are. This data could then be used in conjunction with details of funding received by these communities to:

- Assess public value for money
- Establish how much land is being managed by communities across Scotland
- Establish trends
- Produce indicators
- Produce toolkits

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## **9 Appendix 1**

### **Key Stakeholder Questionnaire: Community Woodlands Baseline Report - Scotland**

1. Were you involved in promoting / setting up / working with community woodland groups in the past? Are you still involved now and in what way?
2. Are you aware of any legislation or policies which have affected community woodland activity?
3. What do you feel were the key things (organisations/policies/motivations) that have influenced the development of community woodlands in Scotland?

4. What have been main constraints?
5. Oldest community woodlands – or similar - in Scotland? When did it start?

### **Community Woodland Group Questionnaire:**

#### **Community Woodlands Baseline Report - Scotland**

1. When was the community woodland group formed?
2. Why the group was formed/what were the motivations?
3. When did you purchase/start management of the woodland?
4. Size of woodland? (ha) Stock?
5. What is the woodland tenure arrangement? (We own it / management agreement with FCW or CC or private land owner / lease, etc).
6. What does your tenure status allow you to do / not allow you to do? (e.g. Run education activities, maintain footpaths, manage timber, take charge of woodland management plan, etc.)
7. If you own the woodland, what were the circumstances of purchase? (open market; grant funded purchase, asset transfer / donation from landowner, etc.) Where did money come from?
8. Who supported you in the purchase/lease/setting up of the group in terms of advice – and is there ongoing support?
9. How long did it take from the initial idea to getting going on the ground?
10. What was the most difficult aspect of setting up a community woodland group?
11. Main aim(s), main activities, and main uses of woodland?
12. Legal structure? (company, workers cooperative, charity, etc)
13. How many members? Status / voting members / board members? (Membership fee?) how do you assess who can be a member, e.g. Geography, like-minded interest? Do you engage with the wider community?
14. What percentage of local residents involved in group?

15. Would you describe yourselves as urban, urban fringe or rural?
16. Who plans and who carries out woodland management? Do you have a management plan? Extent of group involvement in planning and woodland management? What are the main management objectives and silvicultural system?
17. What is the main use of the woodland i.e. Forestry, recreation, social development etc?
18. What are your main sources of income? – E.g. Grant aid, crafts and products, timber, training contracts, etc.
19. What size is your catchment?

## Appendix 2

### Community Woodland Groups in Scotland

The list below has been reproduced with the kind permission of The Community Woodlands Association. It represents a proportion of their members. The majority of these have individual websites which can be accessed by pressing cntrl – click on the name.

[Anagach Woods Trust](#)  
[Argyll Green Woodworkers Association](#)  
*Ballater Royal Deeside*  
[Aberchirder and District Comm.Assoc.](#)  
[Cormonachan Woodland Project](#)  
[Culag Community Woodland Trust Ltd](#)  
[Dunbar Community Woodland Group](#)  
[Dunnet Forestry Trust](#)  
[Fernaig Community Trust](#)  
[Gearrchoille Community Wood](#)  
[Gordon Community Woodland Trust](#)  
[Highland Renewal](#)  
[Kirkhill & Bunchrew Community Trust](#)

[Laide and Aultbea Community Woodland Ltd.](#)  
[Laggan Forest Trust](#)  
[Laide and Aultbea Community Woodland Ltd.](#)  
*Menstrie Community Woodland*  
[Milton Community Woodland Trust](#)  
[Minard Community Trust](#)  
*North Sutherland Community Forestry Trust*  
*Roots of Arran*  
[South-West Community Woodlands Trust](#)  
[Strathfillan Community Development Trust](#)  
[Strathnairn Community Woodland Project](#)  
[Tinne Beag Workers Co-operative](#)  
*Treslaig & Achaphubuil Crofters Woodland Trust*  
[Wooplaw Community Woodlands](#)  
[Friends of Durris Forests](#)  
[Portmoak Community Woodland Steering Group](#)  
[Scolty Woodland Park Association](#)  
[Sluggans Woodland Park Group](#)  
*Stewarton Woodlands Action Trust*  
[Talamh Life Centre](#)  
[Wemyss Bay Community Woodland Association](#)  
[Borders Forest Trust](#)  
[North Highland Forest Trust](#)  
[Sunart Oakwoods Initiative](#)  
[Forres Community Woodland Trust](#)  
[Alva Glen Heritage Trust](#)  
[Angus Council](#)  
[Castlemilk Environment Trust](#)  
[Central Scotland Forest Trust](#)  
[Kilmallie Community Company](#)  
*Crossgates Community Woodland*  
[Dunain Community Woodland Group](#)  
[Dunning Community Trust](#)  
[Echline Community Woodland](#)  
*Friends of Ferry Glen*  
*Friends of Leadburn Community Woodland*  
[GalGael Trust](#)  
[Garvald Garden and Woodland Project](#)  
*Helensburgh Community Woodlands Group*  
*Highland Perthshire Communities Land Trust*  
*Lionthorn Community Woodland Association*  
[May-Tag Ltd](#)  
[Mid Deeside Ltd](#)  
[North West Mull Community Woodland Group](#)  
[Paths for All Partnership](#)  
*Redhall Community Woodland*  
*Saltburn and District Community Association*  
[Clatto Community Woodland](#)

[Development Trust Association Scotland](#)  
[Assynt Foundation](#)  
[Highland Council Planning and Development](#)  
[Lochalsh Woodland Park Steering Group](#)  
*Kirkton Woodland Group*  
[South Lanarkshire Ranger Service](#)  
[Burn o'Fochabers Community Woodlands Trust](#)  
[South East Caithness - Rumster](#)  
[Kilfinan Community Forest Project](#)  
[Aline Community Woodland](#)  
[Dunnottar Woodland Park Association](#)  
[Aberdeenshire Council](#)  
*Ardross Forest Park*  
*Findhorn Hinterland Group*  
*Docharty Resident's Association*  
*Glasgow City Woodlands Unit*  
*Friends of Cumbernauld Glen*  
[North Harris Trust](#)  
[Craigmarloch Wood Project](#)  
[Acharacle Community Company](#)  
*Perthshire Pit Clachan*  
[Morvern Community Woodlands](#)  
*Clackmannanshire Council*  
*Middleton Wood Management Team*  
*Glanelg and Arnisdale Development Trust*  
[Carron Valley Development Group](#)  
[Craignish Community Company](#)  
*Raasay Community Association*  
*Drymen Woodland Park Group*  
*Badluarach & Durnamuck Community Woodland*  
[Kingsburgh Forest Trust](#)  
*Broadford and Strath Community Company*  
[Strathtay Community Company](#)  
[Action For Change](#)  
*Daviot Trust*  
[Rosneath and Clynder Community Action Trust](#)  
*Drumchapel Woodland Group*  
*Evanton Wood Community Company*  
*ABC Group*  
*Glen Urquhart Land Use Partnership*  
[Holmehill Community Buyout](#)  
[Darnick Community Woodland](#)  
[Beachwood and Wheatcroft Residents Association](#)  
[CLEAR Buckhaven](#)  
[Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust](#)  
*Closeburn Community Council*  
[Sleat Community Trust](#)  
*Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise*

*Castle Grange Owners Association*  
*Auchencairn Initiative*  
*Embo Trust (Urras Euraboil)*  
[Kilmarnock Community Trust](#)

### **Appendix 3**

#### Questionnaire Participants

##### Wider Stakeholder Questionnaires:

Donald McPhillimy, Independent forestry consultant and a Director of Reforesting Scotland

Steve Robertson, Forest Trust Manager North Highland Forest Trust

Piers Voysey, Chair Community Woodlands Association

Diane Campbell, Development manager, Community woodlands Association

Jon Hollingdale, Chief Executive Community Woodlands Association

Jake Willis, Community Woodland Extension Officer Community Woodlands Association

Andrew Thomson, Community Woodland Extension Officer Community Woodlands Association

Angela Williams, Knoydart Foundation

##### **Community Woodland Group questionnaires:**

Donald McPhillimy, Wooplaw Community Woodlands

Piers Voysey, Anagach Woods Trust

Jake Willis, Morven Community Woodlands

Grant Holroyd, Knoydart Forest Trust

Michaela Hunter, Kilfinan Community Forestry Company

Jean Barnett, Chair Dunnet Forest Trust

William Forey, Drumchapel Woodland Group

Isobel Knox, Dunbar Community Woodland Group

Crossgates, web based material

Laggan Forest Trust, Author

## **Appendix 4**

### **Case Studies**

#### **Wooplaw**

Wooplaw was the first community owned woodland in Scotland located in the Scottish borders approximately six miles from Galashiels. It is a charity and was purchased in 1987 for £35,000; the aims being to manage the woods for the benefit of the local community - in particular education, training, recreation, and the sustainable production of forest products. It is a membership charity open to all, with 100 members at present. Situated in a rural location it has a catchment of approximately 12000 drawn from surrounding villages of Melrose, Galashiels, Tweedbank, Stow, Lauder, Blainslie and Earlston. It is well supported by a core group and has held regular activities since its establishment.

It covers about 22ha and consists of mixed woodland, some coppiced. Thousands of trees have been planted by the members, ponds, footpaths, stiles and six different buildings constructed. These include composting toilets and a bothy which can be used overnight, this and the barbeque are supplied with woodfuel from the coppice. Funding comes from membership fees of £5 for two years and from grants and donations. There is a core of 3 trustees and a management group known as wardens who make the decisions with respect to woodland management and events and activities that are held within the woodlands.

Link:

<http://www.wooplaw.org.uk/>

#### **Morven Community Woodlands**

Morven Community Woodlands were established in 2002 it is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee; set up to bring neglected woodlands back into active management. It manages the woodland in partnership with FCS. The aims of the company are to manage the woodland resources to:

- Raise awareness of the need for sustainable management of woodlands in Morven and the benefit of increasing the contribution of Morven woodlands to the local economy
- Create opportunities for woodland recreation and education, and provide access to community woodland areas for recreation and education

- Promote the active involvement of the local community in woodland management and seek to create economic opportunities for local people through woodland management and utilisation
- Develop the necessary skills for sustainable management and utilisation of woodlands and woodland resources in Morvern and provide the facilities and equipment for the development of these skills.

The woodland is called Achnaha Community Wood and is a 8ha coastal woodland of mixed broadleaves and some planted conifers; it is located on the west coast and opens out onto the Sound of Mull.

The land is FCS owned, and covered by a 25 year 'management agreement' signed in 2005. There are 50+ members, with a board of nine directors. The catchment is Morven parish - 350 people in 400 square kilometres. Income is primarily event based and project based funding, funding is also generated to cover insurance and events from event entry fees, firewood and wood sales, CWA and other training courses.

Link:

<http://www.morvencommunitywoodlands.org.uk/>

## **Dunnet Forestry Trust**

Dunnet forest Trust was incorporated in May 2002, but work had already started on the community management of the wood under the auspices of the Dunnet Bay Initiative, established in 1993.

Dunnet Forestry Trust is a limited company with charitable status with a community membership of 450 and a catchment of approximately 28000, but visitor numbers are approximately 40000 per year. It is situated adjacent to the A836 Thurso to John O'Groats road, just inland from Dunnet Bay and covers an area of 104ha. The forest contains over 25 different species and has SSSI botanical and archaeological designations. Dunnet Forestry Trust manages the woodland on behalf of SNH and the woodland is mainly used for recreation, income is derived from the supply of fuelwood, grants, donations and membership, a small amount of support of wages for employment trainees, when they have them, and some in kind from volunteers (Dounreay apprentices especially) and local businesses. DFT has nine board members elected from the membership (anyone resident in Caithness). SNH and HC are represented as advisors.

Roles within Board of the Directors:

Chair – appraisals and training requirements for staff and directors.

Vice Chair – Forest Officer's line manager.

Company secretary

Treasurer / Finance officer – account and budget reporting to Board of Directors.

Line manager for Administrator.

Director responsible for Health and Safety – all related issues including regular

walks around forest with Forest Officer.

Link:

<http://www.dunnetforest.org/>

### **Anagach Woods Trust**

Anagach Woods Trust is a charitable limited company situated at the edge of Grantown on Spey in the Highlands, with 250 members it was purchased by the community in 2002 with funds from Scottish Land Fund and Highland and Islands Enterprise Community Land Fund for £975,000. It is 390ha of native pine forest and is used as a resource for environmental and forestry education, for sustainable timber management, and for a range of green tourism activities as well as local amenity.

There are no membership fees at present, and AWT are reliant on grants, donations, fund raising events and occasional timber sales. Catchment size is around 3,000 people, within approximately 35 square km. Active membership: 20, but most of Grantown is active enjoying the woods at some stage in the year.

The aims are:

- To manage the Woods in such a way as to improve the habitats for rare plants and animals characteristic of native Scots pine forest.
- To make the most of the wood as a resource for environmental education and skills training
- To create and maintain to a high standard access routes and other facilities that allow people of all abilities to enjoy the woods, that contribute to the value of Grantown as a whole and that balance with the primary objective of conservation.
- In line with conservation objectives, to ensure that Anagach Woods provides opportunities for small business development based on the products and activities of Anagach Woods
- To maintain a positive flow of financial resources from timber and non-timber forest product revenues and from grants and donations that will sustain the management of the woods.
- To ensure that a wide range of Grantown residents and other stakeholders are involved in the management operations and planning of the woods.

Link:

<http://www.anagachwoods.org.uk/>

### **Laggan Forest Trust**

Laggan is a small isolated community dispersed over 400 square miles, off the A86 Newtonmore to Spean Bridge road in the Central Highlands.

One of the major employers in the 1950's and 60's at Laggan had been the Forestry Commission (FC), when 16% of the population were directly employed in forestry. This had justified the construction of 11 forestry houses as part of the FC's Forest Village Programme. However as work scaled down and the FC started to contract work out, the local foresters were laid off and concerns arose that Strathmashie Forest would be sold. As a result 'The Laggan Forest Trust' (LFT) was set up to safeguard local community interests. In 1998 LFT agreed a pioneering (five year) formal Partnership Agreement with FCS for the day to day operation and management of Strathmashie Forest – this agreement was rewritten and extended for a further 25 years in 2004. A consultation exercise and ballot were held in 2003 with the whole community and Associate Members of LFT. The return rate was 66% with 85% in favour of buying parts of the forest, and in 2007 LFT successfully purchased 3 pieces of land (20ha) in the forest under the terms of the National Forest Land Scheme, for £75,821. The funds for purchase were sourced from the Scottish Land fund and fund raising by the community. The Community land unit, FCS, Cairngorm National Park Authority and a wide range of other stakeholders have provided support and advice before, during and post land purchase. The remaining 1329 ha is still managed under the partnership agreement with FCS. LFT has a membership of 80 and is managed by a board of 8 trustees. The forest is mainly conifer plantation, with some areas managed for natural regeneration created under the MFST scheme. Income for the trust is derived mainly from grants, donations and fundraising. The partnership with FCS enables the Trust, under its trading arm, Laggan Forest Trust Forestry Company, to ensure that local contractors have first option for contracts within the forest, run activities, jointly established Wolftrax mountain bike centre, pony trails, footpaths, interpretation, habitat management e.g. Aspen, Pearl Bordered Fritillary monitoring. The aims with respect to the land now owned by the community are to ensure that the community will benefit from the forest through employment, tourism, recreational facilities and economic sustainability with the over riding principle of ensuring that the income and wealth generated from the forest stays within the community.

Link:

<http://www.laggan-forest-trust.com/>

### **Kilfinan Community Forest Company**

The aims of Kilfinan Community Forest Company are to acquire an area of Acharossan Forest to deliver a range of benefits to the community. At present the forest is owned by FCS and the community play no part in its management, FCS have made it clear that they are unwilling to enter into a management agreement. In 2005 the community had a meeting, facilitated by Reforesting Scotland, to discuss what they wanted and how this could be achieved. Initially the group was informal however it was felt that attaining charitable status was essential to facilitate funding, hence the group officially formed on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007. The decision to purchase the forest was

made and a recent successful application under the National Forest Land scheme means that the community can now move forward with their plans. Their project aims to;

- Develop a Forest Park that would open up access and offer recreational opportunities by creating a safe play area for children, a path network including the path to Kilfinan, mountain bike trails, assault course and horse riding.
- Create a valuable educational resource including environmental interpretation, nature trails, workshop space to learn green woodwork and woodcraft skills and develop as an education centre.
- Generate employment opportunities in the management of the forest and building of houses, with potential for a range of small businesses.
- Actively improve natural habitat and the conservation value of the forest by developing and implementing a biodiversity action plan.
- Offer training in a range of subjects including sustainable forest management and timber construction.
- Develop renewable energy systems based on the forest resource to supply housing with heat and power.
- Explore sustainable land management techniques including water catchment management, improved deer management and agro-forestry systems.
- Generate increased turnover for existing local businesses and tourism.
- Allow affordable housing for local people, and thus create a demand for local timber from the forest. The housing will be constructed with an element of self-build and a burden agreement that keeps the housing affordable long term.

(<http://www.kilfinanforestpark.org.uk/aims.htm>)

The group were supported through their application by a broad range of bodies including: Reforesting Scotland, Communities Scotland, The Community Land Unit, ALI Energy and Scottish Native Woods. The most difficult aspect of the process, where the group received no support, was the ballot and nomination of members; this was very complex, there was no support and the group had no experience to guide them through this. In addition it was felt that the FC land agents were not adequately trained in dealing with communities, they hindered rather than facilitated the application. It was very difficult for the community, who were inexperienced, to comprehend and unravel the '*legal jargon*' with which they were presented. Without outside help in the negotiation the community felt they would have got into '*a pickle*' which could have inhibited their access rights in the forest.

Membership currently stands at 153, with a board of 9, membership is limited by the parish district post code, however they do have associate members outwith this although they have no voting rights. At present there are approximately 10 people out of a potential 700+ catchment that use the forest.

Even though the community are now able to purchase the forest, they have been unable to obtain funding. The Scottish Land Fund which has supported many community woodland purchases in the past, is now closed, the lottery will not support land purchase as it considers that FC land is already owned by the public, and most other funding channels will not support capital purchase. Because of this the group have renegotiated to purchase a smaller area within the next 5 years, they hope to achieve this through fundraising and donations.

Link:

<http://www.kilfinanforestpark.org.uk/>

## **Knoydart Forest Trust**

The Knoydart Forest Trust area covers the west of the Knoydart peninsula, access only by boat. The land has had a succession of owners all with short term interests, the last abandoning it as he was pursued by Interpol! By this time the community had had enough of the ongoing problems with absentee landlords which led to lack of stability and security and decided that they could deliver benefits in terms of stable local employment, improve the local economy and increase biodiversity.

The whole process took between 5 and 10 years to get off the ground, but this did have advantages. The community started to look at how they could manage the woodlands 2 years before purchase and 1 year before obtained funding for a survey and to produce a forest management plan so the group were ready to start as soon as the purchase went through. In 1999 The Knoydart Foundation purchased the estate and the Forest Trust evolved in parallel to manage the woodland. The purchase was funded by the John Muir Trust, The Chris Brasher Trust, HIE, SNH plus a substantial anonymous donation.

The primary purpose of the forest trust is to manage the wooded areas of the peninsula for public benefit, which includes increasing access, forestry activities and improving their biodiversity. In addition to their own land KFT are also responsible for other adjacent wooded areas such as those at Kilchoan Estate. In total the Trust are responsible for stewarding the land of 10 different owners on the Knoydart Peninsula, they also offer 3 other neighbouring estates woodland services on a contract basis. The woodland owned by the foundation covers 100ha, but the total area managed under the plan stretches to 800ha, half of which is conifer plantation the other half native woodland, the contract area covers an additional 250ha. The FT employs Grant, a community forester, 3 forest workers and a part time administrator, The FT wrote the management plan with the help of an outside consultant and with community consultation.

The management plan is reviewed on a 5 year basis in consultation with the community and landowners, work achieved so far and being undergone include:

- New native planting
- Thinning of existing conifer stands
- Rhododendron control (now in the final phase of a ten year clearance)
- Increasing public access – mountain bike trails and footpath creation and maintenance
- Archaeology
- Timber sales
- Selling milled wood
- Other contract work
- Maintenance of public access for council

The Trust is a charitable company ltd by guarantee, membership is open to all residents and non residents as associate members, at present there are 31 members with voting rights and 26 non resident members that are not allowed to vote. The board is elected by the resident members, normally 5 board members but at present there are only 3. The total population of Knoydart is 120, many of these are children so the %age of pop that are members is approximately 50%. The turnover from the current business plan over the 5 year period is £1 million. With income from:

- Contracts
- Events and activities
- 25% from forestry grants
- 25% other small grants
- 25% Lottery funding
- 25% timber sales
- Donations
- Interest on an endowment fund which has been between 3 & 6 000 pounds in the past but with the current economic climate is negligible

The most difficult aspect of setting up the CW was dealing with consultants, they are expected to produce documents fit for use but often they require more management than the plan!! They often produce work that does not suit the need.

Link:

<http://www.knoydart-foundation.com/home/knoydart-forest-trust/>

### **Dunbar Community Woodland**

Dunbar Community Woodland group manage the 18.2 ha of Lochend Wood which is located just off the A1 in the town of Dunbar. This woodland was originally part of the old Lochend Estate and some specimen trees including Oak, Walnut and Yew, from the old garden can still be found dotted throughout the woodlands, which consist mainly of sycamore, spruce and some pine. When privately owned access to the woodland was actively discouraged. However in 1997 the farmer that owned the estate sold it to a developer who subsequently sold parcels off and planning consent was gained for housing

development, a golf course and a hotel. Towards the end of the 90's a road was constructed to give the new houses access to the sports centre this effectively cut the woodland in two. East Lothian council felt that the woodland was an asset for the community and that it should be under community management and after several years of lengthy negotiation (2000-2007), the developers agreed to transfer the ownership of the woodland to the hands of the community. East Lothian council approached Dunbar Community Development Company to see if they would take on the ownership, a deal was struck and the woodland together with a financial package was gifted to the community to manage.

Dunbar community woodland group, a registered charity, were formed to manage the woodland on behalf of Dunbar Community Development Company. There are currently 150 members with a board of 10, 3 of whom are very active. There are no restrictions on membership and a wide cross section of the community from dog walkers, joggers, nature lovers to children all enjoy the woodland.

Whilst the negotiations were underway the work that could be carried out in the woodlands limited to litter picking and small events, the youth group held a performance of a midsummer nights dream in 2006. From 2007 the group were able to take a more active role in the management of the woodland and through WIAT funding were able to engage contractors to remove dangerous trees. DCW is fortunate to have a lot of expertise on its board including a forestry expert, who has written the management plan, and an archaeologist. The main areas of this that have been implemented so far have been the removal of some non native species to allow for natural regeneration, and a limited amount of planting including Oak, Ash, Crab Apple and a few fruit trees. Some timber harvesting will take place as part of the WIAT bid.

The woodland is mainly used for recreation and their motto is '*for trees, for wildlife, for people*'. The aims being:

- To manage Lochend Woods as a community resource for the benefit of everyone in Dunbar.
- Maximise potential for educational and recreational use, and to value wildlife.
- Encourage all who use the woods to treat them with respect, to clear litter and to discourage damage to the trees and wildlife habitats.
- To steward the environment, and maintain pathways and waterways

They have very few problems, there is not too much vandalism, occasional fires, some use of the woodland for drinking dens, and a recent issue of removal of timber for firewood, and this also caused damage to footpaths as a vehicle and trailer were taken in to remove the wood. 300 houses back on to the woodland and there can be problems with householders complaining about trees hanging over their gardens and then conversely complaints when the trees are cut, in the words of a committee member '*you cant please everyone all the time*'

Link:

<http://62.44.79.130:81/cmullender/dcwg/>

## **Drumchapel Woodland Group**

Drumchapel is located just 5 miles from the centre of Glasgow, it is ancient Oak woodland that over time had been neglected and used as a dumping ground. Originally owned by Glasgow City Council, the woodland known locally as the Bluebell Wood had been handed over to FCS for management under the WIAT scheme and designated as a local nature reserve in 2006.

Members of the local community decided that enough was enough and that something needed to be done about the state of the woodlands so they started up a clean up operation. Quickly they realised they would need help and asked FCS if they would approach Glasgow West Regeneration Agency, with the view to starting a training programme to clean up the woodlands. After much hard work at the beginning of 2008 the woodland was nominated for a Clean Glasgow award, which it won. Drumchapel woodland group was founded in January 2007, and constituted in March 2008 and by late spring had won yet another award the Tim Stead Trophy for Community & Social Forestry, for being the finest community and urban woodland in Scotland.

The woodland is still owned by the council but DWG are now in full control of its management, apart from work on the footpaths which the council still maintain. The group clear rubbish, clean out ditches and have put in new ponds they work with Forestry Commission Scotland and other agencies to promote the protection, conservation, regeneration and good maintenance of the woodlands, help with wildlife protection and conservation by recording what they see including wildlife crime and fly tipping. They have a part time warden that regularly patrols the woodland to report instances of anti social behavior.

The group was set up and running very quickly, with few problems, the only real one being the wait for insurance before they could start work! They hold events such as the recent Easter egg hunt that more than 150 children attended, they have tours and many schools attend events within the woodlands. Including play days for disadvantaged children, they have held two treefest/Drumhenge events, a junior health walk at which 300 children attended.

DWG are a community group with 19 members, with 5 of these on the management committee, all have voting rights. To become a member individuals are invited to an induction, a taster session, following this they are interviewed and given an application form.

The local population is around 8000 and the woodland very busy, it is well used by the locals. From the point of view of woodland management they work within a pre existing plan. Events and activities within the woodland and

are funded through grants.

Link:

<http://drumchapelwoodlandgroup.co.uk/>

## **Crossgates**

Crossgates is a former mining village in Fife, with long history and tradition of deep and surface mining. The woodland – The Taft, was one of the first to be registered under part 2 of The Land Reform Act (Scotland), they purchased the 16.5ha of woodland and pasture for £150,000 in 2005. £135,000 of this was awarded by the Scottish Land Fund, the remainder raised through local fundraising events. The land had been previously owned by the coal authority, it had been used by local people for years and its potential sale was seen as having a major negative impact for the village, so when it was put up for sale the community acted very swiftly, held a ballot and secured the funding.

They have a five year management plan in place the primary aims being to manage for conservation, education and access, it includes removal of non native sycamore to open the canopy for natural regeneration, conversion of some of the pasture is to wildflower meadows, some are being planted. It also includes the creation of new paths and improvements to those already existing in the wood with support from the Fife Ranger Services, and tidying the burn that runs through the land. It is hoped that the woods will benefit Crossgate and surrounding communities through the creation and retention of skills in crafts, the use timber and other materials in the Taft area.

## **Culag**

Culag Community Woodland Trust was set up in 1995, originally to manage Culag Wood for the Community of Lochinver and the parish of Assynt. The wood itself is leased from two owners, Inver Lodge Hotel & Estate and The Highland Council. Subsequently, funding was procured to purchase the "Little Assynt Estate" and these two entities are managed by twelve directors, including four co-opted from stakeholders. They are a membership organisation.

Link:

<http://www.culagwoods.org.uk/who.htm>