

**Cairngorms National Park  
LAND MANAGEMENT FORUM**

**Glen Tanar Estate  
Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**MEETING NOTE**

**Present:**

Alison McKnight	Agroecosystems
David Frew	National Trust for Scotland
Duncan Ferguson	Spey District Fishery Board
Eleanor Mackintosh	CNPA Board
Patrick Thompson	Ben Alder Estate
Hamish Trench	CNPA
David Campbell	Glenavon and Braulen Estates
Richard Greenlaw	Glenavon and Braulen Estates
Jamie Williamson	Alvie & Dalraddy Estates
Hebe Carus	RSPB Futurescapes
John Forbes-Leith	Dunachton Estate
Kenneth McDiarmid	Glenmazeran Estate
Drew MacFarlane-Slack	Scottish Land and Estates Ltd
Adam Smith	Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
Emma Yendell	LLTNP
Paul Timms	Select
Penny Lawson	CNPA
Tim Baynes	Scottish Moorland Group
Rhoderick Noble	CKD Galbraith (Chair)
Chris Donald	SNH
Ailsa Anderson	Scottish Land and Estates Ltd
Duncan Bryden	CNPA Board
Scott Petrie	Scottish Land and Estates Ltd
Will Boyd-Wallis	CNPA
Angela Douglas	CNPA Board
Andrew Campbell	Woodland Trust
Stuart Jennings	RSPB
Jenny Lennon	RSPB
Mark Bilsby	Dee DSFB and Dee River Trust
Tom Richmond	Smiths Gore
Lucy Gilbert	James Hutton Institute
Andrew Norval	Seafeld Estate
Richard Gledson	Balmoral Estate
Catriona Rowan	CNPA Board
Sue Engstrand	University of Highlands and Islands
Scott Newey	James Hutton Institute
Alix Whitaker	Smiths Gore
Simon Blackett	Invercauld Estate

Frances Thin	CNPA
James Dewar	FCS
Alasdair Laing	PDG Helicopters
Simon Thorp	The Heather Trust
James Hepburn-Scott	Forest Carbon Ltd
Dick Bartlett	British Moorlands
Ian Innes	PDG Helicopters
Melanie Smith	University of Highlands and Islands
Penny Lawson	CNPA
Andrew Salvesen	Dinnet Moor
Roger Grau	Glasgow University
Michael Bruce	Glen Tanar Estate
Michael Hone	Glen Tromie/Lynaberack

## Apologies

Roger Knight, Robert Raynor, Miff Tuck, Jim Cornfoot, Katrina Farquhar, Rod Andean.

## 1. Introduction

Rhoderick Noble, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the Land Management Forum, which is a joint forum run by Cairngorms National Park Authority and Scottish Land and Estates.

## 2. Presentations

A brief outline of the presentations is given below. The full presentations will be available on the CNPA website at [http://cairngorms.co.uk/park-authority/about-us/meeting-papers/working-groups-and-advisory-forums/?wg\\_section=meetings&typeID=44](http://cairngorms.co.uk/park-authority/about-us/meeting-papers/working-groups-and-advisory-forums/?wg_section=meetings&typeID=44)

### 2.1 Peatland restoration: introduction – Simon Thorp

A variety of different types of peatlands make up 3% of the earth's land surface. They are extremely important for carbon storage, accounting for around twice the quantity held by forests. 6% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are from damaged peatlands. Scotland has 1.6m ha storing 3 billion tonnes of carbon. The ecosystem services peatlands provide, especially those relating to climate change, are increasingly recognised and include biodiversity, water quality and flood alleviation as well as carbon storage. There is a widespread need for restoration, with only <20% of UK peatlands remaining undamaged, particularly by erosion and drainage. Wet conditions for sphagnum moss growth is critical as this is key component of peat formation. Restoration is underway, eg by blocking grips to help re-wetting, with the aim of expanding the area of active peatlands thereby increasing carbon capture. SNH's Peatland Plan for Scotland sets a target of enhancing or restoring 1 million ha by 2020. Funding is uncertain; private sources such as 'corporate social responsibility' money, and the developing carbon market, are likely.

#### *Discussion:*

The question was raised as to whether there is any environmental or economic gain to be made by draining peatlands under any circumstances: there is little or no evidence to indicate that the intended outcomes are achieved through drainage.

The carbon balance of peatland versus forestry was discussed, highlighting the complexities involved and need for more scientific data to support land management decisions.

### 2.2 Peatland Restoration Flying Squad – Alasdair Laing and Ian Innes, PDG Helicopters

A summary of the development and offerings of the company was given. Applications used in peatland restoration include; liming, fertilising and seeding ground, distributing plug plants, heather brash placement, and drain and gully blocking with various materials. Other land management services include deer counts and fire fighting.

*Discussion:*

Carbon emissions from helicopter use were questioned, and it was explained that the carbon cost has to be balanced against time savings, avoidance of damage to ground and many other factors on a case by case basis. Helicopter spraying of bracken was discussed, and in relation to bracken control it was indicated that 'emergency authorisation' for continued use of Asulam will be allowed for 120 days from 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

### 2.3 Forest Carbon and carbon offsetting – James Hepburn-Scott, Forest Carbon Ltd

Since 2006 *Forest Carbon* has been creating new woodland for carbon offsetting for large businesses. Offsetting is on a voluntary basis at present and is guided by the UK Government's Woodland Carbon Code, which specifies required conditions, e.g. new planting only, permanence, eligibility criteria, etc. Examples of existing sites were given along with costings and carbon uptake figures for different types of woodland. The UK's first carbon offsetting project using peatland restoration covers 224ha on Alladale Estate. Extensive restoration has also taken place where it is proving to be compatible with grouse moorland management objectives. The launch of the *Markit Registry* in July 2013 and the 'sale' of 'charismatic carbon' will be critical in developing the carbon credit trading market.

### 2.4 Peatland management and wildfire risk – Michael Bruce, Firebreak Services Ltd

Moorland management and restoration needs to take account of wildfire risk. Drying out of peat can heighten fire risk, and on peat moorland one of the most serious consequences is smouldering fires which are very hard to control and can burn for years, leading to huge carbon losses. Much more research is needed on fuel load and fire characteristics, and the effects of different land management regimes on these risk factors. The development of a useable Fire Danger Rating System based on Fine-Fuel-Moisture-Code and the Duff-Moisture-Code will greatly assist prevention planning. The importance of neighbouring land managers collaborating was stressed, alongside continued policy development, training and research.

### 2.5 Current thinking on tick control – Adam Smith, GWCT

A considerable amount of research on habitat, predation and disease in grouse moor management has been undertaken and examples of how this is now being applied were given. Lochindorb is one case where control of mountain hares is thought to have reduced the tick problem and increased grouse productivity. However the complexity of the issue, the need for very careful interpretation of data and the need to take a range of additional factors into account in different locations was emphasised. The results of a study in the Angus Glens on sheep as tick mops indicate that this technique can be useful, but the results suggest a complex situation where the presence of other hosts is also significant. There are alternatives to controlling large tick host animals, including diversionary feeding and treating grouse directly with leg bands. More research is needed, possibly utilising experimental land management techniques already being trialled. Adaptive management may be the best approach.

### 2.6 Grouse on a shoestring – Dick Bartlett, British Moorlands

A historical perspective on management of productive grouse moorland and the impact of varying degrees of investment was given, illustrating the high cost of increasing sporting income to economically viable levels. Use of mobile phone signals to automatically check traps etc can help reduce man-hours and costs. Swiping of heather in a wavy-lined grid pattern can provide better habitat than burning in strips in which grouse chicks are more able to find cover and avoid predation. This can be combined with gritting, and is quicker and less weather dependant than burning.

### **3. AOB**

#### 3.1 Cairngorms National Park Estates Survey

A survey to quantify the importance of estates to the economy, environment and social fabric of the Park, comparable to a previous survey in 2003, will be carried out during 2013. The scope and content of the survey has been jointly developed by Scottish Land & Estates and CNPA. We would strongly encourage participation in the survey to ensure that the results provide an accurate, comprehensive picture of the land management sector in the Park. Surveys will be sent out around July/August 2013.

#### 3.2 Land Management Forum feedback

As joint organisers of the Forum meetings, Scottish Land and Estates and CNPA are keen to receive feedback on any aspect of the meeting and in particular on the three points below, to help in arranging future events.

- a) Strengths and weaknesses of the meeting
- b) What you found useful about the LMF in general, and why
- c) Suggestions for future LMF topics

If you have not yet responded to the previous email request, please send replies to [Drew.McFarlaneSlack@scottishlandandestates.co.uk](mailto:Drew.McFarlaneSlack@scottishlandandestates.co.uk). Responses will be treated as anonymous unless you advise otherwise.

Sincere thanks were extended to all organisers, speakers and the Chair, to Glen Tanar Estate for hosting the meeting and to CNPA for providing lunch and paying for the venue.

### **6. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013.  
Venue tbc.