



Why Forest Enterprise Scotland is backing the Heart of Scotland project

Launching the forest partnership in the foothills of Schiehallion

In Highland Perthshire, Forest Enterprise Scotland looks after some of the most extensive and impressive publicly owned woodlands in the country, including Queen's View at Loch Tummel, the Black Wood of Rannoch, and Faskally Wood – which attracts 60,000 visitors each October to view the Enchanted Forest.

“It’s a fabulously mixed beat, with native Caledonian pine forest, remnant ancient semi-natural broadleaf woodlands and productive conifer forests, says Doug Howieson, the Tay Forest District Manager of Forest Enterprise.” It adds to the beauty of the landscape and is highly regarded by visitors and our timber customers.”

As an executive agency that operates under the direction of the Scottish Government, Forest Enterprise currently

has a renewed focus on productive coniferous forestry to help regenerate rural economies. “At the same time, we continue to manage existing ancient semi-natural and new native woodland.”

Forest Enterprise got involved in the Heart of Scotland Forest Partnership after being approached by the Trust’s Land Manager at Schiehallion, Liz Auty.

“We felt that some of our existing native woodland fitted very nicely within this emerging project and so we wanted to support it,” says Doug. “A big part of the site is within a National Scenic Area so the creation of new native woodland by the John Muir Trust and other partners, alongside native woodland previously developed by Forest Enterprise, will further enhance this special landscape.”

Doug believes the commercial operation of Forest Enterprise can thrive alongside the nature conservation priorities of the other partners – Highland Perthshire Community Land Trust, Kynachan Estate, the Woodland Trust Scotland and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. “Both objectives can work harmoniously together,” he says.

He also points to the potential economic benefits of native woodland restoration. “Clearly there will be jobs created as the project develops. And in the future, there can potentially be a productive element to the native species that are planted – for example, providing a hardwood element of timber for industry.”

● *This is the first in a series of interviews with our five Heart of Scotland partners*



PHOTOGRAPHS: KEVIN LELLAND

First step on the road to a future forest wonderland

In blazing late July sunshine, the Heart of Scotland Forest Partnership was launched at the foot of Schiehallion. It brings together community, conservation, public and private landowners with the aim of transforming a vast area of Highland Perthshire into a rich, vibrant landscape.

The Trust’s Liz Auty, who has been the main driving force behind the initiative, gave the opening welcome: “It has taken many years and a lot of passion to bring everyone together and I’m so glad that we’re all finally here today.”

Six tree saplings were planted (one for each partner) to mark the occasion, before the gathering moved on to a perfect spot from which to view land that will one day be flourishing with Scots pine, aspen, birch, rowan, willow and other species.

Nature writer Jim Crumley, who attended the event, commented in his *Courier* newspaper column: “Nothing on Earth responds to encouragement like nature, and encouragement on this scale will prompt nature to respond in ways that may surprise us all.”