Forest Enterprise Scotland
Managing the National Forest Estate

Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

Strategy for Woodland Creation

on the National Forest Estate

December 2018

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1. Background

There are currently a range of drivers for woodland creation, including the Scottish Forestry Strategy which sets the overall ambition for woodland creation; the Scottish Government's second *Report on Proposals and Policies (RPP2)* has as a key policy for the creation of 10,000 hectares of woodland per year from 2012-2022 as part of the Scottish Government's (SG) climate change mitigation efforts; the *2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity* which is looking for half of woodland expansion to have native trees and, more recently, the *Programme for Government* commitment for Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) to create woodland on vacant and derelict land. The Scottish Government's 'Expanding Woodland Creation Programme' provides overall direction for woodland creation in Scotland.

Scotland has consistently failed to reach its 10,000 ha per year planting target since it was introduced in 2012, achieving 36,500 ha against a target of 50,000 ha. On the National Forest Estate (NFE) we have created an average of 600 ha per year.

Much of the woodland created on the National Forest Estate has been on land acquired through the repositioning programme. Until now the programme has been largely 'opportunistic', being based on planting the land that has been acquired from the open market, and local planning teams' decisions about how best to use that land. Now, halfway through the current programme, it is time to take stock and move towards a more strategic approach.

2. Purpose of the strategy

To clarify and target all FES activities relating to woodland creation, so as to achieve FES's share of Scottish Ministers woodland creation objectives on the national forest estate. This strategy is primarily aimed at an internal (staff) audience, but is made publicly available in the spirit of openness and transparency.

3. Woodland creation objectives

Our aim for the four and a half year period September 2016 to March 2021 is:

- To create at least 3250 ha of woodland
- To aspire to at least 250 ha of that woodland being on newly acquired former coalfield and derelict sites across central and south western Scotland to achieve large scale restoration and remediation of these sites.

We will also continue to acquire other land to prepare to sustain ongoing woodland creation after March 2021 at a rate of around 650 ha per year.

All of our woodland creation projects where we use planting to establish the trees (and others, where appropriate) will seek to meet the following objectives:

1. **Create productive woodlands** that make a significant contribution to future timber production and to the delivery of the Scottish Government's Climate Change Delivery Plan targets.

Depending on the location and type of woodland that we are establishing, we will also seek to meet a range of other, often complementary, objectives:

2. **Create new native woodlands** that contribute to native woodland creation commitments under the Scottish Government's *Scotland's Biodiversity – a Route map to 2020.*

3. **Contribute to the development of a resilient national forest estate** by creating appropriately diverse woodland types which support delivery of a broad range of ecosystem services.

4. **Contribute to the Woods In and Around Towns (WIAT) initiative,** on sites located near to centres of population with woodlands designed to meet that initiative's requirements.

Note on compensatory planting:

'Compensatory planting' does not count as woodland creation. We should therefore avoid using the land bank for this purpose. If small amounts are offered (as a pragmatic solution to a local issue) this should normally be accompanied by additional financial contributions towards woodland enhancement on the estate, such as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) restoration.

4. How we will work

As we conceive, develop and implement woodland creation projects, we will:

- Acquire land that is fit for purpose;
- Respect the interaction with other land uses, such as agriculture;
- Create deliverable projects which meet objectives as cost-effectively as possible;
- Apply good silvicultural practice for woodland establishment;
- Use natural colonisation where this can meet our objectives;
- Look for alternative and additional ways of delivering woodland creation, such as working in partnership with others.

These points are explored further in Section 6 (Land Acquisition) and Annex 1.

Note on the UK Forestry Standard:

This Strategy does not repeat the requirements of good forestry practice set out in the UK Forestry Standard, which makes reference to (for example) site choice; species diversity; climate change resilience; landscape design; ecological connectivity; public access; involving people; and protecting soils and water. It is assumed that all woodland creation by FES adheres to these standards.

5. Types of woodland to be created

The above objectives and considerations suggest that we will be creating the following types of woodland:

1. **Production-focussed forestry**
   - Main aim being to produce sawlogs, short roundwood, firewood and other standard wood products;
   - Species choice: conifers and broadleaves that are straightforward to establish with minimal ongoing maintenance;
   - Likely to be on underutilised low-grade agricultural land with access for future timber transport.
   - This category, combined with the next, are likely to be the majority of the overall programme.

2. **Forests on vacant and derelict land**
   - Main aim being to help restore this land to a productive capacity, to sequester carbon and to produce wood products using species as per "1" above where possible.
   - Primarily in central and southwest Scotland, on remediated coalfield land.

3. **Native woodlands**
    - Native woodlands have the ability to deliver valuable ecosystem services including timber, biodiversity, water management and long term carbon capture across substantial parts of the estate.
    - Created through planting and natural colonisation on both acquired land and on suitable open land on the existing estate. We refer to this as "Mountain Woodland" where it colonises/is planted 400m above sea level (see Annex 3).
    - Focussed on areas adjacent to existing native woodlands to expand, enhance and buffer these woodlands, as well as to targeted areas (e.g. riparian zones) within productive woodlands.
    - A variable proportion of the programme, mostly achieved through natural colonisation on existing NFE land

4. **'Higher input' productive woodland**
    - Main aim of developing new ways of diversifying the productive element of the estate, and producing higher-end/niche wood products.
    - Species choice: alternative conifers and/or productive broadleaves, often with specific planting needs and ongoing maintenance requirements.
    - May include seed orchards to supply specific species/provenances.
    - Due to its higher costs, to be focussed on a small number of sites where land capability and the wider objectives for the site make this a desirable option.

5. **Mixed woodland for 'Woodlands In and Around Towns' objectives**
    - Likely to be a very small proportion of the programme, and normally delivered in partnership with others, or through a funded project.

Individual sites may contain one of more of these woodland types. Production-focussed forestry and forests on ex-coalfield land will make up the majority of the current programme.

6. Land acquisition for woodland creation

In order to achieve the above woodland creation and to complement the sites already acquired and already on the estate, land acquisition will focus on the following types of sites:

- Ex-coalfield and ex-industrial ('vacant and derelict') land which has been effectively restored and carries a low level of liability. Also such land which has or can cost-effectively be remediated to have the capability to establish woodlands.

- Land where the proportion which can be planted is likely to be high (generally more than 60%) – taking into account site and policy constraints such as deep peat, priority habitats, utilities and agricultural use of land.

- Land where the cost per hectare planted (including both land purchase and subsequent woodland establishment costs) is affordable.
- Land which has the capability to grow productive woodlands.
- Larger sites, typically with a minimum net plantable area of more than 40 ha.
- Taking account of land quality in the locality, lower grade agricultural land (e.g. 'rough grazing' and 'improved grassland' and land with bracken cover) will be preferred. Care should be taken, however, not to get too stringently tied to Land Capability for Agriculture classifications as these take no account of historical land management or local practices.
- Land which is contiguous with or close to existing holdings on the NFE, or which connects ownerships with similar objectives to FES to provide wider habitat network, landscape or ecosystem-scale benefits.
- Land with no buildings or houses is preferred, unless these properties would be easily resold.
- Land where there is reasonable access for timber transport, woodland management, operational activity and other purposes.

More detailed guidance on the acquisition of land is available from the Estates Team.

7. Governance and funding

The Scottish Government's 'Expanding Woodland Creation Programme' brigades together the range of activities aimed at creating new woodland in Scotland to fulfil its climate change and biodiversity requirements and to help underpin the sustainable supply of wood products to the Scottish forestry industry. One of the activities within the overall Programme is woodland creation on the National Forest Estate.

Within FES, woodland creation activities are overseen by an internal Programme, this time one operating internally within FES; this is the New Woodland Investment Programme (NWIP) led by the NWIP Board. This Board is responsible to the FES Management Board and is tasked with:

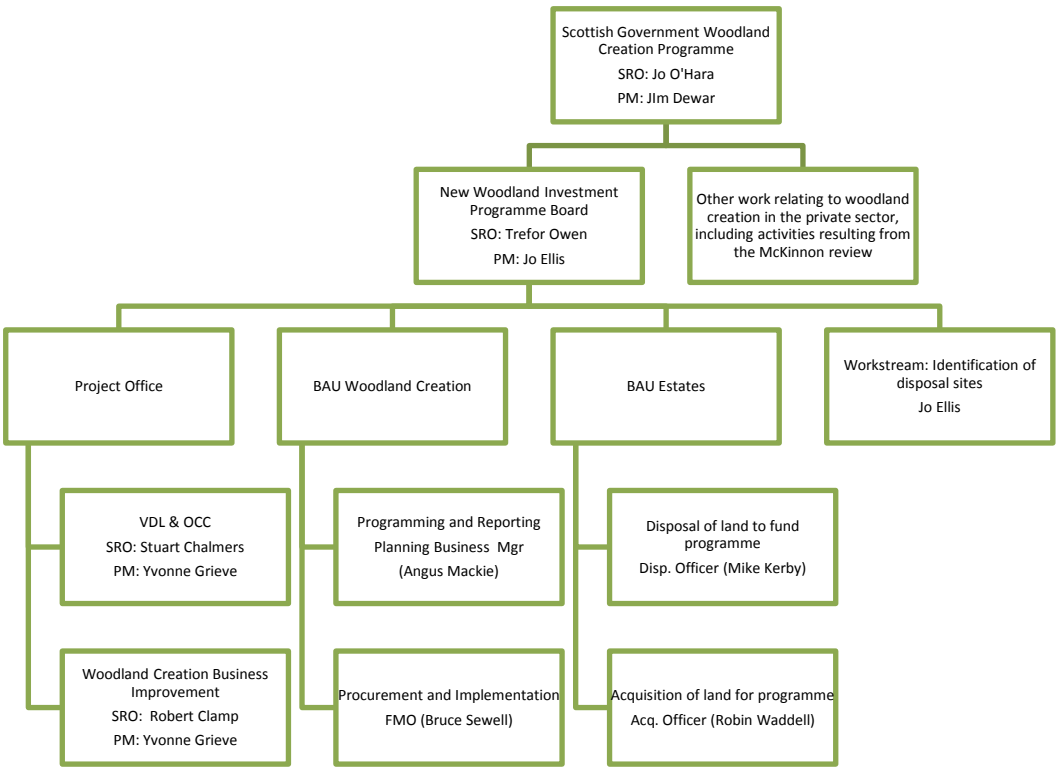
- Overseeing the programme of woodland creation (including natural colonisation) and providing assurance on progress towards targets.
- Overseeing the identification and acquisition of suitable land for the programme (including ex-coalfield and industrial land);
- Raising money to fund the programme, through NWIP sales (see below).
- Allocating budgets to land acquisition and woodland creation.

In these tasks the NWIP Board is supported by: the FES Woodland Creation Project and the FES Vacant and Derelict Land Project; and by the Estates Development Acquisitions and Disposals Team. For details of members of these groups, please see section 9.

Note on Income:

NWIP Sales income is obtained as a result of Estates Development acting on disposal instructions from the New Woodland Investment Programme Board. This income is then used to further the FES Woodland Creation targets, either through the acquisition of new land or the establishment of new woodland on land already acquired as part of the earlier Repositioning programme. This income has also been used to fund investment in starter farms. For 16/17 the budget income was £5m.

This is separate from Rationalisation Sales Income, which is obtained as a result of Estates Development acting on the disposal instructions from the Built Asset Management Board and from approved Land Transaction Appraisals (LTAs). This income is used to fund strategic small acquisitions (e.g. access to land-locked blocks) and also makes a contribution to operational capital funding for vehicles, machinery and the buildings maintenance budget. For 16/17 the budget income was £1.3m.



8. Business process and implementation

An outline business process for woodland creation is described below. This will be subject to a 'lean' process review by the FES Woodland Creation Project, and so timescales are currently indicative. Considerations to be taken into account while implementing the programme are listed in Annex 1.

1. Site acquisition and handover

- The 'Land Transaction Analysis' (LTA) process (led by Estates Development in conjunction with Regional areas) will be used to gather information about potential acquisition sites and assess whether they are fit for meeting the objectives of this strategy.
- The NWIP Board will decide whether sites should be purchased, with reference to the site's cost implications and the available budget.
- All woodland creation sites, including natural colonisation sites, will be added to a nationally-managed spreadsheet together with a provisional budget, delivery mechanism (e.g. framework or in-house), delivery year and proposed woodland type (as per section 5 of this strategy).
- The advice gathered through the LTA, including any recommendations about the type of woodland for which the site was purchased, will be passed onto the planning teams at the site handover meeting.

2. Project planning and programme smoothing

- The next stage is to prepare the Land Management Plan (LMP) for the site. In order to assure the NWIP Board that woodland creation is aligned with this strategy and the type of woodland for which the site was purchased, the Regional Manager should share the brief for the LMP with the NWIP Board (via NWIP Programme Manager, Jo Ellis) prior to further planning being undertaken.
- During the planning period there must be liaison between Regional areas and the Planning Support Manager (Angus Mackie) to confirm the budget and delivery mechanism and to schedule the delivery date for the site within the overall national FES programme.
- Under current arrangements the LMP needs to be ready by June *two years before planting* and the site documents should be prepared by the Planning and Delivery teams by September *two years before planting* (e.g. LMP by June 2018 and site documents by September 2018 for delivery during the 20/21 planting season[1]). Site documents include work plans, planting

[1] In this process, the 'planting season' is assumed to be during winter through to end of financial year, and so the '18/19' planting season refers to winter 2018 through to end March 2019, and planting during this period would count towards our 2018/19 planting figures.

requirements, maps and operational site plans. These timescales are under review but act as a guide.

3. Budgeting

- The NWIP Board will assess and agree the overall FES programme of sites and budget on an ongoing basis.

4. Tendering

- For framework contracts the documentation must be with the NWIP Board for checking by June of the year before planting (i.e. June 2018 for planting in the 19/20 planting season) so that the tender process (if required) can start in September. Awarding contracts early in the year (e.g. early 2018 for 18/19 planting) allows contractors time to secure the correct plants and prepare the site for planting. These timescales are under review but act as a guide.

5. Delivery and monitoring

- Once contracts are issued, the operation should be monitored and progress reported using standard business processes, i.e. the Business Monitoring Report (BMR). These will be summarised and reported to the NWIP Board monthly on an exceptions basis and to the FESMB at the end of the year for the annual accounts.
- On completion, area details should be passed to the GIS team to update the SCDB and produce annual report on area.

9. Further queries?

This strategy is owned by the New Woodland Investment Programme Board. If you have any queries about how this strategy affects your work, please contact Jo Ellis (NWIP Programme Manager) or members of the Programme Board:

Trefor Owen (Head of Land Management) - Programme Senior Responsible Officer
John Mair (Head of Estates Development) - Programme Senior Supplier
Sallie Bailey (Regional Manager, South) - Programme Senior User

If you would like more information on applying the business processes in this Strategy, please contact a member of the FES Woodland Creation Project:

Yvonne Grieve (Environment Advisor Central Region)
Angus Mackie (Planning Support Manager)

The members of the FES Vacant and Derelict Land Project are:

Stuart Chalmers (Visitor Services Manager Central Region) – Project Senior Responsible Officer
Yvonne Grieve (Environment Advisor Central Region) – Project Manager
Colin Hossack (Planning Manager South Region) – Project Senior User
Robert Clamp (Planning Manager Central Region) - Project Senior User

Members of Estates Development Acquisitions team are:

Leona Wilkie – Head of Acquisitions and Disposals
Robin Waddell – Acquisitions Officer
Jim Seaton – Estates Forestry Advisor

Annex 1: Considerations for planning and specifying woodland creation

- Early dialogue between Regional functions is critical, particularly between the planning and delivery teams to ensure well-balanced, deliverable projects. The simplicity and deliverability of the design will be the main influencing factor on affordability and cost.
- Undertake an early costing exercise. There is support for this process available from National Office via the Forest Management Support Officer.
- Ensure staff resource is in place and programmed to facilitate planning and delivery – consider the impact of the project on resourcing of the planning, restock and FM programme.
- With support of the Woodland Creation Project agree the most appropriate delivery mechanism:
    - New planting framework contract - If the site is large to mid-scale and non-complex, it should be delivered through the new planting framework contract. This is the default delivery mechanism, however:
    - In-house contract - If the site is small, sensitive and complex it may be best delivered through an in-house contract.
- Utilise specialist advice and support:
    - Vacant – national new planting framework
    - Vacant – soils and silviculture
    - Victoria Stokes – silviculture and species choice
    - Ian McKee – open habitats
    - Matt Ritchie – archaeology and heritage
    - Kenny Kortland – birds and mammals
    - Richard Thompson – native woodlands
    - Stewart Hendry – agricultural use of land
- Build appropriate specification and contract tender documents. The simplicity and clarity of the tender specification and operational requirements will provide the contractors with the ability to effectively cost the projects and consider options to offer value for money. In particular, provide clear maps which inform anybody planning the delivery of the on-site operations.
- Engage with the local Wildlife Ranger Managers and Deer Management Officers to ensure that protection is considered at all stages of the planning and delivery process.
- Use natural colonisation where this makes sense. This can be a low-cost establishment method for sites where natural colonisation meets objectives. However, deer numbers need to be low enough to make success likely, and plans

and budgets need to be in place for longer-term follow up work. See Annex 2 for more information.

- Check plant availability and tree species and provenances – be aware of the very lengthy lead-in time required for some less mainstream species and provenances and, where this is possible, provide early warning to nurseries of the need for these (some 3-5 years in advance). Where this is not possible, choose those which are less difficult to source.
- Use proven species and provenances at scale. The bulk of woodland creation projects should be made up of species which are less demanding to establish. This does not mean defaulting to Sitka; proactively choose proven species that are well suited for the site, taking ESC and survey reports fully into account.
- Bearing in mind that this will only be a very small part of the overall programme, target the planting of 'alternative' conifers and high-input productive broadleaves carefully. These species can be less easy to source and can require additional protection and maintenance. Even if suitable in Ecological Site Classification (ESC), they may not be available on the scale required for extensive woodland creation. Some of the prescriptions involved in planting productive broadleaves require an increased intensity of operational delivery and maintenance, and this will incur higher cost. For projects using 'alternative' conifers and high-input broadleaves, ensure this is reflected in the costing exercise, and seek advice from FMSO/SLFD FM Team.
- Consider the total number of species needed to achieve the objectives - rationalise and reduce the number of different tree species being used in an individual project to the most favourable, simplifying complex mixtures where appropriate.
- Specify appropriate plant spacing/density – specify the minimum needed to meet FES business objectives and to facilitate mechanised weeding and inter-row operations where possible. Ensure that proposed stocking densities are deliverable and avoid variable spacing within individual planting areas where possible.
- Fencing location and specification – minimise fencing through good forest design, landscaping and choice of tree species. FES will inherit all fencing liabilities after the end of the framework period and will be liable to carry out fence removal at the end of the life of the fence.
- Public access – concurrent public access during the period of the framework contract period can compromise delivery if not properly planned and managed. Work with CRT teams to ensure that full account is taken of public access routes, that information is given timeously to the Planning and Delivery teams and that these are catered for during the delivery period.
- Constraints – when planning and considering delivery methods, assess the impact of the site constraints, such as overhead powerlines, for: 1) health and safety of those on site and 2) the impact on cost to manage them.

Annex 2: Business guidance for creating woodland by natural colonisation

1. Background

Across the national forest estate (NFE) there are likely to be areas of ground which are described in the sub compartment database (SCDB) as having a land use code of "open" but which have become wooded naturally over a period of years, often due to deer management activities. Much of this occurs above the existing timberline and is termed "Mountain Woodland" - the benefits of which are described in Annex 3.

Where this "open" land has not previously been wooded, subsequent tree cover can be described as "new woodland" by means of natural colonisation and claimed towards the Scottish Government's woodland expansion target.

2. Purpose of this guidance

To set out a process of surveying and recording data, updating the SCDB, and consultation where appropriate to allow new woodland to be claimed as part of the FES contribution to woodland expansion.

3. Definitions and criteria

For the purposes of this guidance, **natural colonisation** is defined as –

"the process by which plants and woodlands are allowed to establish from seeds dispersed naturally from local sources."[2]

Woodland is defined as –

"An area of tree-covered land greater than 0.5ha and at least 20 metres wide whose canopy cover extends to 20 per cent or more of the land area (or the potential to achieve this – normally at least 500 stems per hectare at establishment.)"[3]

In order to claim natural colonisation as new woodland, the previous land use must have been of a non-woodland type. This will normally be recorded as "open" in the SCDB (i.e. open ground or ground with woodland cover of less than 20%).

Colonisation on sites which have been felled for more than 30 years, which do not show clear evidence of former tree cover (e.g. stumps) and which have had tree cover of less than 20% can be claimed as new woodland if the land now meets the criteria above.[4]

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[2] Using Natural Colonisation to Create or Expand New Woodlands – Ralph Harmer 1999

[3] Various documents – Survey handbook, UKFS, UKWAS, NFI

Development sites (e.g. open cast mining or renewables projects) on previously wooded areas which have had a land use change previously approved by means of a planning permission can be claimed as new woodland should tree planting be subsequently approved on all or part of the site not required for the development.

In addition,

- trees should be less than approximately 15 years old[5] to qualify as new woodland creation (though the SCDB should be updated if boundaries of older existing woodland are found to be inaccurate), and
- trees should be outwith browsing height to be considered established (though seedlings / saplings shorter than this could qualify providing conditions suitable for successful woodland establishment were in place), and
- woodland establishment should be consistent with management objectives for the site.

4. Survey

Surveying of any areas of natural colonisation should be carried out following the guidance in the "Natural Regeneration Monitoring" document, and entered into the SCDB according to the guidance contained in the Survey Handbook. The document can be found on each FD server at –

G:\FCData\FDData\Conservation\NaturalRegeneration\Natural Regeneration Monitoring Survey Methodology

Normally such surveys would be undertaken as part of the information-gathering stage of creating or revising a land management plan – however, where we are aware of significant areas of such new woodland, this can be surveyed on an ad hoc basis.

5. Approval of new woodland

5.1 EIA determination

EIA determination is required for initial afforestation (within stated thresholds) – which includes using natural regeneration to establish woodland. A screening opinion is required to assess if the work proposed [6](or 'project' to use EIA terminology) is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Only if the effects of the work proposed are deemed by FCS to have a significant effect is an actual EIA required to be prepared.

Where the intention is to use natural colonisation to achieve the aims of a plan, then it is a woodland creation 'project', even if the 'work proposed' is simply using deer management to create this woodland. In that case, where we have intent to create

[4] Land Use, Land Use Change and forestry. IPCC 2000

[5] In some cases, e.g. montane woodland, growth will be very slow and older trees may qualify.

[6] Reference – Environmental Impact Assessment Code 2014 (FCS)

woodland through natural colonisation to meet a plan objective, this should be clearly stated, and will be subject to an EIA screening opinion.

However, in an area where naturally colonising woodland does not compromise plan objectives, and where the woodland has colonised by default without there being any work carried out that explicitly creates this woodland, FCS will not retrospectively subject this woodland to an EIA screening opinion.

5.3 FCS approval

All natural colonisation sites within an LMP area should be mapped prior to the ten year plan review.

On re-submission of the LMP, the intention for future management of any identified naturally colonised woodland that has established during the lifetime of the previous plan will be described (which may be to leave it to do 'its' own thing', or fell it, or supplementary plant, or increase deer control to suggest just four examples) – in other words, the colonised woodland is brought into management that will relate to the plan's objectives – or removed if it does not meet the plan objectives. The proposed removal of any naturally colonised trees may itself be subject to EIA screening

In all areas where we do not intend to actively manage open space to meet plan objectives, and where naturally colonising woodland is not going to compromise plan objectives, we should categorise the land as '*Open land where the possible colonisation of woodland and scrub through natural processes would be acceptable if it occurred*.'

Where the intention is to manage the land to keep it "open" then the management objective should be described. There would be an expectation that resources would be committed to meeting this objective.

6. Recording of colonisation

In the GIS management coupes layer, land should be classed as 'open' until such time as it is not (at which point it should be updated to an appropriate classification).

On approval of the LMP, and assuming any natural colonisation is accepted as part of the plan, a note of the LMP name, compartment and sub compartment number, and area of new woodland should be sent to the Planning Support Manager at FESHO who will update the woodland creation spreadsheet.

Annex 3: The contribution of Mountain Woodland to the Strategy for Woodland Creation on the NFE

1. Introduction

The term "Mountain Woodland" describes trees and scrub (e.g. willows, juniper and dwarf birch) above the commercial timberline (typically >400m ASL) where canopy cover has the potential to exceed 20%. We are encouraging the development of this type of woodland as part of our native woodland expansion, as described in section 5 part 3. There are existing examples on the NFE, some of which are in our SCDB. Whilst the majority of Mountain Woodland will consist of native species, high elevation colonisation of non-native trees falls within this scope where on non-priority habitats.

We acknowledge that there have been biodiversity losses elsewhere in Europe due to open habitats "scrubbing up". We recognise the need to strike a balance, protecting the richest open habitats and using partially wooded high elevation mosaics to enhance others.

The main emphasis in creating Mountain Woodland is on natural colonisation - achieved principally by increased control of large herbivores. Planting of small scale seed sources for future colonisation is also an important mechanism. In key locations, where a clear range of benefits will be delivered, larger scale Mountain Woodland planting projects will be considered.

2. Rationale for Mountain Woodland

Mountain Woodland is a low cost way to deliver a wide range of valuable ecosystem services over a substantial part of the NFE. The principle benefits are:

- ### Increased woodland creation

  Simple GIS modelling suggests that there are large areas of high-elevation land on the NFE that could colonise or be planted with Mountain Woodland given control of limiting factors such as excessive browsing impacts.

  We estimate that 1,000 hectares could naturally colonise with native woodland in the long-term, based on existing seed sources. A large area could also colonise with non-native regeneration, some of which may deliver benefits – especially if in mixture with native species. A proportion of this area is likely to qualify towards our Woodland Creation targets, under the terms of Annex 2.

- ### Resilience

  Mountain Woodland can act as a buffer against storm force gales, replacing hard exposed edges often seen in plantation forests. Slopes vulnerable to landslips can also be stabilised by deep rooting native trees. Rainwater torrents can be minimised through the increased water holding capacity provided by the deep litter layer and permeable soils[7].

[7] Permeability increases through tree rooting and reduced trampling by large herbivores.

- Flood management

  The extra water holding capacity relative to the open land it replaces can make a contribution to reducing flooding events downstream. Mountain Woodland will be promoted on the upper fringes of Potentially Vulnerable Areas (i.e. catchments with communities and other assets vulnerable to flooding).

- Enhanced biodiversity

  Sub-Arctic *Salix* species scrub is one of the UK's most rare and endangered habitats, and is almost confined to the higher mountains of the Highlands where it is a relic of post-glacial vegetation. A few stands of the habitat also occur in the Southern Uplands.

  Many other rare species of flora and fauna utilise Mountain Woodland, some of which are in steep decline (e.g. ring-ouzel). Encouraging the development of Mountain Woodland can make a strongly positive contribution to the biodiversity of the National Forest Estate and of Scotland.

- Landscape aesthetics

  Many of our upper forest edges are hard transitions from planted commercial forest to open hill. These can be visually unappealing when viewed from hill paths or viewpoints. Mountain Woodland has a key role to play in creating an attractive landscape; integrating commercial forests into the wider environment. In some cases, where priority habitats are not threatened, Sitka spruce colonisation will achieve this.

3. Further information

More detailed business guidance on Mountain Woodland will be available in due course.

Spatial data will be made available to Regions on Forester Web. A number of datasets have been used to assess where Mountain Woodland is likely to occur through natural colonisation, where native woodland development onto Priority Open Habitats may be appropriate and where climate variables will allow woodland development.